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Advocate Haae Phoofolo KC Passes Away

By: Tholoana Lesenya

Lesotho has lost one of its most prominent legal practitioners following the passing of Advocate Haae Phoofolo KC, a highly respected senior counsel whose career spanned decades at the forefront of the country's legal and political spheres.

Phoofolo, who held the title of King's Counsel (KC), was widely regarded as one of Lesotho's leading legal minds. Known for his commanding courtroom presence, sharp intellect and dedication to the rule of law, he played a central role in shaping the legal landscape of the



country.

Throughout his career, Advocate Phoofolo was involved in several high-profile cases that defined moments in Lesotho's judicial and political history. His legal practice was characterized by eloquence, precision and an

unyielding commitment to justice.

In addition to his legal work, he contributed significantly to national affairs. He was called upon to provide counsel and leadership during critical periods in Lesotho's governance, and his voice

often carried influence in moments of uncertainty. Members of the legal fraternity described him as a mentor and a pillar of wisdom. Many young lawyers who trained under his guidance credit him for instilling discipline, professional integrity and a passion for justice.

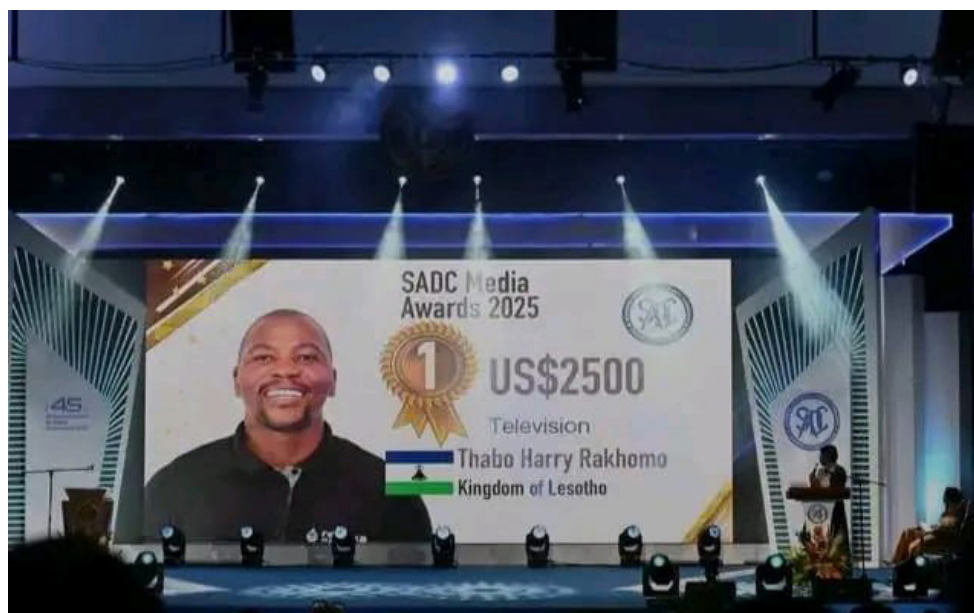
Advocate Phoofolo's passing marks the end of an era for Lesotho's legal community. His contribution to both the law and public service leaves a lasting legacy that will continue to be felt across the country.

Funeral details are expected to be announced by the family in due course.

Lesotho Shines at SADC Awards as Rakhomo, Kholumo Bring Home Top Honours

By: Tholoana Lesenya

Lesotho emerged as one of the standout nations at the 45th Southern African Development Community (SADC) Summit of Heads of State and Government held on Sunday in Antananarivo, Madagascar, after scooping top honours in both the SADC Media Awards and the SADC Secondary and Tertiary Essay Competitions. Television journalist Thabo "Mthibo" Rakhomo flew the national flag high by claiming 1st place in the Television Category of the prestigious SADC Media Awards. The annual awards recognize excellence in print, radio, television and photojournalism across the region, offering cash prizes to winners and runners-up who



demonstrate outstanding creativity and commitment to telling Africa's stories.

Rakhomo's triumph follows in the footsteps of fellow countryman Lesooana Moeti, who has won the same category on multiple occasions, further cementing Lesotho's reputation as a breeding ground for world-class journalism talent.

In the academic arena,

Lesotho also made history through Ntsoaki Kholumo, who clinched 1st Prize in the Tertiary Institutions Essay Competition. Her essay, which explored the role of SADC's founding fathers in fostering peace, security, and regional co-operation, was praised for its depth, originality, and clarity of thought.

Adding to the nation's success, Boitumelo Khotlele secured 3rd Prize in

the same essay category, ensuring Lesotho was represented on the winners' podium twice. The SADC Essay Competitions are designed to engage young people at secondary and tertiary level on the organization's vision, mission, and milestones, while inspiring them to contribute ideas towards regional integration and sustainable development.

The string of victories marks a proud moment for Lesotho, with both media and academic representatives standing tall among their regional peers. Officials and fellow citizens have hailed the winners as "trailblazers" who continue to position Lesotho as a force to be reckoned with in both journalism and intellectual discourse.



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Frazer Solar Case Collapse Sparks Concerns over DCEO's Effectiveness

By: Tholoana Lesenya

MASERU

The permanent stay of proceedings against former Minister in the Prime Minister's Office, Temeki Tšolo, in the controversial M1.7 billion Frazer Solar case, has raised questions about whether the Directorate on Corruption and Economic Offences (DCEO) is adequately fulfilling its mandate. Along the week, the High Court Judge Tšeli-so Mokoko dismissed the charges after the prosecution failed to bring eleven subpoenaed witnesses or present sufficient evidence, despite previously being granted an adjournment from October 21, 2024, to August 18, 2025.

Justice Mokoko ruled that the Crown's repeated failure constituted an unreasonable delay that infringed on Tšolo's right to a fair trial. "This court cannot continue to allow such delays where the accused's rights are being infringed," the judge noted.

