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Vol 07 No 51

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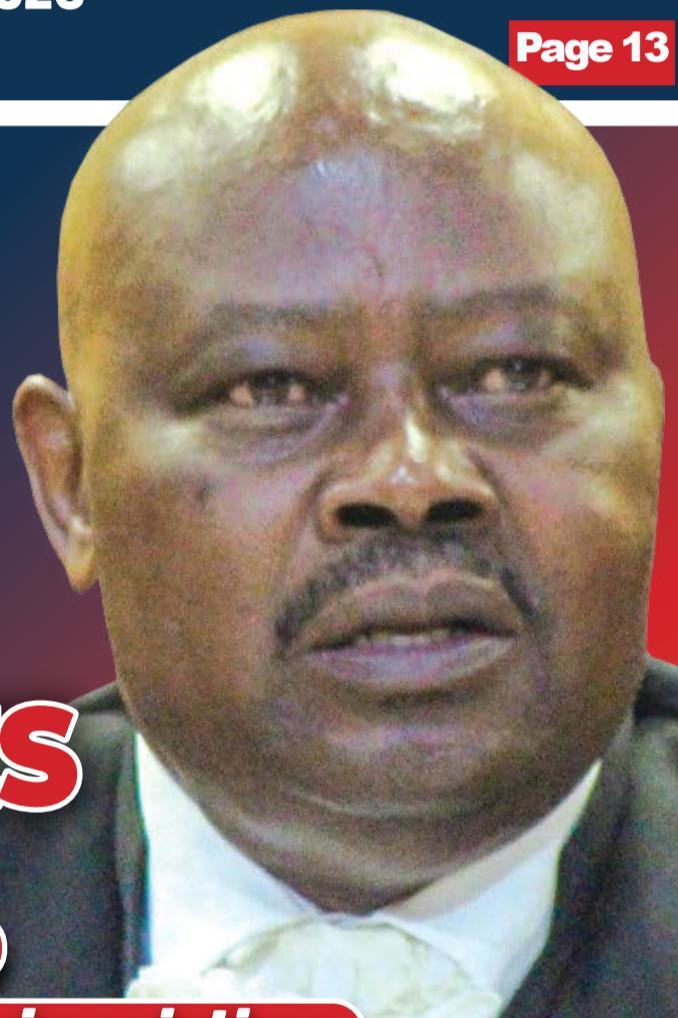
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CHIEF JUSTICE SLAMS MAGISTRATES



• Targets poor case disposal

• Calls for compensation for crime victims

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Chief Justice slams magistrates

- **Targets poor case disposal**
- **Calls for compensation for crime victims**



Thoboloko Ntšonyane

Chief Justice Sakoane Sakoane has expressed serious concern over the poor performance of the Magistrates' Courts, particularly the low rate of case disposal.

Sakoane said he will engage Chief Magistrates to address the situation and ensure accountability within the subordinate courts.

The Chief Justice made these remarks during the official opening of the High Court earlier this week at the Palace of Justice.

"Judicial independence and accountability are non-negotiable. Judicial officers must be free to decide matters without interference from political actors, economic interests, or popular pressure," he said.

He emphasised that independence must be matched with responsibility.

"The flip side of judicial independence is accountability to litigants through the timely delivery of rulings and judgments. Judges and magistrates account only through their judgments—judgments that are clear, reasoned, timely, and anchored in the law.

"Delayed judgments weaken public confidence in the justice system and bring the judiciary into disrepute. Disciplinary measures are therefore appropriate and necessary to ensure accountability."

Justice Sakoane warned that corruption and unethical conduct within the courts erode public trust and undermine the moral authority

of the judiciary.

"As Head of the Judiciary, I will not shield wrongdoing. Accountability and disciplinary mechanisms exist in the Constitution and the Codes of Ethics, and they will be applied without fear or favour. Integrity is not optional; it is the cornerstone of a fair, clean, and transparent judiciary."

However, he also cautioned against what he described as unsubstantiated attacks on judicial officers, particularly rumours intended to influence court outcomes.

"Unfounded allegations and the peddling of rumours of corruption undermine confidence in the judiciary," he said.

The Chief Justice acknowledged systemic challenges facing the courts, including congested rolls, delays, and procedural inefficiencies that deny litigants timely resolution of disputes. To address these issues, he said the judiciary has introduced new rules, including the Judicial Commissioner's Court Rules of 2025 and the Criminal Procedure and Evidence Rules, which are expected to be gazetted before the end of this month.

He further announced that the rules will be translated into Sesotho to ensure wider public access and understanding.

"The efficiency of courts is measured by how effectively they handle cases within a reasonable time, without sacrificing fairness and quality. Well-managed cases take significantly less time to conclude. One of the clearest indicators of case management is the time taken to deliver rulings and judgments," he said.

Turning to performance statistics, Justice Sakoane revealed that Magistrates' Courts received a total of 9,530 cases. Of these, 8,457 were allocated, while only 4,919 were disposed of, representing a 51 percent decline compared to previous years.

In the central region, 4,669 cases were received, 4,592 allocated, and 3,193 disposed of. The southern region received 1,322 cases, allocated 1,580, and disposed of only 451. In the northern region, 3,539 cases were received, 2,285 allocated, and 1,275 disposed of.

"This is disturbing because the majority of people seek justice in the subordinate courts," said the Chief Justice. "Chief Magistrates will be held accountable. The Bench-Bar Committee will conduct a study and submit a diagnostic report with recommendations for corrective action."

By contrast, Justice Sakoane reported improved performance in the superior courts. The Court of Appeal registered 106 cases, allocated 98, and completed 86. The High Court (Main Division) registered 1,474 cases, with 1,090 completed. The Labour Appeal Court registered 47 cases and completed 33, while the Commercial Division completed 718 cases out of 612 registered. The Northern Division registered 525 cases and completed 293.

In total, superior courts registered 2,704 cases, allocated 810, and completed 2,139, an improvement from the previous year, which he attributed to effective case management.

He further highlighted progress in the disposal of criminal trials at the High Court.

"Sixty-nine criminal trials were completed, compared to 30 in 2024. This represents an increase of 130 percent," he said.

Justice Sakoane noted that firm sentencing in criminal cases plays an important role in deterring crime and restoring public confidence.

"These sentences instil fear in criminals and bring some comfort to victims. However, sentences alone do not repair the harm caused by crime," he said.

He called for Lesotho to enact laws that provide compensation to victims of crime, in line with the 1989 United Nations Declaration of the Basic Principles of Justice for Victims of Crime and Abuse of Power.

"Such measures have the potential to further restore public confidence in the justice system," he said.

To further tackle case backlogs, the Chief Justice said the judiciary is implementing reforms aimed at streamlining procedures and curbing unnecessary interlocutory applications, which have contributed to delays in the administration of justice.

ation instead of prosecution, especially for forms of abuse like economic violence, stalking, or technology-facilitated abuse.

Officials expressed frustration at a recent two-day workshop in Maseru, organised by the Inter-Parliamentary Union, Parliament of Lesotho, and SADC Parliamentary Forum.

Members of Parliament (MPs), 'Malela-ka Lehohla Malakane and Mamello Phooko stressed the need for immediate action, including a three-month ultimatum to the relevant ministry to operationalise the Act.

Sekokotoana suggested identifying and implementing non-conflicting clauses right away while amending problematic sections.

'Matau Futho Letsatsi, Director of Gender, emphasised the translation's role in empowerment. "For those who do not know English, it affords them the opportunity to read this law in their own Sesotho language so they can avoid breaking the law," she said.

Lebohang Mothae, Chief Executive of the National AIDS Commission (NAC), reminded participants that behind the statistics, were people. Mothae said that until the barriers prohibiting this law were addressed, those people would remain trapped in a queue, waiting for a justice that has yet to arrive.

Lesotho grapples with widespread domestic violence

... As counter-domestic violence law remains unenforced

Ntsoaki Motaung

In police stations across the country, domestic violence dominates reports, Newsday has learned.

Sergeant 'Mamorapeli Zulu of the Lesotho Mounted Police Service (LMPS)'s Child, Gender and Protection Unit (CGPU) states that on any given day, if 10 people are queuing to report cases, seven are there due to domestic violence.

The CGPU receives about 30 reported domestic violence cases every day nationwide.

"At any police station on a random day, if you pass people queuing, if they are ten, seven of them are there to report domestic violence," Zulu said.

Despite the passage of the Counter Domestic Violence Act 2022, intended to protect victims and hold perpetrators accountable,

the law has been described as ineffective in practice.

Police officers have received training and were said to be prepared to file cases, but prosecutors allegedly have refused to proceed, citing conflicts with other laws, particularly Section 27 of the Act conflicting with the Sexual Offences Act.

Sergeant Zulu explained the roadblock: "The prosecution told us that we are not able to proceed because of the reasons they had tabbed; they said the law as a whole they cannot implement it, not particular sections."

Nthabiseng Sekokotoana from the Office of Parliamentary Counsel confirmed inconsistencies and the absence of supporting regulations. Without these, key parts of the law cannot be implemented. Specialized Family Courts out-

lined in the Act have not been established, and funding shortages further hinder progress.

Recent data highlights the severity of gender-based violence (GBV) in Lesotho. An estimated 86 percent of Basotho women have experienced some form of GBV in their lifetime, according to multiple sources including UN Women, UNFPA, and national studies.

Lesotho ranks third globally in reported rape cases per capita and sixth in murder rates, figures higher than many countries in active conflict.

The Act was translated into Sesotho in 2023 by World Vision Lesotho to make it accessible, empowering non-English speakers to understand their rights and avoid violations.

However, due to legal contradictions and infrastructure gaps, victims often face medi-

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Thabure Media Group

Seabata Mahao

Lesotho's textile and apparel sector, a cornerstone of the economy and the country's largest private employer, has gained temporary relief with the United States' approval of a one-year extension of the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA).

Signed into law by President Donald Trump on February 3, 2026, the extension revives AGOA retroactively from its expiration on September 30, 2025, and runs through December 31, 2026. The program historically grants duty-free access to the U.S. market for qualifying African exports, including textiles and apparel, supporting thousands of jobs in Lesotho.

