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the Reporter

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weekly weather

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LODGE IN LABOUR STORM



- Lodge boss accused of unfair dismissals, verbally abusing staff
- Matter to be heard by DDPR next week
- Boss goes ballistic, spews vitriol at journalist

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Vodacom urges customers to register SIMs



Vodacom Lesotho's M-pesa commercial manager Thato Mathule has warned that failure to meet the deadline for registration of Vodacom Sim cards will lead to blocking of M-pesa accounts' access for two years.

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NEWS

Lodge in labour storm

By Neo Kolane
Junior Reporter

The alleged ill-treatment of employees at a family-owned lodge Mahlakapese Guest Lodge has seen a mass exodus of workers and has landed in the courts of law.

The flashy lodge is situated at Hlotse in the district of Leribe, some 100km north of the city of Maseru.

All is not well in this facility as workers are constantly hired and fired at a whim, plunging it into controversial labour practices that are nagging the workforce.

A considerable number of staff members are forced to retire alleging unwelcome treatment by the management such as being subjected to verbal abuse, something they claim cannot be tolerated.

Among those who have exited from the lodge in a period of two months are the operations manager, accounts manager, human resource manager, bar manager and the banqueting manager.

One of the former managers told theReporter this week that the "place is very good to work at but the main problem is the general manager Refiloe Mokuoane who is also the son to the owner of Mahlakapese Guest Lodge."

The former manager who spoke on anonymity alleged that Mokuoane is an architect of a string of labour related difficulties at have become the order of the day at the establishment.

He accused Mokuoane of spewing profanities at both senior and junior managers while portraying himself as an all-rounder who knows everything.

"This he displays at the morning management meetings which are held every day at 6:30am," he explained, stressing that managers' vacancies are advertised in almost after every two months.

"Customers are always asking why they keep seeing new faces every time they come to the lodge," he said.

He revealed that the first time staff members called it quits was when they were accused of theft which was said to have occurred in kitchen department and the storage room. For that, he continued, the sacked staff members are still fighting their dismissal in court.

"Others who complained of unrelenting ill-treatment left and found a new home in a hotel (name withheld) where they now work. Those who were facing the reality of dismissal declined to leave, demanding they be paid their dues," he claimed.

This former supervisor said he left the establishment because "the owner of the Mahlakapese Guest Lodge realised that there are people who joined a workers' trade union called Lebitso la Sechaba."



MAHLAKAPESE GUEST LODGE

The supervisor said the owner told those workers to re-apply for employment as they had not signed any contracts when they were initially engaged in 2021.

"Our contracts ended in December 2020 because the last contract we had was from October 2020 to December 2021.

"From January 2021 to December of the same year we had no contracts but we were still working. Our union warned us that was perilous and it was not supposed to happen in the first place.

The labour dispute between these workers and the Mahlakapese Holdings (PTY) Ltd has now been set for hearing on March 27 at the Directorate of Dispute Prevention and Resolution. This follows dismissal letters served to the 18 employees.

Dated December 21, 2021 the dismissal letters read: "We regret to inform you that we will be ending your term of employment with us as of December 31 2021. On your last day with us, we request that you meet with human resources to return the resources that you were entrusted with to enable your work."

They were advised to seek any clarification from the human resource office.

"Refiloe habitually hurls vulgarities at us in the presence of his mother who is the owner. We reported the matter to the HR (human resource) department but nothing was done. He used abusive language against me. But I was reprimanded when I complained," he alleged.

He claimed that on one occasion members of the Lesotho Defence Force (LDF) came to his house to 'arrest', and took him to their camp at Mokotakoti near Maputsoe. He was not physically hurt but the incident subjected to what he called 'mental and emotional torture'. He was later released.

He claimed the servicemen had been seen in the company of the lodge's general manager prior to his detention, hence he suspected some collusion.

Commenting on the matter, the public affairs officer of the LDF Lieutenant Colonel Sakeng Lekola was not aware of such an incident but insisted it was not strange for soldiers to take a suspect to their camp.

On the other hand, a former labour law practitioner, who did not want to be named, said the Labour Code Order of 1992 does not allow an employee to be fired by the employer based on suspicion. He said an employee should be afforded a hearing whereby all evidence should be submitted.

He said any employee suspected of misconduct should be dealt with in accordance with the law.

He said it should be the policy of the workplace to shun the use of vulgar language against anyone.

Abusive language is also not allowed at workplace and it should be clearly stipulated in the policy of the establishment that such language should not be used against either employees, employer or between each other.

Approached for comment yesterday, Mokuoane insisted Mahlakapese Guest Lodge is an organisation that runs on code of conducts which are 'run by policies'.

"We are governed by the law and not emotions. If there is a management side that runs the company and that makes things happens, people become uncomfortable and when people do not believe such, they usually say I did not like them when asked why they left Mahlakapese Guest Lodge

"If you dig deeper into the matter, you will realise that the claims are not true. There will never be a time when a person is satisfied. About resignations, well, I know nothing; people resigned, they were given a mandate. I cannot pay them if they are not delivering, they should do their job," he said.

He went on to state that it is not the first time that staff members leave Mahlakapese Guest Lodge due to ill-treatment.

He accused this publication of not being objective regarding the information it is reporting on, and taking up things it knows nothing about.

He said the account manager resigned because the management told her of the company structure and that a finance manager will be employed.

"She thought she is going to be eligible for that position and then we sat her down, told her that the company is growing as that we are looking for someone will skills. She expressed satisfaction, thinking she would be given finance management.

"The food and beverages manager resigned because he committed an offence in terms of our code of conduct. He committed gross negligence, but before we sued him, he resigned.

"When you are reporting, report on facts not on assumptions and know why people left. I feel like we trying to create a story out of nothing and you are going to lose," he said.

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NEWS

Civil servants' dismissals flawed - expert

By Mothusi Thabane
Senior Reporter

A labour expert has described as 'unprocedural' the ongoing controversial wave of dismissal of civil servants suspected of having been engaged improperly by the previous governments.

The government of Lesotho has in the last few months embarked on a campaign to purge civil servants employed on a short term contractual basis because they were either 'unqualified or deployed on political affiliation'.

This saw hundreds of officers in the ministries of home affairs, tourism, and more recently the ministry of communications, being served letters notifying them of the termination of their contracts.

In the latter ministry, correspondence from the principal secretary informed all those affected that the aim of the move was not to remove or dismiss staff, but to correct the unprocedural recruitment that was done by the previous governments and to assimilate them into the ministry in transparent a manner.

The Lesotho National Broadcasting Service civil servants working on temporary contracts were to sign once and half months' contracts that would keep them employed until April 30.

Unconfirmed reports suggest no less than 6,000 civil servants are to be affected by the elimination, which has triggered a widespread outcry from people and organsations which accuse the government of promoting unemployment and poverty, contrary to the ruling party's pre-election promises to eradicate these ills.



INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS AND LABOUR LAW CONSULTANT, ADVOCATE RETHABILE SAKOANE

According to Advocate Rethabile Sakoane, a lawyer specializing in labour law, employment and industrial issues, "if they are new employment contracts there is nothing wrong with giving a person a two-month fixed contract. But if it's an extension, then you are legitimizing the first contract. It means that even if the first contact was unlawful, it is now legitimate. The effect of the extension is that it legitimizes the unlawfulness of the first contract."

Advocate Sakoane said the law is clear concerning anyone who has an employment relationship, whether it's an open ended contract or a fixed term contract the law is clear on the steps to be followed in order to terminate that relationship.

"You don't just terminate an employment contract unilaterally without following the steps stipulated by law which are generally accepted worldwide that, to terminate an employees' contract you will have to give that person a hearing, in all aspects. Whether the termination is for performance, capacity, illness, misconduct, whether it's an operational requirement you still have to afford that person an opportunity to present his side of the story.

"Politically, it might be necessary to terminate the contracts of those employees but then they should be afforded the necessary procedural requirements for the government to say the correct procedure was followed. So when things are done in a hurry, mistakes do crop up because in all honesty, to terminate any employment relationship you must follow the right procedure, you must have valid reasons and follow the right procedure.

"That is why government always loses cases to employees, because in many cases things are done in a hurry without following the right procedure. This is where things go wrong. The employer might feel that he cannot work with the employee because of their political differences. There is nothing wrong with that employer terminating the employment contract amicably. That way, you are also giving the employee a fair hearing. It is the best way. This is a mutual separation where the parties sat down and reached an agreement on how to part ways, what to expect, and what promises are made. Then you separate because it is obvious that you will not be able to work together.