Procedural delays and legal precedent The Tšolo case is not isolated. In *Lephoto v DCEO* (2022), the High Court criticized the anti-corruption body over prolonged delays and insufficient preparation, citing violations of fair-trial guarantees. Several other rulings similarly highlight how repeated prosecutorial lapses can



justify a permanent stay of proceedings.

While civil proceedings relating to the Frazer Solar contract successfully declared it "void and invalid ab initio", the criminal case against Tšolo faltered due to inadequate evidence management and witness coordination. The collapse of the prosecution illustrates the contrast between civil and criminal enforcement, and underscores the importance of trial readiness. Impact on the accused For Tšolo, the outcome offers relief but also reflects the personal toll of high-profile prosecutions. During proceedings, he described

himself as socially isolated and unfairly vilified: "They said I sold my country... I live like a loner."

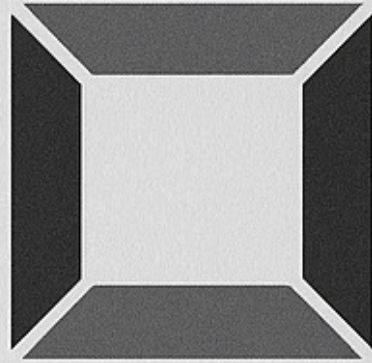
Legal experts warn that, even when prosecution fails due to procedural gaps, public perception often paints the accused as guilty, highlighting the reputational risks associated with incomplete or poorly managed cases. Broader implications for anti-corruption enforcement

Observers say the DCEO's repeated delays in high-profile cases risk undermining public confidence in the rule of law. While there is no evidence that the agency intentionally humiliates

suspects, the outcome, high-profile charges that collapse in court, creates that perception.

Analysts recommend that the DCEO implement stronger pre-charge readiness protocols, robust witness management systems, and timely disclosure practices to ensure that prosecutions proceed efficiently and justly. Until such measures are adopted, high-profile corruption cases in Lesotho may continue to raise questions about whether justice is being served, or merely delayed and deferred, leaving both the accused and the public dissatisfied.

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Lesotho Tribune

By Staff Reporter

The community of Roma and beyond gathered yesterday, 23 August 2025, to lay to rest one of its most beloved sons, former Lerotholi Polytechnic lecturer 'Nabi Lephoto. His passing leaves behind not only a family in mourning but also a legacy of service that transformed lives and communities.

Among those who remembered him was one of his former home students, Pinelo Maharaso, now a qualified cyber security and network expert. Speaking with deep emotion, Maharaso recalled her first encounter with the late lecturer.

"I met ntate 'Nabi in 2015. He took us under his wings and taught us computer basics after we completed our Form 5, every kid rich or poor," she said.

It was this spirit of generosity that defined Lephoto's life. He made computers accessible to

schools across the Roma Parish. Today, every primary school in the parish is equipped with computers, a testament to his vision and sacrifice. The Maama Principal Chief's office too stands as a symbol of his work, equipped with technology that would otherwise never have been within reach. Lephoto's love for community was matched by

his love for sport. He stood behind his local teams with unwavering loyalty, supporting Manonyane FC, Roma Boys FC, and the team that carried his name, 'Nabi Stars. To him, sport was not just entertainment but a means of uniting young people and instilling discipline. He was more than a lecturer, more than a mentor, and more than

a community leader. To his family, he was a son, a brother, an uncle, and a father whose devotion never wavered. To his friends and community, he was a man whose acts of service will echo long after his passing. Rest in eternal peace, beloved 'Nabi. You touched lives, you changed futures, and you will never be forgotten.



Vodacom Lesotho, UNFPA aim to eradicate GBV

By Pheello Mosesi

Afro Barometer reports that in the year 2022, 53 percent of Basotho said violence against women is “somewhat common” while 28 percent found it as a “very common” occurrence within their communities.

In Lesotho, it is reported that 86 percent of women endure the bitterness that comes with GBV. But in an effort to see Lesotho phasing out this alarming statistics, Vodacom Lesotho through its social investment programme Vodacom Lesotho Foundation and the United Population Fund (UNFPA) joint forces, signing a memorandum of understanding (MOU) termed to last three years effective from August 19.

The 2024 studies by LDHS have uncovered that 36 percent of women in Lesotho have experienced violence committed by their intimate partners.

Vodacom CEO Mohale Ralebitso said the collaboration was more personal for them as a company as they have lost an employee in the past as a result of GBV, referring to Rethabile Mofolo who tragically lost her life in the hands of her husband.

He indicated that women and children who are victims of GBV are often not presented with options to easily pack

up and leave, hence they stay to endure the mental, verbal and physical abuse because their perpetrators are also their bread winners. He therefore emphasized that the ceremony is of high significance to empower women and grant them equal opportunities that could help them be independent.

“We partner and sign this MOU today because the UNFPA is a valuable partner to us. We have a lot of work to do in ensuring that in instances where there is GBV, as a society we are there to assist and this assistance starts with stopping the GBV even before it gets anywhere. It starts with men stopping to act like they are no participants or support perpetrators to people who perform these acts,” Ralebitso said.

“We are fostering an en-

vironment where perpetrators are held accountable and women are empowered to speak out, to providing comprehensive support for survivors and their children. We urge every Mosotho to treat GBV with the gravity it deserves, reporting incidents as they would any other crime to ensure justice and protection,” he added.

Ralebitso further hinted that GBV related initiatives are not something they are commencing on from the partnership with the UNFPA, citing what Vodacom Lesotho Foundation continues to do with “Nthuse helpline” which is a line designated to give SOS calls in the case of an ongoing abuse.

In the merger between Vodacom and UNFPA, Ralebitso noted that it will be easier to further care and administer the

care facilities that host victims of GBV which are already monitored under the company’s foundation.

