

Journal NEWS

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NC's Health Infrastructure Drive Gains Momentum



Page 6

Liema wins 'Big Brother Mzansi' S6



Page 10

Blitzboks dig deep to do the double in New York

Page 12



Bloemfontein's Dark and Silver City residents threaten to avoid polls. Picture: Bernell Simmons

MAP Mayor Ousted Amid Council Chaos

MAP 16's Paratlane Motloung replaces Malekula Melato as Mayor after no confidence motion, while knife-wielding intruders cause chaos in special council sitting



By Bernell Simmons

The Maluti-a-Phofung Local Municipality descended into a scene of shameful political warfare this yesterday afternoon as a Special Council sitting dissolved into a spectacle of violence and procedural anarchy.

In a chamber where policy and debate should reign, pepper spray and knives reportedly became the primary tools of political engagement as MAP16 Civic Movement's Paratlane Motloung took over the mayoral reins from the ANC's Malekula Melato after a very controversial Motion of No Confidence against the latter.

Things took a very hostile turn when two knife-wielding intruders stormed the sitting, overturning tables and physically intimidating councillors to disrupt the democratic process.

This blatant act of intimidation cast a long shadow over the legitimacy of the proceedings, prompting the Democratic Alliance (DA) to describe the entire event as a 'circus' held at knifepoint.

Meanwhile, the No Confidence Motion, brought by the South African Royal Kingdoms Organisation (SARKO) and supported by the MAP16, effectively fractured the council.

Amid the chaos and a subsequent ANC walkout, the remaining councillors - who apparently failed to reach quorum - reportedly moved ahead to elect Motloung as the new mayor.

Continues on Page 2

DELIVER OR WE WON'T VOTE!

Page 3

60-DAY

GENERAL AMNESTY

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Ramaphosa Champions Inclusive Education in Kimberley

By Lerato Mutlanyane

In a powerful show of commitment to social justice and the constitutional ideals of equality, Cyril Ramaphosa used Human Rights Day to shine a spotlight on children with special needs — pledging tangible support for one of the country's most vulnerable groups.

Marking 21 March 2025, the President called for stronger collaboration between government and partners to expand access to quality education, while addressing persistent barriers faced by learners with disabilities.

Joined by Northern Cape Premier Zamani Saul, Minister of Sports, Arts and Culture Gayton McKenzie, MEC for Education Abraham Vosloo, Deputy Minister of International Relations Alvin Botes, Deputy Minister of Justice Andries Nel, Sol Plaatje Executive Mayor Martha Bartlett, SAHRC Chairperson Chris Nissen, and school principal Lebogang Diutlwieng, Ramaphosa officially unveiled a multi-million rand investment at Retlameleng Special Needs School in Kimberley.

The development includes a state-of-the-art multipurpose sports court, a fully equipped library, and a South African Sign Language laboratory — all aimed at enhancing inclusive learning. The President also committed to building a much-needed hostel at the school, a move set to transform access to education for learners who travel long distances.

The planned hostel will provide a structured and supportive environment, enabling consistent routines, supervised study time, and access to trained staff attuned to learners' specific developmental needs.

Ramaphosa commended the school's outstanding 100% pass rate in the previous year, highlighting its 33-year legacy of empowering visually and hearing-impaired learners through dignified, quality education.

"Many young people with special needs face discrimination and stigma in our country. That is why it is important to shine a spotlight on institutions like this — to show parents and guardians that they are not alone, and that there is a place where their children can thrive," he said.

He added: "This initiative is a powerful demonstration of translating constitutional values into real change. The Constitution obliges us to ensure that every child has access to education."

While the ribbon has been cut and the speeches concluded, the real impact lies ahead — in the lives of learners who will now walk into a library that inspires possibility, onto a field that builds confidence, and into a Sign Language hub that nurtures future leaders.

For Retlameleng Special Needs School, the future is no longer a promise — it has arrived.

MAP Mayor Ousted Amid Council Chaos

MAP 16's Paratlane Motloung replaces Malekula Melato as Mayor after no confidence motion, while knife-wielding intruders cause chaos in special council sitting



New MAP Mayor ... Paratlane Motloung was elected Mayor of Maluti-a-Phofung Local Municipality after the controversial ousting of the ANC's Malekula Melato. Picture: Network24

Continues from Page 1

Motloung has, nevertheless, justified his acquisition of the mayoral chains.

"As MAP16 we were actually approached by an organisation called SARKO, which has got one councillor, to say that they feel that they need to enrol a motion of no confidence against the executive mayor for various reasons which we agreed with; about things we have always known," Motloung said in an interview with Journal News yesterday.

According to him, the tipping point involved a committee investigation into a Member of the Mayoral Committee (MMC) and allegations that Melato misled the house when quizzed about the former.

"But of recent, what broke the camel's back is when the Committee of Council that investigated one particular matter that involved another councillor who was a Member of the Mayoral Committee (MMC) of the former executive mayor (Melato).

"It was about the mayor misleading Council and

actually being dishonest to Council (despite) having been given a long time - months in actual fact - to actually clear the matter, but she told lies openly," Motloung stated.

Motloung further noted that the Council is still awaiting a report from a committee established by the Speaker to investigate if there were any breaches of the Code of Conduct.

"We are still expecting another committee that was established by the Speaker to table its report to Council through the Speaker.

"That committee was now going to investigate the breach of the Code of Conduct by the former mayor. That committee was also going to propose sanctions that should be meted (out) against the former mayor. We believe too many things have happened," he added.

Council Chief Whip, Moekelesi Lebesa, also commented on the removal of Melato as Mayor, whilst hinting at significant legal hurdles that may bar Mot-

loung from assuming office.

"A motion of no confidence is part of democracy, but with this one of Paratlane Motloung there is a legal technicality that is involved there, which I cannot mention right now, but it might be challenged in court," Lebesa warned.

Despite Lebesa remaining tight-lipped, the election of Paratlane may in fact be on incredibly shaky ground, balanced precariously on the interpretation of the council's own Standing Rules and Orders.

The DA also stated on their social media platforms that they doubt the validity of the election of a new mayor as there was no quorum at that specific time of voting.

Rule 41.2 of the Standing Rules and Orders dictates that if a lack of quorum is suspected, the Speaker must discontinue proceedings and count the members present.

If a quorum is not restored within 20 minutes, the

Speaker is legally obligated to adjourn the meeting, a protocol the DA argues was ignored during the mayoral vote.

While the opposition relies on Rule 41.6 - which allows business to proceed if a group of councillors leaves in protest - the condition remains that the remainder must still constitute a quorum.

Melato also reportedly filed an urgent application in the Bloemfontein High Court to try halt the motion - a move that proved unsuccessful according to MAP16 in a statement that celebrated their feat.

According to the statement, issued by the movement's Central Coordinator, Azael Nhlapo, apart from SARKO, the parties that supported the motion are SARKO, the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF), Freedom Front Plus (FF+), African Transformation Movement (ATM), Afrikan United Lustre Association (AULA) and former SABC head, Hlaudi Motsoeneng's party, African Content Movement (ACM).

Contact US

No 09 Henri Van Rooijen Street
New East End
Bloemfontein
9301

Tel:
051 430 0129

Email:
info@journalnews.co.za
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Postal Address:
No 09 Henri Van Rooijen Street
New East End
Bloemfontein
9301

Editor-in-Chief
Refilwe Mochoari
E-mail: editor@journalnews.co.za
Cell: 083 943 9879

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REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS TO SERVE ON THE RISK MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE (x4)

The Office of the City Manager invites suitable qualified persons in **Financial Management, Auditing, Risk Management and Information Technology** fields to serve as independent members of the Risk Management Committee.

REQUIREMENTS: A relevant qualification in Financial Management, Auditing, Risk Management, Information Technology and relevant extensive experience in the fields. Excellent knowledge of the Risk Management Frameworks and Corporate Governance, ICT Governance, Local Government Municipal Finance Management Act, COSO model, ISO 31000 and King V Report. Knowledge and understanding of Local Government, legislation, policies and internal controls. Minimum of three (3) years serving in risk management or oversight committees. Membership with recognized professional bodies will serve as added advantage.

DUTIES: Assist the Accounting Officer in discharging their responsibilities for risk management. Review risk management policy, strategy and implementation plan. Evaluate the extent and effectiveness of integration of risk management within the City. Assess implementation of the risk management policy, strategy and implementation plan. Evaluate the effectiveness of mitigation strategies implemented to address the material risks of the City. Review material findings and recommendations by assurance providers on the system of risk management and monitor implementation of such recommendations. Develop the Risk Management Committee's key performance indicators for approval by the Accounting Officer. Interact with the Audit Committee to share information relating to material risks of the City. Provide timely and useful reports to the Accounting Officer/Council on the state of risk management, together with accompanying recommendations to address any deficiencies identified by the Committee.