"What I can tell you as a labour lawyer is that you have entered into a contract with a person. The contract is there. These people have been working for so many years, there's no doubt that the person has rendered services as an employee. It says if today you are saying that contract was unlawful then the law is very clear on how to terminate his contract of employment. But if its unlawful but you have allowed this person to work up to now, it says this person is now regarded as your as your employee. So the question is what are the procedures that you have to follow to terminate this employee. Is it operational requirements, and if it is operational requirements it is clear as to how the employer should consult the employees. If it is performance, the procedures are very clear, this also protects the employer against any repercussions that can crop up where the procedure might not have been followed."

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EDITORIAL

A brief look at nutrition financing

Today marks the final day of the two-day African Union's High Level Conference on Nutrition Funding, which will be officially closed by King Letsie III in Maseru.

The King is the AU's Nutrition Champion for 2022-2024. The meeting brought together representatives of several Africa nations who converged to discuss this sensitive issue of nutrition funding.

We take a look at some factors that come into play in the matter. The economic downturn triggered by the Covid-19 pandemic, combined with disrupted food and health systems, threatens to increase malnutrition significantly in low- and middle-income countries.

Estimated nutrition-specific financing needs for select maternal, infant and young child global targets have increased, from previous estimates of US$7 billion/year for 2016–2025 to US$10.8 billion/year over 2022–2030; accounting for nutrition-sensitive needs towards the full gamut of SDG 2 targets, the total needs are estimated at US$39–50 billion per year.

Given these economic challenges, when donor and domestic resources are constrained by the pandemic, the need for concessional, private sector and catalytic innovative finance is more urgent than ever. There are unexplored opportunities for scaling up innovative finance in nutrition.

New tools are available for enhancing the quality of nutrition spending, focusing on evidence and results. Nutrition public expenditure reviews and allocative efficiency tools like Optima Nutrition allow for careful expenditure planning and tracking, and optimising financing to achieve better results.

What does the ICC arrest warrant mean for Putin?

By Anthony Deutsch and Stephanie van den Berg



President Vladimir Putin may not see the inside of a cell in The Hague any time soon, but his war crimes arrest warrant could hurt his ability to travel freely and meet other world leaders, who may feel less inclined to speak to a wanted man.

Putin is just the third head of state to be indicted by the International Criminal Court (ICC) while still in power. The following is a look at what the consequences could be for the Kremlin leader.

What is the case?

The ICC accuses Putin of responsibility for the war crime of deporting Ukrainian children – at least hundreds, possibly more- to Russia.

The Kremlin was quick to dismiss the allegations and the Russian foreign minister said ICC decisions "have no meaning for our country, including from a legal point of view."

Travel abroad

The ICC's 123-member states are obliged to detain and transfer Putin if he sets foot on their territory. Russia is not a member and neither are China, the US or India, which is hosting a summit later this year of leaders of the G20 group of big economies, which includes Russia.

The world's permanent war crimes court was created by the Rome Statute, a treaty ratified by all the EU states, as well as Australia, Brazil, Britain, Canada, Japan, Mexico, Switzerland, 33 African countries and 19 nations in the South Pacific.

Russia signed the Rome Statute in 2000, but withdrew its backing in 2016, after the ICC classified Moscow's annexation of Ukraine's Crimea Peninsula as an armed conflict.

"Putin is not stupid. He's not going to travel abroad to a country where he might be arrested," said assistant professor of history at the Utrecht University Iva Vukusic.

"He is not going to be able to travel pretty much anywhere else beyond the countries that are either clearly allies or at least somewhat aligned (with) Russia," Vukusic said.

ICC'S past experiences

Sudan's former president Omar al-Bashir and Libya's Muammar Gaddafi are the only other leaders to have been indicted by the ICC while serving as heads of state.

Charges against Gaddafi were terminated after he was overthrown and killed in 2011.

Bashir, indicted in 2009 for genocide in Darfur, remained in office for another decade until being toppled in a coup. He has since been prosecuted in Sudan for other crimes but has not been handed to the ICC.

While in office, Bashir travelled to a number of Arab and African countries, including ICC member states Chad, Djibouti, Jordan, Kenya, Malawi, South Africa, and Uganda, which declined to detain him. The court rebuked those countries or referred them to the UN Security Council for non-compliance.

The ICC has tried one former head of state after he left office: former Ivorian president Laurent Gbagbo, who was acquitted of all charges in 2019 after a three-year trial.

Kenya's President William Ruto and his predecessor Uhuru Kenyatta were both charged by the ICC before they were elected. The charges against both men have since been dropped. Kenyatta is the only leader to have appeared before the ICC while still serving in office.

Other courts

Apart from the ICC, several former leaders have been tried by other international courts. Among notable cases:

Slobodan Milosevic, former president of Serbia and Yugoslavia, became the first former head of state to appear before an international tribunal since World War II when he was tried at a UN court for alleged crimes during the 1990s Balkan wars. He died in custody in 2006 before a verdict was reached.

Liberian former leader Charles Taylor was found guilty of war crimes in 2012 by the UN-backed Special Court for Sierra Leone in The Hague, the first former head of state to be convicted of war crimes by an international court since the Nuremberg trials of Nazi leaders after World War II.

Former Kosovo president Hashim Thaci, one of Milosevic's adversaries in the 1990s Balkan wars, left office after being indicted for war crimes by the Kosovo war crimes tribunal in The Hague. He is due to go on trial next month.

Elsewhere, South Africa's Communist Party has slammed the decision of the ICC to issue an arrest warrant for Putin for alleged war crimes in Ukraine.

The party said this decision showed it was biased and was the reason why some countries have chosen not to be part of the Rome Statute.

It said while the ICC has chosen to go after Putin, it has ignored to act against any US leader for the invasion of Iraq exactly 20 years ago.

It said that invasion was unjustified and led to the deaths of tens of thousands of innocent civilians in Iraq, but not a single leader from the US has been held to account.

The SACP said the ICC has been quick to jump on some of the cases, but decided to stay away from others. The US and its Western allies have been involved in invasions in other parts of the world, but none of their leaders have been issued any warrant of arrest.

When the US invaded Iraq in March 2003 it had used the argument that late leader Saddam Hussein was possessing weapons of mass destruction.

Saddam Hussein was later captured and hanged after a trial, three years after the invasion.

The SACP said the ICC has also ignored other invasions across the world carried out by the US and other Western powers.

"Meanwhile, in a month that marks the 20th anniversary of the historical injustice of the invasion of Iraq by the United States-led imperialist forces, the ICC issued arrest warrants for Vladimir Putin, President of Russia, and Maria Lvova-Belova, Commissioner for Children's Rights in the Office of the President of Russia, on allegations relating to the United States-dominated NATO-provoked war in Ukraine," said the SACP.

"In Africa, the case of Laurent Gbagbo, Ivory Coast President from 2000 until his unjust arrest in April 2011 by politically biased forces supported by the imperialist French troops, and his unjust incarceration until 2019, will go down in history as part of the ICC's legacy of bias underpinned primarily by imperialist interests in what appeared merely as a domestic conflict. Gbagbo's arrest and incarceration for eight years under the auspices of the ICC occurred with no evidence. Ivory Coast's former minister of youth development, Charles Blé Goudé, who was also arrested, faced the same injustice," it said. – REUTERS & IOL

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How to plan your finances and plant your future this Global Money Week

By TKay Nthebe



On Monday, the world launched the first day of the Global Money Week (GMW), a campaign celebrated annually with the goal of raising awareness about the importance of financial literacy. GMW is celebrated from 20-26 March 2023 and this year's theme is "Plan Your Money, Plant your Future."

Through hosting various financial literacy initiatives such as essay competitions, social media campaigns, seminars, webinars and workshops on topics ranging from budgeting, credit, savings, insurance and investments, this campaign seeks to empower young people from an early to understand money principles and help them acquire financial education.

In our context as Basotho, with the coordination of the Central Bank of Lesotho (CBL), the Financial Education Steering Committee (FESC) comprising of commercial banks, micro-lenders, insurance and asset management companies, pension funds, credit bureau agencies, non-governmental organisations and the Ministry of Finance the campaign has been extended to a month instead of a week with the goal of reaching more Basotho.