“The foundation is also caretaking duties in several of the establishments which play host for GBV victims assisting them with shelter as well as counselling,” Ralebitso continued, further adding that more facilities of this nature could be build and supported with facilitation and manpower they require for their success.

“We are not in every district yet, so in case there are other partners that wish to join in on the initiative maybe by donating more establishments of this nature, we can together undertake fundraising exercises to ensure that those facilities are refurbished to



Continues in Page 8

Continued from Page 7

fit for their purpose. We will naturally support with communication infrastructure and ensuring that there are no charges taken," he said.

The chairman of Vodacom Lesotho Foundation, John Matlosa, passed his gratitude to the UNFPA for merging with Vodacom in the initiative, citing that experience has taught the foundation that collaborations in such initiatives go a long way in making a difference for the better.

"We convey our appreciation to the organisation that funds the work that we do in gender equality. As a foundation, we supported a number of GBV issues. We have a number of safe houses in the country which shows our commitment on working on GBV issues. We noted over the years that it is not easy to do these things alone over the years, hence we found it befitting to partner with UNFPA."

He further noted that as a foundation, they already have a number of running operations which are linked to fighting GBV in collaboration with other organisations.

"We've got a Nokaneng App, a partnership between us and GZI which is solely intended a space through which victims can be able to access a counsellor at the end



of the line. It identifies five or so people that are trustees in a case of GBV to seek help from them or have them find help for the victim."

He added that one of the fundamental key areas would be to educate boys from an early age to take note on how to not become perpetrators of GBV due to misconceptions of what it may mean to be a man in a house hold.

"Earlier this year we engaged the Initiation Schools Council to say maybe we should change our perspective that when initiates come down from the mountain, they should understand that being a man does not give them the right to abuse women

to assert power, and the project was very successful."

UNFPA Country Representative John Kennedy Mosoti, emphasized the words of Ralebitso's statement, conveying the significance of joining forces in fighting GBV in Lesotho.

In his remarks, he expressed that he is hopeful to see Basotho joining the them in order to curve the graph down from the 86 percent margin to the lowest within the period of the MOU and even beyond.

"The eradication of GBV requires a firm, unified response from all stakeholders, regardless of status of wealth," Kennedy said.

Defined by Vodacom Le-

sotho, the MOU outlines a multi-faceted strategic framework, designed to address GBV through provision of safe environments, holistic survivor support strengthened partnerships, rehabilitation and reintegration and equality advocacy. It has four focus areas which include ensuring the safety and security of survivors of GBV and their minor dependents through provision of shelter, to deliver survivor centered multi-sectorial care support services and empowering GBV survivors, to facilitate access to rehabilitative services and resources designed to assist survivors in their reintegration into the societies and to promote gender equality and protect human rights in Lesotho.

While Vodacom supports Lapeng centre, providing 40 to 60 survivors with support and logistics, now an added benefit has been brought in, engaging health services, police and counselling to improve convenience of services.

Legal services will also be provided for victims for their protection. Prior recovery, they will be provided with skills that will help them to be economically independent. Vodacom is doing advocacy with UNFPA and the ministry of gender building to the 16th of November where all districts will be paid visits.



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Lesotho Tribune

By: Staff Reporter

MASERU

Allegations have emerged that Minister of Local Government, Police and Home Affairs, Lebona Lephema, is pushing the Lesotho National Development Corporation (LNDC) to rescue his struggling diamond venture with M108 (approximately USD6.09 million) of public money. Sources within Mothae Diamonds told Lesotho Tribune on condition of anonymity that the mine has been technically insolvent for months and that workers have borne the brunt of the financial crisis. “Kenny (Lebona’s son) informed us that LNDC will rescue the mine with the needed M108 million, latest in Sept 2025. We have been sitting at home not being paid on time, some people don’t get their full salaries,” said a Mothae employee. Another employee who spoke on condition of anonymity said she was forced to resign, and that to date she has not been paid her terminal

BUSINESS & ECONOMY

LNDC To Rescue Minister’s Failing Mine



benefits.

Repeated calls to Minister Lephema went unanswered. The revelations deepen the crisis surrounding Mothae. Earlier this year, Lesotho Tribune reported that the mine had sent 400 employees home on forced leave, slashing their pay by half. Management claimed the move was driven by weak diamond demand in Europe, but trade unions accused the mine of breaking the law. The Independent Democratic Union of Lesotho (IDUL), affiliated with IndustriALL, said the pay cuts violated the country’s labour legislation. IDUL general secretary May Rathakane demanded that Mothae respect workers’ rights to collective bargaining, warning against unilateral decisions that disregard employees and unions. “Mothae diamond mine must respect trade union rights to collective bargaining and refrain from acting unilaterally where workers’ and trade union rights are concerned,” Rathakane said. “Market volatility is

not an excuse to withhold full wages,” said Glen Mphutlane, IndustriALL’s director of mining and diamonds. “Companies must plan for both booms and slumps rather than sacrificing workers’ livelihoods.” The prospect of LNDC bailing out Mothae raises difficult questions about governance and conflicts of interest. The corporation is tasked with promoting national development, not propping up the private assets of sitting ministers. Critics warn that if public money is used to save Lephema’s mine, it would set a dangerous precedent where taxpayers foot the bill for politically connected businesses, while ordinary Basotho struggle with unemployment and rising costs of living. Labour groups are now calling on the government to intervene, not to rescue the owners, but to protect jobs and enforce the law. The allegations also place renewed pressure on Prime Minister Ntsokoane Matekane’s administration, which has promised trans-

parency and accountability in public spending. The Mothae diamond mine, located in the highlands of Lesotho, has been a magnet for controversy for years. In 2024, Australian firm Lucapa Diamond Company “sold” its 70 percent stake in the mine to Lephema Executive Transport, a local mining and construction company owned by Minister Lephema for a mere M100k (USD6k) without paying Government of estimated an estimated USD100 million. Since then, the mine has struggled with falling revenues, delayed salaries, and industrial unrest. The latest reports of insolvency and a looming LNDC bailout have left workers uncertain about their future, while fuelling public anger about the intersection of politics and private gain. With phones at the minister’s office going unanswered, the biggest questions remain unresolved:

- Why should taxpayers fund the rescue of a privately-owned mine?
- Has LNDC formally committed to releasing M108 million by September?
- And what safeguards, if any, will ensure that workers benefit, rather than political elites?

