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Sunday, 20 July 2025

Lesotho Tribune

www.lesothotribune.co.ls

Information Liberates

ISSN 2453-5419



VOL 4, ISSUE 45

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UAT Addresses Concerns Over Russian Scholarship Program

... "I visited Russia myself"

By: Tholoana Lesenya

MASERU

After concerns over the controversial 'Alabuga Start' program, reportedly linked to exploitative labor practices in Russia's Alabuga Special Economic Zone, have taken on a local dimension following the emergence of direct recruitment communications between the program's representatives and a Lesotho citizen which Lesotho Tribune has, United Africans Transformation (UAT) addressed the concerns over Russian Scholarships as its leader, Dr. Mahali Phamotse is alleged to also offer scholarships. Dr. Phamotse said, in response to growing concerns surrounding its scholarship program in Russia, particularly amid reports linking certain programs like Alabuga Start to exploitative labor practices, UAT has provided a comprehensive outline of its safety measures, partnerships, and student welfare protocols. Speaking candidly in a recent interview, a UAT leader, Dr. Phamotse emphasized the organization's commitment to student safety, transparency, and academic integrity.

Addressing questions about the legitimacy of the Russian institutions involved, the UAT clarified that extensive due diligence measures had been undertaken prior to formalizing partnerships. "I personally traveled to Moscow, where I inspect-



ed university facilities, engaged management teams, observed classroom activities, and assessed student accommodation conditions," Dr. Phamotse explained.

She stated that the institution in question is fully accredited by Russia's Department of Education and holds all mandatory operational certifications, the official added, describing it as a reputable establishment with a solid academic reputation. Commenting specifically on reports concerning Alabuga Start, Dr. Phamotse expressed unfamiliarity with the program, noting that preliminary assessments suggest it is not affiliated with recognized educational frameworks. "We will, however, take this matter further with the relevant Russian government bodies to obtain clarity," Dr. Phamotse assured. UAT also invited members of the public to share any concrete information regarding the entity, emphasizing openness

to collaboration in safeguarding student welfare. Plans are underway to launch a dedicated website for the program, providing real-time updates to ensure transparency. UAT further confirmed that none of its sponsored Basotho students are enrolled in or associated with entities such as Alabuga SEZ, Alabuga Start, or Alabuga Polytechnic. Dr. Phamotse stressed that UAT operates exclusively through direct partnerships with accredited universities and does not engage with intermediary organizations.

"If any of our students, acting privately, have encountered such programs without our knowledge, we encourage them or concerned parties to report the matter so that it can be addressed," Dr. Phamotse stated.

To safeguard the well-being of Basotho students in Russia, UAT has established a structured welfare monitoring program. This system, designed to track

student experiences and promptly address any concerns, will also be publicly accessible via the upcoming website.

"Student welfare is not an afterthought but a core component of our program's framework," Dr. Phamotse noted.

Acknowledging that students' parents are responsible for accommodation and food expenses, UAT highlighted that financial responsibilities are clearly defined through formal agreements with both the partnering university and guardians.

According to the official, this approach minimizes financial stress and reduces the risk of students seeking exploitative work to cover living costs. Institutional support structures are in place to provide additional assistance when necessary.

Finally, UAT emphasized that contingency plans have been developed to address any potential threats to student safety. In cases where students face unsafe or exploitative conditions, protocols for intervention, support, and, if required, repatriation are established. "Student safety is our utmost priority, and we are fully prepared to act decisively if any issues arise," Dr. Phamotse affirmed.

With its focus on transparency, direct institutional engagement, and student welfare, UAT maintains that its scholarship program in Russia remains a secure and beneficial opportunity for young Basotho scholars.



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Boko Visits Lesotho, Sign BNC with Lesotho

By: Staff Reporter



On Tuesday, Lesotho and the Republic of Botswana signed a Bi-National Commission of Cooperation at the State House in Maseru.

As a formal agreement between the two member states to cooperate on issues of mutual interest including water, agriculture and food security and energy, the commission will serve as a platform for dialogue, negotiation and coordination across these sectors and others with the goal of strengthening bilateral relations, fostering development and addressing shared challenges effectively.

Statements prepared for the media show that Botswana has experienced several severe drought spells in the past that have led to water restrictions and despite several efforts to alleviate the situation, predictions were that water would be inadequate as early as 2025, causing Botswana to make efforts to meet its water needs of 150 million cubic metres annually from this year onwards to 2045.

As part of its efforts to ensure water security, the then Minister of Minerals, Energy and Water Resources in Botswana, Honourable PH Kedikiwe then proposed



the Lesotho-Botswana Water Project in 2011.

With a similar design to the Katse Dam, the construction of the 140-metre-high concrete double-curvature arch dam will stand at the bottom of the gorge in which the Makhalleng River flows in, right in the area of Malealea.

The dam is envisioned to store over 1.2 billion cubic metres of water and generate 40 megawatts of hydropower at the dam and 5 megawatts along the conveyance system.

Downstream water is expected to travel over 700 kilometres through an advanced conveyance system to reach Nnywane Dam in Lobatse, Botswana, delivering 136 million cubic metres of water while adding 158 million cubic metres shared between Lesotho and South Africa.

The proposed budget required for this pro-

ject is 2 million USD (M35 371 698.20) to conclude the feasibility stage and an estimated 3 billion USD (M53 057 550 000.00) for the implementation stage and partners and stakeholders include ORASECOM, government of Lesotho, Botswana, SA and Namibia that will actively participate as an observer on project studies. There is also the African Development Bank which will play the role of the trustees for the African Water Facility; a financial support for the project preparation and the World Bank financing the reconnaissance studies among many.

The Lesotho-Botswana Water Transfer project has evolved through a structured and collaborative process under the auspices of ORASECOM, prompted by the long-term water

security concerns in Bot-

swana and the potential to harness Lesotho's relatively abundant

water resources. Its objectives include, among others, to promote sustainable socio-economic development in Lesotho, Botswana and South Africa, to enhance water security

by transporting water to Botswana and creating employment and investment opportunities during project development, construction and operation phases.

Speaking at the site visit in Mafeteng, the Minister of Natural Resources, Honourable

Mohlomi Moleko, said the Makhalleng River stands as testament to a shared regional statement and the power of cooperation.

“The Lesotho-Botswana Water Transfer Project is more than just an infrastructure venture; it is a strategic long-term investment in regional water security, energy production and climate resilience,” Moleko said.

He urged the two countries to deepen the collaboration and apply more efforts to accelerate the implementation of the project.

“Let us together build a legacy that future generations will look back on with pride, a legacy of resilience, neighbourliness, solidarity, cooperation and sustainable development,” he concluded.



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Tshiamiso Trust Launches Major Outreach Campaign for Lesotho's Former Mineworkers

By: Tholoana Lesenya

MASERU

In a renewed push to bring long-overdue justice and compensation to former gold mineworkers, the Tshiamiso Trust has officially launched a nationwide outreach campaign in Lesotho. The initiative, running from July through August 2025, is expected to directly benefit thousands of Basotho who contracted silicosis or work-related tuberculosis (TB) while working in South Africa's gold mines between 1965 and 2019.