Let's unpack the theme "Plan Your Money, Plant your Future."

Plan your Money: As Basotho, we have a responsibility to plan how best to use our money by preparing a spending plan. This is a roadmap or budget that outlines and guides which expenses to prioritise and how best to spend your money. Preparing a budget will help you track your spending. If you do not have a budgeting template, please see the one provided below.

Plant your future: With climate change and the Keep Lesotho Clean campaign important conversations in our country, taking care of our environment and avoiding littering is as important as managing our finances. According to Global Money Week (2023), this year's theme recognises that future individual financial well-being is linked to the health of our plant and society.

How to plan your finances?

Planning your finances does not have to be complicated. It starts with normalising money conversations, changing the script and not calling money names like 'Parcel.' Developing a healthy relationship with your money requires that you seek professional financial advice from qualified and licensed professionals, have a budget, manage your debt, save for rainy days, invest, and plan for the future. In my weekly Leruo articles, I discuss the building blocks of a holistic financial plan.

How can the Leruo platform help you?

Navigating your finances can be extremely challenging, especially in a constantly changing and complicated industry with many products to choose from. Leruo is a financial education platform, proudly brought to you by Alliance Insurance, through print, radio and digital platforms. Through Leruo, Alliance seeks to provide personal finance and financial planning hacks to help the ordinary Mosotho navigate their finances, plan and access information about financial products and services.

As the Global Money Week draws to an end, I encourage you to always get a copy of Leruo available every Friday in The Reporter newspaper, listen to Leruo Radio on Wednesday and Thursday mornings on the Ultimate Radio and Bokamoso FM respectively, follow Alliance Insurance on different social media platforms and their website at www.alliance.co.ls for FREE personal finance tips and nuggets. ***Likhomo!***

We are eager to get your comments about this column and the topics we cover.
You can reach out to us at: talk2us@alliance.co.ls

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AfriSki Resort cancels ski slopes for this winter

Lesotho's largest tourist attraction in winter, Afriski Mountain Resort's slope will not take place this year. The organisers of the resort took to social media last week to announce the disappointing news.

In the announcement, the company said that it regrets to inform its dear valued friends of Afriski that the ski slopes will not be open for the winter 2023 season. According to the Afriski Mountain Resort, this is the first time since 2009 that Afriski is not able to provide a winter adventure. "We understand that this may require some of our guests to cancel their bookings, and we will make every effort to ensure a smooth process for you." Afriski Moutain Resort went on to say, "we apologize for the limited communication, but we felt it was important to let you know that we are still here, we are doing our best, and we appreciate your support.

"We understand that this news may be disappointing, but we hope to have your continued support as we work towards a brighter future. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to reach out to us," the announcement read.

Vodacom urges customers to register SIMs

By Matseliso Phulane
Junior Reporter

Vodacom Lesotho's M-pesa commercial manager Thato Mathule has warned that failure to meet the deadline for registration of Vodacom Sim cards will lead to blocking of M-pesa accounts' access for two years.

The deadline for registration of mobile phone network sim cards is June 23 mid-night this year.

During a press conference held on Wednesday this week, Mathule said such failure to register the Vodacom sim cards will result in funds being transferred to the Central Bank of Lesotho under uncleaned balances where M-pesa users will have to claim them.

The registration of SIM cards is currently being implemented under the Communications (Subscriber Identity Module Registration) Regulations of 2021. Under the regulations, all subscribers holding SIM cards are required to register them by June 23.

The executive head regulatory and external affairs, Tšepo Ntaopane also stressed that, again the other consequences of non- registration include SIM card deactivation with a risk of a holder losing the subscriber's number together with the data and related services such as mobile money (Mpesa) as well as possible delays in post-deadline registration.

"Lessons from other countries point to increased congestion at registration centres as the deadline approaches and subscribers tend to leave it to the last day.

"While less than 40 percent of subscribers remaining unregistered according to our records, it is important to avoid such congestions as well as to ensure that registration centres are made available at places with the most likely responses from last- minute registration.

"While our records indicate that majority of unregistered subscribers may be found in the peri-urban and rural areas, we need to ensure that proper arrangements are made to meet this demand at the right localities. This is due to maximizing the existing investment in personnel and equipment which was deployed for the expected demand, but which seemingly has been not been fully utilized," Ntaopane observed while strongly advising subscribers to register in time.

The executive Head of Sales and Distribution, Palesa Kaloli noticed a huge challenge of customers being reluctant to register their SIM cards.

The network's records show that 844 000 customers constituting a 60 percent of the total number of customers at the time, have registered their cards.

This is despite Vodacom Lesotho having doubled the number of mobile registration agents, with the majority of additional agents going to rural and peri-urban areas.

The official mobile SIM registration agents can be identified with a branded vest, cap and a name badge with a picture of the agent and a Vodacom logo.

Kaloli further highlited that Vodacom has identified points of registration which are Vodacom centres countrywide, certain hospitals, community council offices, border posts and taxi ranks.

A subscriber should have a national identity card. Such registration is free.

She mentioned that minors, elderly people, the infirm and people with disabilities are allowed to delegate someone close to them to register on their behalf, adding that representatives are expected to bring their own identity cards and that of the customer accompanied by an affidavit or local chief's letter authorizing the proxy to register on behalf of the customer.

"I want to urge subscribers including diplomats, companies, refugees, learners, and minors to ensure that they are fully registered," she concluded

The SIM card registration was launched on June 24 2022, by former minister of communications, science, and technology, Mr. Tšoinyana Rapapa in collaboration with the Lesotho Communications Authority (LCA) the mobile operators being Vodacom Lesotho and Econet Tel-



theReporter

WORLD WATER WEEK 2023

ACCELERATING CHANGE

LESOTHO CELEBRATES WATER WEEK

Picture this: all the rainwater runoff from Lesotho almost ending up in the Atlantic Ocean while the country remains in dire need of drinking water for its people.

As this water travels, it erodes and transports fertile soil out of the country leaving behind gullies, impermeable surfaces, reduced arable land, worsening poverty and hunger.

This situation then is exacerbated by the frequent occurrences of extreme droughts that have caused changes in weather patterns.

But Lesotho is not alone in this potential predicament.

The World Health Organisation last year estimated that 1.4 million people die annually and 74 million will have their lives shortened by diseases related to poor water, sanitation and hygiene.

Today, one in four people (2 billion people worldwide) lack safe drinking water, while 44 per cent of household wastewater is not safely treated, the organisation said.

It further warns that the global water demand is projected to increase by 55 percent by 2050.

It is against this sobering background that Lesotho joins the rest of the globe in commemorating World Water Week.

This year's theme 'Seeds of Change: Innovative Solutions for a Water-Wise World' calls for a rethink on how governments and people manage water.

World Water Week is the leading conference on global water issues, held every year since 1991. The UN 2023 Water Conference, which started in New York on Wednesday this week and ends today, is regarded as a once-in-a-generation opportunity to unite the world around solving the water and sanitation crisis.

The non-profit event attracts a diverse mix of participants from many professional backgrounds and every corner of the world.

Together they are expected to develop solutions to the world's greatest water-related challenges, with topics ranging from food security and health to agriculture, technology, biodiversity, and the climate crisis.

The event also seeks to highlight the importance of fresh water and advocates for the sustainable management of freshwater resources. The theme of each year focuses on topics relevant to clean water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH), which is in line with the targets of Sustainable Development Goal 6.

Back home, the government is playing its part. Lesotho is now a signatory to various international agreements that directly and indirectly affect the development of the water sector in the country.

The government has also committed itself towards ensuring efficiency in management and development of its water resources through an Integrated Water Resources Management Policy.

Lesotho is part of the Orange-Senqu River, the largest watercourse system in Southern Africa, south of the Zambezi. The 2 300 km long River originates in Lesotho, where the River is called the Senqu. The Orange-Senqu River drains almost the entire plateau of South Africa and the total basin, covering one million km, spreads over four countries: Lesotho, South Africa, Namibia and Botswana.

The average annual natural run-off from the total basin is estimated to be in the order of 11 900 million m per annum. Due to many developments and growing number of water consumers, less than half of the flow reaches the River mouth.

The governments of Botswana, Lesotho, Namibia and South Africa – which form part of the Orange-Sengu River Commission (ORASECOM) have agreed to collaborate and to develop the River System in a sustainable way as a water source of common interest which shall significantly contribute towards the mutual benefit, peace, security, welfare and prosperity of their peoples.