For now, Mothae workers remain in limbo, caught between a collapsing mine and a political storm. The controversy is unlikely to die down soon, especially as the deadline for the alleged bailout approaches.

Gem Diamonds Confronts Tough Market with Cost Cuts and Workforce Reduction

By Lemohang Botsane

London

Gem Diamonds Limited has announced significant operational changes in response to ongoing market headwinds, reporting a sharp decline in sales revenue and production metrics for the first half of 2025. The company, which owns 70 percent of the Letseng mine in Lesotho, recorded weaker diamond sales, reduced ore volumes, and a notable workforce restructuring as it revised its guidance for the remainder of the year. Performance in H1 2025 From January to June 2025, Gem Diamonds sold 44,360 carats compared with 56,944 carats in the same period last year, a 22 percent drop. Sales revenue fell even more steeply, down 43 percent to US\$44.7 million from US\$77.9 million in H1 2024. Average prices declined to US\$1,008 per carat, a 26 percent fall from US\$1,366 per carat a year earlier.

Although volumes and prices both decreased, some standout stones supported revenue. Six diamonds sold for more than US\$1 million each, generating US\$9.3 million. The highest price achieved was US\$26,441 per carat for



a 67.5 carat white diamond. Four diamonds larger than 100 carats were recovered during the period, three of which were sold. After the reporting period, a 250 carat Type II white dia-

mond was recovered, but management cautioned that its quality is such that it will likely yield a lower-than-expected polished outcome.

Production Metrics
Waste tonnes stripped

fell by nearly half to 1.7 million tonnes, while ore tonnes treated remained broadly stable at 2.5 million tonnes. Carats recovered totaled 47,125, down 16

Continues in Page 14

Government Ministries Equipped With Skills to Drive Change

By: Lemohang Botsane

Leribe

The Ministry of Finance and Development Planning this week completed a 10-day seminar on policy and growth training, held from August 11th-22nd, in Leribe.

The Workshop, supported by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), intended to boost the capacity of public sector practitioners in Policy formulation, strategic planning and data-driven analysis.

A total of 31 participants from various organisations across different fields attended the training that was formulated to strengthen their skills and expertise in policy development. The workshop is also part of the ministry's efforts to build the capacity of public sector professionals and refine policy-making in this country. Matenki Mohapeloa, a senior economic planner from the Ministry of Trade and Industry said this training has equipped them with confidence as planners.

"As we go back to our different sectors, we are going to lead and show merit policy," Mohapeloa said.

She said since there's a problem, they will meet and plan on how to tackle such issues.



"Personally, this workshop helped me. It came about at the right time for me because I was given the responsibility of making strategic plans for my ministry," added Mohapeloa.

The managing director at the Ministry of Finance and Development Planning, Mokone Mokokoane, said the main objective of this training was to educate professionals from different government sectors and learn which steps to follow in policy development.

"As the ministry, we are given the responsibility to see that we help other ministries. We had to find an expert in policy making within the country but with the help from the UNDP, the training was facilitated by Professor Gituro Wainaina," Mokokoane informed. He said the training participants will further train

others in their respective sectors as well as those in sectors that were not represented, as this is a Trainer's Training.

"We hosted 1 representative from 1 sector or ministry hence they will have to go back and train others in their organisations and those organisations which were not represented," he concluded.

Souleman Bouke, a UNDP Economic advisor expressed gratitude for this collaboration and commended every participant for their dedication and effort, saying he believes that after the workshop, for the betterment of the Policy, everyone will be able to voice out their opinion.

When closing the ceremony, acting DPS from the Ministry of Finance and Development Planning, Mahlape Ramoseme, weighed in and bestowed appreciation to all par-

ticipants as well as the UNDP for backing this initiative.

"Let's leave this programme inspired, motivated and committed to being agents of change in our policy and planning landscape. Let us continue to interact, to innovate and to hold ourselves accountable as we work to deliver better outcomes for the people of Lesotho," said Ramoseme.

The Ministry of Finance, which backed the venture, acknowledged the importance of alliance, creativity and accountability in the policy-making process. As attendees go back to their various responsibilities, they are anticipated to apply the knowledge and tools obtained during the workshop to upgrade administration and the lives of Basotho.

The workshop facilitator, Professor Wainaina was applauded for his proficiency and guidance while the UNDP was valued for its generous alliance and aid. The attendees were also lauded for their devotion, active interaction and willingness to challenge themselves.

"With the end of the workshop, you are expected to be advocates of change, transforming insights into tangible results that advance Lesotho's development goals," Ramoseme commanded the participants.

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Continued from page 11

percent from 55,873 in the prior year. Grades also declined, from 2.20 carats per hundred tonnes to 1.88 carats, reflecting lower ore quality during the period.

Cost and Operational Adjustments

In light of the weak global diamond market, compounded by US tariff uncertainty and a subdued US dollar, the company has moved to conserve cash and protect shareholder value.

Cost reduction measures target savings of between US\$1.4 million and US\$1.6 million per month.

Mining activities will continue at current throughput levels of around 5 million tonnes per year, but waste mining volumes will be scaled back for 12 months. This reduction is not expected to compromise the longer-term life of the mine plan. An additional 0.5 million tonnes of higher-value Satellite pipe ore has also been unlocked for processing in the second half of 2025.

