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News
'Up to 40,000 jobs at risk'
Page 3

News
Labour dispute threatens integrity of social protection data
Page 6

M3.49 BILLION UNACCOUNTED FOR IN 2023 AUDIT REPORT



...Auditor General delivers an "Adverse Opinion" on the nation's Consolidated Financial Statements, the worst possible verdict.

Page 2



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M3.49 billion unaccounted for in 2023 audit report

...Auditor General delivers an "Adverse Opinion" on the nation's Consolidated Financial Statements, the worst possible verdict.

Staff Reporter

An audit report tabled in Parliament yesterday reveals that the government cannot account for a staggering M3.49 billion discrepancy in its cash balances.

The report, tabled in the Parliament of Lesotho on Thursday, delivers an "Adverse Opinion" on the nation's Consolidated Financial Statements, the worst possible verdict.

It was submitted to Finance and Development Planning Minister Dr Retšelisitsoe Matlanyane on May 9, 2025, but was only tabled in Parliament yesterday – a delay of more than 10 months.

"I submit my report on the Consolidated Financial Statements of the Government of Lesotho for the year ended 31st March 2023 in accordance with Section 117 (4) of the Constitution of Lesotho, and Section 27 of the Audit Act, 2016," Auditor General, 'Mathabo Makenete, wrote in May last year.

"Please arrange to lay the report before each House of Parliament in terms of the above Sections of the Constitution and the Act," Makenete added.

Before it was audited in August last year, Section 117(4) of the Constitution stated: "The Auditor-General shall submit every report made by him to the Minister for the time being responsible for finance who shall, not later than seven days after each House of Parliament first meets after he has received the report, lay it before that House."

The report found that the government's financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2023 "do not present fairly the financial position of the Government"

In the audit certificate, the Office of the Auditor-General stated that the financial statements failed to meet the requirements of the International Public Sector Accounting Standards (Cash Basis IPSAS).

"Because of the significance of the matters discussed in the Basis for Adverse Opinion paragraphs, the accompanying Consolidated Financial Statements (CFS) do not present fairly the financial position of the Government as at 31st March 2023, its financial performance and cash flows for the year then ended," the report states.

Among the most striking findings was a M3.49 billion discrepancy in the government's reported cash balances.

The consolidated statement of cash receipts and payments indicated that the government had M5.71 billion in cash as of 31 March 2023. However, supporting notes reflected a significantly lower figure.

"The Consolidated Statement of Cash Receipts and Payments showed that the Government had a cash balance of M5.71 billion... whereas Note 15 showed a total cash



balance of M2.22 billion, thus resulting in a discrepancy of M3.49 billion between the two balances," the report states.

The report repeatedly notes that issues flagged in previous years remain unresolved. Appendix 1 details how the M3.49 billion discrepancy is actually an improvement from previous years, the 2021/22 report flagged a M5.3 billion difference, and 2020/21 showed M6.16 billion.

Further inconsistencies were identified in the government's reported decline in cash balances. While the notes suggested a decrease of M1.61 billion, the consolidated statement reflected a drop of only M597 million.

"Note 15... revealed a cash decrease of M1.61 billion... whereas the Consolidated Statement of Cash Receipts and Payments reflected a cash decrease of M597 million, thus a discrepancy of M1.01 billion," the Auditor General noted.

Unsupported liabilities and debt discrepancies

The audit also found that some financial figures could not be substantiated.

For example, the government reported M237.94 million in external liabilities related to debt assumed after the termination of a public-private partnership with Netcare.

However, auditors found no supporting evidence.

"The opening balance of external liabilities owed to commercial banks was adjusted and restated as new borrowing of M237.94 million... However, there was no evidence to substantiate this," the report says.

Loan guarantee records also raised

questions.

"The closing balance of guaranteed loans of M48.78 million did not have details that supported the movement of principal and interest repayments for loan guarantees," the report notes.

Foreign debt repayments overstated

The Auditor General further found discrepancies in the repayment of foreign debt.

While official statements recorded payments of M916.31 million, the actual cash paid was significantly lower.

"Cash paid amounted to M784.87 million, resulting in the overstatement of payments by M131.44 million," the report states.

Auditors also warned that the balance of domestic debt could not be relied upon because previous errors had not been corrected.

"The balance of domestic debt is unreliable, as the prior year balances... has not been corrected for the effect of net basis preparation as against that of gross basis."

Government assets poorly managed

The audit raised serious concerns about the management of government assets, noting the absence of a proper asset register.

Despite the creation of an asset management function within the relevant ministry, basic accountability measures were still lacking.

"It failed to maintain a register of Government assets. There was no asset management plan and performance report," the report says.

Auditors also found that equipment worth M9.9 million purchased for the AUSC Region

5 Youth Games hosted by Lesotho in 2020 was never recorded in the asset register of the Ministry of Gender, Youth, Sports and Recreation.

Completed infrastructure lying idle

The report also flagged inefficiencies in public infrastructure spending.

A health care centre built for the Lesotho Correctional Services (LCS) remained unused years after completion.

"The Health Care Centre at the Lesotho Correctional Services, which was fully completed and furnished in 2020, remained non-operational as at the time of the audit in December 2024 despite being fully equipped."

Conflicting revenue and expenditure figures

Auditors also identified inconsistencies across different government financial reporting systems.

The consolidated financial statements recorded M16.75 billion in revenue, but the totals differed across ministries' reports and the government's financial management system.

"The CFS reflected total collection of M16.75 billion whereas ministries' financial statements totalled M16.74 billion, and the IFMIS ledger had a total figure of M16.66 billion."

The report further found that expenditure figures for eight ministries in the IFMIS system were M140 million lower than those reflected in the consolidated statements.

Missing litigation records

Another concern was the disappearance of legal liabilities previously disclosed in government accounts.

Fourteen court cases worth M51.35 million that appeared in the 2021/22 financial statements of several ministries and the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) were no longer reflected in the following year's reports.

"The movements had no supporting evidence," the report states.

Minister responsible for financial reporting

Under the Public Financial Management and Accountability Act, the Minister of Finance is responsible for preparing the government's consolidated financial statements and ensuring they comply with international accounting standards.

The Auditor General emphasised that the role of the audit is to provide independent scrutiny as required under the Constitution.

The Constitution requires the Auditor General "to audit and report on these Statements," the report notes, adding that reasonable assurance does not guarantee that all misstatements will be detected but is intended to identify material errors that could influence economic decisions.

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Staff Reporter

The textile sector in Lesotho is facing a deepening crisis after steep tariffs imposed by the United States triggered factory closures, mass layoffs and widespread economic distress among garment workers, according to the Business and Human Rights Resource Centre (BHRRC).

BHRRC is an international non-profit NGO headquartered in the United Kingdom, with offices in places like New York, Berlin, and Bogotá.

Founded in 2002, it is one of the world's leading independent sources on corporate human rights impacts. It tracks allegations of abuse and positive practices involving over 10,000 companies across more than 180 countries.

It maintains what it describes as the most comprehensive public database of its kind.

In an analysis titled "US tariffs trigger gendered supply chain shock on Lesotho garment industries," the organisation said the tariffs introduced by Donald Trump in April 2025 as part of a "reciprocal" trade policy have produced a "serious human cost" for workers in Lesotho's largest private sector industry.

"The US imposition of steep tariffs on imports from Lesotho... has triggered a severe crisis for Lesotho garment workers — devastating the mountain kingdom's textile sector, its largest private employer and a lifeline for tens of thousands of women," the centre said.

The tariffs were initially set at 50 percent, the highest globally at the time, before negotiations reduced them to 15

percent. However, the centre said the rate still remains higher than the 10 percent tariffs faced by textile producers in Kenya, Eswatini and Ethiopia.

"Even after negotiations reduced the rate to 15 per cent... buyer uncertainty, order cancellations and hesitation over AGOA's future led to widespread disruptions," the organisation said.

The uncertainty surrounding the future of the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA), which expired in September before being extended by only one year to 2026, has further worsened the situation.

The centre said factories have closed, downsized or moved operations to other countries with lower tariffs, leaving thousands of workers without income or prospects.

"The wave of closures has left Lesotho garment workers with little recourse and no safety net," the report stated.

Among the hardest hit factories is Ever Unison Garments, which previously em-

ployed more than 2,000 workers but has reopened with only about 200 employees while shifting production to Kenya and Eswatini.

Other closures have also wiped out thousands of jobs. Tai Yuan Garments closed, affecting about 1,500 workers, while TZICC Clothing Manufacturers shut down, leaving 700 workers without jobs.

Precious Garments, which employed about 4,000 workers producing for global brands including Reebok, Mayor and Fish, has also laid off all its workers amid buyer reluctance linked to the short-term AGOA renewal.

The organisation said the impact has been particularly severe for women workers.

"For women workers, the fallout is particularly acute, as retrenched workers queue daily at factory gates from 7 am, hoping for sporadic shifts while some turn to informal jobs like laundry or street vending," the report said.

It added that the job losses are pushing

households into distress.

"Some workers are struggling to pay for food, school fees, housing or basics, worsening food insecurity and increasing reliance on subsistence farming or remittances."

The report described the situation as a "gendered supply chain shock", noting that women face limited employment alternatives in Lesotho's largely patriarchal economy.

The Independent Democratic Union of Lesotho (IDUL), an affiliate of IndustriALL Global Union, according to the report, has warned that the situation could deteriorate further.

The union said tens of thousands of jobs are at risk, potentially up to 40,000, if the conditions persist in export-oriented garment operations.

It added that many workers are already facing reduced working hours, partial wages, in some cases as low as one-third of normal pay, as well as "no work, no pay" policies and unpaid leave.