The campaign was formally unveiled in Maseru by the CEO of Tshiamiso Trust, Dr.

Munyadziwa Kwindu, who emphasized the critical importance of reaching claimants in their own communities. "This campaign is not just about paperwork, it is about restoring dignity and delivering justice to people who risked their health and lives for a livelihood," he said.

The outreach will bring on-site claim lodgment services and Benefit Medical Examinations (BMEs) directly to former mineworkers across Lesotho. These BMEs are a vital step in the claims process, ensuring that those affected receive the compensation



they are entitled to base on medical assessments. According to Dr. Kwindu, 2,647

Basotho claimants are still awaiting BMEs, highlighting the urgency and necessity of the campaign.

Beyond BMEs, the outreach teams will also assist new claimants in filing applications and help existing applicants update missing or incomplete documentation that might be delaying their payments. The Tshiamiso Trust was established following a historic class action lawsuit against six major South African gold mining companies. The settlement paved the way for a dedicated fund to compensate former mineworkers and their dependents who suffered

from occupational diseases linked to silica dust exposure underground.

The companies involved in the settlement include African Rainbow Minerals, Anglo American South Africa, AngloGold Ashanti, Gold Fields, Harmony Gold and Sibanye-

Stillwater. These corporations have committed to addressing the legacy of ill health left by decades of mining practices that often prioritized profits over safety. Lesotho, whose citizens have long formed a significant part of the South African mining labor force, has emerged as the leading beneficiary of the compensation effort. Since February 2021, when claims processing began

in the country, more than M836 million has been paid out to Basotho mineworkers and their families, representing an impressive 40% of the total M2.2 billion disbursed across seven Southern African Development Community (SADC) countries.

"This figure reflects both the deep impact of the mining industry on Basotho families and the importance of ensuring that every qualifying individual receives their due," Dr.

Kwindu noted.

The Trust's outreach teams will travel across the country over the coming weeks, visiting key locations to provide support on the ground. The full schedule is as follows, Butha-Buthe – July 21–22, Leribe – July 23–24, Teya-Teyaneng – July 25–26, Maseru – July 28–31, Mafeteng – August 1–2 & 4–7, Mohale's Hoek – August 8–9, Quthing – August 11–12.

The Trust is urging all eligible former mineworkers, or their dependents, who have not yet lodged a claim or completed their BME to attend the outreach in their district. With the window for claims processing not open indefinitely, time is of the essence. "This is your opportunity," Dr. Kwindu stressed. "We are coming to you to make sure no one is left behind."



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REQUEST FOR INFORMATION FOR THE SUPPLY AND IMPLEMENTATION OF AN INTEGRATED SPECTRUM MANAGEMENT, LICENSING AND TARIFF SYSTEM

The Lesotho Communications Authority is a statutory body, established in June 2000, with the mandate to regulate the communications sector in Lesotho. Its primary responsibilities include facilitating the provision of communications services, promoting and preserving competition and safeguarding consumer interests.

In pursuit of continuous improvement and enhanced service delivery in a dynamic information and communications environment, the Authority has identified the need to review its spectrum management and licensing systems in line with the evolving market trends.

Therefore, the Authority invites competent and qualified vendors (registered companies or firms), to respond to this Request for Information (RFI) by submitting proposals demonstrating their expertise in the supply and implementation of an integrated spectrum management, licensing and tariff system.

Interested Vendors must drop their submissions in a zipped folder on the link below:

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Proposals must be submitted on or before **Monday 18 August at 1100Hrs. Late**

submissions will not be accepted, and incomplete submissions will be disqualified.

Detailed RFI is available at the Authority's website at: www.lca.org.ls.

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Lesotho Lawyer Takes Police to Court Over Social Media “Public Shaming” of Suspects



By Seipati Matobo

Maseru

In what could become a defining moment for digital rights in Lesotho, prominent attorney Adv. Lemohang Nzuzi has filed a groundbreaking constitutional case against the Lesotho Mounted Police Service (LMPS), challenging their increasingly controversial practice of publishing suspects’ photographs and personal details on social media before trial.

Key Players

- Applicant: Adv. Lemohang Nzuzi (K.D. Mabulu & Co Attorneys)
- Respondents: LMPS, Commissioner of Police, Minister of Police, Attorney General
- Jurisdiction: High Court – Constitutional Division

The Heart of the Matter Nzuzi, a well-regarded member of the Law Society of Lesotho, claims the police violated his constitutional rights when they posted his photograph and arrest information on their official Facebook page on July 10, 2025, after he was stopped for a routine traffic offense. “This case goes beyond

personal grievance,” Nzuzi says in his affidavit. “It speaks to a dangerous culture where law enforcement uses social media as a modern-day pillory, subjecting individuals to trial by public opinion before any court has spoken.”

Alleged Constitutional Breaches

The 28-page application highlights four core violations of Lesotho’s Constitution:

1. Right to Privacy (Section 11) – Unauthorized dissemination of personal information without consent
 2. Right to Human Dignity (Section 4(1)(b)) – Public humiliation through online exposure
 3. Freedom from Degrading Treatment (Section 8) – Emotional and psychological harm inflicted by digital shaming
 4. Presumption of Innocence (Section 12) – Damage caused by prejudicial publicity before legal adjudication
- ## What the Applicant Seeks
- Nzuzi is asking the High Court to grant relief that could drastically reshape how police interact with the public online:
1. Declaration of Unconstitutionality

– A formal ruling that LMPS’s social media practices infringe constitutional rights

2. Remedial Action –
 - Immediate removal of the offending Facebook post

- A public apology and retraction from LMPS

3. Policy Reform –
 - Introduction of a human rights-based social media code for LMPS

- Clear internal guidelines on publishing information about suspects

4. Constitutional Damages – M1.5 million to compensate for the violation of rights

5. Costs Award – Full legal costs to be borne by the respondents

Drawing Strength from Global Precedents

To bolster his case, Nzuzi cites progressive international frameworks:

- South Africa: Legal limits imposed by the SAPS Act on naming and shaming suspects

- United States (California): AB 1475 prohibits posting mugshots of non-violent arrestees on social media

- France: CNRS research into the effects of digital exposure by law enforcement

- Namibia: NAMPOL’s evolving policies on social media conduct

These examples, Nzuzi argues, underscore a growing global recognition that unchecked digital exposure by state actors can inflict irrevers-

ible harm.

Implications for Law Enforcement and Rights Protection

Legal commentators suggest the case could become a catalyst for reform not just in Lesotho, but across the region.