A major change will be workforce rationalisation. Gem Diamonds has warned that approximately 250 positions, representing around 20 percent of the workforce, could be cut. Consultations with employees and stakeholders are under way to manage the process in a transparent and re-

sponsible manner.

Further belt-tightening will come from the corporate office. Board members, executives, and senior managers will take temporary salary reductions, with the company considering issuing shares in lieu of cash to partially offset the cuts. This approach is intended to align management interests with those of shareholders.

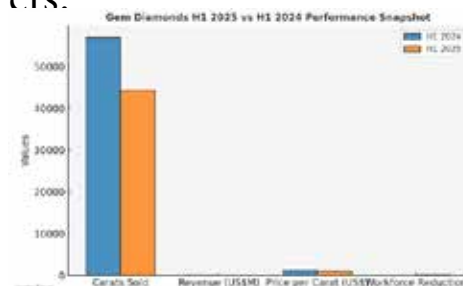


Figure 1: H1 2025 vs H1 2024 Performance Snapshot

Ghaghoo License Relinquished

The first half of the year also saw the formal hand-over of the Ghaghoo mine in Botswana to the government. Following the removal of the processing plant and other infrastructure, Gem Diamonds completed all agreed safety and remedial activities. With the license officially cancelled, the company has no further obligations or commitments at the site.

Revised 2025 Guidance Given the operational changes and market conditions, Gem Diamonds has updated its guidance for the full year 2025. Waste tonnes mined are now expected to range between 1.8 and 2.0 million, down from previous guidance of 5.0 to 5.5 million. Carats recovered are

forecast between 87,000 and 90,000, unchanged from original estimates. Carats sold are slightly reduced to 84,000 to 87,000 from 86,000 to 89,000.

Costs are expected to improve. Direct cash costs per tonne treated are now projected between M225 and M240, down from the earlier forecast of M245 to M260. Operating costs

per tonne treated are also expected to decline to between M295 and M310, compared with earlier guidance of M345 to M360. Total capital expenditure guidance remains modest at US\$4.0 to US\$5.0 million.

Outlook

Despite the setbacks, Gem Diamonds reaffirmed its commitment to producing high-quality diamonds from Letšeng and expressed confidence that its cost management and operational changes would leave the company well positioned for a recovery when global conditions improve. Management stressed that it will continue to monitor markets closely and provide updates as the year progresses.

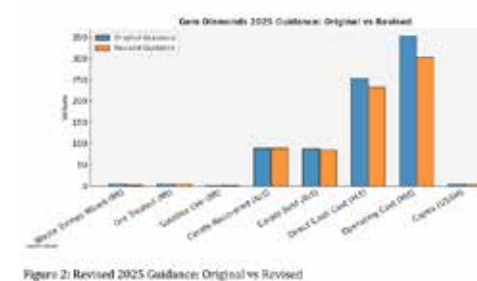


Figure 2: Revised 2025 Guidance: Original vs Revised



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Lesotho Tribune

By: Editorial

The 2027 national elections are fast approaching and a prevailing sense of dissatisfaction among the populace has become evident. This discontent extends not only towards the current administration but also towards all previous governments in Lesotho which have largely failed to uphold the promises made during their campaigns.

As political parties, we would like to believe it is essential to engage in thorough self-introspection at one point to identify and implement effective strategies that will resonate with the voters and ultimately restore their trust. The number one question our politicians need to ask themselves is: what concrete steps can we take to ensure that we not only win back the support of the electorate but also secure a prominent position in the next government?

The urgency of the situation is underscored by the current government's need to convene a critical, perhaps even unconventional, meeting to address the growing concerns voiced

by citizens. The sentiments expressed on the streets indicate that many are losing faith in the electoral process, casting doubt on the potential success of the upcoming elections. A significant risk looms that a large number of Basotho, particularly those residing in the highland areas, may opt to boycott polling stations altogether.

In light of this, we recently embarked on an insightful journey, taking a left turn out of Maseru to engage directly with the people living in rural villages. Our objective was to gather their thoughts and reactions regarding the current government's performance. This raises an important question: Do our politicians genuinely care enough to reconnect with the very same constituents who once entrusted them with their votes? Are they willing to go back and assess how effectively they have addressed the community's needs and how well they have fulfilled the promises made during their election campaigns? Or do they only revisit these communities when they are in pursuit of votes?

What we gathered in our journey is that the people have had enough. They

wish for change in the way Lesotho is governed. Most of the people we interacted with said if it were up to them, they'd command the King to take over his role and change Lesotho into a monarchy. Their belief is without political influence, Lesotho can be the Lesotho Basotho always wanted. Many, in 2022 when the Revolution For Prosperity made a grand entrance in the political scene, were relieved and their hopes were revived because its leader, Prime Minister Sam Matekane, had always been a successful business man who had supported the poor, even the past governments alike, therefore, he had qualities of a leader Basotho always wanted to drive change in Lesotho and improve the lives of all, especially in the highlands where politicians only go to buy votes with food parcels and rich empty promises. However, the reigning government lifted the people's hopes from 100 to zero in a very short space of time. The people's hearts are red with fury in the Lesotho that our politicians only visit to regain strength to climb the power ladder. Most of these people said they couldn't even single out one development



project or initiative in the communities brought by politicians except rivals of political divisions. Meanwhile, Maseru is shining with improved infrastructure that was meant to curb high crime rates while the highlands were forgotten in the process. From mere gravel roads to no lights, the people cry foul, saying they don't ask for much but to be remembered in any development plans that are made. The lights, most said and continue to say, will probably "shine light on Basotho and create jobs" that many have long begged to be created. Grievances are many outside town, calling to action those in power to make time out of their busy schedules and stop discussing bills that aren't benefiting the nation but their people to go back and recollect the people's opinions in places that give them the power they only exercise where it benefits them. It is therefore crucial for political leaders to bridge this gap and foster a genuine dialogue with the electorate, thereby reinforcing their commitment to the people and ensuring that their voices are heard in the corridors of power. The people have had enough with empty promises. They need action. They need to see the ground moving, not just from a distance but they also need to feel the movement from around them. Before our politicians put on their different colours and plan trips into the mountains next season, they need to sit down and question themselves; what is it that we are going to do different? How are we going to start for real this time? And that time is now. Not two months away