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LHDA backed Katse Tourism Festival 2026 with over M1 million in support

Seabata Mahao

The headline sponsor of the Katse Tourism Festival 2026, the Lesotho Highlands Development Authority (LHDA), provided logistical and financial support exceeding M1 million in cash and in-kind contributions.

“The success of the Katse Tourism Festival 2026 reflects the power of partnership in unlocking tourism-driven economic opportunities. As headline sponsor, LHDA supported the festival logistically and financially to the tune of over a million maloti in cash and in-kind,” LHDA stated.

The event was made possible through the dedication of the organising committee, led by Katse Dam Action and Aid, alongside partners Jam Sessions and Leseli Tours.

“This collaboration demonstrates how tourism events can stimulate local economies while celebrating culture and community identity,” LHDA added.

Looking ahead, LHDA said it remains committed to expanding tourism opportunities across its project areas and invited more partners to support this growing platform for community-driven tourism development.

Held from Thursday, February 26 to Saturday, February 28, 2026, in the highlands

around the iconic Katse Dam, this year’s festival showed renewed energy and visible growth. It expanded beyond its traditional weekend format, drawing exceptional participation from local schools and surrounding communities.

The addition of Thursday marked steady progress, with the day dedicated primarily to school activities involving 16 primary schools. This brought vibrant colour, excitement, and a deeper sense of community ownership.

From early Thursday through Saturday night, the festival grounds buzzed with children in school uniforms, teachers guiding performances, and parents cheering. Traditional dances, poetry, choral performances, and cultural displays took centre stage as young learners showcased their talents against the stunning backdrop of the dam and mountains.

Selikane Rakuoane, Chairperson of Katse Action and Aid, highlighted the significance of the Thursday programme.

“In the beginning, we focused only on the main weekend days, but now we are seeing real expansion,” Rakuoane said. “Sixteen primary schools participated this year. That alone shows the festival is growing.”

He described the vision as long-term and acknowledged that progress was gradual but

optimistic.

“This event will eventually become what we want it to be. It takes baby steps. Growth does not happen overnight, but we are moving in the right direction,” he said.

Rakuoane stressed the need for stronger partnerships, particularly with the Lesotho Tourism Development Corporation (LTDC).

“We need the Lesotho Tourism Development Corporation and others to fully support us. If we work together, this can become one of the biggest tourism events in the country,” he added.

While Thursday and Friday featured school competitions and community activities, Saturday delivered the main attractions: performances by local and international artists, food exhibitions, sporting events, and cultural showcases.

Organisers noted challenges with Saturday attendance, often lower than Thursday and Friday.

“The festival on Saturday needs more collaborations and broader advertising. It is normally not as packed as the other days,” one organiser observed. They believe enhanced marketing and strategic tourism-sector partnerships could boost turnout significantly.

The festival also advanced economic goals, with local vendors selling traditional

food, crafts, and handmade products. Small business owners described it as a vital platform for reaching new customers and increasing income.

For LHDA, supporting the festival aligns with its 10-Year Strategy, viewing tourism as a pathway for livelihood diversification in project-affected communities. By strengthening participation in the tourism value chain, LHDA aims to deliver tangible benefits from the Lesotho Highlands Water Project.

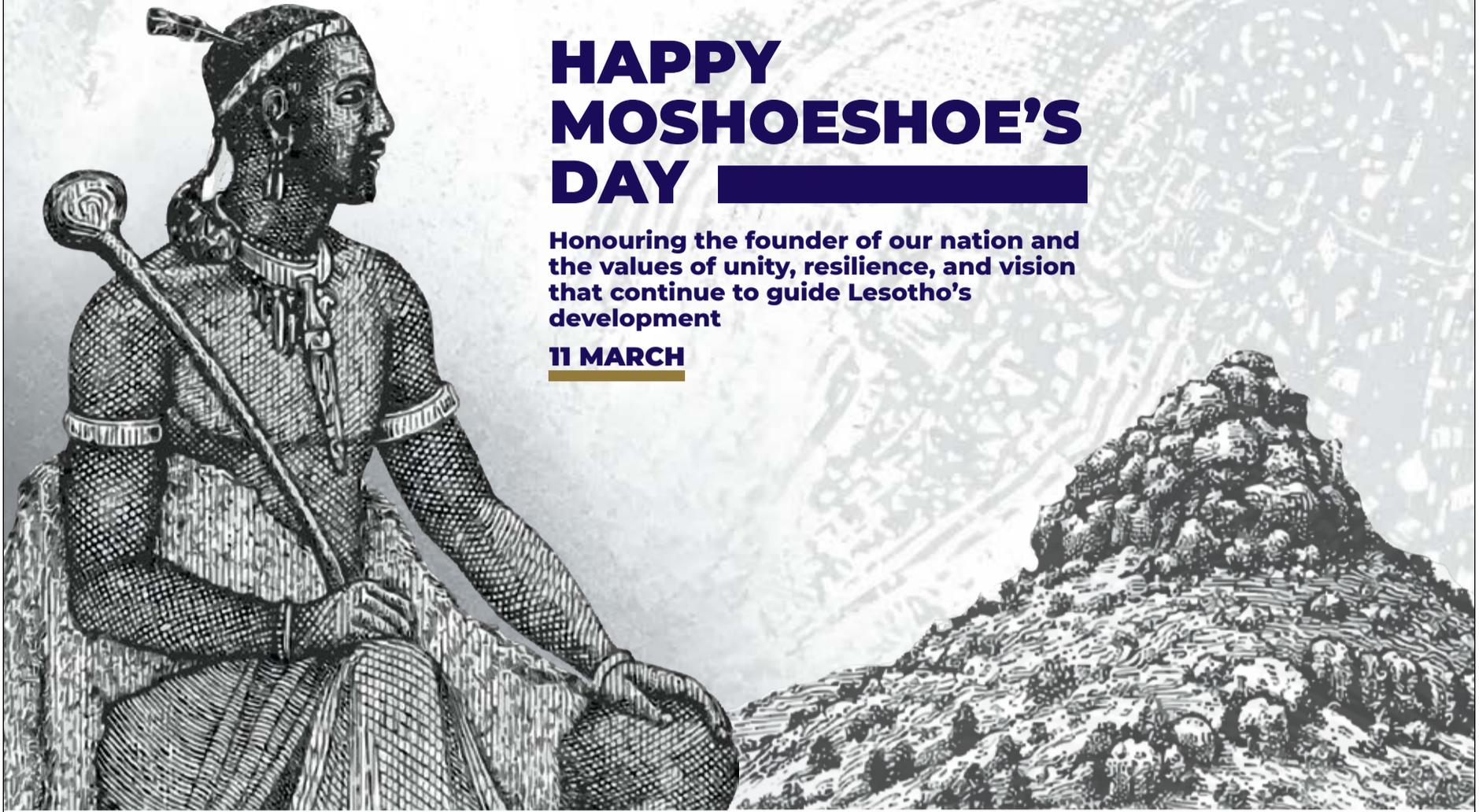
Minister of Natural Resources Mohlomi Moleko thanked LHDA for its support, noting the festival advances the objectives of the 1986 Lesotho Highlands Water Treaty between Lesotho and South Africa. The treaty emphasises infrastructure development, including dams, bridges, and hydroelectric power stations, alongside tourism promotion.

“Beyond tourism, this festival shows young people that they can earn money from their talents,” Moleko said, referencing the cash prizes.

LHDA Chief Executive Tente Tente outlined plans to create more tourist experiences across LHDA-managed sites.

“We are aiming to host such festivals more frequently throughout the year in different locations under LHDA,” he said.





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Mafeteng	4 - 5 March 2026	2	City Center Hotel
Berea	9 - 10 March 2026	2	Assumption High School, Berea
Thaba Tseka	12 - 13 March 2026	2	Motherland Guest House
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Labour dispute threatens integrity of social protection data

Staff Reporter

An ongoing National Information System for Social Assistance (NISSA) data collection exercise in eight districts is facing significant concerns over the credibility of the information being gathered after a labour dispute led to the dismissal of 26 field workers.

The conflict, involving the project consultant Transatlantic Development Limited (TDL) and its enumerators working in Thaba-Tseka district, has raised alarm over the reliability of the data that will ultimately inform social protection policies under the Ministry of Gender, Youth and Social Development.

The NISSA system is designed to help the government identify vulnerable households and allocate social assistance such as child grants and other welfare programmes. Any compromise to the integrity of this data could therefore affect the targeting of some of the country's poorest households.

In a protest over the pay dispute, workers temporarily withheld project equipment including tablets and vehicles used for field data collection in their possession, although these were later returned to the company.

The incident has sparked doubts about the security and reliability of the information stored in the devices during the standoff.

Studies have shown that any breakdown in relations between workers and project management can compromise data accuracy, whether through incomplete interviews, rushed surveys or deliberate alterations, in which case its usability would be questionable.

This publication has established that the dispute began when TDL allegedly failed to pay salaries for

field workers operating in Thaba-Tseka district by the end of February 2026, despite the workers being engaged under a three-month contract that actually began on 29 December 2025.

The workers also claimed that their contracts were due for extension but that no written communication confirming the extension was issued; one of the sticking issues they raised with their employer during the standoff.

According to the employees, the delay in salary payments triggered frustration and uncertainty among staff as they were already working in remote areas collecting household information. The workers maintain that failure of TDL to pay them on time constituted a breach of their employment contract.

"...on 25 February 2026, a memo was shared by Queeneth which informed field staff that February salary will not be paid, rather will be paid on the March 16th, therefore this violates contractual agreement with TDL in particular Clause 6.7," the workers said in a correspondence to their employer.

The workers, who preferred to speak anonymously due to fear of reprisal, said the communication provided little explanation for the delay and left them uncertain about whether they would continue working under valid contracts.

