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# LESOTHO LEADS THE WAY IN ADVANCING SADC MODEL LAWS

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# Lesotho leads the way in advancing SADC Model Laws

LIAPENG RALIENGOANE

Maseru – The country is steadily emerging as a regional leader in legislative reform, as stakeholders gathered for the official opening of the popularisation of SADC Model Laws, an important step toward strengthening social protection and human rights across the country.

The event facilitated by SADC Parliamentary Forum (SADC-PF) started yesterday and ends today in Parliament.

It follows a landmark benchmarking visit conducted in October 2025 by the SADC Parliamentary Forum Regional Parliamentary Model Laws Oversight Committee, which assessed Lesotho's strides in domesticating key model laws. Stakeholders from government, Parliament, civil society and development partners have convened to deepen understanding, strengthen collaboration and accelerate the integration of these laws into national systems.

Speaking at the engagement, Hon. 'Mope Khati, representing SADC-PF commended the Kingdom for its notable progress in aligning national laws with regional frameworks.

Hon. Khati stressed that the adoption and integration of SADC Model Laws is essential for promoting legal harmonisation and strengthening regional cooperation.

"By aligning national legislation with regional standards and commitments, we not only improve the quality and consistency of our laws, but also reaffirm our shared commitment to governance, human rights and sustainable development," he said.

At the heart of these reforms are two critical frameworks: the SADC Model Law on Eradicating Child Marriage and Protecting Children Already in Marriage, and the SADC Model Law on Gender-Based Violence, both aimed at tackling some of the most pressing social challenges affecting women and children across the region.

However, the benchmarking visit also revealed an important gap. Despite the progress made, there remains limited familiarity with SADC Model Laws within the country, a challenge that has constrained their full utilisation, particularly in the domestication of these laws into Lesotho's national legal framework.

Recognising this, the engagement marks a deliberate effort to bridge that gap.

Adding further insight, SADC-PF Programs Manager Clare Musonda highlighted the process behind the development of SADC Model Laws, describing them as practical, evidence-based tools designed to guide member states. She emphasised the key message of the initiative: align and strengthen national legislation through the use of SADC Model Laws.

Musonda explained that these laws are not binding but are adaptable frameworks that allow countries to tailor legislation to their unique contexts while still meeting regional standards. She noted that leveraging these model laws helps harmonise legislation across the region, strengthens the protection of human rights, particularly for vulnerable groups and accelerates law reform by providing ready-to-use legal frameworks.

She further underscored that the use of SADC Model Laws enhances accountability and supports countries in meeting national, regional, and global commitments, including the Sustainable Development Goals.

Established in 1997, SADC-PF promotes democratic governance, human rights, gender equality and sustainable development across 16 member states through initiatives such as its SRHR, HIV and AIDS Governance Project.

SADC News

# Unlocking The Lifeblood Of Southern Africa: A Multi-Billion Dollar Vision For The Zambezi River Basin

RANTAU TLALI MAKHETHA


In a landmark move for regional development, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the Zambezi Watercourse Commission (ZAMCOM) have officially joined forces to activate a transformative investment pipeline aimed at securing the future of the Zambezi River Basin.

This ambitious partnership, formalized during an inception meeting in Harare, Zimbabwe, on April 9, 2026, marks the beginning of the Strategic Basin Investment Programme (SBIP), a major regional initiative designed to build climate resilience and sustainable livelihoods across Southern Africa.

The scale of the challenge and the opportunity is immense, as the Zambezi River Basin supports more than 50 million people across eight riparian countries, including Angola, Botswana, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, the United Republic of Tanzania, Zambia, and Zimbabwe.

Despite being a vital lifeline for the region, the basin is currently facing significant socio-economic pressures, with over two-thirds of its population relying on rain-fed agriculture and approximately 44 percent of residents living below the poverty line.

The SBIP is not merely a theoretical framework but a practical mechanism intended to bridge the gap between planning and implementation by unlocking multi-million dollar investments.

