



PVA SUPA SL WHITE & PEACH  M90.00	LAMINATE FLOOR 8.3MM BEACH-SB  M500.00	CT SB 600X600 ITALIAN MARBLE 144  M319.99	ANGLE IRON 25X25X2X6.0M  M150.00	TIMBER SAP 38X114X4.8M  M160.70	CD IBR C/GREY 0.36X1.67M  M619.99
---	---	---	--	---	---

Sunday Express

M6 VOL 14 ISSUE 08
May 29 - June 4 2022

Best Sunday in Lesotho



Civil servants revolt

- Vow to vote against the governing parties in upcoming elections,
- This because they are angry at the govt's failure to award them 25 percent salary increments.

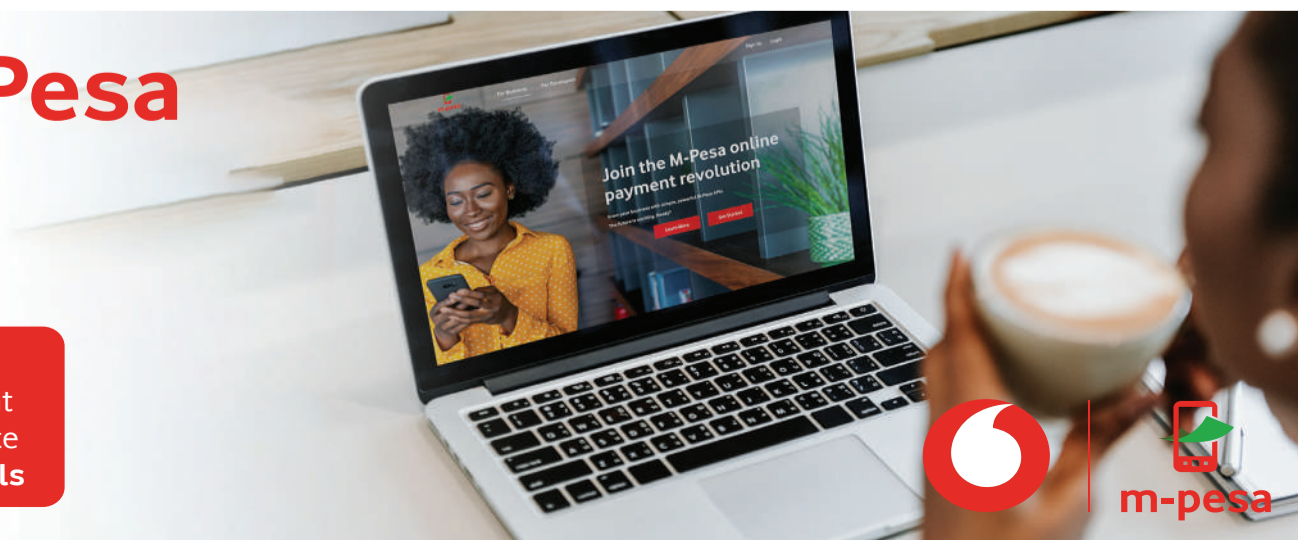
Patala ka M-Pesa

Customers can now use **Patala ka M-Pesa** to pay for goods & services online

How it works:

1. Register for an M-Pesa merchant account
 2. Add this new feature (API) to your website
- Visit www.vodacom.co.ls for more details

T's & C's apply. E&OE.



Civil servants revolt

... vow to vote against the governing parties in upcoming elections,
... this because they are angry at the govt's failure to award them 25 percent salary increments.



CIVIL servants on strike. — file pic.

'Marafaele Mohloboli

RESTIVE civil servants have vowed not to vote for current coalition government parties over their failure to award them a whopping 25 percent wage hike.

The civil servants, who met under the auspices of Coalition of Lesotho Public Employees (COLEPE), said withholding their votes from the current coalition parties would represent their best form of protest.

In the meantime, they vowed to stage protests to press their demands. They nonetheless did not indicate when their protests would begin.

The *Sunday Express* has learnt that the civil servants made the resolutions at their meeting in Maseru on 26 May 2022.

COLEPE comprises the Lesotho Police Staff Association (LEPOSA), Lesotho Public Service Association (LEPSA), Lesotho Association of Teachers (LAT), Lesotho Teachers Trade Union (LTTU), Lesotho Schools Principals' Associations (LESPA), Qiloane Nursing Assistants Association (QINUASA), and the Lesotho Nurses Association (LNA).

Two months ago, the civil servants rejected the "paltry" five percent salary increase the government awarded them for the 2022/23 financial year.

Last year they were not awarded any increment as the country battled to recover from the effects of the Covid-19 induced slowdown in economic activities.

The public servants had planned to stage a massive protest march on 28 March 2022.

They hoped to hand over a petition of their grievances to the Speaker of the National Assembly, Sephiri Motanyane, Prime Minister Moeketsi Majoro and Deputy Prime Minister, Mathibeli Mokhothu.

However, the strike did not materialise after they were denied a permit to march by the government citing Covid-19 regulations which

barred demonstrations and other public gatherings.

This was despite that the government had relaxed stringent lockdown rules against such activities back in January this year.

The civil servants subsequently dragged the government to the Constitutional Court last month.

Advocates Borenahabokhetoe Sekonyela and Mafeoane Moshoeshoe appeared on behalf of COLEPE and the government respectively.

However, Judge, Molefi Makara, ordered the civil servants and the government to go back to the drawing board and negotiate an out-of-court settlement.

Such talks have not taken place to date, the public servants say.

They are blaming their lawyer, Adv Sekonyela, for failing to file a fresh lawsuit against the government for its failure to engage them in talks.

They have since resolved to fire him and seek another lawyer.

Now that the planned talks with the government have not materialised, the public servants have resolved to engage in a series of protest marches to force the government's hand.

They would however, require a police permit to stage their demonstrations.

"We have decided to part ways with our lawyer and embark on other means in our struggle since the Lesotho government is negotiating in bad faith by clinging to Regulation 2 of the Public Health Covid-19 Risk Determination and Mitigation Measures which prohibits demonstrations," COLEPE says in its letter containing the resolutions of its 26 May 2022 meeting in Maseru.

"We have agreed to search for a new legal representative. While we search for a legal representative to help us to force the government to hold talks with us about our remaining 20 percent (increment), all COLEPE mem-

bers will be busy preparing for the legal case (against the government) and they will be holding a series of protest marches until government advises itself to hold genuine talks with us."

The public servants however, promised that the police would be excluded from participating in the protests in line with Justice Makara's April 2022 ruling that LEPOSA members should not take part as they had a key mandate of ensuring law and order in the country.

"Since we are law abiding members, we are going to respect the court's decision to exclude our LEPOSA members from the protests," COLEPE states in its letter.

The public servants also vowed to vote against the governing parties in the forthcoming elections if their demands are not met.

"Should government not see the importance of engaging us in talks with us over our remaining 20 percent, we will have to advise ourselves on how we are going to vote in the coming elections in order to emancipate ourselves from this slavery."

While the governing coalition consists of several parties, the All Basotho Convention (ABC) and Democratic Congress (DC) are the two that would be hardest hit by a protest vote against them by the civil servants.

The two are the biggest parties in the governing coalition. This could then tilt the scales in favour of business mogul Sam Matekane's two months-old Revolution for Prosperity (RFP) party. The cash-rich party has made a grand entrance on the political by wooing high profile personalities who have previously shied away from the cutthroat world of politics.

These include former Chief Justice Nthomeng Majara, former Central Bank Governor, Retšelisitsoe Matlanyane, and Moshoeshoe Walk organiser, Thabo Maretlane. Former Lesotho National Development Corporation (LNDC) head of investment promotion, Mokhethi Shelile, prominent businessman

Lephema Lebona and former Accountant General, Sam Mphaka, are also part of the RFP.

The new party also sent shivers down the spines of the established parties by capturing some of their senior officials barely a fortnight after its formation.

Former Democratic Congress (DC) stalwart and ex-cabinet minister, Tlohang Sekhamane, is the most high-profile member of the Mathibeli Mokhothu-led party to jump ship and throw his lot with Mr Matekane.

But the biggest exodus occurred last month when former cabinet minister Mahali Phamotse and four other senior officials ditched the Monyane Moleleki-led Alliance of Democrats (AD) for the RFP.

AD treasurer and former Development Planning Minister Tlohelang Aumane; former Finance minister Leketekete Ketso; former Deputy Minister of Health, 'Manthabiseng Phohleli and deputy secretary general Batlokoa 'Makong were the others who dumped the AD for the RFP.

The defections and the general excitement surrounding his entry into politics have given Mr Matekane confidence that he could well break the 10 year jinx of parties failing to achieve an outright victory to enable them to govern alone.

The civil servants' votes could be crucial in helping Mr Matekane to realise his dream.

Despite the public servants' tough talk, it is highly unlikely that the government will find the funds to increase civil servants' salaries by 25 percent.

The government has already been told by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to slash the public wage bill, undertake public financial management reform as well as implement the multi-sector reforms recommended by the Southern African Development Community (SADC).

The IMF has also advised the government to award performance-based salary increments.

Fresh woes for Molibeli

... as court orders him to reinstate 'Manomoro gangsters',
... police minister accused of imposing his own people in the recruitment exercise

Marafaele Mohloboli

THE High Court has ordered Police Commissioner, Holomo Molibeli, to reinstate 12 police recruits he had fired because of their alleged affiliation to the infamous *Manomoro* gang of juvenile delinquents.

The court ordered their reinstatement pending the finalisation of their application for an order for their permanent reinstatement.

Commissioner Molibeli has also been given 10 days from 24 May 2022 to "show cause" why the decision should not be made a final one.

This after the 12 expelled recruits last week sued the police boss for "unfair dismissal".

The 12 are Moliehi Dlamini, Mokhethi Damane, Lebaka Matie, Kopano Ramokhoro, Ngaka Lenka, Mojela Gugushe, Thabang Maine, Lechesa Lepheane, Poloko Sekhohola, Refiloe Kheleli, Moorosi Kalane and Sebongile Cekwane.

They were part of a group that was recruited last month to undergo police training in Maseru.

Police spokesperson Senior Superintendent Mpti Mopeli had initially said six recruits had been sent packing shortly after their enrolment for training at the Police Training College (PTC).

He said four of the recruits were found to be medically unfit to begin training while the other two were dismissed due to their "unbecoming behaviour". Some police sources said the four had been kicked after being found to be pregnant while the two were shown the exit door for being *Manomoro* members.

It has since emerged from the court papers that the number of expelled recruits was higher than the initially stated six.

This after 12 people petitioned the High Court for reinstatement. The expelled recruits are said to be part of *Manomoro* - a gang of hardened youthful ex-convicts who include *Famo* musicians in their ranks.

The gang terrorised residents in various parts of Maseru and its environs last year. They were accused of theft, burglaries, armed robberies, rape and assault among other crimes.

Manomoro gangsters can be identified by their tattoos.

Police insiders last week told the *Lesotho Times* that a fortnight ago, the police bosses called in their Lesotho Correctional Service (LCS) counterparts to help interpret the tattoos they had observed on the bodies of the recruits.

The LCS officers confirmed that the tattoos were indeed synonymous with the notorious juvenile gang. The recruits were subsequently expelled from the training college.

Unhappy with their dismissal, the recruits approached the High Court last week citing unfair dismissal.

In their court papers, the expelled recruits alleged that they were discriminated against as they had learnt that there were others who had not been dismissed despite being accused of being *Manomoro* gang members as well. They did not say whether they were indeed part of the *Manomoro* gang as alleged by the police command.

They said they had also learnt that some new recruits were called in to replace them "before we had even left the (PTC) gate".

In her interim judgement handed down on Tuesday, Judge 'Maliepollo Makhetha restrained Commissioner Molibeli from discharging the applicants before the matter has been finalised in the courts.

Justice Makhetha ordered that the applicants be allowed to continue with their training and be paid their benefits until the matter is finalised.

She also granted the applicants' request

to be furnished with the vetting reports by the police that allegedly showed that they were members of the *Manomoro* gang.

"The 1st respondent (Molibeli)'s decision to refuse to provide the applicants with further particulars as delineated in their letters dated the 16th and 18th May 2022 shall be reviewed, corrected and set aside.

"The 1st respondent be and is hereby directed and ordered to dispatch the record of proceedings (if any) that gave birth to a decision to refuse to provide the applicants with further particulars to the register of this Honourable Court," Justice Makhetha ordered.

Contacted for comment, Senior Supt Mopeli said he was unaware of the interim High Court order compelling his boss to temporarily reinstate the expelled recruits. He said they would decide how to proceed once they had been furnished with the court order.

"We are not aware of the court order and we will only know how we are going to proceed with the matter once we have it," Senior Supt Mopeli said this weekend.

Commissioner Molibeli and Police and Public Safety Minister Lepota Sekola were both not reachable on their mobile phones for comment.

However, police sources said the situation at the PTC had become chaotic as there were currently 323 recruits instead of the recommended 300.

They accused Minister Sekola of adding his own people to the approved list of recruits thus swelling the numbers.

The situation will get worse from a logistical point of view now that the 12 expelled recruits have to be reinstated, the sources added.

"There are 323 recruits already in place. The number is set to increase following the court order for the reinstatement of the 12 who had been expelled. There will be overcrowding and it remains to be seen how the salaries of the extra people will be paid since the initial budget didn't include such a huge number but only the recommended 300," said one source.

Last week, Lesotho Police Staff Association (LEPOSA) spokesperson, Motlatsi Mofokeng, said the botched recruitments were a clear indication of the incompetence of the police command under Commissioner Molibeli's leadership.

"We have always held that the Commissioner is incompetent and this is a clear sign that what we have said still holds water. There is no reason why the recruits were only dismissed after they had already been enrolled if indeed vetting was done prior their enrolment as should be the case," said Police Constable (PC) Mofokeng.

He said the vetting would have been thorough and individuals with questionable credentials would not have been recruited if the police command had included LEPOSA in the selection process.

This is not the first time that the LMPS has been accused of recruiting 'undesirable' elements.

Last year, then Police Minister, 'Mamoipone Senauoane, was accused of facilitating the recruitment of one Lebatsang Rotheli, who had been convicted of arson and attempted murder.

Mr Rotheli was convicted by a Thaba-Tseka magistrate who sentenced him to four years in prison. He was given the option of paying a M4000 fine.

A few months after his release, he was allegedly involved in another crime but he was never brought to book.

According to LEPOSA, Rotheli was not ejected from training and went on to graduate with others despite his crimes.

It is not clear where he was deployed afterwards.

There have been widespread calls for Commissioner Molibeli's dismissal by LEPOSA and other sections of society over the alleged deterioration of policing standards under his watch.

Serious crimes, particularly gruesome killings of vulnerable men, women and children by ruthless gangsters, have escalated since Commissioner Molibeli took charge in August 2017.

The police union also accuses Commissioner Molibeli of allowing his blue-eyed subordinates to get away with acts of brutality against civilians. The brutality has been criticised by the courts and hefty damages claims have also been awarded to several victims by the High Court and Court of Appeal.

The theft of guns from police stations has also renewed questions about the competency levels in the police command.

Such incidents were due to Commissioner Molibeli's incompetence and would not have happened had Prime Minister Moeketsi Majoro heeded its call to fire him, LEPOSA says.



HOLOMO Molibeli.

Another gruesome murder rocks Maseru

... Motimposo residents worried by escalating crimes, demand police action

Senate Lerotholi

TWO Motimposo men have been arrested in connection with the murder of their friend on Sunday night.

According to a member of the local neighbourhood watch committee, Telu-Nts'o Mahloane, what started as a jovial drinking session at a local tavern ended in tragedy after the two suspects turned on their friend and stabbed him to death.

His lifeless body was found in a pool of blood the next morning by passers-by.

The two suspects, Motsoale Makomoreng and Mokone Phakisi, have since been arrested over the incident which has left residents shell-shocked.

Although the details leading up to the murder are still sketchy, Mr Mahloane said Makomoreng had confessed that he stabbed the now deceased, Lira Lekholo, twice in the back. He however, denied killing him and instead blamed his co-accused, Phakisi.

In a recorded confession after his arrest by members of the neighbourhood watch committee, Makomoreng claimed that Phakisi is the one who had killed their friend by stabbing him in the neck with a knife.

"He (Makomoreng) confessed to stabbing the deceased twice from the back, but says his counterpart delivered the killer blow. He denied killing the man," Mr Mahloane said.

"Makomoreng said that Lekholo was still alive and talking after he stabbed him twice. He also claimed that Phakisi went on to stab Lekholo with a knife on the neck before carrying him on his back," Mr Mahloane added.

This and other escalating crimes have got Matimposo residents worried.

Speaker after speaker at a recent public meeting in the village appealed to the police to set up a station in the area to combat crime.

The meeting was attended by Defence and National Security Minister, Habofanoe Setšabi, Police Commissioner Holomo Moli-

beli, Motimposo legislator, Thabang Mafojane and area chief Leloko Theko.

Mr Setšabi said Motimposo ranks among the areas with the highest levels of crime in the country.

He said some parents were contributing to the rampant crime by allowing their children to bring dangerous weapons and illegal guns into their houses.