TERM OF OFFICE: The Term of Office of appointed candidates will be three (3) years. This is not a full time appointment. The Risk Management Committee has four (4) statutory meetings per annum and additional special meetings may be convened by the Chairperson as deemed necessary by the Committee or Accounting Officer.

REMUNERATION: Appointed candidates shall be remunerated in accordance with the tariffs set by the National Treasury applicable to non-official members of Committees of Inquiry.

The closing date for submission of application forms (available on the municipality's website), curriculum vitae and supporting documents is **17 April 2026 @ 16H00**. Applicants, who wish to be considered, must post/submit their applications and comprehensive CV's clearly marked **Risk Management Committee Mangaung Metro Municipality** directly to the address indicated below:

**THE CITY MANAGER
MANGAUNG METROPOLITAN MUNICIPALITY
P.O. Box 3704
BLOEMFONTEIN
9300**

Or hand deliver to:

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MANGAUNG METROPOLITAN MUNICIPALITY
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Enquiries may be directed to:
Chief Risk Officer: Morakane Mototo (051) 405 8382 or email: Morakane.Mototo@mangaung.co.za

Please note: should you not be contacted by this office within three (3) months after the closing date, kindly consider that your application was unsuccessful.

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Dagga Busts Surge Across Provinces, With Women Emerging as Key Couriers

Intelligence-driven police operations across the FS, NC and NW uncover a growing pattern in drug trafficking, with women increasingly implicated in high-value dagga busts

By Bernell Simons

Recent police operations across the Free State, Northern Cape and North West have revealed a concerning trend in drug-related arrests, with several women among those caught in major SAPS busts involving dagga worth hundreds of thousands of rand. Authorities say the arrests form part of intensified intelligence-driven operations targeting trafficking routes running through central South Africa.

The latest incident unfolded in Upington in the Northern Cape, where a woman was arrested on Friday, 20 March 2026, after police allegedly discovered dagga with an estimated street value of R670,500 in her possession at a fuel station.

According to police spokesperson Molefi Shemane, members of the crime prevention unit acted on intelligence information and identified a suspect matching a circulated description. A search of three bags believed to belong to the woman uncovered large quantities of dagga, leading to her immediate arrest. She is expected to appear in the Upington Magistrate's Court on charges related to dealing in drugs.

The arrest comes amid growing concern over the rise in drug-related crimes in the Northern Cape. Third-quarter crime statistics for the 2025/2026 financial year reflect a 27.4% increase in drug-related offences. ZF Mgcawu district commissioner Maj. Gen.

Monica Sebili commended the swift response by officers and highlighted the critical role of community tip-offs in disrupting illegal networks.

The Upington case is not isolated. Earlier this month, on 7 March 2026, police arrested a 25-year-old suspect in the same town after stopping a vehicle along Schroder Street during routine patrols. Officers became suspicious when the driver allegedly attempted to change lanes abruptly upon noticing the patrol vehicle. A search of the car uncovered multiple bags of dagga valued at approximately R478,000, resulting in charges of dealing in drugs.

Similar operations in neighbouring provinces are painting a broader picture. In both the Free State and North



West, police have reported arrests of female suspects linked to drug trafficking, suggesting a possible shift in how syndicates are moving contraband across provincial borders.

In the Free State, SAPS units engaged in ongoing crime-prevention operations have made several arrests tied to dagga and other illicit substances. Officers warn that traffickers are adapting their methods, increasingly relying on smaller loads and multiple couriers to evade detection.

Meanwhile, in the North West, authorities continue to flag the province as a critical transit corridor for drugs moving between the Northern Cape, Gauteng and neighbouring countries. Arrests of female suspects during roadblocks and targeted operations have reinforced concerns about evolving trafficking tactics. Police believe the emerging pattern may point to organised groups recruiting women as couriers, as they are often perceived to attract less suspicion during travel. While no single coordinated syndicate has been confirmed in the recent cases, investigators note striking similarities in modus operandi — including the use of public transport routes, fuel station stops and highway interceptions.

SAPS officials say intensified patrols, roadblocks and intelligence-led interventions will remain central to efforts aimed at dismantling these networks.

"We will continue to act on information received and ensure that drugs do not reach our communities," said Sebili.

With multiple arrests recorded within weeks across three provinces, authorities believe the recent busts may represent only a fraction of a broader, more organised network — one that is increasingly relying on ordinary travellers, including women, to move drugs through the heart of the country.

Deliver or We Won't Vote

Bloemfontein's Dark and Silver City residents have threatened to avoid polls in protest to the endless empty promises by the provincial government

By Bernell Simons

President Cyril Ramaphosa was met with a stark ultimatum during his visit to the long-delayed Dark and Silver City housing project this week: deliver homes or risk losing votes.

The warning was not delivered through a formal memorandum or a political briefing, but in bold white lettering painted across a black banner near the development reading 'No flats, no vote'.

For residents living in informal conditions adjacent to the site, the message reflects years of deep-seated frustration with a project that has come to symbolise stalled delivery and fading trust.

Launched more than a decade ago under the Community Residential Unit (CRU) programme, Dark and Silver City was intended to provide over 500 affordable rental units for low-income households.

Construction was initially expected to be completed by 2016, yet the project became mired in contractor disputes and significant funding challenges. Work stopped and started repeatedly as costs escalated from just over R100 million to more than R994 million, leaving several structures exposed to vandalism and weather damage.

While the government recently indicated that parts of the development are now ready for a phased handover, significant portions remain incomplete. Infrastructure and electrification work is still ongoing in several blocks, leaving locals sceptical of the latest round of official assurances.

"How do you celebrate something that is almost ten years late?" asked one community member who declined to be named for fear of eviction.

"People applied when their children were small, and now those children are grown," they added, highlighting the generational impact of the delay.

Many families continue to live in informal structures within sight of the completed apartment blocks, a contrast that has only sharpened local criticism. Residents argue that even reduced rent-



From left is Human Settlement Minister Thembu Simelane, President Cyril Ramaphosa and Premier MaQueen Letsoha-Mathae. Picture: OTP/Facebook

al rates are viewed as unaffordable for households dependent on social grants, raising concerns about systemic exclusion.

"We see the flats every day, but they are not for us," said another resident, questioning the logic of the rental model. "They say we must afford rent, but if we could afford that, we wouldn't be living here in the first place."

The growing discontent has increasingly taken on political overtones, linking democratic participation directly to tangible service delivery on the ground. Community members suggest the 'No flats, no vote' slogan reflects a broader shift in how

residents view the value of their ballots.

"People are tired. We have been waiting for years, and now we are saying enough is enough," they said a local resident who joined the small groups gathered near the site during the presidential visit.

The scene underscored the severe political risks associated with prolonged delays in basic service delivery across the Mangaung metro.

Despite repeated commitments from the state to finally complete the project, trust among the local population appears increasingly fragile.

Officials have framed the phased completion of

Dark and Silver City as a milestone in addressing housing backlogs and restoring dignity.

However, experts warn that these extended delays do more than just inflate costs - they systematically erode public confidence in state-led housing programmes.

While Ramaphosa's visit was intended to be an oversight and progress inspection, it also served as an opportunity for the residents to express their frustration about a project that has overshot its original deadline by nearly a decade - pointing to the fundamental lack of accountability in governance.

New 24-Hour Clinic Brings Lifeline to Struggling Sheila Community



North West Health MEC Sello Lekhe officially opened the new Sheila Clinic. Picture: Supplied

By Lerato Mutlanyane

After three years of hardship and uncertainty, residents of Sheila Village near Itsoeng finally have a reason to breathe again. On 26 March 2026, North West Health MEC Sello Lekhe officially opened the new Sheila Clinic - a 24-hour facility set to transform access to healthcare in the area.

For years, the community has endured long distances to medical care, with many unable to afford transport or forced to wait hours for assistance. The crisis deepened after the closure of Thusanong District Hospital in 2022 due to safety concerns, and the devastating fire that destroyed Christiana District Hospital in 2021, causing damages exceeding R95 million.

Residents were left grappling with overcrowded clinics, medication shortages and costly travel to distant facilities.

"I had to spend R60 for a return trip just to collect my treatment for hypertension and arthritis," said Malesolle Mokoatsi, a Sheila Village resident. For many, such costs became an unsustainable burden in already strained households.

Although facilities like Tlalelo Madyibi Clinic and General De La Rey District Hospital continued to operate, they struggled under pressure - often turning patients away due to long queues, limited resources and insufficient medication.

Before its closure, Thusanong District Hospital served as a critical lifeline to more than 200,000 people across surrounding areas, including Lichtenburg, Coligny, Biesiesvlei, Verdwaal, Bodibe and Itsoeng.

Its loss exposed the fragile state of rural healthcare in the province.