At the heart of this effort is the need to address an imminent deficit of critical infrastructure across the basin. During the meeting, ZAMCOM Executive Secretary, Felix Ngamlagosi, underscored the sheer magnitude of the financial requirements, stating that the total investment needed to implement the Strategic Plan for the Zambezi Watercourse (ZSP: 2018-2040) reaches a staggering 28.3 billion United States dollars.

This massive requirement encompasses a pipeline of 282 identified projects that are currently being prepared for funding.

The SBIP serves as the vehicle to transform these identified projects into a portfolio of bankable investments, specifically targeting critical gaps in water storage, irrigation, water supply, and hydropower, while simultaneously reinforcing food systems and environmental sustainability.

The regional implications of this program are profound, extending far beyond the immediate banks of the Zambezi.

Dr. Dumisani Mndzebele, the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Water Division Programme Officer, highlighted that the Zambezi River Basin spans eight countries, which represents half of SADC's 16 Member States.

He noted that the success of ZAMCOM is a direct reflection of the success of the broader SADC integration agenda, suggesting that when this basin thrives, nearly 50 percent of the region's integration goals are effectively being realized.

By adopting an integrated Water-Energy-Food-Ecosystems Nexus approach, the SBIP aims to foster sustainable industrialization and significantly improve the living standards of the region's people, directly tackling the root causes of poverty.

This holistic strategy ensures that water management is not viewed in isolation but as a foundational element that supports energy production, food security, and the preservation of vital ecosystems.

FAO's role in this initiative is described as catalytic, providing the necessary "investment readiness" to attract larger financial players.

Dr Patrice Talla, the FAO Subregional Coordinator for Southern Africa, emphasized that while the Zambezi Basin is a source of life, it is also increasingly vulnerable to climate variability and environmental degradation.

To kickstart the SBIP, FAO has activated a Technical Cooperation Programme with a budget of USD 250,000.

Although this amount is modest relative to the billions required, it is intentionally designed as a catalytic intervention.

Its purpose is to lay the necessary foundations to mobilize significantly larger sums from public, private, and climate finance sources, including development banks and specialized climate funds.

By creating a credible and well-structured pipeline of opportunities, the partnership aims to move from a state of planning to one of active large-scale implementation.

The program is firmly anchored in two major strategic frameworks: the Strategic Plan for the Zambezi River Basin (2018–2040) and the FAO Strategic Framework (2022-2031).

These frameworks are built upon four essential pillars: infrastructure investment, livelihood support, environmental protection, and water resources management.

By aligning these pillars, the SBIP seeks to ensure that every dollar invested contributes to a more resilient and food-secure future for the millions who call the basin home.

The urgency of this work cannot be overstated, as climate risks continue to intensify across Southern Africa, making traditional rain-fed agricultural methods increasingly unreliable. The inception meeting in Harare also drew the attention of other transboundary river basin organizations within the SADC region, many of whom expressed interest in replicating this partnership model for the management of other shared natural resources.

This suggests that the ZAMCOM-FAO collaboration could serve as a blueprint for sustainable development across the entire continent.

Mr. Alex George, the ZAMCOM Chair from the United Republic of Tanzania, described the launch of the SBIP as a "new beginning" of a long journey toward delivering meaningful interventions that will benefit the people of the region both today and in the future.

He emphasized that while the meeting itself might have seemed like a small administrative step, its impact would be felt basin-wide as it aligns governments and investors around a shared vision of prosperity.

Ultimately, the Strategic Basin Investment Programme represents a move toward proactive and collective action in the face of growing environmental and socio-economic challenges.

By focusing on bankable projects and multi-sectoral integration, the initiative aims to provide tangible benefits, such as expanded irrigation for farmers, more reliable energy through hydropower, and cleaner water supplies for growing urban and rural populations.

The transition from "projects on paper" to "infrastructure on the ground" is the primary goal of the SBIP.

As the partnership between FAO and ZAMCOM matures, it is expected to unlock the transformative investments necessary to safeguard the Zambezi River Basin as a permanent engine for regional growth and resilience. The journey toward a $28.3 billion reality has begun, and for the 50 million people dependent on the Zambezi, the stakes could not be higher.

