

LMPS APPLAUDS PARAY HOSPITAL FOR REPORTING SEXUAL OFFENCES AGAINST MINORS



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South African players targeted after World Cup exit

The second South Africa's tournament exit was confirmed, media in Europe went into overdrive linking clubs to the Mzansi players who had graced the global stage.

Relebohile Mofokeng
It started with Relebohile Mofokeng being linked with a move to Belgian side Saint-Gilloise by respected Belgian media outlet Nieuwsblad within hours of Bafana Bafana getting knocked out by Canada. The report stated the Belgian side had been tracking the Pirates star for some time and were confident of finalising a deal for "several millions" with the 21-year reportedly now having skipped the flight home so he can travel to Brussels to have a medical and finalise his deal with the Jupiler Pro League champions. In the latest information available, the deal is so advanced that Hugo Broos has already cast his judgement on it.

Oswin Appollis
According to Radar da Liga, Portuguese giants Porto have submitted an offer worth around €4 million (approximately R71 million) for Appollis. The report claims Pirates have accepted the proposal, with the winger expected to complete his move to Portugal before the start of the new season, as reported by Siseko Gwegwe.

Meanwhile, former South African footballer and Soccerbeat owner Peter du Toit recently revealed that Mofokeng is on the verge of joining Belgian side Union SG.

- See More



LMPS applauds Paray Hospital for Reporting Sexual Offences Against Minors



LIAPENG RALIENGOANE

THABA-TSEKA – Paray Hospital has been commended for its commitment to reporting sexual offences involving minors to the Lesotho Mounted Police Service (LMPS), a practice described as critical in protecting children and ensuring perpetrators are brought to justice.

The remarks were made during a roundtable discussion on youth empowerment and the prevention of gender-based violence (GBV), including child marriage, organized by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA).

The meeting brought together heads of departments and representatives from the LMPS, the Ministry of

Health, the Ministry of Gender, Youth and Social Development, the Ministry of Education and Training, and youth representatives to discuss collaborative strategies for addressing GBV and empowering young people.

Speaking at the meeting, Officer Commanding Thaba-Tseka Police Station, Senior Inspector Moeketsi Mokotjo, applauded Paray Hospital for consistently reporting cases of sexual offences against minors to the police.

He said the hospital's cooperation with law enforcement demonstrates a strong commitment to protecting children and ensuring that cases are investigated without delay.

Senior Inspector Mokotjo emphasized that timely reporting is essential for preserving evidence, supporting victims and

increasing the chances of holding perpetrators accountable.

He further stated that the LMPS remains committed to strengthening its response to sexual and gender-based violence through close collaboration with government ministries, health institutions and community stakeholders.

Also speaking at the discussion, Child and Gender Protection Unit (CGPU) Inspector Robert Tšuiyana outlined the awareness programmes being implemented by the police in Thaba-Tseka to prevent violence and promote community safety.

Tšuiyana said the police regularly visit high schools to educate learners about violence prevention and conduct community gatherings to engage the public on issues affecting

their communities.

He added that the LMPS also works closely with traditional leaders and reaches out to herdboys with messages aimed at preventing gender-based violence.

“We recently gathered men and boys together to capacitate them about gender-based violence so that they are well informed about preventing GBV,” he said.

Tšuiyana stressed that involving men and boys in conversations about gender equality and violence prevention is essential in changing harmful attitudes and building safer communities for women and children. He also encouraged community members to report all cases of abuse and violence involving children so that the police can respond promptly and ensure

justice is served.

Thaba-Tseka District Administrator Tlali Mphafi said the roundtable discussion seeks to move the district from point A to point B in its efforts to empower young people and eliminate gender-based violence and child marriage.

Mphafi said the gathering reflects a shared commitment by government institutions, development partners and community stakeholders to work together in addressing the challenges affecting young people.

He emphasized that preventing gender-based violence and child marriage requires a coordinated, multi-sectoral approach, calling for continued collaboration among government ministries, healthcare providers, law enforcement agencies, traditional leaders, development partners and communities to ensure that children and young people grow up in safe environments where their rights are protected.

Delivering closing remarks, UNFPA Country Representative John Kennedy Mosoti said ending gender-based violence and child marriage requires sustained collaboration among government institutions, development partners, communities and young people themselves.

He emphasized that empowering young people with knowledge, life skills and opportunities is key to preventing violence and building resilient communities.

Mosoti commended the participation of the various stakeholders, saying multi-sectoral partnerships are essential in creating safe environments where women, girls and boys can thrive free from violence.