The situation eventually escalated when some workers reportedly stopped working in early March in protest over the delayed salaries and lack of contract clarity. Following the work stoppage, TDL responded by dismissing 26 out of 30 workers in Thaba Tseka.

In its communication to employees, the company argued that the workers had failed to follow the proper grievance procedures provided in their contracts.

"Your decision not to return to work following the expiration of your formal contract, your failure to follow internal grievance and dispute resolution procedures, and your undertaking of a tools down action, which is ordinarily considered a measure of last resort, clearly indicates that you are no longer interested in carrying out your duties on this assignment.

"This conduct constitutes breach of contractual agreement (Clause 5.4) and grounds for termination. Consequently, no extension of your contract will be issued, and your original contractual agreement is hereby considered terminated," TDL said.

TDL further confirmed that employees who had participated in the tools-down protest would not have their contracts extended.

"This letter serves to formally acknowledge receipt of your recent message. Further to your complaints regarding the contract variation and TDL's request to extend the contract until 31st March 2026, this is to notify you as follows formally:

- For team members whose contracts ended on 28th February 2026 and who did not report to work today following their decision to embark on a tools-down action, their contracts will not be extended beyond the stated end date.
- For Supervisors whose contracts were scheduled to end on 6th March 2026 and who did not report to work today following their decision to embark on a tools-down action, their contracts are hereby discontinued with immediate effect."

The company also indicated that any outstanding payments would depend on the completion and verification of submitted data.

"Further note that any outstanding payments due to you will be processed only upon confirmation of complete, quality-assured data submission and a satisfactory handover. The decision regarding any future contract renewal remains at the sole discretion of TDL."

The company is reported to have since hired new staff to replace the dismissed workers, although it is yet to pay their outstanding pay.

The NISSA database is one of country's most important social protection tools. Established in 2010 through collaboration between the Ministry of Social Development, the European Union and UNICEF, the system stores socio-economic data used to identify vulnerable households and coordinate assistance programmes.

The data collection exercise is being implemented in Berea, Butha-Buthe, Leribe, Maseru, Mafeteng, Mohale's Hoek, Mokhotlong and Thaba-Tseka districts.

It was initially developed to support the Child Grants Programme but has since evolved into a broader national registry used by government and development partners to plan and deliver social assistance.

Over the years, NISSA has expanded to cover hundreds of thousands of households across rural and urban councils.

The database enables authorities to determine who receives support from which programme and helps avoid duplication of benefits. It is also used during emergencies such as droughts to identify households that require urgent support.

Because of its importance, any weaknesses in the data collection process could have far-reaching consequences for social protection planning.

If inaccurate information enters the system, vulnerable households could be wrongly excluded while others may be incorrectly prioritised.

Roads upgrade boosts Maseru economy flow

Seabata Mahao

Lesotho's ongoing road infrastructure upgrades are beginning to yield tangible progress, with the Roads Directorate reporting significant advances on two key Maseru projects aimed at improving mobility, trade efficiency and access to essential services.

During a media tour on Wednesday, the Roads Directorate showcased developments on major road rehabilitation works along the A3 and A5 corridors, while also highlighting their importance in strengthening the country's transport network and enabling broader economic activity.

Journalists were taken to inspect repair and re-sealing works along the A3 road from Masianokeng to St. Michael's, including the upgraded Masianokeng intersection.

This project is estimated to be 99 percent complete, with only minor finishing works remaining before it becomes fully operational. The upgrade of the Masianokeng intersection is expected to significantly ease traffic congestion and improve road safety in the busy area, which has long experienced traffic bottlenecks and accident risks.

The media tour also assessed progress on the A5 corridor where reconstruction and rehabilitation works are currently underway on the St. Michael's to Roma road.

The Roads Directorate indicated that the project has advanced to between 70 and 76 percent completion, marking steady progress on one of the capital's important transport links.

A key component of the project is the construction of a two-kilometre loop road connecting St. Joseph's Hospital to Ha Mafefoane, which is expected to improve accessibility to healthcare facilities for communities in the Roma Valley.

Both infrastructure developments are funded through the Road Fund and form part of a broader national programme aimed at restoring and modernising Lesotho's road network to support economic growth, mobility and social services.

The reconstruction of the St. Michael's to Roma

road is valued at M140,181,315.01 and has been awarded to China Geo Engineering Corporation, with Mafube/SM Consulting Engineers Joint Venture overseeing supervision.

The project involves the comprehensive rehabilitation of an eight-kilometre stretch of road over a 15-month implementation period.

Once completed, the improved corridor is expected to strengthen connectivity between Maseru and key institutions such as the National University of Lesotho (NUL) and St. Joseph's Hospital, while also improving access for villages located across the Roma Valley.

The upgraded road is also expected to enhance the efficiency of transport between Maseru and the southern parts of the country, including the district of Qacha's Nek.

Assistant Resident Engineer Refiloe Mashea said the project places strong emphasis on improved road design and safety.

"One of the most important aspects of this reconstruction is the widening of the road, which improves both mobility and visibility for road users," Mashea said.

He added that the improvements will contribute to smoother movement of people, goods and services.

The road reconstruction includes a wide range of infrastructure upgrades designed to enhance safety and durability.

Key components of the project include widening sections of the road, constructing climbing lanes on steeper sections, installing gabion walls to prevent erosion and building concrete-lined drainage systems to manage storm water.

Additional improvements include the installation of new road markings and signage, construction of cross-drainage structures, extension of paved pedestrian walkways and the development of bus bays.

Solar-powered street lighting will also be installed along certain sections of the corridor to improve visibility and safety during night-time travel.

To ensure smooth implementation of the project,



Roads Directorate showcases progress on key Maseru road projects from Masianokeng to Roma

the Roads Directorate began stakeholder engagement consultations in January 2025 involving the contractor, the Maseru District Administrator and street vendors operating within the road reserve.

The consultations were aimed at minimising disruptions during construction while ensuring that communities affected by the works remain informed.

Authorities have cautioned that temporary traffic delays may occur while construction is ongoing, urging motorists to exercise patience and follow traffic signage placed along the affected routes.

The Roads Directorate said the ongoing projects illustrate its commitment to strengthening Lesotho's transport infrastructure as part of efforts to support the country's evolving economic needs.

NOTICE FOR LOST LEASE

NOTICE is hereby given that I intend to apply for a certified copy of a registered Title deed / lease to immovable property registered under No 13281-013 on the 12 October 1981 In favour of KHETHANG ALOYSIUS MOSOE-UNYANE in respect of every right or interest on and to the building[s] and other development express or implied in certain plot NO 13281-013 situated at STADIUM AREA MASERU URBAN AREA on plan No 13281 As held by the chief surveyor.

All persons having objection to the issue of the said copy are requested to lodge such in writing to the land registrar within three weeks from the last publication of the notice.

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4D Climate Solutions e ntse e tšoara lithupelo le lipitso libakeng tsa Leribe, Mafeteng le Mohale's Hoek, moo morero o ntseng o tsoela-pele teng. Sepheo ke ho fa sechaba le bohle ba amehang ka lintlha tse fuperoeng ke Tlhopho Bocha ena, sepheo sa eona le kamoo e tlo ama litšebeletso tsa metsi kateng mabalane.

Ho feta moo, o boetse o ntse a fetisa thuto ka mecha e fapaneng ea litaba, ho kenyeletsa:

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- Marang-rang (social media),
- Likoranta.



Dr. Tšeliso Moroke

Common Concern

How the country moves

When politics begins to resemble a cult

Isn't politics sometimes indistinguishable from a cult?

It is an uncomfortable question, but one worth asking.

In many political systems, particularly in fragile democracies, political loyalty often goes far beyond policy agreement or ideological alignment. Instead, it becomes personal devotion to a leader. Once politics reaches that stage, debate fades, scrutiny becomes betrayal, and loyalty becomes the ultimate currency.

One of the classic characteristics of cults is the creation of a defensive circle around a central figure. The leader is not merely supported; they are protected, praised, and shielded from criticism by loyal followers. The movement begins to revolve around the personality of the leader rather than the ideas or institutions that should guide public life.

We have seen examples of this in politics across the region. At one point, while serving as Youth League leader in the African National Congress Youth League, Julius Malema publicly declared that he was prepared to "kill for" and "die for" Jacob Zuma, then President of South Africa and leader of the African National Congress. The statement was dramatic, but it revealed something deeper about the nature of political loyalty: the transformation of political allegiance into personal devotion.

Such language is rarely about governance. It is about identity, belonging, and power.

Cults often demand unquestioning loyalty, and political movements sometimes slide into the

same pattern. When supporters feel compelled to defend a leader regardless of performance, accountability disappears. A leader may fail to deliver on promises, preside over poor governance, or tolerate corruption, yet the defence machinery remains intact. Every criticism is dismissed as sabotage, jealousy, or opposition propaganda.

At that moment, politics stops being about public service.

It becomes about protecting the leader.

A healthy political culture should be built around institutions, policies, and accountability. Leaders should be temporary custodians of power, not objects of devotion. Citizens should support ideas and programmes, not personalities. When political loyalty becomes blind loyalty, democracy weakens because criticism, which is the lifeblood of accountability, is treated as disloyalty.

This is where the line between politics and cult behaviour begins to blur.

In cults, members often believe the leader embodies the movement itself. To criticise the leader is therefore seen as attacking the entire organisation. The same logic frequently emerges in politics: once the leader is equated with the party, and the party equated with the nation, dissent becomes unacceptable.

But politics should never operate on that logic.

No political leader is the state. No political party is the nation.

The danger of cult-like politics is that it encourages emotional loyalty instead of rational judgment. Supporters begin to measure commitment not by the strength of ideas but by the intensity of

their defence of the leader. The louder the defence, the greater the loyalty.

Yet governance requires the opposite.

A functioning democracy requires citizens who question leaders, supporters who demand delivery, and party members who are willing to challenge their own leadership when it fails.