# Silencing the house: the dangerous debt game

**RANTAU TLALI MAKHETHA**

The presentation of the Annual Borrowing Plan (ABP) for the 2026/27 financial year by the Ministry of Finance and Development Planning is not merely a technical exercise in fiscal management; it is a profound test of our democratic integrity.

As the Minister of Finance, Dr RetŠelisitsoe Matlanyana, moves to implement a strategy that involves borrowing a staggering M4,638.8 million for the upcoming year, the question of who truly holds the power of the purse in Lesotho has never been more urgent.

We find ourselves at a crossroads where the Executive, cloaked in the technical jargon of debt-to-GDP ratios and concessionality, continues to sideline the very institution meant to represent the will of the people: Parliament.

This systemic exclusion is not just a procedural oversight; it is an affront to the principle of accountability, especially when one considers that the total debt stock has already reached LSL 22,717.5 million, representing a full 50 percent of our Gross Domestic Product.

The government's insistence on a "presentation" model of oversight, rather than a model of active, granular consent, treats the National Assembly like a rubber stamp for decisions that will burden Basotho for generations to come.

It is impossible to discuss this current lack of parliamentary involvement without recalling the poignant warnings issued last year by the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) Chairperson, 'Machabana Lemphane-Letsie.

Her assertion was clear and remains unrefuted: there is a desperate, existential need for Parliament to be deeply involved in the mechanics of national borrowing. Yet, looking at the 2026/27 ABP, it appears the government has learned nothing from her counsel.

Instead, they lean on the Tenth Amendment to the Constitution Act, 2025, which requires the Minister to prepare an annual borrowing plan to be presented with the budget for parliamentary approval.

While the government might point to this as evidence of transparency, the reality is far more cynical. The amendment also permits the Minister to propose new loans for parliamentary approval after the budget has been passed, creating a fragmented and reactive oversight environment

where the House is always chasing the executive's tail.

This is a far cry from the robust, proactive involvement Lemphane-Letsie and the PAC championed.

The sheer scale of the proposed borrowing for 2026/27 demands more than a cursory glance from the backbenchers.

The government plans to raise LSL 1,500 million through domestic bond issuances and another M3,138.8 million from external sources.

Within these billions of Maloti are commitments to a litany of projects—from the Ramarothole Solar Power Generation to the Safe City Project funded by the Export-Import Bank of China.

Why is it that these specific, multi-million dollar agreements are signed behind closed doors, only to be presented to Parliament as a fait accompli within a broad borrowing plan? Each of these projects carries its own set of risks and long-term implications for our national sovereignty.

For instance, the external debt portfolio already stands at M18,875.3 million, and while the government boasts that 88.4 percent of this is concessional, the truth remains that we are graduating to low-middle-income status, which brings with it the "hardened" and higher costs of borrowing from international markets.

Matlanyana and the current administration seem to operate under the illusion that because the Debt-to-GDP ratio has seen a slight decline from 54.3 percent to 50 percent, the requirement for legislative scrutiny has somehow diminished.

This is a dangerous fallacy. The reduction in debt stock was largely influenced by parity gains of M1,127.4 million due to the appreciation of the Loti—a factor entirely outside the government's control. To rely on the volatility of currency exchange rates while simultaneously bypassing the House is a recipe for fiscal disaster.

The government's own risk assessment identifies exchange rate fluctuations as a primary threat that could necessitate "unplanned budget adjustments".

If the representatives of the people are not involved in weighing these risks before the ink is dry on new loan agreements, then the "transparency" the minister speaks of is nothing more than a carefully curated facade.

Furthermore, the government's domestic borrowing strategy involves a shift toward long-term instruments, such as the planned issuance of 7-year, 10-year, and 15-year bonds.

While lengthening the maturity profile is a standard debt management goal, it also means that this administration is making choices that will dictate the fiscal space of future governments for the next decade and a half.

When the PAC Chairperson called for involvement, she was calling for the right of Parliament to ask: is this the right mix? Are we crowding out the private sector?