He reaffirmed UNFPA's commitment to supporting initiatives that strengthen prevention efforts, promote gender equality and protect the rights and dignity of all young people.



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China, Lesotho Celebrate Enduring Friendship



LIAPENG RALIENGOANE

MASERU – The Chinese Embassy on Monday hosted a reception to celebrate the 105th anniversary of the founding of the Communist Party of China (CPC), with government officials, diplomats, political leaders and members of the Chinese community gathering to mark the occasion.

Chinese Ambassador Yang Xiaokun said the anniversary celebrated the Communist Party’s remarkable journey in transforming China into a modern nation while improving the lives of millions of its people.

He highlighted China’s achievements in poverty reduction, economic development, science and technology, adding that China remains committed to promoting peace, cooperation and mutually beneficial partnerships around the world.

Delivering remarks on behalf of the Government of Lesotho, Minister



of Foreign Affairs and International Relations Limpho Tau congratulated China on the milestone and reaffirmed the strong friendship between the two countries.

Tau said Lesotho values its partnership with China, noting that cooperation in infrastructure, education, healthcare, agriculture

and trade has contributed significantly to the country’s development.

He also reaffirmed Lesotho’s commitment to the One-China Principle, describing it as the foundation of the longstanding diplomatic relations between the two nations.

The minister said the

relationship between Lesotho and China continues to be guided by mutual respect, equality, solidarity and a shared commitment to development that benefits ordinary people.

Ambassador Yang expressed confidence that the friendship between the two countries would

continue to grow through stronger political ties, practical cooperation and increased people-to-people exchanges.

The evening concluded with a toast to the enduring friendship between Lesotho and China, as well as to continued peace, development and shared prosperity.

Fresh legal storm over CAB 3

Metro **MIRIAM MANGWAYA**

The passing of the controversial Constitution Amendment No. 3 Bill (CAB 3) has cleared the way for numerous court challenges against legislation that seeks to extend President Emmerson Mnangagwa's tenure beyond constitutionally mandated limits.

The Bill cleared its final stage in the National Assembly on Tuesday during an extraordinary sitting convened by the President after legislators reconsidered amendments proposed by the Senate.

It was approved by 226 votes, with 41 opposition legislators from the Citizens Coalition for Change (CCC) voting against it.

The Bill now awaits Mnangagwa's signature.

However, war veteran Reuben Zulu has already launched an urgent High Court application seeking to halt the processing of CAB 3, following the fallout from controversial cash and car gifts given to Members of Parliament by businessman Wicknell Chivayo.

Zulu argued in his application that Parliament's approval of the proposed constitutional changes was "contaminated" by allegations of corruption and unlawful inducements offered to MPs.

The application was filed on Tuesday, the same day the National Assembly approved the Bill.

Zulu was one of six applicants who previously approached the Constitutional Court seeking to invalidate the process leading to the Bill's introduction, he is represented by constitutional expert Lovemore Madhuku.



In this latest application, he seeks an interim interdict preventing the Speaker of Parliament, the Clerk of Parliament, and other officials from certifying or presenting the Bill to the President for assent pending the determination of the case.

Madhuku has also filed two additional constitutional applications challenging the Bill — one on behalf of war veterans and another for CCC legislator Prince Dubeko Sibanda — against the Senate amendments adopted by the National Assembly.

Political analyst Blessing Vava stated that the completion of the parliamentary process is likely to trigger a fresh wave of constitutional litigation.

Vava argued there are credible grounds to claim that Parliament failed to comply with mandatory constitutional procedures, particularly those relating to public participation and other safeguards.

He said several legal applications had effectively been

put on hold pending the conclusion of Parliament's deliberations and expected new challenges to be filed now that the legislative process is complete.

Vava further contended that the proposed amendment to Section 328(7), which protects presidential term limits, must be subjected to a national referendum before it can become law.

"In my view, the provisions dealing with the extension of term limits ought to be subjected to a national referendum, as required by the Constitution," Vava said.

He added that the completion of the parliamentary stage should not necessarily mark the end of the amendment process.

He criticised the positions taken by National Assembly Speaker Jacob Mudenda and Justice minister Ziyambi Ziyambi, who maintain that a referendum is unnecessary.

Vava considers that interpretation

inconsistent with the spirit and intent of the Constitution, reflecting an attempt to expedite the amendment without affording citizens the opportunity to vote on a fundamental constitutional question.