"Parents are contributing to this situation by allowing their children to bring dangerous weapons in the house and illegal guns. They should never allow this," Mr Setšabi said.

He also called for tougher sentences to deter criminals.

"It is easy for a person to kill today and be seen freely roaming on the streets the next day like nothing has happened," Mr Setšabi added.

Mr Mafojane said he would work hand in hand with the Lesotho Defence Force (LDF) and Lesotho Mounted Police Service (LMPS) to set up a task team to ensure that crime in Motimposo is brought under control.

The legislator advised those in possession of illegal weapons to take them to the chief before the police start a planned house to house search.

"We are going to make sure that house owners kick out tenants with no proof of letters from their chiefs indicating where they come from. We have realised that some crimes are committed by people who are not from here," he said.

Commissioner Molibeli said the police were still looking for a suitable location to set a police station in Motimposo.

He called on the residents to join hands with the police to fight crime.

"The police are responsible for law and order but we can't do this on our own. Communities also have a role to play. We need to work together," Commissioner Molibeli said.



THABANG Mafojane.

Champion cyclist died of damage to internal organs: autopsy

Leemisa Thuseho

CHAMPION cyclist, Lemohang Mokherane, succumbed to injuries to her internal organs, an autopsy has revealed.

Some police sources said the autopsy released on Monday showed that Ms Mokherane had fractured ribs, which went on to puncture and damage her lungs, resulting in her death. The officer commanding the Criminal Investigations Department (CID) section at Mabote Police Station, Inspector Moeketsi Moeketsi, confirmed that the postmortem results were out.

"We are done with the postmortem and that is a huge boost to our investigations, it allows us to move forward. I can't disclose what we got from the postmortem as that might affect our investigations," Inspector Moeketsi said in an interview. He however, refused to divulge the findings or comment on allegations that Lemohang died from injuries sustained after she was assaulted by her husband. The 2021 Lesotho National Road Championships winner died on 15 May 2022 at Queen 'Mamohato Memorial Hospital (QMMH) where she had been admitted after the alleged beating by her husband, Tanki Khoanyane. She was 22.

The late Lemohang was daughter to former Lesotho international cyclist, Tumisang Mokherane. Last week, Mr Mokherane said a medical report revealed that his daughter had fractured ribs as a result of the alleged beating by her husband.

He said he had been aware that his daughter had been in an abusive marriage and he had advised her on



LEMOHANG Mokherane.

several occasions to leave her husband but to no avail.

Even after she had battered by her

husband and when he took to her hospital, she had initially concealed the abuse from him, Mr Mokherane

said.

He only learnt about the assault from neighbours and doctors who

attended to her, he added.

"The husband is always out working on different contracts as a manual labourer but three weeks ago he was at home in Ha Tšosane. My daughter who had been at my place, also in Ha Tšosane, went over to spend a week with him before she came back to me last week.

"Upon her return, she didn't say anything, and I didn't notice anything suspicious. But a day after her return, I realised that she was unwell. Still, she didn't say what the problem was.

"I then took her to a private clinic in Maseru and they transferred her to Queen 'Mamohato Memorial Hospital on 13 May 2022," Mr Mokherane said.

He said the QMMH doctors told him that his daughter had suffered some internal injuries following the assault by her husband.

The couple's neighbours had informed him that the two were involved in a serious fight before she left their home, he said.

"Their neighbours later told me that my daughter had refrained from telling me what had really transpired because for the longest time, I had been telling her to leave that man. However, my advice had gone unheeded," Mr Mokherane said last week.

Meanwhile, Lemohang was yesterday laid to rest at her home in Ha-Tšosane.

Her death is all the more tragic because she leaves behind a six-year-old daughter who would have to live without both parents if her 'killer' father is arrested and jailed for the murder of her mother.

Political parties re-affirm commitment to national reforms

Tšoloane Mohlomi

ELEVEN political parties represented in parliament have signed a pledge re-affirming their commitment to the national reforms process.

The parties met in Maseru on Friday and committed to work together in removing obstacles and impediments that have potential to derail the passing of the 11th Amendment to the Constitution Bill.

The Bill contains a raft of constitutional changes that the government proposes to enact in line with the 2016 recommendations by SADC for constitutional reforms.

SADC had also recommended the implementation of security sector, media, judicial and governance reforms as part of efforts to achieve lasting peace and stability in Lesotho.

Law and Justice Minister, Le-khetho Rakuoane, is on record saying they decided to prioritise the implementation of constitutional

reforms since the constitution is the supreme law of the land. The rest of the reforms would be implemented afterwards, he said.

The reforms are long overdue largely because of bickering among various political parties.

It was against this background that 11 parties represented in parliament recently met in Maseru as part of efforts to break the logjam.

The 11 are the main ruling All Basotho Convention (ABC), Democratic Congress (DC), Alliance of Democrats (AD), Basotho Action Party (BAP), Basotho Congress Party (BCP), Basotho National Party (BNP), Basotho Patriotic Party (BPP), National Independent Party, (NIP), Popular Front for Democracy (PFD) and the Reformed Congress for Lesotho (RCL).

They recently met and signed a pledge reaffirming their commitment to the reforms process.

The parties pledged to press parliament to pass the 11th Amendment Bill before the end of June 2022. They said it was important to do so before

the elections due in October 2022.

The parties said that the reforms process requires the highest priority in order to achieve lasting stability, security, peace and reconciliation in the country.

“We re-affirm our commitment to the National Reforms Process, and constructive engagement and expeditious implementation of the reforms,” the parties state in their pledge.

“We also commit to co-operate with all parties and stakeholders in the processing and passing of the 11th Amendment to the Constitution Bill.”

The parties further pledged to work together to ensure that the forthcoming elections are successful.

They commended the National Reforms Authority (NRA) for making significant strides in implementing reforms under the constitutional, security sector, economic, judicial, public service, parliament and media thematic areas.

Speaking after the signing ceremony, Prime Minister Moeketsi Majoro said the parties’ pledge was clear testament of their commitment to the peace and the transformation of Lesotho into a better country.

Dr Majoro said that the reforms were important as they sought to address the sources of all the political conflicts the country has endured over the years.

“This 11th Amendment to the Constitution Bill also modernises the constitution and introduces checks and balances in government to ensure that everybody carries out their duties in line with their mandates.

“I thank the National Reforms Authority (NRA) for the work they have done in ensuring we have a Bill to address all previously identified problems.

“We can write laws all we want and pass them in parliament, but what is of outmost importance is the sustenance of peace in Lesotho. What we did today goes beyond just signing a piece of paper.

“We must work hard to ensure the implementation of everything we have agreed. Our nation was founded on the values of peace and we should continue maintaining it,” Dr Majoro said.

SADC representative, Envy Surty, thanked the parties for their commitment towards peace, saying the pledge was a remarkable achievement for Basotho and the Southern African region as a whole.

“I’m really happy. I’m sure (SADC Facilitation Team head) retired Deputy Chief Justice Dikgang Moseneke would have been very delighted if he was here,” Mr Surty said.

In a subsequent interview with the *Sunday Express*, the principal secretary in the Ministry of Law and Justice, Retšelisitsoe Mohale, said that had not yet signed the pledge to do so without further delay.

The Movement of Economic (MEC), Marematlou Freedom Party (MFP) and the Democratic Party of Lesotho are some of the parties that are still to sign the pledge.

Govt petitioned over tourism levy

Bereng Mpaki

THE Lesotho Hotels and Hospitality Association (LHHA) has petitioned the government to defer the implementation of the new tourism levy.

The association says they were not consulted before the imposition of what they consider to be a “crippling levy”. Hence a deferment is necessary to allow for fresh consultations before the levy is implemented, the association says.

The levy is expected to be implemented with effect from 1 July 2022. It will be collected by the Lesotho Tourism Development Corporation (LTDC) on behalf of the government.

The government says collected revenue will be re-invested in the development of tourism infrastructure around the country. It will also be used to promote Lesotho as a destination of choice for both local and international visitors.

According to the Tourism Regulations, 2021, accommodation establishments will charge an additional five percent levy on their bookings; travel agents an extra M10 per ticket for the levy, while event organisers will charge an additional M5 per ticket.

Tourists who bring safari vehicles and motorbikes will be charged M20 and M10 respectively to enter the country.

Those with leisure and speed boats will pay M20 upon entry while local and international adult tourists will pay an additional M10 and M20 respectively, on top of the fees payable to access tourism attraction sites.

Tour operators will pay a flat M1000 levy annually.

All players in the industry will have to register with the LTDC to facilitate the collection of the levy.

However, the LHHA and other stakeholders have criticised the government for introducing the levy without thorough consultations and proper ground work.

In his 20 May 2022 letter to Tourism, Environment and Culture Minister Ntlohi Motsamai, LHHA chairperson, Tsunyane Tsotetsi, said the introduction of the levy would cripple the tourism sector.

“We request the deferment of the implementation of the proposed levy in its current form and that consultation be opened to review stipulations as contained in the announcement,” Mr Tsotetsi states.

He said they also want clarity on how the funds collected through the levy would be used.

The LHHA also wants a review of the composition of the government-appointed levy oversight committee to ensure equal repre-

sentation of the private sector.

“We note with concern the membership to the committee that will administer the levy. There is only one representative from the private sector in the complement of six members. We strongly urge that a review and an increase of members from the private sector be made. The minimum representation proposed is 50 percent, particularly when a minimum of 50 percent of monies from the Fund are meant to support developments within the private sector,” Mr Tsotetsi states.

He said the proposed levy was too steep and could lead to a decline in business.

The five percent levy to be added to normal room rates would make bookings more expensive since the government is also charging 15 percent Value Added Tax (VAT) and another five percent withholding tax on the industry, he said.

Moreover, the hospitality sector has been adversely affected by the Covid-19 pandemic and it only starting to recover from a devastating shutdown, hence the need for concerted efforts to help the industry sustain this momentum, he added.

Mr Tsotetsi said the recent increases in the costs of fuel and food have further impacted negatively on the hospitality sector

He said the proposed cut-off date for the remittances of the levy on the 10th day of every month is impractical.

“This is not practical as some payments are received well after that date. The government usually pays after six months or even years (some members are owed by more than two years) to date. Payments are received well after the 10th day of the following month.”


Mr Tsotetsi said that the industry occasionally offers free complementary tickets as part of a marketing and promotions strategy. Since the expectation is that the levy should be collected from these guests, this effectively means that hosting establishments would be expected to pay from their own pockets.

Instead of implementing the levy in its current form, the LHHA has proposed a number of modifications.

“There are options available which we are willing to table for discussions. These include: (i) A flat rate or amount (ii) A lower rate (0, 5 percent) as in other countries which are charging less than one percent levy. (iii) A phased rate over a period,” Mr Tsotetsi states.

Contacted for comment this weekend, Ms Motsamai said she was yet to receive the letter from the LHHA.

“I can only comment on the matter when I have seen the contents of the letter, but I have not received it as of now,” Ms Motsamai said.



LESOTHO HIGHLANDS DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

ADVERTISEMENT

The bi-national Lesotho Highlands Water Project (LHWP), of the Kingdom of Lesotho (KOL) and the Republic of South Africa (RSA) is aimed at harnessing the water resources of the highlands of Lesotho for the mutual advantage of Lesotho and the Republic of South Africa.

The Lesotho Highlands Development Authority (LHDA) was set up to implement and operate that part of the LHWP that falls within the borders of Lesotho. LHDA is to embark on Phase II of the Lesotho Highlands Water Project (LHWP), a multi-billion-rand Phase involving large scale civil engineering and socio-environmental aspects. In ensuring that it achieves its mandate, the LHDA places emphasis on its values of caring, professionalism, execution, teamwork, communication, and customer focus. If you are a Lesotho National espousing the above values and who is interested in progressing their career to the next level, please submit your application for the following position tenable at the LHDA:

DIVISION/BRANCH	POSITION/LOCATION	GRADE	SUMMARY JOB PURPOSE	REQUIRED QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE
PUBLIC RELATIONS	Public Relations Manager HR/PRM/14A/01/05/22 (FIVE YEAR FIXED TERM CONTRACT)	D4 Paterson Grading System	To effectively manage and oversee the implementation of the public relations function of the LHDA and to maintain a positive public image both locally, regionally, and abroad AND To ensure that accurate information related to LHWP is made available to all stakeholders.	Bachelor's Degree in Journalism/Mass Communications/ Public Relations or equivalent. A Postgraduate Degree in Journalism/Mass Communications/ Public Relations or equivalent will be an added advantage. Minimum Experience Ten (10) years of relevant professional experience in a similar/large organization, five (5) of which should be at managerial level. Demonstrated experience in the areas of journalism and public relations administration in larger organisations is essential.
CLOSING DATE: 10 JUNE 2022				
Reply Instruction	Application Forms are obtainable on the Ground Floor, LHDA Tower Building or at www.lhda.org.ls . Application Forms, Curriculum Vitae's and certified copies of academic certificates, identification and two (2) reference letters are to be hand delivered to the Ground Floor, LHDA Tower Building, Maseru or posted to the Chief Executive, Lesotho Highlands Development Authority, P. O. Box 7332, MASERU 100, Lesotho or alternatively e-mailed in read only PDF format files not exceeding 4 MB to recruitment@lhda.org.ls . For further information that may be required about any of the positions, please visit the Human Resources Branch, on the 4 th Floor, LHDA Tower Building, Kingsway, Maseru, or view the advertisements on the website www.lhda.org.ls .			
Disclaimer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Only applications received on or before the closing date and in the prescribed format will be considered. ▶ Applicants must use the LHDA Application Form. ▶ QUOTE THE REFERENCE NUMBER OF THE SPECIFIC POSITION ON THE APPLICATION SUBMITTED. ▶ Attach Curriculum Vitae (CV), certified copies of certificates and valid manual transmission Motor Vehicle Driver's Licence. ▶ Correspondence will only be conducted with short-listed candidates. ▶ Selection interviews for short-listed candidates will be at a date, time and place determined by LHDA. ▶ Short-listed candidates will be required to authenticate information provided in the Curriculum Vitae (CV). ▶ LHDA reserves the right to leave an advertised position unfilled if no suitable candidate is identified. ▶ The employment of successful candidates is subject to positive security clearance and other requirements as may be stipulated by the LHDA 			

Majoro has underwhelmed

LAST weekend, Prime Minister Moeketsi Majoro marked his second anniversary at the helm of government.

Dr Majoro succeeded Thomas Thabane who was forced to step down by his own All Basotho Convention (ABC) party in the wake of damaging allegations by the police pointing to his involvement in the 14 June 2017 murder of his ex-wife, Lipolelo Thabane. The ABC also wanted him out because he had allegedly ceded control of both party and government to his wife, 'Maesaiah Thabane.

Dr Majoro took over after the ABC forged a new coalition with its main rival, Deputy Prime Minister Mathibeli Mokhothu's Democratic Congress (DC) party. He came to power with a professed agenda of restoring good governance and the rule of law, fighting crime, containing Covid-19, ending poverty as well as reviving the comatose economy.

As the Majoro-led administration commemorated its second anniversary, a recent *Vox Pop* by the *Lesotho Times* revealed that most people believe the government has been abject failure thus far. All the interviewees said the government had failed dismally in its stated objectives of fighting corruption, spearheading economic growth, job creation, fighting rampant crime and ensuring peace and stability.

In this article, the *Sunday Express* conducts its own assessment on Dr Majoro's government and rates its performance on various key criteria.

Achieving political stability

Dr Majoro came to power as the head of a coalition anchored by his own ABC party and Deputy Prime Mathibeli Mokhothu's DC.

The two parties initially had 78 parliamentary seats. Eight smaller parties also threw their weight behind the ABC-DC coalition with 19 seats. The smaller parties were Movement for Economic Change (MEC-six seats), Basotho National Party (BNP-five seats), Popular Front for Democracy (PFD-three seats) and one seat each from Basotho Congress Party (BCP), Reformed Congress of Lesotho (RCL), National Independent Party (NIP), Marematlou Freedom Party (MFP) and Democratic Party of Lesotho (DPL).

Given that the new administration had, at its inception, the overwhelming support of 97 legislators in a 120-member parliament, it appeared to have a solid support base to enable it to concentrate on implementing its development agenda without having to worry about stability issues which had dogged previous coalitions.

But this stability and numbers did not last long. Barely a week after Dr Majoro's inauguration, the cracks began to show.

The initial source of instability came from within the premier's own ABC party. Some ABC MPs who still professed allegiance to the ousted premier Thomas Thabane complained about their exclusion from lucrative cabinet posts.

They complained that members of the junior coalition parties were given ministerial posts at their expense. This was in reference to the likes of RCL's Keketso Rantšo who was appointed Labour and Employment Minister and his then BNP counterpart Thesele 'Maseribane who was appointed Communications, Science and Technology Minister.

The calls for the duo's dismissal and their replacement by ABC members reverberated throughout 2020. And on 3 February 2021, Dr Majoro seemingly succumbed to pressure by firing Ms Rantšo and shunting Chief 'Maseribane to the Small Business Development, Cooperatives and Marketing portfolio. This ministry



MOEKETSI Majoro.

was deemed less powerful by the ABC honchos who are said to have wanted one of their own to control the Communications portfolio whose significance derives from its control of the communications sector under which money-spinning entities like mobile phone services giants Vodacom Lesotho and Econet Telecom Lesotho as well as the regulator, Lesotho Communications Authority (LCA), fall.

