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NEW COALITION GOVT PROMISES ECONOMIC FREEDOM

- Matekane, Moleleki and Mochoboroane sign partnership to form new government
- The three partners shall lead Lesotho with a total of 65 seats in parliament

National News

New coalition govt promises economic freedom

Mpilo Boutique

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NEO SENOKO

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MASERU - Leader of the newly formed coalition between the Revolution for Prosperity (RFP), the Alliance of Democrats (AD) and the Movement for Economic Change (MEC), Sam Matekane has promised that the new administration shall focus on economic emancipation, combating crime and completion of the reforms process in its first 100 days of office.

The union comes just days after his newly formed party, the RFP was declared as the winner of the 2022 general elections after collecting a total of 56 constituencies, beating close competitors, the Democratic Congress (DC) who won 18 constituencies.

The DC was compensated with 11 proportional representative seats after the final counting of votes.

Monyane Moleleki's AD brings to the table five seats while the MEC of Selibe Mochoboroane comes with four. This, after each of the two parties, won a constituency in the Friday general elections.

This means the three partners shall lead the country with a total of 65 seats in parliament for the next five years while the rest of the other parties will form the opposition.

"This marriage that is being announced today comes after serious considerations and also because the three parties agree on very important issues that are within our manifestos. We have to promote discipline in terms of expenditure, get our civil service in order as well as fight corruption among other things. We will fight for the unity of Lesotho and Basotho for a prosperous Lesotho," Matekane said on Tuesday, at the signature of the partnership in Maseru.

Lesotho held its eighth general elections on Friday since its transition to multi-party political system in 1993, following eight years of military regime.



The three leaders signing the partnership

Until 2001, Lesotho had used the British-type First-Past-The-Post (FPTP) electoral system, which is a single-member constituency model.

Following the reforms that were spearheaded by the Interim Political Authority (IPA), the electoral system was changed to the Mixed Member

Proportional (MMP) electoral model involving a mixture of the FPTP and Proportional Representation (PR) systems.

As part of this reform, the size of the National Assembly was increased from 80 to 120. Of this, 80 constituencies are occupied on

the basis of the FPTP and 40 on the basis of the compensatory PR system.

In the first 100 days of office, Matekane said the new coalition government shall double efforts to fulfill the promise they made to the nation ahead of the national elections.

"In the first 100 days, we promise to complete the National Reforms Process, reduce government ministries, fight corruption as well as stabilise the economy," he added.

He said the new government will further focus on creating employment opportunities, improving agriculture, road infrastructure, water and electricity supplies as well as other public infrastructure improvement.

The new government will also level the playing field for easier trade both within the country's borders and internationally. Health and education systems will also be strengthened.

The overall socio-economic situation ahead of the elections included low human development, high crime, poverty, unemployment and inequality.

About 49.7 percent of Lesotho's population lives below the poverty datum line.

The unemployment rate stands at 22.5 percent and youth unemployment is at 33.68 percent.

The country's socio-economic predicament is further compounded by climate change as well as health pandemics such as HIV and AIDS along with COVID-19.



Professor Ntoi Rapapa, Mr Sam Matekane and Mr Selibe Mochoboroane

RFP wins Lesotho vote but no majority

...as the ABC, which led the outgoing government, wins only eight of 120 seats in parliament.

MASERU - At six months old, political rookie, Revolution for Prosperity (RFP) has won the most votes in the Friday's legislative elections in Lesotho, but fell short of securing a parliamentary majority that could have ended a long-running political gridlock.

According to final results published by the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) on Monday, the RFP formed by multi-millionaire businessman Sam Matekane of Mantšonyane in Thaba-Tseka, won 56 out of 120 seats in parliament.

For the past decade, Lesotho has been governed by a string of coalition governments that have proved fractious and frail, and no premier has served out a full five-year term.

Matekane, 64, who styles himself as a champion of the country's business community and was considered an outsider in the vote, came close to an outright win.

On Tuesday, he signed a partnership to form a new coalition government with AD leader, Monyane Moleleki and Selibe Mochoboroane of the MEC.

The AD brings to the table

five seats while MEC comes with its four seats.

The Democratic Congress (DC) party led by Deputy Prime Minister Mathibeli Mokhothu came in second, securing 29 lawmakers, according to the IEC.

The All Basotho Convention (ABC), which led the outgoing government, suffered a sharp drop in support, securing only eight seats.

Believed to be Lesotho's richest man, Matekane started off raising donkeys before making a fortune in diamond mining and other business ventures.

The RFP has promised to focus on food security, agriculture, healthcare expansion, pharmaceutical production and good governance.

Speaking to the media outside Thetsane High School in Maseru on Friday, the outgoing prime minister, Dr Moeketsi Majoro said about 200 years after the nation was established, and 56 years into democracy, Basotho still faced many problems.

He said the incoming government should address poverty, inequality, unemployment and other issues



Leader of RFP, Sam Matekane

facing the country.

According to the poverty assessment produced jointly by the World Bank and the Lesotho Bureau of Statistics in 2019, more than 75% of the population is either poor or vulnerable to poverty.

An assessment by the World Bank in 2021 found that youth unemployment in Lesotho was among the highest in the world, and three times higher than the average rate observed in other lower-middle-income countries.

Apart from the high unemployment rate, the World Bank said the other disturbing trend was that more Basotho had given up looking for work.

Majoro told the media that his government could not address all these issues in two years.

He was appointed prime minister by parliament in May 2020 after his predecessor, Motsoahae Thabane, stepped down after months of pressure.

Thabane was named as a suspect in the murder of his former wife, Lipolelo Thabane, in June 2017, days before he was sworn in as premier.

In July this year, the Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP), Advocate Hlalefang Motinyane, dropped charges against Thabane and his current wife, 'Maesaaiiah, because critical witnesses could not be located.

They have both denied involvement in the killing. Majoro did not seek

reelection. He refused to disclose which party he voted for. "Would that not be seen as campaigning? My vote should be public but I cannot disclose it at the polling station."

He said he would make an announcement about his plans after leaving office.

It is not out of his own free will that he did not seek to be prime minister for another term.

He was defeated by Nkaku Kabi in the election for leader of the governing ABC in January.

The results of the Afrobarometer survey released in July this year indicated that the DC was most likely to win the election.

If voted to power, the DC had said it would harness natural resources "for job creation and wealth generation for Basotho".

The survey findings indicated that at least 42% of

the respondents said they would vote for the DC.

The institute said the figure fell short of the majority required for the DC to form the government on its own.

The findings also showed that the ABC was the second most preferred party, with 21% of the respondents saying they would vote for it.

The party had promised to diversify the economy "for enhanced job creation" and investment in agriculture for self-empowerment.

The survey found that the Basotho Action Party (BAP) could take about 8% of the support while MEC appeared in fourth position.

But the survey was conducted between February and March this year and did not factor in the RFP, which was formed on March 22. — Aljazeera/M&G



Founder of ABC and former PM, Motsoahae Thabane hands over the reigns of power to his successor, Nkaku Kabi



Former PM and leader of DC, Pakalitha Mosisili (right) and his successor, DPM Mathibeli Mokhothu

National News



Lesotho EU EOM Short-Term Observers (STOs) in a group picture with Chief Observer Ignazio Corrao and the Core Team Members.

EU, SADC applaud Lesotho for free elections

- IEC staff acted professionally throughout the elections process - EU
- SADC deployed 40 observers across the country

MASERU – The Chief Observer of the European Union Election Observer Mission (EU EOM) to Lesotho, Ignazio Corrao has lauded the country for

holding a free and fair election that he says was conducted in a transparent manner.

He made these remarks on Sunday when presenting the mission's preliminary statement at a press conference held in Maseru.