However, the reprieve remains partial due to a 15 percent reciprocal import tariff imposed by the U.S. in 2025 as part of broader reciprocal tariff policies. This levy continues to apply even under AGOA, undermining the zero-duty benefit that once defined the program and eroding Lesotho's price competitiveness in a cost-sensitive market.

Without AGOA, Lesotho's exports would face World Trade Organization most-favoured-nation rates, such as 16.5 percent duties on cotton-made products, plus the 15 percent reciprocal tariff, totaling 31.5 percent.

"This is why it was very important for us to get AGOA renewed," said Minister of Trade, Industry and Business Development Mokhethi Shelile. "With AGOA, we remain at zero percent plus the 15 percent tariff. Without it, it would have been 31.5 percent, which would kill competi-

31.5% without AGOA. 15% with it.

Can Lesotho really survive either?



Minister of Trade, Industry, and Small Business Development, Mokhethi Shelile

tiveness."

The tariff's announcement last year triggered immediate hardship, including temporary factory shutdowns, lost orders, and stalled production. Investors hesitated to commit new capacity to Lesotho, where market access comes with narrowed profit margins.

The renewal caps a three-year advocacy effort and covers the previous four months from September 2025. Shelile

described it as a hard-won but short-term victory.

"I'm optimistic that we are going to get something long term at the end of the day because I am not satisfied with one year. It is not a conducive timeline for our businesses," he said. "We have to work today to get the USA to provide a framework of a proper trade policy for Africa, maybe one that replaces AGOA or fine-tunes it."

The government is pursuing dual strat-

egies: securing a more durable AGOA framework and reducing the 15 percent tariff. Shelile pointed to Kenya's 10 percent rate as a benchmark and noted ongoing negotiations.

"We are currently in negotiations with one of the producers here to start buying raw materials like cotton from the USA," he said. "According to our calculations, this could bring the tariff down to around 10 percent for that specific industry. The buyer is the one who identifies where the producer should source raw materials. We are working for that to change."

Despite the added costs, Shelile expressed confidence in Lesotho's competitiveness through productivity and logistics to ports, even if delivery times are longer. AGOA remains vital for Lesotho's factories, many producing sportswear for the U.S. market. The sector supports communities through employment and local sponsorships, including in sports.

The U.S. has signaled that discussions for a longer-term arrangement should begin immediately. "The one year was designed to be a stop-gap measure while we are talking about AGOA," Shelile said.

He highlighted the mutual benefits of the pact, noting that U.S. exports to Africa have grown faster than African exports to the U.S., and more than 350,000 U.S. jobs depend on related trade, warehousing, and logistics.

While the extension ends months of uncertainty for Lesotho's garment workers and factories, the lingering tariff and short timeframe leave the industry's long-term future dependent on swift progress in U.S.-Africa trade talks.

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LHDA spearheads Lesotho's role in regional bird atlas campaign



Staff Reporters

The Lesotho Highlands Development Authority (LHDA) will coordinate Lesotho's participation in a major regional bird monitoring exercise under the Southern African Bird Atlas Project 2 (SABAP2), scheduled to take place from today to Monday, February 9, 2026.

The four-day campaign will bring together birdwatchers, conservationists, and citizen scientists across southern Africa to collect critical data on bird populations, movements, and habitat use.

In a statement, LHDA said its role in hosting and coordinating the Lesotho Highlands leg of the campaign reflects its commitment to environmental stewardship within the Lesotho Highlands Water Project (LHWP) footprint.

"The Authority's participation reflects our ongoing commitment to environmental management, biodiversity protection, and sustainable development in the Lesotho Highlands," LHDA said.

SABAP2, launched in 2007, is one of the region's most extensive long-term biodiversity monitoring initiatives. It builds on the original Southern African Bird Atlas Project and covers South Africa, Lesotho, and Eswatini. Trained volunteers record bird sightings within standardised grid squares, generating detailed and continuously updated data on species distribution and long-term environmental change.

According to LHDA, the February 2026 campaign will focus on a wide range of environments, including urban areas, rural settlements, wetlands, and mountainous terrain, with particular emphasis on Lesotho's high-altitude ecosystems.

"These highland environments are ecologi-

source management," the statement read.

The campaign comes at a time when bird populations across southern Africa are undergoing rapid change due to climate change, habitat loss, and increasing human pressures.

"Species that were once considered common are declining in some areas, while others are expanding into new ranges," LHDA said. "Without up-to-date field data, conservation planning risks being based on outdated or incomplete information."

Organisers expect hundreds of observers to take part during the four days, generating thousands of new records that will help fill critical data gaps and strengthen regional conservation science.

LHDA emphasised that birds are widely recognised as indicators of ecosystem health and that SABAP2 data plays a key role in shaping conservation priorities and public policy.

"For Lesotho, where mountain ecosystems underpin regional water systems and socio-economic resilience, the atlas provides essential evidence to balance development needs with long-term environmental sustainability," the Authority said.

By the end of the campaign on 9 February 2026, all new observations will be incorporated into the SABAP2 database.

"Each record represents a meaningful contribution by ordinary citizens to extraordinary scientific work," LHDA said. "The story of birds is inseparable from the story of the landscapes we depend on and the choices we make to protect them."

Participation in the Lesotho Highlands campaign is open to birding enthusiasts and citizen scientists interested



cally fragile but critically important for biodiversity, water security, and rural livelihoods," the Authority said.

LHDA noted that fieldwork in the Lesotho Highlands will be aligned with existing envi-

ronmental management and conservation programmes implemented under the LHWP.

"This integration ensures that bird atlas data contributes directly to evidence-based environmental planning and sustainable re-



Promised a job, trapped in exploitation

Ntsoaki Motaung

In Lesotho, the hope for a better life often starts with crossing the border into South Africa.

For one woman, whose name is withheld to protect her dignity, that crossing stemmed from the heavy burden of single motherhood after a painful divorce in 2019.

Suddenly, she was solely responsible for her child's survival.

"After the divorce, I had to make sure my child and I survived," she recalls.

In a country where unemployment soars, blocking many from putting food on the table, she turned to the internet for job opportunities. She found a Facebook post seeking women to work at a bar in South Africa.

The recruiters wanted more than just her. They asked her to bring two other women. The others refused to cross the border illegally, but she felt she had no choice. The desperate needs at home drowned out her fears.

"I knew how bad things were. I had to ensure my child went to bed with food. I felt I had no option, not knowing what awaited me."

She crossed through the shadows at Van Rooyen's Gate border post, trusting the person on the other end of her messages because they had traveled hours to pick her up. Relief came when she met the man, she felt safe because he spoke Sesotho, her language.

"On the way, I was relaxed. Nothing strange happened, and I thought if someone did not care, they would not travel so far to fetch me."

That sense of safety was an illusion. When they arrived, her ID documents were taken "for reception protocols," leaving her without any proof of identity. "They made sure to take any document that could identify me, saying I should leave them at reception."

The promised bar job disappeared overnight. New men arrived, saying the owner had hired someone else. What began as grooming quickly turned violent.

On the third day, the man who had picked her up returned with a drink laced with drugs. "I don't know what was in it, but soon I was intoxicated. When he saw I was helpless, he let the man he came with rape me."

This was not a job. It was six months of sexual exploitation and abuse. She soon learned she was not alone. Behind locked doors were other women with similar stories.

One, from Matelile in Mafeteng, shared that she too had been promised a job but ended up sexually exploited. The environment was filled with terror.

Refusal to comply brought death threats. "If I refused to sleep with the men



they brought, they threatened to kill me, saying no one would know where I ended up."

The horror deepened when another woman became pregnant. A botched, forced abortion led to her death, and the survivors were warned never to speak of it.

"One time, another lady got pregnant. They gave her medication to abort, but it failed, and she died. We were told never to tell anyone."

The nightmare ended only when police raided the place. But, the rescue brought new challenges. Because they had entered illegally and had no documents, the women were deported back to Lesotho, scattered across borders, returning to the same poverty that had driven them away.

Today, this survivor is rebuilding her life with help from the Migrants Association of Lesotho (MWA-Ls) and World Vision's Protection and Promotion of Human Rights (PPHR) project.

Instead of returning to South Africa for work, she chose to start a small business at home.

"I picked the project. I started a small spaza shop because I had already been selling fatcakes." Her story is a stark warning. "I tell anyone looking for a job: get help from trusted people, and tell many about where you're going."

Lerato Nkhetše, Executive Director of MWA-Ls, said the association supports trafficking survivors by welcoming them back to their families, connecting them to counseling, authorities, small income projects, or organisations like World Vision.

He noted that trafficking is a major concern in Lesotho. Many Basotho are trafficked to South Africa, men for illegal mining and construction, women for domestic work, salons, or sex work.

"People must beware of unregistered and unregulated recruitment agencies, especially those sending them to South Africa."

Nkhetše added that the government was taking steps but not enough. He said there is no dedicated budget for awareness, survivor support funds, or a legal

recruitment centre.

This personal story reflects a broader regional crisis. Economic vulnerability drives many into the hands of traffickers.

The 2025 U.S. Trafficking in Persons (TIP) Report kept Lesotho on Tier 2 (making significant efforts but not fully meeting minimum standards), while South Africa was downgraded to Tier 2 Watch List due to concerns like decreased victim identifications and official complicity at borders.

The UNODC Global Report on Trafficking in Persons highlights that sex trafficking remains the most detected form globally (affecting about 61 percent of victims), but forced labour is rising.

In Southern Africa, Basotho men face exploitation in illegal mining, while women are lured into domestic servitude or sex work. Social media platforms like Facebook and WhatsApp have become key recruitment tools, over 50 percent of documented cases in the region in recent years started with fraudulent online job posts.

Lesotho's main legal framework is the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act No. 1 of 2011, strengthened by amendments (including in 2021) to fully criminalise all forms of trafficking, including sex trafficking.

Penalties reach up to 25 years' imprisonment (or life for child trafficking). The law includes protections like non-prosecution of victims for crimes committed under duress (e.g., illegal border crossing) and safe harbour provisions.