Two of the ABC MPs, Sello Mooki (Bobatsi constituency) and Mokherane Tsatsanyane (Stadium Area), even defected to the opposition Alliance of Democrats (AD). Mr Tsatsanyane has since joined the DC.

Dr Majoro initially appeared to have reconciled with Mr Thabane and in April 2021, they allegedly ganged up against then ABC deputy leader Professor Nqosa Mahao. The latter was forced to dump the ABC and form his own Basotho Action Party (BAP) in April 2021. In a development that weakened the governing coalition, Prof Mahao jumped

ship with 10 ABC MPs including then cabinet ministers like Motlatsi Magelepo.

But Dr Majoro and Mr Thabane's alliance did not last. On 2 December 2021, the largely pro-Thabane ABC's national executive committee (NEC) voted to recall Dr Majoro and replace him with then cabinet minister, Nkaku Kabi.

However, Dr Majoro refused to resign and make way for Mr Kabi, saying prime ministers are only removed through a no confidence vote in parliament and not by political parties. He even fired Mr Kabi from his post as Agriculture, Food Security and Marketing minister.

The two subsequently squared off at the 28-29 January 2022 leadership contest to choose a replacement for Mr Thabane who stepped down on 31 December 2021.

In March this year, Mr Kabi and his allies failed in their bid to oust Dr Majoro who comfortably survived a parliamentary no confidence motion sponsored by former ABC mem-

ber and current Basotho Patriotic Party leader, Tefo Mapesela.

Although Dr Majoro has managed to outmanoeuvre Mr Kabi and his allies, the infighting in the ABC has taken its toll on the government and prevented it from focusing in its core business of service delivery.

That the government has not fallen owes more to the DC's refusal to back the Kabi faction of the ABC from toppling Dr Majoro. He has also survived because of the support of the likes of Prof Mahao's BAP and other parties who have said they will not support any of the ABC factions to gain an advantage over the other.

It has to be said that while Dr Majoro has succeeded in retaining power for himself, this has been achieved at the cost of service delivery. There is no political stability to speak of particularly when the government's survival is not down to Dr Majoro but to various political parties within and outside government who have their own reasons for keeping him in power.

Verdict: Dr Majoro has thus far failed to achieve political stability.

Restoring good governance and the rule of law

On assuming office, Dr Majoro was immediately confronted with the challenge of addressing potential instability due to the infighting in the police pitting the Commissioner Holomo Molibeli against his subordinates in the Lesotho Mounted Police Service Staff Association (LEPOSA).

LEPOSA members accuse Commissioner Molibeli of incompetence, cronyism and the failure to stamp out police brutality against ordinary citizens. The police boss in turn accuses his juniors of insubordination.

It is a fight which began when Mr Thabane was still in power and the Molibeli-LEPOSA fight has the potential to destabilise the country in the same manner that previous fights within and among the security agencies have done.

Dr Majoro had appeared on

in two years in charge

course to tackle the police challenge in August 2020 by appointing an inter-ministerial committee headed by Prof Mahao, the then Justice and Law Minister to probe the infighting in the police and other security agencies.

The committee summoned Commissioner Molibeli, other senior police officers and LE-POSA before presenting its findings which were made public in December 2020.

The committee appeared to exonerate Commissioner Molibeli with Dr Majoro saying he had found no basis to fire him as demanded by LEPOSA.

The police union then accused the government of shielding Commissioner Molibeli despite that it had presented "overwhelming evidence" of his alleged incompetence and his failure to deal decisively with the issue of police brutality.

The results of Dr Majoro's failure to deal firmly with the police command are evident to see: there have been widespread reports of police brutality against citizens. The police are facing numerous lawsuits running into several millions by various people including prominent human rights lawyer, Napo Mafesa, who was tortured by police in January this year.

Last year, Lesotho earned the dubious distinction of being Africa's murder capital and the sixth most homicidal nation on the globe due to the police's failure to deal with rampant killings countrywide.

The extent of the police incompetence was painfully brought home by the theft of guns at the Mafeteng and Mohale's Hoek police stations in November 2021 and April 2022 respectively.

The guns are said to have sold to rampaging Famo gangsters who have been blamed for the rampant killings countrywide.

Another failing of the government in terms of maintaining the rule of law - relates to the paltry budget allocation to the judiciary. Prof Mahao, who served as Justice and Law minister until he was fired in April 2021, bemoaned the government's failure to allocate adequate resources to the judiciary.

His comments came against the background of revelations by the Judicial Service Commission that the government had only allocated a measly M937 366 to be shared by all the country's courts including the High Court and Court of Appeal in the first quarter of the 2021/22 financial year.

To put the matter into perspective, the M937 366 budget for all the courts was much less than the M1.3 million electricity debt owed by the Maseru Magistrates' Court alone.

As if the magistrates' court debacle was not enough, operations at the High Court and its Commercial Division in Maseru were in March this year paralysed after the Lesotho Electricity Company (LEC) abruptly cut power supplies due to the judiciary's failure to pay a M1.4 million power bill. All this due to the Majoro administrations failure to allocate enough funds to the judiciary.

To his credit though, Dr Majoro's government has appointed nine High Court judges over the past year as part of efforts to reduce a crippling backlog of cases said to be over 4000.

Many long-standing criminal cases have finally been heard. However, the major blemish has been the tendency of the courts to free high profile suspects like murder-accused businessman, Tseliso Nthane, without even putting them to their defence. Chief Justice Sakoane Sakoane and other judges have attributed this to the shoddy work by the police and prosecution which has resulted in the latter's failure to present solid cases against suspects before the courts of law.

In all the analyses done by this newspaper and the *Lesotho Times*, the public and analysts have voiced their concerns at what they consider to be the incubation of two parallel justice systems - one favouring the rich and another biased against the poor.

Verdict: Dr Majoro has largely failed to restore good governance and the rule of law.

Fighting Covid-19

Covid-19 was first reported in China in December 2019 and thereafter it spread rapidly to other countries around the world. For a while, Lesotho was spared and it officially became the last country in Africa to record an infection on 13 May 2020, exactly one week before Dr Majoro was sworn in.

To his credit, Dr Majoro disbanded the

wasteful and clueless inter-ministerial committee known as the National Emergency Command Centre (NECC) which had been set up in March 2020 by then Prime Minister Thabane to spearhead the government's fight against Covid-19.

The NECC had already gobbled M161 million out of the M698 million budget set aside by the government to fight Covid-19 by the time it was disbanded by Dr Majoro in June 2020.

A huge chunk of that money was not spent on core activities aimed at fighting the pandemic but on luxuries like food and other items bought at highly inflated prices.

The extravagant NECC spent more than M10 782 618 on food for its staffers drawn from different ministries at a time health staff were going with no personal protective equipment (PPE).

The NECC was then replaced by the National Covid-19 Secretariat (NACOSEC) which reported directly to Dr Majoro.

Dr Majoro appointed Lesotho Revenue Authority (LRA) Commissioner General Thabo Khasipe as the CEO of NACOSEC. Mr Khasipe's appointment would have breathed new life into the fight against Covid-19 had it not been hampered by an acute lack of government support.

On several occasions in 2020 and 2021, the country endured crippling strikes by health professionals over risk allowances and demands for personal protective equipment (PPE) and other equipment for hospitals.

In December 2020, the government showed its ineptitude in handling the Covid-19 crisis by allowing thousands of Basotho who live and work in South Africa into the country without testing or presenting valid Covid-19 test certificates.

This contributed to a huge spike in infections and deaths which only recently slowed down after the imposition of a hard lockdown by the government.

To its credit, the government woke up from its slumber and began a mass vaccination programme last year.

The Covid-19 initiatives have been a major success as the pandemic has been largely contained. Normal business operations have resumed.

Verdict: fair performance. Dr Majoro's success in fighting Covid-19 has been blighted by the scandals pertaining to the use of Covid-19 funds by NACOSEC officials.

Reviving the economy

Even before the impact of Covid-19, Lesotho's economy was already in the doldrums. Nonetheless, there were things that the Majoro administration could have handled differently.

The government failed to provide any meaningful relief assistance to private companies that were hit hard by the Covid-19 induced lockdowns between 2020 and 2022.

The government also folded its arms as textile factories retrenched over 11 500 workers between 2020 and 2022. In other words, 25 percent of the entire workforce have lost their jobs during Dr Majoro's tenure.

By the premier's own admission earlier this year, more than 300 000 youths are unemployed and his government has failed to attract investors to Lesotho due to the political instability.

Despite protestations from players in the industry, the government is hell-bent on imposing the Tobacco and Alcohol Levy which is likely to cripple businesses and fuel the black-market trade in tobacco and alcohol.

On the positive side, Dr Majoro's government scored a major success with the signing of the long-awaited agreement for the United States (US) Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) to provide a US\$300 million (about M4.8 billion) grant to Lesotho.

The Compact II is set to create 90 000 jobs. The signing of Compact II is a huge achievement considering that the previous Pakalitha Mosisili and Thabane administrations had both failed to reach an agreement with the US for over a decade.

Verdict: failure. While the Compact II signing is a major achievement, Dr Majoro has done nothing else to attract investment and stem the tide of job losses. The economy is still struggling and most people are food insecure. Only food assistance from international donors have prevented outright famine in many parts of the country.



MOEKETSI Majoro.



Kingdom of Lesotho

MINISTRY OF HEALTH

REQUEST FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST (CONSULTING SERVICES – LOCAL INDIVIDUAL CONSULTANT)

Assignment Title: Consultancy to provide training on management and leadership skills for Laboratory Heads
Reference No.: MOH-CDC COAG/REOI/01-22

- The Ministry of Health has received support from Centre for Disease Control (CDC-PEPFAR) under the project title "Strengthening Ministry of Health's Capacity (MOH-Cap) for HIV Diagnosis, Treatment and Monitoring in the Kingdom of Lesotho", and is requesting Expression of Interest for **provision of training on management and leadership skills for Laboratory Heads**.
- The overall aim of the exercise is to create and share an understanding of the implementation of performance management, execution of performance appraisals, and the necessity to change for effective people leadership and management; provide insight into strengthening the people management and leadership skills of participants; as well as to build participants' team leadership skills.
- The Ministry of Health now invites eligible consultants to express interest. Interested Consultants should write an Expression of Interest (EOI) letter to commit at least 3 days of man time to the activity. **In the EOI letter, Consultants must detail relevant past assignments related to this activity, indicate who the employer/client was and when the activity was undertaken.** Consultants should also attach their Curriculum Vitae (CV) to demonstrate qualifications, overall experience, and functional capabilities. The shortlisting criteria are: Relevance of the EOI letter and the CV.
- To communicate this information in 3 above, you should provide a Personal Curriculum Vitae highlighting your qualifications that meet the minimum requirements as set out in the TOR available on request from the email address given in (7).
- Shortlisting Criteria shall be Qualifications and Experience relevant to the assignment.
 - Lead consultant should possess a Bachelor in Management Leadership (BML) or Post Graduate Diploma in Business Administration (PGDIP) or MBA
 - At least 10 years' practical experience in private and Public Service serving on senior level in project management role with demonstrated ability of developing project guiding documents, e.g project implementation manuals etc.
- The Consultant will be selected in accordance with the Consultant Qualification Selection Method (CQS).
- Further information and Clarifications can be obtained at the address below during office hours **0800 to 1630** hours. Detailed Terms of Reference (TOR) Document are available on request on this email address; mankhethoa.molumo@gov.ls
- The Posting Period is the 30th May 2022 – 10th June 2022
- Expressions of interest must be delivered in a written form to the address below (in person, or by e-mail) by 16:00 Noon 10th June 2022.

Ministry of Health
Procurement Unit
Corner Constitutional and Linare Road
Attn: Mrs. Molumo
P.O. Box 514
Maseru 100
Tel : (+266) 2232 8957
E-mail: mankhethoa.molumo@gov.ls
Cc: maneo.mothobi@gov.ls

Comment

Spate of crimes by members of the security agencies worrying

PEACE-LOVING Basotho are extremely worried by the increasing tendencies of some members of the security agencies to commit murders and other serious crimes against ordinary civilians.

While most of the soldiers, police officers, intelligence officers and prison officers are diligent professionals who conduct their duties with the utmost professionalism, there is, unfortunately, a group of bad apples who are tarnishing the image of the entire security sector with their criminal behaviour.

Unfortunately as our stories show, this group of rogue officers appears to be growing with each passing week. And it appears they seek to outdo each other because the crimes are increasingly ghastly and sadistic with each passing week.

In its latest edition, the *Lesotho Times* carries the story of an intelligence officer who allegedly sodomised a 16-year-old boy and raped a 14-year-old girl.

The two crimes, which were allegedly committed on 1 May and 10 May 2022 respectively, have left the National Security Service (NSS) shell-shocked.

The accused intelligence operative, Khethollo Lekoane (52), boasted over 30 years' experience in the NSS. He is said to have resigned in the wake of the damaging alleged crimes which have got him arrested.

Ironically, Lekoane is said to be a pastor at one of the local churches.

In a case of a Good Samaritan gone rogue, he is alleged to have sodomised the boy on 1 May 2022, on the very night Lekoane had hired him as a shepherd to look after his livestock.

Now this begs the question, who is going to guard the guards is the very security officers who are supposed to be protecting people are going to be molesting them like Lekoane is alleged to have done?

Who is going to minister to the religious flock if the pastors and clergymen who are supposed to attend to their spiritual needs are turning into ravenous wolves and devouring them like Lekoane did?

As our dedicated reportage shows, Lekoane's alleged two crimes are merely the latest in the ever-escalating incidences of crimes committed by members of the NSS and other security agencies.

Two months ago, another NSS officer, Rethabile Tsietsi (40), allegedly shot and killed his stepson, Bokang Tsietsi.

Tsietsi was arrested but quickly granted bail. His case is pending before the courts.

Some family members and friends said Tsietsi was given to violence and abusive behaviour particularly when he was intoxicated.

They said at one time Tsietsi's gun was confiscated by the NSS only to be returned even though it was clear that his behaviour had not changed at all.

Again, the question is why continue employing such a monster and why give him back his gun when it is clear that he is danger to his family and the rest of society when has a firearm?

In another case late last month, a Ha 'Mapotsane, Mohale's Hoek, woman was gunned down by her police officer husband.

The victim was 38-year-old Relebohile Tšolo.

Her killer cop husband, Lance Sergeant Letsie Posholi (44), was based at the police headquarters in Maseru. He served on the Interpol desk, tasked with facilitating worldwide police cooperation and crime control.

But Lance Sergeant Posholi's standing as a police officer and Interpol point man in Lesotho for that matter, did not deter him from committing a gruesome crime against the woman who he swore to love and protect with his own life.

Besides this particular crime, the police are regularly in the news for acts of brutality against citizens which have resulted in numerous deaths and injuries over the years.

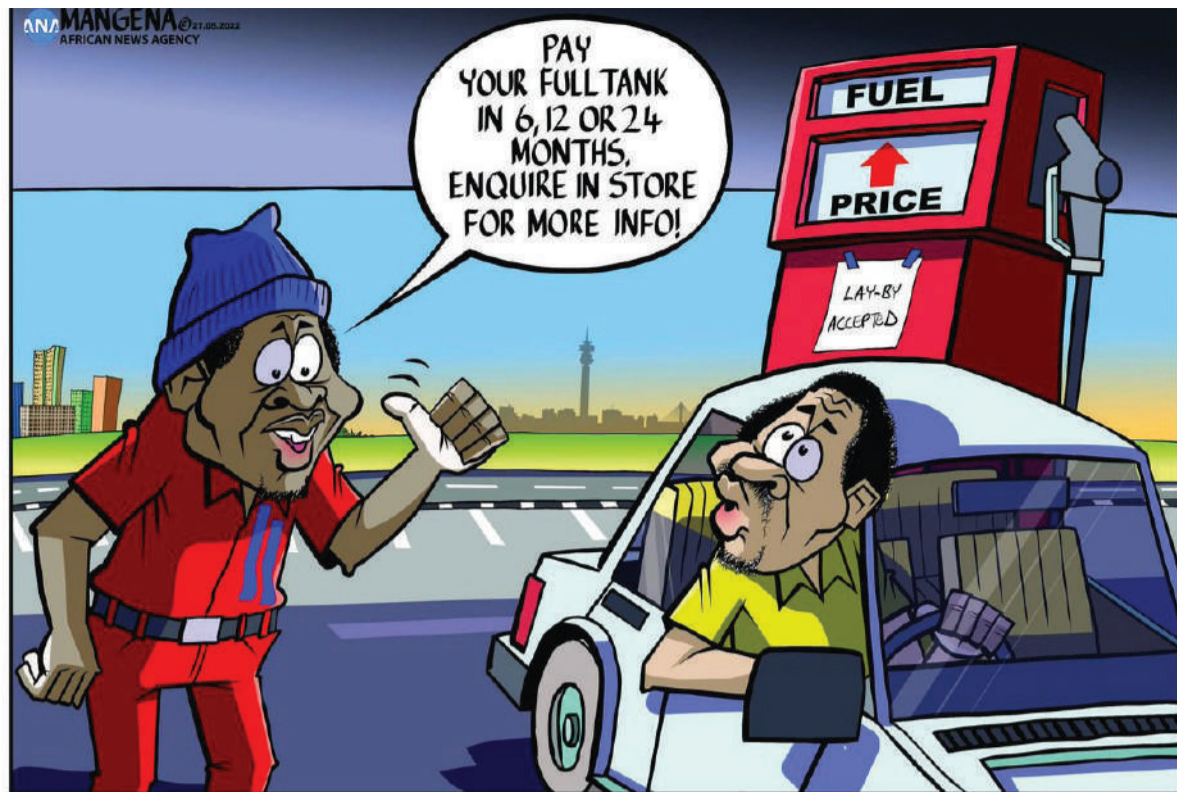
When will enough be enough? When will our security agencies weed out all the miscreants?