- It could lay the groundwork for Africa’s first court-defined digital rights framework in law enforcement

- Compel policing institutions to rethink and regulate their online conduct

- Offer legal protection for vulnerable individuals disproportionately affected by online public shaming

- Prompt broader conversations on how to balance public interest with individual rights in the digital age

Timeline

- July 10, 2025 – Facebook post published by LMPS
- July 15, 2025 – Court application filed

- August 2025 – Hearing scheduled

What Happens Next

The High Court’s Constitutional Division is set to hear the matter in August 2025. With the Police Commissioner, Minister of Police, and the Attorney General all listed as respondents, the case is poised to be a high-profile test of state accountability in the age of social media.

“When police become publishers, the rules must change,” Nzuzi asserts. “This case is about affirming that our constitutional rights don’t end at the screen’s edge.”



9

Lesotho Tribune

By Lesotho Tribune
Staff Writer

Across Lesotho, concern is growing over whether corporate governance truly serves the wider public interest, or funnels benefits toward insiders. While Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) principles are increasingly discussed, many companies in Lesotho, particularly state-owned enterprises (SOEs) and significant private firms still fall short in independence, transparency, and stakeholder accountability.

Board Composition & Conflicts of Interest
Under the Companies Act (2011), directors in Lesotho must exercise fiduciary duties, including loyalty, care, and avoidance of conflicts of interest, but independent non-executive directors remain rare.

Public entities such as the Lesotho Electricity Company (LEC) and the Water and Sewerage Company (WASCO) historically suffered from weak governance structures, political appointments, and improperly constituted boards, contributing to mismanagement and inefficiency.

Executive Remuneration & Misaligned Incentives

ESG Lens

Are Lesotho's Corporations Governed for the People?



Weak boards often fail to enforce alignment between executive pay and long-term company performance.

Executives may be rewarded despite declining returns or deteriorating governance, classic indicators of agency problems and potential rent-seeking.

ESG Oversight & Risk Governance
Good ESG governance demands active board oversight of environmental, social, and ethical risks, plus transparent disclosure. But most firms in Lesotho lack dedicated ESG or audit committees, and audit oversight remains sporadic; weakening both public trust and resilience to emerging risks.

Companies Leading the Way
Though challenges persist, a number of firms in Lesotho and regional corporations with Lesotho presence are making real strides:

- Sekhametsi Development Trust / SMIC has formally integrated ESG values into its governance and ethics frameworks. Its corporate social investment programs focus on community development, health, education, and environment, aligning business practice with public benefit and stakeholder transparency.

- Letseng (Gem

Diamonds) maintains a robust governance framework, with a strong Board that oversees financial, social, environmental, health and safety performance. It enforces a clear Code of Ethics, operates under recognized standards such as GRI G4.1, and reports ESG metrics consistently. The firm reports zero incidents of child or forced labour and maintains zero tolerance for corruption or abuse.

- Letshego Holdings, which operates in Lesotho, adopted regional best practices aligned with South Africa's King III corporate governance code. It has added multiple independent non-executive directors, standardized board charters, and strengthened enterprise risk oversight. Board policies include clear governance procedures, conflict-of-interest rules, and systematic slides to address identified gaps.

Are Corporations Serving the People?
With few independent directors, poor conflict-of-interest safeguards, and opaque remuneration practices, many corporations continue to benefit insiders at the expense of the broader stakeholder community. The deficiency of rigorous governance discourages investment, erodes confidence, and fosters inefficiencies, particularly among SOEs embedded in political patronage networks.

Where Reform Must Focus

- Broaden board independence and expertise: Boards need genuinely independent directors with sector-relevant experience.

- Strengthen audit, risk, and ESG committees: These must operate

autonomously and enforce transparency in performance and remuneration.

- Align executive compensation with long-term value: Remuneration should be tied to measurable performance outcomes.

- Enhance transparency and stakeholder reporting: Communication about conflicts, compensation, and ESG metrics should be accessible and routine.

- Implement the Mohlomi Corporate Governance Code: Widely adopting the nationally contextualized code can anchor governance in Lesotho's shared values and economic goals.

Conclusion

For corporations in Lesotho to genuinely serve the public, from farmers to consumers to taxpayers, boardrooms must evolve from insulated decision-making centers into accountable guardians of stakeholder value. The companies showing leadership, such as Sekhametsi, Letseng, and Letshego, demonstrate that governance aligned with ESG principles is both achievable and beneficial. Much hinges on whether boards embrace independence, enforce transparency in executive pay and conflicts, and commit to stakeholder-inclusive conduct. With full implementation of the Mohlomi Code and improvements in practice, Lesotho can build corporate leadership structures that serve not only shareholders, but society as a whole. You think we have left out rising stars Leading the way? Email us supporting data: editor@lesothotribune.co.ls



10

Lesotho Tribune

By: Tholoana Lesenya and Lemohang Botsane

MASERU

In a strategic move to catalyze financial innovation, Vodacom Lesotho this week hosted a high-level panel discussion focused on redefining the future of financial technology (FinTech) across Africa. The thought-provoking event, held in Maseru, brought together key industry leaders and policy-makers to deliberate on the pressing need for collaboration and innovation to drive inclusive financial growth. Under the theme of fostering partnerships for sustainable digital transformation, the event saw insightful contributions from Lesotho's Minister of Finance and Development Planning, Honorable Dr. Retšelisitsoe Matlanyane, M-Pesa Africa CEO Sitoyo Lopokoiyit, and Vodacom Lesotho CEO Mohale Ralebitso. Together, they offered expert perspectives on both the

BUSINESS & ECONOMY

Vodacom Lesotho Leads Conversation on Shaping Africa's FinTech Future



vast opportunities and the considerable challenges that shape Africa's evolving FinTech landscape. In her keynote address, Dr. Matlanyane articulated a clear and ambitious vision for Lesotho's financial future, one in which digital payments become as commonplace as cash. Stressing the importance of full digital integration, she highlighted the role FinTech can play in boosting financial inclusion, particularly among underserved populations in rural areas and vulnerable groups like the elderly. "Our goal as government is not to hinder innovation, but to support it," Dr. Matlanyane declared. "We must ensure the right policies are in place, build strong digital infrastructure, and support

seamless platform integration to create an environment where FinTech can thrive. Accessibility is key, not just for businesses in urban centers, but for people in every corner of our country." The Minister also challenged businesses to adopt digital solutions that go beyond mere convenience, emphasizing their potential to drive meaningful economic change. Her remarks underscored the government's commitment to working hand-in-hand with private sector players like Vodacom Lesotho to create a robust digital economy.

M-Pesa Africa CEO Sitoyo Lopokoiyit echoed these sentiments, emphasizing the transformative power of mobile money and digital platforms in expanding

access to financial services. He pointed out that millions across the continent still lack basic banking services, yet possess mobile phones that can serve as gateways to financial inclusion. Lopokoiyit stressed that innovation must be matched by strategic partnerships between regulators, service providers, and governments to overcome regulatory and infrastructural barriers. Vodacom Lesotho CEO Mohale Ralebitso highlighted Vodacom's ongoing efforts to drive digital adoption in Lesotho through its M-Pesa platform. "FinTech is not just about technology; it's about people. Our mission is to connect everyone, everywhere, to the benefits of digital finance, whether in the city or deep in the mountains," he said. The event concluded with a call to action for more collaboration between all stakeholders, innovators, regulators, financial institutions, and businesses. The consensus was clear: Africa's FinTech revolution can only succeed if built on collective effort and shared responsibility. As Lesotho positions itself at the forefront of digital financial innovation, today's panel discussion marks a significant step towards realizing a future where financial services are accessible to all, powered by technology and united by purpose.