He suggested that those opposing the Bill could use "lawful democratic" means to defend constitutionalism through peaceful civic action and public advocacy.

He also called on churches to engage the President to either withhold assent or refer the Bill to a referendum, while encouraging civil society organisations to engage regional bodies such as the southern African Development Community (Sadc) and the diplomatic community.

Opposition politician Jameson Timba argued that a specific Senate amendment — providing that the Vice-President last designated to act under Section 100 would automatically become Acting President in the event of a vacancy — alters political incentives

surrounding succession.

Under the 2013 Constitution, the first Vice-President automatically succeeded the President for the remainder of the term.

Constitution Amendment No. 2 replaced that system by allowing the governing party to nominate a successor.

CAB 3 now proposes giving Parliament the power to elect a new President within 30 days, while the Vice-President who last served as Acting President temporarily assumes authority.

According to Timba, this amendment could intensify competition within the Executive, as routine acting appointments may increasingly be viewed as signals for future presidential succession.

CAB 3 has generated intense legal and political debate because, among its key provisions, it seeks to extend the terms of the President, Parliament, and local authorities by two years until 2030.

- **NEWSDAY**

‘Under siege’: Uganda’s army chief clamps down on the press

Amnesty urges Uganda to end harassment after army chief, Muhoozi Kainerugaba, shut down major independent media outlets. Analysts see the move as part of a widening press crackdown and a looming power shift.

MARTINA SCHWIKOWSKI

Rights group Amnesty International has called on the Ugandan government to immediately end the harassment of activists and to allow the media to operate freely.

Their demand comes after Uganda’s military chief Muhoozi Kainerugaba ordered the closure of the independent media company Nation Media Group (NMG). Kainerugaba, the son of President Yoweri Museveni, is known for threatening critics of the government, particularly opposition leaders. His attack on the press is the latest escalation. Several opposition figures, including Kizza Besigye, are in detention in what rights groups and activists say are politically motivated charges.

On June 28, soldiers surrounded the company’s editorial and broadcasting facilities, NTV, a channel owned by NMG. The military halted broadcasting operations at NTV and Spark TV. The “Daily Monitor” and “The East African,” newspapers, as well as radio stations, are also affected.

“Negotiations are ongoing at different levels for reopening,” said Susan Nsibirwa, managing director for NMG in Uganda, according to news agency Reuters on Monday.

US condemns Uganda’s attack on free speech

Kainerugaba’s action prompted a strong response from Jim Risch, Chairman of the US Senate Foreign Relations Committee: He urged Washington to review its security relationship with Uganda, adding Kainerugaba’s attacks on free speech, including shuttering major media houses, made him



and the Ugandan military “unfit partners”.

Army Chief Kainerugaba gave no specific reason for the shutdown of the media outlets but wrote on the platform X: “I do not believe in a free press. The press should be guided by cadres of the revolution.” He also confirmed that the orders were approved by his 81-year-old father, who has ruled Uganda for 40 years and began his seventh term in January 2026.

Opposition and human rights groups accuse Kainerugaba of being a central figure in a highly repressive regime led by his father, a former rebel leader.

Under Kainerugaba’s command, demonstrations are often crushed by brutal force. “The president’s son continues his unchecked and unjust campaign of harassment and intimidation of independent media and civil society,” Amnesty’s East and Southern Africa director, Tigere Chagutah, said in a statement on Monday.

Is Museveni ‘handing power’ to his son?

“We are seeing a

transfer of power to the president’s son,” a source at an international foundation in Uganda who wished to remain anonymous for security reasons, told DW. “General Kainerugaba has been expanding his influence within the government since taking over leadership of the military in 2024”, he said, adding that The Daily Monitor is Uganda’s most influential independent newspaper and is known for its investigative journalism, editorial independence, and critical reporting on the government.

Kainerugaba had already threatened to shut down the news outlet weeks ago. The reason for this, according to the source, was critical headlines and critical analysis by the NTV regarding the army general’s influence on national institutions, particularly Uganda’s parliament.

However, even those institutions responsible for regulating the media—such as the Uganda Communications Commission—have “reacted only very cautiously to the

army chief’s action,” he added.

Commission Director George William Nyombi Thembo remained reserved in his statement: “We are in contact with the relevant authorities within government institutions to gain a comprehensive understanding of the current situation. As soon as we have all the facts, we will issue a comprehensive statement as the regulatory authority,” he told DW.

