

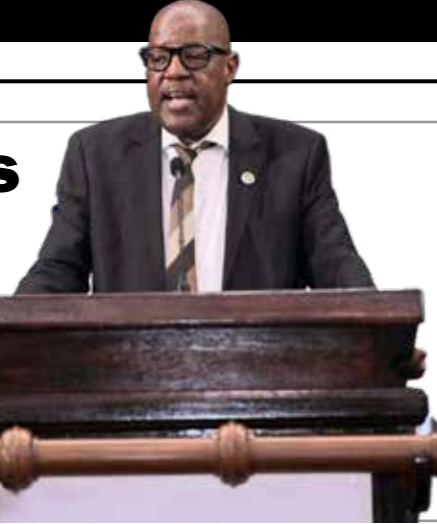
Journal NEWS

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**Makume Plots
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Comeback**

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**Gogo Skhotheni
Welcomes
'Rainbow Baby'**

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**Chaine Dropped
for Leaner
Experiment**

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SAUL LEADS EKAPA RELIEF EFFORTS



Championing disaster relief ... Premier Zamani Saul is working to ensure that the collapse of a private entity does not result in the collapse of the community. Picture: Dr Zamani Saul/Facebook

*Northern Cape Premier
drives an essential
socio-economic
recovery programme
following terrible
mine disaster*

Page 2

Illicit Diamonds Trade Thrives

... despite troops deployment along
the country's international borders



Illegal mining networks continue to test State crack-down capacity along South Africa's borders with neighbouring countries. Picture: Supplied

By Bernell Simons

The arrest of a suspected illegal diamond dealer in Ladybrand this week has raised uncomfortable questions about the effectiveness of the military deployment across the Free State, North West and Northern Cape - provinces that sit at the centre of South Africa's illegal mining economy and along some of the country's most difficult borders to police.

Earlier this year, more than 2 000 members of the South African National Defence Force were deployed under Operation Prosper, a 13-month intervention authorised by President Cyril Ramaphosa to support the South African Police Service (SAPS) in tackling illegal mining, gang violence and organised crime.

The operation was intended to stabilise hotspots, reinforce border policing and disrupt criminal syndicates operating across provincial and international boundaries.

But this week's arrest in Ladybrand - a border town just kilometres from the Maseru border - suggests the networks moving precious stones across the region remain active despite the show of force.

Members of the Free State Provincial Anti-Gang Unit arrested a 39-year-old foreign national in the Ladybrand central business district after acting on intelligence that he was allegedly dealing in precious stones.

Police recovered twelve stones believed to be diamonds, with an estimated street value of between R900 000 and R1-million.

Free State Police Spokesperson, Sergeant Mahlomola Kareli, said the case may form part of a wider illegal mining chain stretching across several provinces.

Investigators suspect the stones could be linked to abandoned mining areas in the ... **Continues on Page 2**

60-DAY

GENERAL AMNESTY

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CENTLEC (SOC) Ltd commenced a 60-day General Amnesty on meter tampering, illegal connections and unauthorised meter shifts. This initiative invites consumers who have engaged in meter tampering, illegal connections, or unauthorised shifting of meter boxes to voluntarily disclose so as to normalise their status without facing the standard punitive penalties or prosecution.

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ANC Dumps Conferences, Fast-Tracks Councillor Nominations



ANC Secretary-General Fikile Mbalula. Pictures: Citizen

By Staff Reporter

The African National Congress (ANC) has scrapped its planned regional and provincial conferences, opting instead to fast-track the nomination and selection of councillors in a move that signals urgency ahead of looming electoral deadlines.

The decision shifts focus from internal deliberations to candidate processes, with party structures now expected to prioritise branch-level nominations and streamline the selection pipeline to ensure readiness for the upcoming polls.

In a letter addressed to provinces and the party's electoral committee chairperson, Kgalema Motlanthe, Secretary-General Fikile Mbalula directed party members to officially kick off the selection process of councillors from 1 April, while putting a stop to internal elective conferences.

"This instruction effectively means that all ANC elective conferences at regional and provincial levels must be put on hold from 1 April until immediately after the date of the 2026 local government elections, which is yet to be announced by the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC)," Mbalula said in the letter.

He further ordered that, in line with the selection process, all NEC-approved rules and guidelines must be strictly followed.

"We wish to emphasise that adherence to rules and guidelines approved by the NEC is sacrosanct and deviations of any form shall not be tolerated by the ANC," he said.

The IEC has indicated that local government elections are expected to take place between November 2025 and January 2026.

Saul Leads Ekapa Relief Efforts



Northern Cape Premier drives an essential socio-economic recovery programme following terrible mine disaster

By Bernell Simons

One month after the devastating collapse at the Du Toitspan Joint Shaft, the Northern Cape Provincial Government (NCPG), under the leadership of Premier Zamani Saul, continues to drive a comprehensive developmental relief programme aimed at stabilising affected households and the broader Kimberley community.

While the disaster on 17 February 2026 initially triggered a rescue mission, the provincial government has since transitioned into a long-term intervention phase to mitigate the socio-economic fallout caused by Ekapa Minerals' subsequent entry into provisional liquidation.

The intervention marks a critical shift from emergency response to sustained developmental support. The provincial government is addressing the systemic vulnerability of over 1 000 workers and their families who were left without a livelihood, by mobilising

R3.5-million in targeted funding.

This state-led recovery initiative serves as an essential bridge for a community whose identity and economy have been tied to diamond mining for over 150 years.

Ekapa Minerals, which took over Kimberley's historic diamond mines from De Beers in 2015, had long been the city's primary economic lifeline.

Through its operating arms, Ekapa Resources and Ekapa Minerals, the company managed underground mining and the processing of old tailings.

However, the disaster exposed significant financial and operational shortcomings within the privately owned empire.

When the company moved toward liquidation, it left hundreds of households facing the prospect of total abandonment. In response, Saul and Minister of Mineral Resources and Energy, Gwede Mantashe, have prioritised a human-focused recovery model, ensuring that the collapse of a private entity does not result in the collapse of the community.

"We cannot replace the lives that are at risk, but we must stand with the families and workers who are suffering," Premier Saul told relatives during a recent engagement at the mine gates.

He added: "This support is meant to help households carry on while the recovery operation contin-

ues."

The developmental framework of the R3.5-million package is divided into several strategic pillars designed to maintain social stability.

A total of R1.8-million is dedicated to direct family support, with R800 000 distributed as cash grants to cover essential household costs such as food, electricity, and transport.

Recognising the long-term trauma associated with the disaster, the government has also allocated R500 000 for ongoing psychosocial services and counselling.

Furthermore, R500 000 has been utilised for the distribution of food parcels, blankets, and hygiene kits to ensure basic human needs are met during the transition period.

The province's developmental focus also extends to the next generation and public health infrastructure. An education fund of R500 000 has been established to provide uniforms, stationery, and transport, ensuring that the disaster does not interrupt the schooling of the miners' children.

Additionally, R700 000 has been earmarked for local clinics to bolster mental health services and ongoing medical care.

The final R500 000 of the package supports community-led relief structures, including R250 000 for

safety improvements around the mine and R250 000 to equip volunteers assisting families since the day of the collapse.

For community organiser, Boyce Makodi, of the Kimberley Action Group (KAG), the government's sustained presence has been a vital stabiliser.

"For weeks, families were living with fear, uncertainty, and no income after the mine collapsed," Makodi said.

"Seeing Premier Saul and Minister Mantashe step in to provide financial support, psychosocial care, and necessities has given them a lifeline. Families can now keep food on the table, care for their children, and feel that they are not forgotten while the rescue continues."

Makodi, who has previously organised community demonstrations to address local grievances, emphasised that this ongoing intervention has been a key factor in restoring public faith.

"This is the kind of leadership that communities need when private companies fail to protect their workers," he added, urging continued state engagement to ensure that accountability and long-term recovery remain at the forefront of the provincial agenda.

Mantashe described the package as an essential component of a broader effort to stabilise the mining sector in the region.

"This tragedy has affected more than the men who are trapped.

"It has affected workers, families, and the entire community. Government must respond to all those needs," added Mantashe.

The government's proactive stance stands in sharp contrast to the failures of Ekapa Minerals, where a lack of sufficient safety protocols and financial security has complicated the recovery and compensation process.

As the liquidation process unfolds, the provincial government remains the primary source of support for that above ground.

Today, the impact of this intervention is visible in the tangible support reported by families.

The support includes putting meals on the table, settling utility bills, and ensuring that children remain in the classroom despite this horrible crisis.

While rescue teams continue to navigate treacherous conditions 890 metres below the surface, the NCPG's relief efforts continue to provide hope for the affected families and community above the ground.

Illicit Diamonds Trade Thrives

Continues from Page 1 Free State and Northern Cape before being moved along smuggling routes running through North West and across neighbouring borders.

The arrest highlights a familiar pattern - while authorities tighten control in one area, the trade shifts to another.

Mpho Matlala, a security analyst from the University of South Africa (UNISA), has repeatedly warned that geography itself makes enforcement in the central region extremely difficult.

"The Free State shares long, lightly monitored borders with Lesotho. North West connects directly to Botswana and major transport corridors often used by organised crime.

"The vast terrain of the Northern Cape, dotted with old mine dumps and abandoned shafts, provides ideal conditions for illegal diggers to operate beyond routine patrols," Matlala highlighted.

He stressed that these conditions should already be flashing red warning lights for government.

"Weak border monitoring, understaffed posts, inadequate training of officials and persistent allegations of corruption continue to undermine enforcement. Under such circumstances, he cautions, deploying soldiers alone cannot solve the problem.

"Without stronger border control, better-trained personnel and proper coordination, operations become reactive instead of preventative. "Illegal mining networks regroup as quickly as they are disrupted,"

added Matlala.

Criminologist, Robert Peacock, agrees that military deployment cannot close the gaps on its own.

"You can put soldiers in towns, but illegal mining syndicates don't operate only in towns.

"They use farms, rural crossings, old mine dumps and informal border routes. Unless intelligence, border control and local policing improve together, the flow of diamonds will continue."

An anonymous anti-illegal mining law-enforcement investigator revealed that syndicates often rely on insider information to avoid raids and roadblocks.

"You are dealing with organised networks with money," the investigator told this newspaper.

"They know when operations are coming. They know which routes are open. Sometimes they know which officials can be bribed."

The deployment of SANDF troops has drawn strong criticism from Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) President, Julius Malema, who warned that sending soldiers to fight crime reflects deeper failures in policing.

"You don't deploy the army into communities if the police system is working," Malema said during a post State of the Nation Address (SONA) debate.

He argued that reliance on the military show years of weakened policing capacity, budget cuts and poor management - even though he

acknowledged that soldiers may be needed in areas overwhelmed by illegal mining and gang violence.

The provinces at the centre of the trade and the regions where troops are now deployed mirror the geography of illegal mining itself.

In the Free State, abandoned shafts around Welkom, Virginia and Allanridge remain hotspots for illegal diggers.