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Lesotho Security Chiefs Warn Against Illegal Recruitment and Threats to National Stability

By: Seipati Matobo

Maseru

The heads of Lesotho's security institutions have issued a nationwide alert over what they describe as mounting threats to the country's peace and sovereignty. The chiefs warned of illegal recruitment schemes allegedly designed to lure young Basotho into paramilitary training across the border in South Africa. Central to the concern is a group identifying itself as "Malata Naha"; loosely translated as "Defenders of the Nation", which authorities accuse of orchestrating a clandestine operation aimed at misleading citizens into joining unapproved training camps on farms in South Africa under the guise of military preparation.

Security officials warned that this activity constitutes not only a violation of the law but also a direct assault on Lesotho's sovereignty. Intelligence suggests the possibility of external support for these efforts, raising concerns that foreign actors may be manipulating vulnerable Basotho for destabilizing agendas. While no specific international entities were named, the tone of the statement underscored the seriousness of the issue and its potential to unravel national stability.

Adding to the gravity of the matter, the statement



condemned what it described as "unacceptable" verbal attacks on His Majesty King Letsie III and the Royal Household. Without identifying the perpetrators, the chiefs insisted that such utterances offend both traditional values and legal provisions safeguarding the monarchy. They warned that public figures and private citizens alike would be held accountable for actions that undermine national unity or insult state institutions.

Equally concerning to the security apparatus is the alleged involvement of individuals in positions of authority. According to the joint statement, certain Members of Parliament and undocumented foreign nationals are suspected of participating in or enabling these operations. The statement made it clear that investigations are ongoing and affirmed that no one will be immune from legal consequences, regardless

of their political or social standing.

Security chiefs have urged families and communities to remain vigilant and to report any unusual or suspicious activity, particularly attempts to entice youth into so-called training programs. They emphasized that recruits are being exploited and trafficked under false pretenses, making the situation not only a legal matter but also a humanitarian one.

In response, authorities have pledged swift and decisive action. Measures will include arrests and prosecutions under national security laws, enhanced border security, and collaboration with regional partners to dismantle cross-border recruitment networks. Intelligence agencies have also been tasked with identifying and monitoring the individuals or organizations believed to be financing and coordinating these operations.

Calling for national unity, the security leadership appealed to all Basotho to resist divisive narratives and manipulative forces. "Our peace is precious," the statement declared, urging citizens not to allow misinformation or violence to erode the country's stability. The message concluded with a solemn invocation: "God Bless Lesotho and the Basotho People." As a follow-up, police and immigration officials have been directed to intensify surveillance at borders and within local communities. Members of the public are encouraged to report any suspected illegal recruitment activities to the nearest police station or relevant authority as the nation moves to confront what could become a serious national crisis if left unchecked.

What remains mysterious is the fact that no single South African security installation reported on this.



13

Lesotho Tribune

FARMERS CORNER

Winter Turns Everyday Veg into Costly Commodity

By Motsamai Tjakata, Agricultural Economist

As winter tightens its grip on Lesotho, vegetable prices continue to climb, putting pressure on household budgets and local retailers. Persistent cold, weak local production, and rising import costs are pushing up prices for essential vegetables, particularly tomatoes and green peppers, which remain scarce and expensive.

What's Driving the Price Increases?

- **Reduced Local Supply:** Cold weather and climate stress have limited domestic production, forcing reliance on imports.

- **Rising Import Costs:** Transport expenses and regional supply constraints are making imports pricier.

Lesotho: Price Changes in the Past Two Weeks

Vegetable	Price (per kg)	Change (%)
Tomatoes	M22.00	+10%
Green Peppers	M20.35	+12%
Potatoes	M7.00	+8%
Onions	M7.85	+9%



Cabbage
M3.80 -5%
[Data from Lesotho Tribune, local market surveys, and author estimates.]

South African Market Prices
Cross-border supply remains an important buffer, though exchange rates apply:

- **Cabbage:** R2.85/kg (down 5%)
- **Potatoes:** R48.25/10 kg (down 5%)
- **Onions:** R68.90/10 kg (up 6%)
- **Tomatoes:** R15.40/kg (up 10%)

What This Means
• Local production remains low due to cold conditions and climate variability, increasing dependence on imports.

- Import costs are climbing amid higher

transport and exchange-rate pressures.

- **Wider inflation context:** Food prices, especially vegetables, significantly contribute to headline inflation.

- **Household impact:** As essentials like tomatoes and peppers get pricier, low-income families bear the brunt.

What You Can Do
For Farmers:

- Shift to cold-tolerant crops such as cabbage, spinach, carrots, and beetroot.

- Employ season-extension strategies—plastic tunnels, greenhouses—to sustain production through winter.

For Retailers:

- Source bulk imports from South Africa when local stock is low.

- Anticipate continued shortages and price hikes in tomatoes and green peppers.

For Consumers:

- Choose more affordable vegetables currently in season (cabbage, beetroot, spinach).

- Budget for higher costs in staples like tomatoes and peppers.

Looking Ahead: Early August Forecast

- **Tomatoes:** Could rise 10–15% if imports remain constrained.
- **Green Peppers:** May climb another 12%.

- **Potatoes and Onions:** Likely to stabilize or drop slightly if more crosses from South Africa. The next Market Report will be released on 1 August 2025.

Econet gives back to the community

By: Pheello Mosesi

As the fifth beneficiaries of the Econet Telecom Lesotho's corporate responsibility, the Maleoa family walked into a newly built two roomed house in Matsatsaneng, Butha-Buthe this week.

A mother of eight children, 'Masefako Maleoa, has been described to have lived in misery and anguish for years by her neighbour who spoke at the handover of the newly built house by Econet. The house, valued to an estimated quarter of a million, is fitted with furniture.

Speaking at the handover event on behalf of the company's Chief Executive Officer, the Chief Financial Officer Teboho Tjaoane said they saw it beneficial and vital to build the Maleoa a house.

"We would like to thank the customers who have helped ETL grow as their contributions have highly contributed to making things like this happen," Tjaoane said. He said in the previous week, an event of the same fashion took place in Mokhotlong, Ntlholohetane, where a 16-year-old girl was gifted the same house from the telecommunications company.

"In line with Econet's mission, vision and core values, this new home is



not just a building but a symbol of our deep-rooted commitment to changing lives. We believe that access to a safe and dignified living environment is a basic human right. For the Maleoa family, this house represents security, peace of mind and a fresh start," Tjaoane said.