The recent Labour Act of 2024 targets fraudulent recruitment by requiring agency licensing and allowing inspections of private homes for domestic labour cases. Lesotho is party to key international agreements, including the UN Palermo Protocol (which standardises the definition of trafficking: act, means, purpose), the ILO conventions on ending modern slavery, and the SADC Protocol on Gender and Development, which addresses cross-border trafficking risks for women.

High rates of gender-based violence (affecting nearly 86 percent of women in their lifetime) and HIV (around 25 percent) make divorced or traumatised women especially vulnerable to promises of a fresh start.

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Newsday Business

Letšeng's latest results reveal tough end to 2025

Staff Reporter

Letšeng Diamonds ended its 2025 financial year on a subdued note, with fourth-quarter (Q4) results confirming a year of softer production, weaker grades and cautious operating choices at Lesotho's flagship mine.

In the three months to December 31, Letšeng recovered 20,961 carats, down from 22,268 carats in the previous quarter, underlining a steady loss of momentum as the year closed.

For the full year, total recoveries fell to 90,354 carats, a 14 percent decline from 105,012 carats in the 2024 financial year (FY2024).

Total sales value for FY2025 fell to US\$97.7 million, a steep 36 percent drop from US\$152.8 million the previous year, reflecting not only lower volumes but also a weaker overall pricing environment.

While the achieved price per carat improved quarter-on-quarter, rising from US\$1,124 in



Letseng diamond mine

Q3 to US\$1,288 in Q4, this late-year recovery was not enough to reverse the annual slide. The full-year average settled at US\$1,105 per carat, down 20 percent from US\$1,390 in

FY2024.

The sales performance mirrored the production pressure. In Q4, 21,191 carats were sold at an average price of US\$1,288 per car-

at. For the full year, 88,381 carats achieved an average of US\$1,105 per carat, down sharply from US\$1,390 per carat in FY2024.

Letšeng did register standout results at the top end, including a peak price of US\$66,602 per carat for an 8.83-carat pink diamond and six stones selling for more than US\$1 million each.

In its 2025 Q4 trading update, Letseng's majority shareholder Gem Diamonds noted that direct cash costs (before waste) per tonne treated and operating cost per tonne treated are at the lower end of the guidance range, though waste cash costs per tonne are expected to be slightly above guidance because of the lower volumes mined.

"All operational metrics were within or ahead of the revised guidance announced on 23 July 2025. Direct cash costs (before waste) per tonne treated and operating cost per tonne treated are at the lower end of the guidance range. This follows the successful outcome of the operational and cost management measures implemented in H2 in response to market conditions.

"As part of those measures, the mining of waste tonnes was deferred, resulting in 64% less waste tonnes mined during the year compared to 2024. Although the reduced waste mining preserved cash, the lower waste tonnes negatively impacted unit costs. Waste cash costs per tonne of waste mined is therefore anticipated to be marginally above guidance," Gem said in the trading update published this week.

Letshego wraps up campaign in style



Lesotho's microfinance heavyweight, Letshego Financial Services, has concluded the final leg of its flagship "Let's Go and Win" campaign, rewarding seven December winners with prizes valued at thousands

Seabata Mahao

Letshego Financial Services has concluded the final leg of its flagship "Let's Go and Win" campaign, rewarding seven December winners with prizes worth thousands of maloti at a colourful ceremony held last Friday.

The prize-giving event took place on January 30 at Sefika Complex in Maseru, marking the close of what the company has described as its biggest and most successful campaign to date. Winners walked away with a range of prizes, including trolley dash groceries worth M5 000 each, electricity vouchers, cash winnings from the Wheel of Fortune, and school fees support.

Two customers won trolley dash grocery prizes valued at M5 000 each, two others received electricity vouchers worth M1 000 each, while two participants spun the Wheel of Fortune and won M18 000 and M12 000 respectively. Another winner received school fees worth M3 000.

Speaking at the event, Letshego market-

ing officer Maieane Makate said the campaign, now in its third year, had exceeded expectations in both reach and impact.

"This is the third year of the campaign, but this one has been the biggest and most successful. With this year's campaign, we managed to reach areas we never thought we would reach, and the number of customers doubled compared to previous years," Makate said.

The 2025 edition of the "Let's Go and Win" campaign ran from October 1 to December 31, although prize distribution is continuing after the official close. According to Makate, increased interest from Basotho prompted the company to expand the campaign beyond Maseru to Mohale's Hoek in the south and Leribe in the north.

"In the past we focused mainly on Maseru, but due to public demand we extended the campaign to other districts. This year I can confidently say the campaign was bigger and better," he said.

Makate added that the campaign featured

both weekly and monthly winners, with approximately 45 customers benefiting overall. He said Letshego remains committed to raising the bar with each edition.

"Our mandate is to improve lives. Not only customers benefit from this campaign, but also stakeholders such as sound providers, photographers and others who work with us," he said.

For many winners, the campaign delivered more than just prizes. One of the trolley dash winners, 'Matebelo Sello from Ha-Mphele in Teyateyaneng, said the experience gave her renewed hope and confidence.

"I have never won anything in my life. When I was told I was one of the winners, it felt like a dream. I am over the moon and grateful to God for choosing me among many customers," she said.

Sello said the groceries would significantly ease pressure on her household, particularly as schools have reopened and living costs continue to rise.

"Food prices are very high these days. This will really go an extra mile for my family," she said.

She explained that she initially approached Letshego while heavily indebted, and the institution assisted her by consolidating her debts at low interest rates, enabling manageable repayment.

Another winner, Mosola Mosola from Ha-Mabote in Berea, who won M12 000 from the Wheel of Fortune, echoed similar sentiments.

"I approached Letshego deeply indebted with no plan. They consolidated all my debts, paid them in full, corrected my payslip and allowed me to repay at the lowest interest rates I have ever seen," he said.

Mosola said his winnings would go towards funding his daughter's education.

Other winners included Theko Moeko of St Monica's in Leribe, who won M18 000 from the Wheel of Fortune; Mpho Monaheng from Lesia Ha-Thetsane, who won a trolley dash worth M5 000; Phakiso Liphoto, who received M3 000 in school fees; and Pitso Seutloali from Mathebe in Mafeteng and Mokhethi Sekonyela from Moreneng in Leribe, who each received electricity vouchers worth M1 000.

NOTICE OF CHANGE OF SCHOOL NAME

Notice is given for general information that the Management of Trinity Pre School Tax Registration TIN 200018428-9 intends changing the school to BRIGHT MINDS ACADEMY. All persons having objection to this name are advised to lodge them to the Lesotho Revenue Services at the Ministry of Finance, Finance Building Government Complex 11 Maseru.

Florence Mangeni
Principal

NOTICE NOTICE NOTICE

Notice is hereby given to the public that the Executive Committee of Africa 4 Jesus Lesotho intends to review and repeal the current constitution registered under registration number 2020/237 and replace it with a new update Constitution in line with the current vision ethos of the organization.

Please direct any queries to:
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Newsday Health

Ntsoaki Motaung

Her name was Relebohile. She was just 16 years old when she went into labour in the remote mountains of Thaba-Tseka.

While most teenagers her age should have been worrying about school or friends, Relebohile was fighting for her life, and that of her unborn child.

To reach Paray Hospital, she had to walk for four hours. Along the way, she crossed two rivers, swollen and raging after days of heavy rain.

She survived. Her life was saved. The baby was born healthy.

The story was shared by Kennedy Mosoti, the UNFPA Country Representative, during a high-level workshop on SDG-informed legislative scrutiny convened this week by the SADC Parliamentary Forum (SADC-PF).

Mosoti, however, reflected that Relebohile's survival is not the reality for many women. Countless mothers endure not only long distances but also flooded rivers and impassable terrain to seek medical care. Many die during labour or shortly thereafter.

He shared these realities to highlight the severe challenges women and girls face in accessing Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) services, challenges that are being intensified by the adverse effects of climate change.

In the highlands of Lesotho, where climate change has transformed seasonal rains into unpredictable deluges, a river is no longer just a water source, it is a life-threatening barrier.

The workshop opened with a stark reminder of the crisis confronting Lesotho. Despite a high literacy rate of 86 percent and an antenatal attendance rate of 92 percent, the country remains a dangerous place to give birth.

Maternal mortality stands at 530 deaths per 100,000 live births, the second highest in Africa, surpassed only by war-torn South Sudan. Furthermore, 26 infants out of every 1,000 die before reaching

Deadly intersection of climate change and women's health



Kennedy Mosoti Country Representative for UNFPA

their first birthday.

Mosoti admitted to wincing at these national statistics.

The Secretary-General of SADC-PF, Boemo Sekgoma, noted that climate change is no longer a future threat, it is a daily struggle. Citing Cyclones Dineo (2017) and Eloise (2021), she emphasised that extreme weather events disproportionately affect SRHR.

"When climate disasters strike, they do not just destroy crops; they destroy the last mile of healthcare," she said. "Flooded roads prevent the delivery of contraceptives, and extreme poverty driven by crop failure pushes young girls into early marriage."

or exposes them to increased gender-based violence."

Member of Parliament for Hloahloeng, Katileho Mabeleng, grew emotional as he corroborated these accounts. "You spoke of a woman who walked four hours," he said. "In my constituency, people travel eight hours to reach a clinic that does not even have a doctor. We have women giving birth along the road because hospitals are simply unreachable."

The Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly, Tsepang Tšita Mosena, speaking on behalf of the Speaker, challenged her colleagues to view SRHR not merely as a health issue, but as a development imperative.

"Climate-related shocks disproportionately affect women and adolescents. These shocks disrupt access to essential SRHR services and exacerbate gender-based violence," she said. She called for the institutionalisation of gender-responsive and climate-resilient approaches within parliamentary processes.

However, the path to reform is constrained by financial realities. Member of Parliament for Motimposo and SADC-PF member, Makatleho Motsoasele, pointed to the impracticality of constructing costly bridges across a country where land erosion is accelerating.

"We must be climate-smart," she urged. "We need to talk about how people can be served where they are."