As the *Lesotho Times* reports, the NSS is worried by the behaviour of its rogue officers.

NSS spokesperson, Limpho Gugushe, said they were deeply "ashamed" of the conduct of their rogue officers.

"We sincerely apologise to the public. We don't condone the criminal acts of some of our officers that have dented our reputation. We are working around the clock to ensure that such acts do not happen again. We feel it's only right to own up to the wrongs of our officers as they impact on our image. We are truly sorry," Ms Gugushe said.

It is our sincere hope that her words and promises translate into concrete actions to weed out the criminals in the uniforms of the security agencies. We can't go on like this.



Expedite integration to secure Africa's future

ONCE more upon us, Africa Month calls for reflection on the state of the continent and its future. Perhaps the best way of tackling this mammoth task is by assessing current problems and challenges in the continent's five regions and the wider world; and how these might impact Africa's trajectory.

Except for the conflict in Mozambique's Cabo Delgado province and the intermittent to general political strife in Lesotho, eSwatini and Zimbabwe, the Southern African Development Community (SADC) is, for the most part, stable. SADC should, in keeping with its parlance, "remain ceased" with the situation in these countries for obvious reasons.

Poverty in the region and elsewhere on the continent remains the single biggest challenge requiring the undivided attention of our governments, the corporate sector and civil society. It is one of the push factors for much of the migrant inflows into South Africa and Europe via the Mediterranean Sea in the Maghreb region of North Africa.

We can be certain that if the SADC and the wider African economy do not grow inclusively, there will be increased migrant inflows, with potential discord among ordinary people, exacerbated by opportunistic political entrepreneurs.

Issues such as migration should therefore be a standing item on the agenda of SADC and the African Union (AU). These institutions should invest in finding collective solutions to the thorny issues and their discontents. In the 21st century, solutions will be better realised through regional integration.

We should therefore think of rendering certain public services on a confederal basis, with a common regional identity system (including as it relates to fighting crime) as one of the priority tasks.

Such measures should be predicated on some basics. Insofar as migration is concerned, we should embrace the cardinal truth that it is as old as humanity. It cannot be prevented; only managed.

A related basic, to which we should administer mouth-to-mouth resuscitation, is found in the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP). It counselled: "In the long run, sustainable reconstruction and development in South Africa require sustainable reconstruction and development in Southern Africa as a whole. Otherwise, the region will

Pakati

face continued high unemployment and underemployment, leading to labour migration and brain drain to the more industrialised areas.

"The democratic government must negotiate with neighbouring countries to forge an equitable and mutually beneficial programme of increasing cooperation, coordination and integration appropriate to the conditions of the region. In this context, the RDP must support the goals and ideals of African integration as laid out in the Lagos Plan of Action and the Abuja Declaration."

The long and short of it is that none of our countries can develop on their own without a collective co-operative framework.

The African Continental Free Trade Agreement (AfCFTA) which came into force on May 30, 2019 is one of the key provisions of the Lagos Plan of Action and the Abuja Declaration. As the continent's most industrialised country, South Africa stands to benefit more than other sister African countries through the AfCFTA.

But let's face it: our ability to integrate, to be seen and considered as a dependable ally is contingent upon the relations we forge with the rest of the continent.

We should continuously pay attention to the way in which our conduct, including our management of migration enhances or otherwise undermines our expressed commitment to building a better Africa and the world, put differently, the African agenda.

Government officials and political office bearers ought to ask themselves whether their handling of migration and other tasks assists us to promote the African agenda on whose success our fate as a country, region and continent depends.

The AU turns 20 this year. Those who recall the decade of the 2000s would be unsurprisingly nostalgic about the unity and cohesion of that period, relative to the present period. Surely, our celebration of Africa Month would be meaningless if we did not commit ourselves to rekindle that sense of unity?

As the world's major powers jostle for hegemony, Africa will increasing-

ly become a theatre for their varied and multiple contests. The latest evidence of this is the Countering Malign Russian Activities in Africa Act which was voted by the US Senate on April 27th. The legislation aims to "hold to account African governments and their officials who are complicit in aiding (Russia's) malign influence and activities".

It also enjoins Congress: "Regularly [to] assess the scale and scope of the Russian Federation's influence and activities in Africa that undermine United States objectives and interests, and determine how to address and counter such influence and activities effectively, including through appropriate United States foreign assistance programmes; and to hold accountable the Russian Federation and African governments and their officials who are complicit in aiding such malign influence and activities."

Why is it the responsibility of any party but the Africans to hold governments on the continent accountable? Look at the keywords: "United States objectives and interests," which Washington will unapologetically pursue even if it means dictating to the Africans who we should relate to and, in the process, usurp our right to self-determine.

Whether one looks at the increase in oil prices, grains and a variety of agricultural inputs, the ongoing Russo-Ukrainian War has shown just how mutually interconnected and dependent the world is. Yet, our government has come under fire from familiar local and international quarters who have, for the longest time, been engaged in a permanent struggle intent on making South Africa a Trojan Horse for interests other than our own.

The offensive proves that in a world whose major powers no longer pretend the end of the cold war, non-alignment, as conceived in the 1955 Bandung Conference, has never been more relevant.

As for Africa, we should expedite our integration, and strengthen our unity of purpose and relations with the global south to secure Africa's and humanity's future. — IOL

Pakati is executive mayor of the Buffalo City Metropolitan Municipality, chairperson of the South African Cities Network Council, and deputy president of the South African Local Government Association.

Sunday Express

A220 Lower Thetsane,
Maseru 100, Lesotho
Tel: +266 2231 5356
editor@lestimes.co.ls
marketing@lestimes.co.ls

Have your say

Sunday Express

May 29 - June 4 2022

The Sunday Express welcomes readers' feedback on topical issues. Send us Whatsapp, post on our Facebook page or write to:

The Editor Sunday Express,
220A Lower Thetsane, Maseru 100
editor@sundayexpress.co.ls

Africa's contribution to betterment of the world

WE will be celebrating Africa Day on May 25th — reflecting on the valuable contributions that Africa can make to the advancement of society and building of a better world.

People in the African continent, according to the Bahá'í Writings, have "a great contribution to make to the advancement of world civilisation".

One example is the concept of extended family, a distinguishing African practice within a family or a tribe.

Through such a practice society is able to assure assistance to many who are needy. Of course, care must be exercised that such positive qualities are not abolished through urbanisation of life and materialism.

Furthermore, it is important "to preserve and improve those wholesome aspects of tribal and family custom that are in accord with" God's teachings today, "and to dispense with those that are not".

People of our continent have a great potential to contribute both materially and spiritually to global well-being and peace. In order to make full use of this potential and to build a better Africa and a better world, we need to reflect on questions such as racial and tribal unity and observance of human rights for all inhabitants of this special continent.

Racial unity: key to global unity

The Bahá'í Writings state that "One of the important questions, which affect the unity and

the solidarity of mankind is the fellowship and equality of the white and coloured races".

Racial and tribal conflicts and intolerance — as experienced both in our continent and in many other parts of the world — are due to flawed ideas that we are somehow made of separate and distinct races or tribes and that these sub-groups have varying capacities, which justify different forms of treatment.

"The reality is that there is only the one human race. We are a single people, inhabiting the planet Earth, one human family bound together in a common destiny, a single entity created from one same substance", as the Bahá'í International Community states.

The principle of oneness of humanity is not a vague hope or slogan. This principle reflects a spiritual, moral and physical reality. The reality of human oneness is fully endorsed by science.

Anthropology, physiology, psychology, sociology and genetics demonstrate that there is only one human species, although infinitely varied in the secondary aspects of life.

The Bahá'í Writings compare the indigenous people of Africa, "to the black pupil of the eye", through which "the light of the spirit shineth forth" and express the hope that "the power of the Kingdom will bind' black and white races in friendship".

There is, Bahá'u'lláh insists, but one human race; inherited notions that a particular racial or ethnic group is in some way superior to the rest of humanity are without foundation.

Religion

A Bahá'í Perspective

with
Flora Teckie

rights.

God has endowed all human beings with the potential to reflect His attributes and all human beings have an equal spiritual dignity. Human rights can be established when we realise that the gift of life obligates us to meet responsibilities we have towards God, towards society and ourselves.

Lack of access to education — a fact of life for large percentage of populations in many parts of the world — is a reason for people to fail to recognise their abilities, talents, capabilities as well as their rights. Therefore, the cause of universal education deserves the utmost support that the governments in Africa and of the world can lend it.

In order to observe human rights for all, there is need for transformation of thoughts, values and attitudes. To affect any degree of transformation, however, it is essential to create a new mind-set and a profound change of heart. Through the power of the Word of God such a necessary transformation can take place.

It is the Bahá'í view that, in Africa and globally, the respect for human rights can be strengthened through recognition of two basic concepts: First, that human rights are God-given rights and secondly, a consciousness of the organic oneness of the human race.

It is further stated in the Bahá'í Writings "that the various races of humankind lend a composite harmony and beauty of colour to the whole. Let all associate, therefore, in this great human garden even as flowers grow and blend together side by side without discord or disagreement between them" and "Let them look not upon a man's colour but upon his heart. If the heart be filled with light, that man is nigh unto the threshold of his Lord; but if not, that man is careless of his Lord, be he white or be he black".

The observance of human rights of every one

The acceptance of our oneness requires the observance of human rights of every one. Human rights, according to the Bahá'í Writings, are divine endowments. They are God given

For feedback please contact:
bahaiensotho@leo.co.ls; or call +266 56715009
Website: www.bahai.org

Sunday Express

ADVERTISE WITH US

Contact:

marketing@sundayexpress.co.ls

+266 2231 5356

COMPANY TERMINATION

Notice is hereby given that **M.F Enterprises (PTY) LTD**, Registration No. **63968**, intends to cease its operations effect to date.

Anyone who is likely to be affected by this NOTICE and intends to object to it, must lodge her or his objection in writing with the Registrar of companies at One Stop Business Facility Center, Kingsway Road Maseru on or before 21 days.

Notice by Management.

An established Civil Engineering company requires the services of a self-motivated and committed individual for the following vacancy:

1. Administration Officer

Requirements:

- Grade 12
- Certificate in Administration
- At least 3 years working experience in similar role
- Computer literacy:
 - MS Office (Excel, Word, PowerPoint)
 - BuildSmart
- Relevant legislation and regulations:
 - Knowledge of ISO (9001, 14001 & 18001)
- Stock management:
 - Receiving stock
 - Issuing stock
 - Stock control
- Office Management
- Basic SHEQ management principles and procedures relevant to the workplace
- Basic understanding of quality principles used in the workplace
- Customer care and needs awareness
- Numerical data processing skills
- Written and verbal communication skills

Only candidates with ALL the minimum requirements will be considered. To apply, forward a detailed CV with at least 3 (three) contactable references to hr@hillary.co.za. All short-listed candidates will be required to present a Portfolio of Evidence and may be required to undergo psychometric profile assessment.

Closing: 12 June 2022

Any response to this advertisement places the company under no obligation to interview or make an appointment

Thabane celebrates 83rd birthday

Bongiwe Zihlangu

FORMER Prime Minister Thomas Thabane yesterday celebrated his 83rd birthday at his Makhoakhoeng residence surrounded by family, friends and political colleagues.

Speaker after speaker applauded his wife, 'Maesaiah Thabane, for taking care of her husband whom they said "still looks as fit as a fiddle".

Mr Thabane's daughter, Judge 'Mabatsoeneng Hlaele nee Thabane, praised the former First Lady for taking care of her husband and looking after his health.

In attendance were Thabane's children, members of his All Basotho Convention (ABC) party clad in their yellow, green and red party regalia.

The former premier was joined at the high table by ABC leader Nkaku Kabi, former Water Minister, Samonyane Ntsekele, as well as his friends including Molobeli Soulo, who joined the Lesotho Congress for Democracy (LCD) in 2014 after a fall-out with Thabane.

Ms Thabane said she had felt the need to organise the party as an expression of her love for her husband.

"Today I say happy birthday to my husband. Ladies, I am a woman shining among other women because I am by my husband. When the world has torn my heart, he is the first to console me," she said.

"Ntate Thabane, you will never lack anything as long as I live. Neither will you look shabby or unkempt," she added.

Speaking after his wife, a jubilant



FROM Left: ABC leader Nkaku Kabi, Thomas Thabane, Samonyane Ntsekele and Temeki Tšolo during Thabane's 83rd birthday at his Makhoakhoeng home yesterday.

Mr Thabane thanked her for the party.

"I have 'Maesaiah to thank for this birthday celebration. That is because she is my wife, and I am her guy. It is always good to indulge in things that make us happy with people that we love. I am sick and tired of conflicts.

Let us all be sick and tired of things that bring us sadness.

"To ABC supporters, seeing you gathered here today for my birthday is the testimony of God's love for me. Your presence has made me very happy," Mr Thabane said.

Mr Thabane said he resigned as

ABC leader and handed over the baton to the younger generation under the leadership of Mr Kabi, further reminding them that "being a party leader or a world leader does not make anyone God, no one can claim to be God".

Justice Hlaele had earlier spo-

ken about her upbringing under her father's strong hand, saying, "I wouldn't be where I am today if it weren't for you.

"You all know that I love my father with all my heart. If both my husband and father needed a heart, my husband knows that I would give it to my father. We are all here because Thabane has touched your lives in different ways. You can say all you want about him but the whole world will tell you he is a good man.

"I would like to thank my step-mother for what she has done. I can testify that my father is well taken care of. He is warm, happy and healthy. Please keep it up. It is all because of you that he is this happy," Justice Hlaele said.

"Ntate Thabane has always loved cleanliness and we thank you 'Maesaiah for maintaining that," she added.

Mr Thabane's friend and former Minister in the Prime Minister's Office under the first 2012 coalition government, Mr Soulo, praised Ms Thabane for taking care of the former premier. Mr Soulo narrated how he and Mr Thabane were brought together by politics when the ABC was formed in October 2006.

He said it was unfortunate that their hard work had gone down the drain because "today we have politicians and MPs who are clowns and are playful".

"Politics needs strong people, not those who spend their time admiring their wives' beautiful faces. Today we see politicians talking on radio instead of going to the grassroots," he added.

Metropolitan declares M3m profit to civil servants

Bereng Mpaki

METROPOLITAN Lesotho has declared a M3, 094 million share of profits to government employee groups under its voluntary insurance scheme.

A total of 35 government ministries and institutions will share the windfall, which has accrued over the years.

The money can be used collectively by scheme members for approved socio-economic development projects.

Metropolitan's voluntary group scheme is an insurance plan that covers a homogenous group of people such as employees of a certain company under the same contract.

Among its group schemes, Metropolitan has civil servants as members and the partners have a 60/40 profit sharing arrangement.

Each ministry or department gets a share of the profit depending on the premium contribution its members make into the civil service scheme.

The Ministry of Health has been allocated the largest share amounting to M622 000, after contributing 20, 11 percent into the civil service scheme. The Ombudsman office, which contributed the least, will get M5 000.

Announcing the profits at a weekend function held at Avani Lesotho, Metropolitan Lesotho managing director, Mamello Phomane, said that the company owed its growth to the long-term support of civil servants, who are among their biggest clients.

The company is scheduled to celebrate its 55-year anniversary in the country in November this year.

"The civil service has been among one of our biggest partners and it is why we are here today," Ms Phomane said.

"We want to celebrate this partnership to say thank you for sticking with us for this long and we want to ask you to stick

around for much longer.

"I have been reliably informed by my team that we are here to share just over M3 million of this voluntary group scheme profit sharing arrangement.

"Each ministry will get a share of the profit and through that there will be sponsorships towards the Public Service day among others for the policy holders to enjoy the fruits of their labour," she said.

On his part, Metropolitan's head of life business, Seenyane Nthejane, explained that group schemes generate profits when paid out claims are lower than collected premiums.

He said the profits are shared on the group scheme basis, and not to individual member.

"The voluntary group scheme was created on behalf of government employees. They pay premiums into the pool and then we pay claims out of the pool and in some pools we can pay over or below what the pool has.

"When we have paid more it means the scheme has run a loss, and when we have paid less it means the scheme has made a profit.