In North West, syndicates operate near Rustenburg and along rural corridors leading toward Botswana, while in the Northern Cape, old diamond workings around Kimberley, Barkly West and Kuruman continue to attract illegal miners, buyers and smugglers.

Despite high-visibility patrols and joint operations, authorities admit the trade has not stopped - it has adapted.

Once stones leave mining areas, they move quickly through border towns, private vehicles, buses, and informal routes.

"If border control is weak, the whole system becomes weak," Matlala said. Experts warn that unless border management, anti-corruption measures and police capacity improve alongside the SANDF deployment, the operation risks becoming a temporary show of force rather than a lasting solution.

"The army can stabilise a situation, but stopping illegal mining requires intelligence, clean administration and proper border control. Without that, you are chasing diamonds that have already crossed the line." He concluded.

From Runway to Revenue:

Mangaung Eyes Sky-High Growth with Airport Partnership

By Lerato Mutlanyane

Mangaung Metropolitan Municipality is positioning its airport as more than just a travel hub, unveiling a new partnership with Airports Company South Africa (ACSA) aimed at turning Bram Fischer International Airport into a catalyst for economic growth, investment and job creation.

A collaboration with aviation leader, the Airports Company South Africa (ACSA), was officially announced during a media briefing on 17 March 2026 at Bram Fischer International Airport in Bloemfontein. The municipality, joined by ACSA General Manager Faith Zwane, alongside stakeholders from the Department of Transport and the Provincial Department of Economic Development, outlined a shared vision to reposition the airport as a strategic economic hub.

At the centre of the initiative is the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), which commits all parties to unlocking investment opportunities that will benefit both businesses and residents in Mangaung. The airport is expected to play a pivotal role in strengthening connectivity between the Free State and the rest of South Africa, while also opening doors to global markets.

The move revives elements of the previously shelved N8 Corridor Development project—a public-private partnership launched between 2011 and



ACSA General Manager Faith Zwane and City Manager Sello More during the signing of MoU. Picture: MMM/Facebook

2014. The original plan included developments such as the Bloemfontein Airport Node, a golf course, and a racehorse precinct, with an estimated value exceeding R200 million, but was ultimately abandoned.

Now, the renewed vision seeks to establish the airport precinct as a multi-use investment node along the N8 corridor. Plans include landside developments to improve integrated transport access, upgraded road signage, and the potential establishment of a functional cargo airport. There are also proposals to maximise the use of smaller regional airports, including those in Thaba Nchu and Tempe.

Municipal planning documents indicate that future

developments—ranging from housing to infrastructure upgrades—will be guided by a comprehensive master plan aligned with provincial strategies for logistics, tourism and human settlements. The broader goal is to stimulate economic activity on the eastern side of Bloemfontein and surrounding areas.

City Manager Sello More said the MoU establishes a framework for long-term collaboration rather than immediate project rollouts.

"We are creating what we call a framework agreement. We are not talking about projects at the end. We are going to establish working teams that will drive these projects," he said.

More added that the implementation timeline spans between five and 15 years, with planning and feasibility studies already completed. The current focus is on securing bulk infrastructure—seen as critical to enabling future developments such as housing, retail centres, healthcare facilities and a proposed conference centre.

"Plans are already in place. What is required now is investment. If the airport expands, the likelihood is that we will be able to attract more investors," he said. ACSA's Faith Zwane emphasised the broader economic significance of the initiative, noting that airports serve as more than just transit points.

"Airports are not just gateways for passengers and cargo—they are catalysts for economic opportunities. Through this partnership, we aim to strengthen the role of airports as key drivers of tourism, trade, investment and job creation," she said.

Zwane added that the agreement establishes a mechanism for accountability, ensuring that all stakeholders work collaboratively to deliver on shared development goals.

The partnership also aligns with the district development model, which promotes coordinated planning and cooperation across government spheres to accelerate economic growth, job creation and investment. With the groundwork laid, the success of the initiative will now depend on attracting investment and delivering the infrastructure needed to turn vision into reality.

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Makume Plots Free State Fiscal Comeback



Free State MEC for finance, Ketso Makume tabling a R47.9 billion budget for the 2026/27 financial year on Tuesday. Picture: Facebook

By Lerato Mutlanyane

Free State Finance MEC Ketso Makume has outlined an ambitious plan to steer the province back to financial stability, pledging tighter spending controls, improved revenue collection and a renewed focus on service delivery as government grapples with mounting fiscal pressure.

Tabling a R47.9 billion budget for the 2026/27 financial year on Tuesday, Makume said restoring financial stability in municipalities will be a key priority. Adding that the establishment of a panel of

aimed at maintaining macroeconomic stability while advancing reforms in electricity, transport and water to stimulate investment and job creation. However, he cautioned that the outlook remains uncertain amid shifting trade policies, evolving industrial strategies and ongoing geopolitical tensions.

He noted a slight improvement in the payment of suppliers within the prescribed 30-day period, adding that efforts will be intensified to reduce unauthorised, irregular, fruitless and wasteful expenditure.

focus on industrialisation, strengthening agricultural value chains, ensuring energy security, attracting investment and easing logistical constraints that continue to limit economic expansion," said Makume.

He stressed that the timely payment of suppliers is both a legislative requirement and a critical driver of economic sustainability, particularly for small and emerging businesses.

"The province remains committed to strengthening financial discipline and restoring confidence in public financial management," he said, urging departments to finalise all outstanding cases within the set timeframe.

Makume added that Provincial Risk Management will continue assessing how effectively risk strategies are implemented across departments and public entities, positioning risk management as a key tool in achieving institutional objectives.

He further revealed that eight municipalities are currently under intervention in terms of Section 139 of the Constitution, with teams deployed to assist with financial, governance and service delivery challenges.

"We recognise that results may not be immediate, but we are confident we are on the right path towards turning around the state of local government in our province," he said.

Over the 2026 Medium-Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF), frontline service departments are projected to spend more than R116.2 billion to deliver essential services, including healthcare, education and social development programmes.

"We present this budget as a means to unlock opportunities for the poor and the needy," Makume said. "It means ensuring that no entrepreneur is left behind, no child goes to school on an empty stomach, and no community is excluded from the promise of prosperity."

Opposition reacts
Opposition parties criticised the budget, arguing that it fails to address structural challenges.

Freedom Front Plus MPL Tammy Breed said the budget focuses on the consequences rather than the root causes of the province's problems.

"If we look at Agriculture and COGTA, allocations sit at 2.3% and 1% respectively, despite ongoing foot-and-mouth disease and nearly half of municipalities being under administration. This is unacceptable," she said.

Democratic Alliance MPL Werner Pretorius said the party will closely scrutinise departmental budgets and programmes to assess their effectiveness.

EFF MPL Malefane Msimanga described the



Premier Maqueen Letsoha-Mathae. Picture: Facebook

budget as substantial but raised concerns about spending priorities and value for money.

"We must start seeing value for money across departments. There is increasing strain on the fiscus, yet economic development is not being prioritised," he said, also criticising spending within the Office of the Premier.

Msimanga warned that the province faces a deepening crisis in healthcare, education and overall service delivery.



Free State MEC for finance, Ketso Makume. Picture: Facebook

experts to intensify intervention efforts is assisting various municipalities with financial, institutional, governance and service delivery matters, while R1.7 billion has been earmarked for frontline services.

Makume emphasised that the province's economic outlook is underpinned by a fiscal strategy

To address outstanding financial cases, Makume said the provincial government has established a transversal term contract and appointed a panel of experts to conduct assessments, investigations and forensic reviews. The panel will operate for a period of 36 months.

"To achieve stronger long-term growth, we must

Free State Grade 12s Take the Lead in Budgeting Brilliance

Top learners step into the shoes of the MEC, showcasing financial savvy and critical thinking

By: Matshidiso Selebeleng

The future of every country starts in the classroom, and the Free State province is no exception. For Grade 12 learners, who are about to leave high school and step into the world, this lesson has never been more hands-on.

For the past 14 years, the province has hosted the Grade 12 Budget Essay Competition, a partnership between the Department of Education and the Department of Finance, Economic Development and Tourism. Each year, learners taking Economics are challenged to step into the shoes of the MEC for Finance, allocating provincial resources through a thought-provoking essay.

This year, 145 learners across the province were tasked with allocating R47.9 billion toward the green economy. After fierce competition, five stood out as winners: Kekeletso Mtshwane (Seemahale Secondary School), Matshego Mocholoi (Lekhulung Secondary School), Palesa Lethiba (Setjhaba Se Maketse Combined School), Lethabo Mothofo (Calculus Secondary School), and Motshidisi Potsane (Ithabeleng Secondary School).



Grade 12 learners tasked with allocating R47.9 billion toward the green economy. Picture: Facebook

The winners, accompanied by their teachers, received certificates, laptops, tablets, and shared a cash prize of R32 000, with the top prize reaching R10 000, thanks to sponsors including Nedbank,

Vodacom, and Old Mutual.
MEC Ketso Makume, who hosted the 2026 awards ceremony, emphasised the competition's purpose.

"We want learners to understand how budget allocations are made, what a government budget entails, and also to develop personal budgeting skills," he said, praising both the learners' efforts and the dedication of their teachers.

Education MEC Dr Mamiki Maboya added that this year's challenge was designed to test analytical thinking, problem-solving, and critical thinking skills. "We wanted learners to go beyond understanding the budget process—to also contribute strategic ideas for shaping the future," she said.

Motshidisi Potsane from Ithabeleng Secondary School topped the competition with 75%, describing the journey as challenging but rewarding.

"It was honestly not easy, but I finally did it. Economics has always been my favourite subject, and it prepares me for my future aspirations in Internal Audit," she said.

Her teacher, Mr Dube, praised her dedication and discipline, noting that they are now preparing for the upcoming Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) national competition, where learners will compete in groups.

The Grade 12 Budget Essay Competition continues to inspire young economists, teaching them financial literacy, critical thinking, and real-world problem-solving—skills that will serve them long after matric.

2026/27

Departmental allocations in a nutshell

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

The department is allocated just over R20 billion in 2026/27, R21 billion in 2027/28 and R21.7 billion in 2028/29. In total the department is estimated to spend R62.8 billion over the 2026 MTEF period.

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

The department is allocated R15 billion in 2026/27, R15.6 billion in 2027/28 and R16.1 billion in 2028/29. In total the department is estimated to spend R46.9 billion over the 2026 MTEF period.

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

The department is allocated more than R1.4 billion in 2026/27, R1.4 billion in 2027/28 and R1.5 billion in 2028/29. In total the department is estimated to spend R4.4 billion over the 2026 MTEF period.

DEPARTMENT OF SPORT, ARTS, CULTURE AND RECREATION

The department is allocated R685.3 million in 2026/27, R708.2 million in 2027/28 and R725.5 million in 2028/29. In total the department is estimated to spend R2.1 billion over the 2026 MTEF period.

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Public Works and Infrastructure is allocated just above R2.3 billion in 2026/27, R2.4 billion in 2027/28 and R2.5 billion in 2028/29. In total the department is estimated to spend more than R7.3 billion over the 2026 MTEF period.

DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY SAFETY, ROADS AND TRANSPORT

The department will receive R3.5 billion in 2026/27, R3.3 billion in 2027/28 and R3.3 billion in 2028/29. In total the department is estimated to spend more than R10.2 billion over the 2026 MTEF period.

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, RURAL DEVELOPMENT AND ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS

The department will receive R1 billion in 2026/27, R1.1 billion in 2027/28 and R1.1 billion in 2028/29. In total the department is estimated to spend more than R3.3 billion over the 2026 MTEF period.

DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SETTLEMENTS

The department is allocated R1.1 billion in 2026/27, R1.2 billion in 2027/28 and R1.2 billion in 2028/29. In total the department is estimated to spend more than R3.6 billion over the 2026 MTEF period.

DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM

The department is allocated R533.3 million in 2026/27, R542.8 million in 2027/28, and R550.1 million in 2028/29. The department is estimated to spend more than R1.6 billion over the 2026 MTEF period.

OFFICE OF THE PREMIER

The department is allocated R658.3 million in 2026/27, R656.2 million in 2027/28 and R655.5 million in 2028/29. In total the Office of the Premier is estimated to spend above R1.9 billion over the 2026 MTEF period.

COOPERATIVE GOVERNANCE AND TRADITIONAL AFFAIRS (COGTA)

COGTA is allocated R483.5 million in 2026/27, R476.2 million in 2027/28 and R485.6 million in 2028/29. In total the department is estimated to spend more than R1.4 billion over the 2026 MTEF period.

PROVINCIAL TREASURY

Provincial Treasury is allocated R403.9 million in 2026/27, R411.7 million in 2027/28 and R421.4 million in 2028/29. In total the department is estimated to spend more than R1.2 billion over the 2026 MTEF period.

FREE STATE LEGISLATURE

The Provincial Legislature is allocated R339.0 million in 2026/27, R380.9 million in 2027/28 and R408.4 million in 2028/29. In total the Provincial Legislature is estimated to spend above R1.1 billion over the 2026 MTEF period.



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FOR THE EMERGENCY ROUTINE ROAD MAINTENANCE ON NATIONAL ROUTE R59 SECTIONS 2 TO 3, AND NATIONAL ROUTE R30 SECTIONS 4 TO 6 IN THE LEJWELEPUTSWA DISTRICT MUNICIPALITY TENDER NOTICE AND INVITATION TO TENDER (SBD1)

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SUBCONTRACT SANRAL X.004-146-2025/1 FOR THE EMERGENCY ROUTINE ROAD MAINTENANCE ON NATIONAL ROUTE R59 SECTIONS 2 TO 3, AND NATIONAL ROUTE R30 SECTIONS 4 TO 6 IN THE LEJWELEPUTSWA DISTRICT MUNICIPALITY

endorsed by The South African National Roads Agency SOC Limited (SANRAL).

This project is in the province of the Free-State and in the **Lejweleputswa District Municipality** and consist of the **Matjhabeng, Nala, Tokologo, Tswelopele and Moqhaka Local Municipalities**.

Subcontractors are required for the following subcontractors:

Sub-Contractor Packages	Description	Route Section	Proposed CIDB Grading	Target Area
SC05	Monthly Maintenance	R30 Sec 6 km 67.2 to 89.48	1CEPE-2CE	Moqhaka Local Municipality
SC08	Monthly Maintenance	R59 Sec 3 km 42.8 to 64.2	1CEPE-2CE	Nala local Municipality
SC13	Pavement layer Construction/Surface Treatment - Texture Correction	R59/2 and R59/3	4CEPE-5CE	Lejweleputswa District Municipality
SC16	General Maintenance	R30 Sec 6 km 22.4 to 44.8	2CEPE-3CE	Nala local Municipality
SC18	General Maintenance	R30 Sec 6 km 67.2 to 89.48	2CEPE-3CE	Moqhaka Local Municipality
SC22	General Maintenance	R59 Sec 3 km 64.2 to 85.79	2CEPE-3CE	Nala local Municipality
SC23	General Maintenance	R59 Sec 2 km 0.00 to 25.9	2CEPE-3CE	Tokolologo local Municipality
SC24	General Maintenance	R59 Sec 2 km 25.9 to 51.81	2CEPE-3CE	Tokolologo local Municipality
SC28	General Mow/Vegetation Control	R59/2 and R59/3	4CEPE-5CE	Lejweleputswa District Municipality
SC29	Shoulder Repairs	R30/4, R30/5 and R30/6	4CEPE-5CE	Lejweleputswa District Municipality
SC31	Accommodation of Traffic	R30/4, R30/5 and R30/6	3CEPE-4CE	Lejweleputswa District Municipality

Only tenderers who are registered on the National Treasury Central Supplier Database at the closing date for tender submissions and who comply with the definition of a Targeted Enterprise under clause C.2.1.1 and are at least 51% Black owned and who is an EME or QSE or cooperative, are eligible to tender.

Only tenderers that meet all the eligibility criteria under clause C.2.1.1 of the Tender Data will be considered.

Only tenderers who meet the minimum functionality score as stated in clause C.3.11 will be evaluated further on price and preference.

The tenderers attention is drawn to clause C.3.11 of the Tender Data for each work package when submitting their tender.

Only locally produced or locally manufactured products and components for construction will be considered.

Preferences are offered to tenderers who comply with the criteria stated in the Tender Data.

Northern Cape police conducted a high-density operation in Kimberley



Northern Cape SAPS members during the multi-disciplinary operation. Picture: SANews

The Northern Cape Provincial Commissioner, Lieutenant General Koliswa Otola, accompanied by Francis Baard District Commissioner, Major General Charlotte Makgare, led a multi-disciplinary high-density operation in the Kimberley CBD on Thursday.

According to the police, the coordinated effort was aimed at eradicating criminal activities and curb lawlessness within the city.

"The operation included members from various SAPS components and specialized units, as well as officials from the Traffic Department, Environmental Health from Sol Plaatje Municipality, the Department of Correctional Services and the Department of Labour," the police said.

The operation focused on crime prevention, drug trafficking, contravention of traffic regulations and illicit trading activities in the CBD.

During the operation, several identified hotspots

were cordoned off and searched. Dangerous weapons were confiscated, street vendors were inspected, and counterfeit designer brands including clothing were seized.

Traders found in violation of trading regulations were issued with warnings, while three shops were closed for failing to meet environmental health standards.

"Several motorists were also issued with fines for a range of traffic violations, while the Department of Labour issued prohibition notices to employers found to be non-compliant," the police said.

Lieutenant General Otola encouraged members of the public to actively participate in the fight against crime.

She further reiterated that the SAPS in the Northern Cape remains resolute in its commitment to dismantle all forms of criminality and to stamp the authority of the State. — [SANews.gov.za](https://www.sanews.gov.za)

Mkhwanazi Dries to Nail Shadrack Sibiya as Ad HOC Committee Wraps up Hearings

After months of public hearings, the parliamentary ad hoc committee has wrapped up its work with final testimony from KwaZulu-Natal police boss Nhlhlanhla Mkhwanazi. He returned to talk about Shadrack Sibiya, Crime Intelligence and to put the spotlight back onto fellow leading police officer Hilda Senthumule.

KwaZulu-Natal Police Commissioner Nhlhlanhla Mkhwanazi has declared there will "never be peace" between him and suspended deputy national commissioner Shadrack Sibiya, following a series of explosive mutual allegations that have shattered their professional relationship.

These allegations, in part, have played out at the parliamentary ad hoc committee investigating the allegations Mkhwanazi made at a July 2025 media briefing that a drug trafficking cartel had infiltrated South Africa's law enforcement and political circles. The parallel Madlanga Commission has also called both generals to the stand as it probes the claims.

Mkhwanazi was the first witness at the ad hoc committee in October 2025, when public hearings started. On Wednesday, 18 March, he returned as the committee's last witness.

During that period, the rift between Mkhwanazi and Sibiya has widened into a public chasm. Once a highly respected police officer, Sibiya is now fighting claims that he has been co-opted by the very criminal syndicates he was meant to dismantle.

Sibiya, who has denied any wrongdoing, has been placed on suspension. He claimed in October 2025 that all the issues between himself and Mkhwanazi relate to the battle for succession in the SA Police Service.

On Wednesday, during his testimony, Mkhwanazi was asked by DA MP Glynnis Breytenbach about his July 2025 media briefing and who he believed he was protecting the country from. He pointed to Sibiya.

Breytenbach asked why Mkhwanazi wore a Special Task Force (STF) uniform during his media briefing. Mkhwanazi, a former STF leader, testified that he'd been speaking to individuals about a "danger". He was led to believe that unnamed individuals — "they" — were planning a "takeover" and thus, "We have reached a stage where we must face an enemy head-on."

In the light of that, he received permission from the national police commissioner, Fannie Masemola, to wear the uniform.

When asked by Breytenbach who "they" were, Mkhwanazi did not name anyone specifically.

He claimed, "Once General Sibiya was sent to the position of the head of the police with the relationship that he has with other key players within the security



General Nhlhlanhla Mkhwanazi at the parliamentary ad hoc committee on 18 March. Picture: DailyMaverick

department, from intelligence to the NPA to presiding officers, some in [the] judiciary, it is easy then for them to drive the country towards where they want.

"And maybe [committee] members don't know — once you control the security cluster, you take over the country."

In response to a question from ANC MP Xola Nqola, Mkhwanazi replied, "I can tell you now, there can never be peace between me and Sibiya."

"Senthumule can't be trusted"

Mkhwanazi also spoke extensively about acting deputy national police commissioner Lieutenant General Hilda Senthumule, who testified last week about how she "regrets" not looking into alleged underworld figure Vusumuzi "Cat" Matlala before asking him to sponsor a policing award in November 2024. Matlala is accused of having a close relationship with Sibiya, as well as offering him and other leading police officers gifts or financial payments.

Senthumule also denied claims by Sibiya that Matlala paid for her cosmetic enhancement surgery — a "Brazilian butt lift". She told MPs the money came from a combination of credit cards and a police bonus.

She said she was pursuing civil and criminal charges against Sibiya.

During his testimony, Mkhwanazi produced a recording of a conversation between Senthumule and Sibiya. While not in English, Mkhwanazi alleged the audio proved Senthumule was no bystander in the controversial transfer of 121 dockets away from the

Political Killings Task Team (PKTT).

Though primarily focused on KwaZulu-Natal's high rate of political assassinations, the PKTT had begun probing organised crime syndicates in Gauteng — an expansion that Mkhwanazi claims triggered the unit's disbandment by the then police minister, Senzo Mchunu, and the relocation of its sensitive files to Sibiya's Gauteng office.

Labelling Senthumule untrustworthy, Mkhwanazi pointed to her as the likely source of the letter that moved the 121 dockets from KZN to SAPS headquarters. He noted the stark contrast between her public denials and the recording, which allegedly revealed she played a far more active role in shifting the dockets to national headquarters than she admitted.

Mkhwanazi told Breytenbach that during his stint as the acting national police commissioner, he moved Senthumule out of Crime Intelligence and into human resources. He claimed she had abused the Crime Intelligence secret slush fund.