As Lesotho prepares for the 2026-2027 budget speech, pressure is mounting on Parliament to move beyond rhetoric. The workshop underscored that Zero Hunger (SDG 2) is foundational. Without food security, health systems fail, and violence escalates.

The legislators agreed that the national budget must be informed by an SDG lens. This includes funding Waiting Mothers' Homes, facilities that allow pregnant women from remote areas to stay near hospitals as their due dates approach, and ensuring these spaces are properly equipped, not merely four walls.

With SADC-PF currently developing a Model Law on Climate Action, Lesotho has an opportunity to lead the region. As Sekgoma reminded the room, "There is but one world, and we only have one shot at making it right."



REQUEST FOR EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST EXTENDED SUBMISSION DEADLINE (CONSULTING SERVICES – FIRMS SELECTION)

NB: THIS EXPRESSION OF INTEREST REPLACES THE SPECIFIC PROCUREMENT NOTICE WHICH WAS PREVIOUSLY ISSUED RELATED TO THE SAME WORKS.

LESOTHO
MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE, FOOD SECURITY AND NUTRITION SADPII PROJECT.
Loan No./Credit No./ Grant No.:P165228

Assignment Title: DESIGN-BUILD CONTRACTOR FOR SEAKA IRRIGATION SCHEME, QUTHING DISTRICT,
Reference No. (as per Procurement Plan): LS-MAFS-530019-CW-RB

The Government, through the Ministry of Agriculture, Food Security and Nutrition-SADPII Project, has received financing from the World Bank toward the cost of the SADPII Project, and intends to apply part of the proceeds Design-Build Contractor for the Seaka Irrigation scheme.

The consulting services ("the Services") include Design-Build Contractor for the SEAKA Irrigation scheme, including the development of ESMP.

The Ministry of Agriculture, Food Security and Nutrition-SADPII Project now invites eligible construction firms ("Consultants") to indicate their interest in providing the Services. Interested Consultants should provide information demonstrating that they have the required qualifications and relevant experience to perform the Services.

The shortlisting criteria are: *Firms are required to have the following:*

- a minimum of 5 years experience in the design and construction.
- A minimum of two similar major irrigation infrastructure projects which have been successfully completed.

Individual experts' bio data will not be evaluated at this stage.

The attention of interested Consultants is drawn to paragraph 1.9 of the World Bank's *Guidelines: Selection and Employment of Consultants under IBRD Loans and IDA Credits & Grants by World Bank Borrowers World Bank Procurement Guidelines February 2025* ("Consultant Guidelines"), setting forth the World Bank's policy on conflict of interest. *If applicable, insert the following additional text:* In addition, please refer to the following specific information on conflict of interest related to this assignment:

Firms may associate with other firms in the form of a joint venture to enhance their qualifications.

Terms of References can be downloaded from the SADPII website as follows: <https://www.sadpii.org.ls/procurement/>

A Firm will be selected in accordance with the Request For Bids method set out in the Consultant Guidelines.

Further information can be obtained at the address below during office hours **0900 to 1600 hours**.

Expressions of interest must be delivered in a written form in a sealed envelope to the address **below in person**, clearly written; **'DESIGN-BUILD CONTRACTOR FOR SEAKA IRRIGATION SCHEME, QUTHING DISTRICT'**, by 20th February 2026, at 12:00hrs. Procurement Office
Ministry of Agriculture, Food Security and Nutrition, Livestock offices,
SADPII Project, Moshoeshoe II
P.O.Box 24, Maseru 100, Lesotho
procurement@sadpii.org.ls, +266 22312578
www.sadpii.co.ls



REQUEST FOR EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST EXTENDED SUBMISSION DEADLINE (CONSULTING SERVICES – FIRMS SELECTION)

NB: THIS EXPRESSION OF INTEREST REPLACES THE SPECIFIC PROCUREMENT NOTICE WHICH WAS PREVIOUSLY ISSUED RELATED TO THE SAME WORKS.

LESOTHO
MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE, FOOD SECURITY AND NUTRITION SADPII PROJECT
Loan No./Credit No./ Grant No.:P165228

Assignment Title: DESIGN-BUILD CONTRACTOR FOR TSIKOANE IRRIGATION SCHEME, LERIBE DISTRICT,
Reference No. (as per Procurement Plan): LS-MAFS-530022-CW-RFB

The Government, through the Ministry of Agriculture, Food Security and Nutrition-SADPII Project, has received financing from the World Bank toward the cost of the SADPII Project, and intends to apply part of the proceeds to the Design-Build Contractor for the TSIKOANE Irrigation scheme.

The consulting services ("the Services") include Design-Build Contractor for the TSIKOANE Irrigation scheme, including the development of ESMP.

The Ministry of Agriculture, Food Security and Nutrition-SADPII Project now invites eligible construction firms ("Consultants") to indicate their interest in providing the Services. Interested Consultants should provide information demonstrating that they have the required qualifications and relevant experience to perform the Services.

The shortlisting criteria are: *Firms are required to have the following:*

- a minimum of 5 years experience in the design and construction.
- A minimum of two similar major irrigation infrastructure projects which have been successfully completed.

Individual experts' bio data will not be evaluated at this stage.

The attention of interested Consultants is drawn to paragraph 1.9 of the World Bank's Guidelines: *Selection and Employment of Consultants [under IBRD Loans and IDA Credits & Grants] by World Bank Borrowers World Bank Procurement Guidelines February 2025* ("Consultant Guidelines"), setting forth the World Bank's policy on conflict of interest. *If applicable, insert the following additional text:* In addition, please refer to the following specific information on conflict of interest related to this assignment:

Firms may associate with other firms in the form of a joint venture to enhance their qualifications.

Terms of References can be downloaded from the SADPII website as follows: <https://www.sadpii.org.ls/procurement/>

A Firm will be selected in accordance with the Request For Bids method set out in the Consultant Guidelines.

Further information can be obtained at the address below during office hours **0900 to 1600 hours**.

Expressions of interest must be delivered in a written form to the address below in person, clearly written **'DESIGN-BUILD CONTRACTOR FOR SEAKA IRRIGATION SCHEME, QUTHING DISTRICT'** by 20th February 2026, at 12:00hrs. Procurement Office
Ministry of Agriculture, Food Security and Nutrition, Livestock offices,
SADPII Project, Moshoeshoe II
P.O.Box 24, Maseru 100, Lesotho
procurement@sadpii.org.ls, +266 22312578
www.sadpii.co.ls



Dr. Tšeliso Moroke

Common Concern

How the country moves

Development without transformation

Development projects in Lesotho have consistently failed to achieve their stated objectives, not least because they are premised on a construction of the country that bears little resemblance to lived realities. As James Ferguson and Akhil Gupta observed decades ago, such projects may fail economically and socially. Yet, they succeed remarkably in expanding bureaucratic state power into the everyday lives of citizens.

Development, in this sense, becomes less about transformation and more about administration, managing poverty rather than eliminating it.

This is not an outdated academic critique. It remains painfully accurate today.

What is most disturbing is not the failure itself, but the normalisation of failure. In Lesotho, development failure has become routine, expected, and politically convenient. We continue to recycle development models that misunderstand the society they claim to uplift, while congratulating ourselves for delivering infrastructure detached from production, employment, and structural change.

Success is measured in kilometres of roads, numbers of buildings, and ribbon-cutting ceremonies, rather than in jobs created, industries established, or incomes sustained.

Governments repeatedly insist on "owning" infrastructure projects, imagining them as neutral, apolitical assets that can outlive political administrations and ideological shifts. Yet infrastructure without institutions, without industrial policy,

without capable administration, and without accountability is little more than concrete symbolism. Roads do not industrialise an economy on their own. Buildings do not generate productivity. Industrial estates without industries are monuments to failed imagination.

The uncomfortable truth is that Lesotho already has enough resources to begin moving forward. Our taxes, combined with competent institutional governance, policy coherence, strategic planning, and disciplined administration, would be sufficient to set this country on a different trajectory. What is missing is not money, donor support, or technical expertise. It is political seriousness and intellectual courage.

This failure is not accidental. It is historical.

There is extensive literature demonstrating how development institutions in Lesotho were deliberately politicised during the Basotho National Party era. Structures such as Village Development Committees were not neutral vehicles of grassroots participation. They were political instruments, channels through which the ruling party extended control into rural areas under the language of development and participation. Development became a mechanism for loyalty, surveillance, and political consolidation.

That legacy has never been dismantled. It has merely changed form.

Today, development institutions still function less as engines of transformation and more as ex-

tensions of state power, elite control, and patronage networks. The language has improved—"governance", "inclusion", "sustainability"—but the underlying logic remains unchanged.

President Thabo Mbeki, in his lecture on King Moshoeshoe II, correctly reminded us that development must confront poverty, unemployment, and inequality simultaneously. This is not a moral aspiration; it is a structural necessity. Any development strategy that does not fundamentally alter how people earn a living, how wealth is produced, and how opportunity is distributed is not development. It is public relations.

And the historical record is unforgiving. The history of development projects in Lesotho is one of persistent, unremitting failure to achieve stated objectives. Decades of interventions have left the economy's productive base weak, narrow, and externally dependent. The state remains overextended administratively and underpowered economically.

Despite years of "reforms", Lesotho remains largely untouched by modern economic development in any transformative sense.

Yes, economic infrastructure now exists. We have roads, border facilities, telecommunications networks, industrial shells, and logistics platforms. But industries themselves are virtually non-existent. Infrastructure has not translated into industrialisation. Connectivity has not translated into competitiveness. Growth figures, where they exist, have

not translated into employment or dignity.

At its core, Lesotho remains trapped in a structural contradiction. Since the era of Leabua Jonathan—and disturbingly, even under the current Matekane administration—the economy still exhibits the characteristics of a traditional subsistence peasant society, supplemented by external rents: remittances, SACU revenues, donor funding, and short-term projects. These sources sustain consumption rather than production. They delay collapse but do not enable transformation.

This is not an insult to Basotho society; it is an analytical diagnosis.

And diagnoses demand treatment, not denial.