Opposition ‘under siege’ too

Opposition parties repeatedly criticize the government’s repressive policies. They face pressure and are subjected to arbitrary arrests, abductions, and politically motivated charges, according to political observers.

“We are convinced that Uganda should be governed in accordance with the constitution and the principles of the rule of law,” Lulume Bayiga, deputy leader of the People’s Front for Freedom (PFF), told DW, as he commented on the commission’s statement. “This is the

body that must take responsibility for the closure of the media outlet.”

However, according to human rights lawyer Cathy Anite, the institutions responsible for media governance in Uganda have stepped back.

“It is quite obvious that the state is disregarding rights and laws regarding media freedom,” she told DW.

Anite is a member of the Independent High-Level Panel of Legal Experts on Media Freedom and the founder of the Freedom of Expression Hub in Uganda. “In my view, all media restrictions, including the closure of media outlets, must be enshrined in law and serve a legitimate purpose.”

“We are currently witnessing an erosion of media freedom and a blatant disregard of the policy standards that govern a free press,” Anite said, adding that Uganda’s political leadership has created a rather complex and contradictory environment that has blurred the line between constitutional guarantees, legal restrictions, and media freedom.

“This arbitrary closure will have a chilling effect on media freedom and citizens’ freedom of expression in the country and will stifle accountability and the rule of law,” she warned, adding: “The media has that mandate to criticize the state.”

Journalists are frustrated by the restrictions on press freedom in the country. “We are afraid to express our opinions and to do our jobs freely,” a journalist told DW.

“In this media profession, it is a severe blow and a great shock when you cannot speak freely or think without fear,” she said.

- DW

A Travesty of Transparency: Why the High Court's Electricity Tariff Judgment Must Be Challenged



The court also touched upon the issue of mootness, as the tariffs in question had already been implemented and their initial period had theoretically ended by the time the judgment was delivered.

To its credit, the court exercised its discretion to hear the matter because electricity is a "daily and costly necessity" and the issue is likely to recur. However, having acknowledged the immense public importance of the case, the court's subsequent dismissal on the merits feels like a retreat.

If the issue is of such public importance that it transcends mootness, then it is surely of enough importance to demand that the regulator adheres to the highest possible standards of transparency, rather than the bare minimum of a decade-old procedure.

Sekopa must appeal this decision to ensure that the "audit window" trick does not become standard practice for every future tariff hike.

The principle at stake is simple: audited financial books must be presented before any tariff increase is approved, not months or years later. The public should not be expected to provide "informed representations" based on management accounts and two-year-old audits while the LEC claims it is incurring massive current losses.

An appeal would provide the Court of Appeal with the opportunity to clarify that the transparency requirements of the LEWA Act and the Companies Act must be read together to protect the consumer, not used as a shield for the utility.

In conclusion, while the High Court followed the letter of the 2012 guidelines, it failed to protect the spirit of accountability that the Basotho people deserve.

The judgment prioritizes the internal procedures of a regulator over the substantive rights of the consumers who fund the entire system.

The fight for transparency did not end with this judgment; it must continue in the higher courts to ensure that the next time the LEC asks for more, they bring their current, audited books to the table first. Procedural compliance is no substitute for the truth.

RANTAU TLALI MAKHETHA

The recent judgment delivered by Justice Polo Banyane in the matter between The Advocates for the Supremacy of the Constitution, Bokang Sekopa, and the Minister of Energy alongside the Lesotho Electricity and Water Authority (LEWA) and the Lesotho Electricity Company (LEC), represents a significant missed opportunity for judicial activism in the realm of consumer protection.

While the court acknowledged the public importance of the matter, its ultimate dismissal of the application for review is a bitter pill for the Basotho public to swallow. This opinion piece contends that the court's narrow interpretation of procedural compliance has come at the expense of substantive transparency and accountability.

For the sake of the economic welfare of every household and business in this country, the second applicant, Bokang Sekopa, must urgently seek an appeal.

At the heart of this dispute is a principle that should be sacrosanct in any democratic society: that state-protected monopolies like the LEC must be held to the highest standards of financial disclosure before they are permitted to reach further into the pockets of the citizenry.

The crux of the legal battle was whether the LEC's application for a multi-year tariff increase for the period 2023/2024 to 2025/2026 was valid, given that it was not accompanied by the most recent audited financial statements—specifically those for the financial year ending March 31, 2023.

Instead, the LEC and LEWA relied on statements from the year ending March 31, 2022, effectively asking the public to justify a 2024 price hike based on financial data that was already two years old at the time of the stakeholder consultations.