The 2026/27 plan admits that interest payments on domestic debt are already higher than on external debt, despite domestic debt making up less than 20 percent of the total portfolio.

This is a glaring inefficiency that cries out for a public, parliamentary debate, not just a ministerial decree.

The lack of granularity in the current "approval" process is perhaps its most insulting feature.

The minister presents a list of "new projects to be signed," which includes everything from a USD 50 million IDA project for clean energy to USD 30 million from EXIM Bank China for the Safe City Project. These are not mere line items; they are massive policy shifts.

The Safe City Project, for example, has significant implications for privacy and security, yet it is tucked away in an annex of a borrowing plan.

Parliament should have the power to deliberate on the merits of each individual loan, its interest rates, its grace periods, and its specific creditors, rather than being asked to approve a M4.6 billion "package deal".

By the time the minister "presents" these for approval, the negotiations are often finished, leaving Parliament with the impossible choice of either approving the debt or derailing essential infrastructure projects.

We must also look at the underperformance of capital projects, which the government itself admits was at 62 percent.

If the Executive is unable to even spend the money it borrows due to "implementation challenges" and a "lack of capacity," then why are they allowed to continue contracting more debt without a rigorous, project-by-project defense in the National Assembly?

Parliament's role should be to act as a gatekeeper, ensuring that debt is only incurred when there is a proven ability to utilize it for the benefit of the Basotho.

Instead, we see a cycle where money is borrowed, interest is paid, yet the projects stagnate, and the debt stock remains a looming shadow over our economy.

The Tenth Amendment was supposed to be a step forward, but in the hands of this government, it has become a tool for containment.

The minister's ability to propose loans after the budget is passed provides a loophole that can be exploited to avoid the intense heat of the main budget session.

This "incremental borrowing" strategy effectively dilutes the power of the PAC and the House at large.

It creates a scenario where the cumulative weight of our national debt is never fully felt or debated in a single, comprehensive moment of accountability.

Dr. Matlanyane may argue that this provides "flexibility," but in a democracy, flexibility should never be a substitute for consent.

The risks outlined in the 2026/27 ABP—from auction underperformance to the contingent liabilities of State-Owned Enterprises (SOEs)—are risks that the entire nation bears. When utility companies fail to report their full indebtedness, it is the taxpayer who eventually bails them out.

Yet, the government's solution is simply more executive oversight through "newly enacted legislation" that empowers the Minister further, rather than empowering the Parliament to conduct public hearings and demand transparency from these SOEs. We are moving toward a more centralized, less democratic form of financial governance, and the silence from the government benches is deafening.

Last year, the PAC gave the government a roadmap toward better governance. They were told that the status quo is unsustainable. The M1,279.1 million we will spend just on domestic debt service this year is money that could have gone to our crumbling hospitals or our struggling schools. Every Maloti spent on interest is a Maloti stolen from our development.

When the executive decides, in isolation, to commit us to these payments, they are effectively legislating our poverty.

Matlanyane and the government must realize that Parliament is not an obstacle to be bypassed; it is the heart of our democracy.

To ignore the House is to ignore the people. We cannot continue to treat national borrowing as a private agreement between the Ministry of Finance and international creditors like the World Bank or EXIM Bank China.

These are public debts, and they require a public mandate. The Annual Borrowing Plan for 2026/27 should be the beginning of a conversation, not the end of one.

It is time for the Minister to stop hiding behind the Tenth Amendment and start respecting the spirit of the PAC's call for involvement.

If we do not restore the power of Parliament to truly scrutinize and reject individual loans, we are not just borrowing money; we are borrowing a future we cannot afford to pay back.

The House must be allowed to speak, and more importantly, the Minister must be forced to listen. Our sovereignty, and our children's heritage, depend on it.


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*Strength and growth come only through continuous effort and struggle."*
**- Napoleon Hill, author**

*Out of your vulnerabilities will come your strength." -*
**Sigmund Freud, neurologist and founder of psychoanalysis**

# A record taxi fare increase looms

**NEO SENOKO**

MASERU-Maseru Regional Transport Operators (MRTO) has decided to implement new public transport fares from M13.00 to M23.00 within a ten kilometer radius effective 1 May 2026.