The Commission advises member states on the development, utilisation and conservation of the water resources of the Orange-Senqu River Basin.

The driving force remains the potential benefit through the equitable and reasonable utilisation of water sources in the River System to support sustainable development in each country.

The Lesotho government also believes that public-private partnerships are essential for sustainable development of water resources and accelerated access to potable water and sanitation services to the un-served and underserved population on account of improved efficiency of operations and investments. In view of this, it works with non-governmental organisations such as ReNOKA and GIZ on programmes to promote and protect the country's water sources.

Lesotho's water and sanitation policy is based on the recognition of a need for a holistic and sustainable water resources management and development approach. This could be done by ensuring as wide a participation of water stakeholders as possible and treating the resource as an economic, environmental and social good.

"In this regard, it is important that communities have equitable utilisation of water within its boundaries. This right may be exercised through an integrated basin management approach and the active participation in planning and implementation of joint programmes aimed at conserving and sustainably utilising river basin systems," the policy states.

However, effective sector wide coordination remains a challenge for proper management and development of the water resources in the country.

MMB EMBRACES WATER DAY

MALUTI MOUNTAIN BREWERY

The World Water Day is about accelerating change to solve and improve the water and sanitation in our communities. Maluti Mountain Brewery is no exception in taking part on this auspicious day.



To produce our quality beer, we use water as a main ingredient, and it is a resource we cannot do without hence the prerequisite to take care for it. The good quality of water also plays a major role in the exquisite taste of our beers. In a nutshell, we have numerous reasons to ensure efficient use of water as a resource which implies sustainability of the business. Everyday at Maluti Mountain Brewery, we drive water use efficiency and responsible discharge of the effluent.

We have set clear targets on water use reduction and monitor the progress to achieve our targets. we are constantly looking for opportunities where we can reduce our usage that is why we have our ambitious goal of water 1:1 whose main objective is to reach a milestone of producing 1HL of beer with 1HL of water.

A roadmap detailing our 1YP and 3YP on how we intend to achieve this as well as water saving initiatives are already in place. In addition to that, we also have projects that are already underway. Initiatives like recovery of backwash water from water treatment plant and recovery of last stage rinse at water softeners alone will save us 3.9 million L of water annually.

A day like World Water Day gives us an opportunity to celebrate our progress on reduction of water usage and challenge ourselves to go further. We have water stewardship as one of our Sustainability goals that are well aligned with the United Nations sustainable development goals.





Water stewardship as our sustainability goal has been a steppingstone towards achieving our goal of water 1:1. The commitment of the goal is to have a water usage ratio of 2.5HL of water for 1 HL of beer by 2025. The current ratio of 3.09 against the target of 2.75HL for 2023 is a step in the right direction, with the stringent target we are setting every month we can only expect great result. By using water efficiently, we are not only helping the company but the community as well, that is why the commitment of the sustainability goal also takes into consideration the availability of water for the nearby communities.



Water being a critical resource for the health and well-being of every community around the world and key ingredient in our products, we strive to understand the state of our water quality and availability by undertaking water risk assessment which is also important in ensuring that the quality of our product is never compromised by identifying primary water risk factors so that we can be proactive and ensure that proper measures are in place to mitigate any risk identified. As brewers, we aim to make a positive contribution with regards to water use and management and are focused on being a part of the solution to the growing water challenges so we continue to create a future with more cheers.

reNOka
We are a river

LESOTHO LOWLANDS WATER DEVELOPMENT PROJECT PHASE II
Supporting Life, Inspiring Progress.

World Water Day 2023
Accelerating Change

The Government of Lesotho joins the world in its commemoration by highlighting actions it has taken across the country, with the support of her international partners, aimed at accelerating change in Lesotho's water sector and safeguarding the country's water security.

Water infrastructure is highly vulnerable to climate change as heavy rainfall damages the infrastructure. Land degradation and soil erosion in the catchments increases siltation of dams and reduces the lifespan of infrastructure projects. Through ReNOKA and LLWDP, the Government of Lesotho supported by the European Union and the German development cooperation work together to implement risk informed development and to protect public infrastructure such as the Metolong Dam. Climate risk assessments have been carried out and the restoration of upstream catchments will reduce siltation and prolong the lifespan of the dam. Furthermore, LLWDP's Contingent Emergency Response Component (CERC) aimes to support and mitigate sector-related risks caused by climate change and resulting floods. In the event of an emergency, this contingent component provides immediate and effective response to the crises. In 2021, CERC component was triggered to respond to the affected water infrastructures in the country. Furthermore, LLWDP is undertaking technical inspection and Safety, Health & Environmental monitoring of construction and rehabilitation of water infrastructure in 10 districts of Lesotho covering 215 villages.

With the support of the European Union (EU), the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development, the Southern African Development Community (SADC), and financial institutions, the European Investment Bank (EIB) and World Bank, the Lesotho government is implementing actions to encourage the sustainable management of water and land resources in the country.

Lesotho is considered the water tower of Southern Africa as vital river systems have their source in the Maloti mountains. 15 million people in the Orange-Senqu River Basin across Lesotho, South Africa, Botswana, and Namibia rely on this river for water, farming, industry and hydropower. The cross-border economy in Lesotho and South Africa that relies on water from Lesotho is valued at an estimated M1,730 billion. Hence, water is an important economic commodity for the Mountain Kingdom accounting for 22 % of Lesotho's GDP. Around 30% of the jobs in Lesotho are dependent on the country's water resources.



Cropland well protected from erosion by terracing

However, the natural enablers of securing this precious resource are under threat. Lesotho's river catchments are facing severe environmental degradation due to inadequate land and range management practices.

Healthy catchments and wetland ecosystems absorb rainfall and release water gradually into rivers and streams. Degraded catchments worsen flood and drought events, soil erosion and cause water reservoirs and resources to fill up with silt.
Climate change exacerbates these effects. Extreme weather events induced by climate change such as frequent, severe rainfall and storms as well as longer and intense dry spells lead to an alarming status of Lesotho's land and water resources.

If the catchment ecosystems were to collapse, water production would be adversely affected posing an existential threat to Lesotho's socio-economic development. This would equally have ramifications for the domestic and regional water, food and energy security in what is already considered one of the most drought prone regions of the world.

Government of Lesotho and local communities leading the change

ReNOKA, the national Integrated Catchment Management programme implemented by the Government of Lesotho supported by the European Union (EU) and the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development, is restoring degraded watersheds through emergency rehabilitation measures and the development and implementation of catchment management plans. These plans address the human causes of degradation such as unsustainable land use patterns, advance climate resilience and provide livelihood opportunities for the local communities. Furthermore, ReNOKA is working closely with local communities to promote the adoption of more sustainable behaviours such as farming practices like terracing and controlled grazing practices to reduce land degradation.

Catchment Management Joint Committees (CMJCs) and Catchment Planning Units (CPUs) have been formed across the country in line with local government regulations to support planning at catchment level. 25 community-level watershed teams in the six sub-catchments Khubelu, Hlotse, Likhetla, Makhalaneng, Maletsunyane and Senqunyane representing 3,000 members from local land and water user associations have developed action plans to restore their watersheds. With the support of the CPUs, these plans are costed and readied for integration into local council action plans for the financial year 2023-24. A compendium of soil and water conservation measures provides quality standards for the identification, costing and implementation of rehabilitation measures to inform this process.

In 2022, more than 260 hectares of watershed were rehabilitated through emergency rehabilitation of degraded hotspots and the voluntary implementation of community watersheds' plans by the local communities. As rehabilitation measures such as construction of stone bunds and invasive species removal were implemented in the upstream parts of the watersheds, adjacent downstream areas are starting to show signs of recovering. Rangeland recovers and sedimentation in water bodies reduces. The measures were instrumental in stormwater management during the recent floods and prevented further erosion from occurring.

Furthermore, local communities are supported in creating economic activities that reduce pressure on water and land resources contributing to sustainable and resilient livelihoods for the Basotho living in the watersheds.



Figure 1: Water storage tank at Ha Ramokakatlela

Eight boreholes at Maputsoe where rehabilitated and deepened to avail more water and for prolonged periods. Additional water from the boreholes will supplement the current WASCO supply on the Maputsoe area and its surroundings.