He told EFF MP Leigh-Ann Mathys he had launched an investigation into Senthumule, but he was then shifted out of the top job and did not know whether the probe was ever concluded.

With Mkhwanazi's testimony concluded, the committee now pivots to the high-pressure task of drafting its final report. These findings, along with a set of critical recommendations, are set to be tabled in the National Assembly. The committee has until the end of the month to complete its work. **DM**

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Opinion

Kagiso Nkomo
 Founder and CEO, Climate Paints formerly known
 as Dumax Paints (Pty) Ltd



Reclaiming Industrial Power: Why Black Manufacturers Need Protection, Not Just Participation

South Africa often celebrates entrepreneurship as a pathway to economic inclusion, yet far less attention is paid to the structural realities confronting Black manufacturers attempting to build productive businesses. In sectors such as paints and coatings an industry valued at roughly R15 billion, the market appears competitive on the surface but is in practice highly concentrated and historically entrenched.

A small number of established firms dominate the decorative paints segment that drives most retail demand, controlling access to distribution networks, retail relationships, and the institutional legitimacy required to operate at scale. In such an environment, the promise of an “open market” becomes difficult to reconcile with the lived experience of emerging manufacturers.

For many Black industrialists, manufacturing represents far more than a business opportunity. It represents ownership of productive capacity, participation in supply chains, and entry into the real economy beyond the margins of service contracts and procurement. It is often framed in policy discourse as a central pillar of localisation, job creation, and economic resilience.

Yet the question that increasingly confronts Black manufacturers is not whether they can produce competitively. The deeper question is whether the structure of the market will allow them to survive long enough to scale.

The Illusion of an Open Market

The South African paint industry illustrates how market concentration quietly shapes the competitive landscape. While the sector is frequently described as “moderately fragmented,” market influence is in fact concentrated among a small group of long-established manufacturers. Firms such as Kansai Plascon, Dulux (owned by AkzoNobel), and Prominent Paints collectively control a significant share of the decorative coatings market, particularly

within the retail segment where brand visibility and volume are determined.

This concentration does not simply influence pricing or product competition. It shapes the deeper infrastructure of market participation distribution agreements, retailer relationships, and supplier networks that have evolved over decades. These embedded relationships effectively determine which brands gain visibility, credibility, and access to consumers.

For new entrants, especially Black-owned manufacturing firms, the barriers are therefore not only technical or financial. They are structural. Market legitimacy is closely tied to distribution power, and distribution power is largely controlled by incumbents whose dominance is reinforced through long-standing commercial ecosystems.

The result is a market that appears competitive in theory but remains difficult to penetrate in practice.

Access Without Power Is Not Transformation
 My experience as founder of Dumax Paints illustrates how these structural dynamics unfold on the ground. The company was established with a clear industrial ambition: to manufacture locally, create employment, and compete on quality within the South African decorative paints market.

From a technical standpoint, the company complied with regulatory standards, invested in production capability, and developed competitive products. Yet capability alone proved insufficient.

The most significant constraints emerged not in production but in market access. Retail shelf space within major hardware and building supply chains proved exceptionally difficult to secure in meaningful volumes. Even when listings were achieved, placement was often marginal, limiting visibility and restricting consumer uptake.

These outcomes were rarely explained through explicit exclusion. Instead, decisions were framed through the language of “category saturation,”

“supplier rationalisation,” or logistical constraints. While such explanations appear commercially neutral, their cumulative effect is to protect existing market share while raising the cost of entry for new manufacturers.

In addition to distribution barriers, emerging firms frequently confront legal and administrative pressures that place disproportionate strain on limited resources. For small or medium manufacturers without extensive legal capacity, prolonged disputes or compliance challenges can redirect managerial focus away from growth and toward survival.

The effect is subtle but powerful. A system that formally allows entry simultaneously creates conditions that make sustained participation extremely difficult. When such firms exit the market, the narrative often attributes failure to entrepreneurial weakness rather than structural conditions.

From Industrial Policy to Industrial Protection

South Africa’s policy discourse increasingly recognises the importance of industrialisation, localisation, and Black industrialists in rebuilding the productive economy. However, current support frameworks remain heavily focused on start-up financing, compliance assistance, and procurement opportunities.

What remains largely absent is institutional protection during the most vulnerable phase of industrial development: scaling.

As emerging manufacturers attempt to secure distribution, negotiate with large buyers, and compete with established incumbents, they often face structural pressures that existing support mechanisms are not designed to address. Legal vulnerability, in particular, is rarely recognised as a strategic risk within industrial policy frameworks.

Yet protection is a normal feature of industrial development globally. Mature industrial economies combine market competition with strategic interventions that protect emerging industries, regulate

dominant players, and ensure fair access to distribution infrastructure.

South Africa’s transformation agenda must evolve in a similar direction. Participation alone cannot sustain Black industrialists if the surrounding market structure remains unchanged.

Without mechanisms that address retail gatekeeping, concentration in distribution networks, and unequal legal capacity, the cycle will continue: Black manufacturers enter the market with ambition, struggle against structural barriers, and exit before reaching scale.

Conclusion

The collapse of a Black manufacturing firm should never be viewed as an isolated business failure. Each exit represents the loss of productive capacity, employment opportunities, and entrepreneurial confidence within communities that the transformation project seeks to uplift.

If South Africa is serious about inclusive industrialisation, transformation must move beyond symbolic participation and procurement targets. It must confront the structural dynamics that determine who survives in the marketplace.

The next phase of economic transformation must therefore focus on building institutional mechanisms that protect emerging Black manufacturers while they scale. This includes stronger regulatory oversight of market concentration, fair access to retail and distribution channels, and specialised legal support for Black industrialists facing exclusionary practices.

Manufacturing is not simply another sector of the economy. It is a foundation of economic power. Reclaiming industrial power requires more than celebrating Black entrepreneurs who attempt the journey. It requires building an ecosystem that ensures they can endure it. If we fail to do so, we are not building an inclusive economy, we are rehearsing managed exclusion.

Vision 1994 vs 2026: The invisible ‘Dompas’ of today Organized racism, institutional racism, let’s talk about Human Rights Day in modern society



Refilwe Mochoari
 Editor-in-Chief

This year the Bill of Rights marks 30 years and as we commemorate Human Rights Day tomorrow under the theme “The Bill of Rights at 30 – Making human dignity real”, I would like to reflect on how far the nation has come and how far we still have to go on issues of equality and human dignity.

Hi, everyone. My name is Refilwe Mochoari. How long must the generation of today wait until we are all equal in different institutions across South Africa?

On 21 March 1960, the police opened fire on a crowd of about 5000 people in Sharpeville, during a peaceful protest against apartheid pass laws.

On that day, sixty-nine people were killed and 180 were injured.

The Pass Laws Act of 1952 required black South Africans over the age of 16 to carry a passbook also referred to as a “dompas” everywhere and at all times, a system that was used to control the movement of Black, Indian, and Coloured people.

The ‘dompas’ stated which areas a person was allowed to be in, and if they were found outside of these areas, they would be arrested.

Following the Sharpeville Massacre of 1960, several black political parties including the African National Congress were banned by the Nationalist government, which was the governing party of that time, but the liberation movements continued to operate.

On this day, as South Africans, we commemorate the sacrifices that were made by Robert Sobukwe, the founding President of the Pan Africanist Congress (PAC) a breakaway party from the ANC, which initiated the anti-pass laws campaign and led the protest to the Orlando police Station in Johannesburg

We celebrate Philip Kgosana, a university student and PAC member who led the march in Langa Township in Cape Town where over 20 people were killed.

We celebrate Potlako Leballo, Clarence Makwetu, and many other brave young men and women who fought against the ruthless apartheid government.

This day is a symbol of the constitutional promise of dignity, equality, and freedom for all South Africans.

Yet thirty years into democracy the ideals of the constitution remain unevenly realised.

What is the meaning of Human Rights in modern society?

How rife is racism still in the communities that we belong to?

We cannot afford to celebrate freedom while ignoring the persistence of organised racism.

Over thirty years later, it is still difficult for the black and white South Africans to co-exist and really look at one another beyond skin colour.

Organised racism is everywhere and it is rife.

In education, the former model C schools today referred to as quintile 5 schools, black children remain oppressed. These schools remain hostile spaces for many Black learners.

Many black children are abused by their teachers, they are discriminated against, and deprived of opportunities.

These schools foster racist practices and the lack of transformation in these schools affects the well-being of many learners, perpetuating systemic inequality.

In the workplace, black professionals are suffering from corporate inequality. Unequal opportunities and great opportunities are more often than not viewed as Black Economic Empowerment (BEE) placements.

In these institutions, it is so unequal that as a black individual, you have to work twice as hard to prove that you are capable of doing your work.

In residential complexes black occupants and tenants are abused and bullied by the trustees.

To me, Human Rights Day represents a project of unfinished inequality.

Tell me why South Africa still experiences organized racism after so much blood was shed?

A town like Orania a ‘white’s only town’ in the Northern Cape’s Namaqualand district is not an isolated case.

Spending a weekend in this district two weeks ago, was a demonstration that organised racism in South Africa is still in the country.

Driving into that district, I saw an apartheid flag flying with pride on the street poles, and community members of these small towns see it as normal.

What the 69 people of the Sharpeville massacre fought and died for, should be a lived reality and not just cited in the constitution, the speeches, and the government rallies.

The bloodshed during the Sharpeville Massacre, is a call for the invisible ‘dompas’ to be dismantled wherever it hides and it is the duty of government to ensure to fight aggressively.

South Africa cannot afford to ignore organised racism while celebrating freedom.

For me, the long walk to freedom is not yet over.

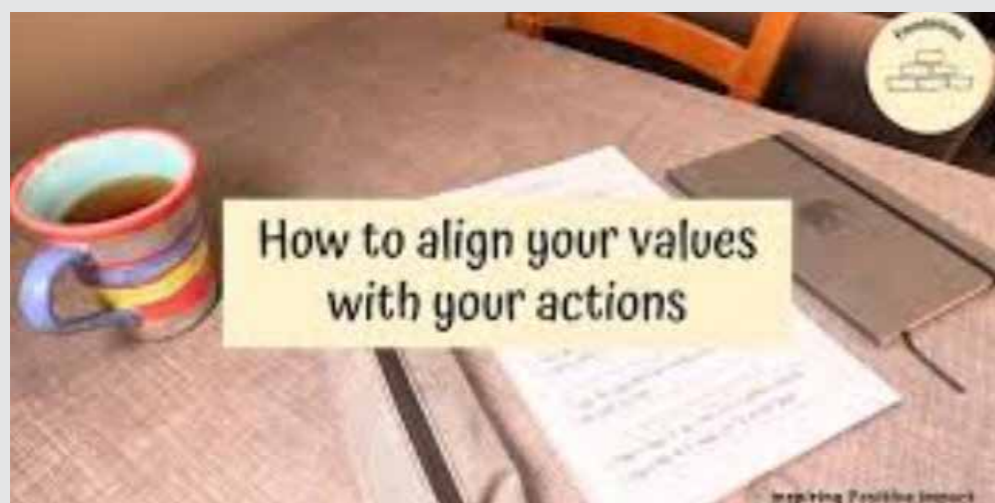
Letter to the Editor

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Pastor Motsamai Kareli
 Empowerment Ministries International

Aligning Action and Values



Executives spend too much time drafting, wordsmithing, and redrafting vision statements, mission statements, values statements, purpose statements, aspiration statements, and so on. They spend nowhere near enough time trying to align their organizations with the values and visions already in place.