What we are witnessing today is a governing elite content with managing stagnation rather than confronting it. Policy documents multiply, strategies are launched, commissions are formed, but the political economy remains untouched. No serious attempt is made to restructure land use, align infrastructure with industrial policy, discipline the state bureaucracy, or confront the rent-seeking incentives embedded in the system.

Development has been reduced to administrative activity rather than economic change.

We cannot continue mistaking motion for movement, activity for progress, or policy rhetoric for results. The country does not need more consultants, more workshops, or more pilot projects that never scale. It needs a break with inherited thinking. A willingness to challenge the assumptions that have governed development practice for decades.

We have to change things—fundamentally.

That change will not come from technocratic tinkering alone. It requires political leadership willing to confront entrenched interests, rethink the role of the state, and place production—not patronage—at the centre of governance. It also requires intellectual honesty from those who claim to be thinkers, experts, and advisors.

Which raises an uncomfortable question:

What happened to being revolutionary intellectuals?

What happened to the courage to interrogate power, to challenge development orthodoxies, to connect infrastructure to industrial strategy, politics to production, and governance to lived outcomes?

Where are those willing to say that managing decline is not leadership, and that administering poverty is not development?

A country does not move by inertia.

It moves because people decide—intellectually and politically—to push it forward.

That decision has been postponed for too long.

Theko Tlebere

...Continuation

This week, I delve into the political reforms outlined in Act No. 2 of 2025 and their implications for Basotho. I want to emphasise one point without reservation: reform is a journey, not merely a ribbon-cutting ceremony. While Act No. 2 of 2025 marks a significant milestone, it is not the end of the road. Unless the new constitutional framework is implemented through enabling bi-laws, adequate budgets, and independent institutions, we risk congratulating ourselves while old political habits resurface. It is simply too early to celebrate.

The political reforms in Act No. 2 of 2025 have profound implications for the future of democracy in Lesotho. For instance, the recognition of multiple official languages is not just a symbolic gesture; it is a political statement about inclusivity. By acknowledging linguistic diversity, the state strengthens access to government services, judicial processes, and public information for all citizens.

The Act also establishes limits on executive power. Provisions that restrict the Prime Minister's tenure, enhance parliamentary oversight, and clarify accountability mechanisms are crucial for mitigating the risk of authoritarianism. In a political landscape plagued by unstable coalitions and concentrated power, these checks and balances ensure that the executive remains accountable to the legislature, and ultimately to the people.

Floor-crossing has long been a contentious issue. Initially intended to promote political dynamism and give Members of Parliament (MPs) flexibility, this provision can also incentivise opportunism without consequences. The revisions in the final Act reflect a conscious effort to stabilise party politics: by restricting floor-crossing to constituency MPs and mandating by-elections for those crossing the floor outside a designated window, the Act seeks to balance political choice with voter accountability.

The enactment of Act No. 2 of 2025 represents a critical moment in Lesotho's political and constitutional evolution. The reforms address longstanding issues that have hindered national progress: recurring governance crises, political instability, and deep economic inequality. By fostering inclusivity, accountability, and credible democratic processes, the Act guides Lesotho toward a more transparent and equitable political order.

Part 3: Lesotho's journey to reform: Expectations vs. reality of Act No. 2 of 2025

However, constitutional text does not implement itself. The success of these reforms hinges on three practical conditions: political leaders must adhere to the principles enshrined in the Act; state institutions must possess the capacity and independence to fulfill their new mandates; and citizens must be ready to utilise the new rules to defend democratic practices. If any of these pillars falters, the reforms will remain aspirational.

For Act No. 2 of 2025 to lead to tangible change, the government must treat implementation as a national program, complete with timelines, budgets, appointments, and measurable outputs. The priority should be the enforcement of the accountability mechanisms provided in the Act. Parliamentary oversight, impeachment procedures, and the strengthening of independent commissions must go beyond mere headlines. Institutions such as the Parliamentary Service Commission, the Anti-Corruption Commission, and the Human Rights Commission should be fully operational, adequately funded, and shielded from political interference.

Second, newly established and reformed institutions cannot succeed on goodwill alone. They require reliable funding and competent staffing based on merit. Capacity-building must be intentional, particularly for institutions expected to uphold



Theko Tlebere

heavy constitutional responsibilities, such as the National Prosecuting Authority, the Salaries and Remuneration Commission, and other oversight bodies that will set the standard for integrity in public life.

Third, reform without public understanding equates to reform without ownership. The government should invest in civic education and public awareness, especially for marginalised communities historically excluded from political decision-making.

Citizens require practical information: what rights have changed, how to access services under the new framework, how to lodge complaints, and how to engage meaningfully in elections and community dialogue.

Fourth, given Lesotho's long history of political conflict, the country must institutionalise dialogue across party lines. Platforms such as the Council of State can mediate disagreements early, reduce polarisation, and promote cooperative governance. Stability is not achieved by silencing dissent; it is fostered by establishing credible channels for peaceful disagreement management.

Finally, the Act's emphasis on natural resources as the property of the Basotho nation opens the door for reforming resource governance. Institutions like the Mining Authority must prioritise transparency, accountability, and sustainable de-

velopment, ensuring that revenues from extraction are tracked, audited, and distributed in ways that benefit the public, especially communities enduring the direct social and environmental costs of extraction.

The enactment of Act No. 2 of 2025 presents Basotho with a renewed opportunity to engage in the country's political life, not only on election day but throughout the policy cycle. The Act broadens the political space for inclusivity; citizens should respond by enhancing civic engagement: registering to vote, joining political parties or community platforms as appropriate, and participating in community dialogues that keep reforms aligned with genuine public priorities.

The new accountability mechanisms also require public utilisation. With clearer parliamentary oversight and impeachment procedures, citizens have stronger grounds to demand transparency and performance from their leaders. The Human Rights Commission and the Anti-Corruption Commission can become effective avenues for accountability, but only if the public engages them, reports wrongdoing, and demands follow-through.

Civil society remains a vital backbone of reform. It has long amplified marginalised voices and maintained pressure on the political class when public attention wanes. Basotho should continue to support these organisations so they can monitor implementation, educate communities, and serve as watchdogs when institutions stray from their constitutional commitments.

The recognition of multiple official languages and the Act's affirmative action provisions should be viewed as practical mandates, not mere celebratory slogans. Inclusivity must be upheld in classrooms, workplaces, courts, and public service delivery. This is how democratic consolidation becomes tangible: when every voice is not only acknowledged on paper but respected in the daily life of the nation.

So yes, Act No. 2 of 2025 is historic. But the true test lies in what happens next. As the Act transitions from theory to practice, Basotho must remain vigilant and organised, monitoring government actions, tracking enabling laws and budgets, and using social media, community meetings, and public forums to demand implementation. Reform is a journey, and progress only occurs when the people insist on it. The future is NOW!



Political parties: Lesotho's democratic lifeline – and its deepest fault line

Adv Bokang Moshoeshoe

If one were to trace Lesotho's recurring political crises to a single source, political parties would sit squarely at the centre of the map. They are the institutions through which democracy is supposed to work: citizens organise, elections are contested, governments are formed, and accountability is exercised. Yet, paradoxically, they are also the most persistent drivers of instability, constitutional breakdown, and governance paralysis in the Kingdom.

From independence to the present coalition era, Lesotho's political history reads like a cautionary tale about what happens when political parties exist without strong institutions, internal democracy, or a shared commitment to constitutional norms. Parties are indispensable to democracy – but in Lesotho, they have too often behaved as instruments of power rather than custodians of the constitutional order.

This contradiction lies at the heart of the country's democratic struggle.

Political parties emerged in Lesotho during the late colonial period as symbols of liberation and self-determination. For many Basotho, parties such as the Basutoland African Congress (later the Basotho Congress Party) and the Basotho National Party embodied hope: hope for independence, modern governance, and political inclusion. Yet even at birth, these parties carried seeds of future instability. They were organised around powerful personalities, shaped by factional rivalries, and embedded in patronage networks involving chiefs, churches, and external actors.

Ideological differences existed, but they were fragile. Over time, personality eclipsed programme. Loyalty to leaders mattered more than loyalty to institutions.

That pattern hardened after independence in 1966. The narrow electoral victory of the BNP left the political environment polarised and volatile. When the BCP won the 1970 elections, the refusal by the BNP leadership to accept defeat marked Lesotho's first major constitutional rupture. The annulment of election results and suspension of the Constitution signaled a dangerous precedent: political power would be defended at all costs, even at the expense of democracy itself.

That moment reshaped Lesotho's political culture. Parties no longer viewed the Constitution as a binding framework for competition, but as an obstacle to be manipulated or discarded when inconvenient. What followed were years of author-

itarian rule, militarisation, and violent conflict – much of it rooted in party rivalry and intolerance of opposition.

Even when the military intervened in 1986, ostensibly to end civilian authoritarianism, party politics did not disappear. It went underground, into exile, and into clandestine mobilisation. Parties survived, but they became even more personalised and organisationally weak. Leadership legitimacy flowed from individual histories rather than democratic internal structures.

The return to multiparty democracy in 1993 raised expectations of renewal. The BCP's sweeping electoral victory was hailed as a fresh start. But once again, internal party conflict proved decisive. Factionalism within the ruling party soon exploded into a split, producing the Lesotho Congress for Democracy in 1997 and triggering another cycle of instability.

That episode exposed a core structural weakness: political parties in Lesotho are often held together not by institutions, ideology, or rules, but by leaders. When leaders fall out, parties fracture – and when parties fracture, governments fall.

The violent crisis following the 1998 elections reinforced this lesson. Despite winning decisively, the LCD faced mass opposition protests, unrest, and ultimately external military intervention. Once again, party competition escalated into a national emergency, revealing the fragility of democratic institutions when political actors lack mutual trust and constitutional restraint.

In response, Lesotho undertook a major reform: the adoption of the Mixed Member Proportional electoral system in 2002. The intention was noble. By making Parliament more representative and reducing the winner-takes-all logic of elections, the system aimed to dampen conflict and stabilise democracy.