The applicants rightly argued that this absence of current audited data disabled them from making informed representations and contributions to the proposed tariff increment.

How can any stakeholder, no matter how expert, evaluate the "reasonableness" of a tariff increase when the baseline financial health of the utility is obscured by a two-year lag?

The court's reasoning for dismissing this complaint rests on a technicality that favours bureaucratic convenience over the spirit of the law.

Justice Banyane noted that the LEC submitted its tariff proposal on September 28, 2023. According to Section 94 of the Companies Act 2011, a company has six months from the end of its financial year to ensure its

accounts are audited. Since the LEC's financial year ended on March 31, 2023, the deadline for those audited books was September 30, 2023.

Because the LEC filed its application just two days before that deadline, the court found that the "preceding year" for the purposes of the Tariff Filing and Review Procedure of 2012 was technically 2021/2022.

This is a classic example of "ticking the boxes" while ignoring the reality of the situation. By the time the actual stakeholder meeting took place on February 2, 2024, the 2022/2023 audited statements were already four months overdue according to the Companies Act, yet they were still not provided to the public.

By upholding LEWA's decision, the court has effectively signaled that a utility provider can dodge the requirement for current financial transparency simply by timing its application to fall just before an audit deadline.

This sets a dangerous precedent. The 2012 Procedure guidelines, which allow for a "two-year lag" in audited statements, are clearly outdated and out of step with the transparency requirements of modern administrative law. The court's reliance on these guidelines, which it deemed "consistent" with the Lesotho Electricity Authority Act of

2002, fails to account for the fact that the public's right to be heard is hollow if they are denied the tools—the actual, current financial books—needed to make that hearing meaningful.

Regulation 3(5) of the LEWA Regulations of 2009 mandates an "open, consultative and transparent manner" for tariff reviews, yet the court has accepted a process where the most vital piece of evidence for that review is missing.

Furthermore, the court's application of the Wednesbury unreasonableness test is overly deferential to the regulator. Under this test, a decision is only overturned if it is so outrageous in its defiance of logic or accepted moral standards that no sensible person could have arrived at it.

I argue that it is indeed a defiance of logic to grant a multi-year tariff increase based on stale data. The LEC justified its hike by citing increased costs from ESKOM and EDM, and a 33.3% decline in generation at the Muela Hydro Power Station.

While these may be real pressures, the public has a right to see how these costs are reflected in the latest audited books before agreeing to pay more.

Without those books, we are simply taking the LEC's word for it, supplemented only by "management accounts" which do not carry the same weight or verification as a full audit.

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BUSINESS

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

Farmers gear up for EL Nino season

Metro **NEO SENOKO**

MASERU- The Lesotho Meteorological Services (LMS) is planning ahead and gearing up for any possible adverse impacts of EL Nino season with the weather services body working closely with the Disaster Management Authority (DMA) and the World Food Programme Lesotho (WFP Lesotho) to prepare for the tough conditions ahead.

"We are, clearly, heading for an El Niño year and LMS is continuing to monitor and investigate the impacts of El Niño by close check on the development of the Sea Surface Temperatures.

"Therefore, LMS would like to update the public on the seasonal climate outlook for July to September 2026 which indicates an increased likelihood of near-normal to above-normal precipitation over much of the eastern and central parts of the country," the LMS Director Teke Ramotubei revealed in a statement this week.

The LMS revealed further that parts of the western lowlands have a slightly higher probability of below-normal rainfall, although near-normal conditions remain the most likely outcome across many areas. As this is the winter (generally dry) season, rainfall is expected to be limited,



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with precipitation mainly associated with the passage of the cold fronts.

Although El Niño is expected to be the dominant large-scale climate driver for the October 2026 to March 2027 rainfall season, there remains uncertainty regarding the timing of its onset and eventual strength of its impacts. These uncertainties may influence the magnitude and spatial distribution of

its impacts across Lesotho and the wider southern African region.

Ramotubei said LMS will continue to closely monitor the evolution of ENSO conditions along with the depth of its impacts and provide updated seasonal forecasts as confidence in the outlook increases.

On the other hand, some local farmers are not discouraged by the anticipated conditions,

arguing that it is important to plan ahead and prepare for any weather conditions as a farmer.

"I have seen the projections but I think as farmer's e should be ready for anything that may come our way and this year is not an exception. We are ready and prepared to overcome all the challenges and succeed," one local farmer Rethabile Mafatle said in

an interview with Metro this week.

