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Telecoms complement banks - VCL MD

2

Govt tightens noose on livestock imports 4



THURSDAY April 28 - May 4, 2022

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3

JOB LOSSES LOOM AT CHINESE ROAD FIRM

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BORN ON THIS DAY

- April 28**
- 1941** - Ann Margret, Swedish-American actress and singer, initially described as a female vision of Elvis Presley due to her vibrant contralto voice
 - 1948** - Oskar Schindler, German industrialist who displayed extraordinary dedication and courage to save the lives of 1 200 Jews during the Holocaust
 - 1950** - Jay Leno, American comedian, best known for his shows, 'The Tonight show with Jay Leno' and 'The Leno Show'
 - 1974** - Penelope Cruz, Spanish model and actress who had major success in the American entertainment industry. Also known for her work as a philanthropist
 - 1981** - Jessica Alba, American actress, also known as a successful business woman. She acted in films like Honey, Fantastic Four and Valentine's Day among others
 - 1982** - Harry Shum Jr, Costa Rican-American actor, dancer, choreographer and a singer. He is best known for his roles as Mike Chang on the Fox TV series Glee.
 - 1984** - Mariya Putina, the oldest daughter of Russian president Vladimir Putin, a pediatric endocrinologist and Putin's advisor in genetic engineering

NewsBriefs

Telecoms complement banks – VCL MD

- Telecoms transfer money to every corner of Lesotho
- Money Month campaign launched to promote saving cash

NEO SENOKO

business@maserumetro.com

MASERU – LOCAL mobile network operators have this week here openly denied allegations they were competing for business with commercial banks.



Vodacom Lesotho MD, Mohale Ralebitso

During the launch of the Money Month Campaign, Vodacom Lesotho Managing Director, Mohale Ralebitso, said the telecoms' job was to transfer money to every corner of Lesotho, adding that anybody who wanted to save could do it anywhere in the country.

In

recent years, the spread of mobile money has brought speculation that telecom operators are taking over the banking system, thus affecting the bottom line of commercial banks.

Mr Ralebitso said mobile network operators were not taking over the role of banks but were instead offering an extended service to customers.

"As mobile money operators, we are not competing with the banks," he said. "We are an extension of their capability so that it's easy to arrive in places where a bank cannot easily reach. We are already in that space."

Under the theme: "Build your future, be smart about money," the Lesotho Money Month Campaign is part of the Global Money Week Campaign, an annual event that is intended to equip consumers with the necessary skills and techniques to manage their personal financial resources effectively.

The theme emphasises the importance of planning for the future by making prudent and well-informed financial decisions now.

It therefore prompts all the citizens and residents of the country, particularly young people, to take the responsibility for securing their financial future.

Mr Ralebitso further encouraged Basotho to employ the culture of saving to pave way for a better tomorrow.

"Our infrastructure is useless if there is no value to transmit," he said. "Which means we have to save money because tomorrow starts today. Please start saving early and bring intentionality to your money because our tomorrows are made every day."

This year, the campaign aims to train the public issues such as financial management, investment, mobile money, money transfer, insurance, pension and retirement, debt management and financial consumer protection amongst others.

SA police arrest Lesotho citizens for murder

KABELO MASOABI

LERIBE – Two Lesotho nationals who are believed to be illegal immigrants were on Friday nabbed in Soweto by the South African police in connection with the fatal shooting of a Pimville resident at the Chicken Farm informal settlement in Klieptown, Johannesburg.

The shooting according to police broke out when a group of residents protested against people who live in the informal settlement, accusing them of stealing power cables.

During the shooting that ensued, Kgomotso Vincent Diale was allegedly gunned in a hail of bullets.

Police investigations that followed led the arrest of the two Lesotho citizens in Dlamini and Chiawelo, Soweto.

Upon their arrest, a third suspect was fatally shot

after he pointed a firearm at the police, according to a statement by Brigadier (Brig) Brenda Muridili. Brig Murudili said police followed up on information about suspects in possession of firearms in Soweto. Police seized two firearms and ammunition from the arrested suspects.

"Preliminary investigations have linked the arrested suspects to the shooting incident that occurred on Monday at Chicken Farm where six people were shot. One of the victims, Diale, 34 died on the scene while five others were taken to hospital. Three of them have since been discharged while two still remain in hospital," she said.

Eye witnesses said a VW Golf bearing Lesotho registration number stopped near a group of Pimville residents and its occupants opened fire on them, killing Diale in the process.

FastFACTS

The world's largest man-made oyster reef was created in Maryland.

Due to overfishing and disease, the oyster population in Maryland's Chesapeake Bay was seriously suffering. But thanks to dedicated work by scientists at the Horn Point Laboratory, the Army Corps, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, and the Nature Conservancy, the state is now home to the world's largest man-made oyster reef. Home to more than one billion oysters, the area is a no-fishing zone, which will hopefully give the population a chance to recover.

On This Day in History

2004



Abu Ghraib torture and prisoner abuse

April 28

On April 28, 2004, during the early stages of the Iraq War, members of the United States army and the CIA committed a series of human rights violations and war crimes against detainees at the Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq, including physical and sexual abuse, torture, rape, sodomy and killing of Manadel al-Jmadi. The abuse came to public attention with the publication of photographs of the abuse by CBS News in April 2004.

The incidents caused shock and outrage, receiving wide-spread condemnation within the United Nations and internationally. President George Bush claimed that the abuses at Abu were isolated incidents and not indicative of U.S policy. This was disputed by humanitarian organisations including the Red-Cross and human rights watch; these organisations stated that the abuses at Abu were part of a wider pattern of torture and brutal treatment at American overseas detention centers, including in Iraq, in Afghanistan, and at Guantanamo Bay.

Documents popularly known as the Torture Memos came to light a few years later. These documents, prepared in the months leading to the 2003 invasion of Iraq by the United States Department of Justice, authorized certain enhanced interrogation techniques of foreign detainees.

In response to the events at Abu Ghraib, the US Department of defense removed 17 soldiers and officers from duty. Eleven soldiers were charged with dereliction of duty, maltreatment, aggravated assault and battery.

ALL JOKES ASIDE

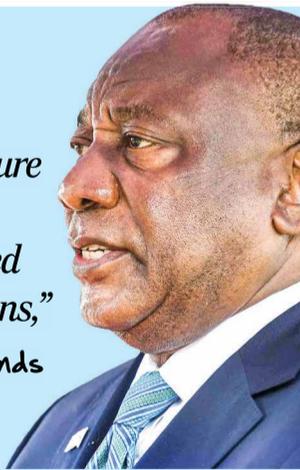
A church's bell ringer passed away. The church posted the job opening in the local newspaper's classified ads and a man came in with no arms wanting the job. The clergy weren't sure he could do it, but he convinced them to let him try it. They climbed the bell tower and the guy ran toward the bell and hit it with his head, producing a beautiful melody. They gave him the job on the spot. The next day he went to ring the bell, tripped, bounced off the bell and fell to the sidewalk below. Two priests were walking past. One asked, "Do you know this guy?" The other responded, "No, but his face rings a bell."

The next day, the dead man's twin brother came in for the again vacant bell ringer position. He also had no arms. The clergy led him up to the bell tower, where he ran at the bell, tripped and fell to the sidewalk below. The same two priests walked up. The first asked, "Do you know him?" The second responded, "No, but he's a dead ringer for his brother."

Quotes & Quips!

"Treasury is also strengthening reporting requirements with respect to expenditure on disaster relief. To improve monitoring and ensure greater transparency, the details of all disaster-related procurement by public institutions will be published on the treasury website to allow public scrutiny of these procurement transactions,"

says SA president Cyril Ramaphosa, assuring the nation that millions of rands in relief funds to be released by the government will reach the intended victims of the floods that ripped through parts of Kwazulu-Natal and some parts of Eastern Cape and North West



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Govt tightens noose on Livestock imports



4

Metro BUSINESS

CURRENCIES

(How Lesotho's Loti fared against world major currencies this week)

Loti/SDR	Special Drawing Right (SDR)	21.03
Loti/Dollar	United States (US\$)	15.75
Loti/Rands	South African (ZAR)	1.00
Loti/Euro	European Union (€)	16.82
Loti/Yuan	Chinese (¥)	2.39
Loti/Yen	Japanese (¥)	0.12
Loti/Pound Sterling	British (£)	19.96

STOCKS

S&P500	4,171.65
NASDAQ100	12,950.66
Nikkei225	26,394.98
Dow Jones30	33,212.07
FTSE 100	7,420.43
JSE	70,264.00
Hang Seng	19,923.83

COMMODITIES (Rates in Us Dollars)

Gold p/ounce	1,889.02
Platinum p/ounce	927.27
Silver p/ounce	23.44
Copper p/ounce	4.43
Brent Oil p/barrel	103.37

EQUITIES

Bonds	18.44
Treasury Bills	3.67
Interest Rates	91

AGRICULTURE (Rates in Maloti/Rands)

Maize Meal p/kg	M7.00	Eggs p/tray	M45.00
Wheat Meal p/kg	M10.00	Milk (fresh) p/litre	M16.00
Cabbage p/kg	M14.00	Milk (sour) p/litre	M20.00
Potatoes p/kg	M10.50	Rice p/kg	M30.00
Brown Bread p/loaf	M10.00	White Sugar p/kg	M22.00
White Bread p/loaf	M11.00	Brown Sugar p/kg	M25.00
Sorghum Meal p/kg	M25.00	Beef p/kg	M85.00
Brown Beans p/kg	M30.00	Mutton p/kg	M90.00
Tomato p/kg	M15.00		

ENERGY (Rates in Maloti/Rands)

Petrol Unleaded 93 p/litre	M20.50
Unleaded 95 p/litre	M20.80
Diesel 50PPm p/litre	M22.95
Paraffin p/litre	M16.90
Water (Domestic) p/litre	M5.53
Water (Industrial) p/litre	M15.03
Electricity (Domestic) p/unit	M1.38
Electricity (Industrial) p/unit	M0.26
Gas p/kg	M20.00

Job losses loom at Chinese road firm

...as labour union threatens court battle

proceed with the illegal lay-offs."