"So, we are here because the scheme has made a profit, meaning we have collected money into the scheme, paid premiums and there is little left that Metropolitan is intending to share with the scheme members.

"This is a voluntary group scheme, and for better share of profits, new membership is needed in the scheme," Mr Nthejane said.

A typical Metropolitan group scheme has funeral benefits for the member, spouse, children, parents and parents-in-laws and extended family members.

It also has life cover for the member and spouse; accidental benefit for member, spouse and children; disability benefits; retirement benefits; and paid up benefits at death, disability or retirement.

WASCO appoints new CEO

Staff Reporters

ACTING Water and Sewerage Company (WASCO) chief executive officer (CEO), Thelejane Thelejane, has been appointed substantive CEO.

Mr Thelejane's appointment is with effect from 1 June 2022.

He has been acting CEO since the dismissal of former incumbent, Futho Hoohlo, on 21 September 2021 for alleged misconduct.

Mr Thelejane has previously held the positions of WASCO Director of Operations and Director of Enterprise Projects Management.

He started his career with the Department of Water Affairs in 1995 and later joined the Lesotho Highlands Water Project (LHDA) as a hydrologist.

He holds a Bachelor's degree in Physics and Mathematics from the National University of Lesotho, an Honours degree in Hydrogeology from the University of the Free State, and a Post Graduate Diploma in Hydrology from the University of Nairobi, Kenya.

In a recent statement, WASCO said they had elevated Mr Thelejane to the substantive post after he "demonstrated reassuring confidence,

determination and capability as a leader to steer the organisation into the desired direction".

"Furthermore, Mr Thelejane has successfully delivered on two strategic directorship roles at WASCO in the capacity of Director of Operations and maintenance and Director of Enterprise Projects Management respectively. He has convincingly created 'big picture' narratives that clearly elucidate workable outcomes for WASCO.

"These outcomes speak to Lesotho water economic imperatives and solutions to such are seamlessly backed up by his solid leadership potential and technical credibility. His capacity to 'remain above the fray' augurs very well with the current level of maturity of WASCO relative to its peers in the region and its unique circumstances...

"The Board of directors of WASCO wishes to congratulate Mr Thelejane for this appointment and pledges its unwavering support. As such the Board also calls upon all stakeholders to support Mr Thelejane in his new voyage as the Chief Executive to deliver sustainable results for the Water and Sewerage Company," WASCO said in its statement.



THELEJANE Thelejane.

Brand vs talent: the new way to make it in Mzansi

PEOPLE

May 29 - June 4 2022



BOITY Thulo.

THE new age of social media has made it easy for a person to be “famous” in South Africa without being talented, creating the rise of many celebrity faces at a fast pace that sometimes we as the public cannot keep up with.

Have you ever wondered what a person’s claim to fame is? Well, I have, and with so many famous faces, old and emerging, I wouldn’t blame you if you shared the same sentiments.

Talent may have been what landed people in the spotlight in the past, but I have recently begun to notice a shift in the entertainment industry. It seems that many are able to make it without being talented in sports, singing, acting, presenting or dancing.

People are now becoming famous for simply being brand magnets. Brand value has become the new commodity. Being able to attract audience numbers is the new drawcard and how can you take your career to the next level.

I spoke to Yonwaba Pangeni, managing director and strategy lead at Zena Brand Builders, a full-service strategic brand-building and communications agency, about this trend in showbiz.

Public figures are being positioned by their management and public relations teams in ways that make it hard for us to overlook them. Whether we think they are talented or not, they are so much in our faces that we end up becoming fans.

“Currently, we are experiencing an influx of people in traditional and non-traditional work-streams owning their work, building their platforms online to relate to different types of audiences,” she shared.

“These individuals are creating additional streams of income and attracting niche brands which are looking for particular types of audiences. This digital fragmentation is continuing with the idea of the evolving consumer that brands are constantly chasing,” Pangeni explained.

Actress Ama Qamata’s “*Glamour*” May issue cover got me thinking, what is it about her that makes her such a magnet? I have only seen her in two roles, on the local telenovela “*Gomora*” and the Netflix original series “*Blood and Water*”. On both, she portrays a high school girl with interesting family lives, to say the least, but these roles are yet to show her range as an actress.

This has not stopped Ama from gracing the covers of top magazines such as “*GQ*” and ambassador deals from Adidas. I have to credit her success to how her brand has been built.

From the moment she landed on screens in 2016, she was proclaimed as a “rising star” and “one to watch”. For this we can give kudos to the team which is marketing her and presenting this image to the public.

A good brand team is essential to any star as they bring the glue and support that is needed for the talent.

“Investing in the business aspect of your brand it also essential

to ensuring that the foundation is right and carries all the right elements to ensure that the more cosmetic aspects are developed as well,” said Pangeni.

When presenter and model Maps Maponyane first blew up on the Mzansi entertainment scene, he was everywhere. It seemed that the well-groomed personality was making appearances at every A-list event.

This positioned him in the right place to start bagging the right gigs, ones that aligned with his “brand”, such as “*Top Billing*”.

While Maps is gorgeous with his charming smile, his presenting skills are not award-winning, but this has not stopped his rise in the entertainment industry.

It’s hard not to like the “*Tell Me Sweet Something*” actor — he’s got that thing that draws brands such as Mercedes-Benz to him.

“A public figure can position and package themselves as brands based on their talents and with others this may be based on other qualities that allow for a brand to exist. This allows for the person to be able to generate other sources of income.”

Maps is certainly not the only one who has managed to build a career out of their brand power. Let’s take a look at his former bestie, Boity Thulo.

Boity may have talent and has also the ability to reinvent herself with the times, but if we are being honest her power is in her brand.

“More personas are positioning themselves as brands largely because the digital age has thrust us into a more dynamic era where the expectations of consumers have evolved,” explained Pangeni.

With an *Instagram* account that holds 5.6 million followers and growing, the rapper, actress and presenter is raking in the coins with deals from Huawei, Moët and Chandon, and her business deals BTS Signature and Boity Pink Sapphire.

But when last did she bag an on-screen role? However, I’m sure many of us are able to recall her brand partnerships and we have all seen her continue to rise.

“The biggest part of assessing a talent’s value is based on the numbers that they are able to draw in audiences which largely equate to a financial value.

“With the existence of digital platforms, the power of being able to draw the audience’s attention to those who are interesting enough to do so has shown the talent that this is a difficult job on its own,” shared Pangeni.

In no way am I hating, but having a strong brand value does put you in a better position. The entertainment industry is small, and with influencers on the rise, anyone can make it.

If you are able to drive engagement and deliver top-notch content, paid work is bound to follow.

“For those who have undertaken the journey to participate on social media, the process has allowed for them to be more analytical about their talent and become conscious about the number of factors which are required to build their careers,” Pangeni added.

So, it is possible to make it without having talent, but it takes strategy. Positioning yourself as a brand doesn’t happen overnight.

Pangeni says that it’s important to work on understanding your essence as a brand. Anyone can trend, show us what more you can do. — IOL

The Africa we want – within reach or a major challenge?



FLAGS from participating African countries are paraded by South African soldiers at the launch of the African Union (AU) in Durban in 2002. The minister says that this year Africa Day is particularly auspicious for Africa and for South Africa.

Naledi Pandor

THIS year Africa Day was particularly auspicious for Africa and for South Africa. We were celebrating the 20th anniversary of the African Union (AU) and recalling that the launch was held right here in South Africa, a very special affirmation then of our new democracy.

The AU has made important progress in these two decades and has established itself as the premier organ of unity on our continent and has devoted focused attention to enhancing its ability to address the complex challenges of African unity and development.

In this 20-year period, progress has been achieved in several significant areas. AU member states have developed the practice of adopting common positions on many issues of global importance and jointly striven to influence international debates in multilateral organisations. For example, they have pushed for much-needed reform of UN-decision-making bodies such as the Security Council.

They have also succeeded in developing an African perspective on climate change policy and practice, despite developed country's efforts to divide developing countries. Together, they have argued for

development financing for climate change responses, reminded developed countries of their obligations as large emitters, and worked together to secure debt relief, progressive trade regulations, and access to Covid-19 research innovation and production capacity.

Beyond these more recent developments, the AU has ensured action on establishing institutions of the union. We now have a Pan African Parliament still in its formation stage but functional, an increasingly robust African Peer Review Mechanism, and the recently agreed African Continental Free Trade Agreement (AfCFTA).

All of these institutions have support from the majority of African countries and point to increased acceptance of a future truly United Africa. These are a few celebrated signs of progress. Despite these and many other successes, the continent and the AU continue to be confronted by near insurmountable challenges. First, after having adopted a well-designed strategy to finally silence the guns in Africa, many conflicts continue to reverse progress.

The war in Libya severely impacted African peace and progress. The devastating war that has spawned mayhem in the Sahel region continues to pose a massive risk for the continent. The role of external par-

ties in the conflict in Libya was a clear demonstration of how powerful countries continue to be a force for instability. The AU is working hard at drawing the various parties together to devise an Africa-supported solution to the conflict.

The coup in Sudan, instability, and absence of democratic outcomes is also a challenge for the union. The most devastating blow to our progress has resulted from the coups witnessed since April last year. Chad, Mali, Guinea Conakry, and Burkina Faso all had unconstitutional takeovers of government.

The AU acted swiftly and suspended Guinea, Mali, and Burkina Faso. The lack of action against Chad remains a concern nevertheless, even on Chad the displeasure of the region through Economic Community of West African States (Ecowas) and that of AU has been emphatic.

A challenge that must be attended to by the AU is the inadequate embrace of democratic competition in some countries. At times opposition is treated as an invading enemy and leads to destructive intra-state conflict with worrying levels of internal refugees and humanitarian disasters. The AU has also not fully succeeded in addressing the conflict in eastern DRC but continues with peace efforts in that country.

Much more needs to be done by

the AU to inculcate dialogue on the continent and preventive measures to stem armed conflict. Focused attention to the Sahel is critical, as well as embedding democracy in the Sudan.

In addition, the AU has to strengthen its peace and security architecture so it can intervene more decisively if governance begins to collapse or if conflict results in war or skirmishes. Greater attention has to be given to so-called Islamist groups that are terrorising communities and diverting resources away from development.

The key focus alongside conflict prevention has to be achieving higher levels of intra-African trade as anticipated in the AfCFTA. The AfCFTA is a milestone achievement for Africa in creating potentially the largest free trade area in the world. Once fully implemented it creates a trade area linking 1.3 billion people, enabling enhanced industrialisation and viable regional and continental value chains.

The AU must focus on this with resolve as it is the policy that will alter Africa's fortunes forever if fully implemented. Thus far 41 out of the 55 states have ratified the agreement, the overall legal framework has been agreed, including protocols on trade in goods and services, as well as protocols on procedures for settlement of disputes.

The negotiations aimed at finalising rules of origin are also at an advanced stage of completion. This is remarkable progress.

The AU must also be acknowledged for developing a forward-looking blueprint for the development of Africa — Agenda 2063 — providing a vision of Africa in the future, an Africa we want.

The next 20 years must focus on this Africa. One that is united, one in which youth play a leading role in integration of Africa. Linked to this must be a radical change in our attitude to our extensive natural resources. Our mineral resources must be benefited in Africa, a solid manufacturing and industrial capacity must be created, and agriculture must support a nourished skilled Africa. Of course, digital platforms must support all sectors.

Our leaders have already adopted a 50th anniversary declaration that these goals will be accomplished through a people-driven process. Agenda 2063 is that blueprint and must be fully implemented by all Africans supported by committed, forward looking, leaders whose sole interest is the fundamental and progressive development of Africa.

— IOL

Pandor is the Minister of International Relations and Cooperation

A woman with dark hair pulled back, wearing large hoop earrings and bright red lipstick, stands on a stone path in a lush garden. She is wearing a white, long-sleeved, sheer top over a white crop top and a white, sheer, knee-length skirt. She is also wearing white sneakers. The background features green foliage, a stone wall, and a clear blue sky.

Weekend Girl

AGATHA Monaheng (24) hails from Mangopeng, Roma. She is a self-employed fashion designer who designs and makes her own clothes at her own AG Creations studio. Her motivational quote "is whatever you are, be a good one" by Abraham Lincoln.

Your stars

Aries - March 21 - April 20

You will not be able to trust someone you work with. You can meet new and exciting friends who will provide mental stimulation. Get thinking about prolonging longevity. Much can be accomplished if you compromise.

Your lucky day this week will be Monday.

Taurus - April 21 - May 20

Your mate, however, may not be too pleased with you. Get down to business. Your lover may cost you financially. Your ability to ferret out secret information will lead you to an inside scoop on an amazing financial deal. You should be trying to clear up legal contracts that have been pending.

Your lucky day this week will be Friday.

Gemini - May 21 - June 21

Ask a close friend for advice. Use your quick wit to win points with friends. You are ready to blow up and your stress level has gone into over drive. Don't push your luck with authority.

Your lucky day this week will be Monday.

Cancer - June 22 - July 22

You can get a promotion if you put in a little extra detail. Dazzle them with your intellectual conversation. Emotional disputes will only end in sorrow. You will communicate easily and should be able to develop new friendships.

Your lucky day this week will be Wednesday.

Leo - July 23 - August 22

Being unappreciated by your boss could make it hard to do your work effectively. You will have to check your cash flow before you decide to indulge in hobbies or entertainment that may be beyond your budget. Enjoy some socializing this week. You will be full of good ideas, and your choice of activities may bring you enrichment far beyond your expectations.

Your lucky day this week will be Tuesday.

Virgo - August 23 - September 22

They will jump at the chance to do something without you if it sounds like more fun. Refrain from overspending on entertainment or luxury items. You can get ready to celebrate your new direction. You need time to rejuvenate.

Your lucky day this week will be Thursday.

Libra - September 23 - October 22

Do not overspend on entertainment. You could find that children will be a handful. You have made an accurate assessment of the situation and have come up with ideas that will save money. You may find that depression is causing you to feel lonely and insecure. You may want to pull out some of those unfinished projects you've got tucked away.

Your lucky day this week will be Tuesday.

Scorpio - October 23 - November 21

Don't settle for less than the best. Don't make a move; your confusion has caused this dilemma and you are best to back away and reassess the situation. Underhandedness regarding legal matters or contracts must be counteracted. Try to bend but by no means should you give in completely.

Your lucky day this week will be Saturday.

Sagittarius - November 22 - December 20

Refrain from overspending on entertainment or luxury items. Business trips might prove unproductive. Enlist the aid of family members and consider the feelings of your mate. Spend time with youngsters this week.

Your lucky day this week will be Sunday.

Capricorn - December 21 - January 19

You are in a high energy, get it all done, mood and you'll have little patience with those who are slacking off. You will have a blow-up this week if your partner does things that you feel are not above-board. Secret enemies may be holding a grudge that you're not even aware of. Your involvement in interest groups may bring you popularity.

Your lucky day this week will be Saturday.

Aquarius - January 20 - February 18

You have a tendency to think that no one else will do things properly. Arguments with relatives may lead to a split in the family. Don't let your emotions interfere with your professional integrity. Your unique contribution to the organization will enhance your reputation.

Your lucky day this week will be Thursday.

Pisces - February 19 - March 20

Evasion is likely if you aren't direct about your feelings. You will be able to dazzle others with your obvious charm and your outgoing nature. Romantic opportunities will be plentiful if you go out with friends. Added knowledge will give you the edge when dealing with peers.

Your lucky day this week will be Saturday.

World's largest whisky bottle sells for more than £1,000,000 to mystery buyer



THE bottle features 11 pioneering explorers.



A SMALL number of 12-bottle sets were also produced.



A RATHER large cork is tops the 311 litres bottle.

THE 32-year-old, 311 litres bottle of Macallan single malt, was bought at an auction earlier today.

Called The Intrepid, the vessel stands at an impressive 5ft 11 inches tall and holds enough liquid to fill 444 standard bottles.

An anonymous foreign buyer purchased the whisky at Edinburgh-based auctioneers Lyon & Turnbull for £1.1 million. Parties from all over the globe were interested in the bottle but the final payment is worth the equivalent of almost £92 per dram. Daniel Monk, of Fah Mai and Rosewin Holdings, came up with the concept and claimed it had 'always been about more than money'.

'This is a passion project to celebrate the life of my late father, Captain Stanley Monk, who was himself an explorer and achieved many amazing things during his life,' he said.

'Today would have been his birthday so it was a perfect date to put The Intrepid up for auction.'

The bottle's name is in tribute to the drive and achievements of 11 of the world's most pioneering explorers who are featured on the bottle, its makers say.

That include Sir Ranulph Fiennes,

Stranger than Fiction

Jamie Ramsay and Karen Darke.

The project is also supporting the explorers' chosen environmental, physical and mental well-being charities.

Marie Curie and the Campaign Against Living Miserably are among them.

Mr Monk continued: 'The Intrepid project has been an adventure from the start. I started contacting explorers during lockdown to get them on board and found people who could make and fill the largest bottle of Scotch whisky and together we have achieved the dream.'

The Intrepid was officially certified by Guinness World Records as the largest

when it was bottled last year and, before the auction, there were hopes that it might sell for as much as £1.5 million and become the most expensive ever sold.