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Lesotho Tribune

By Staff Reporter

The United States has thrown the global diamond trade into turmoil. By announcing a 50 percent tariff on Indian imports, including polished diamonds, Washington has shaken the foundations of an industry long dominated by India. According to Rapaport and National Jeweler, the new tariffs will take effect on August 27, 2025. What appears on the surface as a bruising trade war between Washington and New Delhi could, for Lesotho, be an opening too big to ignore.

India's dominance of the diamond industry has been unrivalled. More than 90 percent of the world's cut and polished diamonds pass through its factories, most of them in Surat. That dominance has rested on one thing: cost. India offered skilled labor at a scale and price unmatched anywhere else. The 50 percent tariff now wipes away that edge in

OPINION

Lesotho Must Not Miss the Diamond Opportunity Hidden in Tariffs



the U.S. market, which happens to be India's single largest buyer. The immediate effect is simple. American wholesalers and retailers cannot keep sourcing from India at the same price. They will not stop selling diamonds, the luxury market will survive tariffs but they will be forced to look for alternatives. That is how trade works. When one supply route becomes too expensive, buyers divert to others. And in that shift lies Lesotho's chance. For too long, Lesotho has played a secondary role in the diamond economy. We dig up some of the finest rough stones in the world, only to see others capture the real profits through polishing, marketing and trading. The tariff shock on India

cracks open a door that has always been slammed in our face. U.S. buyers will not suddenly start flocking to Lesotho tomorrow, but they will be searching for reliable partners beyond India and Russia. Lesotho could be one of them.

This is not about replacing India. It is about claiming a bigger share of value from our own production. If Lesotho develops even modest polishing capacity, it sends a signal that we are ready to move up the chain. Joint ventures with established firms from Antwerp or Dubai could help us build the skills. More importantly, strong governance and transparency in the sector would build the credibility that international buyers demand.

Politics also plays in our favor. Washington has already shown, by sanctioning Russian diamonds, that it wants its supply chains diversified and ethically sourced. Lesotho can align itself with that narrative. American buyers are not just looking for stones, they are looking for security of supply. We can be that secure option. Critics will point to our size. Lesotho cannot match India's scale, they will say. And they are right. But scale is not the point. The point is that when the largest player in the game suddenly stumbles, even smaller producers can find room to grow. Lesotho does not need to dominate the global diamond trade. It only needs to stop giving away so much value to others. Washington's tariff decision may devastate Indian polishing hubs, putting over a million jobs at risk. But in every global disruption, there are winners as well as losers. For Lesotho, this could be a once-in-a-generation opportunity. The world's diamond economy is realigning. The only question is whether we are ready to seize the moment, or whether we will watch, once again, as others profit from our stones.



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Textile Firm HR Manager in Turmoils Over Exploitation

BY: Lemohang Botsane

A unit of ex-workers of Quantum Apparel, a textile firm based in Thetsane, have accused the company's Human Resource Manager, Gladys Mokone, of obliging them to uncompensated overtime which they defined as "similar to slavery". The charges were made by Kananelo Mokhele, a former worker who has filed a case in the Labour Court disputing her firing.

According to Mokhele, the difficulties started on June 25, 2025, when the company gates were locked at lunchtime, hindering workers from exiting for their usual break. As they began singing, some employees tried to return inside but were prohibited and told to go home because "the factory was shutting down".

Mokhele gave evidence that the HR Manager found them singing and said if the gates were opened, they should not leave but continue singing. She further told them that she had already called the police. The workers later interacted with the police that were called to the scene and explained their injustices, including unpaid overtime, being forced to remain



after working hours and being stopped from joining trade unions without management's consent. Mokhele testified that the police later informed the employees that management had linked the closure to a boiler problem and ordered them to go home and return the next day. However, a worker familiar with the boiler later verified that there was nothing wrong with it.

When the workers returned the following day, they found a notice at the gate mentioning that the factory was closed while management reviewed "damage caused".

Following talks including labour representatives, shop stewards and management, the workers were again told

to remain at home until further notice.

Mokhele said on July 2, she received a call from a co-worker, Puleng Monaheng, alerting her that they had been asked to check in for duty the next day. Upon signing in, she noticed some colleagues were missing. According to Mokhele, the HR Manager was going through some pictures on a cellphone, saying she was looking for people who had appeared on Meloli Airwaves social page.

Mokhele continued to narrate that on July 4, she carried on with her normal duties until July 9, 2025 when she was swiftly informed it was her last day. She was called into the HR office and told that the machine she was using

already had enough workers, so she should not report the next day. She said she was promised to be called on July 14 to be advised when to return. However, she never received a call and was instead released. The case is still ongoing, with Mokhele having concluded her primary testimonies. The respondents' lawyer, Advocate Mosiuoa Koto, is expected to cross-examine her on a date yet to be set by the court.

The claims of oppression and unfair labour practices have raised issues about the working conditions and behaviour of employees at Quantum Apparel. The results of the case will be closely watched by labour rights advocates and workers in the textile industry.



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“Lesotho Finally Stable”, SADAC Agenda Ecludes the Mountain Kingdom

By: Lemohang Botsane

The Right Honourable The Prime Minister Sam Matekane announced this week that the Kingdom of Lesotho has been eliminated from the SADC Organ Troika plan, subsequent to notable progress in the country's political and protection situation.