Mafatle said he specializes with cabbage and tomato, citing that he is currently already preparing the soil the two products which he has managed to make a living out of in the past five years.

EL Nino refers to a warming of the ocean surface, or above-average sea surface temperatures, in the central and eastern tropical Pacific Ocean. The low level surface winds, which normally blow from east to west along the equator (easterly winds), instead weaken or, in some cases, start blowing the other direction (from west to east or westerly winds) and these can disrupt normal weather patterns.

Lesotho's NSDP woes continue

NEO SENOKO

MASERU-Lesotho has failed dismally to implement the development plans set under the National Strategic Development Plan (NSDP) since it first became operational in 2012 and the country has, despite notable failures, come up with the extended version that should be achieved by the end of the fiscal year 2027/28.

The big question is whether the country will be able to achieve the set economic goals under the extended version of the NSDP which seeks to transform Lesotho from a consumer-based economy to a producer-based economy, aiming to promote inclusive growth and create employment through the private sector to reduce poverty.

The first NSDP was implemented from 2012/13 to 2016/17, focusing on achieving sustained and broad-based economic growth as the most effective route for poverty reduction through private sector growth. The second NSDP was implemented from 2018/19 to 2022/23 and aimed to grow employment in the private sector that could be maintained beyond seasonal or informal activities.

The NSDP II aimed to achieve this by focusing on four key priorities: enhancing inclusive and sustainable economic growth and private sector-led job creation; strengthening human capital; building enabling infrastructure; and strengthening national governance and accountability systems.

However, these development plans did



not fully realise their goals for various reasons.

For instance, the Mid Term Review revealed that the NSDP II could not be fully implemented because it was too ambitious given the context of Lesotho. The plan was not fully aligned with the limited financial and non-financial resources available in the country, making it challenging to implement all identified priorities effectively.

Furthermore, the Plan had too many strategic interventions and priorities, leading to a complex and extensive framework that did not align with the available resources in Lesotho.

The review further highlighted that the lack of a comprehensive Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) framework in the previous NSDP I contributed to difficulties in planning and monitoring progress, potentially leading to an overly ambitious NSDP II.

“External factors such as the COVID-19 pandemic and the Russian-Ukraine war negatively impacted the progress made towards employment creation and poverty reduction.

The COVID-19 pandemic caused “deep economic regression, significant loss of productivity, and job losses with the shutting down of factories and



mines in Lesotho and South Africa, worsening inequalities for a country that relies heavily on remittances.

“The war between Russia and Ukraine has led to a substantial increase in the prices of energy and food. Fuel and food shortages caused by the war are exacerbating post-pandemic inflation that had already reached multi-decade highs in most economies,” the NSDP Midterm Review revealed.

In Lesotho, the inflation rate for 2022 was 8.27 percent and slightly decreased in February 2024 to 7.30 percent. These global events have had a significant impact on several economies, including Lesotho.

This has resulted in increased inequalities, with a spike in fuel and food prices and job losses.

The country has had to endure budget cuts, leading to a delay in implementing strategic initiatives across various sectors.

These setbacks have necessitated a revaluation of the NSDP II's strategic objectives and initiatives to align them with the current realities such that they are implementable.

As a result, the Extended NSDP II includes several adjustments, including reassigning sectors to Key Priority Areas (KPAs) based on their potential to yield more value.

The Mining sector has shifted to KPA I, which focuses on Productive Sectors. The government intends to leverage the mining sector's potential, particularly diamond mining, to generate employment and support economic diversification, as the sector has positioned itself to be a growth accelerator and a productive sector.

The Finance, Technology and

Innovation Sectors are now part of the cross-cutting sectors as these are all pertinent to the implementation and growth of all strategic objectives.

The budget limitations and financial constraints impacted the ability to effectively implement strategies and activities outlined in the NSDP II, hindering progress towards the planned outcomes.

The implementation of the Extended NSDP II will be guided by a structured framework designed to ensure coordination, resource alignment, and accountability.

This framework will define the roles and responsibilities of stakeholders, institutional arrangements, and processes for integrating the Plan's priorities into national and sectoral strategies, as well as operational tools like budgets and annual work plans.



SOCIETY

‘Transforming grief into growth’: Inside Ricky Rick’s new Memorial Forest in the Free State

LUTHO PASIYA

Roughly four years after his passing, Ricky Rick’s legacy is taking root in a new way.

“Riky believed deeply in people,” said Louisa Zondo, executive director of the Ricky Rick Foundation for the Promotion of Artivism.