The opening of the Sheila Clinic signals a turning point. Operating around the clock, the facility is expected to ease pressure on nearby institutions while bringing essential services closer to home.

For the people of Sheila Village, the clinic represents more than just bricks and mortar - it is a restoration of dignity, access and hope.

While challenges in rural healthcare persist, this long-awaited development marks a significant step forward in ensuring that no community is left behind.

Khoi and San Remains Return Home



The reburial ceremony of 63 Khoi and San ancestral human remains held at Kinderlê Monument in Steinkopf, Northern Cape Province. Picture: GCIS

By JN Reporter

In the arid stretches of Namaqualand in the Northern Cape, where rugged hills meet endless sky, 63 Khoi and San ancestors have finally been laid to rest on home soil - closing a painful chapter that spanned more than a century.

Between 1868 and 1924, their remains were removed without consent by colonial Europeans for race-based scientific research, denied dignity in death and reduced to objects of study. Last year, they were repatriated from the University of Glasgow, where they had been housed at the Hunterian Museum.

Speaking at the reburial ceremony near Steinkopf, President Cyril Ramaphosa acknowledged the deep injustice, describing the erasure of indigenous peoples as a tragedy that often went unrecognised. He said South Africa would not wait for incomplete apologies from former colonial powers.

"We will restore dignity - on our own terms," he said, framing the return as an act of restitution rooted in ubuntu and shared humanity.

Following their return, the remains were entrusted to the Iziko Museums of South Africa before beginning their final journey north. Along the way, ceremonies, rituals and a night vigil honoured the ancestors before their re-

burial at the Kinderlê monument - a site already regarded as sacred ground.

For descendants, the moment carried both pain and relief. National Griqua Council chairperson Barend van Wyk spoke of the emotional weight of knowing their ancestors had been exhumed and displayed.

"Why did they do that to human beings?" he asked. "But today, we are grateful we can finally lay them to rest in their land."

Dionne Barley, a direct descendant, described the reburial as a moment of dignity restored - no longer confined to museum shelves, but returned to their rightful place.

Among those present was Ouma Katrina Esau, the last fluent speaker of the endangered N|uu language, who said attending the ceremony fulfilled a lifelong wish despite ill health.

The reburial, coordinated by government and heritage bodies, ensured each ancestor was placed in an individual grave - a deliberate act of respect denied to them in the past. As the sun set over Kinderlê, Ramaphosa reaffirmed government's commitment to recovering more ancestral remains taken abroad.

The ceremony was more than a burial. It was a reckoning - and a step toward healing a history long marked by silence, loss and dispossession.

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MATJHABENG MUNICIPALITY

PUBLIC NOTICE
ORDINARY COUNCIL MEETING

Notice is hereby given in terms of section 19 of the Municipal System Act (Act no 32 of 2000) that a meeting will be held as follows:

DATE: TUESDAY, 31 MARCH 2026
TIME: 15H00
VENUE: COUNCIL CHAMBERS

Any member of the public is welcome to attend.

Dr. Vuyo Adonis
ACTING MUNICIPAL MANAGER Notice: /2026

Land Row Erupts in Sol Plaatjie as Residents Defy Eviction Threats



Angry Rhythm City residents. Picture: Baagedi Sethora

By Lerato Mutlanyane

Tensions are boiling over in the Rhythm City informal settlement in Kimberley, where a bitter land dispute between residents and the Sol Plaatjie Municipality has escalated into open defiance, protests, and threats of eviction.

While South Africa marked Human Rights Day on Saturday, just kilometres from the AR Abass Stadium where President Cyril Ramaphosa delivered his keynote address, angry Rhythm City residents took to the streets demanding land rights and access to basic services.

Inside the packed stadium, Ramaphosa acknowledged the country's persistent inequalities, conceding that many South Africans still live without dignity despite progress since 1994.

"We must be able to admit that too many South Africans still experience the indignity of unemployment, the injustice of inequality, and the daily struggles for basic services," he said.

"For them, the Constitution is yet to be a lived reality in full... A right that exists on paper is not yet fully a right that is lived by our people."

For residents of Rhythm City, those words rang painfully true.

Many say they have lived on the contested land for more than seven years and now consider themselves permanent occupants. However, they claim the municipality is reneging on earlier assurances and threatening to remove them.

Resident Kgomotso Mokgothu told Journal News that the community is prepared to stand its ground.

"We have proof in black and white, given to us by the municipal manager, Thapelo Matlala, confirming that this land is ours. We are permanent here," said Mokgothu.

"Now the municipality is delaying the process. Unless they want the land for business purposes, we don't understand. We are not going anywhere."

But the municipality disputes these claims. Spokesperson Thabo Mthibi said the settlement remains informal and is situated on privately owned land, with portions belonging to the Department of Education.

"There is no formalisation. Rhythm City is on private land," said Mthibi.

"Some residents may qualify for relocation to Frans Farm if they are registered on the National Housing Needs Register."

He added that the municipality has held multiple engagements with the community over the years, including fresh consultations as recently as 26 March 2026.

As the standoff deepens, the clash highlights the growing pressure on municipalities to balance land ownership laws with the urgent demand for housing — a tension that continues to play out in communities across the country.

For the people of Rhythm City, the fight is no longer just about land — it is about dignity, recognition, and survival. With neither side backing down, the standoff is fast turning into a test of whether constitutional promises can withstand the pressures of poverty, land scarcity, and political will.

FS Leads Push for Accountable, People-Centred Municipalities

By Lerato Mutlanyane and Bernell Simons

With Local Government Elections fast approaching, government is intensifying efforts to restore trust and stabilise struggling municipalities, placing governance reform firmly at the centre of its agenda.

Building on calls by CoGTA Minister Velenkosini Hlabisa for municipalities to strengthen governance systems and rebuild public confidence ahead of the 2026–2027 polls, government has reaffirmed its commitment to sweeping reforms. Central to this effort is the near-complete review of the 1998 White Paper on Local Government, alongside ongoing work to improve municipal funding models and professionalise staffing frameworks.

The Free State Provincial Government, in partnership with the provincial Department of CoGTA, has taken a proactive lead by hosting a consultative engagement on the Draft White Paper at Bloemfontein City Hall on 24 March 2026.

Free State MEC for CoGTA Saki Mokoena painted a stark picture of the challenges facing municipalities, citing deepening service delivery backlogs, deteriorating infrastructure, financial instability, governance failures, and rising community expectations.

The revised White Paper aims to tackle these issues through a bold reform agenda focused on ethical leadership, stronger accountability, financial sustainability, and responsive service delivery. It also emphasises deeper collaboration with communities and traditional leaders to build a more coordinated and capable local government system.

Kgosi Gaboilewe Moroka of the Barolong boo Seleka Royal House stressed the importance of unity, noting that meaningful reform will require cooperation across all sectors to secure a functional and inclusive future for local governance.

The engagement further underscored the growing role of traditional leaders within municipal systems. Deputy Minister Prince Zolile Burns-Ncamashe highlighted existing legislative provisions that enable their participation, including the potential assignment of certain municipal functions.

Mangaung Executive Mayor Gregory Nthatsi said the consultation comes at a critical moment, describing local government as the most pressured sphere due to its direct responsibility for delivering essential services such as water, sanitation, electricity, housing, and roads.

"The White Paper speaks to fundamental trans-



formations required in local government. This is the sphere closest to the people, and when it fails, communities feel the impact immediately," Nthatsi said.

Across South Africa, municipalities continue to grapple with ageing infrastructure, rising debt, weak revenue collection, and increased demand driven by urbanisation and population growth. In the Free State, several municipalities remain under administration or face severe financial distress, while residents continue to raise concerns over unreliable water supply, sewage spillages, potholes, and housing shortages.

Nthatsi noted that much of the discussion centred on fixing municipal utilities, which he described as the backbone of service delivery.

"Key issues relate to transforming utilities such as water and sanitation, electricity, and energy. If these systems fail, municipalities cannot meet the expectations of residents. The White Paper must guide the rebuilding of these institutions," he said.

He added that service delivery improvements will remain out of reach without reforming the local government funding model. Many municipalities, he said, are expected to deliver services without adequate financial support, while also struggling with low payment levels from consumers.

"We need better mechanisms to ensure services are paid for, as municipalities depend on this revenue to operate. At the same time, we must confront unfunded mandates and budgets that do not match the responsibilities assigned to local government," Nthatsi

si said. The mayor also pointed to mounting pressure around land and housing in urban centres, stressing that the revised policy must enable municipalities to respond more efficiently while ensuring fair and transparent allocation processes.

"Land and housing remain daily challenges for municipalities. The policy must equip us with the tools to respond effectively," he said.

The Fezile Dabi District, comprising Moqhaka, Ngwatho, Metsimaholo and Mafube local municipalities, continues to face governance and service delivery challenges.