Without that, political organisations risk becoming echo chambers where leaders only hear praise while the country suffers the consequences of poor decisions.

Another feature of cult-like politics is the creation of a moral hierarchy within the movement. Those closest to the leader are treated as guardians of the faith. Their role is not necessarily to contribute ideas or improve governance, but to defend the leader against critics both inside and outside the organisation.

Once this dynamic takes hold, internal democracy disappears.

Members who raise legitimate concerns about governance, corruption, or poor leadership are quickly labelled enemies of the movement. Instead of debating the substance of the criticism, the response becomes personal: questioning the motives, loyalty, or patriotism of the person raising the issue.

This is precisely how cults maintain control, by turning criticism into betrayal.

Political parties are supposed to be spaces where ideas compete, policies are debated, and leadership is held accountable. But when the leader becomes untouchable, those mechanisms collapse. Party conferences, internal elections,

and policy debates become ceremonial exercises whose real purpose is to reaffirm loyalty rather than shape direction.

The leader becomes the centre of gravity around which everything else rotates.

In such an environment, performance becomes secondary to loyalty. What matters is not whether a leader is delivering on economic growth, public services, or institutional reform. What matters is whether they continue to command devotion from their supporters.

This is where politics becomes dangerous.

When loyalty replaces performance as the standard by which leaders are judged, poor governance can survive indefinitely. Supporters will rationalise failure, reinterpret reality, or blame external forces rather than confront the possibility that their leader may simply be ineffective.

This phenomenon is not unique to any one country or political party. It appears in many political systems where institutions are weak and personalities dominate the political landscape.

In smaller states especially, politics can easily become personal rather than institutional. Leaders become larger than the organisations they lead, and parties begin to resemble personal vehicles for power rather than democratic institutions.

The long-term consequences are severe.

First, it discourages capable individuals from entering politics. Many professionals, intellectuals, and technocrats avoid political life precisely because they see that success often depends more on loyalty to individuals than competence or ideas.

Second, it weakens state institutions. When loyalty to a leader becomes the primary qualification for positions of power, institutions stop functioning independently. Decisions are made not on the basis of national interest, but on the basis of protecting political authority.

Third, it creates political instability. Once politics revolves around personalities, the fall of a leader can destabilise the entire system because institutions are too weak to provide continuity.

This is why mature democracies work hard to separate leaders from institutions. Leaders come and go, but the system must remain stable and accountable.

Politics should never require anyone to "die for" a leader. That language belongs on battlefields, not in democratic politics.

In a democracy, leaders are not objects of sacrifice. They are public servants whose legitimacy depends entirely on performance and accountability.

The moment politics begins to demand devotion instead of scrutiny, we should pause and ask ourselves a serious question:

Are we strengthening democracy, or quietly building political cults?

Repositioning Lesotho's youth employment strategy through Commonwealth multilateralism

Youth unemployment in Lesotho is often attributed to the lack of job opportunities. However, studying in China has led me to realise that the underlying issue is more structural.

What I mean is that Lesotho's economy lacks sufficient tradable activities to accommodate a significant influx of first-time job seekers. Multilateralism, particularly through the Commonwealth, presents a viable mechanism for expediting structural transformation, attracting investment, and expanding sectors that generate employment.

The United Nations defines multilateralism as cooperation among three or more states within a mutually agreed framework of shared rules, norms, and institutions. This enables governments to coordinate policies and undertake collective actions on challenges that cannot be effectively addressed by individual states. In light of this definition, I propose a framework to reposition Lesotho's youth employment strategy through Commonwealth multilateralism.

A pertinent framework for addressing unemployment in Lesotho is New Structural Economics (NSE). NSE cautions against supporting unviable industries, which may lead to dependency on extensive protection and subsidies, ultimately resulting in political capture and governance challenges.

Instead, NSE endorses a "growth identification and facilitation" approach: identifying tradable goods and services that have been successfully produced for approximately 20 years in rapidly developing countries with similar resources but roughly double the per capita income, while removing barriers that prevent domestic firms from upgrading or new firms from entering the market.

This approach is particularly relevant for Lesotho as it transitions policy from vague commitments to a targeted, evidence-based pursuit of scalable industries.

Another framework I encountered in China is the "leading dragon phenomenon," which offers tangible opportunities for these targeted industries.

For instance, as wages rise in China, labor-intensive production is progressively relocating to lower-wage economies. Evidence suggests that China employs about 85 million workers in manufacturing; even a 10 percent reduction in this workforce could result in approximately 8.5 million jobs migrating overseas, potentially including Lesotho, thus facilitating the "jump-start" of industrialisation in lower-income countries.

This perspective also highlights that the primary challenges in sub-Saharan Africa, limited local entrepreneurial skills and scarce investment capital, can be mitigated through outward foreign direct investment (FDI), thereby promoting the relocation of industries within the Global South.

To effectively leverage Commonwealth multilateralism, Lesotho should strategically attract investments in job-rich light manufacturing and related services. This necessitates a comprehensive strategy.

First, the Commonwealth can assist Lesotho in enhancing its soft infrastructure to reduce trans-

action costs, including the establishment of predictable commercial regulations, transparent licensing, investor grievance mechanisms, and reliable dispute resolution processes.

Second, Lesotho can utilise Commonwealth partnerships to develop compliance capabilities such as testing, certification, and quality assurance, enabling local producers to meet buyer standards within Commonwealth-linked value chains.

Third, Lesotho can capitalise on the Commonwealth's convening power to organise investment roadshows and facilitate matchmaking with firms in upgrading economies, focusing on sectors that align with Lesotho's resource endowments, such as apparel, footwear, simple assembly, and agro-processing, while negotiating performance-based incentives tied to local hiring and training.

Moreover, multilateralism can transform "skills mobility" into a conduit for job creation. Youth unemployment is partly due to a lack of experience.

Commonwealth professional networks and scholarship/placement programs can be structured to foster brain circulation by providing short-term placements for young Basotho in higher-productivity firms abroad, with incentives for their return to contribute to domestic supplier development, entrepreneurship support, and public procurement opportunities.



Theko Tlebere



The degeneration of civic virtue and culture in Lesotho

Nkopane Mathibeli

It has become common for Africans to describe constitutional democracy as useless, ineffective and at worst, fraudulent. Increasingly, it is becoming near impossible to convince them otherwise, given the state of economic regression, social decay and political vice observable in almost all constitutional democracies on our continent. This is probably why some people jokingly say that if elections, voting and democracy were a guaranteed gateway to national development, Europeans would not have introduced them to us. This explains why many (definitely not all) celebrate the three military regimes in the Sahel, including the recent suspension of party politics in Burkina Faso.

Inasmuch as I am aware that these regimes have violated democracy's core principle by usurping power, I am unashamedly in their corner just for one reason. They represent real-time proof that developing an African country and restoring the dignity of its citizens is merely a function of will, not that it can best be done by a military regime. This is because the same is possible under a constitutional democracy, but seemingly evasive.

What then explains the lack of development in our country?

My contention is that it is not the failure of democracy. Rather, it is the degeneration of civic culture and civic virtue which in turn deprive us of the ability to harness the dividends of democracy.

How, so?

To fully appreciate this, we must first appreciate the anomaly of the system of governance that preceded democracy in Europe. For context's sake, let us specifically look at Britain because it is their version of democracy (constitutional monarchy) we inherited. This will reveal the classic goal of representative democracy. It is then from its goal that the rationale of civic culture in a democratic dispensation can be appreciated much better.

Britain before democracy

Why did the Brits formulate a constitutional monarchy as their system of governance? But before that, we must proudly note that before Basotho adopted it, they also had their indigenous system of governance, which was undeniably democratic. What was most unique about it, specifically during the reign of our founding father, was that it was overseen by a king with absolute power but not for selfish ends.

Rather, he had absolute power, as dictated by custom and monitored by the councillors of his court (parliament), to ensure that each of his subjects lived in pure bliss.

"A Constitutional democracy is in serious trouble if its citizenry does not have a certain degree of education and civic virtue"

- Phillip E. Johnson (1940 - 2019)

Consequently, under his watch, poverty and starvation were unknown to Basotho. The case was entirely different in Britain, where we inherited our current system of governance. The only similarity was that, as was the case in Lesotho, the state was headed by an absolute monarch. However, he used this power solely for the material benefit of his parliament/court (royal council), constituted of the landowning class (the nobility) and members of the clergy.

None of his subjects had rights except the right to life, so as to live in servitude of the king and his court. Also, none of them owned land, as all lived on plantation sized lands owned by the nobility. Just like slaves, these subjects were the property of the landowner and worked without payment until death. This system of governance was called feudalism and ended (unofficially) in 1649 after a seven-year-long civil war. The monarch (Charles I) was thereafter publicly executed, and Oliver Cromwell established an eight-year military dictatorship. On his death, Charles II became the monarch (1660 - 1685), followed by James II, who in his third year in power was overthrown by his son-in-law and daughter (William III & Mary II).

Key among the reasons for his overthrow were: (a) being a Catholic ruler of a largely Protestant nation and (b) his obsession with absolute monarchism. These two (William III & Mary II) accepted the Bill of Rights. They also agreed to abide by the royal prerogative under which the centuries-old "king's law" was replaced by "the rule of law". With this, the constitutional monarchy was born.

The soul of democracy

In order to fully appreciate the spirit of representative democracy, whether in the form of constitutional democracy or constitutional monarchy, it is best to see them as feudalism in reverse. This is because feudalism was a dictatorship of the few (the king and his court), whereas representative democracy is a dictatorship of the majority (the electorate).