Not only did he thank Econet for making this family's dream come true but he also passed his gratitude to the customers of the company as he revealed that he believes the growth of the company comes from them.

"I want to thank Econet for the house. I lived in a muddy and ever puddly house. The condition was heartbreaking. It is still surreal to see I have a house like this because of Econet and for that act of kindness I will eternally be grateful. Those who are to follow and be the beneficiaries, I will love to see them experience the joy I have as well and I wish this company growth,"

'Masefako Maleoa, the beneficiary said, voicing out her gratitude with a face filled with joy. Present at this handover event was the Minister of Youth, Sports and Recreation, Honourable Pitso Lesaoana. The Minister said they had been working on the housing project to help the less privileged for quite some time, adding that he was amazed at how persistent Econet has been in trying to improve the lives of Basotho with both corporate responsibility and their mission statement as a service and network provider.

I want to embrace 'Mase-

fako for holding on in her conditions and not abandoning her responsibility as a parent.

This new house will be a home to her family to secure their dignity and safety. As a ministry we are Sensitivity: Confidential already working on seeing how we can also contribute to bettering the life of this family and others," the Minister added.

He said he wished more companies could follow suit in helping the less fortunate to meet them halfway, to see them having their dreams turning into reality so that poverty could be combated in Lesotho.

"I plea with Basotho to also adapt to this behaviour of helping one another individually or in groups," he said.

This project is yet another milestone in Econet's journey of putting people first and demonstrating that beyond technology and innovation, at the heart of the company is a genuine desire to see communities thrive.





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Lesotho Tribune

By: Editorial

Ever since Starlink officially landed in Lesotho, there's been this sudden shift in how the big telecom players, Econet and Vodacom, price their data. Almost "overnight", we started seeing reduced rates. Cheaper bundles, slightly tweaked promotions, that sort of thing. And don't get me wrong, on the surface that looks like a win for consumers. Who wouldn't want more affordable internet?

But then something strange started happening.

Well, maybe not strange, just... expected, if you've been paying attention to how networks actually function.

A few weeks into the new pricing wave, I (and honestly, quite a few people I've spoken to) started noticing slower speeds. YouTube buffering more than usual, WhatsApp calls cutting off randomly, web pages taking longer to load and Lesotho Tribune's livestreams a disaster. It wasn't dramatic at first, just a little frustrating. But then it became hard to ignore.

Now, I'll admit: I'm not an engineer. I don't have

EDITORIAL

Inviting the Village to a Dinner Meant for Five

...Why Lower Data Prices Without Network Upgrades Slow Everyone Down



the technical qualifications to draw definitive conclusions about how mobile networks operate. But you don't really need a degree to sense that something's off. The simple version, what I understand, is that if more people are using the same limited bandwidth (resource), something's going to give. And usually, it's speed.

That's the part I keep circling back to. It's technically impossible, at least without upgrading infrastructure, to cut prices and maintain the same level of performance. You can't open the floodgates, let more people in, and expect everything to work like it used to unless you've made space for the extra load. It's like inviting the whole village to a dinner meant for five. Everyone's still welcome, but... well, don't expect a full plate or any for that matter!

I suppose the competition brought on by Starlink forced the incumbents' hand. That's not a bad thing in principle. It's healthy. Disruption often

forces improvement or at least change. But lowering prices shouldn't be the only response. You also need to invest. Build more towers. Expand backhaul. Acquire more spectrum. Or whatever else engineers say needs to happen behind the scenes...you seem to be focused on what marketing proposes and it'll backfire! But I haven't seen signs that those kinds of upgrades are happening. At least not at the scale that would make a real difference.

It's possible the providers are playing a wait-and-see game. Maybe they're hoping Starlink won't scale quickly or that most users won't switch permanently. But if that's the strategy, then it feels short-sighted. Because what we're seeing now is slower connections across the board, is a consequence of trying to meet new competition with pricing tricks rather than infrastructure improvements. And honestly, it feels a bit unfair. You're paying less, sure, but the quality of service is also worse. So in the end, is it really a better deal?

I read on Reddit, that in Botswana, people had similar experiences when Starlink entered the scene. ISPs there also dropped their prices and, for a while, people were excited. Then the networks got bogged down. Speeds dropped. It wasn't a disaster, but it was enough to remind people that price isn't everything. Quality matters too.

One post I came across said something like: "Funny how these companies suddenly offer decent speeds the moment a real competitor arrives." There's some truth in that. Sometimes, it takes a serious threat for companies to realize what customers have been asking for all along.

But here in Lesotho, it seems we're stuck halfway. We've got the price cuts, but not the upgrades. It's like starting a race with excitement, only to trip on the first lap.

I'm not blaming the networks entirely. Maybe the margins really are tight. Maybe they're trying to stretch existing resources as far as they can before deciding whether it's worth investing more. But from a consumer standpoint, it's frustrating. You're led to believe things are getting better, but in practice, they're just... different. Not necessarily worse, but not exactly better either.

What's needed now, if we're serious about digital progress, is some honesty in how we respond to competition. Not just slashing prices, but also upgrading what supports those prices. That's the only way to give people real value.

Because otherwise, we're just putting a new label on the same old service and in this case, it might even be a slightly worse version of the old service.

Comments, corrections and tipoffs, editor@lesothotribune.co.ls



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Lesotho Tribune

By Hlalele 'Neko

Lesotho's declaration of youth unemployment as a national disaster has reignited a critical conversation about the limits of executive authority and the importance of lawful governance during times of crisis. While the Section 2 article in Lesotho Tribune rightly argues that such declarations must be both legally and constitutionally sound, the issue extends beyond technical legality. At stake is the integrity of our democracy and the precedent we set for future crises. And this is why....

A government's duty in the face of genuine disaster is to protect its people, safeguarding lives, infrastructure, and public order. But it must do so within the bounds of the law. A disaster declaration is not a political shortcut, nor is it an all-access pass for executive overreach. It is a legal instrument meant to be triggered only in the most exceptional of circumstances; such as widespread natural catastrophes, war, or pandemics that disrupt the normal functioning of state institutions. When

OPINION

Disaster Declarations Must Be Anchored in Law, Not Political Convenience

CRISIS RESPONSES AND CORRUPTION IN EMERGENCIES

declarations are issued without clear and credible evidence, or when their purpose seems politically convenient rather than factually necessary, the very concept of emergency governance is undermined.

This is why it's crucial to ask: what exactly qualifies as a disaster in legal and constitutional terms? Disasters, by definition, are sudden, severe, and overwhelming. They exceed the normal capacity of government and require immediate, extraordinary responses. Floods, earthquakes, and large-scale civil unrest meet this threshold. Vaguely defined social or economic challenges, especially those that are persistent or politically contentious, do not. Allowing a government to invoke emergency powers without strict and transparent criteria opens a dangerous door. It blurs the line between legitimate crisis management and calculated political control.

