

'Sin tax' could spur job cuts: brewery warns

Page 7



'Oppressive' education bill peeves opposition

MPs vow to fight

'No to foreign investors in farming'
 - Page 4

Firebrand Mapesela escalates ABC leaders' squabbles
 - Page 4

Inexperience frustrates young job seekers
 - Page 5



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News

Opposition MPs vow to oppose 'oppressive' education bill

MATHATISI SEBUSI

MASERU - Opposition MPs have pledged to block the Education Act Amendment Bill 2019 which was recently read in Parliament, arguing it violated provisions of the Constitution and was meant to oppress teachers.

The MPs further contend that the bill, which was intended to address teachers' grievances including engagement of principals and teachers' retirement packages, is designed to intimidate teachers and paralyse education fraternity, instead.

Leader of the Movement for Economic Change (MEC) Selibe Mochoboroane is opposed to the bill saying it was not necessarily meant to respond to the current crisis within the teaching fraternity because, among others, it is discriminatory.

Mochoboroane said the 'no work no pay' principle that the Minister of Education intends to apply on teachers not only fails to respond to the industrial action they undertook but also discriminates against teachers from other civil servants.

He said if the Government needed to make laws that concern civil servants, such laws should apply to all civil servants not a selected group.

"If a teacher is absent from



Leader of the Movement for Economic Change Selibe Mochoboroane

duty without permission, the principle of 'no work no pay' shall apply notwithstanding any disciplinary procedure provided under this Act," he said.

Mochoboroane said the bill stipulates that: "the Teaching Services Commission (TSC) shall appoint, promote, transfer, suspend and remove from office non-teaching staff except the education secretary".

This, the MEC leader, said is contrary to the principal law which stipulates that the school board shall recommend to the TSC the dismissal, transfer and promotion of a teacher.

He said authority is taken away from school boards and given

to the TSC, meaning the school boards which are traditional owners of schools are left without control of their schools.

According to him, apart from denying school boards the authority to have a say in the engagement, promotion, dismissal and transfer of teachers, the move is not practical as commissions are elected on the basis of politics.

He said that way, the law would be promoting corruption as teachers would have been engaged through their political affiliations, which is contrary to the provisions of the Labour Law.

"If the children of these politicians attended government schools, maybe the government would appreciate the compromise required for education in Lesotho."

MP for the Qalabane Constituency, Motlalentoa Letsosa echoed Mochoboroane's sentiments on the implications the bill would have on the teaching fraternity if it were approved.

Motlalentoa said the government is prepared to control teachers at all costs, starting with taking over all authority from them.

He was quick to add that the bill would, however, not be approved by parliament since the schools are not government's but belong to churches though the government only subsidises operations by paying teachers' salaries and supplying essential resources.

The Education Act of 2010, he said, grants school boards the authority to have a say in the engagement, promotion, transfer

and dismissal of teachers.

For his part, president of the Lesotho Association for Teachers (LTA) Letsatsi Ntsibolane, said the subsections included in the bill were made without consulting all the relevant stakeholders.

Ntsibolane said the education minister has given himself the authority to personally get into classrooms and make inspections as well as take action against any defaulting teachers.

"This, however, is the role expected to be played by the teachers' immediate supervisors who have the right to make recommendations where there is need."

Ntsibolane said through the bill, the minister gives himself authority to choose a conciliator and to dissolve a conciliatory board which is currently dealing with the disputes.

"The Conciliator, which is the Directorate of Dispute Prevention and Resolutions (DDPR), has the authority to resolve disputes where trade unions have disputes of interest or rights.

"The minister is actually denying the teachers a chance to fair trial and a chance to fight for their rights," Ntsibolane said.

Section 19 (i) of the principal law further stipulates that: "Where in the course of an inspection, an inspector discovers a breach of discipline committed by a teacher, the inspector shall instruct an immediate supervisor of the teacher to take disciplinary action against such a teacher in terms of the disciplinary code and the instructed supervisor shall comply with the instruction and if the immediate supervisor fails to take disciplinary action in accordance with subsection (1), the minister may, notwithstanding the provision of section 57, appoint a committee to inquire into the alleged breach of discipline and the committee shall make recommendations to the appointing authority.

"A teacher who is entitled to retire at the age of 65 shall upon coming into effect of this Act, have an option to retire at any age from 50 to 65 years" reads section 62(4)

"The minister shall appoint a Conciliator who shall conciliate disputes of interests among parties to the dispute," section 59(1) reads.