Councillor Dennis Khasudi said the engagement comes at a crucial time, particularly as several municipalities struggle to pass budgets and meet service delivery obligations.

"This process will help align intergovernmental relations across all three spheres. But governance in our district remains deeply concerning. When communities still lack running water and face deteriorating roads, it is clear we are falling short of our mandate," Khasudi said.

Ultimately, the success of the White Paper reforms will depend not only on policy shifts, but on implementation, accountability, and the ability to deliver tangible improvements in people's daily lives.

As South Africa navigates mounting governance pressures, the revised White Paper stands as both a blueprint for reform and a critical test of the state's commitment to rebuilding public trust.

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REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

COMMEMORATING WORLD WATER DAY 2026

With JN's Bernell Simons

From Sewage Crisis to Recovery: How Pressure Forced a Sanitation Turnaround in Matjhabeng



For years, Matjhabeng's sanitation system symbolised municipal collapse—raw sewage in the streets, broken pump stations and failing wastewater treatment works across Welkom, Virginia, Odendaalsrus and Allanridge. Communities complained, businesses raised alarm, and rivers were polluted. Yet despite repeated warnings, progress remained painfully slow.

That changed this week.

On 22 March 2026, Water and Sanitation Minister Pemmy Majodina officially handed over more than 20 refurbished sanitation and wastewater infrastructure projects in the

Matjhabeng Local Municipality. The milestone marks the culmination of a three-year intervention—one many say was driven by sustained pressure from Executive Mayor Thanduxolo Khalipha and a coordinated effort across all spheres of government.

The handover, held during the national World Water Day programme in the Free State, brought together Deputy Ministers David Mahlobo and Sello Seithloho, Free State MEC Saki Mokoena, municipal leadership, engineers and officials from the Vaal Central Water Board—the entity tasked with leading the recovery of the municipality's failing sanitation network.

A system on the brink

By 2022, Matjhabeng's sanitation infrastructure had reached a breaking point.

Nine of the municipality's eleven wastewater treatment works were either severely damaged or completely non-functional.

Forty-two pump stations had broken down, while more than 1,500 kilometres of sewer pipeline were blocked, vandalised or destroyed. Entire communities were exposed to raw effluent, posing serious environmental and health risks.

Municipal officials say the turning

point came when Khalipha escalated the crisis to national government, warning that the municipality no longer had the financial or technical capacity to respond.

His intervention prompted the Department of Water and Sanitation to issue a ministerial directive in 2022, appointing the Vaal Central Water Board to take over refurbishment work using funding from the Regional Bulk Infrastructure Grant.

What followed was one of the largest infrastructure recovery programmes ever undertaken in Matjhabeng.

“What followed was one of the largest infrastructure recovery programmes ever undertaken in Matjhabeng”

Pressure meets partnership

Speaking at the handover, Khalipha framed the recovery as proof of what sustained pressure—and partnership—can achieve.

“This intervention is restoring the dignity of our people,” he said. “Water is life, and sanitation is dignity. When we asked for help, it was because our communities could no longer live with sewage running in the streets. Today we are seeing the results of collaboration, commitment and hard work.”

The refurbishment programme, valued in the billions of rand, included the rebuilding and repair of pump stations, restoration of wastewater treatment plants, clearing of blocked sewer networks, and replacement of vandalised electrical systems.

Technical teams from the Vaal Cen-



tral Water Board, led by acting CEO Johnny Adams and operations executive Teboho Mokoena, worked under challenging conditions to bring long-defunct infrastructure back online.

Several key pump stations and treatment works that had stood idle for years are now fully operational.

Minister Majodina said the intervention demonstrates the power of coordinated governance.

“Access to safe water and proper sanitation is a fundamental human right,” she said. “When infrastructure fails, dignity is lost. This programme shows what is possible when municipalities, provincial government and national departments work together to restore services to our people.”

Mokoena echoed the sentiment, highlighting leadership that refused to normalise collapse.

Visible change on the ground

For residents, the turnaround is no longer theoretical—it is visible.

Areas that once saw sewage flowing through streets are now serviced by functioning pump stations. Wastewater treatment works that had fallen silent are operating again, reducing environmental contamination and improving living conditions.

The scale of the work required close coordination between engineers, municipal officials, contractors and national departments. It also demanded consistent oversight to ensure that funds translated into functioning infrastructure.

While challenges remain, the intervention has shifted Matjhabeng away from the brink.

A turning point, not the finish line

Despite the progress, leaders are clear: the handover is not the end of the journey.

Khalipha emphasised that sustaining the gains will require both institutional discipline and community responsibility. He urged residents to protect infrastructure and pay for services to ensure continued maintenance.

“Government has played its part, and we thank every stakeholder who made this possible,” he said. “Now we must all work together to protect what has been built so that our communities never return to the conditions we experienced.”

Across Matjhabeng, the signs of recovery are evident—pipes are flowing, pump stations are running, and treatment works are functioning.

The years of sewage spills cannot be undone. But the municipality is no longer defined solely by failure.

From pressure to progress, Matjhabeng's sanitation turnaround stands as a clear example: when leadership persists,



stakeholders align, and government acts decisively, even the most entrenched service delivery crises can begin to turn.

Matjhabeng's recovery is more than a technical fix—it is a reminder of what accountable leadership, sustained pressure and coordinated governance can achieve when communities are pushed to the brink.

For years, residents endured conditions that stripped them of dignity and threatened their health, with little assurance that change would come. The turnaround did not happen overnight, nor did it come easily. It required political will, national intervention, and the alignment of multiple stakeholders willing to confront a crisis that had long been ignored.

At the centre of it all was persistence—the refusal to normalise failure.

Executive Mayor Thanduxolo Khalipha's escalation of the crisis forced it onto the national agenda, while the intervention led by the Vaal Central Water Board translated urgency into action. The result is a system that, while not perfect, is functioning again and restoring a basic standard of living for thousands of residents.

But the real measure of success lies ahead.

Sustaining these gains will depend on consistent maintenance, financial discipline, and community buy-in. Infrastructure that has been rebuilt must now be protected. Mu-

nicipal systems must be strengthened to prevent another collapse. And residents must play their part in safeguarding what has been restored.

The lesson from Matjhabeng is clear: crisis can be reversed, but only through collective effort and continued accountability.

As the municipality moves forward, it carries both the scars of its past and the promise of renewal. The pipes may be flowing again, but the real victory will be ensuring they never stop.

Northern Cape's Health Infrastructure Drive Gains Momentum

The Northern Cape is turning the tide on healthcare delivery — placing infrastructure at the centre of a bold, results-driven push to expand access, modernise facilities, and restore dignity in public health services across the province. Premier Zamani Saul has recently adopted a mission-driven approach to governance, moving beyond compliance to focus on outcomes that matter most to communities. During his State of the Province Address on 26 February in Springbok, nearly 1,000 km from Kimberley, Saul outlined a strategy that directs government attention, resources, and technical expertise toward high-impact priorities such as healthcare, agriculture, and rural development.

To drive implementation, integrated multi-disciplinary teams have been established — bringing together expertise in monitoring and evaluation, finance, human resources, infrastructure, ICT, policy and planning, legal services, and risk management. Within the Department of Health, now under the leadership of MEC Nontobeko Vilakazi, this approach has translated into a structured 10-Point Turnaround Action Plan, reinforced by unannounced visits to public health facilities. “These visits are practical interventions that focus on leadership stability, the condition of infrastructure, staffing, equipment, medicine, ICT systems, and the patient experience,” Saul said.

Journal News Editor-in-Chief, Refilwe Mochoari, spotlights Saul's 10-Point Turnaround Strategy as a critical step toward strengthening healthcare delivery, improving patient experiences, and ensuring accountability across the province's public health system.

R68 Million Accident and Emergency Unit Launched at Kuruman Hospital

Northern Cape Premier Zamani Saul, alongside Health MEC Nontobeko Vilakazi and John Taolo Gaetsewe District Mayor Queen Mogatle, earlier this year broke ground on a new 30-bed Accident and Emergency Unit valued at R68 million at Kuruman District Hospital.

The facility is expected to serve more than 154,000 residents across the John Taolo Gaetsewe District — a region experiencing steady population growth driven by economic activity.

According to the Department of Health, Kuruman Hospital's accident and emergency services began as a single room with just two beds. Today, the unit manages approximately 539 motor vehicle accident cases annually — accounting for 66% of such incidents in the district.

As the province modernises, the pressure on healthcare infrastructure has intensified, particularly in one of the fastest-growing districts in the Northern Cape. Recognising the

urgency, the department introduced an 8-bed temporary modular structure in January 2026 to provide immediate relief while permanent infrastructure is developed.

The new Accident and Emergency Unit is designed not only to meet current demand but to future-proof healthcare delivery for generations to come.