Mr Corrao said although preparations were marred by challenges such as limited financial resources for the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) and uncertainty regarding the applicable legal framework, the IEC carried out most of its activities according to the election calendar.

He said among others, IEC staff acted professionally by displaying strong dedication to their duties.

The EU EOM, he said deployed 87 international observers to all the 10 districts, covering all 80 constituencies, adding that they visited 371 out of 3 149 stations polling stations.

"We observed a peaceful campaign period nevertheless, unlimited campaign disadvantaging smaller parties and independent candidates to go all out," he said.

Mr Corrao further noted, "I would like to express my respect for the staff of election administration who did all they could to fulfil their responsibilities, despite budgetary constraints, as well as the people of Lesotho, in particular the party agents for their commitment on election day, I trust that the officially declared election results will be accepted and that no grievances will be resolved in the courts of law," he said.

The Minister of Defence and Veterans Affairs of the Republic of Namibia, Frans Kapofi who headed the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Electoral Observation Mission (SEOM) said they deployed 40 observers across the country and visited 158 polling stations on election day to observe the opening, voting, closing and counting procedures in their areas of deployment with 54% in urban and 46% in rural areas.

He said 87% of the polling stations opened on time with IEC staff following the required opening procedures and guidelines.

Mr Kapofi also commended the Lesotho Mounted Police Service (LMPS) for their commitment and professionalism depicted throughout the process.

The Commonwealth representative and former president of Seychelles, Danny Faure also commended Lesotho, saying it had indeed outdone itself in conducting free and fair elections.

He said as the Commonwealth, they recommended that the IEC should review the procedures for compilation of the voter register to better ensure its reliability, in particular as regards duplicates, removal of deceased persons, and inclusion of youth.

They also recommended IEC's policies to facilitate assisted voters to persons with disability, seniors, and other groups in prioritising or helping them in order to make their votes also count. - LeNA

Chief Observer of the EU EOM to Lesotho, Ignazio Corrao



Returning officer Ratfomo Ratfomo receives polling material at the Ha Mohale village

Politicians accused of fuelling famo wars

- Some police officers are actually associated with famo gangs
- Lesotho is ranked number one in Africa with the highest homicide rates

NEO SENOKO
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MASERU - The depressed socio economic situation in Lesotho has significantly contributed to the currently high crime and murder rates in the country, the World Population Review shows.

Famo gangs, which are allegedly being sponsored by some politicians and certain corrupt police officers have been blamed for the current situation.

Lesotho is marked by an upward spiral of violent criminality including sexual and gender based violence.

Data from the World Population Review shows that the country, with just over two million people, is ranked number one in Africa and number three globally among the top 10 countries with the highest homicide rates, behind EL Salvador and Jamaica.

Only three African countries feature on this unenviable list of countries considered dangerous destinations in the world.

The three include Lesotho at number three, South Africa at position eight and

Nigeria ranked 10.

Part of the culture of violence manifest ahead of the 2022 general election was the famo musical gang wars which translated into serious wars at the illegal mines in South Africa.

This is according to the Lesotho Council of Non-Governmental Organisation (LCN)'s Interim Observation Mission during the general elections that were staged on October 7.

"The complication of dealing effectively with the violence perpetrated by the gangs was compounded by the fact that these groups have links and alliance with some of the security officers who are alleged to be supplying them with ammunition and are also linked with the two major parties in the outgoing coalition government, namely the All Basotho Convention (ABC) and the Democratic Congress (DC), which makes them difficult to handle," said LCN's Executive Director, Seabata Motsamai.

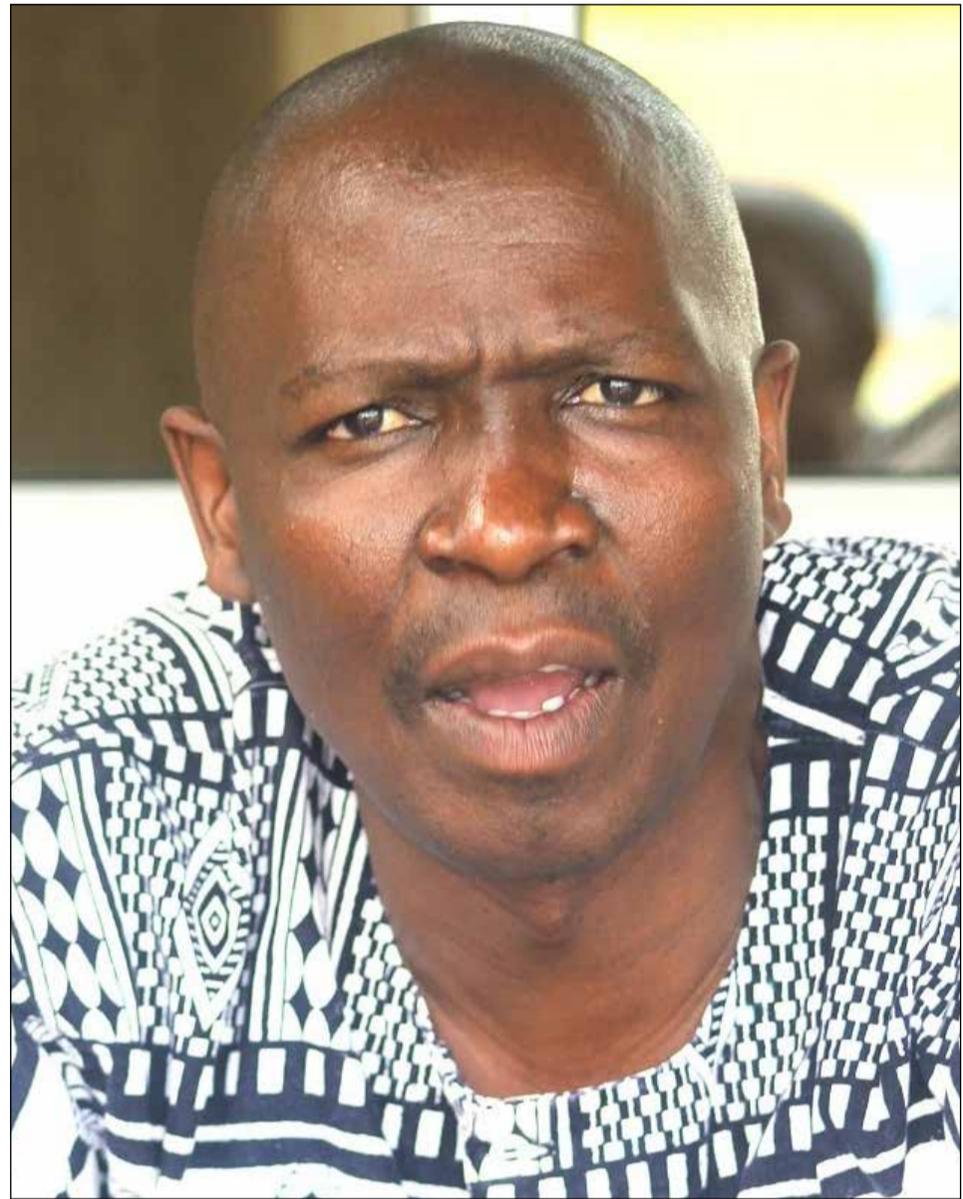
Recently, politicians' support for gangsters has been blamed for hampering police's work in line with efforts to try and arrest the perpetrators.

Some police officers have, however, actually been linked with the famo gangs in the past.

Famo music, which was initially intended purely for entertainment has rapidly developed and became highly commercialised.

The commercialisation has led to the creation of rival gangs in different communities, eventually ending up in actual violent attacks.

The overall socio-economic situation ahead of the elections included low human



LCN's Executive Director, Seabata Motsamai

development, a high crime rate, poverty, unemployment and inequality.