The road is one of the key infrastructure projects being undertaken as a collaborative effort between the Lesotho and Chinese governments, facilitated through the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC).

The Export-Import (EXIM) Bank of China provided a concessional loan of M1.3 billion to fund the 91-kilometre-road project while the Lesotho government injected an additional M500 million to bring the total cost of the project to M1.8 billion.

Other FOCAC projects include the Maseru Hospital and Eye Clinic that is to replace Queen Elizabeth II Hospital as well as the construction of the Hlotse multi-million dam amongst others.

In August 2020, when the Minister of Development Planning, Selibe Mochoboroane visited the area, the project was already eight months behind schedule.

However, Mr Mochoboroane had then argued that the project was still on track as 19 percent of the work had already been done.

Director of Project Cycle Management (PCM) Mthobi Letoane said the project was delaying due to the Covid-19 pandemic that ended in a lock-down.

The project is expected to be completed by the end of 2022.

While subcontractors have been unhappy with the payments, the main contractor has also complained that the workers were slow.

The project will be a seven-metre-wide double-lane road after completion. It will shorten the drive time from Mpiti to Sehlabathebe from four hours to about one and half hours.

It is expected that the road will solve transport woes and attract tourism to the area.

KABELO MASOABI

MASERU – An undisclosed number of employees working on the M1.8 billion Mpiti-Sehlabathebe Road in Qacha's Nek stand to lose their jobs following government's failure to pay Chinese company Qingjing Group.

Qingjing Group has since issued a notice of intent to lay-off the workers due to financial difficulties, saying a continued delay of release of funds by government was the reason for the job losses.

In a savingram dated April 25, 2022, the company said only teams recalled after pay-weekend should report for duty. It said other teams should remain at home until further notice.

Mining and Quarrying Allied Workers Union (CMQ) general secretary Robert Mokhahlane told Metro on Wednesday that the lay-offs were unjustified and unlawful.

He said the Labour Code clearly stipulated that government could only award a tender to a company that should be able to pay salaries to its employees should there be a delay in the release of funds.

"Secondly, we regard the intended lay-offs as an indirect retrenchment because the employer did not mention the length of time the workers will be out of work." Mr Mokhahlane said.

"We are going to engage by taking this matter to court should the company persist to



The Ha Mpiti to Sehlabathebe road under construction

Business

Govt tightens noose on livestock imports



The importation of livestock including cattle has been negatively affected by the outbreak of the foot and mouth disease in SA

STAFF REPORTER

MASERU – Government has tightened the noose on the importation of livestock and its products following an outbreak of the foot and mouth disease in South Africa.

Director of Livestock Services, Dr Keneuoe Lehloenyia said the department had since resolved to impose additional conditions on the import permits for live cloven hoofed animals such as cattle, sheep, goats and pigs following a March 28 letter from the Directorate of Animal Health of South Africa, detailing the spread of foot and mouth disease that started in Limpopo in 2019.

The disease has since spread to the Free State, Kwazulu-Natal, and North West provinces with the recent case reported in Gauteng on April 11.

It is feared that a total ban could potentially be imposed on local livestock products such as wool and mohair, which are the major agricultural exports from Lesotho to international markets.

The livestock department is worried that the latest outbreak could result in devastating economic losses once the country is infected with the virus, reducing agricultural contribution to economic growth.

Dr Lehloenyia said additional requirements included mandatory laboratory testing of animals, sampling, and isolation.

Any person who wishes to import

frozen and semen of domestic ruminants and pigs must apply for a permit at the department.

The permit will attest that the donor males were kept in an artificial insemination centre where no animal had been added in the 30 days before collection.

It must be proven that the virus would have not occurred within a 10km radius of the artificial insemination centre for 30 days before and after collection.

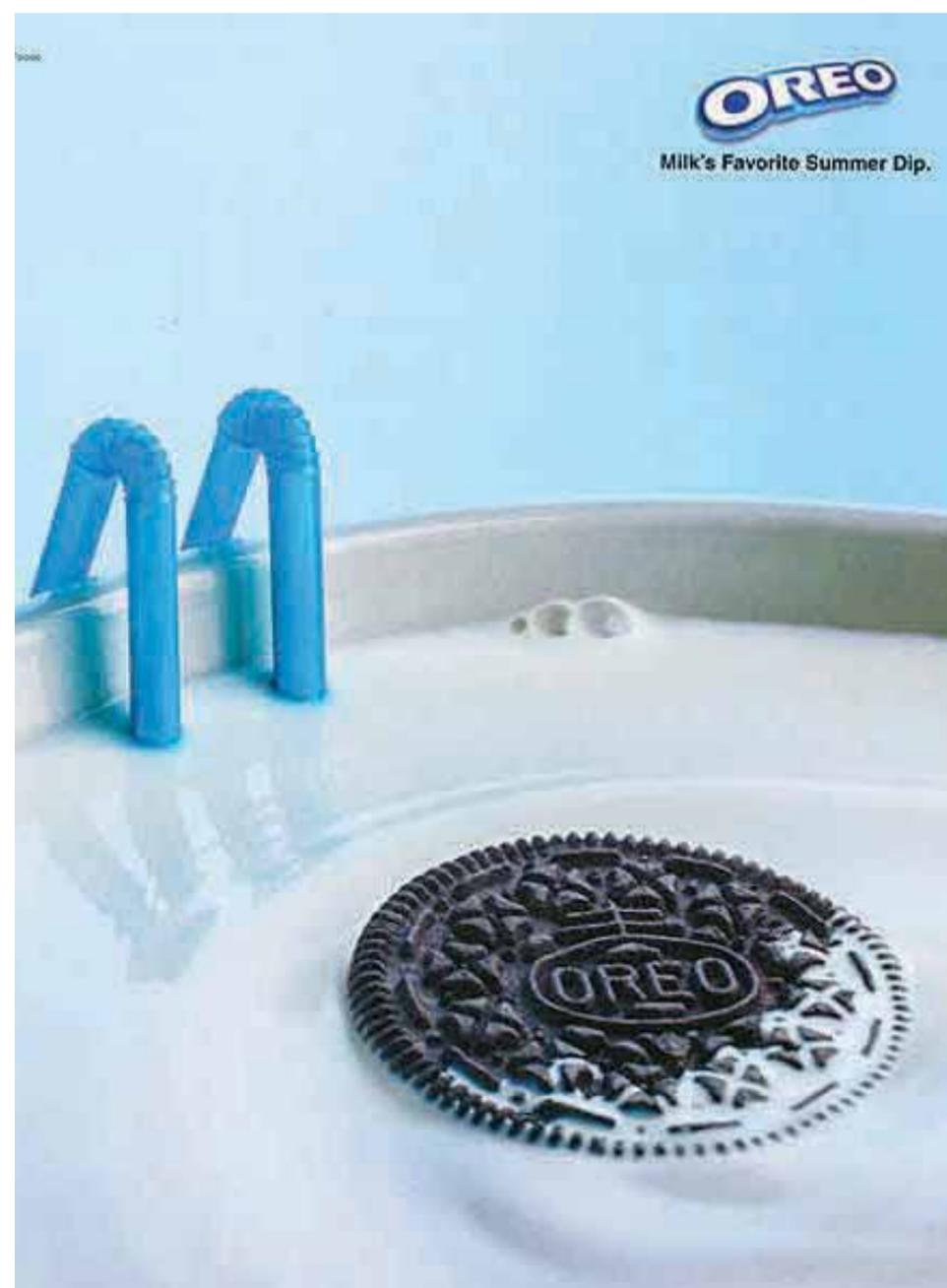
It should also be confirmed that the donor males are also subjected to, not less than 21 days after collection of the semen, tests for antibodies against the foot and mouth disease with negative results.

Another requirement is that the semen from South Africa should have been stored for a period of at least one month following collection, and that during that period no animal on the establishment where the donor males were kept showed any signs of the virus.

“Importation of fresh semen is prohibited,” Dr Lehloenyia said. “Meat and meat products from affected species will be imported strictly from animals which have been slaughtered in an approved slaughterhouse or abattoir and have been subjected to ante and post mortem inspections, with favourable results.”

She said meat products would be screened to ensure the destruction of the foot and mouth disease.

Already, butcheries and meat vendors are experiencing a scarcity of red meat.



Consumers to pay more for less

...as prices average 6.1%

NEO SENOKO
business@maserumetro.com

MASERU - Consumer prices in Lesotho are expected to average 6.1 percent year-on-year, says the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in its World Economic Outlook report for the year 2022 released last week.

At this rate, Lesotho will be the second highest behind Botswana in the Southern African Customs Union (SACU) region

Botswana is projected to be the highest at 8.9 percent in the region, while South Africa and Namibia follow at 5.7 and 5.5 respectively.

Eswatini is the lowest at 4.8 percent.

The 6.1 percent figure is the highest in Lesotho since 2016 when consumer prices averaged 6.6 percent.

"It means consumers will have to pay more for less this year as compared to previous years," said IMF boss, Kristalina Georgieva in the statement.

Observers have warned that while consumers are set to suffer, they should brace for even more struggles due to the ongoing war between Russia and Ukraine.

"Russia and Ukraine war has

added salt to injury and it's an undeniable fact that the war has had a devastating impact on the global economy," said Consumer Rights Protection Executive Director, Nkareng Letsie in a recent interview with Metro.

"Basotho should brace for more difficult times ahead because of the unprecedented soaring prices."

Also, the Central Bank of Lesotho (CBL) in February warned that prices and inflation would remain high. This is despite the fact that the domestic inflation rate as measured by the year on year percentage change in the consumer price index (CPI), declined slightly from 7.6 percent in January to 7.5 percent in February.

The IMF has said inflation would complicate the trade-offs central banks faced between containing price pressures and safeguarding growth.

As central banks tighten policies, extending pressure on emerging markets and developing economies, interest rates are expected to rise.