R22 Million BoeBoe Van Wyk Oncology Clinic Brings Care Closer to Home

In another major milestone, patients in the Namakwa District can now access life-saving chemotherapy treatment closer to home, following the opening of the R22 million BoeBoe Van Wyk Oncology Clinic on 25 February.

Premier Saul

and MEC Nontobeko Vilakazi officially unveiled the facility, joined by Nama Khoi Municipality Mayor Mervin Cloete and Caroline Mongale from the National Department of Health.

The clinic is named in honour of Jacobus Frederick “BoeBoe” Van Wyk, a respected leader who dedicated his life to public service. A member of the African National Congress, Van Wyk served as a Member of Parliament from 1997 to 2004 and held several key positions, including MEC for Safety and Liaison, MEC for Housing and Local Government, and notably MEC for Health in the Northern Cape.

He later served as Speaker of the Northern Cape Provincial Legislature and Mayor of Nama Khoi Local Municipality.

Constructed by Vedanta Zinc International under the leadership of Vijay Kumar, the world-class facility was completed in just 10 months — on time, within budget, and to high-quality standards. The project recorded 45,000 person-hours of construction without a single injury.

“This is not merely a building — it is a powerful testament to what becomes possible when government and the private sector unite with shared purpose and unwavering dedication,” said Saul during the launch.

At its core, the BoeBoe Van Wyk Oncology Clinic features a dedicated 10-bed chemotherapy unit, significantly boosting capacity in a health system that serves 80% of the province's population.

“Every bed represents a fighting chance. Every treatment brings renewed hope,” Saul added.

Vilakazi echoed these sentiments, expressing gratitude for the Premier's leadership and vision, noting that such milestones are the result of sustained commitment to improving healthcare access and outcomes across the Northern Cape.

Steinkopf Clinic Restored: A Community Reclaims Its Lifeline

A total of R12.5 million has been invested in the refurbishment of the Steinkopf Community Clinic in the Namakwa District, restoring a critical healthcare facility that was destroyed by fire in 2018.

On 24 February, Premier Saul, accompanied by Health MEC Nontobeko Vilakazi, officially reopened the clinic — marking a deeply significant milestone for the Steinkopf community.

The original Steinkopf

Primary Health Care (PHC) facility was set alight in 2018, leaving nearly 10,000 residents across 1,939 households without access to a local clinic. At the time, the facility comprised five consulting rooms and provided comprehensive primary healthcare services to the community.

The multi-million rand refurbishment project, completed in November last year, has now restored essential services to the area.

The reopening was attended by the department's Head of Department Oupa Phiri, alongside Ward Councillors Susan Cloete and Warren Britz, whose collective efforts supported the project's completion.

Located approximately 51km outside Springbok in the Nama Khoi sub-district, the facility now serves a population of about 9,972 people. It currently sees an average of 100 patients per day and provides a full spectrum of primary healthcare services.

These include weekly doctor visits, community-based rehabilitation outreach, and treatment programmes for TB, HIV and AIDS, as well as care for non-communicable diseases such as diabetes and hypertension.

“This is more than a building. This is a community's right to dignified, accessible healthcare restored,” Saul said, as residents — particularly young people — celebrated the long-awaited reopening.

Robert Mangaliso Sobukwe Hospital Ushers in Advanced Imaging Technology

In another major step forward, the Robert Mangaliso Sobukwe Hospital has introduced one of the world's largest CT scanner bores, significantly enhancing diagnostic capabilities in the province.

The new 90cm CT scanner — among the largest available globally — is expected to improve both patient comfort and clinical precision, particularly in oncology and trauma care.

Often referred to by patients as the “tunnel,” the wider bore allows for improved imaging of larger areas of the body, making it especially valuable for cancer patients undergoing radiation therapy planning.

Its expanded design enables clinicians to capture a broader focal area with greater accuracy, reducing the risk of missing cancer cells in soft tissue and ensuring more precise treatment planning.

According to the Department of Health, this investment marks a significant leap toward delivering world-class healthcare services to communities across the Northern Cape.

Premier Prioritises Health Systems and Good Governance

As part of his Ten-Point Turnaround Action Plan, Premier Saul has placed strong emphasis on leadership stability and good governance within the Department of Health.

In February, the department finalized the appointment of senior managers, reinforcing its leadership structure and ensuring a capable team is in place to drive reforms.

According to the Department of Health, these appointments mark a decisive step toward restoring full organizational capacity and strengthening oversight, accountability, and service delivery across the province.

“With these positions now filled, the department is better positioned to deliver on its mandate of providing quality, accessible healthcare to the people of the Northern Cape,” Saul said, underscoring his commitment to a health system that is efficient, responsive, and community-centred.



Opinion

Dr Ernest Peresu
Centre for Health Systems Research & Development (CHSR&D), University of the Free State



World TB Day: Ending TB is not ambitious – it is achievable

World TB Day is commemorated on 24 March each year, marking Dr Robert Koch's discovery of the bacterium that causes TB in 1882. It reminds us of how humanity has grappled with this disease, and of the global efforts towards its diagnosis, treatment, and ultimate cure. Under this year's theme, "Yes, You and I Can End TB", South Africa is highlighting the critical role of individuals and communities in turning the tide on the TB epidemic.

TB is not the kind of crisis that seizes media headlines; it is a quiet, slow-burning epidemic with a profound global impact, particularly in developing countries. It spreads through the air when people with lung TB cough, sneeze or spit, and disproportionately affects the poor. The disease thrives in overcrowded housing, in mining communities, in prisons, and among those with compromised immunity. Despite being preventable and curable, TB remains the world's leading cause of death from a single infectious agent. In 2024 alone, the disease claimed an estimated 1.23 million lives and affected over 10.7 million people globally.

End TB Campaign

In South Africa, TB remains a major public health challenge, with drug-resistant TB (DR-TB) continuing to undermine progress. In 2024, an estimated 249 000 people developed TB, including 14 000 that had DR-TB, yet only about three in five people accessed treatment. TB-related deaths fell by a modest 17% between 2015 and 2024, reaching 54 000. The closely intertwined HIV and TB connection continues to shape the TB epidemic, with more than half of all TB patients living with HIV. TB remains the primary cause of death among this group.

These figures underscore why World TB Day matters. It's a moment to reflect on progress and renew accountability. While progress is not victory, there is clear momentum. Supported by the concerted



efforts of people affected by TB, community health workers, civil society, and private sector partners, the End TB Campaign, led by the National Department of Health (NDoH), has driven 2.9 million TB tests, reaching 58% of its ambitious target of five million, and diagnosing approximately 152 000 new TB cases ahead of March 2026. The Free State province alone achieved 55% of its target, identifying about 7 000 new TB cases. Although the target has

not yet been reached, this effort is likely to result in the highest number of TB tests conducted in any single year.

Encouragingly, TB incidence in South Africa has declined substantially over the past decade, with reductions of more than half since 2015. Treatment coverage increased to 79%, and success rates improved across many districts. These gains reflect expanded screening, improved access to rapid diag-

nostics tools, stronger contact tracing, and wider provision of TB preventive treatment. However, persistent structural and systemic challenges continue to limit the full benefits of integrating TB and HIV services.

Eradicating TB is achievable

Launched in April 2025, the NDoH's TB Recovery Plan 4.0 seeks to strengthen TB services disrupted during the COVID-19 pandemic while advancing progress toward the national End TB targets. The Plan emphasises generating demand for TB services through stronger communication and community engagement, recognising that people are more likely to act when they understand their risk, and trust the health system. It prioritises active case-finding among high-risk groups, including children, adolescents, and those living with HIV, while strengthening linkage to and retention in care, where gaps remain. However, this progress remains fragile; ongoing funding uncertainties and recent disruptions in health-related aid threaten to slow or even reverse these gains, underscoring the need to rethink current funding mechanisms to sustain and expand essential TB services.

Ending TB is therefore no longer just a scientific challenge but also a test of leadership, long-term investment, and collective resolve. For universities, this moment calls for research that stretches beyond laboratories into communities. Addressing behavioural and social determinants of TB is essential if evidence is to meaningfully inform policy and practice.

While progress may feel incremental, South Africa's End TB Campaign reflects a forward movement. TB control is increasingly embedded in community health systems and supported by national leadership. This growing momentum offers a reason for optimism; ending TB is not ambitious – it is achievable.

Fuel levy increases will place strain on South Africa's ride-hailing economy



South Africa's latest Budget Speech has once again placed fuel costs at the centre of the national economic conversation. Presenting the 2026 National Budget, Finance Minister Enoch Godongwana confirmed that the government would raise several fuel-related levies as of April 2026. As he told Parliament, "the general fuel levy will go up by 9 cents per litre for petrol and 8 cents per litre for diesel. The carbon fuel levy will go up by 5 cents per litre for petrol and 6 cents for diesel." These adjustments, alongside an increase in the Road Accident Fund levy, translate into motorists paying roughly 21 cents more per litre overall once the changes take effect.