About 49.7 percent of Lesotho's population lives below the poverty datum line. The unemployment rate stands at 22.5 percent and youth unemployment is

at 33.68 percent.

The country's socio-economic predicament is further compounded by climate change as well as health pandemics such as HIV and AIDS along with COVID-19.



Members of the famo music group, Terene

Africa News

New data reveals ugly truth about load shedding in SA

ON October 6, 2022, power utility Eskom added another bleak record to its growing list of firsts related to load shedding.

The day marked the first time in history that rolling blackouts continued for 30 consecutive days.

With load shedding having been suspended on Saturday (October 8), the group stopped at a record 32 days – but the suspension didn't last for long, with Eskom announcing a return to stage 2 load shedding on Monday, October 10.

The latest round of load shedding started on Tuesday, September 6, and saw the country pushed to stage 6, endure a week of stage 5, and various fluctuations between stage 3 and stage 4 for an entire month.

There have been many reports outlining how destructive load shedding and the current streak of blackouts have been for the country, and numbers have been thrown around trying to contextualise how bad it has been in 2022.

South Africans know that load shedding is bad and likely getting worse due to an ageing power fleet and multiple technical issues, but it's difficult to grasp the extent and how it has hit them individually.

Data from Eskom Research, Testing and Development shows that an estimated 4,115 GWh has been cut this year – far above the 1776 GWh cut in 2021.

Popular load shedding notification app, EskomSePush, meanwhile, has put out data tracking the total hours the country has been thrust into darkness – now sitting well over 2 000 hours, collectively.

However, neither of these data points show exactly how individuals have been impacted by the blackouts.

According to independent data analyst Pieter Jordaan, while total load shedding hours is a quick way to see if load shedding, collectively, is getting worse, it doesn't take into account the intensity of the various stages of load shedding and how individual households are affected.

It also makes comparing load shedding in different years tricky – for example, 2015 saw 836 hours of load shedding in total, while 2020 saw 844 hours. At first glance, this would make it seem that load shedding was up only 1%.

However, Jordaan argues that when you look at how those load

- Latest round of load-shedding started saw the country pushed to stage 6
- South Africans know that load-shedding is bad



shedding hours were experienced by individual households,

the reality is that the average consumer was in the dark for around 93 of those 836 hours – while in 2020, the average consumer was in the dark for

around 127 of the 844 hours – an increase of 36%.

“For sake of convenience, the most popular accounting method to express rolling blackouts for comparison is the ‘Hours of National Load Shedding’ metric.

The method tallies the number of hours that rolling blackouts were in force for a given period, normally a calendar year.

“However, as a simple metric, it does not account for the differences in stages between

periods. For instance: In March 2019, rolling blackouts were in effect for 208 hours and during which the average consumer was disconnected for 42.1 hours. In March 2021, rolling blackouts were in effect for 214 hours and during which the average consumer was disconnected for 28.9 hours.

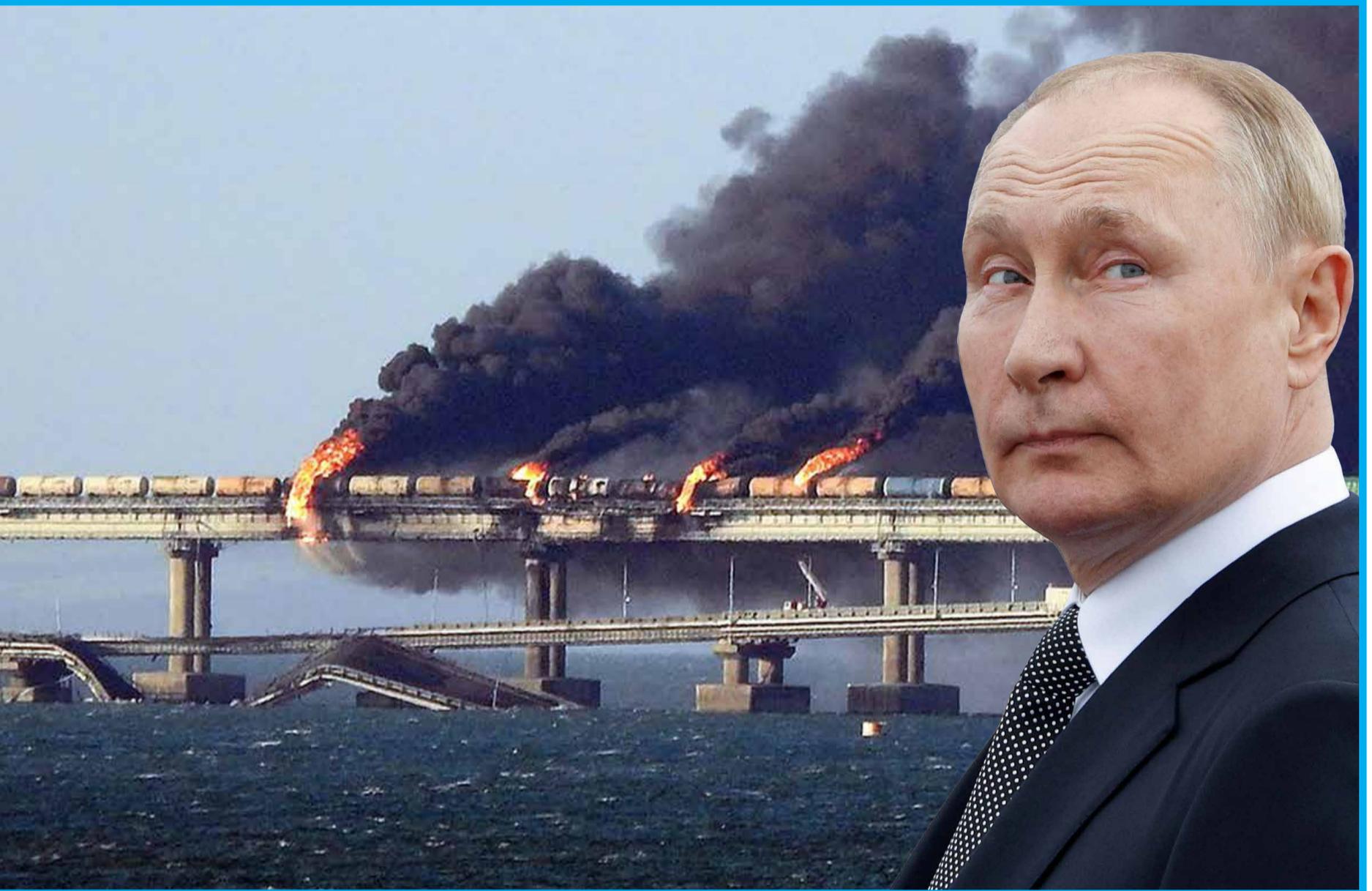
In absolute terms, March 2019 suffered 3% fewer “National Load Shedding Hours”, Jordaan said, yet consumers suffered 45% more disconnected hours.

“This is due to the flawed accounting method that ignores the average stage difference between the two periods,” he said.

Using the Disconnected Hours method to determine the direct impact on consumers shows how energy availability in South Africa has significantly deteriorated over the years.

To October 5, 2022, the average household in the country has experienced 459 hours of load shedding. This is more than the last eight years combined, Jordaan said. – BusinessTech





Russian President, Vladimir Putin

Putin accuses Ukraine of 'terrorism'

- *Officials say three people were killed in the blast on the bridge*
- *The victims were in a nearby car when a lorry blew up*

Russian President, Vladimir Putin has accused Ukraine of attacking the bridge to Russian-annexed Crimea, saying that it was an "act of terrorism".

He said Ukraine's intelligence forces had aimed to destroy a critically important piece of Russia's civil infrastructure.

Putin was speaking at a meeting with the head of the Investigative Committee of Russia, Alexander Bastrykin.