The IMF said many countries had limited fiscal policy space to cushion the impact of the war on their economies.



The International Monetary Fund (IMF) boss, Kristalina Georgieva

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Comments & Letters

Men and boys are sexually abused too

The Editor,

Although we tend to focus on the needs of girls as victims of sexual abuse, young boys and men are victims of sexual abuse too. Rather they choose to suffer in silence than seek help or speak up for the fear of being ridiculed or labelled weak. It is a step too far for them and they often face the trauma alone. Traditions and culture have minimised the impact of sexual abuse and sexual assault on the boy child. When a disclosure is made, the blame is shifted and the boy victim is either accused of lying or in some way being responsible for the crime. Male victims must also often confront unsympathetic attitudes, especially if they choose to report the crime. They may also lack support from family and friends.

The reality is that it can happen to any boy regardless of his age, size, strength, appearance, race or culture. It can also happen anywhere, at school, at home or in cars, at sports grounds and in change rooms. We know that many people are not equipped to realise that many males are sexually abused. Male victims become a forgotten category.

Moabi Mohloai
Hloahloeng, Mphahle's Hoek

Restrict indoor events to vaccinated people

The Editor,

We should try and restrict indoor activities to only vaccinated people as indoor environments pose the highest risk and the main place where the new variants could spread.

This is becoming more important if you are having a big gathering, or want to go to a shopping mall. You have to be vaccinated as vaccines have done quite well in preventing all of the past COVID-19 variants.

The jabs have provided protection against severe sickness and hospitalisation. It does not matter which vaccine you take or when, but if you take your dose and booster, you are well-protected. Vaccination remains the best defence against different variants so far, and any other known or upcoming variants. So far, we are not observing a major spike in cases, hospitalisations or deaths since the use of vaccines and boosters. With this year's flu season expected to be more severe, it therefore remains important to protect indoor spaces.

Through measures such as the wearing of face masks, regular hands sanitising and social distancing, we have seen less infections of late.

Molefi Khauta
Matamong, Maseru

Hiking is a team effort not a race

The Editor,

How could we possibly lose a sister over hiking? Or should the culture of hiking in Lesotho stop? It's so sad. Hiking has become increasingly popular over the past decade but we are saddened by the loss of Princess Dee. Her passing has brought us a lot of questions. People like to spend their time in nature in order to relax from their stressful daily life and hiking has become part of their lives. Apart from many of its advantages, some people enjoy hiking since it's different from other leisure activities.

But is it about time safety guidelines are enforced in this activity?

I feel like the club owes us an explanation as to what really happened to Princess Dee especially when it is alleged that the group she was with comprised very experienced hikers.

Where was team spirit?

Hiking can be fun with your family or also alone, but it can also be a risky activity if there is a lack of team spirit.

Mpho Rampeo
Mphosong, Leribe

Speak OUT! Your opinions matter. This page is dedicated to those who wish to express their views.

EDITOR'S NOTE

Let us celebrate South Africa's freedom

South Africa, our only neighbour, celebrated Freedom Day on Wednesday to mark their freedom from apartheid since April 27, 1994. Yet, almost three decades later, many of our brothers and sisters have not been freed from the poverty and hardship. Only a few have amassed wealth making South Africa one of the countries with the highest inequality in income distribution. The xenophobic attacks, the crime and murder rates all point to a nation in distress. The high unemployment rate coupled with the Covid-19 pandemic and recent floods in Kwazulu-Natal have left millions of people in misery.

Otherwise, whatever goes on behind closed doors of the neighbour affects us all. As a small country completely surrounded by South Africa, their loss is our loss. Not only do we import most of our food, fuel, clothing, shoes, building materials, medicines, vehicles and machinery, from the neighbour but we also share a common ancestry. We have wives, husbands, children, brothers and sisters who live and work in South Africa. Some of us depend on the money they send back home. Others have been educated in their schools and universities. As they celebrate, let us celebrate with them. When they lost their loved ones a week ago during the floods, we also lost our family members who live, work and maybe attend schools over there. Our own people have died in their abandoned gold mines trying to make a living. Some have since been arrested. It illustrates how neighbourly our two countries are. Encircled by and no doubt economically dependent on South Africa, with poor job prospects, Lesotho is in trouble. While the gold mines in South Africa have been a major source of employment for Lesotho's labour force, and thus a source of remittances to the economy, the impact of Covid-19 has seen Lesotho nationals probably lose an income in all industries of the neighbour after it recorded job losses in trade, finance, construction, manufacturing and services. South Africa in January this year cancelled the critical skills permits, which allow Basotho and other foreign students who study at the universities and colleges to have the automatic permanent residency. Hundreds of Lesotho students stand to lose employment opportunities in government and private companies of the neighbour. Over the years, many Lesotho medical doctors, engineers, chartered accountants, and actuaries amongst others have benefitted under this provision, thus sending home the much needed remittances. The fate of Basotho is unclear as the neighbour has yet to spell out what the decision would be when the Lesotho exemption permit for workers also expires at the end of December 2023. Unemployment has become a cause for concern as we hear reports about Lesotho men who work illegally in the South African mines and cable theft. Last week, the majority of illegal miners who were rescued trapped in a mine in Orkney, Klerksdorp, were Lesotho nationals. Other reports indicate that some Basotho men are involved in cable theft that has cost South Africa billions of rands in lost business and revenue. Let us celebrate South Africa's freedom. Let us not spoil it.

Critical Information about Our Brains, Response

...Mechanisms, Learning and Thinking: Fear vs Love

This is a reminder for many of us; and repetition is essential for anything to stick mentally. Individuals are wired with two primary emotions of fear and love for their survival and the survival of the human species. Fear can be expressed as anger, hatred, disgust, anxiety, panic; and love as calm, happy, comfort, connected, safety. We are often not aware of fear, especially in ourselves, hiding under anger, hatred, or disgust, which are often regarded as "macho". Research shows that when the brain receives a sensory stimulus that informs it that danger is present or pending, that information is routed via a short brain pathway for a quick reflex action in response to the high-level situation that does not involve cognition. In a truly life-threatening situation this can be truly life-saving.

Yet, if the situation is not as bad as perceived, this can lead to destructive behaviors. This can occur in cases where a person has an unresolved childhood trauma; or when a person has been subjected to long-term repression or fear, or a person has inherited the traits, such as from slavery, colonisation, apartheid, or other repressive practices. Extended periods in this state lead to chronic stress or psychosis and can be destructive, (and) self-destructive. The phenomenon holds true for individuals as it does for whole societies. On the other hand, the longer route that involves cognition enables individuals to evaluate the situation and assess how best to respond to it. It requires training and habituation. It also requires the development of different competences to respond to life situations, a growth mindset, positive stress mindset, or positive stress response, and the willingness to learn and grow. With these traits individuals are able to trigger the part of their nervous system that initiates release of stress hormones and enables them to respond constructively to their life challenges. This is love, self-love, at its very best.

When love is strong it enables individuals to transform from chronic stress and psychosis to face life with aplomb. The second mother-tongue – of sustaining quality peace and resilience – is based on the two response mechanisms which together constitute people's natural process for responding to life situations. Stress is helpful. Human stress response matters. How individuals think about stress is the difference between constricted and normal blood vessels, the difference between dying from a heart attack at

age fifty and leading a healthy life beyond ninety, between nations that are stuck in strife and destitution and peaceful, resilient nations; between societies that dialogue and those that go to war. Ordinarily, stress constricts individual's blood vessels while their heart rate increases and that is what makes extended stress dangerous to their health. Yet, with a positive stress mindset – believing that stress is helpful, stress then helps individuals to increase their performances and maintain optimum health, where optimum health

includes good mental health and access to all the factors that determine good health, while doing so – a high heart rate with relaxed blood vessels. In our current situation, we can only benefit from this when we have the courage to learn about these process, and immerse ourselves in them. Stress gets people's bodies to release stress hormones. A

particular stress hormone – oxytocin – is released in response to stress and makes individuals to seek support and connection with others. When individuals connect with others oxytocin then also makes their blood vessels to relax. A condition that improves their health and performances. It is the major reason why forgiveness and reconciliation, as the bases for social cohesion, then become easier and attractive. Otherwise, trying other routes could prove to be problematic: "If legislated or regulated in any way, forgiveness may become fraught with difficulty." None-the-less, "... reconciliation lies at the heart of building and maintaining peace (and unity) in a community".

The tools and processes shared and illustrated later in this presentation help people to train and strengthen the brain pathways to the left pre-frontal lobe and enable us to balance use of the two pathways appropriately because they are both essential for survival and growth. The trending neuroplasticity is the capacity of human brains to develop new neural pathways throughout their lives – fear-creating and strengthening protective, and largely destructive neural pathways and love-creating and strengthening growth neural pathways. The processes of brain reprogramming, brain detoxification and social Extended fear and long-term Repression strengthen the brain pathways to our right pre-frontal lobe. So, we are always in fear of something, and wanting to protect ourselves. This becomes our default mode. It lowers our mental capacity and weakens our immune system.

SUSTAINING QUALITY

PEACE & RESILIENCE

BY MAFOLE SEMATLANE



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Covid-19 impact on Lesotho garment fashion industry

...as many people lose their jobs due to the pandemic



The CEO of LNDC, Advocate Molise Ramaili

When the coronavirus pandemic hit the world two years ago, the global fashion industry in Lesotho and South Africa was not spared. Faced with collapsing demand, brands canceled orders worth billions of dollars as the tens of thousands of workers lost their jobs.

Two years into the coronavirus pandemic, the effects of the outbreak on the fashion industry remain substantial. In Lesotho, a mountainous speck of a country nestled entirely inside South Africa, the pain was especially widespread. Many people who lost their jobs due to the pandemic are making a comeback. Walking towards the blue jean factory in the industrial district of Lesotho's capital, Maseru, 32-year-old Vekile Sessa who was forced to pack her bags and leave four months earlier, is willing to try her luck joining a queue of more than 100 job seekers.