For policymakers balancing fiscal pressures, the increases may appear modest, but for the millions of South Africans who depend on fuel daily, the impact is cumulative.

Transport costs sit at the heart of economic activity. When fuel prices rise, the effect ripples outward through supply chains, delivery services and daily commuting. In an economy already facing persistent financial strain, even small shifts in input costs can carry significant consequences.

South Africans are entering this latest adjustment after several years of economic pressure, with analysts and consumer organisations warning that levy increases inevitably cascade through the broader economy. Higher transport costs influence everything from food prices to delivery fees and commuting costs, and the gig mobility sector is no different, where the pressure is felt directly.

What the levy increase means for ride-hailing

For ride-hailing drivers, fuel is often the single largest daily expense. When pump prices increase, drivers must either absorb the additional cost, work longer hours to maintain income or increase fares to remain financially viable. None of these options are straightforward in a market where riders themselves are becoming more cost-conscious. Ride-hailing platforms have played a significant role in expanding mobility options across South Africa. Many services rely on algorithm-driven pricing systems to calculate fares in real time.

That being said, the inDrive platform operates differently, with a lower commission model that allows drivers to retain a larger share of each trip's fare, giving them greater financial breathing room when costs increase.

Equally important, inDrive is built on a peer-to-peer model where drivers and passengers interact directly, negotiating fares in a fair and transparent way. Rather than relying solely on automated algorithms, this approach allows drivers to factor in real-world expenses, such as rising fuel prices, while giving passengers the flexibility to choose options that best fit their budgets. However, when operating costs such as fuel fluctuate sharply, even inDrive drivers often have limited direct control over how those costs are reflected in fares.

The knock-on effect for businesses and deliveries

Across South Africa, many small and medium-sized enterprises rely on flexible logistics services to move goods between suppliers, warehouses and customers. Platforms such as inDrive Freight support businesses that cannot afford to operate their own vehicle fleets.

When fuel costs rise, those businesses face a myriad of difficult trade-offs, including an increase in delivery prices. For companies operating on tight margins, every additional rand spent on fuel directly affects profitability. The result is a chain reaction across the economy. Transport becomes more expensive, goods become more expensive and consumers ultimately absorb part of the cost.

While the government's fiscal challenges are well understood, I cannot overstate the reality that policies that affect fuel prices inevitably shape the livelihoods of workers in mobility-dependent sectors.

Ride-hailing drivers, couriers and logistics partners are an increasingly important part of South Africa's digital economy, providing services that keep cities functioning. They support small businesses and offer income opportunities in a labour market that remains under increasing pressure.

As policymakers continue to consider transport policy and fiscal adjustments, it is important that the realities of this growing mobility workforce remain part of the conversation. Ensuring that drivers can earn sustainably while riders can continue to move around their cities is, as such, an economic priority for the country as a whole. **By Ashif Black, Country Representative for South Africa at inDrive**

Letter to the Editor

The editor reserves the right to edit and reject letters and all correspondence must include your full names, address and phone numbers. Write to: editor@journalnews.co.za



Pastor Motsamai Kareli
Empowerment Ministries International

Change is Good—But First, Know What Should Never Change

This article is from my mentor and I thought it's relevant and necessary to have it published as part of the continuation of our previous article on core values. I hope you enjoy it but more so apply principles it teaches especially those in business.

Imagine a President of the United States wrestling with the challenges of a rapidly changing and increasingly chaotic world—among them, new global competitors rising in both the East and West, fickle and unpredictable voters, government bureaucracies whose systems are fast becoming outdated, information technologies fomenting upheaval in virtually every aspect of the society. At a Cabinet meeting, the President's top advisers are handed a memo that begins:

We no longer hold these truths to be self-evident. We can no longer afford to hold the belief that all men are created equal...

The Commander-in-Chief then speaks: "We need to take a hard look at the Bill of Rights. We certainly can't let those outdated values get in our way. Nothing is sacred anymore—not freedom of religion, not freedom of the press, not the right to trial by jury. We're in the third wave now. We must change."

Of course, this is an absurd scenario. But I've created it to drive home a point: Reengineering and other prevailing management fads that urge dramatic change and fundamental transformation on all fronts are not only wrong, they are dangerous. Any great and enduring human institution must have an underpinning of core values and a sense of timeless purpose that should never change. Give up the bedrock principles—the "what we stand for" and "why we exist"—of a great nation, and it will eventually cease to be great.

The same lesson applies to corporations. I've found that the best of them—companies like Hewlett-Packard, Disney, and Boeing, which as a group have outpaced the stock market averages some 15-fold since the 1920s—have one thing in common. They have successfully adapted over the decades to a changing world without losing their core values. They have done so by grasping the difference between timeless principles and daily practices.

Disney, for example, has almost religiously preserved a central ideology of wholesomeness and

bringing happiness to people, yet it has continually changed its product strategy—from cartoons, to feature films, to the Mickey Mouse Club, to Disneyland, to videos. Boeing resolutely held tight its core philosophy of product integrity and leading-edge aviation, yet turned its business strategy upside down in the 1950s by betting the company on commercial jets at a time when 80% of its business came from military bombers.

At IBM, service to the customer above everything else was a core value; dominating the mainframe computer market was a business strategy; and compulsory white shirts an operating practice. IBM stumbled badly in the late 1980s because it drifted from its core values (which it should never have abandoned) while remaining too rigid in its strategies and operating practices (which it should have changed far more vigorously).

So how do you tell the difference between timeless principles and ephemeral practices? First—and this is vital—understand that a core ideology does not arise from the pursuit of competitive advantage. Valuing freedom might be a competitive advantage for the U.S., but that is not why we embrace this belief. A true core value is something you would hold even if it became a competitive disadvantage (although that seldom happens).

HP founders Bill Hewlett and David Packard didn't make respect for the individual a core value at their company for strategic advantage. Rather, they believed it was the morally right way to manage. At one point they passed up significant growth and profit opportunities by turning down big government contracts that would have forced them into a pattern of on-again, off-again, "hire and fire" employment. The decision paid off, though, by fostering greater loyalty among HP's workers.

The critical question to ask is, if the world changed such that you were penalized for this tenet, would you continue to hold it? If so, then it is probably part of your core ideology. You will likely only find a handful of truly basic principles that you would want your company to hold forever—any more than five, and you're probably mixing up core ideals and business practices. Answer this question with clarity, and you'll know what you should not change. That crucial knowledge, in turn, will then free you to alter everything else.

Human Rights Day 2026: A Continuing Commitment To Dignity And Progress



Each year on the 21st of March, we pause as a nation to remember the events of Sharpeville in 1960, a painful chapter in our history that exposed the brutality of a system built on injustice and exclusion.

On that day, ordinary South Africans stood in defiance of laws that sought to strip them of their dignity. Many paid the ultimate price. Their courage, and their sacrifice, form part of the foundation upon which our democratic South Africa stands today.

Human Rights Day is therefore not only a moment of remembrance; it is a call to reflection and renewal. It reminds us of how far we have come, and of the responsibility we carry to continue building a society rooted in equality, dignity and opportunity for all.

Since the advent of democracy in 1994, our country has made meaningful progress in restoring the dignity of its people. Across our province, this progress is reflected in the lives of ordinary citizens in families who now have access to decent housing, in communities where basic services are being expanded, and in young people who are being given opportunities to learn, grow and shape their own futures.

In the Free State, we see this progress in initiatives that seek to improve the daily lives of our people. From the provision of housing to vulnerable families, to investments in education infrastructure such as learner accommodation, these are practical expressions of the human rights for which so many fought.

Yet, we are mindful that the journey towards full realisation of human rights is ongoing. Many of

our people continue to face challenges including unemployment, inequality and uneven access to services. These realities call on us not for complacency, but for renewed focus and sustained effort.

As a government, we remain committed to addressing these challenges with urgency, humility and purpose. Our responsibility is to serve, to listen, to act, and to ensure that the rights enshrined in our Constitution are experienced in the everyday lives of our people.

We also recognise that building a just and inclusive society requires the collective effort of all South Africans. It calls for unity, for mutual respect, and for a shared commitment to the values that define our democracy.

On this day, we honour the memory of those who lost their lives in Sharpeville and all those who contributed to the struggle for freedom. Their legacy compels us to continue working towards a South Africa where no one is left behind, and where the dignity of every person is upheld.

As President Nelson Mandela reminded us, "to deny people their human rights is to challenge their very humanity."

Let us continue, together, to affirm that humanity not only in what we say, but in what we do, and in how we serve.

Because the true measure of our democracy is not found in our words, but in the lived reality of our people.