According to the Prime Minister, Lesotho's political setting has taken a turn for the better, with the SADC Assembly taking a decision to erase the country from the Troika Agenda.

The Kingdom of Lesotho's execution and acceptance of the 10th Update to its constitution was identified by the SADC conference as a substantial success in the country's reforms that foster serenity, balance and development. Matekane voiced out his contentment with the growth made up so far, welcoming the SADC conference's decision to accept Lesotho's efforts in steadying the security situation, bettering governance and progressing the national reforms procedure under the government's stewardship.

“Lesotho's elimination from the SADC agenda is a benchmark achievement, infusing new hope and energy into the country's initiatives to finish the remaining constitutional reforms and pursue the growth and development agenda forward,” said Matekane. He continued to say “By ranking the adoption of the Eleventh and Twelfth Amendment bills, the state intends to

unite the country's constitutional outline preparing the way for a firm and thriving future for the people of Lesotho.” The Prime Minister's certainty of continued tactical governance and guidance will likely console Basotho that the Government stays devoted to rendering its pledges and greating a better future for all populace,” The Lesotho that Basotho want and deserve”.

In a genuine declaration of recognition, Matekane stretched his praise to the departing SADC Chairman, the Organ Troika, the SADC Secretariat and the board of Elders for their priceless guidance and technical advice. He also recognised the whole SADC family for their aid. He went on to applaud the state and people of Lesotho for their firm dedication to merging harmony and security in the country, additionally voicing valuation to members of parliament in both Houses, leaders of political parties in the national Assembly and diverse Basotho structures and channels for their support of the reforms as a

national process.

In a call to operation, the Prime Minister encouraged all Basotho to assemble alongside the state to finalize the reforms procedure.

“It is important that we all collide and make effort in achieving the country's goals and creating a brighter future for Lesotho.”

Lesotho's path on the SADC agenda embarked in 2014 when the SADC conference held in Zimbabwe's Victoria Falls, assigned former South African President Jacob Zuma with enabling the settlement of the country's political and security uncertainty. This gesture followed a chaotic era that saw the then-Prime minister abandon the country, spotlighting the necessity for foreign mediation for stability restoration.

Since then, Lesotho has fought to find its status, with four changes of government between 2012 and 2020 and the loss of two army Commanders.

Regardless of these hurdles, the country has made notable development, thanks in large part to the facilitation attempts led by South

African President Cyril Ramaphosa who has functioned delightfully to mentor Lesotho towards Stability.

The technical facilitation team, expertly led by Justice Dikgang Moseneke, has contributed a pivotal responsibility in backing the country's reform process. Basotho are deeply obliged to these sons of Africa for their persistent efforts to bring peace and stability to the Kingdom of Lesotho. Strengthening on this work, a team of elders led by former Tanzanian President Jakaya Kikwete has continued to offer direction and support to Lesotho's reform initiatives. Their joint efforts have been essential in assisting the country manage its hurdles and move towards a more stable future.

As a participant of SADC since its foundation in 1980, Lesotho has long been included in the regional community's efforts to foster economic development, peace and stability. The country's membership in SADC has given basis for mutual support and collaboration and has aided to enable the support and guidance that Lesotho has acquired during its time on the SADC Agenda.

Today, as Lesotho looks to the future, it is prepared to develop on the growth made so far. With the support of SADC and the continued attempts of its people, Lesotho is working towards a brighter future, one that is distinguished by peace, stability and prosperity for all Basotho.



RMA visits Basotho pensioners and beneficiaries

By: Pheello Mosesi

Rand Mutual Authority (RMA), a South African based insurance company, hosted a Pensioner Welfare Management Programme themed RMA Lekgotla in Maseru this Thursday.

The summit which invited stakeholders and Basotho mine pensioners and their beneficiaries was used as a platform to update them on the benefit packages and improvements that the company is devising to help them improve their lives.

Established 130 years ago, RMA is an insurance company that was implemented and established to administer mine workers, iron, metal and steel industry employees. It currently has a total of 2945 pensioners in Lesotho. The Pensioner Welfare Management Programme was therefore designed to ensure that ex miners who have endured occupational diseases and those that have stopped working due to injuries incurred at work as well as their families continue to get access to benefits including medical care, bursaries, enterprise development support and income upliftment. Aligned with the corporate's motto, "caring, compassionate and compensation", the RMA shared its implementations which are already running and those that are still in the pipeline, designed to improve the lives of Basotho mine pensioners and their beneficiaries.

After the Principal Sec-



retary in the Ministry of Labour and employment Moshe Mosaase declared the opening of the event, the RMA Chief Executive Officer of COID & Group Operations, Berlina Moroole, echoed that the company is devoted to giving the best service provision for their pensioners and their beneficiaries.

"We are here to tell you that we are with you" she told the pensioners, ensuring that the company cares.

She said if in any way the pensioners feel they are not being serviced well, the company doors and lines are open to receive criticism and improve their efforts, assuring that the summit was also a safe space to engage and allow them to voice out their grievances if any.

"We want to hear how we can improve. We have made a commitment that our workers that we perceive as our heroes and pension beneficiaries will always be at the heart of our story, this is the very

reason why we exist," said Moroole.

"We continue to pioneer solutions that are fundamental to your wellbeing and dignity. Our main identity is anchored in a clear and deliberate purpose, shaped by fundamental values that guide our every decision," she emphasized.

She further announced that some of their objectives as the company is to assist injured workers and pensioners who are still in the age that enables them to work and learn new skills that could help them fit in the working industry. Above many of these ideas, she emphasized that RMA is working tirelessly to refining and improving the value of the compensations given to pensioners and their beneficiaries.

Dr Luvuyo Dzingwa, the Medical and Pensions Management General Manager, tabulated some of the initiatives that RMA has set in place.

"When we sat and planned new programmes to im-

prove our service provision, we noticed that social interventions like this one could help us understand better what you as the people we serve may require from us. Some of the things we looked into was that we need to set some money aside which will help your children through primary and secondary schools."