“His greatest gift was making others feel seen, heard and worthy of their dreams. The Memorial Forest is an extension of that belief.”

Those words will come to life this month when the foundation launches South Africa’s first Memorial Forest, creating a space where remembrance grows into something that can be seen, touched and experienced.

The Ricky Rick Foundation, together with the Naledi Village Communal Property Association and Rustlers Valley Regenerative Farm and Eco Tourism, will officially launch the Ricky Rick and Anton Chaka Memorial Forest on July 18 and 19 at Rustlers Valley in the Eastern Free State.

The initiative honours the lives of Ricky Rick, born Rikhado Makhado, and Anton Chaka by creating a living forest that celebrates their lasting impact on South African society.

Rather than remembering loved ones through monuments alone, the project offers

a different approach. Every tree planted will represent hope, healing and renewal while encouraging people to reconnect with nature, their communities and themselves.

“The Memorial Forest is an extension of that belief. Every tree planted becomes a symbol of hope and renewal, and a reminder that even after loss, life continues to grow.”

“We want this space to become one where families, young people and communities can gather to heal, reflect, create and reconnect with themselves, each other and the natural world. It is about transforming grief into growth and ensuring that Ricky’s legacy continues to inspire generations in a meaningful and lasting way,” said Zondo.

The two-day launch has been designed as more than a ceremonial event. Visitors will take part in memorial tree planting, healing

and reflection sessions, community storytelling, earth connection experiences and moments of remembrance.

Organisers hope that these activities will encourage conversations around mental well-being, environmental care and the importance of supporting one another.

The gathering will also honour the legacy of Frik Grobelaar, whose work at Rustlers Valley in the early nineteen eighties helped support the establishment of Naledi Village and contributed to the growth of the surrounding community.

For the Ricky Rick Foundation, the Memorial Forest is a natural extension of its mission to promote artivism, the meeting point between creativity, activism and positive social change.

It reflects the belief that Rick’s influence stretched far beyond

music and continues to inspire action in areas including mental health, youth empowerment and community building.

Rick’s brother, Sheikani Makhado, said that the project reflects the values his brother carried throughout his life.

“Riky believed deeply in healing, even when he was struggling himself. Riky always wanted young people to feel seen, heard and valued. The dream of this forest represents the kind of space that he would have loved, a place where creativity, reflection and nature come together. It’s a reminder that growth is possible, even after loss,” he said.

Zondo added that the project is about continuing Ricky’s work through meaningful action.

“This forest is a living expression of Ricky’s heart. He asked difficult questions about injustice, about inequality, about the future of humanity,

especially young people.”

“Planting trees in his name is about remembering him in action, continuing the work of healing, empowering and restoring the good we may have lost or be losing. We see it as planting dignity, hope and courage for the next generation.”

During his career, Rick became much more than an award-winning musician. He was known for opening doors for young artists, often funding music videos and giving emerging performers opportunities on major stages.

He founded Cotton Fest, a festival that celebrates music, fashion and youth culture, while helping shape a new generation of South African talent.

His message of believing in yourself and lifting others continues to resonate long after his passing.

IOL



Vodacom supports local marathon



Metro **NEO SENOKO**

MASERU-In a partnership aimed at promoting wellness, social inclusion and practical community impact along the race route, Vodacom Lesotho has announced its sponsorship of the Mountain Runners Athletics Club Marathon, scheduled for 5 September, through the Vodacom Lesotho Foundation and VCL Financial Services (M-Pesa).

The partnership forms part of Vodacom Lesotho's 30th anniversary commemorations and reflects the company's commitment to using partnerships and social investment to support healthier, more inclusive communities.

Now in its fifth year, the

marathon is expected to bring together competitive athletes, social runners, families, small businesses and surrounding communities in a celebration of endurance, discipline, wellness and Basotho resilience.

Speaking on behalf of the Vodacom Lesotho Foundation, its Head, Tšepo Ntaopane, said the sponsorship was intended to deliver lasting benefits beyond race day.

"We are supporting this marathon as part of Vodacom Lesotho's 30-year anniversary because we believe its impact can go well beyond the finish line," he said.

Ntaopane said the marathon presented an opportunity to engage communities along the route, particularly children, young people and families who will

witness the runners passing through their villages.