Officials say three people were killed in the blast on the bridge.

The victims were in a nearby car when a lorry blew up, Russian officials say.

"There is no doubt, this is an act of terrorism aimed at destroying Russia's critical civilian infrastructure," Putin said.

"Its authors, perpetrators and beneficiaries are the security services of Ukraine."

Bastrykin said that citizens of Russia and some foreign states had aided preparations for the attack.

According to Bastrykin, investigators have established

that the truck which they say blew up travelled through Bulgaria, Georgia, Armenia, North Ossetia and Krasnodar Territory.

He has ordered an investigation into the incident which brought down sections of the roadway.

Ukrainian officials have not indicated that their forces were behind the attack.

But an adviser to Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelensky, Mykhailo Podolyak, denied Putin's accusation.

He wrote that there is "only one terrorist state here" and that the "whole world knows who it is".

"Does Putin accuse Ukraine of terrorism? It looks too cynical even for Russia," he said.

On Saturday, President Volodymyr Zelensky acknowledged the incident in his nightly address, saying: "Today was not a bad day and mostly sunny on our state's territory."

"Unfortunately, it was cloudy in Crimea. Although it was also warm," he added.

Russian authorities partially re-

opened the roadway part of the bridge hours after the attack but for light traffic only.

The railway part of the bridge - where oil tankers caught fire - has also reopened.

The 19km (12-mile) bridge, the longest in Europe, is an important supply route for Russian forces fighting in Ukraine.

Russia has used the bridge to move military equipment, ammunition, and personnel from Russia to battlefields in southern Ukraine.

It was opened by Putin in 2018, four years after Russia's annexation of Crimea.

Security camera footage released on social media showed a truck - allegedly from the Russian city of Krasnodar, an hour's drive from the crossing - moving west across the bridge at the time of the explosion.

The footage shows a huge fireball erupting just behind - and to one side - of the truck as it begins to climb an elevated section of the bridge.

The speed with which the truck bomb theory started to spread in

Russian circles was suspicious. It suggested the Kremlin preferred an act of terrorism to a more alarming possibility: that this was an audacious act of sabotage carried out by Ukraine.

"I've seen plenty of large vehicle-borne IEDs [improvised explosive devices] in my time," a former British army explosives expert told me. "This does not look like one."

A more plausible explanation, he said, is a massive explosion below the bridge - probably delivered using some kind of clandestine maritime drone.

"Bridges are generally designed to resist downwards loads on the deck and a certain amount of side loading from the wind," he said. "They are not generally engineered to resist upward loads. I think this fact was exploited in the Ukrainian attack."

Some observers have noted that in one of the other security camera videos, something that looks like the bow wave of a small boat appears next to one of the bridge supports, a split second before the explosion.

— BBC News

EDITOR'S NOTE

RFP, MEC and AD have a lot to do to turn Lesotho's fortunes around

The newly signed alliance to form a coalition government between the Revolution for Prosperity (RFP), the Movement for Economic Change (MEC) as well as the Alliance of Democrats (AD) should focus more on uplifting the spirit of the nation through job creation and other economic emancipation projects.

The three partners, including leader of the pack, Sam Matekane along with Selibe Mochoboroane and Monyane Moleleki who have been entrusted by the majority of the electorates to shake up things and take the country forward, should thus fast track exertions to bring hope that Lesotho and Basotho so desperately need right now.

On Tuesday, the new union was announced following the country's general elections of last Friday.

The RFP won a total of 56 constituencies which ill-advisedly were not adequate to allow the six-month old party to rule alone, hence, the Tuesday

partnership.

Notwithstanding, the fact that the political rookie enjoys such a following garnered within such a short time is a clear indication of the unpretentious trust Basotho have in Matekane as a leader.

Such confidence can only be exalted through proper service delivery, job creation and absence of corruption in his imminent administration.

Matekane is the man entrusted to do all these. His partners in the merger, particularly the MEC's Mochoboroane is also a celebrated work horse with strong vision on national issues and matters of economic development.

The man from Thabana-Morena has to make his presence felt in the holy alliance if he still wants to be taken seriously.

Moleleki is not a pushover either, with a career spanning nearly three decades as a prominent Cabinet Minister and a former deputy Prime Minister.

There is no reason why the three partners should not turn this country's economy and fortunes around with their respective colourful CVs.

Of course, a lot people are skeptical of Matekane's lack of the so-called political experience or exposure, contending that his being a successful industrialist does not literally translate into being a good political leader.

But that is a debate for another day because one may argue that most Lesotho political leaders are not necessarily political scientists or gurus. The fact that Matekane is already contemplating to reduce expenditure through cutting government ministries says a lot about his business acumen and thinking proficiencies.

Apart from that, the fact that he is a globally well known businessman could draw a lot of foreign investment his way and with his notable business aptitude, could steer Lesotho in the right direction to become a strong trading country in the region.

Speak OUT! Your opinions matter. This page is dedicated to those who wish to express their views.

Great opportunities for healing

Taking cue from the Semmelweis story, I believe that we are now aware that we can all not know somethings even in our own professions; that it may take some experience, sometimes unpleasant experiences, to learn new things. All it says is that we need to be open to learning new things if we want to grow and perform better in life. Many of us would have not known about how long-term repression damages our brains and limits our minds. Now we are aware. Yet, it may still take a lot of effort to actually open up to new leaning, open up to being assisted in order to experience improved life conditions and quality of life.

Today we have to build the courage and humility to accept and acknowledge that we have been unknowingly colluding with the coloniser and colonising or neo-colonising our own selves. Until we begin to learn how to and get to know how to decolonise ourselves and humanise ourselves and heal of the colonisation and dehumanization mental dis-eases our conditions will only continue to deteriorate.

It is, thus, important to note that just as there may still be some rare occurrences of left handedness or left footedness, there can be some (rare) occurrences of people born with the use of their long love and life-supportive brain pathways – narrow gate that leads to life (Mat. 7: 13-14) – as their default response, who I call love-brain pathed. That is, it is possible to still see some transformations like Singapore or Rwanda, even if it is (still) largely at the physical level. In this column, we are saying that it is possible to create more of such because, like the phoenix, they were created out of their own ashes.

From the story of my former classmate, we would have gleaned that it is possible for huge proportions of society to inherit traits that society may take for granted, even when some may be limiting. Using only

one foot or only one hand is limiting, even if we may consider it natural. The story shows us that it is possible to transform our own minds – relax and harmonise our own hearts, rewire our own brains, and heal, change our own behaviours, and transform. But, it requires initiative, courage, humility, commitment, and persistence. The story shows us how difficult it may be for people with limitations to seek to address them, even when they are not happy with their prevailing situations. What with the pervasive lack of agency, that sense of victimhood

SUSTAINING QUALITY

PEACE & RESILIENCE

By Mafole Sematlane



and apathy from long-term repression that reinforces the perception that individuals are not able to influence their environments? What with the associated lack of awareness of one's own mental health symptoms or inaccurate perceptions about one's self that cause victims to want to stick with one way of thinking, way of behaving, the same rules, and resisting change? What with difficulties with higher order functions like reasoning, problem solving, and judgment, problems with maintaining attention or concentration, decrease in motivation, or mood swings that come with the lack of self-awareness or inaccurate perception of our own selves?

The default mode or preference to use the right foot or right hand is similar to the default mode or preference

to respond to our life challenges via the limiting, self-destructive short fear-brain pathway that is propagated through long-term repression – colonization, apartheid, or other abuses. The default mode of self-protection, not trusting, blaming, reveling in vengeance, fearing the unknown, fearing to act in our own best interests, rejecting new evidence and knowledge, resisting change.