In one respect, it worked. Smaller parties gained representation, exclusion declined, and electoral violence reduced. But reforms also produced unintended consequences. The ease of forming parties, combined with proportional representation, encouraged fragmentation. New parties proliferated – many created not to advance new ideas, but to resolve leadership disputes or reposition political elites.

Coalition government became inevitable.

Since 2012, coalition politics has defined Lesotho's governance. Yet no coalition has completed a full parliamentary term. Governments have collapsed, al-

liances reshuffled, and elections called early with unsettling regularity. Coalition negotiations are frequently driven by calculations about cabinet positions rather than shared policy agendas. Trust among partners is thin. Defections are common. Governance suffers.

For ordinary Basotho, this instability has tangible consequences. Ministers rotate rapidly. Public servants face political interference. Development planning becomes uncertain. Confidence in democratic institutions erodes as politics appears disconnected from everyday needs.

The problem is not coalition government per se. In many democracies, coalitions produce stability and consensus. The problem in Lesotho is the weakness of the parties themselves. Parties lack internal democracy, clear ideological identity, and enforceable discipline. As a result, coalitions are built on sand.

The consequences extend beyond Parliament and Cabinet. Political parties have historically blurred the line between party and state. The politicisation of the civil service, security forces, and regulatory institutions has undermined professionalism and constitutional neutrality. When institutions are captured or contested along party lines, the rule of law weakens and governance becomes erratic.

This is why Lesotho's constitutional challenges cannot be solved by legal reforms alone. Laws presuppose political actors who respect them. Constitutions assume parties capable of self-restraint, compromise, and long-term thinking.

Where parties are fragmented, personalistic, and obsessed with power retention, even well-designed constitutional systems struggle to function.

Looking ahead, the patterns are unmistakable. The next general election is unlikely to produce a decisive winner. Another coalition government is almost certain. Without serious reform of party behaviour and organisation, instability is likely to continue – not as an accident, but as a predictable outcome of existing structures.

Yet this is not a story without hope.

Political parties remain essential to democracy. They can still be transformed into vehicles of stability rather than disruption. Strengthening internal party democracy, enforcing organisational discipline, clarifying coalition rules, and depoliticising state institutions would go a long way toward restoring public trust. Electoral reforms can be refined to reward cohesion rather than fragmentation. Civic education and media scrutiny can reinforce accountability.

Ultimately, the future of Lesotho's constitutional democracy depends less on rewriting laws and more on reshaping political culture. Democracy is not sustained by elections alone, but by political actors who accept limits on power, respect institutions, and place national interest above factional advantage.

Until Lesotho's political parties embrace that responsibility, they will remain what they have long been: the lifeline of democracy – and its deepest fault line.



GOVERNMENT OF LESOTHO
District Procurement Unit - Mohale's Hoek

TENDER NOTICE

Tender #: FC-26-MOA/01

District Procurement Unit Mohale's Hoek hereby invites tenders from suitably qualified and registered security companies, for provision of 24hrs **security services** in the **Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security Mohale's Hoek**, for the fiscal year **2026/2027**.

Tender documents will be obtainable at Ministry of Agriculture and food Security Mohale's Hoek, at a non-refundable fee of **M2000.00**

Work Description: Supply of security services: Ministry of Agriculture, Food Security and Nutrition- Mohale's Hoek

Bidders' qualification:

To tender for the proposed contract, bidders must be companies **WHO** have registered with **Ministry of Home Affairs and Public Safety and Parliamentary Affairs**.

The closing time and date for the receipt of tenders is **10:00hrs**, on the **17th February 2026**. Tenders will be opened on the same day at **12:05 noon** in the presence of Tenderers or their representatives.



REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS: MOKHOTLONG WASTE WATER PROJECT CONSULTANCY SERVICES

Reference: WASCO/SCM/01012026

Water and Sewerage Company (WASCO) and Government of Lesotho (GOL) invite interested and qualified entities to submit proposals for 'MOKHOTLONG WASTE WATER PROJECT – CONSULTANCY SERVICES'. Interested entities shall undertake Feasibility Study, Detailed Design and ESIA/RAP.

All interested bidders must be in possession of a proven track record and must be licensed for providing services of this nature.

All bidders must attach certified copies of Company Registration Licenses, as the proposals without these documents shall be disqualified.

Interested bidders shall download the Terms of Reference for the RFP from WASCO Website: www.wasco.co.ls

Conditions:

1. Tender is free of charge and it is a **two envelope Request for Proposal (RFP)**.
2. The price quoted in the bid must be in LSL (Lesotho Loti) and include all applicable taxes and duties.
3. The Quotes must be submitted in English.
4. Tenders received later than the mentioned deadline below and electronic tenders **shall not be accepted**.
5. Detailed tender packaging and labelling requirements in the Request for Proposal (RFP) must be adhered to.
6. Bidders (bidding company directors or individual consultant) must be WASCO services debt free throughout bidding and duration of the contract; otherwise, non-adherence shall lead to **disqualification**.
7. **Important dates:**

Action	Date
Issue RFP	3rd February 2026 @ 12:30hrs
Compulsory Prebid meeting and site visit @ WASCO Mokhotlong Office	13th February 2026 @ 10:00hrs

Final date for submission of questions via e-mail from the bidders	19th February 2026
Final distribution of questions and answers to the bidders via e-mail	20th February 2026
Final date for submission of bidder quotations in response to the RFP	3rd March 2026 @ 10:00hrs: WASCO Head Office, Technical Boardroom
Opening of the quotes	3rd March 2026 @ 10:30hrs: WASCO Head Office, Technical Boardroom

8. All tenders should be delivered and deposited in the tender box situated at **WASCO Head Office, Technical Boardroom**, not later than the stated date above. The Quotations submission address is as shown below.

WASCO Head Office
P.O. Box 42
Industrial Area, (off Moshoeshoe Road)
Maseru, Lesotho 100

Tel: +266 22262151; +266 22262130; +266 22262132

Any queries concerning this tender should be addressed to the Supply Chain Manager at this e-mail address: supplychainmanagement@wasco.co.ls
Cc. lekhotlan@wasco.co.ls All queries and questions shall be attended in writing and submitted to the bidders who purchased the document.



NATIONAL DRUG SERVICE ORGANISATION

P O Box 1167
Mafeteng 900
Lesotho
Tel: (+266) 2221 5300
Fax: (+266) 2270 1340

INVITATION TO TENDER

Tender No: NDSO/MEDAID/2026/01

Tender Name: Provision of Medical Aid Services to NDSO Employees

NDSO is the Central Medical Store for the Ministry of Health. It is mandated to **procure, store and distribute Medicines, Medical Supplies and Laboratory Consumables for the Health Institutions in Lesotho**. NDSO is legally gazette -Legal Notice Supplement No.4 to Gazette No.19 of the 2nd March 2007. NDSO invites sealed bids from eligible and qualified service providers for the Provision of Medical Aid Services to NDSO Employees.

05 March 2026
14:00 hours (Lesotho Time)

Bids must be delivered to:
The NDSO Procurement House
National Drug Service Organisation
Main South One Road
Mafeteng 900, Lesotho

Bids will be opened on **05 March 2026 at 14:30 hours** in the presence of bidders' representatives who choose to attend.

A complete set of bidding documents is available free of charge and may be downloaded from the NDSO website: www.ndso.org.ls

Alternatively, bidding documents may be obtained electronically upon request from: tenders@ndso.org.ls Tel: +266 222 15 300

Late bids shall be rejected.

NDSO reserves the right to accept or reject any or all bids without incurring any liability.



Lesotho Highlands Water Project – Phase II



ADVERTISEMENT FOR

CONTRACT 3005G1 THE GEOTECHNICAL DRILLING INVESTIGATIONS: BRIDGES AND QUARRIES

Invitation for Quotations

Khabelu Joint Venture requests Quotations from Geotechnical Contractors, for Geotechnical Investigations Drilling for Bridges and Quarries under Contract: 3005: The Design and Construction Supervision of Feeder Roads and Bridges. The Scope of Permanent Works includes five (5), 3m wide Pedestrian Bridges and six (6), 10m wide Vehicle Bridges. The lengths of the Pedestrian Bridges range from 200m to 700m, and the Vehicle Bridge lengths range from 30m to 432m.

From **05 February 2026**, the Request for Proposals will be available on request for free using the email address: procurement@pemahn.com, the same email address to be used to request the banking details for a non-refundable fee of **M1000.00** for physical collection of the RFP.

Quotations, in sealed envelopes, labelled "QUOTATION FOR C3005G1 THE GEOTECHNICAL DRILLING INVESTIGATIONS BRIDGES AND QUARRIES FOR CONTRACT LHDA No. 3005: DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION SUPERVISION OF FEEDER ROADS AND BRIDGES" and the name of the firm quoting should be hand delivered to:

Khabelu Joint Venture,
No. 6 Manong Road,
Hills View, Maseru, Lesotho.

The meeting place for clarifications will be at the Polihali Operations Branch, Tlokoeng, Mokhotlong, followed by compulsory site visits on 18 and 19 February 2026 at 09H00.

The quotations shall be submitted not later than the closing time: QUOTATIONS CLOSE THURSDAY **05 MARCH 2026 AT 11H00**. Original quotes must be delivered before or on the date of this deadline.

Technical and Procurement Queries:

E-mail: procurement@pemahn.com with subject heading "C3005G1 Geotechnical Investigations for Bridges and Quarries".



Job Detail

Job Type Classification

Permanent

Job Title

Promoter

Reporting to

Manager: Sales Operations

Department

Sales

Site

Premier Lesotho Bakery

How to Apply

Interested candidates are encouraged to apply through our email:
hr.lesotho@premierfmcc.com
 Documents should be sent together (Application, CV, and qualifications) on one email.

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REQUEST FOR EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST

(Individual Consultants: PROJECT ACCOUNTANT)

LESOTHO

GAFSP

Assignment title: Recruitment of Project Accountant

Reference no. : LSO-200002563-0069-NP

The Ministry of Agriculture, Food Security and Nutrition under the SADP II Project has received the grant from the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) that is financed by contribution from Global Agriculture and Food Security Program (GAFSP). It intends to apply part of the proceeds for the recruitment of consulting services provided by an individual consultant who will serve as a Project Accountant.