Studying and working closely with some of the visionary organizations has made it clear that they concentrate primarily on the process of alignment, not on crafting the perfect “statement.” Not that it is a waste of time to think through fundamental questions like, “What are our core values? What is our fundamental reason for existence? What do we aspire to achieve and become?” Indeed, these are very important questions—questions that get at the “vision” of the organization.

Yet vision is one of the least understood-and most overused-terms in the language. Vision is simply a combination of three basic elements: (1) an organization’s fundamental reason for existence beyond just making money (often called its mission or purpose), (2) its timeless unchanging core values, and (3) huge and audacious—but ultimately achievable—aspirations for its own future (I like to call these BHAGs, or Big Hairy Audacious Goals). Of these, the most important to great, enduring organizations are its core values.

Okay, all fine and good to understand the basic concept of vision. But there is a big difference between being an organization with a vision statement and becoming a truly visionary organization. The difference lies in creating alignment—alignment to preserve an organization’s core values, to reinforce its purpose, and to stimulate continued progress towards its aspirations. When you have superb alignment, a visitor could drop into your organization from another planet and infer the vision without having to read it on paper.

In fact, the founders of great, enduring organizations like Hewlett-Packard, 3M, and Johnson & Johnson often did not have a vision statement when they started out. They usually began with a set of strong personal core values and a relentless drive for progress and had—most important—a remarkable ability to translate these into concrete mechanisms. 3M, for instance, has always had a sense of its core values—sponsoring innovation, protecting the creative individual, solving problems in a way that makes people’s lives better. These defined the organization and gave it a soul. But what really set 3M apart was the ability of its leadership over the years to create mechanisms that bring these principles to life and translate them into action. For example, 3M allows scientists to spend 15 percent of their time working on whatever interests them, requires divisions to generate 30 percent of their revenues from new products introduced in the past four years, has an active internal venture capital fund to support promising new ventures, preserves a dual career track to encourage innovators to remain innovators rather than become managers, grants prestigious awards for innovations and entrepreneurial success, and so on. I don’t even know if 3M has a formal “values statement” (if it does, we never came across it in all of our research into 3M), but because of its alignments, I know—with absolute clarity—3M’s core values, as does anyone familiar with the organization and how it operates.

Creating alignment is a two-part process. The first is identifying and correcting misalignments. The second is creating new alignments, or what I call “mechanisms with teeth.” I’m going to discuss the process as it applies primarily to core values, but the same basic process applies to creating alignment with purpose and BHAGs on the next issue.

Human rights, democracy, and the constitution: A grand simulacrum of power

George Orwell’s immortal axiom – ‘All animals are equal, but some are more equal than others’, remains the most apt diagnosis of our world’s political condition. It captures the deception at modernity’s heart: that human rights, democracy, the constitution, and the rule of law emancipate, when in truth they destroy life in the name of life. This piece makes two interrelated arguments – first, that these concepts (human rights, democracy, the constitution, and the law) are encryptions of power and a grand simulacrum presenting domination as liberation; and second, that they are the chief enablers of imperialism and the internationalisation of suffering.

The Theory of Encryption of Power (TEP), developed by Ricardo Sanin-Restrepo provides the scaffolding. TEP shows that coloniality works because it simulates democracy and encrypts power. The greatest trick of encrypted power is to present a world of violence, racism, famine, war, genocides and epistemicides as the only necessary, and unalterable truth. The constitution is the master encryptor: through it, racial, gender, and national hierarchies are established, the commons privatised, and democracy destroyed in its own name while capitalism is installed as the sole global truth. Democracy is not merely compatible with coloniality; it is its most seductive disguise.

Nowhere is this simulacrum more viscerally exposed than in South Africa – which possesses one of the world’s most celebrated constitutions, yet with the majority remaining dispossessed. The Constitution of 1996 enshrines rights to dignity, equality, housing, healthcare, food, water, and education. On paper, it is a monument to human rights. In practice, a monument to their encryption.

Right was vindicated; life was not

Three decades on, South Africa is the most unequal society on earth by Gini coefficient. Over 60% live below the poverty line; unemployment exceeds 40%. The spatial geography of apartheid – townships, informal settlements, and land dispossession, remains structurally intact. The constitution encrypted this geography under a new lexicon of rights. Land was not redistributed but entrenched under Section 25, hiding racial lines of dispossession behind the language of private property.

The ‘hidden people,’ excluded from full legal protection and abandoned to market violence, constitute the majority of South Africans. Invoked as the sovereign people, they are structurally excluded from substantive sovereignty. Sanin-Restrepo (2025: 6-7) writes:

‘We the People’ is the most terrifying fusion of power and the purest form of violence under an impermeable armour of legitimacy [where] the people become the transcendent and mystical model of their own exclusion. Injustice is naturalised as justice. Crime as law.



South Africa’s Constitutional Court produced celebrated judgments – Grootboom of 2001, Treatment Action Campaign of 2002, are hailed as global exemplars. Yet, Irene Grootboom died homeless in 2008, evicted from the land she had litigated to occupy. The right was vindicated; the life was not. The rule of law is the umbilical cord uniting neoliberalism with constitutionalism (Sanin-Restrepo and Araujo, 2020).

In South Africa, this manifests in the criminalisation of land occupations, mass evictions, and state violence against resistors – all beneath constitutional legality. Resistance is encrypted as crime; dispossession as property rights; imperialism as development.

Globally, the human rights architecture – the UN Charter, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Criminal Court – performs universal protection for the most powerful while systematically dispossessing and massacring the ‘Rest’. In Gaza, Sudan, Congo, and Iran, Western powers arm perpetrators while indicting others.

Grosfoguel’s colonial-cum-genocidal ladder – ‘Christianise or I kill you; Modernise or I kill you; Disarm or I kill you’ – finds its 21st-century form in rights enforced through drone strikes, assassinations, and economic warfare.

The decolonial antidote is decryption: unmasking how human rights, the constitution, and the rule of law function as instruments of domination and machines of death. As long as the grand simulacrum holds, George Orwell’s pigs will continue to walk on two legs.

• Prof Munyaradzi Mushonga, Centre for Gender and Africa Studies, University of the Free State. He is the Global Academic Director for the Decolonial International Network (DIN). He enjoys working at the margins of disciplines in an undisciplined way.

Business

Markets and Indicators

Rand/Dollar	16.85	0.57%	▲
Rand/Pound	22.59	-0.64%	▼
Rand/Euro	19.48	-0.33%	▼
Platinum	1 953.20	-2.44%	▼
Brent Crude	107.52	-1.53%	▼
Gold	4 605.89	-4.43%	▼
Ethereum	2 121.49	-3.69%	▼
Bitcoin	69 748.01	-2.14%	▼

North West Fights Back: Foot and Mouth Vaccination Drive Gains Momentum

By Lerato Mutlanyane

An invisible enemy has long threatened the North West's farming industry, jeopardizing livelihoods, food security, and a multi-billion-rand sector. Once considered a national outbreak, Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) is now being actively tackled by the North West Department of Agriculture through an official vaccine rollout.

The first batch of cattle has already received vaccinations as part of the national campaign to curb the disease, though the rollout to other districts has been slower than hoped. Active cases in the province have risen to between 158 and 179, with the DR Kenneth Kaunda District Municipality reporting 58 cases, Bojanala Platinum 53, Dr Ruth Segomotsi Mompati 35, and Ngaka Modiri Molema 33. Farmers have voiced concern over the pace of vaccinations.

"I believe every farmer is concerned about the ongoing situation with FMD. The current pace of vaccination is alarmingly slow, and many animals continue to die. Prompt action is crucial to contain the outbreak and prevent greater losses," said Tuelo Montshiwa.

Mafatshe Ramodia added: "Farmers are waiting for vaccines, not updates on case numbers. Immediate action is what we need." Henk van Wyk noted that early delays in reporting and tracking the outbreaks worsened the situation.

MEC of Agriculture Sambatha reassured farmers that vaccines will be distributed across all districts to ensure fairness and equal access. "While priority will be given to the most affected areas, no farmer or village will be left behind. Communal villages, where livestock movement and limited biosecurity measures increase risk, will be a critical focus to build herd immunity and cut transmission pathways," Sambatha said.

Veterinary teams are on the ground conducting daily outreach, awareness campaigns, and information sessions. Priority is also being given to precautionary



quarantine farms and areas near buffalo populations, known carriers of the virus.

Sambatha urged farmers to report any signs of FMD immediately. "Do not hide cases. Early reporting helps stop the disease from spreading. This sickness moves when we move animals without care, which means we also have the power to stop it. By reporting quickly and working together, we can protect our cattle, villages, and livelihoods."

The Department stressed that vaccines will reach all communities, whether in high-risk districts or smaller villages.

As the campaign gains momentum, additional consignments of FMD vaccines are expected soon, enabling expanded coverage and stronger herd immunity.

"The province has already vaccinated over 74,767 animals in the past week. Farmers are encouraged to use visual ear tags with unique numbers to help identify vaccinated animals," said Emelda Setlhako, spokesperson for the North West Department of Agriculture.

With continued vigilance, collaboration, and timely reporting, the North West aims to contain the outbreak and safeguard its agricultural economy, rural livelihoods, and food security.

Ramaphosa Warns Rogue Justice System Threatens Economic Growth



President Cyril Ramaphosa. Picture: SABC

President Cyril Ramaphosa says a rogue criminal justice system can be detrimental to South Africa's economic growth and job creation. He says the value of commissions, such as the previous Zondo Commission and the Madlanga Commission currently under way, probing allegations of corruption and mismanagement in the criminal justice system, will soon be realised by many South Africans.

Ramaphosa was speaking at the On the Record Jobs Summit in Cape Town. He says a lot of government decisions are being criticised without paying much attention.

Ramaphosa pointed fingers to the apartheid regime for the current jobs crisis in the country.

The summit, which is convened under the theme "Five Million Jobs in 10 Years" is an initiative from the private sector spearheaded by one of the country's media companies.

Ramaphosa says the high unemployment rate in South Africa is one of the results of the legacy of apartheid, which excluded black people from economic activities.

"And we must therefore do everything we can to reverse that legacy and to create jobs because we can no longer continue using it as an excuse. Many young people face the prospect of leaving school without a foot hold in the economy, unable to lift themselves and more particularly their own family out of poverty. And many young people have to pay even before they start work. They have to pay the black tax."

Ramaphosa says it is crucial to create skills-based employment opportunities in order to reach the target of creating five million new jobs in 10 years.