How many of us actually see the limitation with using only one hand or only one foot? Even if we do, or we have, many of us, like me in the case of the hand, would have resigned to it. How many opportunities would the ability to use both our limbs proficiently open for us, or would have opened for us. And to indoctrinate whole societies they are named "right hand", "right foot", "left hand", and "left foot" so that we can have a sense of one side being "correct" and the other being "wrong". The same indoctrination has happened, and continues to happen, with the use of our response mechanisms to life challenges – that we should perceive every life challenge as threatening and seek to protect ourselves than to explore it for learning and growth; that we should always see others as threatening to us and seek to protect ourselves from them, and display macho, than to seek to cooperate and collaborate with them to mutually add value to our lives.

Healing and recovering from the adverse legacy of long-term repression needs to be approached from every angle because of its impact on the lives of individuals and whole societies. Healing and recovering from the legacy of long-term repression of brain damage and constraining the mind may also be likened to healing and recovering from stroke. Next week we shall discuss the impact of long-term repression on the human brain together with the impact of stroke on the human brain and their recovery processes.

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Opinions divided in Moscow after Kremlin's escalation in Ukraine

Russian state TV says the attacks on Ukraine were attacks on energy infrastructure and military objects - civilian casualties were barely mentioned.

On Moscow's Ukrainsky or Ukrainian Boulevard, the statue of one of Ukraine's most famous 19th century poets, Lesya Ukrainka, looks down benevolently across the open space towards the towering Hotel Ukraine.

This little piece of Moscow geography speaks to the integral way so many people in Russia view Ukraine - almost as a part of their identity. Certainly that appears to be the way Russia's president sees it.

The nearby rail station, Kievskaya, was the direct rail route to Kyiv.

Not anymore.

Air sirens across Ukraine as multiple cities hit - war latest

On the side of a bench, in white paint, there are the words 'No to war'. That's about all the visible opposition you'll see on the street these days, the odd piece of graffiti.

Masha, walking her dog by the statue, wells up when I ask her about Ukraine. "I'm really, really sad. More on Russia

"We've already cried about it so many times with our friends.

"I have friends living in Kyiv and I'm always checking in on them."

Advertisement
She's part way through explaining how brainwashed many Russians are when a fellow dog-walker Olga interrupts.

just bombed cities across Ukraine until I assure her that President Putin had just declared as much, in response to the Kerch Bridge attack.

"This was his response to the bridge attack?" she asks, taking it in. "Okay. This is the right response."

The tone on state TV and the main talkshows today was newsy, not celebratory. As though Russia was taking these strikes in their stride, the civilian casualties barely mentioned.

The focus here was that these were attacks on energy infrastructure and military objects: that for Russia, this was mission accomplished.

"What's being shown on state TV... it's just insanity. Pure fanaticism," says Dmitry, who we meet walking the boulevard with his brother who is about to leave for Kazakhstan.

"The Russian population is cut off from any alternative means of information and people like myself who use VPNs and browse outside of Russian media, we see absolutely different pictures, horrific pictures."

I ask him why he thinks so many are prepared to follow everything their president says so blindly.

"Unfortunately I don't think I know my countrymen as well as I thought I did," he replies. -Sky News

MY

TAKE

By Diana Magnay



"Don't ask us what we think," Olga tells me. "Ukraine has been blown up, Russia has been blown up."

It's a confused jumble of complaints and accusations, where the US, EU and, surprisingly Austria, are the main culprits. "We only feel that we are all being killed because in the main we are one people."

Olga won't believe that it was Russia who had



President of African Development Bank (ADB), Dr Akinwunmi Adesina

CURRENCIES

(How Lesotho's Loti fared against world major currencies this week)

Loti/SDR	Special Drawing Right (SDR)	22.12
Loti/Dollar	United States (US\$)	18.18
Loti/Rands	South African (ZAR)	1.00
Loti/Euro	European Union (€)	17.64
Loti/Yuan	Chinese (¥)	2.54
Loti/Yen	Japanese (¥)	0.12
Loti/Pound Sterling	British (£)	19.87

COMMODITIES

STOCKS

S&P500	3,632.24
NASDAQ100	12,051.65
Nikkei225	27,854.32
Dow Jones30	31,984.31
FTSE 100	7,512.34
JSE	65,795.00
Hang Seng	19,235.15

PRECIOUS METALS (Rates in US Dollars)

Gold p/ounce	1,456.34
Platinum p/ounce	813.15
Silver p/ounce	18.02
Copper p/ounce	0.22
Brent Oil p/barrel	93.75

EQUITIES

Bonds	18.44
Treasury Bills	3.67
Interest Rates	91

IEC financial woes exposed during voting



Metro BUSINESS

AGRICULTURE (Rates in Maloti/Rands)

Maize Meal p/kg	M7.00	Eggs p/tray	M45.00
Wheat Meal p/kg	M10.00	Milk (fresh) p/litre	M16.00
Cabbage p/kg	M14.00	Milk (sour) p/litre	M20.00
Potatoes p/kg	M10.50	Rice p/kg	M30.00
Brown Bread p/loaf	M10.00	White Sugar p/kg	M22.00
White Bread p/loaf	M11.00	Brown Sugar p/kg	M25.00
Sorghum Meal p/kg	M25.00	Beef p/kg	M85.00
Brown Beans p/kg	M30.00	Mutton p/kg	M90.00
Tomato p/kg	M15.00		

ENERGY (Rates in Maloti/Rands)

Petrol Unleaded 93 p/litre	M21.25
Unleaded 95 p/litre	M21.60
Diesel 50PPM p/litre	M24.35
Paraffin p/litre	M18.20
Water (Domestic) p/litre	M5.53
Water (Industrial) p/litre	M15.03
Electricity (Domestic) p/unit	M1.38
Electricity (Industrial) p/unit	M0.26
Gas p/kg	M20.00

Global headwinds slow economic activity

- Economic growth in the region is expected to go down to 3.3 % from 4.1%
- Covid-19 has induced a lasting impact on long term growth

NEO SENOKO

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MASERU – Economic activity in Lesotho, like other countries in the region is slowing down amid global headwinds, putting a halt to poverty reduction measures that could be implemented, the latest World Bank's Africa's Pulse forecast says.

The report that was released last week shows that economic growth in the region is expected to go down to 3.3 percent from 4.1 percent in the previous year, a downward revision of 0.3 percentage point from the April forecast.

The downward revision is on the back of multiple shocks affecting the economy, tightening global financial conditions, elevated inflation driven by rising food and fuel prices exacerbated by the war in Ukraine, adverse weather conditions and rising risk of debt distress.

"These trends compromise poverty reduction efforts that were already set back by the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. What is most worrisome is the impact of high food prices on people struggling to feed their families, threatening long-term human development. This calls for urgent action from policymakers to restore



World Bank Group President, David Malpass

macro-economic stability and support the poorest households while reorienting their food and agriculture spending to achieve future resilience," the World Bank Chief Economist for Africa, Andrew Dabalen said in the report.

The estimated per capita income growth of 0.7 percent for the region is insufficient to meet

the challenging goals of poverty reduction and boosting shared prosperity in the medium to long-term. Instead, poverty reduction trends, which were already derailed by the pandemic, have slowed further.

The pandemic has induced a lasting impact on long-term growth, particularly affecting the poorest people and increasing

extreme poverty. The slow recovery of the per capita income growth rate, at 0.9 percent next year and 1.3 percent in 2024, still falls short of putting the continent back on the pre-pandemic path of poverty reduction. The challenge is compounded by the relatively weak relationship between economic growth and poverty reduction.

"Consistent with rising poverty rates, inequality within countries in the region has widened with rising fuel and food prices exacerbated by the war in Ukraine. The economic divide between the rich and the poor rose substantially during the COVID-19 pandemic following job and income losses, especially among less skilled workers in the informal sector," the report adds.