The Scotch was described by Charles MacLean, one of Scotland's leading whisky experts and Master of the Quaich, as an 'an elegant whisky, with subtle complexity'.

After maturing in two sister casks in Macallan's Speyside warehouse for 32 years, the alcohol was bottled last year by Duncan Taylor Scotch Whisky, one of the leading independent whisky bottling companies.

A small number of 12-bottle sets were also produced, each filled with the remaining whisky from the same casks used to fill the record-breaking bottle.

The sets include a replica of the main bottle design, along with individual versions dedicated to each of the explorers associated with the project, and these were also sold at auction.

Gavin Strang, managing director of Lyon & Turnbull, said: 'It certainly isn't every day you get to auction a bottle of high-quality, single malt, that also happens to be a record breaker.' — Mirror



REVOLUTION for Prosperity leader Sam Matekane displays his party's registration certificate from the IEC on Friday.



LESOTHO National Insurance Group hollard managing director Mpho Vumbukani (left) and First National Bank Lesotho CEO Delakazi Mokebe follow proceedings at the Central Bank Money Month 2022 Roundtable at Avani Maseru on Monday.



REVOLUTION for Prosperity supporters sing after their party received a certificate of registration from the IEC on Friday.



IEC director of elections, Lehlohonolo Suping (left) hands over a certificate of registration to People's Convention leader, Khauhelo Maselepo, at the IEC offices on Friday.



IEC director of elections, Lehlohonolo Suping (left) hands over a certificate of registration to Mookoli Theocratic Front leader, Mavis Mothae, on Friday.

Africa 'must establish regional manufacturing hubs' for a sustainable medicines pipeline



RESEARCHERS say that a pipeline of products and robust systems are needed to fight the pandemic and simultaneously deliver on other health outcomes.

Zukiswa Pikoli

THE theme of the 75th World Health Assembly being held in Geneva, Switzerland, from 22-28 May is Health for peace, peace for health. This is the first-time stakeholders have gathered in person since the onset of Covid.

Speaking at the opening of the assembly, World Health Organisation Director-General Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said “the pandemic has demonstrated why the world needs WHO, but also why the world needs a stronger, empowered and sustainably financed WHO.

“I welcome the recommendation of the Working Group on Sustainable Financing to increase assessed contributions to 50 percent of the core budget over the next decade. I also welcome the recommendation to consider a replenishment model, to broaden our financing base, and to provide more flexible funding for the programme budget.”

“WHO also established the mRNA technology transfer programme in South Africa to support countries to build local manufacturing capacity, using cutting edge technology.”

It is against this backdrop that Global Health Strategies convened a media roundtable with Kelly Chibale, Professor of Organic Chemistry at the University of Cape Town, where he holds the Neville Isdell Chair in African-centric Drug Discovery & Development, to discuss the urgency of Africa building a pipeline of products and robust systems to fight the pandemic and simultaneously deliver on other health outcomes.

Chibale began his talk by noting that the pandemic has exposed the vulnerabilities of African health systems and the urgent need for Africa to improve its public health infrastructure to address the inequalities experienced when people try to access vaccines.

Chibale cautioned that not prioritising this would be at the cost of citizens and that the development of this infrastructure should be seen as an opportunity to think of partnerships, not just for local production, but also to boost investment in science and technology on the continent.

Chibale said there were five key lessons learnt from Covid, namely the need for innovation, intellectual property and technology transfer, strengthening regulatory systems, skills development and partnerships.

On innovation, Chibale told the roundtable this needed to be prioritised and that investing in local innovators was key. He said there was a need to take pride in homegrown innovations that went beyond surveillance and sequencing of products and that health infrastructure should be developed for the production of pharmaceuticals.

IP transfer

“The transfer of IP and technology is important and necessary because it enables the creation of an ecosystem of innovators. When you file a patent, you have the responsibility to move the IP forward for the benefit of the patient,” said Chibale, a point he stressed as critical, since the ultimate

purpose of medicines was to assist patients.

He also noted that this needed to be accompanied by the requisite resources to be effective. Chibale explained that a patent needed to be maintained. The cost of moving the process forward and maintaining the patent also extended to its maintenance in multiple other countries where there was a potential benefit.

He emphasised that the process could be costly, with the potential to run into millions of rands.

Chibale said that strengthening regulatory systems was critical because “even if you got a free donation of any vaccine or product, there’s no way it will simply find its way to clinics and hospitals. Sahpra [the SA Health Products Regulatory Authority] has a responsibility to regulate first.

“Many African countries since gaining independence have embarked on massive training efforts, sending their nationals abroad for training. Today, as we speak, we’re still talking about a shortage of skills...”

“The Achilles’ heel of everything we do is skills development. If you are given that licence to manufacture a product that is based on a new technology, you won’t be able to implement it immediately — you have to develop the skills.

“So when we think about local manufacturing, it’s more than just getting the licence to the technology... It’s also to train the people with the skills that are needed.”

On partnerships, Chibale was of the view that “there is no way we are going to do this on our own. It’s going to require and take a network of partnerships both at the research

and development level, but also a network of funders, academia and government.

“We have to recognise what gaps we have and look for partnerships so that for the sake of the next generation, at some point we will have addressed all the gaps that are in the supply chain of local manufacturing.”

Responding to the issue of IP waivers, Chibale said when the world is dealing with an emergency like Covid-19, it makes sense to waive IP because “if we don’t deal with it in one region, it will spread to the rest of the world, virtually rendering the IP worthless anyway”.

He pointed out there was evidence of pharmaceutical companies who conceded to voluntary technological transfer and IP waiving, such as Merck and Pfizer.

Further explaining the importance of IP, Chibale told the roundtable that it was also a necessary measure of control, or there would be chaos when it came to licensing a product.

“There is an issue of fake products and medicines, and that’s why a regulator is important — so that people cannot take advantage and sell unregulated products for profit.”

Chibale said it was important to be realistic and acknowledge that Africa was not homogenous and that there was a need to think about which countries, regionally, would be best suited based on infrastructure, political stability and good governance, to be a local manufacturing hub.

“We have a long way to go to integrate our systems. Of course, there are very encouraging signs with the Africa free trade zone, but that’s into the future.”

— DM/MC

Ramaphosa and German Chancellor Scholz sharply disagree on Ukraine

Peter Fabricius

PRESIDENT Cyril Ramaphosa and German Chancellor Olaf Scholz presented radically opposed views on Russia's invasion of Ukraine at their meeting in Pretoria on Tuesday.

The two leaders talked past each other — and sometimes put words in each other's mouths — in their contrasting public remarks on Ukraine at a joint press conference after their official meeting.

Ramaphosa got the ball rolling by insisting that Scholz “understood” the reasons why other countries had voted with Russia or — like South Africa — abstained, on the United Nations General Assembly resolutions condemning Russia's invasion of Ukraine on February 24. The war is still raging.

He said Scholz “understands very much” that countries like South Africa believed that negotiations, dialogue and engagement between “the two belligerent entities” — Russia and Ukraine — were the only way to end the war, as this had given birth to democracy in South Africa.

Scholz responded by implicitly denying that he “understood” at least those countries which had voted with Russia against the UN resolutions. Voting with Russia was simply “intolerable”, he said.

And he reciprocated Ramaphosa's gesture of putting words in his mouth by saying: “We all agree that the war which Russia started against Ukraine is a war of aggression with the aim to conquer territory that does not belong to Russia.”

“It's clear that the major challenge is now for Ukraine to defend its integrity and sovereignty. And we're all in agreement that there must not be a violent new delineation of borders.”

Scholz went on to explain that Germany, like other Western nations, was providing Ukraine with military and other assistance to help defend itself against Russia's “aggression”.

This was clearly not South Africa's position. Ramaphosa did not even address Germany's arming of Ukraine. But he criticised the sanctions that Germany, the European Union, the US and others were imposing on Russia.

These sanctions were having “an overarching impact”, causing suffering even to bystand-



GERMANY Chancellor Olaf Scholz (left) and President Cyril Ramaphosa at the Union Buildings in Tshwane.

ers to the conflict, he said.

When a German journalist asked him how he could condemn these sanctions against Russia when his ANC had supported strong international sanctions against the apartheid regime, Ramaphosa simply replied those sanctions were “different”, but did not explain how.

The two leaders agreed on much else though. As expected, Ramaphosa accepted an invitation from Scholz to attend the annual summit of the G7 wealthy nations, which Germany will host next month.

Scholz said that the war in Ukraine as well as other critical global issues, like the climate crisis and the Covid-19 pandemic, would top the agenda at the summit, which would want to hear Ramaphosa's views.

He also said Germany would be buying coal from South Africa — and other nations — to replace some of the coal it would stop buying from Russia by the Northern Hemisphere's autumn of this year as part of a wider EU embargo.

Scholz explained that Germany and the rest of the EU also aimed to stop importing Russian oil by the end of the year. For Germany, this required some technical adjustments to enable the country's two refineries to receive oil from ships instead of by pipe from Russia as they

were now doing.

Some other EU countries would take longer as they faced greater technical difficulties in adapting their infrastructure. And he said Germany and others were also investing in new infrastructure to enable them to replace their large imports of Russian piped gas with liquefied natural gas from other countries.

Scholz said that quite apart from the war, Germany was accelerating the transformation of its energy sources to meet its target of a carbon-neutral economy by 2045. One major new energy source would be green hydrogen and he and Ramaphosa later visited the energy corporation Sasol to launch a joint project to produce carbon-neutral aviation fuel via hydrogen.

Ramaphosa said Sasol, together with the Industrial Development Corporation and the Northern Cape government, were developing a project in Boegoebaai to use solar and wind energy to export green hydrogen at a massive scale, including to the EU, which was looking to import 10 million tonnes a year by 2030.

He noted that South Africa and Germany were already cooperating in the Just Energy Transition Partnership — with France, the UK, the US and the European Union — that was announced at COP26 late last year. The partner

nations agreed to put up \$8.5-billion to help SA transition from its heavy dependence on coal to a green economy.

Ramaphosa also urged Scholz to help South Africa with the major problem it was facing because no one was buying Covid-19 vaccines that were being produced in this country. This should be a concern to Germany as well, he said, because Germany and other Western nations were supporting programmes for South Africa to produce its own vaccines.

Ramaphosa was referring to the fact that Africa's largest pharmaceutical company, Aspen Pharmacare Holdings, which became the continent's first manufacturer of Covid-19 vaccines this year — under licence to Johnson & Johnson — has so far been unable to get a single order from any buyer.

He said he had asked Scholz to help ensure that vaccines produced in Africa were given a greater market share in developed countries and that vaccines destined for African populations should be procured locally. The African Union has set a target of reducing its dependence on foreign vaccines from 99 percent to 40 percent.

But neither he nor Scholz indicated if the chancellor had agreed to give this support.

— DM

ISS Pretoria

WITH 14 months to go before Zimbabweans elect a president, members of parliament and local government representatives, the country is in full election mode. The ruling Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front (Zanu-PF) has ramped up its campaign while a new opposition party has sparked hope of a meaningful democratic contest. But the political and electoral playing field remains deeply uneven and stacked in favour of the ruling party.

Zanu-PF's campaign is a mix of state events and party activities, with the national broadcaster doing the party's bidding. Meanwhile, Nelson Chamisa's political opposition, Citizens Coalition for Change (CCC) — which put up a spirited performance during the recent by-elections — is trying to establish itself while simultaneously preparing for the 2023 polls.

The CCC, unveiled on 22 January, was greeted with excitement, and the new political outfit was emboldened by its performance in the March by-elections. Yet nuanced analysis of the political terrain after the by-elections shows that Zanu-PF's position as the ruling party is safe so far.

The CCC's performance was impressive. With less than a month to mobilise and gain traction, the party posted significant wins. It showed political prowess to turn the tide in the by-elections, winning 19 of the 28 seats up for grabs. However, its candidates were previous holders of 21

Courage, charisma not enough to defeat Zanu-PF in Zimbabwe's 2023 elections

of 28 seats. In effect, the party managed to return 19 seats and lost two.

Zanu-PF on the other hand retained all the seats it previously held in both Parliament and local government, and took two more from the opposition.

As the country stumbles towards the 2023 polls, Zanu-PF's dominance and the half-hearted implementation of the Southern African Development Community's (SADC) election guidelines mean the journey will be arduous for opposition parties.

The political and electoral playing field remains as in the days of Robert Mugabe. The ruling party has all but perfected its messaging, its use of the law and security institutions against opponents, and the conflation of party and state resources to boost its position.

Zimbabwe's electoral management body, the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission (ZEC), remains one of the country's least-trusted institutions. The body is populated by former military officials who aren't known for their impartiality. Some analysts have noted that the military has positioned itself as the final arbiter in the country's political power configuration.

Recent efforts by activist groups

like Team Pachedu revealed attempts at gerrymandering by the ZEC. The revelations cast doubts over the commission's credibility and the integrity of any electoral process it presides over.

What's more, traditional leaders — who are custodians of decisive rural constituencies — are still brazenly partisan. The few who have accommodated different views were stripped of their chieftainship and replaced, enabling Zanu-PF to maintain its hold over the rural vote.

The public broadcaster continues to be partial to the ruling party, which enjoys unlimited coverage in the public print, radio and television stations. This matter because internet penetration and mobile data coverage are low in Zimbabwe, making the public broadcaster the main source of information with the widest audience.

However, there are some things the opposition parties can do to tilt conditions in their favour. And SADC can encourage fair elections by pressuring Zimbabwe to implement the letter and spirit of its guidelines.

Sound internal party structures and institutional capacity are key to robust election campaigns. Experienced technocrats are needed to manage the campaign, rather than

party cadres, as is the trend in Zimbabwean politics. Deploying people whose only skill set is courage and charisma won't be enough to beat Zanu-PF at the polls.

Rather than relying on emotive approaches, political parties need to examine data and voter behaviour to craft targeted communication strategies in place of rhetorical messaging. The hackneyed ‘Zanu-PF must go’ slogan won't cut it. The by-election results show a dip in support for the opposition even in the areas they won. And while Zanu-PF's figures also dropped, it had significantly higher margins in its strongholds.

Opposition parties cannot afford to base their electoral position on political posturing — they need solid groundwork. A comprehensive strategy should look at the overall political environment and honestly assess the opposition's chances of unseating the ruling party. Carefully articulated messages and localised campaigns are needed to make inroads in Zanu-PF power bases.

Given the level of investment Zanu-PF puts into the rural electorate, the opposition needs real, sustained engagement with these voters beyond the electoral cycle. The mammoth task of winning over

people fed and sustained by Zanu-PF cannot be a once-off event as polls approach.

Opposition parties need watertight systems that track the political environment and the integrity of the electoral management body. This can be done by including a robust parallel voter tabulation system, well-trained and equipped polling station party agents, targeted voter mobilisation and using domestic laws to enforce fairness.

SADC also needs to be persuaded to apply pressure to level the playing field, as occurred in 2008. The regional bloc has a stake in the election as it strives to enhance democracy and good governance. It must ensure its election guidelines are implemented and outline exactly how Zimbabwe's electoral management body can address the concerns raised in SADC's reports from the 2013 polls.

Without freedom of association, access to information, fair coverage of all parties by the state media and transparency and impartiality by the electoral management body, Zimbabwe's 2023 elections won't be free and fair.

The credibility of the ZEC is central to this goal, and to date, the body has fallen short. — DM

Africa's leaders meet to tackle humanitarian, political crises

AU leaders gathered in Equatorial Guinea on Friday for two summits as the continent contends with humanitarian crises, terrorism and military coups.

Heads of state as well as donors assembled in the capital, Malabo, to raise funds at the AU's first "extraordinary humanitarian summit".

According to AU Commission chairperson Moussa Faki Mahamat, 113 million Africans need urgent humanitarian assistance this year, including 48 million refugees, asylum seekers and internally displaced people.

In a statement, the AU said that 15 particularly hard-hit countries required urgent aid, with climate shocks and conflicts causing humanitarian needs to increase "exponentially".

Of the more than 30 million internally displaced Africans, it said, more than 10 million were children under the age of 15, pointing to inter-ethnic conflict in certain regions and food insecurity.

The UN Food and Agriculture Organisation says about 282 million of Africa's 1.4 billion inhabitants are under-fed — an increase of 49 million on 2019 levels.

A second meeting today will tackle "terrorism and unconstitutional changes" as rebellions and jihadist insurgencies plague Libya, Mozambique, Somalia, the Sahel region, West Africa's Lake Chad basin and the eastern region of the Democratic

Republic of Congo.

Mahamat called terrorism a "cancer" progressively infecting the whole continent with painful economic and security consequences. Military coups in Mali, Guinea, Sudan and Burkina Faso in the past two years have seen the army oust elected leaders and set lengthy or no timetables for a return to civilian rule.

The moves have sparked condemnation and sanctions from regional bodies, the EU and Western capitals, with the AU suspending the four countries until power is handed back to civilians.

AU chief Mahamat said the coups marked a "regression" in the democratic process that countries had been undertaking for two decades.

He called the transition periods put in place by military juntas "sources of dissension and occasionally of tension" un conducive to the stability of those states or their neighbours.

— IOL



AU Commission chairperson Moussa Faki Mahamat.