Despite tough economic conditions, commuters will have to part ways with M46.00 as a return ticked to and from destinations within the ten kilometer radius, while long distance fares will rise by M9.00 for every 10 km. This has been revealed by MRTO on Monday this week, with the organization citing high fuel prices and government's failure to implement the annual fare policy as some of the reasons the surge.

The M23.00 price tag, according to the MRTO, has been recommended by a consultant who was tasked by the government through Ministry of Transport to conduct a proper research and analysis on the taxy industry to come up with the price increase that shall suit both commuters and all the players of the industry.

"We have decided to implement to new prices on our own because government is failing us. Talks between us and the government began in April last year, which resulted in the introduction of a consultant who, according to our agreement was supposed to present newly improved fares in December last year. However, that did not happen and instead, the public transport board is failing to come up with the solution to this matter.

"As a result we decided to take matters into our own hands and introduced the new fares which fortunately are the same as those recommended by the consultant. The new fares shall be operational starting from the 1st of May this year and we are ready for anything that may come as a challenge because we know that police may be instructed to stop us from implementing these new prices," MRTO Chairperson Mokete Jonase said on Monday.

He went on to highlight high costs of fuel as one of the reasons for a massive surge in taxi fares. "Initially we wanted to adjust the prices to M15.00 per a ten kilometer radius. However, with the current economic conditions and the ever skyrocketing fuel prices, we had no choice but to go as high as M23.00," Jonase added.

Furthermore, the chairperson raised concerns that the very same government has mercilessly, and without any form of consultation, increased the number plate fee from M350.00 up to M750.00 while car fitness fees have also surged from M90.00 to M350.00.

If implemented, the country's blue-collar workers who already spend a disproportionate amount of their earnings on transport costs, cold be in for a more pain and families more likely to suffer and sink deeper into poverty.

# A Sovereign Vow: Transforming the Health and Safety of the Nation's Women and Children

**RANTAU TLALI MAKHETHA**

MASERU-Last week, the atmosphere was one of profound solemnity mixed with a resolute sense of purpose as the nation gathered to witness a defining moment in its developmental trajectory. Officially launched by the Minister of Health, Selibe Mochoboroane, the Investment Case for Maternal, Newborn and Child Health, Family Planning, Gender-Based Violence, and Child Marriage represents far more than a technical strategy; it is a profound declaration of the country's commitment to the dignity and survival of its most vulnerable citizens.

Surrounded by high-ranking dignitaries, including His Majesty King Letsie III and the Right Honourable the Prime Minister, the Minister underscored that this document is a bold statement of collective responsibility toward the health and future of women, children, and young people.

The launch comes at a critical juncture where, despite years of incremental progress, the shadows of maternal and neonatal mortality, rampant gender-based violence (GBV), and the scourge of child marriage continue to impede socio-economic aspirations.

The data underpinning this Investment Case provides a stark, evidence-based roadmap of the challenges that lie ahead.

Currently, the nation grapples with a maternal mortality ratio of 530 deaths per 100,000 live births, a figure that stands in haunting contrast to the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 3.1 target of fewer than 70.

The statistics for our youngest citizens are equally concerning, with neonatal mortality at 26 per 1,000 live births and under-five mortality at 54 per 1,000, both significantly higher than the respective global targets of 12 and 25.


These are not merely numbers on a page; they represent families fractured and potential extinguished.

The Minister was clear that the status quo is no longer acceptable, describing a vision of a nation where no woman dies while giving life and no child is denied the opportunity to thrive.

This Investment Case is designed to bridge the gap between these current realities and the future the people deserve by prioritizing high-impact interventions and strengthening the core of the national health system.

A deep dive into the causes of maternal mortality in 2025 reveals that postpartum hemorrhage (PPH) remains the leading killer, accounting for 33% of maternal deaths. This is followed by eclampsia at 24%, while septic abortions and anaemia each contribute 10% to this tragic tally.