"We are a big crowd here, how can they call out individuals' names, while the rest of us stand here? Even when the person they call out isn't here, they won't take anyone else to fill their spot," she said, outside the blue aluminium shell of a factory that supplies pants and athletic shirts to American chain stores.

Although small in comparison to global garment-making giants such as Bangladesh and China, Lesotho's clothing industry is the country's largest private employer, and more than 80% of its workers are women, according to government officials.

In 2001, Lesotho signed on to a historic American trade deal: the African Growth and Opportunities Act, which guaranteed

its duty-free imports to the U.S. of clothing manufactured in the country. The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Lesotho National Development Corporation (LNDC), Advocate Molise Ramaili reacted to the impact of Covid-19 in the company and the challenges they face with regard to workers.

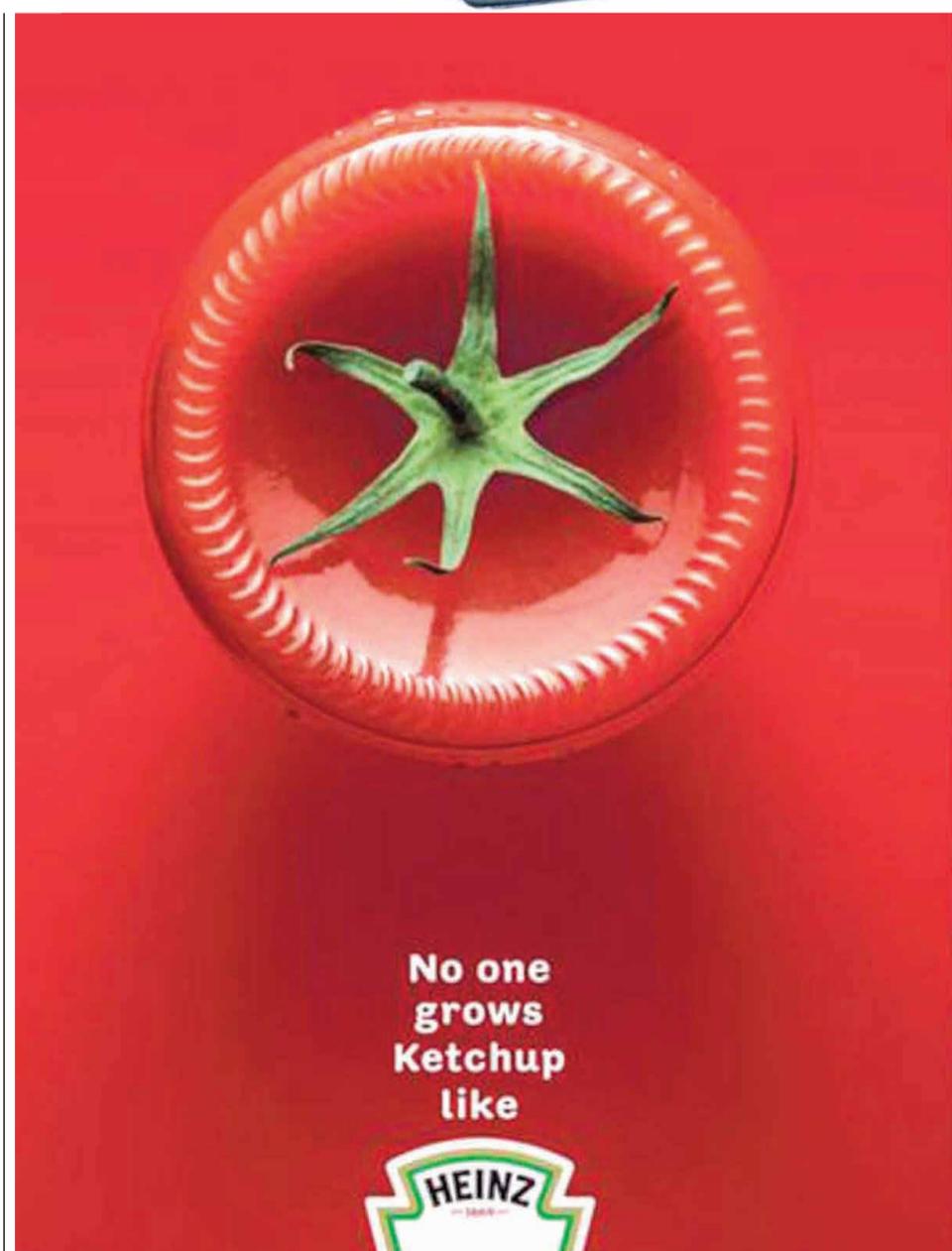
"They were paid their monthly salaries through the LNDC (Lesotho National Development Corporation) just to try retain them and try to ensure that the factories would recover from the pandemic, but unfortunately it took longer than it was anticipated by the whole world and ultimately some of them had to retrench."

In May 2021, workers were desperate, and local unions organized a strike to raise the garment sector's monthly minimum wage as some struggled to keep their jobs amid retrenchments.

Mabuta Irene Kheoane, factory worker, clung to her job, trying to work harder and faster to avoid being the next worker let go. The mother of an 11-year-old son, wishes the best for him and would not like him to go through the same situation as her in the future.

"Lockdown made the already-difficult situation even harder because we couldn't leave our homes to go and look for work. I was without work when the lockdown kicked in and the restrictions on movement meant I had to go without food," she said.

Experts are uncertain about the garment industry's future - both in Lesotho and globally. It's unclear whether the industry will find ways to cushion workers or will continue its race to the cheapest possible production. [africanews](#)



New Shoes, New You

Tekkie Town

Next Adventure Sports

Lapis La Zuli

Sneaker Planet

Ellen Bee

Studio 88

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Cervical cancer vaccine kicks off



- 90% of women identified with cancer must receive treatment
- HPV vaccines now available worldwide

and the world to prevent mortality and morbidity due to cervical cancer.

“The HPV programme will also allow Lesotho to explore synergies for promoting and strengthening health interventions for adolescents.”

He said the HPV vaccination needed the involvement of other stakeholders especially community leaders. “More effort and collaboration are needed especially in the area of communication and social mobilisation for a successful HPV vaccine demonstration programme,” Dr Banda said.

“I would like to emphasise that to achieve full benefits of HPV vaccine, it must be given to all target children regardless where they live or how hard it is to reach them.”

For his part, the Minister of Health, Semano Sekatle appealed to parents to allow their children to get vaccinated in order to prevent cancer, HIV and Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs) amongst others.

Basotho, he said should rise up as one nation to fight the silent killer, adding that prevention for cervical cancer was effective.

He said the health workers should ensure that they reach every girl to eliminate cancer while they work on the campaign.

WHO, a specialised agency of the United Nations (UN) responsible for international public health describes cervical cancer as the fourth most common cancer among women worldwide.

Around 85 percent of the global burden of cervical cancer occurs in the developing countries.

Her Majesty Queen 'Masenate Mohato Seeiso

LINEO MABEKEBEKE
health@maserumetro.com

BUTHA-BUTHE – It is imperative for girls to access Human Papillomavirus Vaccine (HPV) because it is effective in the prevention of cervical cancer, says Her Majesty Queen 'Masenate Mohato Seeiso.

She made these remarks during the launch of the HPV Campaign that was held in Maseru on Monday.

Her Majesty said everybody must contribute to the HPV Campaign for girls below 15 years and mobilise as much as possible for the minors still under the care of parents and guardians.

She said as a country with the support of partners, everyone would be able to sustain the initiative and leave no legible girl behind.

“The nation is double burdened by both communicable and non-communicable diseases, and I encourage all to deploy best practices in the campaign so that all the villages are reached, using the already existing structures,” she said

“We need to live to our

commitments as a country and be committed to ensuring that 90 percent of girls are fully vaccinated against HPV by the age of 15 years.”

Despite the unavailability of a national cancer treatment hospital in the country,

The Queen said 90 percent of women identified with cancer must receive treatment.

She said there were approaches and services such as screening and treatment, which could be used in health facilities to mitigate the cancer.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) representative to Lesotho, Dr Richard Banda said introducing safe and effective HPV vaccine could prevent cervical cancer caused by the HPV.

“HPV vaccines are now available in many countries throughout the world and are highly efficacious in preventing precancerous cervical lesions caused by these virus types,” said Dr Banda.

“This launch is an important step and a milestone in the history of Lesotho to join the fight along with other countries of the region

Häagen-Dazs
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GET SOMETHING JUST FOR YOU.

Don't sleep with your eye makeup on:

Sleeping without removing your eye makeup will irritate them and lead to dark circles around the eyes. Moreover, wearing makeup all night long can generate dermatitis. So even if you are completely exhausted, spare a few minutes to remove all makeup traces from your eyes, face and neck.

Skimp on Sunscreen

Sunburn damages skin, so don't skimp on the sunscreen. We need about 1 ounce (about the size of a shot glass) of SPF 30 or higher sunscreen to protect us from the sun's damaging rays. Even when it's cloudy the sun's UV (ultraviolet) rays can damage your skin.

To avoid sun damaged skin on the face, sun damaged on the arms, and sun damage on other exposed areas of the body, apply sunscreen 30 minutes prior to sun exposure. Don't wait until you're already at the beach or pool to start applying - the damage has already started on

your unprotected skin! Reapply every 2 hours, or after swimming, sweating, or toweling off to help prevent UV skin damage. If you spend an entire day at the beach, the Skin Cancer Foundation says each person should expect to use about 1/2 to 3/4 of an 8-ounce bottle of sunscreen.

Sekatle fights menstrual poverty

- Most girls and women face their menstrual periods with shame
- UNFPA says menstrual health and hygiene are basic rights for girls and women



The Minister of Health, Semano Sekatle

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MASERU – The Minister of Health, Semano Sekatle has called for donations here after the ministry opened a bank account to help impoverished girls buy sanitary pads to cope with their menstrual periods.

On Monday the minister said the menstrual products such as tampons, menstrual pads and menstrual cups would be bought with the money and be provided at the clinics and hospitals to all needy girls. Mr Sekatle said many girls and women faced discriminatory attitudes and beliefs around menstruation, forcing them to experience their periods with shame and embarrassment.