Rising unemployment was particularly sizable across genders, with women being the most affected. The weak rebound of the regional economy in the aftermath of the pandemic along with the setback from rising inflation was insufficient to undo pandemic-induced job and income losses.

Rising public debts and limited fiscal space inhibited Lesotho, and the region from providing support to the most affected people at the same magnitude as the support deployed in advanced economies.

"The gap between rich and poor has widened further with the war in Ukraine as commodity prices jumped and reinforced the lingering adverse effects of the pandemic," the report also says, adding that lack of adequate social protection and feeble per capita income growth constitute major vulnerabilities for the poor.

This pattern, the report says is expected to persist over the short to medium-term as it is unlikely that most countries will regain losses caused by the impact of school closures on human capital.

IEC financial woes exposed during voting



NEO SENOKO

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MASERU - Due to the enormous financial constraints that were experienced by the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) prior to the 2022 general elections, notable challenges were observed during election period.

The IEC faced major financial restraints because out of its total budget of M329 million, the government only allocated M261.5 million of which only M152.7 million was released, leaving an enormous shortfall of M176.3 million.

Consequently, numerous trials surfaced along the way that could have otherwise been dealt with accordingly.

The Lesotho Council of Non-Governmental Organisations (LCN)'s interim observation mission for instance, said on Monday that there were some isolated incidents where the polling stations officers portrayed lack of confidence during the counting or decision-making processes in some polling stations.

Furthermore, it was observed that most polling stations were not accessible to the physically challenged and the elderly as they needed assistance to enter such facilities.

Most of the voting stations had insufficient access to electricity and this situation posed a serious challenge as generally, counting was done late in the evening, it was also observed.

In proportion to the number of voters, the voters' boxes were limited such that at

some stations, the presiding officers were already contemplating other means like the use of envelopes or any available materials.

Some polling staff lacked proper training about the electoral process even basic knowledge of the role of observers.

This, perhaps was predominant owing to the fact the staff was only recruited a few days before the elections day and the training they underwent was relatively insufficient.

"Our observers noted that there was generally permissive environment for multi-party participation and there were various political parties and independent candidates contesting elections. However, it has been observed that in some polling stations, some of the parties did not have agents. Other party agents did not know the full names of the parties they represented," LCN's Executive Director Seabata Motsamai said on Monday.

He, however, acknowledged that the ballot boxes were always locked during the voting process.

One of the concerns noted by the Observer Mission, he said was that the IEC in some instances used small rooms for voting despite previous disquiets that such places compromised secrecy and security of the vote.

This time around, the voting booth did not necessarily promote voting secrecy, especially with the oversized ballot paper that was used.

"This exposed the voters' preference on their choice of a candidate to those in the polling station, thus compromising



LCN's Executive Director Seabata Motsamai

secrecy of the ballot, given the length and size of the ballot paper and many people in the voting room due to number of party agents that have exponentially increased, thus making one voting room small," Mr Motsamai added.

The LCN had deployed over 200 observers countrywide. The Observer

Mission was guided by local, regional and international principles governing democratic, free and fair elections.

The strategy further included the National Support Team responsible for supporting the deployed teams for logistical functions, and coordination of the different teams on the ground.



J&J delays could leave SA paying for Covid-19 vaccine doses



The arrival of the first Johnson & Johnson vaccine at the OR Tambo International Airport in Gauteng, South Africa on Feb. 16, 2021

JOHANNESBURG - The South African government has attempted to end its contract with Johnson & Johnson to avoid receiving – and paying for – 11.4 million doses of the pharmaceutical company's COVID-19 vaccine. The move follows late initial deliveries of jabs and current lower-than-expected demand.

South Africa signed a contract with J&J in February 2021 for 11 million doses of its COVID-19 vaccine. By April that year, the company had agreed to add 20 million more doses to this order.

Still, shipments only arrived in South Africa in June 2021, partly because contamination at a U.S. manufacturing plant forced J&J to dispose of about 60 million vaccine doses. So far, South Africa has received 19.6 million of the 31 million doses it originally ordered, according to Nicholas Crisp, South Africa's health department deputy director general.

"For a long period of time, we were unable to get any Johnson & Johnson vaccine," Crisp said speaking to the country's Parliament recently. "We had to change the vaccination program and rely more on the Pfizer

vaccine in the first months."

South Africa ultimately purchased 30 million Pfizer vaccine doses, and a United States government donation contributed nearly 7 million more doses to this stock, according to Crisp.

When J&J finally diverted 1.5 million doses originally intended for the U.S. market to South Africa in June 2022, the immunizations arrived thawed, Crisp explained, not frozen as is usually the case to preserve the jabs' shelf life. These initial doses consequently had a shorter expiry date.

Today, just over half of South African adults have been vaccinated against COVID-19 – a far cry from the 70% target the country set for itself in 2021 and again in 2022. Still, the country's advanced purchase agreement with J&J includes payment for a final delivery of 11.4 million vaccines which the country now cannot use given low public demand for the jabs, Crisp explained to the parliament.

J&J is now pushing South Africa to accept this delivery and pay the outstanding fee for the vaccines. The government, meanwhile, has unsuccessfully

tried to terminate its contract with J&J to avoid paying for shots it no longer needs. The country is exploring whether it can donate the shots to other countries – but either way, South Africa may be stuck footing the bill for vaccines that came too late, Crisp told parliament.

South Africa has paid the down and advanced payments in full prior to each vaccine shipment required by both Pfizer and J&J.

"Due to [Johnson & Johnson's] operational and approval issues in the initial phase of the vaccination programme and the subsequent waning vaccine demand for COVID-19 vaccines, the need for these additional 11.4 million doses no longer exists," Crisp told parliament. "We've been looking at all plausible options to mitigate this delivery for months now by delaying deliveries or trying to [donate doses] but nobody in the world is really buying vaccine[s] at the moment."

J&J told Devex that the company is in discussions with the South African government regarding the status of its COVID-19 vaccine agreement.

"It's important that all parties adhere to the terms

of this agreement, which is a collaborative effort between our company and the government to make our vaccine available, support the country's response to the pandemic and protect the health of people in South Africa," Johnson & Johnson spokesperson Ronan Collins said.

Collins added that the company also supported efforts to increase local vaccine production in South Africa. Additionally, J&J had provided South Africa with 500,000 doses of vaccine – largely for the country's health care workers – early on in the pandemic when the country had no other supplies, he noted.

These vaccines were administered as part of the Sisonke clinical research trial. Sisonke provided the world with the first evidence of the shot's real-world effectiveness in health care workers.

The company is committed to addressing "the highly complex challenge of vaccine absorption," Collins said, adding that "Overcoming these challenges requires close collaboration across stakeholders, and for vaccine procurement bodies to deploy every vaccine dose ordered to help

protect people from COVID-19."

Crisp said that the South African Parliament is looking at possibly donating unused doses to the World Health Organisation (WHO), COVAX – the global vaccine sharing initiative – or the African Vaccine Acquisition Trust, the African Union's own pooled vaccine procurement initiative.

South Africa may look to use a potential donation, in part, to cover the roughly \$4 million it still owes COVAX – as it has previously done with more than 7 million doses donated through the U.S. government, according to Crisp.

Crisp said that bilateral donations to low-income countries are unlikely. Many low- and middle-income countries do not have national no-fault compensation schemes typically required by both J&J and Pfizer as a condition for receiving vaccines.

Still, even if South Africa is able to donate its surplus COVID-19 vaccines, it will still owe J&J the money for orders the firm has refused to cancel.

"Technically, we must pay the balance whether we donate them, use them or destroy them" Crisp told Devex. — Devex News

Health

Lesotho signatory to African Medicines Agency treaty

In spite of holdouts, a number of countries in Africa that have swung behind the African Medicines Agency (AMA) Treaty has continued to grow – and now constitutes a two-third's majority of the African Union (AU)'s member states. .