Lesotho Association for Teachers President Letsatsi Ntsibolane

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News

Mapesela stokes ABC squabbles

... labels Mahao a Johnny-come-lately thokolosi

KANANELO BOLOETSE

MASERU – Former All Basotho Convention (ABC) spokesperson Tefo Mapesela on Thursday upped the party's old guard's campaign against the newly elected deputy leader Professor Nqosa Mahao.

Mapesela told factory workers they would not allow Mahao to be the deputy leader because he is a "Johnny-come-lately" to the ABC.

"There is someone who is claiming to be the most educated person in Lesotho. Politics are not all about education. We do not need a professor to tell the Chinese that they should pay you living wages. We do not care how much he knows about the Constitution; we just need a brave leader.

"This person does not know that a political leader does not necessarily have to be that educated or have a profound knowledge of the law; all that is needed is decisiveness," Mapesela said to ululating factory workers.

He added: "We do not have any problem with the newly elected committee; we, however, have a problem with the person who got in through a court order. We will not let him in, he should start where the rest started.

"Where was he when we were being chased by soldiers? I have never even seen him at a single ABC rally. I first saw him at

the Lehakoe Recreation Centre wearing a new party T-shirt that someone had bought for him.

"What do you do when a thokolosi comes into your house, finds your children living together in peace and it divides them? You just have to kick it out."

Mahao was elected deputy leader at the party's elective conference that was held in Maseru from February 1 to 2.

This was after the National Executive Committee (NEC) had declined his nomination by the Koro-Koro constituency and subsequently expelled him from the party.

The NEC's decision was upheld by the High Court but the Appeal Court reversed it on the eve of the party's elections allowing Mahao to contest.

The outcome of the conference has been challenged in the High Court by three Members of Parliament; Keketso Sello, Mohapi Mohapinyane and Habofano Lehana.

The trio wanted the court to nullify the results and order fresh polls on the grounds that there were serious irregularities which affected the credibility of the elections.

The High Court interdicted the newly-elected committee from exercising its authority pending finalisation of the matter.

The dispute has effectively split the party into two factions, pitting the incoming NEC's



All Basotho Convention spokesperson Tefo Mapesela

partisans, and outgoing NEC's "rebels".

The split has forced the party into a stalemate, with both teams now locked in court ordered behind-the-scenes negotiations trying to facilitate handover of power.

On February 25, a total 20 of the party's MPs and one senator Lebohlang Hlaele petitioned party leader Motsoahae Thabane to recognise the new NEC, co-operate with it and forge unity – the only way the party could recover from the brink.

The legislators were backed by the party's Gauteng constituency, which also petitioned Thabane on February 26.

As a result, the party's parliamentary caucus held crunch talks on the fate of the newly-elected NEC.

Thabane reportedly told the disgruntled legislators that they

were "disrespectful children" and threatened to call fresh elections so that they could lose their jobs if they continued nagging him.

Having called Mahao a rug that must never be elected to lead ABC, Thabane has sparked speculation that he is sympathetic to the cause of the party's old guard, which does not want to accept Mahao and his colleagues' poll victory.

A few days after the conference, in a surprise cabinet reshuffle, Thabane sacked newly-elected secretary general and deputy spokesperson Hlaele and 'Matebatso Doti respectively.

Doti was minister of social development while Hlaele, who is also Thabane's son-in-law, was minister of law and constitutional affairs.

The two MPs were firmly in Mahao's camp in the run-up to the elective conference.

Meeting slams bid to rope in foreign investors in farming

STAFF REPORTER

MASERU - Farmers have raised concerns on the suggestion made in the budget speech suggesting foreign investors would be engaged in the production of grain products and the expansion of vegetable production in Lesotho.

Speaking during the budget analysis and review jointly organised by the Lesotho Council of NGOs and Rural Self-help Development Association (RSDA) in Maseru on Tuesday, farmers from different sectors urged more support for indigenous players to help Lesotho successfully fight poverty and create employment.

Amongst the projects that the farmers questioned was the proposed 4,000 hectares of land earmarked for the production of grain crops with the assistance of foreign investors.

The farmers contended that the plan was not well-thought-out because, as local producers, they should be capacitated to reach the same level of production.

"We want the government to scrap this from the policy and find a way of capacitating local grain producers. In this way as a country we shall be able to put a stop to the erosion of our economic benefits," lamented the farmers.

They further argued that in

the different production areas, such as piggery, poultry, fruits and vegetables, local farmers should be supported by the government in order to achieve high yields and thereby take charge and responsibility of the economy.

Other criticism on the budget by the farmers was in relation to the ratio of the agriculture estimates to what is actually expected in production, with farmers saying the government should align its allocation with national priorities especially in achieving food security, fighting hunger and poverty.