"They should participate in daily activities during their periods without being subjected to stigma or exclusion from their peers," he said.

"Myths and taboos often promote secrecy even about the most basic menstrual facts, leading to shame and exclusion for women and girls," the minister also said. Over the years, there has been a notable change in how girls and women manage their periods as they now have numerous products to choose from. However, period poverty exists in Lesotho like many other developing countries, where girls and women still use rags, cloths, and leaves during their menstrual cycle.

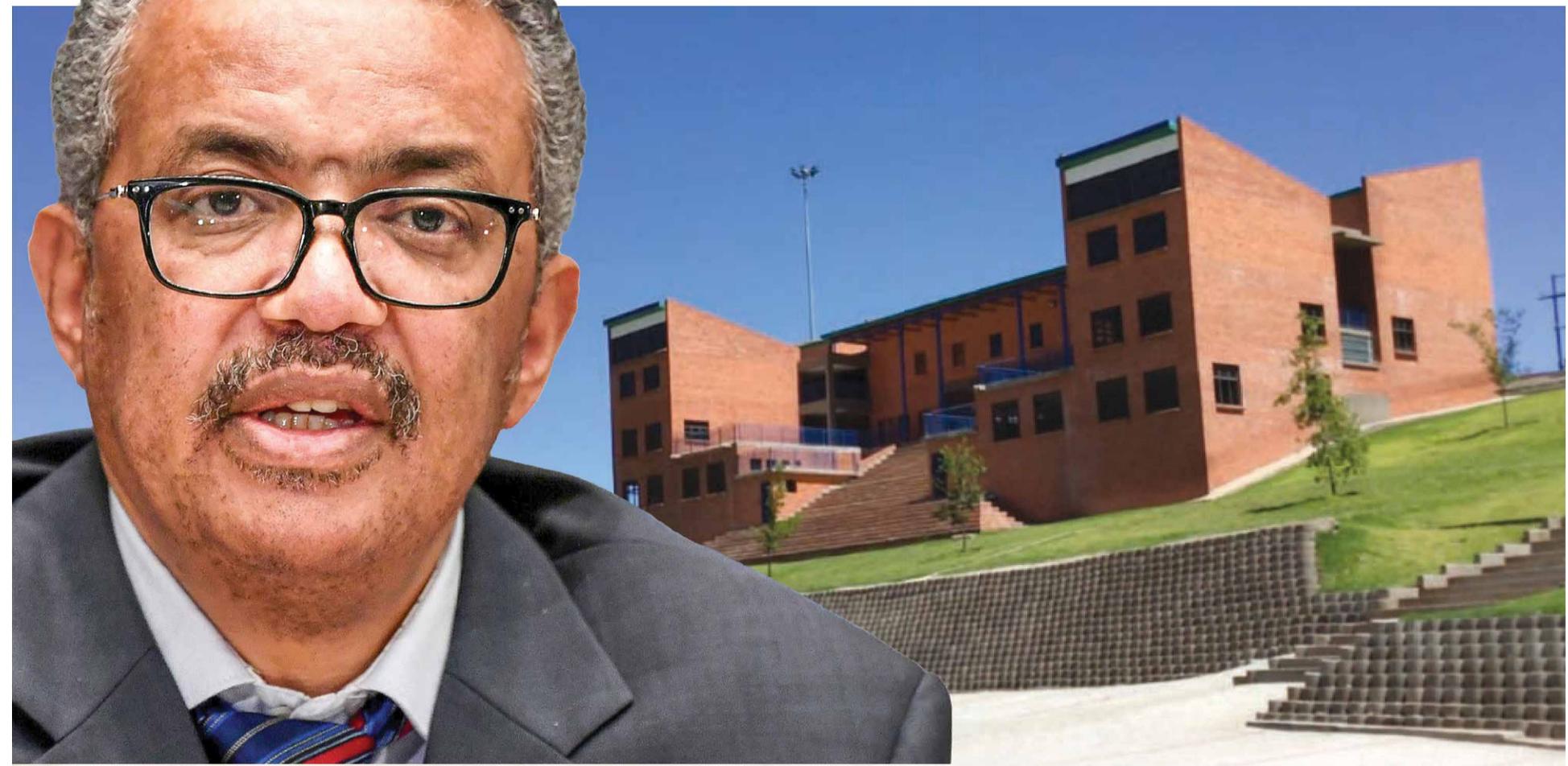
Mr Sekatle said access to safe and dignified menstruation was a fundamental need for women and girls, adding that many girls were unable to manage their menstrual periods with ease and dignity due to poverty as they could not afford materials that were clean.

He said these girls could not practice good menstrual health and hygiene at home, school or other public settings due to a combination of discriminatory social environment, inaccurate information, poor facilities and limited choice of absorbent materials. While some countries such as Lesotho are addressing period poverty, or the hardship of affording menstrual products, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), a UN agency aimed at improving reproductive and maternal health worldwide said menstruation should not mean the end of rights of health, dignity and gender equality. UNFPA said menstrual health and hygiene were basic rights for girls and women and key elements in achieving gender equality.

"However, in many settings, women and girls do not have access to reliable, complete and accurate information, nor to adequate sanitation or protective products to allow them manage their menstruation safely and with dignity," the body further said.

FreshFever





WHO Director General, Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesu

Covid-19 pandemic disrupts health systems

...as children miss out on immunisation

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MASERU – The COVID-19 pandemic and associated disruptions over the past two years have strained health systems with 23 million children missing out vaccination in 2020, 3.7 million more than in 2019, the highest number since 2009, says the World Health Organisation (WHO).

When commemorating the World Immunisation Week, which started on April 24 to 30, WHO, a specialised agency of the United Nations (UN) responsible for international public health said the celebration highlighted the collective action needed to promote the use of vaccines to protect people of all ages against diseases.

Preliminary data from 2021 shows continued disruption, but more positively nearly all countries had introduced COVID-19 vaccination by the end of 2021.

By early 2022, one billion doses of Covid-19 vaccine had been delivered through Covax.

WHO said immunisation was a key component of primary health care and indisputable human right – one of the best health investments money could buy.

It said vaccines were critical to the prevention and control of infectious disease outbreaks, underpinning global health security as vital in the battle against antimicrobial resistance.

“Vaccines have been indiscriminately saving lives, and providing opportunity and hope for all to enjoy a more fulfilling life,” said WHO Director General, Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesu in a statement.

“We now have vaccines to prevent more than 20 life threatening diseases, helping people of all ages live longer and healthier lives. Immunisation currently prevents 3.5 to 5 million deaths every year from diseases like influenza and measles.”

WHO works with countries across the globe to raise awareness of the value of vaccines and immunisation and ensures that governments obtain the necessary guidance and technical support to implement high quality immunisation programmes.

The ultimate goal of the World Immunisation Week is for more people and their communities to be protected from vaccine-preventable diseases.

Despite tremendous progress, vaccination coverage dropped for the first time in 2020.

The world in 10 minutes

FRANCE

Macron defeats Le Pen and vows to unite divided France

Emmanuel Macron has won five more years as France's president after a convincing victory over rival Marine Le Pen, who nevertheless secured the far right's highest share of the vote yet. He won by 58.55% to 41.45%, a greater margin than expected. The centrist leader told jubilant supporters at the foot of the Eiffel Tower that now the election was over he would be a "president for all". He is the first sitting president in 20 years to be re-elected. Despite her loss, Ms Le Pen, 53, said her significant vote share still marked a victory. The ideas her National Rally represented had reached new heights, she told her supporters. But far-right rival Eric Zemmour pointed out that she had ultimately failed, just like her father who preceded her: "It's the eighth time the Le Pen name has been hit by defeat." Marine Le Pen took over the party founded by her father Jean-Marie Le Pen in 2011 in a bid to make it electable. She won more than 13 million votes on Sunday, on a platform of tax cuts to tackle the high cost of living, a ban on wearing the Muslim headscarf in public and a referendum on immigration controls. "An answer must be found to the anger and disagreements that led many of our compatriots to vote for the extreme right," Mr Macron said in his victory speech. "It will be my responsibility and that of those around me."



UK

Has 'Gypsy King' Fury exited the ring for the last time?

Tyson Fury says he can walk away from boxing after winning "every belt there is to win" following a moment of brutal magic to stop Dillian Whyte and retain his WBC heavyweight crown. The unbeaten fighter produced a vicious uppercut at the end of the sixth round of the all-British fight on Saturday, sending a crowd of 94 000 at Wembley Stadium into raptures. The 33-year-old then told his adoring fans he was sticking to his plan to hang up his gloves – forgoing the opportunity to become the first undisputed heavyweight champion since Lennox Lewis. Fury said he had promised his wife, Paris, after his third fight with Deontay Wilder in October that he would quit but owed it to his fans to fight one more time on home soil. "This might be the final curtain for the Gypsy King," he said immediately after his victory in London on Saturday. "And what a way to go out. I've won every belt there is to win, there's nothing more I can do. I've won every belt in the game, he said later at his post-match press conference. If this was a computer game it would definitely be completed for sure." But Fury also muddied the waters on a highly charged evening, saying he had UFC heavyweight champion Francis Ngannou in his sights after the Cameroonian MMA fighter got into the ring during the celebrations. "I want to have fun," he said. "I'm an entertainer and it's what I do best. Big Francis Ngannou is on my hitlist in an exhibition fight."