The Lesotho Lowlands Water Development Project (LLWDP)

Another programme supporting Lesotho accelerate change to solve the water and sanitation crisis, is the Lesotho Lowlands Water Development Project (LLWDP). This World Bank, EU and the European Investment Bank financed programme seeks to improve availability and local communities' access to improved water. The project improves delivery of treated water to supply points and reseviors through water supply investments in priority zones. It thereby mitigates unmet water demand and severe droughts which impact the livelihoods and economic activity of Basotho.

The project is being implemented in phases with a fast tracked phase of Metolong water supply covering Maseru, Morija, Roma and TY completed in 2015. Other phases until 2027 cover Leribe (Hlotse & Maputsoe), Mafeteng and Mohale's Hoek and Butha Buthe.

More than 2,500 people in urban, peri-urban and rural settlements in these zones benefit from increased availability, reliability, and access to water for domestic and industrial purposes. This will boost economic development, public health and improve the area's resilience to climate change impacts such as prolonged droughts.

Involving all stakeholders in water resources management



To join the World Water Day celebrations, the Ministry of Natural Resources together with ReNOKA are launching a 30month long exhibition under the theme, “Resilient catchments” at Metolong Dam visitors Information Centre on the 31st March.

The exhibition will highlight interventions, status and the challenges in addressing sustainable and climate resilient land and water resources management in Lesotho and it’s impacts on the water security for the whole Southern African region. It will be open to the interested public until 30th June 2023.

All media enquiries should be forwarded to:

Makomoreng Fanana

National ICM Coordinator, ICM

Coordination Unit

Makomoreng.fanana@renoka.org

Ramafahla Thamae

Public Relations Officer

Lesotho Lowlands Water Development Project II (LLWDP)

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Disclaimer: This publication was produced with the financial support of the European Union (EU) and the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ). Its contents are the sole responsibility of <name of the author/partner> and do not necessarily reflect the views of the European Union or the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)

Maseru, 24 March 2023



RETAIL NEWS:

Clicks now offers rapid COVID-19 (antigen) self-test

Clicks, South Africa's leading health, beauty and wellness retailer, now offers a rapid COVID-19 (antigen) self-test. Available in-store and online without the need for a prescription, the self-test retails for R59.95 (cash price).

The Orient Gene Rapid COVID-19 (Antigen) Self-Test is a lateral flow test that uses a nasal swab to detect the presence of COVID-19 antigens in the body, with an accuracy rate of 98.7%. The antigen is generally detectable in upper respiratory specimens during the acute phase of the infection. The amount of antigen in a specimen may decrease as the disease duration progresses.

The results of the test can be read in just 15 minutes and reflects as either a single line (indicating a negative result) or two lines (indicating a positive result).

"We are pleased to offer our customers a simple and time-saving way to test for COVID-19 in the safety and convenience of their own home," says Rachel Wrigglesworth, Clicks Chief Healthcare Officer. "We believe that providing access to affordable testing is an important step in the fight against COVID-19."

Spa caters for kids' needs

By Seleoe Nonyane
Junior Reporter

TOTS Hair N Play is an establishment that offers hair related services and cosmetics supplies that are mainly for use on children.

Thato Mokhothu Ramohlanka, who founded TOTS Hair N PLAY says her small business was officially launched in December 2022 with the hope of carving a niche among untapped clientele.

She said since then, her business has been 'amazing' due to significant support during the festive season, especially in what she describes as a 'fluctuating enterprise'.

"We first started operating with just a salon and all went well until January where we saw a decline in the number of clients, compared to December.

"I believe this was because in January parents are more focused on paying their children's fees and other school related expenses. We only saw the numbers pick up again in February.

"We then in March ventured into the baby spa and judging that we are only a few weeks in operation the baby spa has been doing well and I am adamant that we will do better," she said.



IDYLLIC BEAUTY OF THE KIDS' SPA

The spa caters for children from two weeks to eight months. The services offered at the spa include hydrotherapy whereby the children are put in a tub full of water while wearing floaties in order to help them float.

Ramohlanka said the hydrotherapy provides a wide range of benefits for children according to their specific needs.

Among other she said it is good at treating colic which is described as when an otherwise healthy baby cries or fusses frequently for no apparent reason. One of the symptoms of colic is when a baby passes gas a lot.

More benefits of hydrotherapy are that it improves the baby's sleep, the well-being and development of the baby and it is also fun.

Ramohlanka also mentioned that the spa also offers baby massages. Both hydrotherapy and massages can be done separately or together as one package.

She said the motive behind opening this type of business is that she has a background in psychology and she was fortunate enough to work with children whereby she learned what they need for their development. For that, the baby spa was a great idea into bettering the life of children.

A lack of baby spas in the country also influenced her to tap into the market with the well-thought invention.

She has observed that this type of business is popular in the world except in Lesotho while in the neighbouring South Africa's Gauteng province it flourishes.

"In Lesotho this is a very new concept and I believe we are the only business in the country that offers baby spa.

"The public is still warming up to it and are becoming aware of it as I have received a lot of questions about it with regard to its benefits," she added.

Since its opening, it has seen a need to expand and offer the hydrotherapy not just for the two weeks to eight month old babies. Some parents have already enquired whether such services could also be availed to children older.

The plan is to expand such services in the near future to children who are older.

Parents can book a spa or hair appointment on +266 58584551.

Central Bank of Lesotho
INVITATION TO TENDER

The Central Bank of Lesotho (the Bank) invites proposals from duly registered and suitably qualified service providers for provision of sanitary services.

For full details of the tender requirements, interested person (s) should contact the undersigned at **Tel: +266 2223 2126 or Email: mlechela@centralbank.org.ls,** and ask for a copy of detailed **RFP.** The soft copy may also be downloaded from the website at **www.centralbank.org.ls.**

The closing date for submission of proposals is **Friday, 14th April 2023 between 14:30hrs and 16:30hrs.**

M. Lechela (Mrs.)
Secretary, Tender Committee

ESTATE NOTICE

ESTATE LATE MAMOOKHO ALIX-MARY LEBEKO EC02/2023

Notice is hereby given in terms of Sections 34 of the Administration of Estates Proclamation No.19 of 1935 calling upon all heirs, legatees, and creditors of the deceased to attend before the office of the Master of the High Court Leribe on the 24th March 2023 at 0900a.m. for the purposes of:

Proposing some person/persons to be appointed by the office of the Master of the High Court as executor.

DATED AT LERIBE THIS 27TH DAY OF FEBRUARY 2023.

Master of the High Court

Tsifalimali

Lekhotleng

Leribe

THE JUDICIARY
P.O. BOX 99 • MASERU 100
24-02-2023
THE MASTER OF THE HIGH COURT
LERIBE • LESOTHO

P.M. RAMOHOLI (MRS)

ASSISTANT MASTER OF THE HIGH COURT

NOTICE

Lephema Executive Transport wishes to inform the public about a proposed development which will take place at Ha Ntjabane, Teyateyaneng.

The proposed development is for a Shopping Mall, Offices, Filling Station and many more

The proposed project will trigger listed activities in terms of Section 19 of Environment Act 2008 of Lesotho, Part A of the First Schedule which will require the Environmental Authorization prior to commencement.

Further information on the application or activity details can be obtained from : ISHMAIL PEERBHAI, PROJECT MANAGER, 58860500

Mpapa designs phone covers

By Matseliso Phulane
Junior Reporter

A desire to have a unique phone case with his picture on it, Filipi Mpapa built on an idea to establish a business that makes phone covers in June 2021.

Named Customised Phone Covers has now become a brand specialising in design of phone cases depending on the choice of a customer. Such pictures range from an image of a loved one, business brands, logos, role models, football stars or the owner's name written on it.

Mpapa told theReporter this week that he was inspired by the love of art since he was growing up. His ambition was to have his unique phone case with his picture on it but could not find such service, sparking a push for him to invent the art. He then conducted research about such possibility.

"I have an App that allows us to design the appearance of a suggested picture and how it will look like. Again, it enables customers to compare which picture will be suitable for their covers. I use materials from China depending on the order I receive.

"I also researched and watched YouTube videos and downloaded different Apps and compared the one with good edits and those which could be easier to use," he said

His target market are people who are willing to impress their loved ones in case they do not find suitable covers from the phone shops.



SOME OF THE PHONE COVERS DESIGNED BY MPAPA

Although he is solely running the business, he is willing to have a partner to boost production.