The African Union's conflict early warning system is no more. What now?

Ulf Engel

SINCE 2017, the African Union (AU) has undergone institutional reforms to increase its efficiency and effectiveness. The gist of these reforms was proposed by the so-called Kagame Report commissioned by the AU Assembly of Heads of State and Government.

An advisory team led by Rwanda president Paul Kagame took on "the chronic failure to see through African Union decisions". This had led to the AU being seen as having limited relevance to African citizens.

The team also addressed financial overdependence on external partners, the underperformance of some organs and institutions, and the ambiguous working relations between the African Union Commission, and regional entities and member states.

One reform proposed was the merging of the Political Affairs and Peace and Security departments in 2021. It's now called the Department of Political Affairs, Peace and Security.

However, the result was that one of the five pillars of the African Peace and Security Architecture — the Continental Early Warning System — has disappeared. Established in 2002, the early warning system was created to anticipate and prevent conflicts in the continent.

It was recently argued that the warning system's functions would be incorporated across the new portfolio department. However, its major functions can no longer be performed. These include coordination and harmonisation with regional economic communities, and assisting member states in conflict analysis and mitigation.

As a former advisor to the African Union's Peace and Security Department, I am deeply concerned about the effect this will have on the continent's capability to prevent violent conflict. It is impossible to prove which conflicts were avoided because of the early warning system. However, in my view, its outputs ensured less violence than might otherwise have been.

The warning system produced analytical reports that informed the chairperson of the African Union Commission and the Peace and Security Council on impending conflict situations. It also established regular, direct relations with the council and helped regional economic communities develop their own early warning systems.

It further facilitated early warning exchanges across the continent, and helped member states address issues of structural stability and

root causes of conflict.

The continental system additionally offered regular analyses in pre-election situations that had in the past escalated to violent conflict.

Establishing the system

The African Union's Continental Early Warning System became operational in 2012, 10 years after its formation. This followed the careful design of its systems, workflow and structure. Historically, the core of the system was the Conflict Management Centre. This was set up in 1993 for the Organisation of African Unity, the AU's predecessor.

The early warning system functions included information monitoring and collection. Second was conflict and cooperation analyses. Third was the formulation of response options for decision-makers. The first was carried out by the so-called Situation Room while the second and third were carried out by analysts.

The early warning analyses were to be used by the chairperson of the African Union Commission: to advise the Peace and Security Council on potential conflicts and threats to peace and security in Africa, and recommend the best course of action.

Early warning practices

Numerous early warning reports were developed, such as the automated Africa News Brief or Daily Reports. There were also in-depth, analytical early warning reports that offered concrete policy recommendations.

The early warning system also developed a strong dimension of long-term conflict prevention practices. It resulted in strategies that countries could use to assess their potential for conflict and develop mitigation strategies. In 2017 and 2018, Ghana became the first country to voluntarily go through this process.

Another problem to be overcome was the 'silo mentality' among African Union Commission stakeholders who were acting in isolation to each other. For this purpose, a separate conflict prevention framework was established in 2015. The task force was partly operational, until the Covid-19 pandemic hit the continent.

In engaging decision-makers, the Continental Early Warning System developed a horizon-scanning practice. From 2016, it briefed the Peace and Security Council twice a year. However, this was also discontinued during the pandemic.

The effect of institutional reform

The Continental Early Warning System was unfortunately obliterated under the broad AU reforms in 2021 that created a new department of Political Affairs, Peace and Security.

The Situation Room has been retained, but the early warning system analysts were redeployed to regional desks. There are now three regional desks: West and Central Africa, East and Southern Africa, and North Africa. They are staffed by five analysts each. Obviously, they are preoccupied with conflict management in the many cases of violent extremism and terrorism, or unconstitutional changes of government. They simply don't have the time and structure to also do early warnings. This means the dedicated place for early warnings is gone.

So, what are the practical implications of these decisions?

First, the question arises: can these rather dramatic changes be made without the African Union Assembly revising the Peace and Security Council Protocol? As stated earlier, the early warning system is one of five statutory pillars of the African Peace and Security Architecture.

Second, it's not clear what role the system's technical staff will play within the union's peace and security apparatus. Or what becomes of the tools that have been developed and customised for data collection and analysis over the past 13 years.

Third, there is no dedicated unit left to prepare the statutory horizon-scanning briefings for the Peace and Security Council.

Fourth, there's no unit in place to continue assisting member states to identify and address structural vulnerabilities at an early stage to build more resilient and prosperous nations. This core function is quite different from the work of the African Peer Review Mechanism and cannot be replaced by it.

Finally, there's no indication which organ will now coordinate and harmonise the early warning relationship between the African Union and regional economic communities.

A possible future

The current structure of the new Department of Political Affairs, Peace and Security basically doesn't fulfil the early warning mandate of the Peace and Security Council Protocol.

It also doesn't address the ambitious aims spelled out in the African Peace and Security Architecture Roadmap and the Master Roadmap on Silencing the Guns.

The African Union had years of steady progress in implementing the early warning dimensions of the Peace and Security Council Protocol, and even going beyond it. There is a strong need for its decision-makers to realise that these early warning functions and practices must be re-organised quickly, systematically and substantively.

On the issue of early warning and conflict prevention, the well-intended institutional reform of the African Union has gone a step too far.

— The Conversation

Ulf Engel is a Professor, Institute of African Studies, University of Leipzig.



POLICE officers under the African Union.

Russia's war in Ukraine and polar politics spill out on the Antarctic ice

ANTARCTICA is not the only part of the planet currently in the dark. While the winter sun will only rise over the South Pole in September, a traditional media blackout has descended over the two-week annual meeting that governs the ice-bound Antarctic and its Southern Ocean.

The gathering of polar powers under the 1959 Antarctic Treaty — which has ruled the bottom of the Earth more than 60 years for peaceful aims such as tourism and science — opened Tuesday.

Attended in person by many of the treaty's almost 55 signatories, the hybrid meeting is of global interest — not only because Antarctica hit record-low sea ice the day after Russia invaded Ukraine, but because Germany, as host, faces the Sisyphean task of sufficiently cooling heated discussions with the warring states in attendance.

Hosted in Berlin, the event marks the first time Russia and Ukraine — both treaty signatories with voting rights — have sent polar diplomats to sit around the same table since Russia's unprovoked 24 February invasion.

An informal recording of Ukraine delegate Andrii Fedchuk, speaking at the annual meeting in Berlin about the impact of Russia's war on Ukraine's Antarctic activities. The cellphone video was taken from inside the hall, where journalists are not allowed. Source: Ukraine's Berlin Embassy via Facebook

Media access has been rebuffed — including requests by *Daily Maverick* to observe the opening ceremony, the only part of the closed-door annual meeting normally open to journalists.

"The opening ceremony was not open for any member of the press," Germany's foreign ministry told *Daily Maverick*.

Although treaty meetings are always closed to the press, delegates privately told *Daily Maverick* that the ministry was wary of war tensions.

Among diplomatic coups, the treaty and companion agreements ban militarisation, nuclear tests, radioactive waste, mining and territorial possession in a wilderness that can accommodate five Australias — but, without consensus, conservation and scientific decisions are impossible to advance.

Even so, during Tuesday's ceremony — according to a rare statement released out of the meeting — it was Germany's climate envoy and state secretary, Jennifer Morgan, who was handed the podium to address the war, waged by one signatory upon another.

"Russia is waging an unjustifiable, unprovoked and illegal war of aggression against Ukraine," said Morgan, former head of Greenpeace, marking a historic departure from the treaty's usually restricted, don't-rock-the-ice-breaker culture.

The state secretary said Russia had "violated the UN Charter and other fundamental principles of international law", calling on Russian President Vladimir Putin's regime to end the war and withdraw troops immediately "from the entire territory of Ukraine within its internationally recognised borders".

Morgan urged delegates "not to block important decisions for reasons unrelated to Antarctic interests", referencing the challenges of hosting deliberations during the biggest land war since 1945.

After the ceremony, during a speech by the Russian delegation, 25 states including Ukraine staged a walkout to show "decisive support for Ukraine in connection with the Russian armed aggression", according to a statement by Ukraine's National Antarctic Scientific Centre, which executes state polar interests.

Ukraine Antarctic authorities told *Daily Maverick* the members joining the walkout included 23 out of 29 states with treaty voting powers, including the US, the UK, EU countries and India — but not China, South Korea, Peru and South Africa. The latter has adopted a controversial "non-aligned" approach that featured during President Cyril Ramaphosa's awkward presser with German Chancellor Olaf Scholz in Pretoria on Tuesday. Scholz said that votes with Russia were "intolerable".

"In that manner, most of the treaty countries have shown that the Antarctic world is a civilised world in which there is no place for Russian barbarians," said Oleksii Shkuratov, Ukraine delegation head and deputy minister of education and science, commenting on the



UKRAINE President Volodymyr Zelensky, Antarctic division head Evgen Dykyi and fellow officials inspect the arrival of the country's new polar research vessel, the *Noosfera*, in the port of Odesa in August.

walkout. He participated online.

"We hope this is only the first step towards the forthcoming restriction of any activity of the Russian Federation in the international legal system of the Antarctic Treaty. And that is what we are actively asserting throughout this year's meeting."

Ukraine: Antarctic scientists called to fight
In a candid interview with *Daily Maverick*, Ukraine Antarctic official Evgen Dykyi — also an online delegate — said the war had severely disrupted Ukraine research.

As sirens wailed over Kyiv in February, the country's new polar research vessel, the *Noosfera*, was undertaking her maiden voyage across the Atlantic to Antarctica. She had departed the now besieged Black Sea port of Odesa at the end of January — marking Ukraine's first independent Antarctic voyage in about 20 years.

Acquired from the UK at a nominal peppercorn price, the vessel aimed to serve "the needs of Ukrainian Antarctic expeditions and re-establish marine research in the Southern Ocean and other parts of the world ocean", said Dykyi, director of Ukraine's National Antarctic Scientific Centre. A trained Black Sea ecologist and 2014 Donbas war veteran demobilised by disability, Dykyi was speaking ahead of the *Noosfera's* expected Cape Town arrival this Friday after wrapping her recent Antarctic season, despite the war.

"The return of the vessel to Ukraine is now temporarily impossible," said Dykyi.

According to a Wilson Centre webinar last week, Ukraine was to present a paper at the annual meeting detailing challenges caused by the war. Dykyi — not at liberty to discuss proceedings — was unable to confirm the paper's details.

However, Dykyi explained that the war had "sequestered" Ukraine's Antarctic budget and reduced its marine research, which intended to contribute data to marine protected areas repeatedly blocked by Russia and China since 2016.

Ukraine was owed Antarctic scientific facilities after the 1991 fall of the Soviet Union, claimed Dykyi, but he said Russia had not fulfilled asset agreements.

A donation by the UK of a West Antarctic research station, now called Vernadsky, "was the only possible way for Ukraine to return to Antarctic research, interrupted by the violation of the agreement", said Dykyi. The 2014 Crimea occupation had also "created significant difficulties" and budget cuts for Antarctic and oceanographic research, he added.

"It was only in 2018 when we renewed the funding, and also received additional budget for the renovation of Ukraine's Antarctic re-

search base," he explained.

President Volodymyr Zelensky personally inspected the *Noosfera* in Odesa in August last year — just months later, the port city would be shelled by Russian warships.

"Some of the participants of the Ukrainian Antarctic expedition were drafted to serve in the armed forces of Ukraine, while the other participants are in the military reserve and unable to leave Ukraine during martial law," Dykyi noted.

Antarctic staff serving Ukraine after a year of isolation in the frigid, inhospitable Far South learnt about the war "while being far from home".

Even so, he pointed out the expedition had fulfilled its state agreements, arriving "safely" at Ukraine's West Antarctic research station at the end of March. Supply deliveries and personnel exchanges were completed in "normal mode".

"The main staff of the 27th Ukrainian Antarctic Expedition — 14 persons — were delivered by land across the Ukrainian-Polish border to Warsaw airport, from where they departed to Chile," he said.

In the interview, Dykyi exhorted treaty states to adopt "response measures" to address Russia's "unilateral violation of the basic principles" of the treaty. His suggestions included economic sanctions, preventing Russian officials from chairing working groups and "termination or suspension" of joint treaty projects.

Before the war, Russia loudly and often reaffirmed its treaty commitments — but a new *Daily Maverick* investigation shows Russia has not stopped searching Antarctica for vast oil and gas deposits and other minerals since the region's 1998 mining ban entered into force.

"The unconditional loss of confidence in the aggressor party in terms of its compliance with international obligations in other areas, including obligations under the treaty, is an equally significant negative consequence of this," said Dykyi.

"This jeopardises the atmosphere of mutual trust and support that has been built up by the Antarctic community over the years and requires a consolidated response from the community."

Dykyi's words were echoed by Morgan's statement, which emphasised the importance of multilateralism, "although the loss of confidence in the aggressor party in terms of its compliance with international obligations is evident".

"Lessons learned from this situation", the Black Sea ecologist suggested, could strengthen the treaty and its agreements.

"Ukraine is fighting now not only for Ukrainian freedom, but for the freedom of the democratic world," he said.

Referring to Russian scientists "who publicly condemn the Putin regime and oppose war", he cited "single heroes" with whom he was "ready" to collaborate. "In general, Russian science is part of the totalitarian state," he said, referencing institutions.

These principles, said Dykyi, applied to treaty state Belarus under President Alexander Lukashenko's regime, who aided the invasion, but has applied for treaty voting rights — under consideration at the current annual meeting.

"The Ukrainian position is clear: we are waiting for Belarus in the international Antarctic community after real democratic presidential elections," said Dykyi. "Lukashenko's regime could not be part of international scientific cooperation."

Russian and Belarusian state authorities could not be reached for comment.

In a *Nature* opinion article, researchers from the Association of Polar Early Career Scientists have argued that polar science had to "transcend borders".

"Science is rooted in collaboration," it said, "so we should resist isolating climate scientists in Russia."

In a recent analysis, global governance scholar Yelena Yermakova told *Daily Maverick* she worried about a "very likely scenario" — "blocked and/or isolated states withdrawing and doing whatever they want in Antarctica, for instance, mining".

A senior research Fellow at Japan's Kobe Polar Co-operation Research Centre, and a Saint Petersburg native no longer based in Russia, Yermakova said international institutions "should contribute to developing a language of reason, especially at times like these".

No 'situations' or 'actions' — please
Meanwhile, the "#icecurtain", as veteran Antarctic commentator Andrew Darby yearly reminds the *Twittersphere*, appears to remain largely in place as treaty states convene until 2 June.

Shortly after Tuesday's opening ceremony, the treaty secretariat posted on its Twitter account an image of a Ukraine delegate within the meeting hall. It had disabled public replies on that post. Apparently deleted, the post no longer appears available on the secretariat's account.

Secretariat authorities did not respond to questions about media restrictions or details about the opening ceremony, although previously treaty secretary Albert Lluberas told *Daily Maverick* the secretariat did "not provide comments on situations or actions as it is not in our mandate".

According to the treaty secretariat's website, to which Lluberas himself referred us, the secretariat's mandate includes "providing and disseminating information about the Antarctic Treaty system and Antarctic activities".

The South African delegation told *Daily Maverick* it could not discuss South Africa's position on key issues, citing "media protocols".

At the time of publication, organisers under Germany's foreign office had also placed the agenda under lock and key — we share a draft version here, which may not resemble the latest version.

At a recent Wilson's Centre webinar, however, senior German diplomats slated to be at the annual meeting offered clues to priority issues on the discussion table.

Meeting chair Tania von Uslar-Gleichen said the German delegation's rallying cry was "from policy to protection".

"We have to protect Antarctic biodiversity, which includes establishing a network of protected areas," she said.

The gathering would also consider proposals about the future of the emperor penguin and growing tourism pressures.

The meeting chair also alluded to possible tectonic tremors in treaty discussions about fragile Antarctic immunity.

"We hope this meeting will send a strong message of co-operation in light of serious challenges to the Antarctic ecosystem," Von Uslar-Gleichen said.

"We need to counteract the effects of climate change, which we all feel globally. What starts in Antarctica, does not stay in Antarctica."

— DM/OBP

My journey to social work

MY journey to social work wasn't inspired by a single "aha" moment, but rather a series of life events that made me realise I cared deeply about people and their well-being.

I have always been interested in the human

brain and psychology, but what drew me to social work over psychology was that I believed I would be learning about mental health with an emphasis on social justice.

When I read the primary mission of social work, I knew that it was the career I aspired to

have, as it aligned with so many values of my own.

"The primary mission of the social work profession is to enhance human well-being and help meet the basic human needs of all people, with particular attention to the needs and empowerment of people who are vulnerable, oppressed, and living in poverty."

The systems in place that are intended to help often cause more pain than aid. I knew this was a matter that I cared about and that I had a desire to help change it.

In particular, I am invested in breaking down stigmas surrounding help and to provide those who have been through the carceral system with support.

The more and more I learned about mental health, the clearer it became that there were deep-rooted issues in the very foundation of institutions meant to help. Social work provides me with an education to both offer assistance to people in a one-on-one setting and also provides me with the knowledge of policy and policy reform.