RUSSIA

Russia hits railways as US pledges extra weapons

Russia hit railway infrastructure across Ukraine on Monday with the aim of disrupting foreign weapons supplies, while the US declared it would provide more weapons despite Moscow's objections. At least five people were killed and 18 wounded in Russian strikes in the Vinnytsia region, according to Ukrainian officials. The railways are also used by civilians moving between cities or attempting to flee conflict zones. Earlier this month some 50 civilians – many of them trying to evacuate to safer locations – were killed by a Russian rocket attack on the railway station in Kramatorsk. Elsewhere on Monday, plans for a humanitarian corridor to let civilians leave the siege at the steelworks in Mariupol failed to come together. Moscow said there would be a ceasefire around the plant in the early afternoon but Ukraine's deputy prime minister said no agreement had been reached and that Russia was acting unilaterally. Mr Zelensky has called for increased military assistance from Western nations US Defence Secretary Lloyd Austin said America wanted to see Russia "weakened" so it no longer posed a threat to other nations. He was speaking in Poland a day after he and US Secretary of State Antony Blinken met Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky in Kyiv. The US announced an additional \$713m (£559m) of military aid to the Ukrainian government and 15 other allied European governments. The BBC's defence correspondent Jonathan Beale says Mr Austin's words highlight America's growing involvement in the war in Ukraine.



SOUTH AFRICA

Just over 7 000 people remain in shelters after 'greatest disaster' in SA

Just over 7 000 people remain in shelters following the KwaZulu-Natal floods that claimed over 400 lives. Premier Sihle Zikalala revealed in a briefing on Sunday. "The number of those who remain in shelters is 7 245 people in eThekweni, 245 people in KwaDukuza shelters, and the rest in Umzumbe, Ray Nkonyeni [and] Umdoni [local municipalities]," he said during a virtual address. "While at the shelter, residents receive mattresses, hot meals, and vanity packs which are being provided by Sassa, the [Department of Social Development] and NGOs." The recent floods, which the premier described as "the greatest disaster in the life of our country," directly affected 17 438 households, translating to 121 687 people. In addition, as of Sunday, the death toll stood at 435. To date, 54 people were still missing. A total of 6 278 people were currently homeless, and 55 people injured. During his address, the premier further reported that the construction of Residential Temporary Units (RTUs) had started. Constructors were said to be on-site in Ilembe District, Ugu and eThekweni, having started on Friday. "As we continue with the construction of TRUs, our focus is to accommodate more than 4 396 families that are accommodated in halls, churches, schools," he said. Tongaat residents told News24 on Thursday that they have been without water for 10 days. Community activists and volunteers have stepped in to provide water aid to the community who were devastated by severe flooding just over a week ago.



AUSTRALIA

PM Scott Morrison calls poll for 21 May

Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison has called a federal election for 21 May. Mr Morrison's ruling coalition holds 76 seats in the House of Representatives – the minimum needed to retain power. Polls suggest there will be a change of government, with the opposition Labor Party, led by Anthony Albanese, tipped to take office. However, in the last election, the centre-right Mr Morrison won despite most polls predicting otherwise. Mr Morrison announced the date after talks with the Governor General in the capital, Canberra. "It's a choice between a strong future and an uncertain one. It's a choice between a government you know and a Labor opposition that you don't," the prime minister said on Sunday. But Mr Albanese – pointing out Mr Morrison's own deputy prime minister called him "a hypocrite and a liar" – argued that "we can and must do better". Mr Morrison is the first leader to serve a full term in office since John Howard, who won four elections before losing to Labor's Kevin Rudd in 2007. Since then, what observers call the "coup culture" of Australian politics has led to a series of short-lived premierships. Mr Morrison's Liberal-led coalition is defending a one-seat majority. Even though it has won seven of the past nine federal elections, it may be hard-pressed to do so again, say political analysts. In recent weeks, the prime minister has faced accusations of being a bully and once sabotaging a rival's career by suggesting the man's Lebanese heritage made him less electable. Mr Morrison has denied the allegations.



USA

US wants to see a weakened Russia

US Defence Secretary Lloyd Austin has said he hopes Russian losses in Ukraine will deter its leadership from repeating its actions elsewhere. Ukraine can still win the war if given the right support, he added. He also announced the US would allocate an extra \$713m (£559m) of military aid to Ukraine and other European nations. Russian President Vladimir Putin has accused the West of attempting to "split Russian society and destroy Russia from within". Mr Austin, a retired four-star general, was speaking after meeting Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelensky in Kyiv. Also involving Secretary of State Antony Blinken, the visit marked the highest-level trip to Ukraine by US officials since the invasion began over two months ago. The meeting between the US and Ukrainian parties, which ran for over three hours, comes as Russia escalates its military campaign in the south and east of the country. At a news conference in Poland after the visit, Mr Austin told reporters the US wants to see "Russia weakened to the degree that it can't do the kinds of things that it has done in invading Ukraine". The Pentagon chief added that US officials still believed Ukraine could win the conflict with "the right equipment" and the "right support". BBC diplomatic correspondent James Landale observed that Mr Austin's comments calling for a weakened Russia were unusually strong for a US defence secretary. It is one thing to help Ukraine resist Russian aggression, it is quite another to speak of weakening Russia's capabilities, he said.

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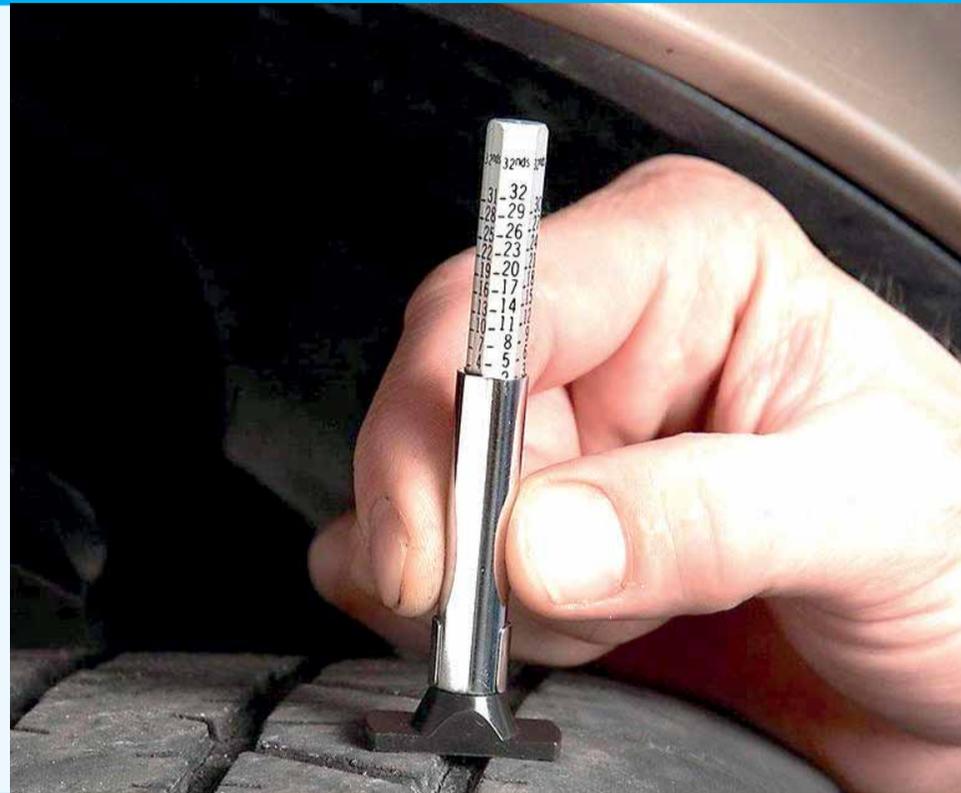
Be Car-Smart

Check Tire Tread Depth

Worn tires and winter driving create a particularly dangerous combination. They increase your stopping distance and decrease stability on wet roads. Even though most states have a 2/32-inch minimum tread depth standard, independent tests have shown that tire traction decreases dramatically once your tires wear beyond 4/32-in. You can try to slide by through winter on low tread, but that's exactly what you'll be doing – sliding. A single skid into the curb at five MPH

can easily cause \$1,500 worth of damage to suspension and steering components. Sure, insurance covers it. But you'll have to pay the deductible and it counts as an at-fault accident, raising your premiums for years.

For about the cost of a single deductible, you can buy new tires or install snow tires to avoid those slip-and-slide accidents. To check the depth of your tread, use an inexpensive tire tread depth gauge. Check the tread depth at the center and outer edges of each tire.



HANNAH LUTZ

The Z06 will add racing components to the standard Corvette stingray. Chevy plans to share details on availability and launch timing when it reveals the Z06 this fall.

In the next two years, Chevrolet dealers will add a high-performance Corvette to their lineups.

Chevy plans to launch a supercharged version of its midengine Corvette for the 2023 model year, the brand said in a statement recently.

The 2023 Corvette Z06 will add racing components to the standard stingray. Chevy plans to share details on availability and launch timing when it reveals the Z06 this fall.

The 2022 Corvette will go on sale this year with an upgraded direct-injection fuel system, improved engine calibration and an enhanced active fuel management range.

Chevy also launched a special-edition racing Corvette last month as the brand returned to the Detroit Grand Prix for the first time in 13 years.

The special edition features Corvette Racing-themed graphics, including a No. 3 on the back of the yellow edition and a No. 4 on the gray edition. Chevy will build 1,000 special-edition models for left-hand-drive markets.

Since the launch of the midengine Corvette in early 2020, production has paused several times because of the pandemic, the microchip shortage and a parts shortage unrelated to microchips. Chevy cancelled remaining 2021 Corvette allocations, and customers who ordered a 2021 model that has not been built will get a 2022 instead.