In his trade, he encounters difficulty in delivering to his customers in time due to limited courier service to places such as Qacha's Nek, Mokhotlong and South Africa.

"Besides that, I am struggling to find cases for old phone models and unpopular ones. Sometimes customers fail to be patient enough and end up withdrawing their orders.

But I have negotiated with some courier companies to enable timely delivery of the items to the customers, he stressed, adding buyers need to be alerted of any possible delays that might occur.

However, he has realised that the small enterprise is not growing as much as he had thought, noting that a variety of marketing strategies were employed.

His attempt to market the art on the social media including Facebook, have earned him good results as friends are able to distribute his makes to their collegaues.

The 28 year-old Mpapa is a graduate from Lerotholi Polytechnic and holds a Diploma in Business Management which he completed in 2017.

Believing that he can go far, his burning desire is to expand his business to other parts of the country and even break into international market.

"The increase in production will also allow me to provide each and every phone with covers that customers may need," he observed.

His ardent advice to other entrepreneurs is to keep trying on what they are are willing to do even if the progress is slow as "good things do not come cheaply and need time for commitment."

"I would be impressed to see business owners having their phone cases with their business brands and logos on them," he concluded

Phone covers' prices range from M 200 each with the price reduced to M170 when buying. Two or more covers.

He can be contacted on + 266 59214807/ 266 6358962. Or visit Customised Phone Covers on Facebook, Instagram: Customised.Phone.Covers, on Twitter at: PhillipMpapa as well as Instagram: Phil.Mpapa and Tiktok: Philmpapa

LMDC

LIQHOBONG MINING DEVELOPMENT COMPANY (Pty) Ltd

PLANT CLERK

Liqhobong Mining Development Company (Pty) Ltd, a subsidiary of Firestone Diamonds PLC, invites suitably qualified and competent Basotho to apply for the vacant position of **Plant Clerk.**

Job Purpose
To oversee all aspects of general office coordination of the Operations Production Department including retrieving, filing, and maintaining all records. The incumbent is also responsible for executing daily routine administrative activities in response to work demands of the department such as filing, data capturing, correspondence and job card logging.

Responsibilities
Under the direct supervision of **Plant Foremen,** the incumbent will carry out the following duties and responsibilities.

- Maintain office calendar to coordinate workflow and meetings.
- Update monthly departmental roisters.
- Handle all incoming and outgoing correspondence.
- File and retrieve departmental documents, records, and reports.
- Update daily reagents consumption and stock levels.
- Interact with temporary workers and assist with recording their working hours.
- Provide feedback to immediate Supervisor on outstanding issues.
- Maintain efficient job card logging system using SAGE.
- Attend meetings as and when required.
- Seek own development and learning opportunities within the Mine.
- Ensure adherence to SHE programmes, practice, safety standards and regulations.
- Participate in daily toolbox talks to reinforce SHE and related messages and decisions.

Legal and other requirements
- Police clearance and medical examinations of fitness.

Qualifications and experience
- 2 years' office experience in a plant environment.
- National Diploma in Office Administration, Office Management or equivalent.
- MS Suite.
- Typing proficiency (>40 words per minute).

Skills and competencies
- Filing and record keeping.
- Problem solving.
- Interpersonal relations and customer oriented.
- Good oral and written communication skills.
- Proficiency in English.
- Time management.

Attributes
- Knowledge of reporting procedures (clocking systems).
- Knowledge of administrative procedures (POSCORBE).
- Ability to pay attention to details and systematic approach to work.
- Consistent with agreed principles of correct; moral conduct.
- Ability to take direction but exercise independent thought and judgment.

Application letters including a detailed CV and certified copies of relevant qualifications should be send to careers@liqhobong.co.ls or submitted to

5th Floor
Letsie Office Park- Pension House
Constitution Road
Maseru West

Closing date for submission of applications is Thursday 30th March 2023 at 16h00
Disclaimer: Only shortlisted candidates will be contacted

JOHNSON CRANEHIRE

EXTERNAL VACANT POSITION ADVERT

Reference No.:	PRO-04-HR-WI-02-F15	Issue Date:	20/07/2016
Page:	1 of 1	Revision:	0

TITLE OF POSITION:	**MOBILE CRANE OPERATOR**
SALARY / HOURLY WAGE:	Hourly Wage
BENEFITS OF POSITION:	Provident fund (with permanent employment)
OPENING DATE OF ADVERT:	24/03/2023
CLOSING DATE OF ADVERT:	14/04/2023
BRANCH/DEPARTMENT WHERE VACANCY EXIST:	JOHNSON CRANE HIRE - LESOTHO
EE/AA/NON AA POSITION	EE Position – Lesotho Citizens Only
REFERENCE NUMBER FOR POSITION:	**MOB-10-23-01 Mobile Crane Operator**
PERSONAL ATTRIBUTES REQUIRED BY APPLICANT:	• Perseverance and Self-discipline • Willing to learn • Positive and Energetic • Passionate and Ambitious • Work hard and go the extra mile
MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS TO APPLY:	• Form E with Mathematics as a subject passed. • Valid Code EC (14) License with PDP • Crane Operating Certificate that is still valid, achieved through a TETA Accredited Training Provider (Certified on Unit Standard 116254 or Unit Standard 242982) and/or • Telehandler and or MEWP Operator certificate achieved through a TETA Accredited Training Provider on Unit Standard 244365 and/or Unit Standard 243272 • 2 or more recent years' experience operating any Liebherr, Tadano or Grove Hydraulic Mobile Cranes with valid references supplied with Application and/or • Must be willing to be assessed by Qualified Assessors before application will be accepted ***NOTE: NO APPLICATION WILL BE ACCEPTED WITHOUT CERTIFIED PROOF SUBMITTED WITH APPLICANT CV***
EMAIL ADDRESS FOR ALL APPLICATIONS:	**E-mail:** recruitment@jch.co.za Please send any queries related to this advertisement through to Recruitment@jch.co.za as it will not be attended to in person / telephonically.
REFERENCE FOR APPLICATION:	**MOB-10-23-01 Mobile Crane Operator Lesotho (must be the subject of the application per email)**
SPECIFICATIONS FOR APPLICATION:	Please ensure that proof of the minimum requirements is submitted with application or the application will not be accepted.
INTERVIEW PROCESS:	Verification of Certificate by TETA before making contact 2 Interview sessions consisting mostly out of: • Panel Interviews and • Practical assessment by the Johnson Crane Hire Training Academy Assessors

Note: Johnson Crane Hire is an equal opportunity employer.
Employment decision shall be guided by the Employment Equity Plan of Johnson Crane Hire (Pty) Ltd.

NEWS

Debt relief worries CBL

By Mothusi Thabane
Senior Reporter

The increasing number of salaried workers seeking debt relief raises concern as households struggle to pay lending institutions, the Central Bank reported on Wednesday.

According to Lefeela Nalane, head of consumer protection division at the Central Bank of Lesotho (CBL) the situation is tittering on the brink of a crises.

"We are experiencing a wide spread incidence of consumer over-borrowing. Over the last decade there has been a significant increase in access to finance especially to households.

Nalane said consumers can be subjected to unfair market conduct as indebtedness among salaried workers has been a feature of controversy in Lesotho.

"This is evidenced through the increasing number of salaried employees who take home far less than the recommended threshold of 30 percent of the individual income. As you can imagine a take home salary of less than 30 percent leads to a decline in the standard of living" he said.

"The effects of this situation are devastating and have long term effects. We are aware of the increasing number of employees who take early retirement in order to settle their debts. In most cases the pension payroll is not enough to settle the debt with. The issue of over-indebtedness is concerning to the employer because it results in low productivity and high absenteeism."



CENTRAL BANK OF LESOTHO

The CBL governor, Dr Emmanuel Maluke Letete, said: "We came from COVID 19 in a very difficult situation where the interest rates were high and because of inflation we had to continuously raise our interest rates. In the process of raising our interest rates consumers were beginning to borrow more. They borrowed to the extent that their household budgets could no longer accommodate their debt. But this was not a new problem. It was a problem that had persisted in this country for a number of years, particularly at the household level.

"There was a challenge in terms of disclosures because people borrowed from one bank to another and eventually end up with loan sharks. This becomes a cycle. A cycle of borrowing was caused therefore by a lack of credit disclosures. At the end of the day borrowers go to loan sharks who are unaware of the client's credit history.