On September 1, Lesotho became the latest Member State to ratify and deposit the AMA Treaty instrument.

South Africa's cabinet on Tuesday approved the signing of the African Union treaty establishing the African Medicines Agency (AMA), a terse government statement reported on Tuesday.

The cabinet approved the signing of the AMA Treaty and its submission to Parliament for ratification at a virtual meeting on 21 September, the statement said.

"Cabinet approved the signing of the Treaty for the Establishment of the AMA and its submission to Parliament for ratification," the terse statement reported. "This will give effect to the treaty that was adopted by the African Union Assembly in 2019. The treaty formally establishes the AMA for the continent. The agency will regulate medical products, and improve the safety and efficacy of the medical products for

the continent.

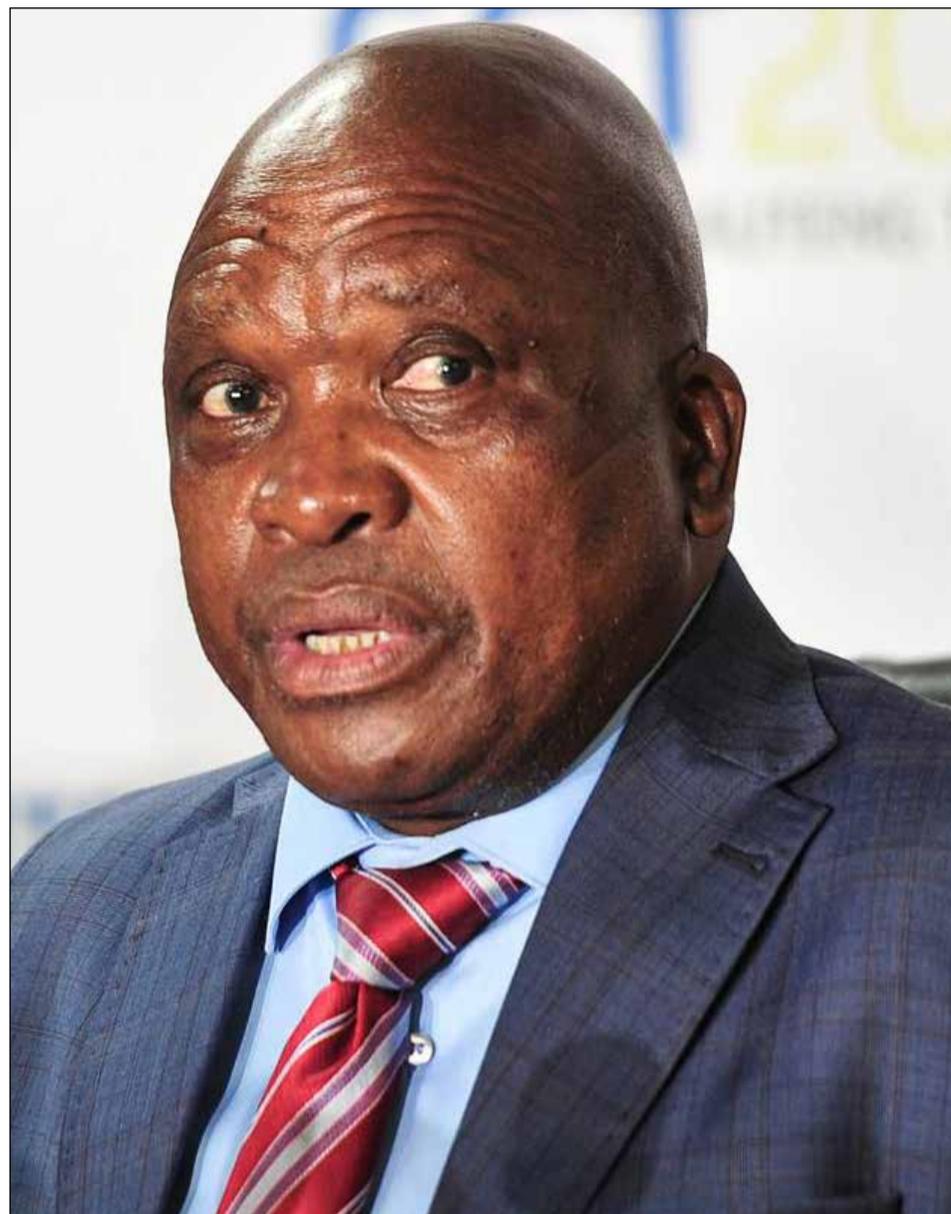
"The signing and ratifying of this treaty will advance South Africa's global and continental commitment toward strengthening the continental regulatory system on its health products," the statement added..

It noted that signing and ratifying the treaty "will advance South Africa's global and continental commitment toward strengthening the continental regulatory system on its health products".

If the treaty is in fact signed and ratified, that would make South Africa the 34th country to swing behind the AMA – since the treaty took force in November 2021 with the ratification of the first 15 African countries to get behind the initiative.

Describing the development as 'great news', Zimbabwean public health specialist who is of South African heritage, Dr Nokuthula Kitikiti, noted that South Africa has one of the few National Regulatory Agencies in Africa that have achieved the milestone of being designated as maturity level 3 (ML3) by WHO after thorough evaluation.

"Smaller and less developed agencies can benefit from their participation in the



SA Health Minister, Dr Joe Phaahla

AMA by building capacity through joint reviews and understanding the process at the South African Health Products Regulatory Authority (SAHPRA) and other ML3 agencies," she told Health Policy Watch.

As a key regional manufacturing hub for vaccines that is also developing further capacity in novel platforms such as mRNA, Kitikiti said it was vital for South Africa to be involved in AMA as Africa builds its vaccine manufacturing capabilities.

"South Africa also has a vibrant patient and civil society community that I am sure will enrich the continent-wide discussions on how to involve the public and patients in a more meaningful way in health products regulations as the AMA takes shape. We are still very nascent in this compared to other regions. After all, we are all doing this to make medicines safer and more accessible for patients," she added.

South Africa, southern Africa's political and economic powerhouse, has been one of the late holdouts on treaty ratification – along with Nigeria and Ghana in West Africa and Kenya in East Africa.

This despite pledges from South Africa's political leadership that it supported the AMA – dating back as far as 2017 when the AMA's first stakeholder consultative meeting was held at the South African historical city of Johannesburg.

Senior South African government officials have repeatedly stated that they had no hesitation regarding being a part of the AMA.

In February 2022, South Africa's Health Minister, Dr Joe Phaahla affirmed the country's support for the continental-wide medicines regulatory authority,

and said the government would sign the treaty. .

"There is no, in principle, hesitation. It's more operational in terms of making sure that we do sign the Treaty on the AMA," the minister said, during a tour by WHO's Director General of Cape Town's new mRNA vaccine R&D hub.

Even so, ratification of the AMA treaty by the South African parliament remains a critical step before the deal is sealed. Following that, the treaty ratification then needs to be formally deposited with the African Union.

Kenya's parliament has remained stalled on the treaty ratification already for the past five months – ever since the cabinet signaled its approval of the treaty in May.

In Kenya, the National Assembly officially received a memorandum proposing ratification of the AMA in June 2022 but nearly four months later, parliamentarians are yet to vote on the treaty.

According to the memorandum that presented the treaty to the parliament, the signing and ratification of the treaty by Kenya will "demonstrate Kenya's commitment to the continent's collective action to the improved regulation of medicines, medical products and technologies.

Ratification will bring about positive consequences both to the country and States Members."

Over the summer, however, Kenya then became engaged in a bitter battle over national elections, which took place in August, leading to a Supreme Court challenge to the election of President William Ruto – whose election was ultimately upheld. The ensuing political uproar, however, likely also delayed the parliamentary move. —Health Policy Watch

**HARD BREAKFAST?
SOFT BREAKFAST?
NO BREAKFAST?**



Dividing the nation since 1902.