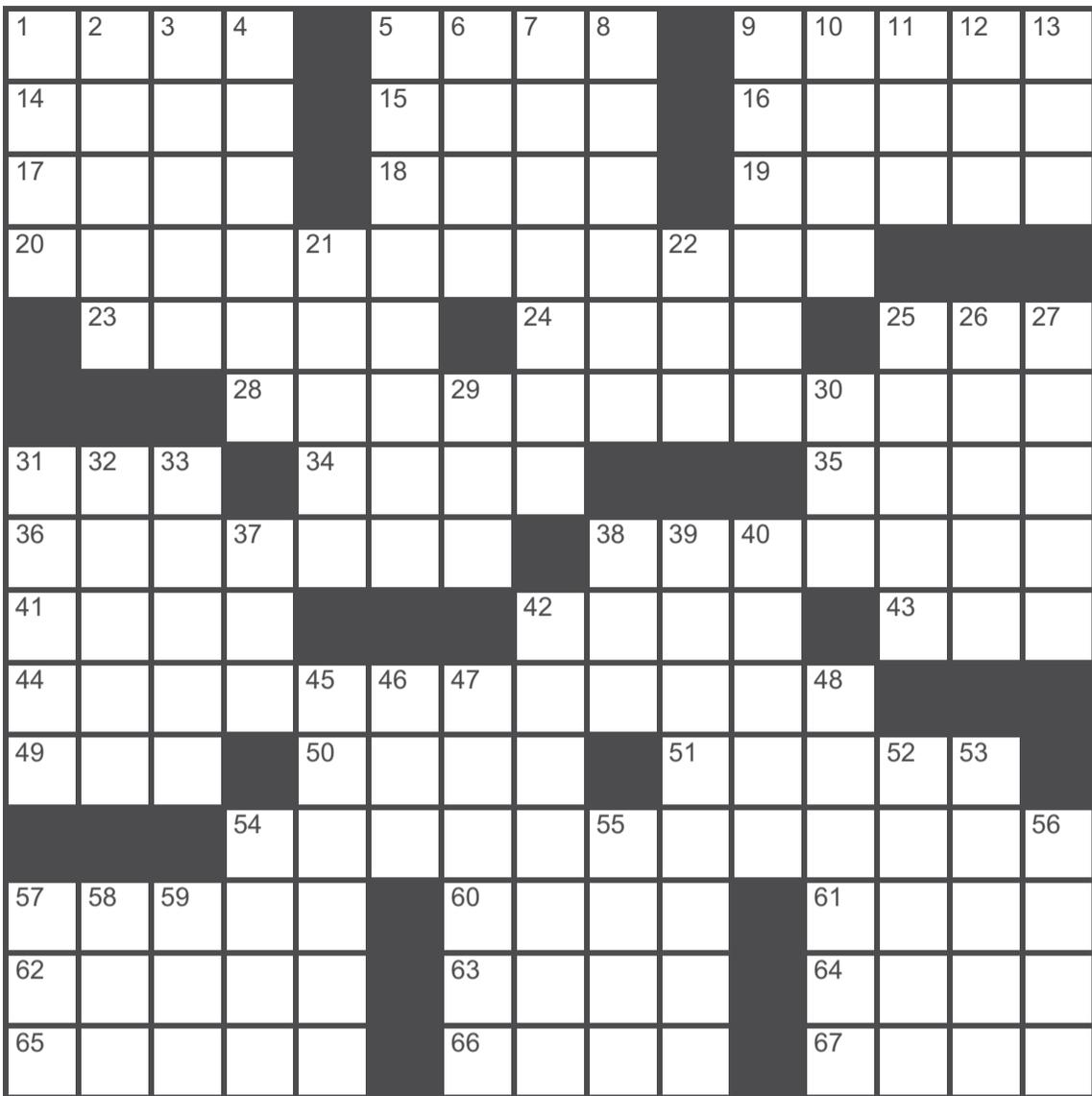
Corvette sales have grown despite the production interruptions. Volume in the first six months of 2021 more than doubled from the same period a year earlier, to 14,582.

Autonews

Chevy to launch Corvette Z06 for 2023 model year

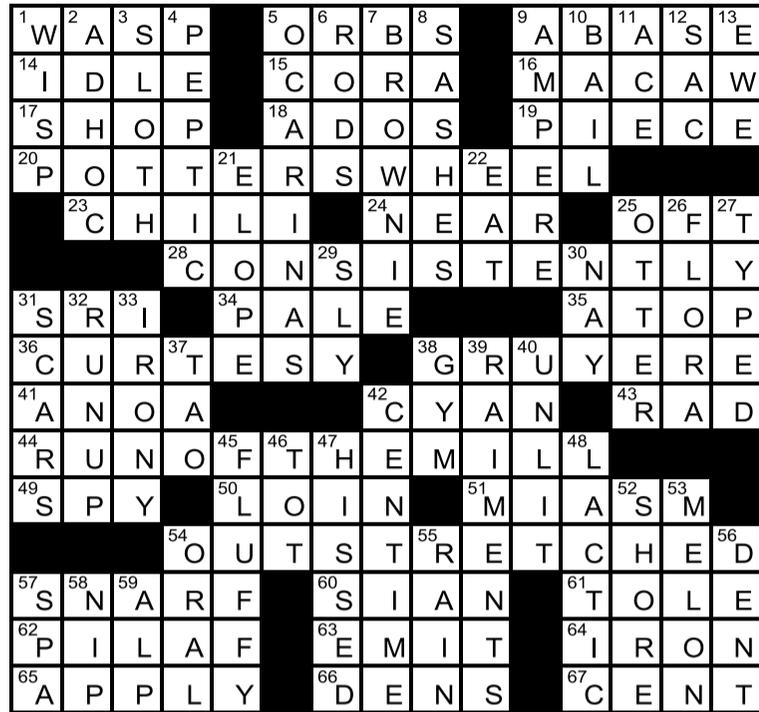


General Crosswords



- Across**
- 1. One who crosses the line?
 - 5. Brewer's kiln
 - 9. How animals drink
 - 14. Domestic
 - 15. Greek salad ingredient
 - 16. Tennyson poem
 - 17. Notable times
 - 18. Scuffle
 - 19. A mile a minute
 - 20. Biker
 - 23. Print
 - 24. Japanese stringed instrument
 - 25. Turkish title
 - 28. Metal artisan
 - 31. Combine
 - 34. Film genre
 - 35. Butcher's stock
 - 36. "Alice doesn't live here"
 - 38. Tank contents
 - 41. Reign
 - 42. Disable
 - 43. Blemish
 - 44. Shifted to go further
 - 49. Hill person: Abbr.
 - 50. Glorify
 - 51. Cyma reversa
 - 54. Provisions
 - 57. Avian chatterbox
 - 60. No angel
 - 61. Without purpose
 - 62. Reef ring
 - 63. Kind of wolf
 - 64. Political second banana
 - 65. Afresh
 - 66. Brings to a close
 - 67. Gaelic language
- Down**
- 1. Flower holder
 - 2. Noel
 - 3. Stradivari's teacher
 - 4. Stupefies
 - 5. Indelicate
 - 6. Ethereal
 - 7. Laborer who builds a pile
 - 8. 12th U.S. President
 - 9. Svelte
 - 10. Mine entrance
 - 11. Eucharist vessel
 - 12. Final: Abbr.
 - 13. Layer
 - 21. Safari sight

Last Week's Solution



- 22. "_____ De-Lovely"
- 25. Elite military unit
- 26. Lake Volta locale
- 27. Flower with a showy head
- 29. Compete (for)
- 30. Mischief-maker
- 31. Trading places
- 32. Become accustomed (to)
- 33. Wood gum
- 37. Blokes
- 38. Drivel
- 39. Zingers
- 40. Last letter
- 42. Golfer's distance tool
- 45. Lento
- 46. "Casablanca" pianist
- 47. Unpretentious
- 48. Glean
- 52. Downy duck
- 53. Corporate department
- 54. Ring up
- 55. Bank deposit
- 56. Sort
- 57. Beatnik's exclamation
- 58. Polished off
- 59. Bully

So You Think You are Genius

Question (Answer next week)

This is an unusual paragraph. I'm curious how quickly you can find out what is so unusual about it. It looks so plain you would think nothing is wrong with it. In fact, nothing is wrong with it! It is unusual though. Study it, and think about it, but you still may not find anything odd. But if you work at it a bit, you might find out. Try to do so without any coaching!

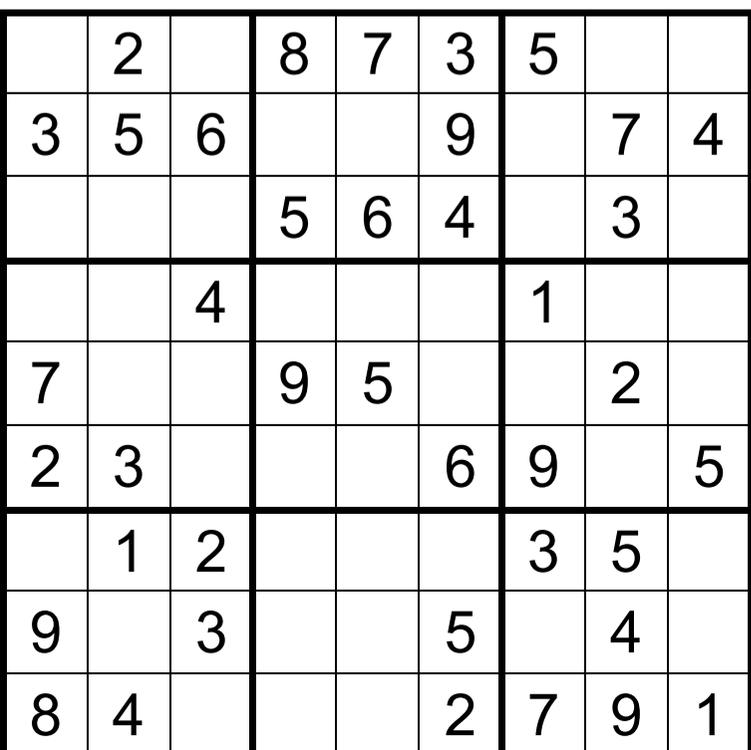


Last Week's Answer



Badminton: this is the only sport which does not use a ball, it uses a shuttlecock.

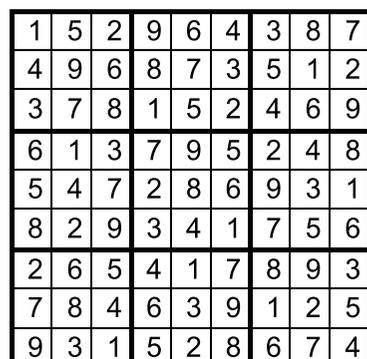
Sudoku Puzzle



Fill in all the squares in the grid so that each row, each column and each 3x3 square contain all the from 1-9

This is the Quick Sudoku for the solver in a hurr: target time, ten minutes.