"What we have observed in the country is that there are people running around with pay slips, but such pay slips are in pdf format which has been edited to remove the amount of money they are owing and leave the same amount of gross salary, giving the impression that the person is good borrower. So deductions are not done by the source, but by the borrower who forgets that it is their own responsibility to borrow responsibly."

Letete added that the implications of over-indebtedness are far-reaching. "In some instances, they can prevent people from making progress in life. They have led to people committing suicide and in some instances, people have gone into hiding."

"The evidence is strong that over-indebtedness in any nation has a debilitating effect on growth. One percent increase in debt leads to one percent decline in growth. That is across the globe and that is the evidence we have," he said.

Govt defends asset recovery plan

By Mothusi Thabane
Senior Reporter

The minister in the Prime Minister's office, Limpho Tau, has dismissed as unfounded concerns from certain quarters of the public that a government asset search and recovery task team is targeting certain individuals.

Speaking at a press briefing last Friday, Tau said the government has no reason to target anybody except to protect its property and recover any other property that has been acquired illegally by individuals.

This follows government's decision to form a task team to take stock of all its movable and immovable property. Tau said the inventory will include developed and undeveloped sites. "This includes government houses to find out who the occupants are, and to investigate the legality of their occupancy of those houses."

He said the task team will also find out if any government property is being rented out illegally, for how long it has been rented, and if such rent is being paid to the government. "The other asset that the government will probe is use of government vehicles and the amount of money spent on fleet management and fuel consumption," he said. "This team will also locate and assess the value of heavy construction machinery."

The task team is made of 11 members from the Prime Minister's office, the ministry of finance, ministry of works, the LDF, LMPS and the NSS.



MINISTER IN THE PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE, LIMPHO TAU

"I am aware that there are some Basotho who made statements over local radio stations that the government is targeting certain individuals, but that is not so. The government is not only carrying out its mandate, but it is seeking to protect public property and to recover any property that might have been acquired illegally," Tau said.

He added that where occupants have leases to the land in question, investigations will be done to ascertain whether correct procedures were followed in the issuance of such leases and whether the transfers from the government to the individuals were properly followed.

"Where a lease was properly issued and later transferred to a third party, we will look at the process that triggered the transfer in the first place. The trigger might not be lawful, and where there is unlawfulness the matter will be settled in court."

"The team will report to the Prime Minister monthly, but the main report will be given after six months, going forward," he said. "This is not expected to take too long because what is important is that the property should be recovered so that we can find out what the government had since 1966 when Lesotho became independent and to recover whatever slipped through government hands since independence."

Tau conceded that it is true that the government might have decided to sell some of its property.

"The second issue is that of government vehicles that are sometimes found at scrapyards or at certain business premises. These are some of the properties that the government wants to recover," he said adding clearly.

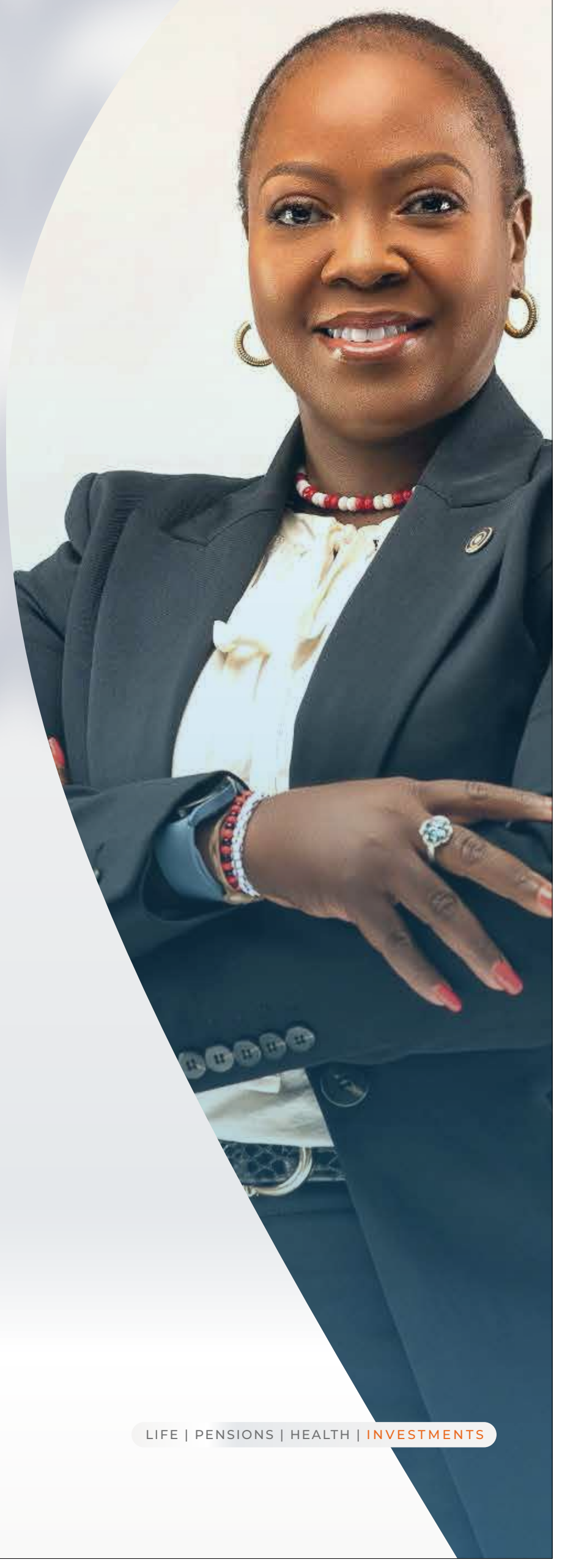
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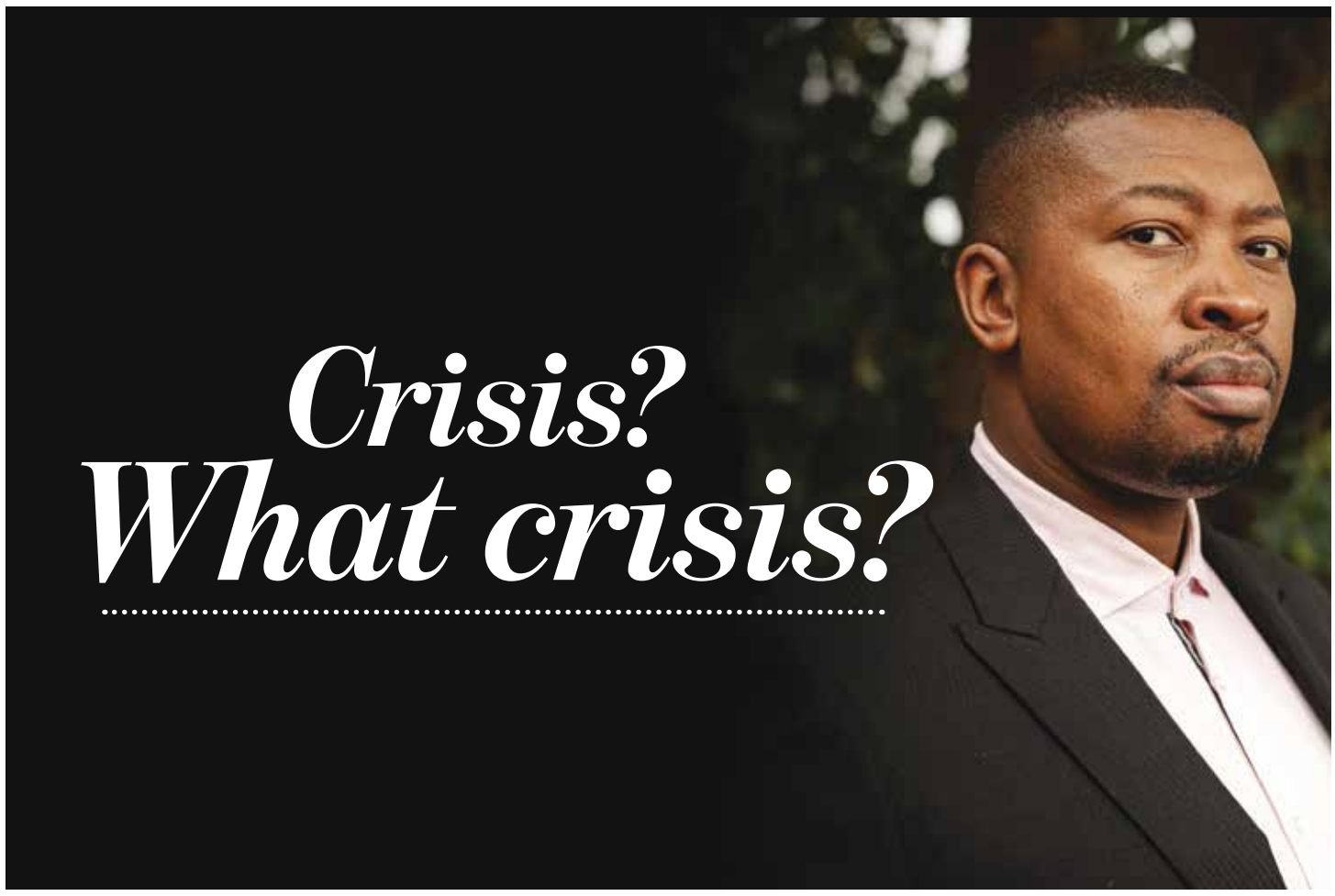
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BY KABELO MOLLO

24 March 2023



Crisis? What crisis?