The use of any IFAD financing shall be subject to IFAD's approval, pursuant to the terms and conditions of the financing agreement, as well as IFAD's rules, policies, and procedures. IFAD and its officials, agents and employees shall be held harmless from and against all suits, proceedings, claims, demands, losses, and liability of any kind or nature brought by any party in connection with GAFSP.

The consulting services ("the services") include the engagement of a Project Accountant for 12 months

This request for expressions of interest (REOI) follows the general procurement notice that appeared on the IFAD website on 26th March 2024, on UNDB on 26th March 2024 and on Lesotho local newspapers on 26th March 2024.

The attention of interested consultants is drawn to IFAD's Anti-Money Laundering and Countering the Financing of Terrorism Policy and the Revised IFAD Policy on Preventing Fraud and Corruption its Activities and Operations. The latter sets forth IFAD's provisions on prohibited practices. IFAD further strives to ensure a safe working environment free of harassment, including sexual harassment, and free of sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) in its activities and operations as detailed in its IFAD Policy to Preventing and Responding to Sexual Harassment, Sexual Exploitation and Abuse.

Interested consultants shall not have any actual, potential or reasonably perceived conflict of interest. Consultants with an actual, potential or reasonably perceived conflict of interest shall be disqualified unless otherwise explicitly approved by the Fund. Consultants are considered to have a conflict of interest if they a) have a relationship that provides them with undue or undisclosed information about or influence over the selection process and the execution of the contract, or b) have a business or family relationship with a member of the client's board of directors or its personnel, the Fund or its personnel, or any other individual that was, has been or might reasonably be directly or indirectly involved in any part of (i) the preparation of the REOI, (ii) the selection process for this procurement, or (iii) execution of the contract. Consultants have an ongoing obligation to disclose any situation of actual, potential or reasonably perceived conflict of interest during preparation of the REOI, the selection process or the contract execution. Failure to properly disclose any of said situations may lead to appropriate actions, including the disqualification of the consultant, the termination of the contract and any other as appropriate under the IFAD Policy on Preventing Fraud and Corruption in its Projects and Operations.

The Ministry of Agriculture Food Security and Nutrition Lesotho under SADP II Project now invites eligible individual consultants ("consultants") to indicate their interest in providing the services. Interested consultants should provide information demonstrating that they have the required qualifications and relevant experience to perform the services in the form of a curriculum vitae (CV). A consultant will be selected in accordance with the individual consultant selection (ICS) method set out in IFAD's Project Procurement Handbook that can be accessed via the IFAD website at www.ifad.org/project-procurement. Interviews will be conducted as part of the selection process.

The shortlisting criteria are: Qualifications, Specific and General experience as stipulated in the TORs.

TERMS OF REFERENCES

POSITION/ASSIGNMENT: Project Accountant

REPORTING TO: Financial Management Specialist

DUTY STATION: Maseru

1. BACKGROUND OF THE ASSIGNMENT

The Government of Lesotho is implementing the Smallholder Agricultural Development Project (SADP) 2 with financial support from the World Bank, Government of Japan

The policy is accessible at <https://www.ifad.org/en/document-detail/asset/41942012>

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Chris Theko

As 2026 unfolds, one thing is certain: Lesotho's music industry is entering a defining moment. With increased visibility, stronger production quality and a growing appetite for local sound, the year presents fresh opportunities for emerging talent to step into the spotlight.

While established names such as Ntate Stunna, Sannere, Citizen LS, Juvy, Morena Sway, Omali Themba, Wave Ryder, Phoka Ea Boroa and Litšepe continue to dominate charts and stages, a new generation of artists is steadily positioning itself to challenge the status quo.

These artists are not only refining their sound but are also pushing creative boundaries, experimenting with genre, identity and storytelling. Below are some of the artists worth keeping an eye on in 2026:

Killer Joy

Killer Joy is fast becoming a standout name within the Sotho Hop and Afro-influenced soundscape. His latest single, 'Ke Busy', has been running on social media, in particular TikTok. With his energetic performances and catchy production, the artist has built momentum that could translate into a breakthrough year.

Qhomane

He has been making rounds for a couple of months now since signing under Crystal Group under the management of Pius Kebise. Now under the same management as Litšepe, Qhobane is building his own path as an artist to look out for. His driven style of music and thoughtful lyricism, Qhomane blends Afro-inspired hip hop with Sotho hop elements. His work resonates with listeners who value storytelling and depth, marking him as a strong contender for wider recognition.

Lisa M

Lisa M brings a refreshing, feminine voice to the industry. Her smooth vocals and genre-fluid approach, moving between Afro-pop and R&B, position her well for radio success and cross-border collaborations. Her sound, production and lyrical skills, coupled with a smooth voice, make her one of the standout artists to have an eye on in 2026.

Nickson Thabane

Recently released The Alpha Renaissance Tape 2 in late 2025. Nickson Thabane's sound reflects a balance between rhythm and lyrical delivery. He is definitely one of the few artists in Lesotho who have the ability to rap and sing very clearly. Drawing his inspiration from the likes of Areece, Nasty C and Kendrick, you can clearly get the influences in his music while maintaining a local identity. The artist is steadily building a loyal audience and growing presence on live stages and online platforms.

Emchurch

With heartfelt bars and melodic flows, Emchurch represents a new wave of hip hop artists with swag and lyricism.

Artists to look out for in 2026



while focused on authenticity. His music speaks to everyday experiences, making it relatable and grounded, while still commercially viable. 2026 looks like a year where the Qoaling rapper comes for everything.

Kay Matete

She was signed in late 2025 to Metšoaka Group, a record label and management group founded by Sannere. She was also the lead vocalist for the live band 'Black Note', which she has since left to pursue a solo career. Kay Matete's appeal lies in simplicity and relatability. With accessible melodies and memorable hooks, the artist is carving a space within the Afro-pop and RnBlane that continues to gain traction among younger and older audiences alike.

Malichelete

Cure in the United States, Malichelete stands out for a distinct vocal tone and willingness to experiment across genres. Whether delivering upbeat tracks or introspective songs, the artist shows versatility and creative confidence. She has been bubbling under as a promising soul and RnB, rightfully the queen of Sotho RnB at the moment with songs like Most Wanted.

As the year progresses, these artists could very well define the next chapter of Lesotho's music evolution. Their growth will not only test the dominance of established acts but also reflect the industry's readiness to embrace new voices, sounds and stories.



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Roads Directorate charts bold reform path

- Tightens safety partnership with police
- New strategy targets better roads, stronger institutions and safer highways

Seabata Mahao & Mamello Rakotsoane

The Roads Directorate has reaffirmed its commitment to upgrading Lesotho's national road network and strengthening road safety, as it consults stakeholders on a new five-year strategic plan and deepens cooperation with the Lesotho Mounted Police Service (LMPS).

At a stakeholder consultation meeting held this week at Lancers Inn, the directorate unveiled its draft 2026-2031 strategy, which prioritises stronger legal and policy frameworks, improved operational efficiency and enhanced staff capacity.

The plan aims to improve 80 percent of the road network to good and fair condition by 2031, strengthen technical project execution by 80 percent, and boost environmental and socio-economic sustainability.

Speaking at the meeting, Roads Directorate Director General Tebogo Mokhoane said the current strategic plan (2022-2026), which includes a one-year extension, was an outcome-based strategy anchored on four perspectives: stakeholder, financial, internal business processes and people.

Under the stakeholder perspective, Mokhoane said the directorate had completed more than 200 kilometres of paved roads across the country, including the Mpit-Sehlabathebe, Marakabei-Monontsa, Moshoeshoe I, Koffi Annan, Masianokeng-St Michaels-Roma and 'Malesaoana-Botha-Botho roads.

"We now have more than 1 600 functional streetlights in Maseru CBD, Mafeteng township, Motsekuoa, Thaba-Tsaka, Teyateyaneng and Botha-Botho," Mokhoane said.

He added that the directorate introduced an emergency response programme using a force account system, re-gravelled more than 250 kilometres of gravel roads, rebuilt bridges across the Tsoaing, Koro-Koro and Lijabatho rivers, including Ha Jimisi, completed the Road Reserve Roll-out Pro-



The Director General of Roads Directorate, Tebogo Mokhoane

gramme and constructed over 30 rural footbridges.

According to Mokhoane, more than 150 contracts for consulting services, construction, rehabilitation and maintenance have been awarded, with a combined value exceeding M4 billion.

On the financial front, he said the directorate's capital budget had improved significantly over the past three years, rising from M300 million to M1.7 billion from government funding, and from M110 million to M300 million from the Road Fund. In addition, the directorate secured USD120 million (about M1.9 billion) in International Development Association financing for the upgrading of the Thaba-Tse-

ka-Katse Road and the Moshoeshoe I International Airport runway and ground lighting.

From an internal business process perspective, Mokhoane said several policies and strategies were reviewed and approved by the board to strengthen governance and operational efficiency. On the people perspective, the directorate implemented a Performance Management System, strengthened capacity building, enforced discipline and compliance, attracted skilled personnel and introduced a Graduate Development Programme, particularly in Civil Engineering.

"We also completed organisational and salary restructuring and, most importantly, rebranded our institution," he said. "While we have recorded notable successes under the current strategy, which concludes at the end of this financial year, challenges remain, including delayed payments to consultants and contractors and some implementation gaps."

Mokhoane said the new strategic plan introduces measurable objectives across six strategic areas, including revenue diversification and streamlined procurement. "We will leverage technology and performance management systems to ensure the strategy is not only visionary but practical and implementable. The Roads Directorate is the custodian of 5 919.14 kilometres of the national road network," he said.

He explained that of this network, 1 992.48 kilometres are paved, 2 813.7 kilometres are gravel, while more than 1 000 kilometres remain earth roads and tracks.

"These roads are not merely lines on a map. They connect districts, urban centres and border posts, facilitate trade and sustain our economy. Roads are critical enablers of socio-economic development, regional integration and national resilience," Mokhoane said.