Other causes identified in the data include advanced HIV disease, asthmatic attacks, and ruptured ectopics, highlighting the complex medical landscape that health providers must navigate. In the first quarter of 2026 alone, five maternal deaths have already been reported in hospital facilities.

These include cases at Queen 'Mamohato Memorial Hospital related to placental abruption and sepsis, as well as deaths at Machabeng Hospital involving PPH post-caesarean section and a patient who died after bearing down.

The Investment Case recognizes that addressing these clinical outcomes requires a multi-sectoral approach that improves both the quality and accessibility of maternal and newborn health services across all districts.

Central to the success of this strategy is the expansion of family planning services, which the Investment Case identifies as a cornerstone of preventive health. It is estimated that family planning can prevent one in every three maternal deaths by reducing unintended pregnancies and unsafe abortions.

Furthermore, the data indicates that child mortality risk is three times higher when the interval between births is less than 18 months.

Currently, the unmet need for family planning in the country stands at 10%, with various barriers such as health concerns, lack of information, and opposition from partners continuing to hinder access.

The fertility rate also varies significantly by district, with Thaba-Tseka showing the highest total fertility rate at 3.6% compared to the national average of 2.5%.

By addressing these disparities and ensuring that modern contraceptive methods are available to all who seek them, the government aims to significantly lower the incidence of high-risk pregnancies and infant deaths.

The Investment Case also turns a rigorous eye toward the social epidemics of gender-based violence and child marriage.

The statistics are nothing short of a national crisis: 86% of women and 40% of men in the country have experienced some form of violence in their lives. Recent data from the 2023/24 Demographic and Health Survey shows that 25% of women aged 15-49 who have ever had a partner experienced physical, sexual, or emotional violence in the last 12 months.

This violence is geographically widespread but hits hardest in districts like Mokhotlong, where 40% of women reported recent intimate partner violence, and Thaba-Tseka at 36%.

Closely linked to this is the issue of child marriage, which currently affects 13% of the population and is particularly rampant in rural areas.

Teenage pregnancy remains another critical indicator of these systemic failures, with 17% of girls aged 15-19 having ever been pregnant. In Thaba-Tseka, this figure rises to a staggering 32%, nearly double the national average.

The Investment Case seeks to end these harmful practices through a combination of community engagement, rigorous policy enforcement, and the empowerment of young girls.

Minister Mochoboroane emphasized that the document underscores the importance of data-driven decision-making and accountability.

It is a strategy built on the recognition that health, gender equality, and protection from violence are interconnected.

The government has reaffirmed its commitment to providing leadership and mobilizing domestic resources to create an enabling environment for this plan.

# Afrika Bambaataa, hip-hop pioneer, dies aged 67


**OWEN MYERS**

The American rapper and DJ Afrika Bambaataa has died aged 67. The musician died in Philadelphia at around 3am local time due to complications from cancer, TMZ reported.

The Hip-Hop Alliance, a group headed by musician Kurtis Blow, wrote: “Today, we acknowledge the transition of a foundational architect of hip-hop culture, Afrika Bambaataa. As the founder of the Universal Zulu Nation, Afrika Bambaataa helped shape the early identity of hip-hop as a global movement rooted in peace, unity, love, and having fun.”

The group acknowledged the allegations of child sexual abuse made against the singer.

“At the same time, we recognize that his legacy is complex and has been the subject of serious conversations within our community. As an organization committed to truth, accountability, and the preservation of Hip Hop culture, we believe it is important to hold space for all voices while continuing to uplift what empowers and protects the people.”

The Bronx native played a key role in shaping hip-hop in the 1980s, notably with the 1982 hit Planet Rock. He collaborated with a range of artists including John Lydon, George Clinton and James Brown. Born Lance Taylor, he formed the hip-hop collective Universal Zulu Nation in the late 1970s, inspired by “father of hip-hop” DJ Kool Herc as well as the solidarity of the Zulu people of southern Africa.