In their analyses, both the LCN and RSDA said there was need to get progress reports on what is being attained through the proposed budgets and projects being initiated.

The groups said while they hailed the proposed allocations, a

close monitoring of progress would be needed, citing among those to be closely watched would be the expansion projects on produce, especially on how such are being rolled out and implemented.

In his presentation, the LCN programmes coordinator, Sekonyela Mapetja called on farmers to be vigilant and not just accept policies as they were being pronounced but encouraged them to question everything.

Mapetja contended government should be held accountable at all levels.

The event was meant to review estimate proposals for the agriculture and food security ministry, education and small businesses development ministries. It was attended by farmers from all over Lesotho, various NGOs and other local interest groups.

Inexperience frustrates young job seekers

'... there's no place where they sell experience'

STAFF REPORTER/XINHUA

MASERU – While unemployment is rising world over, it is joblessness among youths, particularly recent tertiary graduates, often highly skilled, which has left policy-makers in Lesotho and the rest of the continent in sixes and sevens.

Most prospective private employers argue while they are impressed by paper qualifications, their operations are so target-driven that they have neither the time nor the wherewithal to train young graduates.

Job adverts always add work experience as a requirement which is a paradox since most young graduates, though well qualified cannot be expected to have experience since no-one is prepared to take them in for them to add experience to their CVs.

It becomes a vicious cycle:

young employment seekers don't have the required experience because they have never been given the chance to acquire the much-needed experience.

The South African government's plan to scrap work experience requirements for first time job seekers in the public sector has been welcomed by many in that country and perhaps it's time the public service in neighbouring countries followed suit.

However, there are the usual concerns about the capacity of new graduates, who are still learning, to deliver.

"Any attempts to reduce youth unemployment is supposed to be welcomed, but the quality of service should not be affected," Prof. Jannie Rossouw, head of the school of economic and business sciences at University of the Witwatersrand told the media this week.

New graduates entering the job market in South Africa will no longer be required to have work experience for an entry level government job starting from next month.

With the country battling high levels of unemployment, Public Service and Administration Minister Ayanda Dlodlo on Monday noted that the new plan is aimed at tackling youth joblessness.

Dlodlo said the move will not have an impact on services delivered by government.

"This will be structured in such a way that it does not compromise the professional and technical requirements for various fields. All we want is to streamline career paths and align skills," she noted.

For years, unions and organisations representing young people have complained that work experience requirements for first

time job seekers by employers was making it difficult for young people to enter the job market.

In an interview with Xinhua, South Africa's largest trade federation COSATU's spokesperson Sizwe Pamla said the move was long overdue.

"This is going to work. The South African government policy needs to change to accommodate mostly black graduates. We should appreciate the fact that there's no place where they sell experience."

Pamla said employers should always be willing to offer young people opportunities to gain the necessary experience.

"Where do you expect these graduates with no experience to get experience from if you are not willing to give them opportunities. People who have graduated should not be treated as if they are illiterate," Pamla said.

Granted, on the local market in Lesotho the government and many private employers are trying to provide opportunities for young school leavers through internship programmes.

Unfortunately, not only are such opportunities very few and far between but there are potentially exploitative practices where unscrupulous employers use "cheaper" interns to cut down on costs without tangible will to empower such youngsters.

Another big stone from Mothae Mine

Maseru - ASX-listed Lucapa Diamond and the Government of Lesotho have announced the recovery of an 83.9 carat diamond at Mothae.

The diamond was recovered from the new 1.1 Mtpa Mothae kimberlite plant in Mokhotlong.

The 83.9 carat stone is the fourth +50 carat diamond recovered to date from the new Mothae mine, following the recovery of a 51.2 carat diamond in February and Specials weighing 78 carats and 89 carats from the 2018 bulk sampling programme.

While the 83.9 carat diamond was not gem-quality, it continues to underline the large-stone nature of the Mothae kimberlite resource.

Lucapa MD Stephen Wetherall said Lucapa and the Government of the Kingdom of Lesotho continue to be impressed by the Special recoveries from Mothae.

"We are highly encouraged that the coarse size fraction in our recently commenced commercial production through the new 1.1 Mtpa Mothae plant is reinforcing why Lucapa invested in this second high-value resource to complement production from the Lulo mine in Angola," said Wetherall.

'Sin tax' could spur job cuts: brewery

NEO SENOKO

Maseru - The government's decision to shore up revenue by introducing "sin tax" through the 30 and 15 percent levy on tobacco and alcohol, respectively has not gone down well with Maluti Mountain Brewery (MMB).