The normalization of such declarations, particular-

ly when used as tools to consolidate power or delay democratic processes, poses a long-term threat. Once a government discovers it can act beyond the usual checks and balances by invoking a "disaster," the temptation to overuse that authority becomes difficult to resist. History offers many examples of leaders who used recurring states of emergency to curtail freedoms, sideline parliaments, and insulate themselves from accountability. Lesotho must not allow itself to follow that path.

Emergency powers, even when genuinely needed, must come with guardrails. Declarations should be based on verifiable evidence, approved through proper parliamentary oversight, and strictly time-bound. Sunset clauses, judicial review, and regular reporting mechanisms are essential to ensuring that such powers are not abused. If the current declaration lacks these safeguards, then it is more than just legally questionable, it is a threat to consti-

tutional order.

The point is simple but profound: even in moments of crisis, the law must remain supreme. Governance must not yield to expediency. The government must demonstrate that the threat it claims to confront is real, that the measures it proposes are proportionate, and that the duration of these powers is clearly limited. Otherwise, what is framed as a response to disaster becomes a tool of political convenience, a pretext rather than a necessity.

True leadership is not about bypassing laws when they become inconvenient. It is about respecting them, especially when the stakes are high. In a democratic society, power must always be exercised with restraint, humility, and in accordance with the rule of law. Lesotho's leaders must remember that in times of uncertainty, the strength of the Republic lies not in decrees, but in its commitment to lawful, transparent, and accountable governance.

Youth Organisations Unite Against Attempt to Withdraw Disaster Declaration for Unemployment



By Staff Reporter

In April 2025, a coalition of youth organisations submitted a request to the office of Prime Minister Sam Matekane to declare a youth employment as a state of emergency. This letter was responded to by the Minister in the Prime Minister's Office, Limpho Tau, on May 2025, indicating that the office has taken note of the matter and that the government was currently considering it. He had highlighted that the Lesotho Disaster Management Board,

which is mandated by the Disaster Management Act of 1997 to advise the Prime Minister on emergency declarations, had discussed the matter at its meeting that was held on June 4 and directed the department to review the situation in order to advise the board on June 13. However, Tau in his letter indicated that declaring a state of emergency to bring the situation under control was not the right way to handle the issue for various reasons related to the laws set when declaring a state of emer-

gency.

However, he indicated that the issue was of utmost importance and was already being addressed by those involved.

On June 18, the Prime Minister called a youth engagement forum to discuss collective contributions to curb unemployment, an initiative that resulted in a declaration of unemployment as a National State of Disaster. The declaration was made in a Monday, 7 July, 2025 gazette by Justice Nthomeng Majara acting in the capacity of the Prime Minister and will stay so for a period of 2

tears.

It was said that the high rates of youth unemployment and job losses threatened the livelihoods of the people of Lesotho.

Following this declaration, Section 2, the Advocates of the Supremacy of the Constitution issued a statement subjected "Statement on the Declaration of Disaster on youth Unemployment".

Section 2 strongly argued that the declaration "is not only unprecedented in scope but is also legally untenable, politically expedient, and constitutionally pre-

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Lesotho Tribune

By NUL Innovation Hub

Thapelo Lekhotla, a Biotechnology student at the National University of Lesotho (NUL), decided to put the wild rosehip fruit under the microscope—literally! Rosehip is that little red berry you see people picking in the mountains. In Lesotho, folks collect it for tea, jam, juice, and even skin oil. But Thapelo wanted to know: What's really inside this plant? Is it as healthy as people say? And most importantly, is it safe? Under the supervision of Professor Sibusisiwe Magama and other co-supervisors, Thapelo set out to find answers. He didn't just test the juicy red part of the fruit—the one everyone uses. He also tested the seeds and the husks. After all, when people make rosehip oil or powder, they sometimes use

the whole fruit. This wasn't just about curiosity. Rosehip is a big deal in Lesotho. People sell it in local markets, they drink it for health, and they rub the oil on their skin. But until now, few had taken the time to check: What exactly are we putting into our bodies when we eat rosehip or drink rosehip tea?

So, Thapelo got to work. First, he collected fresh rosehip fruits from the mountains. After picking, he cleaned them, dried them, and separated the parts—fruits, seeds, and husks. Each part was ground into fine powder using a pestle and mortar. This powder was ready for testing. To check for the healthy stuff, he used something

called qualitative phytochemical analysis. That's just a fancy way of saying he looked for plant chemicals using colour tests. He soaked the rosehip powders in ethanol, which helps pull out the plant compounds. Then he added special lab chemicals to the

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SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

LESOTHO'S ROSEHIP HAS SOME GOOD STUFF FOR YOUR BODY, FINDS NUL STUDENT!



Continued from page 19

solution. If the liquid changed colour—turning pink, green, or brown—that meant a certain phytochemical was there. And what did he find? Rosehip is packed with good stuff. The fruits had terpenoids, which are great for boosting the immune system. He found flavonoids and polyphenols, which are like tiny heroes that protect the body from damage and reduce swelling. There were also anthraquinones and phlobatannins. Those are big science words, but they basically help with digestion and keep inflammation under control. Saponins and quinones were there too, fighting infections and helping balance cholesterol. So yes—rosehip really does live up to the hype when it comes to health benefits. But Thapelo didn't stop there. Next, he tested for germs. Fruits like rosehip are soft and moist, which makes them the perfect home for bacteria and fungi. To check this, Thapelo used microbial plating. He spread samples onto petri dishes filled with growth media—a jelly-like substance that helps bacteria and fungi grow. After leaving the plates for a while, the microbes started to show themselves. Sure enough, the rosehip fruits had the highest number of bacteria and fungi. The husks had fewer, and the seeds



had the least. What does this mean? If you're making rosehip tea or jam, you need to clean the fruits well and dry them properly. Otherwise, you might be drinking more than just tea—you could be sipping on some microbes too! Well microbes are not always bad but we need to be careful. Right? Finally, Thapelo tested for heavy metals. Plants absorb metals from the soil, and while some are good for you—like potassium and iron—others can be harmful if they build up, like lead and nickel. Thapelo used a special machine called a Flame Atomic Absorption Spectrometer. It shoots flames at the sample to detect even tiny amounts of metal. His results showed that the husks had the most metal con-

tent, especially potassium and iron. The fruits had some metals too, but less. And the seeds had the lowest levels. Luckily, the metal levels were mostly safe for human use. But this is still something to watch, especially for farmers and companies who want to make rosehip products for sale. Thapelo says it best: "Rosehip is an amazing plant. But people deserve to know exactly what's in it—the good stuff and

the risks—so they can use it properly." This research is good news for everyone. For farmers, it means he has found ways to test their produce. For local businesses, it means they can make teas, oils, and jams that aren't just traditional...but backed by science. And for ordinary people? Well, now you can sip your rosehip tea knowing exactly what's in your cup. Pretty cool, right?