In 1982, Bambaataa began playing electronic music as part of the group Ebn Ozn. He was inspired by European electronic groups such as Kraftwerk, the German band that he famously sampled in Planet Rock. The single became a club hit, and helped to establish electro funk as a genre.

In 1985, he helped to create the landmark album Sun City as part of Artists United Against Apartheid, a group of musicians who teamed up to protest apartheid in South Africa. Other musicians involved included Bob Dylan, Bono, Bruce Springsteen, Joey Ramone, Run-DMC, Lou Reed and Bonnie Raitt.

Bambaataa continued releasing albums throughout the following decades. In 1986, Afrika Bambaataa & the Soulsonic Force’s Planet Rock collected his previous singles, and found him collaborating with hip-hop artists such as Melle Mel and Trouble Funk. He released his final album Dark Matter Moving at the Speed of Light in 2004.

In later life, the musician was accused of child sexual abuse and trafficking. In 2016, multiple Bronx men accused Bambaataa of molestation. The musician denied the accusations in a statement, saying they “are baseless and are a cowardly attempt to tarnish my reputation and legacy in hip-hop at this time”.

A man who said he was a former bodyguard for Bambaataa, Shamsideen Shariyf Ali Bey, said: “I’ve walked in on stuff where I say: ‘What the fuck is going on.’ He travels with late teens. Those are the ones he takes overseas with him. When I went with him on tour in the states, I would stay in one room and he would have boys in the room with him.”

In May 2025, an anonymous plaintiff accused Bambaataa of four years of sexual abuse, which started in 1992 when the plaintiff was 12 years old. The musician lost the civil case by default after he failed to appear in court.

*-The Guardian*

# Metro SPORTS

# Battle for league title heats up


*Picture from MatchDay*

**NEO SENOKO**

MASERU-The battle for the Vodacom Premier League title is heating up with the top four teams separated by just three points between them.

Lijabatho Football Club is currently leading the contest with 53 points following a one all draw with close competitors Lifofane FC on Saturday. The draw ensured that Lifofane remains in the title race, currently fourth with 50 points, one behind former champions Matlama FC who are third with 51 points after securing maximum points against Lioli FC on the same day. Bantu FC has climbed to second place following a 2-1 win against lowly ranked Manonyane FC on Saturday.

A single goal from Ts'ele Rankhasa was enough to secure a much needed triumph for Matlama against Lioli in a game that was played at Setsoto Stadium. The result means that defending champions Lioli FC could be mathematically out of the title race with 45 points, eight behind log leaders Lijabatho FC.

While the Sea Point outfit Matlama FC struggled to find rhythm in the first round of the season, the team has been able to turn its fortunes around since the appointment of Thabile Secker as head coach. The second round came with nothing but the best moments for the team, winning most of the games and currently just two points behind the Morija based outfit Lijabatho FC.

Under the tutelage of former Bantu FC head coach James Madidilane, Lijabatho has been a revelation this season winning 15 matches and loosing just three games.

The team cruising nicely at the top and the dream of winning the first ever premier league title is intensifying day by day.

If the dream does come true, Madidilane would have made history by becoming the first ever coach to hand the Morija outfit its first ever major trophy. However, the Morija outfit will have to demonstrate a high level of resilience if they are to make history, particularly looking at the tough marches remaining for the team, and thus compared to the other close competitors.

In its remaining matches, Lijabatho still have to face tough competition from top sides that includes defending champions Lioli FC, Matlama, LCS and LMPS.

Despite this, Madidilane believes that his charges are more than ready to claim the first league title.

"So we hae to collect maximum points in the next two matches so that when we go play Lioli and Matlama we are in a good space.

At the moment everything is fine and we cannot panic because we have a team that can beat any of the four remaining matches.

What matters is the performance on that 90 minutes on the day. We will push all the way to the last games to ensure that we win the league," Madidilane said on Saturday shortly after collecting a point against Lifofane FC.

With four matches remaining for the top four teams, it remains to be seen whether first time contenders Lifofane and Lijabatho can outsmart all the former champions and regular competitors to claim the league title.