And that is the work we must advance every day, for every community, without exception.

Happy Human Rights Day
MaQueen Letsosa-Mathae is the Premier of the Free State Province.

Business

Markets and Indicators

Rand/Dollar	17.10	-0.83%	▣
Rand/Pound	22.80	-0.73%	▣
Rand/Euro	19.72	-0.65%	▣
Platinum	1,841.40	-3.49%	▣
Brent Crude	107.07	3.89%	▣
Gold	4,402.32	-2.80%	▣
Ethereum	2 065.66	-4.46%	▣
Bitcoin	69 110.4	-2.65%	▣

SAHPRA recalls Citro-Soda batch 'C' products

The South Africa Health Products Regulatory Authority (SAHPRA) has recalled all Citro-Soda products with batch numbers that starts with the letter C.

The health regulatory authority says every other batch, manufactured outside of clayville is safe for use. SAHPRA urges the public to check batch numbers before purchase.

The South African Health Products Regulatory Authority recalled Citro-Soda products manufactured at Adcock Ingram manufacturing facility in Clayville, Johannesburg.

The health regulator says it recalled the product due to potential contamination risk identified.

Citro-Soda is a, fast-acting, effervescent, granules treatment used to treat, heart burn, stomach acidity, and urinary tract infections.

The regulator urges consumers to take note of the batch numbers when purchasing the product.

"We have only recalled the batch numbers that start with C of the regular Citro-Soda, all regular citro-soda with batch that starts with c, which are also listed on the recall notice are the ones that are affected," says SAHPRA Regulatory Compliance Manager Mokgadi Daphney Fafudi.

The health regulator says it found pieces of black fragments in the product- which it suspects that it maybe from the worn out conveyor belts at the manufacturing facility.

SAHPRA Inspectorate and Regulatory Compliance Head Lebohang Mazibuko says, "We found presence of metal fragments from the manufacturer equipment and some inkknown black particles from those manufacturing equipment.

So, those metal fragments were from the manufacturing vessels that are used to manufacture this product. Hence we say you cannot consume a metal and be



well after that." The regulator encourages consumers to report any defects on health products sold in the country. SAHPRA CEO Dr Boitumelo Semete-Makokotlala adds,

"We would like to urge the public that as part of the country, as citizens of the country and as those who

consume these products, please do alert us of any quality defects that you encounter, with any health product available in the country."

SAHPRA urges to exercise caution when purchasing the products which could still be available in some shops across the country. **SABCNews**

Another 135 companies close down in SA as disaster looms



Liquidations in South Africa rose sharply in February 2026, rising 40% month-on-month, with warnings that worse may lie ahead.

According to the latest liquidation statistics from Stats SA, the country recorded 135 closures in February 2026, up from 96 in the first month of the year.

Year-on-year, liquidations were down 3.6% from February 2025, while the year-to-date figures were 6.1% lower.

On a three-month rolling count, liquidations from December 2025 to February 2026 (331) were 1.5% lower than the total from December 2024 to February 2025 (336).

Breaking from the usual trend, most liquidations were recorded in the trade, catering and accommodation sector in February.

Typically, the finance, insurance, real estate, and business services sector accounts for the most liquidations, but it fell to second place in February.

The liquidation data published by Stats SA is nuanced and only serves as one data point.

For instance, liquidation doesn't necessarily result from insolvency—businesses can be liquidated voluntarily for transactional purposes.

The vast majority of liquidations tracked by Stats SA (circa 85%) are voluntary liquidations, initiated by the operations themselves.

While these might be related to solvency issues, this is not something the Stats SA data explicitly tracks.

A more important measure to track in a troubled business environment is compulsory liquidation, which is often a court-ordered process initiated by shareholders, creditors, or other stakeholders.

These are more directly tied to solvency and operational issues.

For February 2026, voluntary liquidations were relatively flat year-on-year (127 in February 2026 vs 126 in February 2025), with only 8 being compulsory (compared to 14 a year ago).

This could signal a better environment for businesses at the start of the year, which aligns with most economic data indicating improved sentiment in the country in January and February.

However, the end of February marked a dramatic and decidedly negative shift for South Africa.

Trouble ahead

While the latest numbers point to a better start to the year for businesses in the country, this does not account for the massive market disruption that occurred at the end of the month.

On 28 February, the United States and Israel initiated a war against Iran in the Middle East, which has thrown global markets into chaos.

With oil prices, in particular, skyrocketing and shipping disrupted, businesses in South Africa now face escalating energy costs, which will undoubtedly add severe strain to operations.

Economists have warned that the looming energy price blow will also ripple through the entire economy—impacting industry, businesses, and consumers—shrinking the country's growth prospects.

According to independent economist Elize Kruger, petrol and diesel prices are expected to increase by R6.67/l and R11.22/l, respectively, in April.

In addition, power utility Eskom will be hiking tariffs by 8.8%, adding to the tenfold increase in electricity prices since 2008.

This, in turn, is expected to drive inflation higher to around 4.5%—far outside the South African Reserve Bank's target of 3% and its 1% tolerance band.

Because of this, interest rate hikes could be on the cards in a few months' time, and the country's economic growth in 2026 has been drawn down to 1.1% from 1.6% previously.

Business Leadership South Africa (BLSA) chief executive Busi Mavuso noted that the mining sector will be significantly affected, with diesel-dependent road and rail transport costs rising and operating costs at the mines increasing.

Various companies in the mining and smelting industry are already mulling shutdowns and operational closures, with thousands of jobs at stake.

Businesses operating on thin margins or on the edge of solvency may soon find themselves in dire straits, with costs expected to surge over the next few months—even if the war ends soon, as some hope. "The short-term pain is real, and businesses are feeling it. But this crisis will pass," Mavuso said.

"What matters is whether we use it to build resilience or simply endure it. The government must move quickly on fuel levy relief. Businesses must accelerate contingency planning and supply diversification." **BusinessTech**

Another food product pulled from shelves in South Africa, and SA police in hot water



The South African rand was steady on Wednesday as traders cautiously assessed President Donald Trump's assertion that the US was in negotiations to end the war with Iran.

This came after a significant weakening of the currency on Tuesday, where it traded around 17.1125 to the dollar.

In early trade on Thursday, the unit continued to take its cue from the global backdrop and traded around the R17/\$ level.

US President Donald Trump has stepped back from

plans to target Iran's energy infrastructure, which has boosted the appetite for risk-sensitive currencies like the rand.

However, sentiment grew cautious once again after Iran denied holding negotiations with Washington, raising concerns about a potential energy-driven economic shock.

According to central bank data released on Tuesday, South Africa's composite leading business cycle indicator rose by 0.4% month-on-month in January.

This index tracks various factors, including vehicle

sales, business confidence, the money supply, and other relevant data.

"While Q1.26 is expected to see some growth momentum, Q2.26 looks to begin with hefty fuel price increases which will have a depressing effect on retail, wholesale and vehicle sales if the war persists," said Annel Bishop, chief economist at Investec.

Investors are now focusing on Thursday's central bank rate decision, with economists expecting the bank to maintain its main lending rate at 6.75%.

The US dollar recently rose 0.2% against a basket of currencies, while oil prices rose amid supply concerns. Johannesburg's Top-40 index is currently down by 0.3%.

Additionally, the benchmark 2035 government bond experienced a decline, with the yield rising by 12.5 basis points to reach 9.01%.

As of Thursday, 26 March, the rand is trading at R17.02 to the dollar, R22.74 to the pound, and R19.68 to the euro.

Gold is currently valued at \$4,461.09 per ounce, while oil prices have risen to \$104.2 per barrel.

Fruit juice pulled from the shelves: The National Consumer Commission has confirmed a recall of specific batches of Slimsy Pomegranate Squash Concentrate (6% in one-litre bottles), with a best-before date of October 14, 2026. The recalled products, available from January 22 to March 23, 2026, total 2,894 cases or 17,364 units, distributed across Gauteng, Western Cape, Eastern Cape, Free State, and KwaZulu-Natal, according to Dynamic Brands Manufacturing. **TimesLive**



GET TO KNOW YOUR DJ

Bloem DJ Ignites Dancefloors with Signature Sound



By Lerato Mutlanyane

Commanding dancefloors in Bloemfontein's ever-evolving music scene, 38-year-old Tsoanelo Moleko — better known as DJ Tuxedo — is building a reputation for setting the tone the moment he steps behind the decks.

Inspired by industry heavyweights like Black Coffee, DJ Fresh, Oskido, Glen Lewis and Fistaz Mixwell, DJ Tuxedo has crafted a sound rooted in deep house rhythms and storytelling sets that take audiences on a nostalgic yet fresh musical journey.

From his early days spinning at house parties and varsity events around 2006, his style has evolved into a carefully curated experience — one that blends melody, energy and emotion.