Last Week's Solution



SPORTS



Matlama clinch record league title with four games to spare

STAFF REPORTER

MASERU – Matlama clinched a record 11th league title without touching the ball over the weekend after second placed Bantu suffered a 4-1 walloping at the hands of Linare in a Vodacom Premier League encounter in Maputsoe on Sunday.

They scooped the championship with four games to spare and in the process re-wrote the history books of football in the country with a record 11 league titles.

Tse Putsoa becomes the first team in Lesotho to win the league title since telecommunications giants, Vodacom returned as the sponsors of the Premier League in a deal worth M8.5 million over three seasons.

The first year of the sponsorship will see Vodacom forking out M2.5 million to sponsor the 16-team Premier League while in the second year it will increase to M2.8 million and M3.2 million in the third year and final year of the sponsorship.

The Sea-Point-based outfit stands in position one with its 11 league titles while LDF are in second place with eight.

Matlama reclaim the biggest

- Tse Putsoa win 11th league title
- Matlama to claim purse worth half a million maloti



Matlama celebrate the Independence Cup a few years ago

prize in domestic football from Bantu and will pocket half a million maloti for their troubles.

A Matšo Matebele on the other

hand will battle the likes of LDF, LCS and Lioli in the race to finish the campaign among the top four teams in the league.

At the bottom of the table, clubs such as FC Likhopo, who were Premier League champions on two occasions, must fight for survival

with the likes of Swallows.

Speaking about their special but long season that was disrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic and took almost two years to complete, veteran midfielder, Lisema Lebokollane, said it was their mission to win the league title at the end of the season.

“Our goal from the start was to win the league title and we made sure that everyone at the club knew this,” Lebokollane said.

“We worked hard for it though it was a long and challenging season. We had to stop for months at some stage because of the disruptions brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic and the lockdowns.

“It was really a bizarre season that took almost two years to complete, but it was also important that we as players do not get distracted and lose focus.”

The lanky midfielder, who is among the longest serving players at Tse Putsoa along with the likes of Phafa Tšosane and Jane Thabantšo, stated that they wanted their names to be written in the history books of the club.

“Matlama are a team that is driven by history and breaking records and the only way we could have our names in the history books was by winning this championship to set a new record,” the midfielder noted.

“We wanted to leave a legacy so that we could be remembered for years to come and I have no doubt that we have done exactly that by winning the record title,” he said.

Unstoppable Potloane teases retirement

- Playing for Likuena was an honour for the midfielder
- Player made his name at home team Linare

BUSISIWE TJEKOA

MASERU – HIS love for football began when he was just a little boy kicking a ball made out of plastics. He has played for Lesotho's national team, Likuena for almost 10 years. At 36, Mabuti Potloane, also known as Budeza needs no introduction.

Budeza grew up in Amerika, Hlotse, where he spent his entire childhood. He attended primary school at Joy to the World, before proceeding to Hlotse High School and later went to the Lerotholi Polytechnic in Maseru.

At the age of 12, Budeza joined Linare development team where he remained until he was 18.

“I believe I could have joined the development team sooner but distance was an obstacle,” he told Maseru Metro in an interview.

“It was just impossible for a young boy to travel all the way from

Amerika to Lisemeng on his own. But once I got wiser and knew how to cross the road on my own, I was unstoppable.”

Every day after school, he would then walk to Lisemeng for practice.

“Those were the happiest days of my life,” he said.

Growing up, Budeza said he looked up to two of his homies, Moses Ramafole and Thulo Leboela and he turned to be like them and more.

He then spread his wings and joined the Lerotholi Polytechnic football club where he played two seasons from 2005 to 2007 until he bailed out on them and joined his home team Linare.

His said his journey became smooth because of his supportive parents.

“Their energy is unmatched when it comes to supporting me in this beautiful journey,” said Budeza.

“They hardly missed any of my matches. I'm blessed to have had supportive parents from day one especially in this country where football doesn't pay bills.”

Following his journey at Linare Football Club, Potloane did great for himself and the team.

His walls at home are covered with medals, certificates and trophies he won - top goal scorer, man of the match and player of the season.

“I believe Linare groomed and gave me the exposure I needed,” Budeza said.

It was during his era at Linare that he gained recognition and joined the national team Likuena in 2008. He traveled over 20 countries including Ghana, Algeria, Zambia and Liberia to mention but a few.

“It was a dream come true for a little boy with just a dream to flying across the world representing his

country,” he said smiling.

Budeza said one of his proudest moments was when he scored a goal against Liberia in the preliminary stages moving Likuena to group stage.

“I still remember that moment like it were yesterday,” he said.

I made my country and myself proud - there is nothing I have done in my career that can beat that.”

In 2014, Budeza had a fallout with Linare and joined Matlama as an attacking midfielder. But in 2020, he reconciled with his former team and is still with them.

Speaking on the dangers of playing football, he recalls an injury he suffered in Ethiopia that lasted for eight months.

“It's the longest injury I've ever suffered,” Budeza said.

While some medical costs were covered by the Lesotho Football Association (LeFA), he took care of other costs himself.

Budeza is worried about the infrastructure.

“Our play grounds are not satisfactory at all - not to mention the national stadium, Setsoto,” he said. “One other thing is payment.

We already earn peanuts and there were times we would not get paid at all but that was nothing because playing for Likuena was an honour for me.”

After playing for Likuena for almost 10 years, Budeza teases retirement.

“I have achieved everything I ever wanted and more,” he said. “A young me would be proud of me”. I have spent most of my precious years committed to football, maybe it's time I tried new things.”

He said he believed commitment and discipline could take many aspiring players to places. His favorite international footballer is Luka Modric from Croatia.

“It's in the way he carries himself as a player that makes him my favorite,” said Budeza.

Although he has not been in the national squad since the Covid-19 outbreak, he said the team was “pretty amazing” and he was “very proud of them”.

“But given another chance to kick the ball with the national squad, I wouldn't think twice because there is nothing I like more than playing for my country,” Budeza said.



Football fraternity mourns 'Gunners' great Litšitso 'House on Fire' Khali

MASERU – The local football fraternity is mourning one of the greatest football players to grace the beautiful game in the Mountain Kingdom in Arsenal and national team Likuena legend, Litšitso Khali, who passed away earlier this month.

'House on Fire', as the late Khali was popularly known at the peak of playing career, came to prominence in the late 80s going into the 1990s playing for the all-conquering Arsenal side (Go Go Gunners) that was coached by the late April 'Styles' Phumo.

Former teammate at club level and the national team, Thabane Sutu, who was signed by Egyptian giants, Al Ahly from that all-conquering Arsenal side, describes 'House on Fire', as one of the greatest players to have played football in Lesotho.

"First heard about his (Litšitso) unfortunate passing last week Tuesday, Lepekola Seetane gave me the message. I talk to him quite regularly," Sutu says.

"Obviously I took it very

hard, Litšitso was one of Arsenal founding members, he was there from the very beginning, long before the club was formed in 1984.

"He was an incredible player, right up there amongst Arsenal' greatest ever players. He was blessed with superb speed and balance. Add that to his speed of thought and you had an almost total package. He was a supreme goal scorer."

Sutu, who has been living in the United States of America, where he has continued to work in football as a goalkeeper has ensured that a lot of Lesotho players secure football and academic scholarship to the USA.

He says it is a shame that the late Khali never got the opportunity to take his football career abroad.

Adds Sutu: "Obviously he was blessed with incredible pace, but his game wasn't just about speed. Later, in his career when he got a bit older, he reinvented himself by becoming more of a play maker.

He was quite versatile and could play across all front four positions, but he was also capable of playing as a number eight if needed. I was talking to some of my colleagues last week and told them no matter how bad Arsenal played, if he was in the pitch, we had a chance.

"He didn't need too many opportunities to score. His goal per chance ratio was frightening. When he was operating at the peak of his powers (late 80s-early 90s) he was unstoppable at times. He really was. It's a shame a player of that talent couldn't test himself overseas. I think with the right exposure to international scouts, he would have easily made a name for himself internationally. That's how highly I rated him. Little by little, the old Arsenal rear-guard is whittling away and that's quite scary. I've learnt to enjoy every moment and not take anything for granted," he says.

Former Lesotho Football Association (LeFA) Vice President and Chairman of the Premier League Management Committee,

Tlholo Letete, who worked with Khali as an administrator at the now defunct Arsenal, says the late former national team legend, was not only a good football, but an amazing human being, who cared for all around him.

"Apart from being one of the best strikers to have come out of this country, he was a committed and brave player that was never afraid to take on defenders," Letete states.

"I remember in one of the games when Arsenal won promotion to the Premier League and were playing Rovers and after the match, 'Frisco' Khomari sat on the bench long after the game and told us that he never experienced anything like that because of the torrid time they had marking Khali.

"He was a menace to defenders, and I remember another time when he was picked by LDF to assist them as they were representing the country in continental competitions. He scored and bagged an assist

against Sunrise from Mauritius, but not only was he a powerful striker that gave defenders sleepless nights, but he was also a great human being who, cared for his teammates, administrators, supporters and all around him," the former PLMC chairman concludes.

The LeFA has joined the football fraternity in expressing its sadness at the loss of a member of its golden generation.

"The Lesotho Football Association has learnt with shock and sadness of the passing away of one of the country's most decorated players of yesteryear in Litšitso Khali," LeFA said in a statement.

"The legendary Khali, who was popularly known as "House on Fire", a name that came to prominence at the peak of his career, was a member of the Likuena team in the early 1990s though he missed the famous 2-0 victory over Cameroon in 1994.

"Khali was also part of the Football Veterans Association that last-year met with the Lesotho Football Association to map the way forward in reuniting the legends across the country. "Our deepest condolences to his family, friends and the football family for the loss. We hope they find strength during this difficult period," LeFA said.