Cotton Fest to feature in the Mother City

Announced by festival organisers on Tuesday, the first Cotton Fest Cape Town will take place at the Paarden Eiland Park on Saturday, December 10.

Created by the global music and fashion icon, the festival exploded in popularity back in 2019 featuring over 150 artists. More than just a festival, this youth culture gathering celebrates the new wave of music, fashion and lifestyle.

Mainly known for merging both established and upcoming South African talent, Cotton Fest also showcases the diversities in music while fusing the gaps within the different local current movements.

“With what started out as a great idea between Riky and I many years ago, to a whole culture movement called Cotton Fest. Alongside his family, we are extremely excited to be building on his legacy and extending the festival to my city, which was always part of our plans,” said co-founder Alain Ferrier.

Bringing the same authentic vibe to the

mother city, Cotton Fest Cape Town will feature some of South Africa's finest talent performing over two stages. This action-packed festival will not only showcase the diversities in the different popular music genres but will also feature various lifestyle elements existing within the 'culture,' including fashion and sport.

The Cotton Stage will feature headline artists from both Cape Town and Joburg. The second Stage will feature the New Wave of young hip hop talent alongside some of the biggest names on the Amapiano scene right now.

The Tuckshop

Bringing together proudly South African brands, the merchandise area will showcase the best of what local creatives have to offer with unique pieces, limited branded fashion items and other sought-after accessories.

Festival goers will have a curated shopping experience as they cop merchandise at the University of Cotton



The late Riky Rick's Cotton Fest will feature in Cape Town this summer break

Fest's tuck shop.

Sports Area

A Cotton Fest half-court will be set up for basketball fans, along with a skating ramp hosted by Day Marumo and Jägermeister.

Cafeteria

Food Court bringing you a huge variety of

delectable options and several fully stocked bars positioned around the venue.

There will also be photo booths set up for content creation as well as various chill areas to relax, recharge and reboot.

Tickets will be on sale at Webtickets and Pick 'n Pay outlets nationwide from next Tuesday, October 18 and will range from R200 – R600. — Sunday World

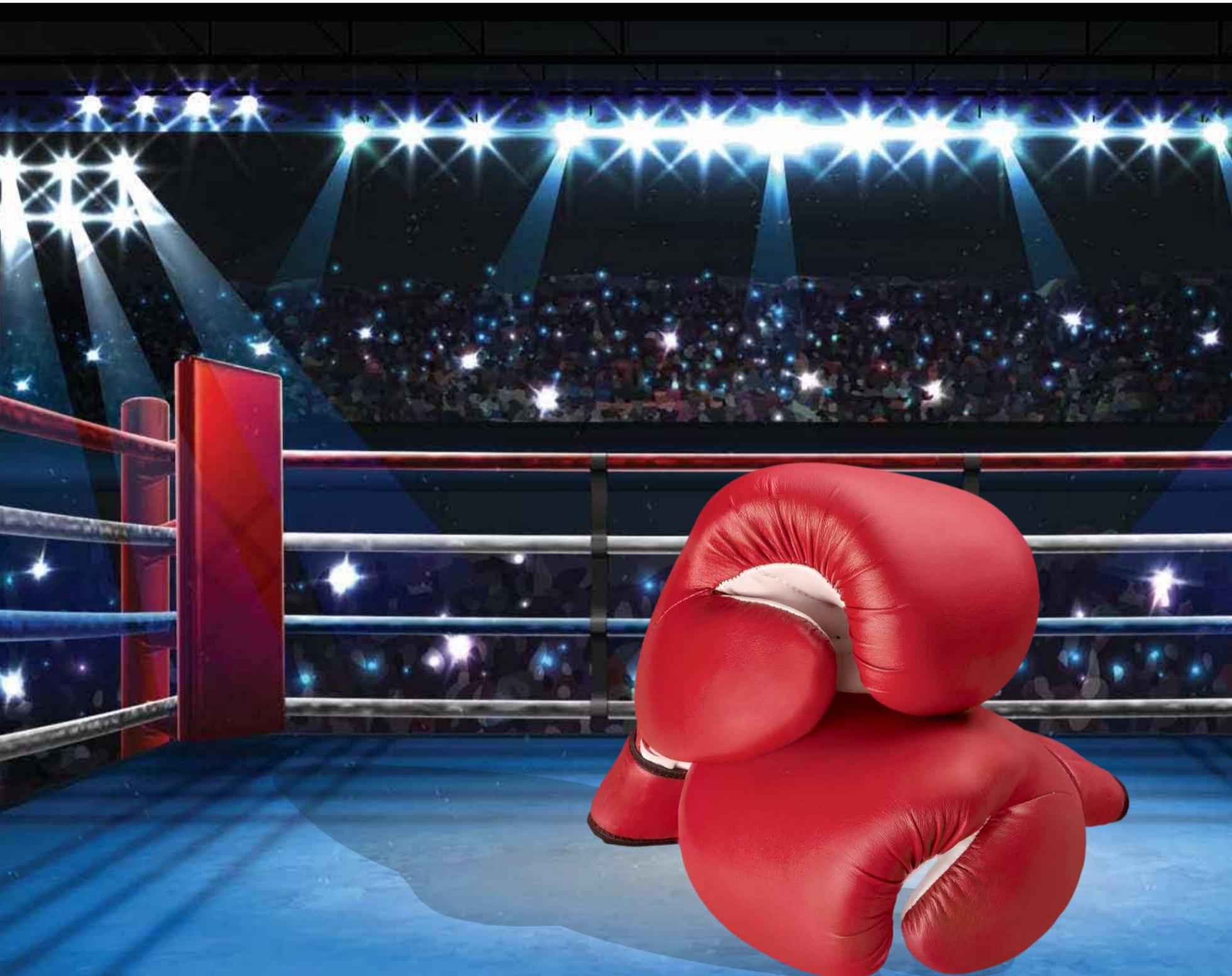


SPORTS

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Boxing federation calls for Russian return to world sport

The International Boxing Federation (IBA) on Friday demanded that Russian and Belarusian athletes be allowed to return to international competition, having been banned by most organisations since the invasion of Ukraine in February.

The first body to launch such an appeal, the IBA has itself been suspended by the International Olympic Committee (IOC) since 2019 for multiple corruption scandals, and risks disappearing as an Olympic sport after Paris 2024.

"Sports is out of politics: where it begins, politics ends," the IBA's Russian president Umar Kremlev said in a statement issued by the federation on Friday. Boxing has not barred Russians and Belarussians from competitions.

"The time has now come to allow all the rest of the athletes of Russia and Belarus to participate in all the official competitions of their sports representing their countries," he continued.

"Both the IOC and the International Federations must protect all athletes, and there should be no discrimination based on nationality. It is the duty of all of us to keep sports and athletes away from politics."

As a sign of its political neutrality the IBA said that Ukrainian boxers could participate in the European Junior Championships in Italy until October 5, after suspending the Ukrainian Boxing Federation on Sunday for controversial reasons.

IOC President Thomas Bach on Friday

insisted that the recommendations made at the end of February "remained the same for the moment", in an interview with Italian newspaper Corriere della Serra.

He pointed out that the decision to exclude Russian athletes had been taken "for their safety" and to preserve "the autonomy of sport" from governments.

Since the spring, the IOC has indicated that it will reassess "step by step" its recommendations against the Russians and Belarusians, amid questions on their participation in the 2024 Olympics.

Football bodies Fifa and Uefa have excluded Russian teams and clubs from their competitions, with the national team banned from the 2022 World Cup in Qatar and from the Euro 2024 qualifying.

— Boxing News



The IBA's Russian president Umar Kremlev