Under feudalism, the king's court was neither elected by the subjects nor did it represent their interests, but under democracy, the subjects elect their

representatives to parliament. This reality is captured by a popular political phrase, "The people are more powerful than the people they put in power". However, this is where the seeming straightforwardness of democracy ends. The main challenge then becomes the activation of the dictatorship of the majority. Under feudalism, this was easy because the dictatorial minority (the king & his court) had a standing army through which it held the majority in check while exploiting it through forced labour. The situation is completely different in a democratic dispensation, therefore demanding a completely different approach; an approach entirely premised on civic, not military means.

This is where the conscious cultivation of a civic culture and civic virtue comes in. In essence, civic culture or the culture of being conscious of and executing civic duties, serves the purpose of countering the situation in which elected politicians become more powerful than the electorate. Logically, when the majority is civilly cultured such that it possesses the wisdom to recognise relevant pressure points through which to dictate performance targets and timeframes of execution within the constitutional framework, it has acquired civic virtue.

It is therefore obvious that the bottom line in countering the degeneration of democracy into modern-day feudalism is a concerted effort at civilly educating the majority. It therefore goes without saying that the potency of its (majority) power is determined by how much it knows about virtuous governance, legislation, development policy and the national interest, not only party politics.

In this way, democracy becomes exactly what it was formulated to be, a dictatorship of the majority, i.e. feudalism in reverse.

What happened to us?

Just like most representative democracies across Africa, Lesotho today is characterised by economic regression, social decay and political vice. All this became reality under the watch of the political class, which, in the context of a democratic dispensation, is meant to be subjected to the dictates of the electorate. However, in reality, it is the

electorate that is subjected to the political class.

Given that democracy itself is designed to rectify this anomaly, it is obviously not the fault of the political class that its masters are so weak as to become its servants. How did this anomaly come to be? There are two main ways it happened.

Firstly, through the electorate being divided on what constitutes the national interest, i.e. what are Lesotho's state goals and ambitions, whether economic, political or social. A strong nation and, by extension, a strong electorate have a collective consciousness about such issues.

Secondly, by constantly electing politicians who do not present comprehensive plans on how to pursue the national interest. Logically, this would include detailed political party blueprints not only describing the state of economic regression, social decay and political vice. They must clearly explain how these are to be reversed permanently. The answer to the question "what happened to us" is that none of these happened. The Lesotho of today is therefore an outcome of a degenerate civic culture, in which the bulk of the electorate has close to no civic virtue.

What must be done?

From the point of view of a parasitic political class, this kind of electorate is a goose that lays golden eggs and must therefore be nurtured. However, from a patriotic point of view, this is a tragedy that must be reversed. To achieve this goal, there must be a programme to ensure that Basotho as a collective possess the requisite political wisdom. The end goal of such wisdom must be to empower them to recognise relevant pressure points through which to dictate to the political class, performance targets and timeframes of execution within the constitutional framework.

The programme must seek to inform them about virtuous governance, legislation, development policy and practice. Once the electorate internalises this, it automatically ceases to be a blind follower of the political class.

Instead, it will begin to question and reject any political party whose blueprint is not aligned with the national interest. This in itself is the height of civic virtue, and its non-negotiable foundation is a solid knowledge base.

By virtue of its role in society, the civic movement is the natural dispenser of such knowledge. Given the state of our civic culture and virtue, the movement is obviously overwhelmed and needs to be strengthened on the basis of which is funding.



Specific Procurement Notice

Request for Proposals Works

(Design and Build) (Without Initial Selection)

Employer: Ministry of Natural Resources
Project: Lesotho Lowlands Water Development Project Phase-II Works (LLWDP-II)
Contract title: Design and Construction of Weir, Raw Water Intake and Pumping Station, Raw Water Transmission Main (RWTM), Water Treatment Works (WTW), Clear Water Transmission Main (CWTM) from WTP to the Command Reservoirs, Pumping Station and Command Reservoirs for Zone 6 (Mafeteng) and Zone 7 (Mohale's Hoek).
Country: Kingdom of Lesotho
Loan No. /Credit No. /Grant No.: EIB-87612
RFP No.: LLWDP/W/16
Date of First Publication: Thursday, 05th March 2026

raine@llwdp.co.ls. The document can also be downloaded at www.llwdp.co.ls and an access (passcode) to the documents will be distributed by e-mail after receiving proof of payment.

Payment Details

Locally based companies and those international companies with local representatives can pay cash at the **Department of Rural Water Supply (DRWS)**, located at Moshoeshoe Road, Industrial Area, Maseru at 29°18'02.8"S 27°28'05.0"E

Foreign companies can pay through EFT Transfer as follows:

Bank: Central Bank of Lesotho
 Account Name: Government of Lesotho
 Account Name: Main Revenue Epicor 10
 Account number: 0101403715016
 BIC: CBLELSMX
 Branch Code: 586611

Bidders are required to provide the following information on their EFT: EFT 315/Date / Org/or Company Name /Tender Title and Reference.

- The **Ministry of Natural Resources** has received financing from the European Investment Bank (EIB) toward the cost of the **Lesotho Lowlands Water Development Project Phase II Works (LLWDP II)**, and intends to apply part of the proceeds toward payments under the contract for the **Design and Construction of Weir, Raw Water Intake and Pumping Station, Raw Water Transmission Main (RWTM), Water Treatment Works (WTW), Clear Water Transmission Main (CWTM) from WTP to the Command Reservoirs, Pumping Station and Command Reservoirs for Zone 6 (Mafeteng) and Zone 7 (Mohale's Hoek)**.
- The **Ministry of Natural Resources** now invites sealed Proposals from eligible Proposers for contract no. LLWDP/W/16 for the **Design and Construction of Weir, Raw Water Intake and Pumping Station, Raw Water Transmission Main (RWTM), Water Treatment Works (WTW), Clear Water Transmission Main (CWTM) from WTP to the Command Reservoirs, Pumping Station and Command Reservoirs for Zone 6 (Mafeteng) and Zone 7 (Mohale's Hoek)**.

The Works includes:

- Weir at Makhaleng River, 130 m wide and height 4.5 m
 - Intake Works and Raw Water Pumps, 0.795 m³/sec
 - Raw Water Transmission Main (RWTM), 400 m, dia 800mm
 - Water Treatment Works (WTW), Capacity 50 MLD
 - Clear water pump stations Z6PS1, Z7PS1, Z7PS2,
 - Clear Water Transmission Main (CWTM) from Z6PS1 to Z6R12 & Z6R18 and Z7PS1 to Z7R6 & Z7R7, Z7PS2 to Z7R1. Total pipe network is 22.69 km comprising of pipe sizing from 100mm to 600mm. The pipe material shall be mild steel, internally lined and externally coated with epoxy or other approved anti-corrosive material, and provided with cathodic protection.
 - Electrical, control and instrumentation for Works components listed (b) to (e)
 - Master Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA) system for the Lesotho Lowlands water supply scheme, Zone 6 & 7,
 - Ancillary works at weir, intake, WTW and reservoir sites.
 - Among the above infrastructures, the Intake, RWTM, WTP, CWTM, pump houses, and reservoirs are mandatory components. However, the weir is optional, and its design shall be optimized by the bidder prior to implementation. The Employer will provide the available concept/preliminary information for reference only. Bidders shall develop, modify, or update the design as necessary, or propose their own design solutions, incorporating the latest technology and ensuring cost-effectiveness. Bidders are requested to include prices for all the above items in their Bill of Quantities (BOQ).
- The procurement will be conducted through international competitive procurement using Request for Proposals (RFP) as per Guide to procurement for projects financed by the EIB, 2024, and is open to all eligible Proposers.
 - Interested eligible Proposers may obtain further information from the Lesotho Lowlands Water Development Project, Procurement Office, Mr. Ronald Aine, email: raine@llwdp.co.ls, and copied to procurement@llwdp.co.ls and inspect the RFP Document during office hours between **09h00 to 16h00 hours (Lesotho time: UTC+2)** at the address given below.
 - The RFP Document, in the English language, may be purchased by eligible Proposers upon the submission of a written application to the address below and upon payment of a nonrefundable fee of **LSL 5,000 (Five Thousand Maloti only)**. The method of payment will be through EFT Transfer or direct payment into the LLWDP Bank account, which will be made available on request from the Procurement Office, Ronald Aine, email: procurement@llwdp.co.ls and copied to

- A single-stage, two-envelope RFP process will be used, and the Proposal will consist of (i) the Technical Part, without any reference to prices; and (ii) the Financial Part, as detailed in the RFP Document. The Technical and Financial Parts of the Proposals shall be submitted simultaneously in two separate sealed envelopes. These two envelopes shall be enclosed in a sealed outer envelope and clearly marked "**Proposal – Original LLWDP/W/16 for the Design and Construction of Weir, Raw Water Intake and Pumping Station, Raw Water Transmission Main (RWTM), Water Treatment Works (WTW), Clear Water Transmission Main (CWTM) from WTP to the Command Reservoirs, Pumping Station and Command Reservoirs for Zone 6 (Mafeteng) and Zone 7 (Mohale's Hoek)**".
- The Proposal, both the Technical Part and the Financial Part, must be delivered to the address below on or before **10h00 (local time: UTC+2) on Wednesday, 6th May 2026**. Electronic Proposal Submission will not be permitted. Late Proposals will be rejected. The Technical Part of the Proposals will be publicly opened in the presence of the Proposers' designated representatives and anyone who chooses to attend at the address below on **10h30 (local time: UTC+2) on Wednesday, 6th May 2026**. The Financial Part shall remain unopened and will be held in safe custody of the Employer until the second public opening of the Financial Part, following the evaluation of the Technical Part of the Proposals. A virtual opening and attendance option will be made available.
- All Proposals must be accompanied by a Proposal Security of **EUR 300,000.00 (or equivalent, in any easily convertible currency, including the local currency)**.
- All Proposals must be accompanied by a Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (SEA) and/or Sexual Harassment (SH) Declaration as well as completed and signed EIB Covenant of Integrity and EIB Environmental and Social Covenant.
- Firms originating from all countries of the world are eligible to tender for works, goods and services contracts (EIB Guide to Procurement, §1.2).
- Attention is drawn to the EIB Guide to Procurement (July 2024) requiring the Borrower to disclose information on the successful Proposer's beneficial ownership, as part of the Contract Award Notice, using the Beneficial Ownership Disclosure Form as included in the RFP document.
- The link to EIB Guide to Procurement (GtP): <https://www.eib.org/en/publications/20240132-guide-to-procurement-for-projects-financed-by-the-eib>
- The address referred to above is:
Mr. Ronald Aine
Procurement Office,
Lesotho Lowlands Water Development Project II
Ministry of Natural Resources
Sentinel Park, Block C, UN Road,
Maseru, 100, Kingdom of Lesotho
Email: procurement@llwdp.co.ls, raine@llwdp.co.ls
Website: www.llwdp.co.ls