Furthering my knowledge and understanding of these institutions is the first step in understanding how to change them. I hope to have an opportunity to rebuild systems of help for communities that have historically been oppressed.

A degree in social work will lead me to like-minded individuals and as a result will be an avenue towards changing and dismantling the harmful systems in place as part of a collective group.

I come from a family with a long history of mental illness, which were commonly ignored and untreated as the cultural stigmas and fear around seeking help were too intimidating to overcome.

I saw the negative impact this had on my family and myself — I saw it consume my mother and ultimately it stole her away from me.

I empathise and understand the how and why this happened, but I know that with the bright support, it could have been avoided. This has fueled me to continue my education so that I may better understand the affects culture has on an individual and assist those in similar situations.

I believe that it is imperative that social workers continuously work on breaking down the stigmas that surround mental health and to show those who are unsure that there is no shame in asking for assistance. Therapy is not just for when times are tough, it is also a space to share happiness and the good in life, it can also be a place for celebration.

I see the negative impact of untreated mental health all around me, often times resulting in an unintended cycle of intergenerational trauma. Many of us are deeply impacted by the carceral system, we see how harmful it is not just to the individual serving time but also to the family that they are torn away from. Often times, the individuals within the carceral system are also victims of trauma themselves. Often times, there is little to no support in place to treat and rehabilitate.

As Dr. Kirk Jae James says "trauma is drama" and if we are not treating the trauma, then we will not see an end to its affects. We need systems in place that emphasise the importance of mental health treatment for individuals who are incarcerated to ensure that they are treated with dignity and respect, and that they are provided with the support systems necessary to overcome the barriers they face.

I look forward to my career in social work, not just dismantling and rebuilding oppressive institutions, but to create sustainable change. I aim to be able to help initiate preventative policy and to gain funding for community programs, to help break down the stigmas around mental health and to help those who feel that society has given up on them.

I'm not sure where this road will lead me and I know this journey will be challenging, but I hope to make a positive impact those whose paths I cross. — hopecenterharlem.org

My Journey to Social Work was written by Hannah Couch



RUSTENBURG — Thapelo Morena landed the sucker punch that saw the spectators invade the pitch after the final whistle as Mamelodi Sundowns completed their domestic treble after winning the Nedbank Cup.

At a cool Royal Bafokeng Sports Palace, the Brazilians beat Marumo Gallants 2-1 in extra time to win the Nedbank Cup, their third trophy of the season after winning the MTN8 earlier in the season and the league title.

Sundowns, 52, and Gallants, 5, are two worlds apart when it comes to age, depth and success, despite the two teams being fond of shoe shine football, thanks to their astute coaching personnel.

Despite their differences though, they had worked their socks off in this competition, having Sundowns won it three seasons ago, before Gallants were crowned champions as TTM last term.

But the writing that the two teams are worlds apart appeared to be on the wall even from the organisers' point of view. They decided to host this game at the neglected World Cup venue.

As if that was not enough. They called upon the services of veteran musical duo and trio Mafikizolo and TKZEE, who were still relevant in the early 2000s, to entertain fans in the pre-match festivities.

Those who danced for them must have felt forced, given how the spirit of Amapiano has consumed 'Ama200s' (the national nickname of the people who were born in this millennium).

And that's why it was perhaps befitting that a young, half-naked, pitcher invader was escorted out of the field to a round of applause after hugging Gallants' Tshepo Gumede. It's their time!

That reaction further unified the sea of yellow and green in the stands, given that it was hard to separate the staunch fans of the two teams who share a touch of green in their respective regalia.

While the fans were almost one, there were no pleasantries shared between the two teams. Gaston Sirino nearly drew first blood on the enemy with a piledriver, forcing a save from Washington Arubi.

Sundowns' bright start meant that Gallants' coach Dan "Dance" Malelela would be on his feet the entire game. There were nervy and proud moments for the 2019 winner with TS Galaxy.

The Brazilians' duo Manqoba Mngqithi and Rulani Mokwena had a cheeky approach, benching regulars Themba Zwane and Denis Onyango as Neo Maema and Kennedy Mweene got the nod.

Thapelo Morena scores at the end of extra-time

... as Sundowns complete a domestic treble



PETER Shalulile of Mamelodi Sundowns celebrates after scoring the opening goal during their Nedbank Cup Final against Marumo Gallants at Royal Bafokeng Stadium on Saturday.

But that gamble paid off as Sundowns' didn't need the dazzling feet of Zwane in the first as Peter Shalulile took over the baton to put his team ahead with a solo effort after the half-an-hour mark.

Shalulile twisted and turned his markers inside the box, before passing the ball to his weaker left foot to lob the ball over the defence and an

onrushing Ndlovu into an empty net.

By the time Zwane came on the 65th minute, to a rousing cacophony of noise, Sundowns had slightly put the foot off the gas — but they were still in control of their fate.

Zwane isn't just embraced by his teammates alright. A young Sundowns fan walked in front of the media box with a placard written: "If

Zwane and Jali don't deserve to play for Bafana, who does?"

This was clearly a swipe at the Bafana coach Hugo Broos who's overlooked the duo, saying they are old for his team — albeit their sizzling form this season.

Sundowns had ample chances to consolidate their lead by firing in front of goal. Gallants, meanwhile,

punished them for their sloppiness as Junior Dion headed home from close-range.

The match went into extra time after the two teams were unseparated in regulation as they headed to extra-time where Morena, 32, scored late into the second half to win Sundowns' third trophy of the season.

— IOL Sport

Roman Abramovich bids his farewell as Chelsea takeover nears confirmation



ROMAN Abramovich.

CHELSEA have confirmed an agreement for the sale of the club to Todd Boehly. The deal is expected to be completed on Monday and Roman Abramovich has written a farewell as he hands over ownership.

On the club's website, the Russian oligarch wrote: "It has been nearly three months since I announced my intention to sell Chelsea FC. During this time, the team have worked hard to find the right custodian for Chelsea FC that would be best positioned to successfully lead the club into its next chapter.

"The ownership of this club comes with great responsibility. Since I came to Chelsea nearly 20 years ago, I have witnessed first-hand what this club can achieve. My goal has been to ensure that the next owner has a mindset that will enable success for the men's and women's team, as well as the will and drive to continue developing other key aspects of the club, such as the academy and the vital work of Chelsea Foundation.

"I am pleased this search has now come to a successful conclusion. As I hand over Chelsea to its new custodians, I would like to wish

them the best of success, both on and off the pitch."

Abramovich, who put the club up for sale after having sanctions imposed arising from his homeland's invasion of Ukraine, says it has been an "honour of a lifetime" to be involved with Chelsea. "I would like to thank all the club's past and current players, staff, and of course fans for these incredible years," he said. "I am proud that as a result of our joint successes, millions of people will now benefit from the new charitable foundation which is being established. This is the legacy which we have created together."

Boehly, leader of a Clearlake Capital consortium, will buy the Premier League club for what will be a sports franchise record deal of £4.25bn, 88 days after Abramovich officially put the Blues up for sale.

A short statement on Chelsea's website said: "Chelsea confirm the agreement to sell the club to the Todd Boehly/Clearlake Capital consortium with the transaction expected to be completed on Monday."

— The Guardian

LeBA names Commonwealth Games team



MOROKE Mokhotho.

Leemisa Thuseho

THE Lesotho Boxing Association (LeBA) has named its team for the upcoming Commonwealth Games.

The games will be held from 28 July to 8 August in Birmingham, England.

The five-man team of boxers is being led by Olympian, Moroke Mokhotho (57kg), who has already announced that this will be his last Commonwealth Games appearance. Moroke competed in the Commonwealth Games in 2014 in Glasgow, Scotland before performing again in Gold Coast, Australia in 2018.

The Rio 2016 Olympian is hoping to improve on reaching the quarterfinals in Glasgow and Scotland. In both instances he was one victory shy of a bronze medal.

The team also has Qhobosheane Mohlerepe (63.5kg) who will also be making his third appearance in the Commonwealth Games. He was also part of the team which represented Lesotho in Glasgow and Gold Coast.

Retšelisitsoe Kolobe (51kg), Phomolo Lengola (54kg), and Arena Pakela (75kg) are the other three.

All the boxers participated in the 2022 Zone 4 Boxing Championships in Maputo, Mozambique last month.

Pakela won a silver medal in his weight category while Mokhotho, Kolobe and Mohlerepe won bronze medals in their respective weight categories.

LeBA public relations officer, Rethabile Mohale confirmed the team to the *Sunday Express* this weekend.

He also revealed that the teams' sparring partners are Tlhohelo Mokhesi, Lehlohonolo Pitso, Mohau Tsie, Toka Ntsane and Bokang Khoai.

According to Mohale, the team is already hard at work preparing for the games.

"We have selected a final team and it is already hard at work," Mohale said.

"Before finalising the team, we have been taking our provisional selection to different tournaments in South Africa and we will keep on doing that with the final squad.

"So far, the team is promising. It is fit we and we are pushing for them to get as many fights as possible. We hope that will improve their competitiveness level."

For the Commonwealth Games, the team will be led by LeBA president, Katiso Tšenoli,

as team manager while Hopolang Mabele is the head coach deputised by Meshack Letsoepa.

Meanwhile, the Federation of Athletics Lesotho (FAL) has also named its team for the Commonwealth Games.

The athletics team consists of 'Neheng Khatala (marathon), Mokulubete Makatisi (marathon), Lerato Sechele (triple jump), 'Mamakoli Senauoane (400m), 'Manqabang Tsibela (1500m and 800m), Motlokoa NKhabutlane (marathon), Lebenya Nkoka (marathon), Toka Badboy (5000m and 10000m), Mojela Koneshe (100m and 200m), and Tebello Ramakongwana (10 km/marathon).

The team manager is Makara Thibinyane while Khauta Makhoana and Andreas Telang are the coaches.

LeFA allays Makateng injury worries

Leemisa Thuseho

THE Lesotho Football Association (LeFA) has allayed worries over Likuena striker, Katleho Makateng's availability for selection ahead of the beginning of the 2023 Africa Cup of Nations (AFCON) group stage qualifiers against Comoros.

This is after the player suffered a concussion during Likuena's practice tie against Namibia at Bidvest Stadium in Johannesburg on Thursday.

LeFA media officer, Mikia Kalati, told the *Sunday Express* that Makateng was given time off and was likely to miss only the game against Ethiopia but would be available for selection for the Comoros match.

The injury which he suffered at the beginning of the match forced the game to be halted for nearly 30 minutes to allow the player to get medical attention.

He was eventually admitted at Netcare Milpark Hospital but was discharged later that day as he had improved.

"Likuena striker, Katleho Makateng, has been discharged from hospital having suffered a severe concussion in the opening minutes of the international practice match between Lesotho and Namibia," LeFA announced in a statement on Thursday.

"The Lesotho Football Association would like to express its gratitude to the Namibian Football Association (NFA) along with the Netcare Emergency Medical Services for their support during a moment of panic and discomfort for the Lesotho team."

LeFA also congratulated the players for winning 2-1. Jane Thabantšo and Likuena tenderfoot, Retšelisitsoe Mopeli, scored for Lesotho.

Likuena are now in Ethiopia for two friendlies against Ethiopia. The first game was played yesterday (waiting for the results) while the next game is on tomorrow.

After the friendlies, Likuena will leave for Comoros for their first AFCON qualifiers match on 3 June.

And this weekend, Kalati said: "He was given few days off and is likely to miss only one of the two matches against Ethiopia."

If Makateng was to be unavailable for the Comoros match, that would have been a huge blow for Likuena following his outstanding performance in March during the AFCON preliminaries.

Makateng, who is one of newly introduced faces to the Likuena squad, announced his arrival on the international stage with a brace in only his second competitive international match for Likuena when they beat Seychelles 3-1. The win helped Lesotho qualify for the group stages of the AFCON qualifiers.



KATLEHO Makateng.

Leemisa Thuseho

LESOTHO senior soccer national team, Likuena will know their 2022 Council of Southern African Football Associations (COSAFA) group stage opponents on Tuesday.

This is after COSAFA announced that the draw for this year's edition would be held on 31 May 2022.

"The draw for the 2022 tournament is pencilled in for May 31, when the final line-up will also be announced, and the teams learn their fate on the road to lifting the trophy," COSAFA said recently.

COSAFA has earlier said the tournament would return to Durban after it was last played there in 2019.

Even though the association is yet to announce the countries enrolled for this year's edition, the Lesotho Football Association (LeFA) had announced that Likuena would be registered for this year's tournament.

So far, the only country that is con-

Likuena's COSAFA opponents to be announced on Tuesday

firmated to miss this year's edition is Zimbabwe due to the suspension by FIFA owing to government interference in the operations of the Zimbabwe national football association.

However, COSAFA said if the suspension is lifted, they will be welcomed.

"As things stand, Zimbabwe will not be on hand to compete for the title this year after their suspension by FIFA prohibits them from taking part in any football activities," COSAFA said.

"However, should that suspension be lifted, they will be welcomed to

the tournament as they have a rich history in the COSAFA Cup."

The association also announced that this year tournament will be staged from 5 to 17 July. This will create a perfect platform for the team to prepare for the second set of the 2023 Africa Cup of Nations group stages of the qualifiers to start in September.

The first set start of the qualifiers start next weekend.

"The tournament will be staged from 5 to 17 July, providing coaches with an excellent chance to fine-tune their squads ahead of the second set

of 2023 AFCON qualifiers." COSAFA said.

This year, COSAFA is celebrating 21 years.

This will be the first COSAFA tournament with Lesotho for coach, Veselin Jelušić who is expected to reach the final.

The only time Lesotho reached the COSAFA final was in 2000 but they suffered a 6-0 defeat to Zimbabwe in two legs.

The side is therefore hoping to perform better than last year when it won only one of its four games. The side beat Zambia 2-1 and lost 3-1

to eSwatini, 4-0 to Botswana and 4-0 to South Africa in the group stages.

Likuena striker, Motebang Sera will also be looking forward to increasing his COSAFA goals tally being Lesotho's top scorer in the tournament.

He moved to the top of the scorers' chart for Lesotho last year when he scored his sixth in the competition. He has now scored in five separate COSAFA editions, having first netted in 2016, then 2017, 2018, 2019 and 2021.

He is the only player to score in the last five tournaments.

**LeFA allays
Makateng
injury worries**
P23



Klaas, Leboela lead Olympiad team

Leemisa Thuseho

CHESS International Federation (FIDE) Candidate Master (CM), Tokelo Klaas and Woman Candidate Master (WCM), Maboloko Leboela will lead Lesotho's team in the upcoming Chess Olympiad.

The Olympiad is scheduled for Chennai, India, from 28 July to 10 August 2022.

Initially, the biennial chess event had been set for Moscow from 26 July to 8 August. However, Russia was in February this year stripped of the hosting rights after it invaded Ukraine.

In preparation for the prestigious event, the Chess Federation of Lesotho (CFL) has selected its final team of five men and five women.

Klaas and Leboela are the only players with FIDE titles in the team.

Klaas is currently Lesotho's best ranked player with 1812 points. He was awarded the CM title after an outstanding performance during the Chess Olympiad in Batumi Georgia in 2018. He is the second candidate master in Lesotho after veteran, Joang Molapo.

As for Leboela, she is ranked 39th with 1226 points. She got her title in 2016 during the Baku Azerbaijan Olympiad. Last year, she was also awarded a Chess Development Instructor title by FIDE.

Leboela has been representing Lesotho in all the Olympiads since the country's first appearance in Norway in 2014. As WCM, she is Lesotho's second woman with a chess title after Lieketseng Ngatane, who is a Women FIDE Master (WFM).

Lesotho's second-best player, Sechaba Khalema (1807) and; Malehloa Likhomo, ranked 28th with 1322 points, are also in the team.

The games will see chess starlet, Tšephe Lebajoa, making his Olympiad debut. Lebajoa (17) is now ranked fourth in the country with 1779 points. He is also the 2019 Lesotho national champion.

Lebajoa was also Lesotho's best performer in the recent 2022 African Zone 4.5 Individual Chess Championship held in Lesotho in March. He finished eighth in the open section and was the only local player to excel in the competition.

Bahlakoana Ntšonyana, Bokang Motsamai, Nteboheling Thetsane, Reitumetse Taioe, and Bonolo Ntsielo are also looking forward to making their maiden appearances in the Olympiad.

CFL secretary general, Tlhoriso Morienyane, confirmed the team to *Sunday Express* this weekend. He said that the team had been finalised after three-day selection games played at the Lesotho National Olympic Committee (LNOC) premises in Maseru.

The games were played on Saturday, Sunday and Wednesday.

"We have finalised our team for the Olympiad, it consists of five males and five females," Morienyane said.

"It is a team of good players with a mixture of experienced and youthful players. Sixty percent of them are young and that shows that the future of our sport is bright. We are hopeful that those newbies will perform well because they qualified to be in the team competing against top and experienced players."

He said they were still to know the FIDE Grandmaster who will work with the team ahead of the games. The grandmaster will be provided by FIDE. In the meantime, the team will be mentored by local coaches; Moseli Phera and Mphethole Mona.



TOKELO Klaas.



MABOLOKO Leboela.