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Lesotho Tribune

By Malefo Thinyane

Renowned SABC International News Editor Sophie Mokoena has announced her departure from the public broadcaster, drawing the curtain on a career that has shaped the landscape of South African journalism for decades.

Known for her fearless reporting and sharp political interviews, Mokoena earned a reputation as one of the country's most respected and influential journalists.

One of the defining moments of her career came in 2015, when I still in varsity, during a tense interview with Lesotho's former military commander, Lieutenant General Tlali Kamoli. At the time, Lesotho was engulfed in political turmoil, and Kamoli stood at the centre of serious allegations including coup plotting and human rights abuses.

Mokoena did not flinch. Her line of questioning was firm and unrelenting, pressing Kamoli on the unrest and holding him accountable in a manner few would dare. Kamoli, who would later face charges including murder and treason, de-

AFRICA

Sophie Mokoena Signs Off, Leaving a Legacy of Fearless Truth



flected the questions, but the exchange laid bare the gravity of the political crisis and highlighted Mokoena's commitment to the truth. Over the years, Mokoena played a central role in shaping SABC's international news coverage. Her ability to strike a balance between probing journalism and measured reporting earned her widespread acclaim. Whether reporting on regional conflicts, high-stakes diplomacy, or elections across the con-

tinent, she consistently brought clarity and depth to complex stories, earning the trust of viewers and the respect of peers. As news of her departure spread, tributes poured in across social media, with colleagues, viewers, and fellow journalists celebrating her unwavering dedication to the craft. Many described her as a trailblazer and mentor, a figure who opened doors for younger journalists and raised the bar for political reporting

in South Africa and beyond. Sophie Mokoena's exit from the SABC marks more than just the end of a professional chapter, it signals the departure of a voice that has long stood as a pillar of journalistic integrity. While she may be stepping away from the newsroom, her impact will endure in the stories she told, the questions she asked, and the standards she set. Likhomo 'M'e Sophie!

Ghana's President scraps fuel allowances for all political appointees



business tycoon Sam Matekane, the Honourable Prime Minister, vowed to do away with the M5,000.00 in petrol allowances of members of Parliament, calling that unnecessary expenditure. Some Basotho had also, in the previous administration, tried to petition the petrol allowance issue but their efforts were unsuccessful. And so when the RFP promised it would dismiss the allowances in its administration, many were hopeful that at least with a new government things would be better. But the five year government term is almost over and Basotho are still waiting for the Messiah to come. Waiting hopefully on the promises that were made to uplift their hopes.

By Dorcas Agambila

All political appointees under President John Dramani Mahama's current administration will no longer receive fuel allowances or allocations, with immediate effect. This announcement was made in a statement dated Tuesday, 15th July (2025) and signed by the Minister for Government Communications, Felix Kwakye Ofose. Redirecting resources to priority sectors According to the statement, this decision forms part of the government's renewed commitment to reducing public expenditure and channelling resources into critical sectors of national development. "This latest cost-cutting measure follows sweeping

reductions in the size of government through the appointment of fewer ministers and a leaner staff at the Office of the President," the statement read. The government has in recent weeks introduced several measures aimed at curbing unnecessary expenditure. These include limiting the number of presidential staffers and ministerial appointments, and now, eliminating fuel benefits for

appointees. The latest move is expected to bolster fiscal discipline, promote responsible governance, and serve as a symbol of accountability at a time when economic prudence is crucial. News source: Business Insider Africa
Aside comment: During the campaign for the national elections of October 7 2022, the then newly found Revolution for Prosperity (RFP) led by



Lesotho Youth Team Returns Home with 13 Medals from AUSC Region 5 Games



By: Litšitso Letsunyane

Maseru

Team Lesotho returned home on Tuesday after a stellar performance at the African Union Sports Council (AUSC) Region 5 Youth Games held in Windhoek, Namibia. The national delegation, comprising athletes across various sporting disciplines, clinched an impressive 13 medals, showcasing the country's growing talent in youth sports. The team was officially welcomed on Wednesday at a ceremony hosted at Scripture Union in Maseru. The event drew senior figures from

the country's sports administration, including Lesotho Sport and Recreation Commission (LSRC) president Baba Malephane, Lesotho National Olympic Committee (LNOC) CEO Morake Raleaka, and the Principal Secretary from the Ministry of Sport.

In a show of determination and talent, Lesotho's athletes shone particularly in athletics and boxing, with additional success in Special Olympics and table tennis.

Medal Breakdown:
ATHLETICS

- Gold Medals:
 - Nokwanda Mabandla – T11 100m, T13 200m

- Silver Medals:
 - Liteboho Lebona – T12 100m
 - 'Mamakhoaa Lipakela – T13 100m
- Bronze Medals:
 - Liteboho Lebona – 200m
 - 'Maletsatsi Pitso – 100m (Special Olympics)
 - Tšelisehang Letuka – 200m (Special Olympics)

BOXING

- Gold Medal:
 - Relebohile Moso – 51kg
- Silver Medals:
 - Mvokelelo Snyman –

- Silver Medals:
 - Realeboha Segoe – 60kg
 - Retšelisitsoe Phalatsi – 60kg
 - Reabetsoe Mokhitli – 54kg
- Bronze Medals:
 - Realeboha Segoe – 60kg
 - Retšelisitsoe Phalatsi – 60kg
 - Reabetsoe Mokhitli – 54kg

TABLE TENNIS

- Bronze Medal:
 - Team Naleli Mfundisi, Nthabiseng Raleie, Zanele Mofechane

The AUSC Region 5 Youth Games serve as a developmental platform for young athletes across southern Africa and Lesotho's latest achievements are a testament to the country's growing footprint in regional sports.

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carious.” It continued to say “by contrast, youth unemployment and job losses, however regrettable and severe, do not fit the statutory construct of a “disaster” under the Act”, referring to Section 2 of the Disaster Management Act, 1997 (Act No.2 of 1997) that defines disaster a progressive or sudden, widespread or localised, natural or man-made event... It said legalising this declaration would therefore open the door to future “disaster” declaration in relation to potholes, corruption, mismanagement or even public dissatisfaction with service delivery. “If the government is of the view that persistent socio-economic deprivation now qualifies as a disaster, then the appropriate legal and constitutional course of action is to introduce an amendment to the Disaster Management Act through a transparent, consultative parliamentary process...ensure that any expanded executive authority is subject to constitutional safeguards, judicial oversight, and clear limitations in both scope and time,” Section 2 affirmed.

It said if none of the amendments are made, then the declaration might as well be considered “ultra vires” as “the youth of Lesotho deserve more than symbolic gestures wrapped

in legal exceptionalism.” The Coalition of youth organisations didn’t take Section 2’s statement lightly, as they also issued a statement titled “Legal Rebuttal to withdraw of state of disaster and taking of some overt action to alleviate youth unemployment”.

After the uproar of Section 2’s legal attempt to the office of the Prime Minister to withdraw the state of disaster declaration, the united organisations issued another letter, now a strong rebuttal against this attempt.