My father was 40 when I was born so he'd already acquired a great deal of knowledge and wisdom. He was also well read and a smart Guy, but of all his teachings the one I seem to remember most at the moment is "if you're not a socialist at 21 then you're strange, and if you are a socialist at 40 then you're strange". What a Guy! He really had a way with words. Let me try and extrapolate what I think he meant. And perhaps why those words seem to ring true to me now.

When you're young and have your whole life ahead of you, it only makes sense that you have a bright outlook. That you see the best in people and believe in the collective will of society. Perhaps contextually this requires you to come from the middle classes. Be that as it may it was certainly my reality growing up. Having gone to elite schools and lived in the suburbs of Johannesburg it struck me that the black masses of South Africa deserved exactly the same circumstances. In my view the capitalist state wouldn't allow for that because capitalism requires (cheap) labour to work and so that cements inequality. And communism (I suppose a bit like socialism) relies too much on the state, but I thought a unity with a social pact to give everyone a decent living was the answer and so I supported socialism. Being born in Denmark I suppose you could say I followed my Scandinavian heritage...

I supported Malema et al's ANCYL call for nationalizing the mines although I was a little more wary of playing fast and loose with financial institutions like banks. There should in my view be a state owned bank, but just one is enough. Competition is still good in economic terms. So I felt increasingly like the policies of Lenin made some sense even though I never made this public. The first time I voted I seriously toyed with voting for Mosibudi Mangena's socialist party of Azania. Mangena is a genius. Most socialists and communists seem to be academics. Then there's the likes of me, who just hate inequality and injustice.

So I'm currently faced with something of an existential crisis. My left wing sensibilities are being challenged very seriously by the daily realities I come across, that include stark income inequality and a seeming failing of leftist policies. I'll make an example. I don't believe in the death penalty. It is my view that nobody is too far gone and that everybody ought to be given the chance to be rehabilitated. However, the spate of violent murders occurring in Maseru makes me wonder whether rehabilitation is even an option. So many people are shot and killed in this town. Killers have got quite brazen, even carrying out these heinous crimes in the middle of the day in very public places. That suggests impunity. I'm wondering whether for law and order to work it doesn't require the law to be more robust in meting out sanction for these crimes?

Furthermore, I have started to wonder whether authoritarian administrations ought not be the order of the day. We keep hearing the term "benevolent dictator". It's my favourite oxymoron. The very best contradiction in terms, because the truth is being a dictator requires some curtailing of rights and democratic principles while also relying on brutality (and violence) of the security cluster. Yet these seem to be the kinds of administrations getting things done, and actually enacting the will of the people. All of this offends my liberal, egalitarianism. So here I am in the midst of an existential crisis. Everything I knew to be true and all the values I held so strongly are wavering. This is why I find myself pondering on my father's take on socialism and the like. I'm learning that reality and experience don't allow you to hold, a theoretic view on life. Lived experience dictates what your value system is. Then, add in factors like being a parent and trying to ensure a pristine blank canvas for your offspring to grow and flourish and it's just an existential mess.

I'm almost 40 and have abandoned any thoughts of Leninism or socialism. I still don't necessarily believe in this exploitative capitalist model but I suppose my old man would be pleased to note that I'm not strange for still harbouring the beliefs of a wide eyed 20year old.

A rich white old man who used to quaff cognac and smoke only Cuban cigars at a country club my father was a member of in Joburg told me once that existential crises were the preserve of the privileged because the less privileged were too busy trying to make ends meet. That is my jarring conclusion to this piece that has no beginning, and no end...

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THABISO IS MR CULTURE 2023

By Seleoe Nonyane
Junior Reporter



MR CULTURE 2023 VUYISILE THABISO GRIFFITHS (SEATED)

Debutant Vuyisile Thabiso Griffiths saw off stiff competition to be crowned Mr Culture 2023 at the renowned pageant which was held this past weekend in the capital Maseru.

The 24-year old from Mazenod in Maseru told this publication that winning this competition was confirmation that he is capable of achieving his goals in life.

He said the Mr Culture title has provided him with the platform to motivate young boys and men into participating in pageantry competitions.

"In most cases, men are not given a chance to take part in pageants so, I will be motivating young boys to aspire to become models one day by showing them the good things about being a model," he said.

He revealed that the win came as a surprise for him owing to the fact that he was faced with some challenges during his preparations to the inauguration.

He said the experience was very hard for him and saw him cry every day and even had him thinking of quitting the competition but that was not an alternative for him as he believes that one he had to start somewhere to see himself moving forward.

He said the greatest challenge he faced was not having resources to acquire outfits for the day.

"I could not afford outfits and the one alternative I had was to borrow them.

"I was also not able to afford transport fare in order to attend rehearsals which were held twice a month.

"I used to walk from Mazenod to Lesotho High School where the rehearsals took place then walk back to Mazenod from the school in the evening," Griffiths said.

He said among other initiatives that he will carry out during his time of reign as Mr Culture 2023 is that donating sanitary towels to vulnerable girls in high schools.

Therefore, together with his queen they plan on doing charity tours in different high schools throughout the country to donate sanitary towels.

He said if an opportunity arises for competitions such as this one then he is most willing to enter them.

"And yes I'm going to be participating in a competition like this every year," he said bullishly.





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NTATE STUNNA RELEASES ANOTHER HIT TRACK

By Neo Kolane
Junior Reporter

'Stimela' hit maker Ntate Stunna, clearly not wanting to leave his fans calling for more, has recently released his new hip-hop song titled 'Mekaefete'.

Mekaefete was released on March 10 2023 and this jaw-dropping impressive track was produced by Sunset Groove and DeejayZaca, who he met on social media platform Instagram.

The song is courtesy of a local famo music band Thope Tse Khang.

It is written by: Mantšali Hantši, Thaabe Letsie, Siphelele Mnyande and Lesego Moiloa.

The song, which has an irresistible melody, features South African award winners P.Dot and Blaklez who Stunner remembers becoming friends with when he first went to Johannesburg and he helped work on some of their album.

He later said he returned the favour by letting them feature on one of his songs.

Ntate Stunna says 'Mekaefete' was inspired by Thope Tse Khang's erotic and sexually provocative hit track 'Nka e Bula/Tsoke-tsoke.

In an interview with this publication this week, Ntate Stunna - born Thaabe Letsie – could not conceal his love for the girly Thope Tse Khang band, and the work they have done.

He further said that the band's front woman just does not know how big she is on the internet.

"There are artists of different genres in the country that do not even match her.

"I think she is one diamond that we have in the country," the record producer of Penya Play said appreciatively.

Ntate Stunna believes that Mekaefete will impact the original song and people who do not know it will actually listen and download it and like it.

The song's catchy chorus has raunchy lyrics: "Lebaka le leng nkekeng ka mo lahla le ha a nketsetsa mehlolo, hara bosiu ngoaneo o nketsetsa Mekaefete, o nketsetsa mehlolo." (Loosely translated: I won't dump my lover because she is drives me crazy in bed)

When commenting on the track, the lead vocalist of Thope Tse Khang Mantšali Hantši this week said that she spoke with Ntate Srunna and they came to an agreement that the song be produced.

As of March 21, the song stands on 557,269 views on YouTube.