He noted that the 2026-2031 strategy responds to challenges such as ageing infrastructure, cli-

mate-related disruptions and limited budgets, and aligns with the Extended National Strategic Development Plan II, the SADC Protocol on Transport and Meteorology, and the African Union Agenda 2063, while also supporting Sustainable Development Goal 9 on resilient infrastructure.

However, he cautioned that the Lesotho Road Management System indicates the country requires about M3 billion per year over the next decade to restore and preserve the road network.

Also addressing the meeting, Roads Directorate's Monitoring and Evaluation Specialist Moeketsi Matia said the consultations were intended to shape the implementation phase by aligning priorities with national development objectives and sectoral goals.

"We wanted to clarify expectations for the next five years, validate priorities, align the strategy with stakeholder expectations and strengthen cross-functional collaboration," Matia said.

One of the participants, Thesele Mokoma from Pemahn Consulting, welcomed the consultation but stressed that effective implementation would be crucial. "This was a good initiative because it brought together many stakeholders, but without strong enforcement mechanisms, implementation will remain a challenge," Mokoma said. "Such meetings should be held regularly to allow stakeholders to provide input and to review achievements and challenges. There must also be a clear communication strategy." He further emphasised the importance of maintenance programmes, warning that neglecting maintenance leads to higher long-term costs, and noted that the Roads Directorate Act of 2010 mandates the directorate to build capacity among local contractors.

In a related development, the Roads Directorate and the Lesotho Mounted Police Service (LMPS) have signed a Memorandum of Understanding aimed at strengthening cooperation on key issues affecting the country's road network.

The Commissioner of Police Advocate Borotho Matsoso welcomed the initiative, emphasising the need for policy reviews, stronger enforcement and public education.

He said the partnership marks a significant advancement in efforts to enhance road safety and infrastructure management, laying the groundwork for coordinated action, better information sharing and a stronger culture of accountability among road users.

On his part, Mokhoane described the partnership as a significant step towards improving road safety, pointing to challenges such as vandalism, reckless driving and encroachment of road reserves.

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Log-leaders Lijabatho face Linare as VPL title race heats up

Seabata Mahao

League leaders Lijabatho FC will this weekend lock horns with northern giants Linare FC in Mafopo, a clash that could prove decisive in shaping the Vodacom Premier League (VPL) title race as the season edges closer to its climax.

Lijabatho currently sit proudly at the top of the log with 38 points from 17 matches, while Linare occupy eighth position on 26 points. With second-placed Lifofane FC breathing down their necks on 35 points, Lijabatho know that anything less than victory could narrow their three-point cushion at the summit.

The leaders head into the encounter full of confidence after a commanding 4-0 demolition of Maroala FC on Sunday. Lijabatho asserted their authority early, netting all four goals in the first half. Mpho Teele opened the scoring, Jane Thabantšo followed suit, and Tlotlo Phatsisi wrapped up the rout with a clinical brace.

The victory underlined Lijabatho's credentials as genuine title favourites. They have now scored 35 goals and conceded just eight, boasting the league's best defensive record. In contrast, Maroala remain 15th with only 10 points and face a growing relegation threat after conceding 25 goals this season.

Maroala coach Mothobi Molebatsi pointed to defensive lapses as the cause of the heavy defeat but insisted his side is not yet doomed. Lijabatho mentor James Madidilane, meanwhile, praised his players' discipline and tactical flexibility, say-

ing the match was an opportunity to demonstrate the quality gap between his side and relegation-threatened opponents.

While attention turns to the summit battle, the race for places in the upper half of the table intensified on Sunday when Matlama FC edged rivals Bantu FC 2-1 in a fiercely contested second-round encounter.

Bantu entered the match in fifth position with 31 points, one ahead of seventh-placed Matlama. The win saw Matlama close the gap and revive their ambitions of finishing among the league's top contenders.

The game began at a brisk pace, and Matlama drew first blood after a costly error by Bantu goalkeeper Lehlohonolo Motšoari, who inadvertently deflected TšeleRankhasa's effort into his own net.

Bantu responded positively and were rewarded through MotseKhiba, affectionately known as Lazolajokojokwane, who produced a moment of brilliance by weaving past three defenders before beating LelumaMofoka to level matters.

However, Matlama regained the lead when MorapeliLesoetsa's shot took another deflection into the Bantu net, a blow from which Bantu could not recover despite creating chances late on.

After the match, Bantu coach Motheo Mohapi conceded that tactical mistakes cost his side, admitting they spent too much time defending deep and allowed Matlama to dictate play. He also explained the substitution of Tšeliso Botsane short-



Lijabatho players in action

ly after his introduction, saying it was to avoid the risk of a red card as the player was already on a yellow.

Mohapi remained optimistic about new striker Sekola, a former Free State Stars top scorer, believing he will sharpen Bantu's attack once fully settled.

Matlama coach Thabile Secker lauded his players for executing their training plans, highlighting attacking movement and motivation as key factors behind the victory. Matlama will next face Limkokwing University FC at Bambatha Sports Arena, while Bantu are set for a tough outing against LDF FC at the same venue.

Elsewhere, Majantja claimed a vital 1-0 win over LMPS on Saturday to strengthen their push for a top-three finish. The decisive goal came late when Tšepo Komecapitalised on a defensive lapse to score from close range. Majantja assistant coach MotoloMakepe praised his players' composure despite difficult pitch conditions, while LMPS interim coach Itumeleng Galeboe lamented the late strike that left his side no time to respond.

At the top end of the table, Lijabatho lead with 38 points, followed by Lifofane on 35, while LDF FC and Lioli FC are locked together on 32 points, a clear indication of how finely balanced the title race has become.

before moving into the knockout stages.

The individual events will be played on a straight knockout basis. Teams may also receive assistance with travel or accommodation costs after the close of entries.

Badminton squad for All Africa Senior Championships unveiled



Mamello Rakotsoane

Lesotho has named a 10-player national badminton team for the 2026 All Africa Senior Badminton Championships, scheduled for February 9 to 15 in Gaborone, Botswana.

The Lesotho Badminton Association (LESBAD) announced a balanced squad that blends experienced players with emerging talent in a recent press statement.

"This team shows the best of our country's skill and hard work," LESBAD Secretary General Moorosi Tsiane said.

He indicated that the selection reflects the association's broader goal of growing and advancing the sport in the country.

The team will be led by head coach Nyakallo Seboka. The squad is set to depart Lesotho tonight (February 6) and arrive in Botswana on Saturday. After a rest day on Sunday, competition will begin on Monday.

Lesotho will compete in singles, doubles and mixed doubles events. The squad comprises six men and four women, underlining the country's growing depth in the sport.

The selected players are:

Men: Mokhali Maleke, Neo Rahlolo, Katleho Mohapi, Limpho Matlosa, Neo Tsokelo, Rethabile Sehole.

Women: Lerato Matlosa, Thato Talejane, Kelumetse Moeletsi, Kahliso Khetheng.

Botswana will host the continent's top badminton players at the Royal Aria in Tlokweng, Gaborone. The championships will feature both team events, the Thomas and Uber Cups Africa Qualifiers, and individual competitions.

All five individual events will be contested: men's singles, women's singles, men's doubles, women's doubles and mixed doubles. Points earned at the tournament can contribute to BWF World Rankings, provided all regulations are met.

The Botswana Badminton Association has confirmed that preparations for the event are complete, adding that the championships will further enhance the country's profile as a destination for major sporting events in Africa.

A team managers' meeting is scheduled for Sunday, February 8, at 17:00 at the venue, where



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Marathon deadline extended amid surging demand

Seabata Mahao

The organisers of the annual Nedbank Maseru City Run have extended the registration deadline to February 20, 2026, in response to a surge in athlete interest ahead of this year's race, scheduled for February 22.

Speaking in an interview with the organisers Eventful Moments, they confirmed that over 2 936 runners have registered so far, with two weeks still remaining before entries close. Now in its fourth year, this year's figures have already dwarfed the 2025 numbers, where about 1400 athletes participated.

International participation has also risen significantly. Of the total registrations, 348 athletes are from outside Lesotho, representing South Africa, Pakistan, Namibia, Botswana and Zimbabwe.

The organisers said the increasing foreign presence reflects the race's strengthening regional profile and its

emergence as a preferred destination for road running enthusiasts beyond the country's borders.

The elite and professional field continues to grow, with 35 professional runners confirmed to date. Adding further prestige to the event, Her Majesty the Queen and Prince Lerotholi have once again confirmed their participation, this time in the 21-kilometre half marathon, while Speaker of the National Assembly, Tlohang Sekhamane, has registered for the 10km race.

The organisers said the involvement of high-profile figures continues to generate public interest and contributes to rising registration numbers.

The event's growth in athlete participation has been matched by strong corporate backing. The 2026 edition is headlined by Nedbank Lesotho as title sponsor, supported by Maseru Toyota, Maluti Mountain Cement, Stanlib Leso-

tho and NBC, listed in order of sponsorship value.

In total, 27 sponsors have been secured, with 21 of them coming on board as trade sponsors, signaling increased confidence from the corporate sector.

According to the organisers, preparations are on track, with adequate logistical arrangements already in place. They confirmed that water stations have been positioned at approved intervals of approximately three kilometres across all routes, in line with race standards.

One of the major milestones for this year's event followed the successful World Athletics route measurement and certification exercise conducted in Maseru in October.

As a result, the 42.2km marathon is now an official Comrades Marathon and Two Oceans Marathon qualifier, elevating the Maseru City Run into the ranks of internationally recognised races.

Organisers are also pursuing inclusion of the event on the World Athletics annual calendar, a move expected to further boost international participation, with a long-term target of attracting at least 400 foreign runners in future editions.

Despite the positive momentum, organisers acknowledged challenges, particularly late entry fee payments, with many runners traditionally registering at the last minute. However, they expressed confidence that the extended deadline to February 20, 2026, for no-pack registration will help accommodate demand while ensuring a smooth race-day experience.

With numbers rising, sponsors on board and international recognition growing, the 2026 Nedbank Maseru City Run is shaping up to be one of the most competitive and high-profile editions in the event's history.



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