"We must invest in skills and education because

there's a mismatch of skills. Our past which I spoke to very briefly determined that black people who were in the majority, who have been excluded in the economic activity were just given poor education. And so therefore we have to focus on developing skills, but we also want those skilled people to be underpinned by innovation."

The president says ensuring the functioning of the various commissions of inquiry, will allow for all questions in the mind of the public to be answered and will be followed by necessary consequences for those found to be responsible of wrongdoing.

"What the Madlanga Commission is doing is giving us a great opportunity to overhaul our police system, our criminal justice system to clean it out, to get all the thugs and rogues out of the system because in the end, passive crime which has been happening breeds fear and mistrust and both a devastating human cost and a direct economic impact as well as a negative one it increases the cost of doing business and discourages businesses from investing and a number of business people have said we would want to invest but your crime rate is just too high."

Meanwhile, Ramaphosa has called for Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs) to be disbanded and be replaced by more effective skills-based interventions.

Stats SA reported that South Africa's official unemployment rate was 31.4% during the last quarter of 2025. The summit, which is being held for two days, comprises of labour and economics experts, as well as working groups focusing on economic growth, youth unemployment, crime and corruption. **SABCNews**

Fraud warning for Nedbank and GoTyme customers in SA



Protecting your mobile device is a simple yet powerful way to reduce the risk of fraud in South Africa, with scammers being incredibly aggressive.

GoTyme CEO Cheslyn Jacobs told BusinessTech that scammers are relentless, and no financial institution can fully mitigate the risks.

Jacobs said that fraud in South Africa is an industry of over R10 billion per year, with scammers being incredibly intelligent.

The recently appointed CEO noted that scammers are increasingly using the latest technologies, including AI, to support their scams.

While the rebranded GoTyme is heavily investing in measures to mitigate fraud risks, Jacobs said that banks cannot fully combat fraud on their own.

He said customers need to be alert to the potential risks to their accounts.

That said, he did stress that the number of victims among those actually affected by fraud remains relatively low compared to everyone who has an account. He said that banking customers should be alert but

not in a state of constant anxiety over potential fraud.

In a recent note to clients, Nedbank outlined a host of simple ways South Africans can protect themselves from fraud.

Nedbank said that one should manage their online banking profile by adjusting their payment, transfer, card and ATM limits to match their actual spending habits and toggle off card features they don't use.

One should also clean up their linked devices, removing unused devices from banking profiles to ensure that only current devices are used online.

Reviewing one's beneficiaries is also an important step. Delete those you no longer pay to keep your list clean and secure.

Keeping details up to date, particularly the primary contact number, is another useful way to ensure banks can contact you if there is suspicious activity on an account.

For Nedbank customers specifically, using the latest version of the Money app means that customers will benefit from the latest security enhancements.

One should also immediately contact their bank if their phone is lost or stolen, or if they suspect a fraudulent SIM swap.

GoTyme and Nedbank's feedback on scams comes shortly after Standard Bank issued a warning about scams ahead of the Easter holiday, noting that scammers are using a variety of tactics.

Standard Bank's Head of Fraud Operations, Client Experience and Risk Execution, Marius le Roux, noted that fraudsters are no longer relying on a single avenue of fraud. Criminals are now blending highly convincing AI-driven spoofing, phishing, and vishing to target consumers from multiple angles.

"In recent cases, we've seen fraudsters impersonate reputable individuals or bank staff with astonishing accuracy," said Le Roux.

"We are seeing a rise in scams where AI generated voices, cloned emails, and deepfake content are used to mimic legitimate communication from the bank."

The use of AI makes new scams look and sound more real than ever, allowing fraudsters to manipulate victims into sharing their banking information.

Phishing also remains one of the most common ways that criminals gain access to accounts. Customers are also tricked by messages appearing to be bank communication.

Standard Bank said that scams are growing in sophistication and often replicate the bank's branding so well that even cautious consumers can fall victim.

"Once fraudsters have the customer's username, password, or intercepted One Time-Pin, they can rapidly escalate their attack," noted Le Roux.

He further noted that fraudsters will combine phishing with other forms of attacks, including spoofed phone calls that appear to come from the bank's real number. **BusinessTech**

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GET TO KNOW YOUR DJ

The Sound Technician Behind the Ultimate Groove



By Lerato Mutlanyane

If you're a deep house lover, let Pablo Khumalo be your energy shifter. The moment he steps onto the decks, he delivers a seamless blend of power, rhythm, and a vibe he masterfully crafts from start to finish.

The house maverick, legally known as Fanyane Daniel Khumalo (38) from Botshabelo, has built a career spanning 22 years, driven by a deep-rooted passion for music.

Pablo's signature style is a rich fusion of bass-heavy, nostalgic, deep and soulful house.

"I can also play all kinds of genres now because with time you evolve. I play what's needed at the time — I am versatile," he said.

His beats per minute are unmatched, and his stage presence electrifying. Much of his inspiration comes from the legendary Shaxe Khumalo.

"They had a musical group and used to do talent shows and many other things. I drew inspiration from that. I then realised I have a true love and passion for music and sound. In 2008, I took my sound business seriously and became even more passionate about being a sound technician — and that continues to this day," he said proudly.

The beats keep coming, the rhythm thumps, and the vibe is unshakable. With impeccable beat-matching skills, Pablo has already released two deep tech smash hits, available on Spotify and YouTube.

Catch Pablo Khumalo live at the Picnic of the North at Naval Hill on 29 March 2026, and experience the deep house catalyst for yourself.



Mörda leads nationwide search for SA's next DJ star

Grammy-nominated DJ Mörda is leading a nationwide search for new talent as part of the build-up to ULTRA South Africa 2026.

The competition, run in partnership with MXD, aims to identify emerging DJs from across the country ahead of the festival on 25 and 26 April.

Mörda will be joined on the judging panel by Dwson and YFM's Hype Factory.

Mörda said they are searching for talents with "true resident DJ DNA".

"We are looking for DJs with true resident DJ

DNA, the ability to read a room, control the energy of a crowd, and hold a floor for hours on end," he said in a press statement.

Regional heats and prizes for the winner

The DJ Search is part of the Official ULTRA South Africa Countdown Tour, a 24-stop tour across Southern Africa.

Regional heats in South Africa will take place during the tour in Pretoria at Europa (March 20), Cape Town at Club Paradise (March 27), and Durban at Harry James (April 1).

The tour began in Nairobi on 14 March.

Attendees at the regional events will be able to vote for their favourite DJs.

Voters also have a chance to win tickets to ULTRA in Cape Town and Johannesburg.

Two top DJs from each regional heat will advance to form the national Top 6.

The overall winner will perform at ULTRA South Africa 2026 on the Confessions Stage.

Additional prizes include a year-long MXD Ambassadorship, professional mentorship from Bridges For Music, and guest mix sets on 5FM and YFM. *The Citizen*

Gogo Skhotheni Welcomes 'Rainbow Baby' After Heartbreak

By Lerato Mutlanyane

Tumi 'Gogo Skhotheni' Motsoeneng has stunned fans with a heartfelt maternity shoot, revealing the birth of her rainbow child — a baby boy.

The reality TV star and traditional healer kept her pregnancy private following the devastating loss of her son, Monde Jr., in May after a lifelong battle with respiratory illness.

She left fans emotional when she shared the news on Instagram, captioning her post: "From heartbreak to hope... From loss to life... My rainbow baby."

Skhotheni also used the moment to set the record straight on her personal life, shutting down speculation that she has rekindled her relationship with her ex-husband, Monde Shange.

In a statement last month, she clarified that a Facebook account circulating old images of the pair is fake.

"Please be aware that I do not have an active Facebook account. There is a fake account currently posting old pictures of me and my ex. This has absolutely nothing to do with me," she said.

She added that her official Facebook account, which had over 800,000 followers, was deactivated and will not be revived.

"I want to make it clear that I have no intention of posting or revisiting past relationships. Any content being shared from that account is false and misleading. Kindly report the fake page," Skhotheni wrote.



GIG Guide

Friday 20 March 2026
Easter Weekend Takeover
Cappello
2nd Ave Bloemfontein

Saturday 21 March 2026
DJ Hlethe Birthday Celebration
The Far Out Lounge (Mahungra)
Bloemfontein

Saturday 21 March 2026
Mangaung Chellanathi Charity Event
Bloemshow Jersey Club
Bloemfontein

Sunday 22 March 2026
Anniversary Celebration
051 Cafe
Bloemfontein

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Lira returns to Lyric Theatre with solo show after six years

Legendary South African singer-songwriter Lira is set to return to the Lyric Theatre on 18 April for a one-woman performance. The show, titled *Still Here*, marks her first appearance at the venue in six years.

Lira says the venue is ideal as it offers a setting she'd like for her show.

"It's been six years since I've performed at the Lyric Theatre," said Lira. "I love the fact that it offers the intimacy I'd like for the show."

What to expect

The performance will feature a solo set built around music and movement. It will include reworked versions of her songs and new material.

Lira said the show reflects her recovery journey following a stroke. The condition affected her speech, as well as her ability to read and write.

"I'm going to tell my story through music and movement, and it's going to be an entertaining yet powerful and healing experience," she said.

She added that she has regained her ability to perform across multiple languages.

"I am able to move my body rhythmically as well, as the stroke affected my sense of rhythm, and I can now move freely and confidently," she said.

The singer will perform in English, isi-Zulu and Sesotho. She will also introduce new music developed during her recovery.

"I will share some new music I've been working on. It's taken me a long time — recovery is a slow process — but I'm finally ready to share some new music," she said.

The concert will take place at Gold Reef City in Johannesburg. Tickets are available through Webtickets from R375. *The Citizen*

Pink Affair Brings Elegance to the North West



By Lerato Mutlanyane

Carving out time in the rush of daily life — balancing careers, family, and the many in-betweens — can feel nearly impossible. But the Department of Economic Development, Environment, Conservation and Tourism, in partnership with the North West Parks and Tourism Board and Sun City, is creating space for just that: an afternoon of bliss and a moment to simply be.

"In strengthening and improving the economic standing of the province, we need to attract more tourists through destination marketing activities led by the Parks and Tourism Board and the Department's Tourism Chief Directorate. The Pink Affair event forms part of this effort," said MEC Bitsa Lenkopane.

This glamorous daytime lifestyle event celebrates lovers of elegance, luxury, and fashion. Guests are expected to arrive draped in pink, embracing a theme that blends style with experience. The event promises a curated mix of fashion, music, fine dining, and meaningful connection.

Set against the pristine gardens of the Gary Player Golf Course, the venue will be transformed with luxurious décor, indulgent culinary delights, and refreshing signature drinks — all designed to spark conversation, laughter, and shared celebration.

A carefully curated lineup of performances and top DJs will set the tone, bringing energy and rhythm to the sophisticated setting. Guests are encouraged to dress with intention — embracing elegance, detail, and bold fashion statements.

"Attending the Sun City Pink Affair promises a perfect day of great music, stylish vibes, and connection, all set against the stunning backdrop of the Gary Player Course. It's the ideal opportunity to relax, celebrate, and enjoy an unforgettable experience at one of South Africa's most iconic destinations," said Neo Pitsoe.