END

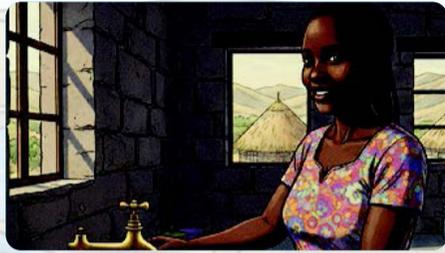
METSI A HLOEKILENG A TLA MOTSENG OO U PHELANG HO OONA

Morero oa Phepelo ea Metsi Mabalane – Mothati oa Bobeli (LLWDP II) o tsebisa sechaba sa libaka tse anngoeng ke Morero hore Kh'amphani ea 4D Climate Solutions eleng Moeletsi, e ntse e potoloha le libaka tsa Morero ho fana ka thuto, ho ruta le ho hlokomelisa sechaba ka Tlhopho Bocha ea phepelo ea metsi mabalane, e reretsoeng ho kenngoa tšebetsong ke 'muso oa Lesotho.

TŠEBELETSO E NCHA EA METSI E TLISA METSI A:



A hloekile: A bolokehileng ho thibela mafu.



A nolofatsang bophelo: U bula pompo ea hau, ha u sa lokela ho tsamaea leeto le lelelele ho ea pompong ea sechaba kapa selibeng.



A tšepahalang: A fumanehang le har'a komello, le litukiso li etsahalang kapele.



A theko e bobebe: Ha u sebelisa 5000L, utla lefella 1000L e nngoe le e nngoe M6.11 feela ka khoeli. Litjeo li phahama ho latela tšebeliso ea hau ea metsi.

MATHATA A LITŠEBELETSO TSA KHALE TSA METSI KE A FE?

- Ha a hloekisoa, joale a ka u kulisa,
- Ha a tšepahale:
 - Pompo e ka robeha 'me ea se lokisoa,
 - A ka fela ka nako ea komello,
- Ha a nolofatse bophelo:
 - U lokela ho nka leeto ho a lata selibeng kapa
 - pompong ea sechaba.



BOIKARABELLO BA HAU KE BO FE?

1. Fokotsa (se ke ua sebelisa metsi a mangata ho hlatsoa)
2. Sebelisa Hape (sebelisa metsi a hlatsoitseng ho noesetsa lijalo tsa hau)
3. Lokisa moo metsi a rothang kapa ho lutla motseng oa hau
4. Lefella tšebeliso ea metsi bonyane khoeli le khoeli



SE BOLELANG HO UENA?

U ka kenya kopo ea khokelo ea metsi a fihlang ka peipi ntlong ea hau kapa, ua tsoela pele ho fumana metsi pompong ea sechaba kapa selibeng haeba li ntse li sebetsa.

HOBANENG TŠEBELETSO EA HO TLISA POMPO LEBALENG LA HAU E LOKELA HO LEFELLOA?

Metsi ke mahala, empa khokelo le bosebeletsi ba ho a tlisa nako tsohle abile a hloekile li hloka ho lefelloa hobane:



Letamo le aheloa hore metsi a fumanehe le ka linako tsa komello.



Ka nako ea tlhoekiso, ho sebelisoa mechini le lihlahisoa tse thusang hore metsi a bolokehe.



Ho hloka hlahla litjeo ho pompa metsi ka mechine le motlakase ho bopa marangrang a isang metsi malapeng.



Ho hiroa basebetsi bakeng sa tšebetso ea letsatsi le letsatsi le tukiso moo ho robehileng malapeng.

TEFISO EA TŠEBELETSO EA METSI E TLA TSAMAEA JOANG?

- **Ho hokeloa** peipe e boholo ba limitara tse 150 kapa ka tlase: **M1,620.00 – M4,860.00.**
- Limitara tse fetang 150 u tla fuoa litjeo ho loatela bohole ba sebaka.
- Mofani oa lits'ebeliso o tla bala mithara khoeli le khoeli,
- Litefiso tsa khoeli li latela tšebeliso ea hau ea metsi mekhahlelong ena:

Band A	0 – 5 kl	M6.10/ 1,000 litara
Band B	5 – 10 kl	M10.39 / 1,000 litara
Band C	10 – 15 kl	M18.29 / 1,000 litara
Band D	>15 kl	M25.24 / 1,000 litara

Ha u sebelisa ka holimo ho 5000L ka khoeli, u patala tjena khoeli le khoeli:

Band A	0 – 5 kl	M0.00
Band B	>5 – 10 kl	M49.18
Band C	>10 – 15 kl	M49.18
Band D	>15 kl	M49.18

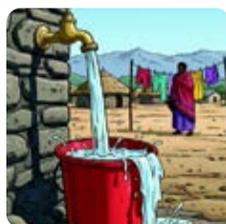
Mohlala oa litefiso tsa khoeli

160L ka letsatsi kapa linkho tsa 20L tse 8 ka letsatsi.

Tefiso ea khoeli: (Matsatsi 30 x 160L) **4800L/4,8kl x M 6.11 +**

Tefiso e tlamang + Lekhetso Kakaretso: M29.28 ka khoeli

SEO U LOKELANG HO SE E TSA TŠEBELISONG EA METSI



Seke oa siea u buletse pompo.



Se ke oa sebelisa metsi a mangata ho hlapa.



Tšella feela ka metsi a hlapileng kapa a hlatsoitseng.



Hlapa matsoho ha u tsoa ntloaneng.

BAKENG SA LITLHAKISETSO HOKAHANA LE LESOTHO LOWLANDS WATER DEVELOPMENT PROJECT - PHASE II LINOMORONG TSE LATELANG: 266 6282 7550 (WhatsApp).

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Arts & Entertainment

Newsday

Thoboloko Ntšonyane

The annual walk tracing the steps of Morena Moshoeshoe is a blend of adventure, challenge and reflection. Trekkers walk through rugged mountains, cross swollen rivers and traverse vast plateaus during the 116km journey, which spans three days.

The Moshoeshoe Walk, organised by T-Connexion Marketing and Tours, started in 2007 and has since grown in leaps and bounds.

The walk is launched by King Letsie III at Menkhoaneng in the Leribe district.

Day one, which covers 31km, concludes at Thaba-Phatšoa. The following day, the toughest leg of the journey begins in the early hours of the morning at 3:30am, covering a 54km distance to the next destination in Malimong. From there, the following morning, the walkers march to Thaba-Bosiu, where the walk ends.

The walk commemorates Morena Moshoeshoe, although he and his subjects reportedly took nine days to reach Thaba-Bosiu while fleeing from enemies and seeking refuge.

Morena Moshoeshoe, the founder of the Basotho nation, is said to have set out from Menkhoaneng in 1824 to seek refuge at Thaba-Bosiu, particularly during the Lifaqane wars.

According to history, there was no unified kingdom when he was born, as Basotho lived in many separate clans. Morena Moshoeshoe united them into one nation. He is celebrated for his leadership, diplomacy, love of peace and many other admirable traits.

The hikers traverse Basotho communities, walking long distances sometimes under unfriendly weather conditions. They climb mountains and cross rivers and streams to reach their next destination. This year was no different.

On the second day of the walk this year, hikers woke up to rain, which continued throughout the day, forcing the organisers to call off the trip after lunch at 'Makhoroana. The rivers were full and posed a danger to the hikers.

One of the hikers, the Minister of Information, Communications, Science, Technology and Innovation, Nthathi Moorosi, said hikers do not fear the rain as they usually come prepared with full rain gear. However, she noted that what they fear most are raging rivers.

She promised to raise the matter with the government and advocate for the construction of more footbridges. She also urged Thabo Maretlane to support the proposal to strengthen the case.

This year's Moshoeshoe Walk was graced by the presence of several dignitaries, including Queen 'Masenate Mohato Seeiso, Moorosi, Member of Parliament and organiser of the walk Thabo Maretlane, Ambassador of the People's Republic of China Yang Xiaokun, and Lithuanian Ambassador Rasa Jankauskaitė, among others.

Countries represented included Lesotho, Botswana, Eswatini, Malawi, South Africa, the People's Republic of China, the United States, Austria, France, Sweden and Wales.

During the journey, this writer walked through many different landscapes. We climbed steep hills that made my legs ache, pushing my body to its limits. In some places, the path was rocky and required careful footing to avoid stumbling.

We crossed riverbeds where the water rushed by, an exciting yet frightening experience for some. The trek was both physically and emotionally demanding, and we would arrive at our destinations tired yet proud of the effort and resilience displayed

Trials and triumphs trekking the beautiful yet challenging Moshoeshoe Walk



throughout the journey.

During the walk, one gets to truly appreciate the beauty of Lesotho.

However, weather conditions can dramatically influence the journey, particularly when it rains. At one point, I was completely soaked and had to discontinue my walk to seek shelter.