As one of the country's largest employers in the private sector, MMB has expressed dissatisfaction on the decision taken by government, citing that there are a number of negative implications associated with the introduction the levy on alcohol.

"Many of these implications will put our business in an unfavourable position.

"The most important of which is the likelihood of consumers switching to informal alcohol and the increased opportunity for smuggling, which is contrary to the government's goal with this levy," said MMB Country Managing Director Sesupo Wagaman in a statement released following the budget presentation by government.

Wagaman went on to reveal some shocking news that his company may be forced to cut its work force as a result of the introduction of this levy which he projected would reduce alcohol sales and therefore chirp away at the

brewery's revenue and increase operating costs.

"By its nature, our industry is very labour intensive and cost efficiencies are paramount to our business, so the difficult reality is that we will be forced to review the cost structure of the business and cannot rule out the possibility of job losses," Wagaman added.

MMB is one of the major contributors to the economy of Lesotho, currently generating revenue over a billion maloti representing an estimated three percent of Lesotho's GDP.

The government is also looking at another 30 percent per litre increase in the fuel levy as well as a one and half percent increase in domestic tax collection with an additional three percent VAT on telecommunications.

Minister of finance Dr Moeketsi Majoro announced this past week while delivering the budget speech for the financial year 2019/20.

Revenues is expected to rise by 3.4 percentage points of GDP to M18.1 billion.

"During the course of financial year 2019/20, government will introduce additional measures to increase fees and charges that have remained stagnant over many years," Majoro said during his budget presentation on Tuesday.



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Basebetsi le bahoebi ba memeloa lithupelong tse etellang pele nako ea ho finyeletsa litlaleho le ho lefa lekhetho la kuno (Income Tax filing season).

Sepheo sa lithupelo tsena ke:

- Ho hlokomelisa, ho ruta le ho hopotsa bahoebi ho etsa litlaleho tsa libuka tsa khoebo ka nepo, le ho tlatsa liforomo ka nepo ele hore qetellong ba tsebe ho lefa lekhetho le lokelang.
- Ho ruta le ho tataisa basebetsi bohle ka ho etsa litlaleho tsa likhafa le ho tlatsa liforomo tsa boikhafiso ka nepo.
- Ho ruta bahoebi le basebetsi ka moralo o mocha oa ho tla sebelisa marang-rang (Tax Modernization) e le mokhoa oa ho ntlafatsa bosebeletsi le ho atametsa litsebeletso sechabeng.
- Ho tataisa bahoebi le basebetsi ka mokhoa o mocha oa ho etsa kopo le ho fumant'soa tokomane ea lekhetho ea Tax Clearance Certificate ka tsebeliso ea marang-rang.

Lithupelo li tla ts'oaroa ho latela lethathamo lena:

La 12/03/19

Maputsoe (Refiloe Guest House)

08:30 - 12:45 Lishopo Le Meaho e Hirisoang
14:00 - 17:00 Mekonteraka le Lit'sebeletso (Service Providers)

La 13/03/19

Leribe - Hlotse (Leribe Hotel)

08:30 - 12:45 Lishopo
14:00 - 17:00 Meaho e Hirisoang

La 14/03/19

08:30 - 12:45 Basebetsi
14:00 - 17:00 Lit'sebeletso tsa LRA

La 15/03/19

08:30 - 12:45 Basebetsi
14:00 - 17:00 Mekonteraka

La 13/03/19

Quthing (Fuleng Guest House)

08:30 - 12:45 Bahoebi bohle
14:00 - 17:00 Lit'sebeletso tsa LRA

**La 14/03/19
Le La 15/03/19**

08:30 - 12:45 Basebetsi
14:00 - 17:00 Lit'sebeletso tsa LRA

La 18/03/19

Mafeteng (Mafeteng Hotel)

08:30 - 12:45 Lishopo Le Meaho e Hirisoang
14:00 - 17:00 Lit'sebeletso tsa LRA

La 19/03/19

08:30 - 12:45 Mekonteraka le Lit'sebeletso (Service Providers)
14:00 - 17:00 Lit'sebeletso tsa LRA

**La 20/03/19
Le La 21/03/19**

08:30 - 12:45 Basebetsi
14:00 - 17:00 Lit'sebeletso tsa LRA

Billiat bemoans Chiefs' poor finishing

Cape Town - Kaizer Chiefs forward Khama Billiat believes the club's poor finishing is a reason they are not managing to pick up wins more consistently in South Africa's top flight.

Chiefs were held to a 1-1 draw on Friday night against SuperSport United at Mbombela Stadium with Mxolisi Macuphu opening the scoring for United.

Billiat brought the Glamour Boys back into the contest with a superb curling effort from outside the box not long afterwards.