This response was triggered by Section 2’s asserts that the attempt to interfere with the government’s disaster management efforts is unlawful and against the interests of Lesotho’s youth.

The organisations defended their case, saying the Prime Minister acted within his rights under the Disaster Management Act of 1997 when declaring the state of disaster. They contended that the declaration was a necessary response to the severity of youth unemployment, which they classify as a man-made disaster resulting from policy failures. They further claimed that Section 2 failed to raise objections promptly and that their request to the office of the Prime Minister was based on misinterpretations of the law,

emphasizing that the government’s actions align exactly with Section 25 of the constitution, which promotes socio-economic affairs. The youth organizations therefore requested that the Prime Minister dismiss the withdrawal request and maintain the disaster declaration to facilitate ongoing efforts to address youth unemployment through legal, financial and technical support. While the back and forth of letters is keeping the youth busy on their toes, apparently a total of 3, 575 jobs have been created since the declaration of Disaster on youth unemploy-

ment.

The Ministry of Public Works and Transport has allegedly created 2,079 jobs, 1,000 youths will be absorbed by initiatives led by the Ministry of Trade, 96 by environmental programmes under the Ministry of Environment and 400 will sign the National Youth Apprenticeship Programme contracts. The spectators in the battle of legal clauses are carefully and patiently watching to see who among the many unemployed Basotho will make it on the government’s payroll without a politician in their pocket.

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Lesotho Tribune

By Tholoana Lesenya and
Lemohang Botsane

MASERU

The much-anticipated Alliance Challenge is back for its 8th edition, promising not just thrilling football action but a historic first in the tournament's history. Set to kick off next month, the annual competition, proudly sponsored by Alliance Insurance, will for the first time feature women's football teams alongside the traditional men's sides. This progressive move signals a new chapter for women's football in Lesotho, offering the country's female athletes a long-overdue platform to showcase their talent. Since its inception, the Alliance Challenge has been a highlight of Lesotho's football calendar, attracting thousands of supporters and football enthusiasts. Traditionally contested by four top-tier men's teams being Lesotho Correctional Service (LCS), Lioli, Matlama, and Linare, the tournament has grown to be more than just a compe-

ARTS & SPORTS

Alliance Challenge Returns with Historic Inclusion of Women's Teams



tion, embodying a spirit of unity and community engagement. However, this year's edition promises to break new ground. The inclusion of women's teams not only reflects the growing interest and participation of women in football but also underscores Alliance Insurance's commitment to promoting equality and inclusivity in sports. The corresponding women's sides of LCS, Lioli, Matlama, and Linare will now have the opportunity to compete under the same spotlight as their male counterparts, elevating the status of the women's game within the national sporting landscape. Matches for the women's division are scheduled to be held at the iconic LCS Ground on the 16th day of August this year, which has been a staple venue for many

memorable fixtures in Lesotho football. Fans can expect spirited contests as these pioneering women's teams' battle for the inaugural women's title of the Alliance Challenge. On the other hand the men's division takes center stage on August 17th this year at the renowned Bambatha Tšita Sports Arena. The event, which has been suitably named the "Alliance Weekend," promises to deliver high-energy action and fierce competition as

four of Lesotho's top clubs vie for supremacy in what has become a staple fixture on the local football calendar. Serving as off-season vital fundraising platform, the annual tournament continues to grow in figure and popularity. This year's edition marks a significant milestone, not only because of the introduction of women's teams to the

tournament but also due to the increased financial stakes in the men's competition. The prize money has been raised to a lucrative M100,000.00, up from last year's M75,000.00, offering an even greater incentive for participating teams to claim victory. Maintaining its high-stakes tradition, the competition will once again adopt a "winner-takes-all" format, ensuring that every match carries immense pressure and excitement.

Alliance Public Relations and Communications Manager, Limakatso Mokobocho said the decision to integrate women's teams into the tournament was driven by the increasing standard and popularity of women's football both globally and locally. With growing support structures and investment in female athletes, it was only fitting that the Alliance Challenge embrace this evolution. Football fans across the nation are eagerly awaiting what promises to be a landmark event, celebrating not just competition, but progress and inclusivity. As excitement builds, the 8th edition of the Alliance Challenge is set to be remembered not only for the skills displayed on the pitch but for breaking barriers and setting a precedent for future tournaments.

Respected Coach Bob Mafoso Steps Down from Likuena Role to Focus On Namibia-Based African Stars FC



By: Litšitso Letsunyane

The Lesotho Football Association (LeFA) has officially confirmed the resignation of Atang Bob Mafoso from his position as assistant coach of the Lesotho senior national football team, Likuena. Bob Mafoso, a respected and accomplished figure in Southern African football, has stepped aside to concentrate fully on his new challenge with Namibian giants, African Stars FC, as they prepare for their CAF Champions League campaign set to begin in September

2025.

Coach Mafoso has been a pillar in Lesotho football, with an impressive coaching résumé spanning over a decade. Holding a CAF A License, Mafoso began his coaching journey with local clubs such as Sky Battalion FC, Likila United FC, and Sandawana FC. His commitment to grassroots football laid a strong foundation for what would become an illustrious coaching career. His achievements include leading Lesotho's U20 side to the COSAFA U20 Finals in both

2017 and 2019, and a celebrated tenure as head coach of Bantu FC, where he won the 2019–20 Premier League title and earned Coach of the Season honors. After guiding Lioli FC to victory in the 2022 Alliance Cup, he returned to Bantu FC, securing both the 2022–23 Premier League title and the 2023 People's Cup. Following the departure of Serbian coach Veselin Jelusic in 2023, Mafoso joined the Likuena technical team as assistant coach to Mr. Leslie Notsi. Under their leadership, Lesotho reached the final of the 2023 COSAFA Cup, a significant achievement that highlighted Mafoso's tactical insight and ability to elevate national performance on the regional stage. His contributions to Likuena have been instrumental during a crucial transitional phase for the team. As the national side now gears up for the 2026 FIFA World Cup qualifiers, with crucial matches against South Africa and Benin scheduled for September, LeFA is now in search of a new assistant coach to support Coach Notsi in the next phase

of Likuena's journey. Coach Mafoso took over as head coach of African Stars in mid-April 2025, succeeding Fillemon Ronnie Kanalelo, who had just led the Namibian club to a league title. In his short time with the team, Mafoso has already overseen 11 matches, earning praise for strong performances and his hallmark tactical discipline. African Stars FC have lauded his winning mentality, his ability to develop young talent, and his sharp football intelligence, all traits that will be crucial as they prepare to compete on the continental stage in the CAF Champions League.

The Lesotho Football Association expressed deep gratitude for Mafoso's dedication and service to the national team. As Coach Mafoso transitions fully into his role at African Stars FC, his focus now shifts to leaving a mark not only in Namibia but across the African continent. With a proven track record, tactical expertise, and a passion for developing the game, he is poised to become an influential figure in continental football.