When hiking, it is important to be prepared for all kinds of weather. Rain can come suddenly and make the journey difficult. It is always advisable to pack a good raincoat and waterproof gear so that you can continue enjoying the hike regardless of the weather.

The Moshoeshoe Walk also provides an opportunity to support local communities along the route. Many people sell a variety of items including fruits, maize, dried peaches, apples, lipabi, motoho and snacks for hikers. In this way, the walk helps boost the local economy.

For the 20th edition, Maretlane said organisers plan to collect 20,000 pairs of school shoes to be distributed to schools near the walking route.

Communities along the route have also benefited from various initiatives over the years, including donations of educational materials, support for building churches and classrooms, as well as tree-planting projects.

However, there are some concerns. Corporates sometimes reserve blocks of classrooms for their workers, effectively competing with individual hikers for accommodation. As a result, some participants struggled to find places to sleep because classrooms were already full. In some cases, there were no blankets or mattresses available.

Morena Moshoeshoe was known for sharing. Perhaps organisers could encourage communities to prepare for larger numbers of hikers so that everyone can find accommodation.

Homestays offer a particularly meaningful option, especially for international hikers who want to experience the lives of Basotho people.

I personally enjoyed my homestays in places such as 'Mate, Ha-Selebalo and Thaba-Phatšoa, where we were warmly welcomed and well taken care of by the families who hosted us.

Organisers could also consider formally registering homestay providers so that hikers know their accommodation is safe and accountable. This would also strengthen the tourism experience while benefiting local families.

Local communities are always supportive

of hikers during the trek, guiding them and cheering them on along the way. Hikers are often greeted with joy and cheerful ululations. Children run alongside them, waving and smiling, while shepherds also show their support through friendly gestures.

Tourists often marvel at how peaceful and welcoming Basotho are. The warmth of the communities makes the journey even more memorable, creating a sense of connection between hikers and locals.

It is a powerful reminder of the spirit of

unity and peace that Morena Moshoeshoe, the founder of the Basotho nation, fought for and aspired to.

This year, hikers were also encouraged to walk in solidarity with those affected by the war in the Middle East and to promote diplomacy, tolerance and peace.

During the closing ceremony at Thaba-Bosiu, the King praised the resilience of the hikers and commended their dedication to completing the demanding journey. Fortunately, there were no casualties reported.

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Basotho commemorate Moshoeshoe's Day

... Launch Diamond Jubilee celebrations

Refiloe Molise

Basotho gathered at Thaba-Bosiu Cultural Village on Wednesday this week to commemorate Moshoeshoe's Day, celebrating the life and legacy of Morena Moshoeshoe.

The national event was attended by His Majesty King Letsie III, members of the royal family, government officials and traditional leaders, who joined Basotho from across the country to reflect on the unity, peace and visionary leadership that laid the foundation of the Basotho nation.

The commemoration also marked the official launch of Lesotho's Diamond Jubilee, celebrating 60 years since the country attained independence.

The Diamond Jubilee represents a significant national milestone, symbolising endurance, strength and resilience after six decades of self-rule. The event also provided an opportunity for Basotho to reflect on the country's journey since independence and the values of unity, development and national identity.

Speaking on behalf of the Principal Chief of Thaba-Bosiu, Leloka Mohalenyane welcomed Basotho to the national celebration and emphasised the significance of gathering at the historic birthplace of the nation.

He conveyed the gratitude of Principal Chief Khoabane Theko, who was unable to attend the event.

"The Principal Chief asked me to express his sincere gratitude to Basotho who came in large numbers to celebrate this important day at Thaba-Bosiu," Mohalenyane said.

He also acknowledged the support of the Prime Minister and corporate sponsors who contributed to the celebrations.

Mohalenyane highlighted the unique traditional welcome accorded to King Letsie III during the event.

"Celebrating Moshoeshoe's Day is one of the



His Majesty king Letsie III, members of the royal family and other officials during the official launch of Lesotho diamond jubilee at Thaba-Bosiu

greatest moments for Basotho. It is not common for the King to be welcomed with horses, but today Basotho brought out their horses to honour His Majesty," he said.

He encouraged Basotho to continue strengthening the celebration in the future.

"This shows the pride Basotho have in their heritage. Next time we must do even better to demonstrate our unity and the respect we have for this important day," Mohalenyane said.

Speaking during the commemoration, Prime Minister Ntsokoane Samuel Matekane said the gathering was not only meant to honour Morena Moshoeshoe but also to mark the launch of Lesotho's 60th anniversary of independence.

"We gather here today to celebrate the legacy of King Moshoeshoe I and to launch the Diamond Jubilee of Lesotho's 60 years of independence. We will always remember that it was in October 1966 when Lesotho attained its independence," Matekane said.

Lesotho gained independence from British colonial rule on October 4, 1966, under the leadership of King Moshoeshoe II.

Matekane also highlighted the significance of Lesotho being governed under a monarchy.

"In Africa, there are only a few countries that are led by monarchies, including Lesotho, Eswatini and Morocco. As Basotho, we are proud to be the Kingdom of Lesotho," he said.

He said Moshoeshoe's Day offers Basotho an opportunity to reflect on the values established by the founder of the nation.

"It is our duty as government and as Basotho to remember the good deeds of the founder of this nation and to reflect on what each of us can do to maintain peace, unity and grow the economy of our country," Matekane said.

Quoting the words of King Moshoeshoe I, the Prime Minister said: "O ka nketsang ha e ahe motse, motse ho ahoa oa Morapeli Thesele," emphasising the importance of community cooperation and

collective responsibility in building the nation.

Matekane further called on communities, traditional leaders, the police and local policing forums to work together in combating corruption and strengthening peace.

"I want to assure Basotho that when there is peace and stability in the country, the economy will grow. Economic growth is the responsibility of every Mosotho," he said.

He added that the government remains committed to prioritising the welfare of Basotho.

"As government, we will always put Basotho first by providing services that promote economic growth and ensure that peace and unity continue to prevail in the Kingdom of Lesotho," Matekane said.

King Letsie III also reflected on the enduring legacy of Morena Moshoeshoe and called on Basotho to prepare for the upcoming Diamond Jubilee celebrations.

"We are here at Thaba-Bosiu again, as we have many times in the past, to remember the founder of the Basotho nation, Morena Moshoeshoe, with respect and love," the King said.

"This is a significant day for all Basotho, no matter where we live in the country."

The King encouraged Basotho to approach the journey towards the 60th anniversary of independence with reflection and prayer, emphasising the values of peace, unity and love established by Moshoeshoe I.

"From this day until October, as we prepare to celebrate 60 years of Lesotho's independence, let us fix our hearts and minds as Basotho. Prepare our hearts and minds by remembering everything we celebrated during the 200-year anniversary of the nation founded by King Moshoeshoe I — peace, unity and love," he said.

He urged the nation to pray for guidance and uphold the founder's vision in daily life.

"On this journey of preparing for independence celebrations, let us pray that our hearts be filled with peace, unity and understanding. When there is no peace in our hearts individually, we cannot have it in our families, villages or in the country," the King said.

"My prayer is that Almighty God opens our hearts and minds so that the aim of our founder stays in our hearts and heads."

He concluded by reminding Basotho of the spiritual significance of the day.

"This is not a day for speeches, but for prayer to ask God to guide us as He guided the founder of this nation and to continue blessing us as we celebrate many years of independence as the Basotho nation. Let us all live in peace, unity and love," the King said.

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Kananelo Mokhele

The Lesotho Sports and Recreation Commission (LSRC) has launched a community sports leadership initiative aimed at promoting active lifestyles while strengthening local sports management structures.

The programme, known as the Certified Leadership Course (CLC) Community Project Implementation, was recently launched at Selesele Football Club ground in Ha Motolo, Berea.

It seeks to equip community members with leadership skills while encouraging wider participation in physical activities to improve public health.

Representing the Ministry of Tourism, Sports, Arts and Culture, 'Matšepo Khau said sport should not only be associated with global competitions but should also be viewed as an essential part of everyday life that contributes to the wellbeing of Basotho.

She explained that physical activity plays a key role in preventing many communicable and non-communicable diseases affecting the population.

Khau encouraged members of the public to incorporate simple forms of exercise into their daily routines, noting that activities such as walking can significantly improve health without the need for organised sport.

LSRC's Deputy President Kamohelo Hlomisi said the initiative aims to unite communities through sport while also creating opportunities for personal and economic development.

According to Hlomisi, the Certified Lead-

LSRC launches grassroots sports leadership drive



LSRC rolls out Community Sports Leadership programme

ership Course was designed to empower individuals with practical knowledge in sports leadership and administration. Participants are expected to apply the skills gained to implement community-based

sport and fitness projects that encourage broader public participation.

He said the programme will be rolled out in five districts, Mafeteng, Berea, Botha-Bothe, Leribe and Qacha's Nek, with each

district implementing activities tailored to the needs of its communities.

Hlomisi added that the initiative promotes healthy living by encouraging people to remain physically active and adopt positive lifestyle habits such as balanced diets and productive activities including farming and walking.

He further noted that sport can play a crucial role in addressing social challenges among young people. By engaging youth in constructive activities, he said, sport can help reduce problems such as teenage pregnancy and behavioural issues within communities.

LSRC Public Relations Officer Advocate Jobo Raswoko said the project follows earlier training conducted in partnership with TAFISA in November, where community representatives were trained to design projects that support sport and health development.

Raswoko explained that the trained participants will now implement the initiatives in their respective communities following the official launch.

The CLC Community Project is expected to boost grassroots participation in sport while fostering healthier lifestyles across the participating districts.