Dr Dzingwa noted that on the model they build to improve pensioners and their beneficiaries' lives, four focus areas were implemented.

The first model is an income security. In this section, the idea is to increase the monthly pension of every beneficiary that earns below M5000 for three years and this will be implemented in phases, starting with disabled pensioners and over 2000 pensioners are already reaping the benefit.

He reiterated that the second focus area is on Health Benefits, where RMA has decide meet pensioners halfway through mobile clinics.

Dr Dzingwa informed that illnesses like hypertension and diabetes will be monitored as well as screenings and diagnosis services.

The third area is social assistance that will cover primary and secondary fees and provide skills development and social support while the last model will focus on business support where pensioners who are already running businesses will be given an opportunity to apply for financial support to boost their businesses.

NUL-CIAST Bids farewell to Chinese Programme Beneficiaries

By: Lemohang Botsane

The National University of Lesotho together with the Confucius Institute of Agricultural Science and Technology (NUL-CIAST) concluded a Chinese language and culture training course and sent off the Chinese Scholarship Counsel(CSC) recipients in an event held at the NUL Campus in Roma this week.

The NUL has collaborated with Jilin Agricultural University and Tonghua Normal University in China to debut the programme in a venture that was formally endorsed by the counsel in December 2024, denoting a momentous achievement, making the NUL-CIAST one of only 11 Confucius Institutes founded across the globe in 2024. It also holds the honour of being the only institute initiated in Africa that year.

The NUL-CI targets to enhance Chinese Language and culture, concurrently advancing agricultural sciences and technology. By unveiling groundbreaking and ecofriendly farming methods influenced by China, the institute aspires to upgrade Lesotho's food security and pastoral development. Through collective research, training and workshops, the institute will facilitate knowledge and skill transfer, profiting students, researchers and local farmers alike. Student and faculty exchanges, seminars and international partnerships will also be promoted, refining cultural and academic connections between Lesotho and China. Ultimately, it aims to



participate to Lesotho's agricultural growth, technological improvements and international mutual support while intensifying the companionship between the two countries. Jilin Agricultural university Alumni, Dr Katleho Lephoto, congratulated the new CSC recipients. "As a JLAU alumni, it is my pleasure to welcome you to the JLAU family. You are about to embark on the most beautiful journey of your life, which is your choice of learning, not only from textbooks but also from different cultures. You are chosen because you can handle this," said Lephoto. However, she said there were hurdles. "You are not only going to be students there but ambassadors of our country. You are going there as a bridge between cultures." The Chinese Embassy commemorated the successful conclusion of the

Chinese Bridge Summer Camp and bid farewell to attendees of the "Silk Road" programme of the Chinese government scholarship.

Mr Yang Xiaokun, Ambassador of China, bestowed his congratulations to the teachers and students who completed their study visit in China, saying "The journey you are about to embark on is pivotal to Lesotho's progress. I am strongly assured that you are all driven by an unshakeable devotion to assigning your obtained skills to the breakthroughs of Lesotho."

Mr Yang also welcomed new teachers of the CI, stressing the importance of People-to-people exchanges between Lesotho and China. He spotlighted the institute's duty in advocating mutual understanding and respect, quoting an old Chinese saying that goes: The sea

of learning is boundless, only perseverance is the vessel to reach the shore. The National University of Lesotho's Vice Chancellor Professor Isaac Fajana also bid farewell to CSC recipients.

"This experience will be a once in a lifetime opportunity for you to learn from one of the world's oldest and vibrant civilizations. As you engage with Chinese culture, language and academia, I encourage you to be open-minded, curious and enthusiastic," Professor Fajana conveyed acknowledgement to the Chinese allies for their continued aid and collaboration and commended the Confucius institute team for their diligent efforts. He encouraged the students to make the most of their experience, establish lasting relationships and bring back the information and perceptions that will profit their societies.



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Lesotho Tribune

By Litšitso Letsunyane

Lesotho's reigning champions, Lioli FC, have touched down in Namibia to take part in the much-anticipated 4-teams CAF Champions League pre-season tournament, hosted by Namibian champions African Stars FC. The event, staged at Independence Stadium in Windhoek from 23–24 August 2025, has already set the stage for a thrilling showcase of African club football. On arrival, Lioli wasted no time and headed straight to the SKW Stadium for their first training session, where head coach Mr. Bongani Maseko began fine-tuning tactics and assessing his squad ahead of their continental campaign.

The draw placed Lioli FC against AS Maniema Union from the Democratic

ARTS & SPORTS

Lioli FC Kick Off Pre-Season in Namibia Against Continental Champions



Republic of Congo, while African Stars locked horns with Angolan powerhouse Petro Atlético de Luanda in the other semi-final fixture. The winners advanced to the final, while the losing teams contest the third-place playoff today on Sunday, 24 August. For Coach Maseko, the tournament serves more than just competitive football. It is a chance to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of his side before their daunting CAF Champions League Preliminary Round clash against South African giants Orlando Pirates, set for September 2025. Lioli head into this con-

tinental build-up boosted by their domestic success. The club recently captured the 2024–25 Lesotho Premier League title, their seventh overall and second in a row, cementing their dominance at home. How-

ever, competing against Africa's top sides is no small task.

This pre-season championship boasts a truly elite field, featuring nothing but domestic champions from across the continent:

- * Petro Atlético de Luanda – Angola's champions
- * Young Africans SC – Tanzanian champions
- * AS Maniema – DR Congo's champions
- * Lioli FC – Lesotho's champions

For Namibian football fans, the tournament has brought together a rare spectacle of Africa's finest club champions on home soil. And for Lioli FC, it is a priceless opportunity to measure themselves against the very best and to sharpen their readiness for the battles that lie ahead in continental football.



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