As anticipation builds, glasses of rosé will be raised, the lush greens will glow in shades of pink, and the atmosphere will come alive with celebration. But beyond the glamour, the Pink Affair is more than just an event — it is a vibrant reminder of the strength, style, and solidarity found in a room full of women.

Threads of UBUNTU

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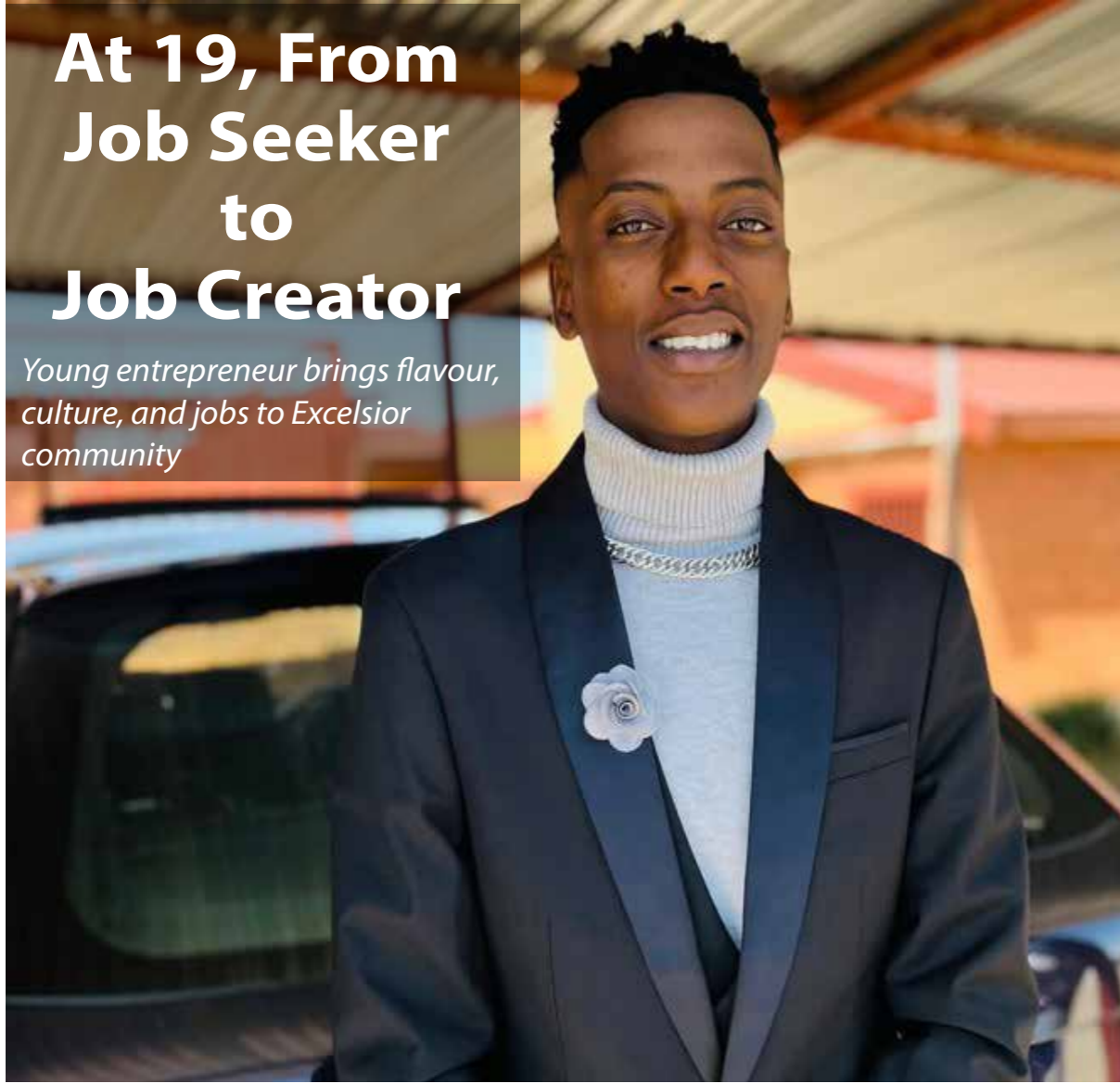
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At 19, From Job Seeker to Job Creator

Young entrepreneur brings flavour, culture, and jobs to Excelsior community



A 19-year-old Letuka Goai. Picture: Supplied

By Matshidiso Selebeleng

After facing unemployment, 19-year-old Letuka Goai decided not to wait for the system—he created his own job and extended the opportunity to others in his community.

Goai launched eKasi Chill & Chow in September 2025 in Excelsior, turning his passion for cooking into a fast-growing food business rooted in community, culture, and flavour.

"I started eKasi Chill & Chow because I'm passionate about cooking and serving food with love to our community," he said.

More than just a food joint, the business celebrates township life, bringing people together to share good food, laughter, and unforgettable moments.

"It's about chilling, chowing, and creating a space where everyone feels at home," Goai added.

Operating in a rural area presents challenges, including a

limited customer base and competition from established eateries. But Goai's creativity and determination set him apart. His dishes are inspired by local traditions, giving customers the comforting taste of home.

"We face competition from established eateries in the area. To stand out, we're focusing on serving unique, locally-inspired dishes that showcase the best of eKasi flavours, while providing exceptional customer service and engaging with our community through events and promotions," he said.

Looking ahead, Goai plans to expand eKasi Chill & Chow over the next five years, opening branches in surrounding towns and bringing his signature flavours to more communities. He hopes to boost the local economy and create additional job opportunities.

Goai's advice to aspiring entrepreneurs in rural areas is simple: understand your community, know what people love, identify what's missing, and always serve with love.

Why fasting strengthens your brain – and other benefits you never expected

Across cultures and faiths, March has long been associated with fasting, reflection and spiritual discipline.

In South Africa's multicultural society, many are fasting during Lent and Ramadan.

But beyond the religious significance lies a powerful psychological advantage that high performers are increasingly tapping into: healthy, controlled restraint trains the brain into sharper, calmer and more intentional habits.

According to mental fitness coach and neuroscience-based performance specialist Lielzel van der Westhuizen, you do not need to fast for spiritual reasons to benefit from its cognitive power.

"Fasting is one of the oldest forms of cognitive training," she explains. "It strengthens the brain's ability to pause, regulate impulses and act from intention instead of emotion. That is mental stamina."

She advises on how it can be done effectively. The neuroscience behind restraint

When you voluntarily give up something, whether it is food, caffeine, social media or even reactive communication, measurable processes are activated in the brain.

Delayed gratification and dopamine reset
Modern life overstimulates the brain's reward system. Notifications, quick online wins and constant stimulation flood dopamine pathways, training us to seek instant gratification.

Temporary restraint helps recalibrate that system.

Research in behavioural neuroscience shows that intentional pauses from reward-seeking behaviours strengthen executive control networks in the prefrontal cortex. In simple terms, you become less impulsive and more focused.

Yes, even endless scrolling can become addictive. The goal is not deprivation. It is learning to control the source of pleasure instead of being controlled by it.

Identity-based discipline
Van der Westhuizen believes mental fitness is not built on willpower alone, but on identity.

Every time you override an impulse, you reinforce the belief that you are someone capable of



handling discomfort. That self-concept becomes powerful.

Identity-driven discipline lasts longer than motivation because it shifts you from reacting emotionally to acting intentionally.

Emotional discomfort tolerance

The first battle in fasting is rarely physical. It is emotional. Irritability. Urgency. Frustration when something you rely on is suddenly unavailable.

Sitting with that discomfort without reacting strengthens emotional regulation pathways in the brain. Over time, reactivity decreases. The nervous system becomes steadier. This is not about punishment. It is about training your response.

Why it matters in business and leadership

The benefits extend far beyond personal growth. In high-pressure sales or leadership environments, impulsive reactions can cost revenue and credibility.

Quick defensive replies, urgency-driven discounting and emotionally charged decisions often undermine long-term strategy. The professional who can pause before responding negotiates better, communicates more clearly and closes stronger deals.

In high-stakes conversations, the pause becomes power.

How to fast effectively for mental strength
You do not have to give up food to experience the benefits. Consider these practical resets:

Stop reacting instantly to emails

Eliminate multitasking for a set period daily

Avoid defensive communication

Limit doom scrolling to specific times

Practice saying no without over-explaining

Start small. Choose one behaviour for 21 days.

Track how you feel. Notice your triggers. Replace impulsive habits with intentional pauses.

Hydrate properly, maintain balanced nutrition if you are fasting from food, and avoid extreme deprivation. The goal is sustainable discipline, not burnout.

Van der Westhuizen, who has completed multiple Ironman triathlons and even cycled across the Himalayas on a tandem bicycle with a blind athlete, embodies the principle she teaches. Endurance, she says, is not built in comfort.

March might traditionally be about sacrifice. But approached strategically, it can become your brain's most powerful training ground. **The Citizen**

HEALTH

5 ways TikTok's floor time trend may support your mental health and well-being



There's something profoundly grounding about sleeping on the floor.

For many South Africans, this isn't a foreign concept; it's a nostalgic throwback to childhood visits to the rural homestead, where cousins from all corners of the country would gather, sharing blankets on the cool floor of a rondavel under the watchful eye of umakhulu.

What the world is now calling a "wellness trend", our mothers have long referred to as "imveli", a return to the roots. But beyond the cultural resonance, floor sleeping is emerging as a modern lifestyle choice with surprising health benefits.

The practical and holistic benefits of sleeping on the floor

At first glance, trading your plush, oversized bed for the floor might seem counter-intuitive, but more people are embracing this minimalist shift. Why? It's not just about nostalgia or simplicity; it's about purpose.

1. Better posture, better sleep

Modern life has us hunched over screens and slouched on couches, wreaking havoc on our spines. When sleeping on the floor, the firm surface supports natural spinal alignment, helping to decompress the spine and reduce tension.

Gravity pulls everything down equally when you lie on the floor, allowing the body to reset from imbalances caused by daily posture and movement.

This reset can improve posture, ease chronic back pain, and enhance your overall sleep quality. Unlike soft mattresses that can encourage poor alignment or uneven weight distribution, the floor provides a neutral

base that benefits your body.

2. Energy and clarity at sunrise

There's something about waking up on the floor that feels purposeful. Without the temptation of a plush mattress to lounge in, you're encouraged to rise with intention. This can lead to a more energised start to the day, promoting a positive mental state.

3. Stress relief and nervous system regulation

Lying on the floor activates the parasympathetic nervous system, shifting your body out of fight-or-flight mode and into a state of rest.

Research has shown that mindfulness practices like this can lower cortisol levels, slow your heart rate, and improve symptoms of anxiety, depression, and stress.

When we lie our full body on the floor, we naturally become aware of the points making contact with it. This awareness deepens our connection to the breath, the body, and the present moment.

4. Grounding and emotional reset

Grounding techniques, connecting physically with the earth, are known to calm the mind and body. Many fans of floor time describe a sense of emotional "reset", allowing them to feel more connected to their surroundings.

