



MAIN STORIES

Some Movement on the Omnibus Bill

Local Government Elections

Joki's Alleged Killers Arrested

Spat with South Africa

HIGHLIGHTS

- Leaders of political parties in the National Assembly signed an agreement to continue with the amendment to the Constitutional Bill (Omnibus Bill). Parliament will be recalled from its winter recess to pass the Omnibus Bill and enable the process of the reforms to move forward ahead of a summit of the Southern African Community Development (SADC) in August 2023.
- Prime Minister Sam Matekane proclaimed 29 September 2023 as the date for local government elections.
- The leader of the Basotho Action Party (BAP), Nqosa Mahao, said plans were afoot to interdict the government from hiring its supporters for jobs in various poverty alleviation projects under the Youth Apprenticeship Programme (YAP). Mahao is adamant that the timing is aimed at buying votes ahead of the local government elections.
- South Africa's Mineral Resources and Energy Minister, Gwede Mantashe, accused the Lesotho government of economic sabotage following the deaths of 31 suspected illegal miners at a closed mine in Welkom, in the Free State. He said that Lesotho government officials were sponsoring the illegal miners, presumably because they were benefiting from their illegal activities. The Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lejone Mpotjoane, admitted that his country's poor economy was contributing significantly to acts of illegal mining in South Africa.
- The Revolution for Prosperity (RFP) party is losing the plot and digressing from its promises to voters, its Member of Parliament (MP) for Abia constituency, Thuso Makhwanyane, said. Makhwanyane, said the party was not appointing people to key positions on merit and some senior party officials were hiring their relatives into key parastatal board positions.
- Lesotho has been ranked as the 111th most peaceful country in the world (1=most peaceful; 163=least peaceful) by the Institute for Economics and Peace (IEP) in its Global Peace Index (GPI), published in June 2023, rating its state of peace as medium.
- Police arrested four alleged Famo gangsters believed to have killed popular radio journalist, Ralikonelo Joki.



- A study by a local researcher, Lesiamo Molapo, on behalf of the United Textile Employees (Unite) says police brutality is a direct result of a delinquent culture within the Lesotho Mounted Police Service (LMPS) fraternity, created by poor supervision and outright lack of accountability.
- Sesotho Media and Development, an NGO, published a report with recommendations on police reforms. The report states that some victims of police brutality and other human rights abuses do not report such acts because they have no faith that action will ever be against the perpetrators.
- According to the United States (US) 2023 trafficking in persons report, the Government of Lesotho does not fully meet the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking but is making significant efforts to do so; therefore, Lesotho remained on Tier 2.
- The Directorate on Corruption and Economic Offences (DCEO) has frozen the accounts of one of the country's largest micro finance companies – Platinum Credit – as it begins a major probe into alleged multi-million maloti theft and fraud by the firm's managing director, Motena Lishea.
- The National Assembly adopted the controversial Members of Parliament Salaries (Amendment of Schedule) Regulations of 2023, which entitle MPs to a monthly tax-free M5,000 fuel allowance, among other benefits.
- On 5 July, Matekane launched the water, hydrogen and digital future conference and Expo that will take place in Maseru on 12 and 13 October 2023. He said that during the conference, the government would announce the establishment of strategic partnerships with like-minded nations across the globe.
- Matekane officially launched the Entrepreneurship Hub and Seed Financing Facility. Under the facility, up to 500 entrepreneurs will receive business incubation support to equip them with the necessary technical skills to run sustainable enterprises.





- Matekane will assume the Chairmanship of the Southern African Customs Union (SACU) from 15 July 2023.
- The member states of SACU signed a Mutual Recognition Agreement (MRA) meant to benefit accredited traders in the member countries with lower costs and quicker turn-around times for imports and exports.
- Finance and Developing Planning Minister, Retšelisitsoe Matlanyane, implored Lesotho's development partners to help the country in its battle to contain the myriad of challenges it is facing including zero economic growth. On behalf of the Lesotho's development partners, the UN Resident Coordinator to Lesotho, Amanda Khozi Mukwashi, said the donor community told the government to prioritise the voices of the marginalised and vulnerable people in developmental plans.
- The Head of the EU Delegation to Lesotho, Paola Amadei, said that, looking at the textile and garment industry, the fact that proper labour standards are not applied and Gender Based Violence (GBV) in the industry, implies that some customers are no longer willing to buy products coming from Lesotho.