However, there were some opportunities for the Ernst Middendorp-coached outfit to snatch all three points but the final pass and wayward finishing meant the spoils were shared.

Speaking to SuperSport TV after the game, the Zimbabwe star said: "I want to thank God for this opportunity, my teammates, the coaches, technical staff and the Kaizer Chiefs family.

"It was not easy and it still not going to be easy going forward.



Khama Billiat

Every point is important, we just take every game as it comes, we keep on working hard.

"This is not the result we wanted but we take one point we know it's going to count in the end. It's always difficult to play against SuperSport (United), especially with their set-play, they are dangerous.

"We had to respond quickly. I give credit to the guys, we all worked hard. We tried to win second balls and go behind their defence.

"It could have been better with the finishing including myself, it's something we'll work on. One point we'll take (it) home.

"This is not where we want to be, we all know. We all have to pull up our socks, we still have games to play. Anything can happen, we really need to work hard, give everything we can. It's still possible, who knows? In every game we take points. We'll look at it after man."

- *Sports24*

'African Champions League poorly run'



Mamelodi Sundowns head coach Pitso Mosimane

Mamelodi Sundowns head coach Pitso Mosimane has slammed the African Champions League as poorly run and described the intimidation his players go through when they travel to Arabic-speaking North Africa as his side headed to Morocco on Thursday to try and win their group when they play Wydad

Casablanca at the weekend.

"It's never been nice," he said of the reception that awaits his players in Rabat on Saturday when they face Wydad to decide who will top group A.

It is the third trip in as many years for Mosimane's men to face the Moroccans.

Sundowns need just a draw

while Wydad must win by two goals.

"I went to Setif (in Algeria) and do you remember what happened?" The match in Setif in June 2016 was called off before the end because of fan violence as Sundowns were headed to an unexpected away win.

As a result, Setif were

chucked out of the Champions League.

"I went to Esperance at a packed El Menzah Stadium (in Tunisia) and do you know what happened? "Not when there were people watching but in the passage there's trouble there.

"The packed stadium doesn't see anything but the trouble is in the tunnel, in the corridors."

Sundowns drew a tense physical encounter with Esperance in the group phase two years ago.

"They do what they do.

"You come with the bus ... you saw what happened at Zamalek," he added, reminding of home fans hitting Sundowns' bus as they entered the stadium in Egypt for the 2016 final, where they won the trophy.

"North Africa? Seriously! Even sometimes West Africa. Everywhere we go there are stories (to tell).

"This Champions League is way behind. We have no buses, no training pitches.

"It's 2019 yet we still have those problems. It's tough," he lamented.

- *timeslive*

Sport

THE BEST SUNDAY READ



Motlokoa eyes return to action

NTHAKO MAJORO

MASERU - Lesotho's fastest marathoner, Nkhahatlane Motlokoa, is looking to return to action in May, a month before the Olympic Games which will be held from July 24 to August 9 in Tokyo, Japan.

Motlokoa, who last ran competitively in December at the Valencia Marathon in Spain where he finished 25th among 44 000 competitors who finished the race, is one of the local athletes who will represent Lesotho at the Olympic Games.

The 26-year-old runner has full support from the Lesotho National Olympic Committee (LNOC) towards his preparation for the Tokyo competition.

"I am currently busy at training, getting ready for the Olympic Games," Motlokoa told Public Eye on Thursday.

"My agent, who is based in Italy, is busy looking for a race for me in Europe right now and according to him, it looks like that would only be possible sometime in May."

Motlokoa started competing in European races in 2017 when he first received a special invitation for the Paris Marathon, in France.

He finished the Paris Marathon on ninth position after clocking in 02:09:47, which

is his current national record.

International Association of Athletics Federations (IAAF)'s qualifying standard for big competitions such as the Olympic Games, among others is 02:11:30, just a few minutes above his national record.

Motlokoa also competed in the Rome Marathon in Italy in April last year and finished on fourth position after clocking in 02:10:32.

He finished the Valencia Marathon in 02:14:59 last year and said he wanted to improve his national record in Spain but could not due to a delay by going to Valencia.

"I wanted to make a better record that will see me breaking my national record of 02:09:47 but I could not after I delayed by going to Spain.

"I was looking to make 02:08:00," Motlokoa said.

He said what also contributed to his disappointing performance in Spain was the fact that he was the only marathon runner from Lesotho and competing alone in a foreign land for the first time was challenging for him.

"But that is in the past. Right now, I am focused and as long as I can find a race to compete in, the better," he said.

One of the international races that Motlokoa won in the region is the Two Oceans Marathon in South Africa in 2015.