LeFA takes measures to ensure safety in stadiums



Officials and participants during the CAF Safe Stadiums Initiative Workshop in Maseru organised by the Confederation of African Football and the Lesotho Football Association to strengthen stadium safety.

Mamello Rakotsoane

The Confederation of African Football (CAF), in partnership with the Lesotho Football Association (LeFA), has launched the CAF Safe Stadiums Initiative Workshop aimed at strengthening safety and security standards at football facilities across the country.

The three-day workshop, held at the Avani Lesotho Hotel & Casino, brought together safety and security personnel from football clubs, LeFA and the Premier League Management Committee.

The programme focuses on improving safety procedures before, during and after football matches, underscoring the growing importance of well-managed stadium environments in protecting players, officials and supporters.

With football crowds increasing and stadium infrastructure under constant pressure, sports authorities say proper plan-

ning, crowd control and risk management have become critical elements in hosting successful matches.

The workshop therefore seeks to equip stadium officials with the skills needed to prevent incidents such as overcrowding, structural failures, violence and medical emergencies.

Speaking during the opening session, LeFA's President Lijane Nthunya said the association continues to address risks that could lead to stadium disasters such as overcrowding, structural failures and violence.

Nthunya noted that although Lesotho has not experienced major stadium tragedies like those recorded in other African countries, including Egypt and South Africa, it remains important to strengthen preventative measures.

He expressed hope that participants will immediately begin implementing improved safety procedures during the remaining

matches of the current football season in both the premier league and A divisions.

The national stadium security officer and head of security at LeFA, Moeketsi Khamali, explained that the workshop aims to ensure that all activities taking place in stadiums run smoothly while maintaining effective security operations.

The initiative also comes at a time when football governing bodies across Africa are increasingly prioritising safety following past stadium disasters on the continent. Lessons from such incidents have led to stricter regulations on crowd management, emergency preparedness and stadium infrastructure compliance.

Meanwhile, head of safety and security at CAF, Christian Emeruwa, said the CAF safety and security department was established on 3 February 2019 to develop systems that improve safety standards at football events across Africa.

Emeruwa said one of the major challenges at the time was the lack of coordination in safety operations during CAF competitions, which led to the development of the first CAF Safety and Security Regulations used to guide stadium safety standards across the continent.

He explained that CAF's responsibilities during tournaments include conducting inspections of airports, training venues, hotels for teams and officials, as well as stadium facilities to ensure they comply with required standards.

The department also deploys safety and security officers to support host countries during CAF tournaments and events, while risk assessments are conducted to identify potential threats and establish mitigation measures.

Emeruwa further noted that CAF has prioritised capacity building across Africa. Since 2019, the organisation has trained more than 1,129 safety and security officers and is now implementing the CAF Safe Stadium Initiative, which aims to train at least 40 safety officers in each member association.

The initiative is expected to significantly improve safety management at both international and domestic football matches, ensuring that stadiums provide secure environments for spectators and participants alike.

Also addressing participants, general manager of the Premier League Management Committee, Mabonolo Senekane, emphasised that safety, crowd control and health measures are fundamental to the success of any football event.

Senekane encouraged participants to actively engage in discussions, share experiences and develop practical solutions that will strengthen match-day operations.

She said the workshop provides an opportunity for security officials to collaborate and establish clear protocols to ensure that supporters enjoy football matches in a safe environment.



Seabata Mahao

Second-placed Lifofane Football Club (FC) saw their title hopes further fizzling out after suffering a narrow 1-0 defeat to LDF FC in Maseru on Thursday.

The high-flying Botha-Bothe outfit has now stumbled in back-to-back matches against two traditional heavyweights of Lesotho football, LDF and Lioli FC. Prior to their clash with LDF, Lifofane were edged 3-2 by Lioli in a fiercely contested encounter.

Despite the two-match losing streak, Lifofane remain firmly in the Vodacom Premier League (VPL) title race, although they have now been overtaken by the equally impressive Lijabatho FC. Both sides have been among the league's pace-setters for much of the season.

During the midweek fixtures played on Wednesday, Lijabatho delivered a commanding 4-1 victory over Manonyane FC to climb to the top of the table.

Bantu FC secured a narrow 1-0 win against Majantja FC, while Maroala FC recorded a rare 1-0 triumph over struggling Liphakoe FC.

Defending champions Lioli were held to a goalless draw by LMPS FC, while Matlama FC and LCS FC also settled for a 0-0 stalemate. Machokha FC and Members FC were likewise inseparable after playing to a goalless draw.

The Lifofane versus LDF encounter was the only match played on Thursday, with the army side emerging victorious.

Prior to the midweek fixtures, Linare produced a spirited comeback to defeat Bantu 2-1 at Setsoto Stadium last Saturday, keeping their momentum alive in the second round of the 2025/2026 Vodacom Premier League season as the title race intensifies.

The victory was particularly significant for Linare, who had lost the first-round meeting against Bantu earlier in the campaign. Determined to respond, the Hlotse-based side showed resilience to overturn an early setback and secure three valuable points.

Bantu struck almost immediately after kickoff when MotseKhiba found the back of the net just two minutes into the match, putting the Mafeteng-based side ahead and briefly silencing the home crowd.

Linare responded with determination and gradually grew into the game. Their persistence paid off when Tšepang Sefalie equalised, restoring parity and igniting an intense contest between the two sides.

With both teams pushing for the lead, Linare eventually found the decisive breakthrough in the 39th minute of the first half when Norman Kumatse struck the winning goal.

The result lifted Linare to seventh position on the league table with 38 points from 22 matches, while Bantu remained fourth with 41 points.

At the summit of the standings, Lijabatho lead the table with 45 points, followed closely by Lifofane with the same tally, while Bantu occupy third place with 44 points.

Linare's head coach Jabulani "S-Curl" Mendu admitted after the match that his side's game plan nearly backfired after conceding early.

"Our intention was to attack aggressively from the start," Mendu said. "But we lost concentration and they scored early before we regrouped."

He explained that his team had carefully studied Bantu's attacking threats before the

Lifofane suffer title setback



Lifofane F.C.

match.

"We did our homework on Bantu and knew they have strong goal scorers, so we tried to limit their opportunities and create a strategy to stop them," he said.

Mendu added that Linare deliberately targeted Bantu's defensive structure in an effort to disrupt their organisation.

"The second round of the season is crucial. Teams must work harder and collect points if they want to stay competitive," he said.

Bantu's assistant coach Bokang Mothoana said his side started strongly but failed to convert their chances.

"We played well early in the game and managed to score first. But we created several opportunities and failed to convert them," Mothoana said.

He noted that Linare's attacks down the wings created difficulties for his team.

"We noticed their attacks from the wings, which is why we made changes to strengthen our defensive line," he explained.

Mothoana also admitted that defensive lapses remain a concern for the team.

"We have realised that we concede from corner kicks and mistakes near our penalty area," he said. "We are correcting those errors and taking each match step by step."

Despite the defeat, Mothoana insisted Bantu remain firmly in the title race.

"To win the league you need consistent victories, so we must continue preparing well and winning matches," he said.

Meanwhile, defending champions Lioli dropped two crucial points after being held to a goalless draw by LMPS at PTC Ground on

Wednesday.

The match lacked intensity from the start, with both sides struggling to find rhythm.

LMPS maintained a disciplined defensive structure, closing spaces effectively and frustrating the two-time reigning champions.

Lioli were forced into a slow and patient build-up but rarely threatened in the final third during a quiet first half.

The second half followed a similar pattern. Despite introducing fresh legs, Lioli head coach Halemakale Mahlaha failed to find the spark needed to break the deadlock.

Lioli were also without suspended players Tšoanelo Koetle and Retšelisitsoe Moepi, while Jerry Kamele, Khothlang Mokete and Mokoteli Mohapi were included in the starting line-up.

After the match, Mahlaha blamed poor decision-making in the final third for the disappointing result.

"It was not good and the results are not good for us," Mahlaha said. "We prepared how we were going to attack them and how they were going to play, but our decision-making in the final third was not good."

Midfielder Thabang Klaas returned to action for the first time in a month after recovering from a head injury, but his presence was not enough to inspire a breakthrough.

Mahlaha admitted his substitutions also failed to influence the match.

"The substitutes did not change anything for us. We wanted TholangMakuru to give us crosses and Klaas to provide through balls, but we were not able to do that," he explained.

"I think we had three chances, but the decisions were wrong. Instead of challenging

defenders or passing into the box, we made the wrong choices."

Lioli will now look to bounce back when they face Lesotho Correctional Service (LCS) this weekend.

Recent results

Weekend fixtures

- Linare FC 2-1 Bantu FC
- Majantja FC 2-1 Lijabatho FC
- Lioli FC 3-2 Lifofane FC
- Matlama FC 1-0 Liphakoe FC
- Members FC 2-1 LU FC
- Machokha FC 1-1 Maroala FC
- LDF FC 3-2 Manonyane FC
- LCS FC 1-0 LMPS FC
- Weekday catch-up matches
- Machokha 0-0 Members
- Liphakoe 0-1 Maroala
- LMPS 0-0 Lioli
- LCS 0-0 Matlama
- Majantja 0-1 Bantu
- Manonyane 1-4 Lijabatho
- Lifofane 0-1 LDF

Upcoming fixtures

Saturday

- Members vs Majantja - LCS Ground (13:00)
- Bantu vs LU FC - LCS Ground (15:30) Live on FIFA+
- Lioli vs LCS - Ratjomose (15:00) Live on FIFA+
- Maroala vs Manonyane - PTC Ground (15:00)
- Sunday
- LDF vs Liphakoe - Ratjomose (13:00) Live on FIFA+
- Matlama vs Lifofane - Ratjomose (15:30) Live on FIFA+
- Linare vs LMPS - LCS Ground (13:00)
- Lijabatho vs Machokha - LCS Ground (15:30)



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