"Through the Vodacom Lesotho Foundation and in partnership with M-Pesa, we intend to explore community investment initiatives that address practical needs in the communities along the route, from food insecurity and menstrual health to disability inclusion, gender-based violence awareness, life skills and livelihood support," he stated, adding that Vodacom Lesotho would invite development and corporate partners to join the initiative, with the ambition of helping the marathon become a platform for long-term community benefit.

On behalf of VCL Financial Services, Managing Director, Seenyane Nthejane, said M-Pesa's participation reflected a

shared commitment to wellness, wider participation in sport and stronger community-based events.

"It is encouraging to see Basotho taking part in athletics and choosing healthier lifestyles. That spirit is what attracted us to this partnership," he said. Mr Nthejane added that MPesa would like to see the marathon grow, reach more communities and inspire similar events across other districts.

For the Mountain Runners Athletics Club, the sponsorship marks an important step in broadening the race's reach, deepening its community impact and advancing the Club's ambition to grow the event into a nationally recognised and internationally attractive running platform.

Welcoming the partnership, the Club's Chairperson, Rorisang Mabusela, said: "This marathon is held annually and has grown steadily over the past five years. Each year, we see more runners, more community interest and greater potential for the race to become a major national event. We are grateful to Vodacom Lesotho and M-Pesa for coming on board as partners."

Mabusela added that the

Club wanted the marathon to benefit not only runners but also communities and small businesses along the route.

"Our ambition is to grow international participation, expand the race to a full 42km marathon and, eventually, develop it into an ultra-marathon," he added, citing that the event should encourage people, especially young people, to choose healthy lifestyles over delinquency, drugs and alcohol abuse, while contributing to tourism growth over the long term.

Beyond the race itself, the sponsorship is intended to support communities along the route by opening opportunities for social investment, local enterprise participation and wider awareness of issues affecting households and young people.

The marathon will include 5km, 10km, 15km and 21km races. It will start at Boinyatso, St Michael's, Roma and finish at Lekhalong-la-Baroa, Machache.



Golden Boot race to take centre stage as England face Norway in quarter-finals

Metro **MALIBONGWE MDLETSHE AND AFP**

Typical of England to use their round of 16 3-2 victory over co-hosts Mexico as a measure of the Three Lions' capability to "win the World Cup" in a way that may seem even undermining to their quarter-final opponents, the 2026 World Cup dark-horse, Norway.

Harry Kane (penalty) and Jude Bellingham (two first half goals) scored the three goals that set up the date with Erling Haaland's Norway in Miami on Saturday.

Haaland and Kane are on the hot race, alongside Argentina's Lionel Messi and France's Kylian Mbappe for the Golden Boot.

Haaland recorded his sixth and seventh goals of the tournament in his World Cup debut to help his side beat Brazil 2-1 in the round of 16.

England victory in Mexico City has been labelled as breathless, unforgettable and hailed as their greatest win on foreign soil.

Former England captain Wayne Rooney said the Three Lions had given a statement performance and could go all the way.

"This has shown we have a team who are capable of winning the World Cup," he said. "The belief this will give to these players is huge."

Alan Shearer, another ex-England skipper, said the win would give the side "belief that they can go on and do something in this competition".

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Lioli appoints new coach

Metro **NEO SENOKO**

MASERU-Lioli football club has announced the appointment of, Blessing Moyo as the club new head coach.

Moyo takes over from Halemakale Mahlaha, who parted ways with the club at the end of the 2025/26 season.

"Following an advertisement of position of a head coach, Lioli fc Board of Management would like to introduce and welcome our new head coach, Mr. Blessing 'Bro B' Moyo.

"Moyo comes with a satisfying rich coaching experience having played and coached different teams in Botswana Premier League as both head coach and assistant coach and have won major trophies before proceeding to participate in CAF CL group stages twice in a row," Lioli

Football Club announced on Monday.

In 2025, Moyo parted ways with Botswana giant Jwaneng Galaxy after joining the club back in 2022 as an assistant coach. In 2023 he was appointed as interim head coach of the club.

Moyo's rise in Botswana football stems from his Zimbabwean roots. After moving to Botswana, Moyo played for Notwane united until 2008 before an injury ended his playing career. He transitioned to coaching, starting with division two teams Calendar Stars and Mega Com and later joined the first division sides that includes Tonota FC.

During his tenure at Jwaneng Galaxy, the team reached the CAF Champions League group stages in one of the club's historic achievement.

Expectations are high



among Lioli fc supporters as the team failed to defend the league title they won in the past two seasons. Moyo will

be expected to revive the team in a desired move towards reclaiming the Vodacom Premier League trophy.