5. Reduced muscle tension

Hard surfaces naturally encourage small movements and stretches during rest. This helps release tight muscles, especially in the back and hips.

Gentle stretches like cat-cow, happy baby pose, or legs up the wall can deepen the effect. **!OL**



Food

Recipes

Crispy sesame lemon chicken

Recipe by whatsfordinne



Make our crispy sesame lemon chicken for a quick, easy and flavour-packed family dinner. Scatter with spring onions and serve with your favourite sides.

Ingredients:

- 600g chicken breast fillets cut into 2cm pieces
- 2tbsp cornflour
- 5tbsp plain flour
- 1tsp baking powder
- large pinch of white pepper
- 1 egg beaten
- 2tbsp sunflower or vegetable oil for frying
- 2 spring onions finely sliced, to serve

Method

• step 1

To make the sauce, tip the cornflour into a bowl and whisk in the lemon zest and juice until any lumps disappear. Add the honey, soy, sesame seeds and sesame oil and mix again. Set aside.

• step 2

Combine the cornflour, flour, baking powder, ¼ tsp salt, the pepper, beaten egg and 4 tbsp water in a large bowl. Tip in the chicken pieces, gently tossing to coat.

• step 3

Heat the vegetable oil over a high heat and fry the battered chicken pieces in batches for 6 mins per batch until golden and cooked through. Remove the cooked chicken and transfer to a plate or tray lined with kitchen paper.

• step 4

When all the chicken has been cooked, return all of it to the pan, still over a high heat, pour in the sauce and toss to coat – the sauce will thicken and cling to the chicken. Scatter with the spring onions and serve with noodles, if you like.

FASHION

After going viral in Paris, MaXhosa Africa brings SIYI'KULTURE to Johannesburg



From making viral moments at Paris Fashion Week, MaXhosa Africa will unveil its Autumn-Winter 2026 collection, SIYI'KULTURE, at the highly anticipated MXS Kulture Festival.

In its fourth year, MXS Kulture Festival brings together lovers of MaXhosa Africa, dressed in their favourite items from one of Africa's most influential brands.

MXS Kulture Festival offers a cultural and educational experience with fashion, food, and music coming together in one place.

A day filled with connecting and enjoying performances from South Africa's top artists is topped with a fashion show at sunset.

Last year's fashion show at MXS Kulture Festival, award-winning rapper Maglera Doe Boy had all eyes on him in his custom MaXhosa Africa outfit, as his commanding presence took over.

If the recent Paris Fashion Week videos are anything to go by, attendees this year can expect a show. MaXhosa Africa made waves when a clip from a moment during the SiyiKulture showcase in Paris went viral.

The clip showed dancers that included media personality Robot Boii, real name (Mzwakhe Mbuli Jr), and splashing home-grown custard brand UltraMel on the runway as models walked.

"At the festival, the fashion show is one of the defining moments. Presented just before sunset, the latest collection is unveiled on the runway, allowing both us and the audience to experience the creativity and craft as it comes to life," said Laduma Ngxokolo, Founder and Chief Creative Director.

MaXhosa Africa's Autumn-Winter 2026 collection, SIYI'KULTURE, meaning "We Are Culture", features elevated silhouettes and carefully considered textures, creating pieces that reflect both heritage and contemporary style.

"SIYI'KULTURE explores how South African cultures influence global culture, from our traditions to our music and dance," added Ngokolo

"The collection blends elements from multiple cultures within South Africa, celebrating our diversity while showing how culture can evolve and be worn in a modern way."

Last year, MXS Kulture Festival's line-up had Grammy Award-winning music producer and DJ Black Coffee and this year they are once again bringing Mzansi's best to perform.

DJ Maphorisa, Kabza De Small, DJ Tira, Makhadzi, Yanga Chief, DJ Kabila, and Fistaz Mixwell are set to perform. **!OL News**

Sport



Downs Take Control of Title Race After Beating Marumo Gallants



By Mpho Sekharume

Mamelodi Sundowns moved two points clear at the top of the Betway Premiership standings after beating Marumo Gallants 3-1 at Loftus on Tuesday.

Keanu Cupido opened the scoring for the league leaders but Gallants hit back in the first half through a penalty by Ndabayithethwa Ndondlo.

Second-half substitute Teboho Mokoena made the difference after the interval, coming off the bench to net twice to seal victory for Sundowns.

Masandawana started the contest on the front foot, but it took until the half-hour mark for them to take the lead when Cupido rose highest from a Marcelo Allende cross, although replays showed that the final touch could have come off Gallants' Siphosakhe Ntiya-Ntiya.

The visitors, fighting for their lives in a relegation battle, fought back before the conclusion of the first half and were awarded a penalty when Nuno Santos handled the ball in the box, allowing Ndabayithethwa Ndondlo to convert from the spot.

Sundowns head coach Miguel Cardoso turned to his bench in the second half to get the vital three points and Mokoena answered the call.

The Bafana Bafana midfielder restored the home side's lead in the 62nd minute after getting on the end of a pass from Athur Sales.

After a few scares from Gallants, Mokoena made sure of maximum points for his team when he rifled in a long-range effort past visiting goalkeeper Washington Arubi.

The result moves Sundowns onto 50 points, two ahead of Orlando Pirates with both clubs having nine fixtures remaining.

Chaine Dropped for Leaner Experiment

Broos rolls the dice as he calls up Renaldo Leaner for a big stage Bafana Bafana audition



Sekhukhune United's Renaldo Leaner has made it into Hugo Broos' final Bafana Bafana squad list for the upcoming international fixtures against Panama. Pictures: Vodacom Soccer

By Mpho Sekharume

In a bold tactical shift ahead of crucial international friendly fixtures, South African senior men's national football team coach, Hugo Broos, has signalled a new era for the Bafana Bafana goal-line by handing Sekhukhune United's Renaldo Leaner a golden opportunity to showcase his goalkeeping talent on the international stage.

The inclusion of Leaner at the expense of Orlando Pirates' Siphosakhe Ntiya-Ntiya is one of the most significant talking points of the latest squad announcement debate, as Bafana Bafana prepare to descend on Durban and subsequently Cape Town for a double-headed fixture against Panama.

While Chaine has been a mainstay in many recent national discussions, Broos has opted for the red-hot form of Sekhukhune's shot-stopper.

Leaner's statistics this season make a compelling case for his inclusion in the national setup. Since claiming the number one spot at Sekhukhune in December, he has been a pillar of consistency for Babina Noko.

The keeper has played in 11 of the 21 matches Sekhukhune have played so far this season. During that period, he has conceded only five goals and kept an incredible total of eight clean sheets.

These impressive statistics are exactly what tempted Broos to want to have a much closer look at the goalkeeper, as he clearly prioritises current form over reliance on experience as he builds toward the next competitive cycle.

Broos, as displayed in his previous squad selections, has never been one to shy away from difficult

decisions or public transparency. For the Belgian tactician, the inclusion of Leaner is about more than just a reward - it is a calculated experiment to see how the keeper handles the internal pressure of the national team environment.

"I want to see him (Leaner). I want to see him with us. I want to see him at the camp, because it's not only on the pitch but also outside the pitch and we will see," Broos said.

By bringing Leaner into the fold now, Broos is testing the player's temperament in a high-pressure environment before the 2026 World Cup qualifiers reach their boiling point.

Meanwhile, for Leaner this call-up is a high-visibility opportunity that could fundamentally alter his professional trajectory, should he come on from the bench for Williams. This also represents an opportunity for the 28-year-old to impress possible suitors in one of the Big Three - Chiefs, Pirates, or Sundowns.

A standout performance in the national colours could possibly brighten his football prospects locally or internationally should he put on an impressive display.

Broos highlighted that Leaner is a familiar name in the Bafana corridors, even if he hasn't been the primary focus until now.

"I think Leaner is always on the list of the preliminary squad and I think it was a good occasion now to get him with us. He was already with us a few months ago, but I want to see him again and we will see what that gives," Broos added.

While the tactical experiments on the field are vital, Broos is equally focused on the atmosphere

in the stands. Bafana Bafana's success is often tied to the energy of the home crowd, and the coach is making a direct plea to the fans in KwaZulu-Natal and the Western Cape.

He is calling on South Africans to show the same spirit and energy that carried the team during their recent successes on the continent. He further believes that a huge fan presence in the seats will intimidate the opposition and uplift his players.

"Come to the stadiums, come to Durban, come to Cape Town and support Bafana," the coach pleaded with passion.

These two highly anticipated fixtures against Panama are designed to test the squad's depth and tactical flexibility against challenging opposition.

The Final 23-Man Squad:
Goalkeepers: Ronwen Williams (Sundowns), Ricardo Goss (Sivelele FC), Renaldo Leaner (Sekhukhune United)

Defenders: Khuliso Mudau (Sundowns), Aubrey Modiba (Sundowns), Khulumani Ndamane (Sundowns), Thabang Matludi (Polokwane City), Nkosinathi Sibisi (Pirates), Ime Okon (Hannover 96, Germany), Samukelo Kabini (Molde FK, Norway), Mbekezeli Mbokazi (Chicago Fire FC, USA)

Midfielders: Teboho Mokoena (Sundowns), Jayden Adams (Sundowns), Thalente Mbatha (Pirates), Sphephelo Sithole (C.D. Tondela, Portugal)

Forwards: Oswin Appollis (Polokwane City), Tshepang Moremi (Pirates), Evidence Makgopa (Pirates), Relebohile Mofokeng (Pirates), Lyle Foster (Burnley, England), Bongokuhle Hlongwane (Minnesota United FC, USA), Themba Zwane (Sundowns), Thapelo Maseko (AEL Limassol, Cyprus)

PSL 2025/2026				
	CLUBS	P	W	PTS
1	Mamelodi Sundowns	21	15	50
2	Orlando Pirates	21	15	48
3	Sekhukhune United	21	9	34
4	AmaZulu FC	21	10	34
5	Kaizer Chiefs	19	9	33
6	Durban City	21	9	32
7	Polokwane City	20	7	29
8	Golden Arrows	21	7	25
9	TS Galaxy	21	7	25
10	Stellenbosch FC	21	6	25
11	Sivelele FC	20	5	23
12	Richards Bay	21	5	23
13	Chippa United	21	4	20
14	Marumo Gallants	22	4	18
15	Orbit College FC	21	5	18
16	Magesi FC	20	2	14

Premier League 2025/2026				
	TEAMS	P	W	PTS
1	Arsenal	31	21	70
2	Man City	30	18	61
3	Man Utd	30	15	54
4	Aston Villa	30	15	51
5	Liverpool	30	14	49
6	Chelsea	30	13	48
7	Brentford	30	13	45
8	Everton	30	12	43
9	Newcastle	30	12	42
10	Fulham	30	9	41
11	Bournemouth	30	12	41
12	Brighton	30	10	40
13	Sunderland	30	10	40
14	C Palace	30	10	39
15	Leeds	30	7	32
16	Tottenham	30	7	30

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