"My love for music started at a very early age," he says. "At home, my mom had a tavern, and I would help play different music to entertain her guests. That's where it all began."

But the journey wasn't always smooth. Breaking into the industry proved difficult, with limited opportunities and a scene dominated by a handful of established DJs. Instead of waiting for a breakthrough, DJ Tuxedo created his own.

"Gigs were hard to come by, so I started hosting my own events," he explains. "That's how I built my name — by giving myself a platform."

Today, he's not just a DJ but a curator of moments, using music to connect people and shape experiences. His rise reflects both persistence and passion, qualities he hopes will inspire a new generation of artists.

"My desire is to see more Bloemfontein and Free State artists go national," he says. "We have the talent to shift the market — and I believe that moment is coming."

With his star steadily rising, DJ Tuxedo continues to redefine the local soundscape — one unforgettable set at a time.

Catch him live at Rio Cocktail Lounge on Second Avenue, where the Tuxedo fire is guaranteed to light up the night.



R2m Wealthier... Liema wins 'Big Brother Mzansi' S6

By Lerato Mutlanyane

After two seasons in the spotlight, Liema Phantsi has finally claimed her well-deserved victory, taking home the grand prize of R2 million on Big Brother Mzansi: Bazoza Season 6.

The 24-year-old from Qonce in the Eastern Cape captured hearts with her strategic gameplay and personal growth, leaving fans and friends overjoyed. Many had tipped fellow contestant Thandeka as the likely winner, making

the finale at Sandton Arena a tense and electrifying event.

Phantsi first appeared on the "S'yamasha" season, where she controversially walked away early with R250 000—a move that divided opinions but showcased her ability to prioritise herself and think strategically.

Returning this season with a new mindset, she declared,

"I'm not here for love. I am in a happy relationship outside the house. I am focused on the game and maintaining a tight, intentional strategy."

Her calculated approach—building alliances, choosing moments wisely, and balancing strategy with self-awareness—ultimately set her apart from the competition.

Beyond the show, Phantsi continues to grow her profile as a musician, and this victory cements her place as both a reality TV powerhouse and rising creative talent.

What once seemed like an early exit opportunity has now become a remarkable redemption story.

LaSauce Returns with Empowering EP 'Inqaba' Featuring Yvonne Chaka Chaka



By Lerato Mutlanyane

LaSauce makes a bold return to the music scene with her new EP *Inqaba*, a powerful project that blends soulful ballads with socially conscious messages.

The four-track EP features collaborations with South African music icons, including the legendary Yvonne Chaka Chaka and celebrated poet Ntsiki Mazwai. Speaking at the EP launch, LaSauce said, "Working with her and legends like her teaches you about the power of your music and presence. Collaborating with the great just makes me greater."

Tracks like *Get Down*, *In Love*, and *Sikhulume*, featuring Maskandi singer Mzukulu and Ekuseni, showcase her signature sultry sound, while the lead single *Mbokodo* delivers a poignant message addressing gender-based violence and celebrating women's strength. Released on 25 November 2025 to mark the start of the annual 16 Days of Activism for No Violence Against Women and Children, the track features Chaka Chaka on vocals and Ntsiki Mazwai's spoken-word segment, creating a moving anthem of resilience. Produced by Vuyo Manike and Ruff1020 of 1020 Cartel, *Inqaba* explores themes of love, self-discovery, and empowerment. "I am proud to share this with the world. I have put so much work into this project, and I can't wait for it to be heard," LaSauce said. With *Inqaba*, LaSauce not only reasserts her presence in South African music but also uses her platform to inspire, empower, and uplift.

Karyn White Returns to SA for April Shows

By Lerato Mutlanyane

American R&B star Karyn Layvonne White is set to light up South African stages this April, with a highly anticipated one-night performance at Kirstenbosch National Botanical Garden on 2 April 2026.

The "The Way You Love Me" hitmaker will be joined by award-winning local sensation Ami Faku, promising a soulful night of music and connection.

White said she is excited to return, describing South African audiences as uniquely engaging and deeply connected to the music.

"They don't just watch... they sing, they feel, they give back. That kind of energy is rare and sacred," she said.

Known for classics like *Superwoman*, *Romantic* and *The Way You Love Me*, White said her return comes at a powerful new chapter in her career, with new music and global expansion underway.

Beyond Cape Town, she will headline a performance in Durban on 4 April in support of the Iconic Global Advocacy Concert Against Gender-Based Violence and Femicide.

Additional shows include *Nekkie's* on 6 April and *Sun City* on 2 May.

White, who last performed in the country in October 2025, also praised South Africa's rich musical talent and hinted at more shows if demand continues.



GIG Guide

Friday 27 March 2026
Gigi Lamayne & Gogo Skhotheni
IZA
2nd Ave Bloemfontein

Sunday 29 March 2026
The Gentlemen's Elegant
Sundays Bar & Restaurant
Bloemfontein

Saturday 28 March 2026
Carwash & Braai
The Thoughts
Bloemfontein

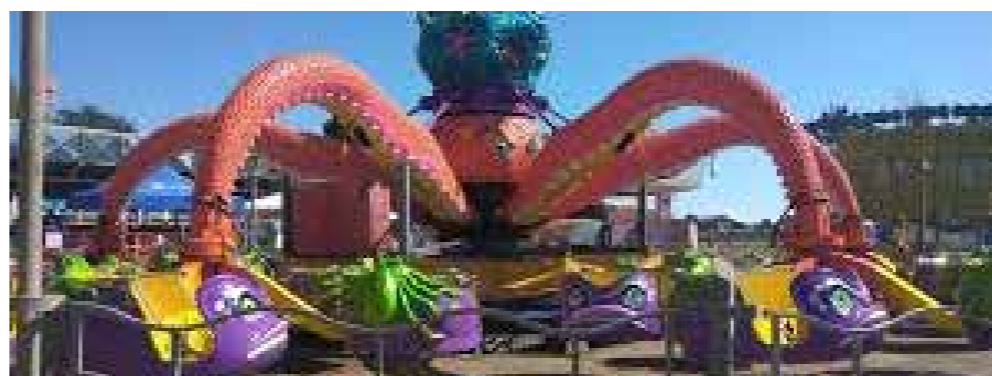
Sunday 29 March 2026
Blackdoor Sunday
Ekhayeni
Bloemfontein

143rd Bloem Show Promises Bigger, Bolder Fun

By Lerato Mutlanyane

April in Bloemfontein is heating up — even as winter approaches — with the return of one of the city's most anticipated events. The Bloem Show is back from 23 April to 2 May 2026, marking its 143rd edition with a vibrant new theme: "Beach Party in Bloem".

This year's show promises a fresh, immersive experience, inviting visitors to "see differently, walk differently and experience differently". With a bold coastal twist, organisers are reimagining the traditional show into a lively, sensory escape for all ages. In a statement, the Bloem Show said the theme is designed to bring new energy while encouraging visitors to reconnect with real, tangible experiences beyond screens and digital distractions. Despite ongoing concerns around Foot and Mouth Disease, agriculture remains at the heart of the show. Organisers have adapted with resilience, ensuring that key livestock and agricultural events continue safely. This year's programme features five major championships, including the prestigious World Outdoor Saddle Horse Championship, miniature horse showcases, tent pegging, show jumping, the second Interpro-



vincial Farrier Championship, and provincial Boerboel dog competitions.

Families, farmers and thrill-seekers alike can expect a packed lineup of activities. From a traditional Sheep Feast Day to chainsaw and pruning demonstrations, a leaf blower challenge and dog displays — the show blends rural heritage with modern entertainment.

The excitement doesn't stop there. Visitors can look forward to oval track racing, exhibitions, arts and crafts, over 60 food stalls, live music, circus acts, vehicle spinning shows, bodybuilding com-

petitions, as well as dance and fashion showcases.

Adding to the festive flair, the "Beach Party in Bloem" theme will transform the grounds with beach-style eateries serving pancakes, waffles, ice cream and a variety of sweet treats — including delights from Mondvol Koekies.

With its mix of tradition and innovation, this year's Bloem Show is set to deliver a wave of unforgettable experiences — proving once again why it remains a cornerstone of the Free State's social calendar.

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Kubheka Turns Pain into Opportunity



By Mogomotsi Selebi

A struggle with alopecia gave rise to a successful business for a Free State business woman. Dieketseng Kubheka from Sasolburg is the brains behind Mckay Hair and Skin Care. She manufactures anti dandruff spray, shampoo, conditioner and a number of hair products. Her products can now be found at stores such as Makro and Kubheka couldn't be prouder. Kubheka said her products are made from indigenous plants such as Rosemary and Moringa and have proven to be a favourite amongst her customers. However, it was alopecia that sprung an idea into Kubheka's head. Alopecia is hair loss and Kubheka also suffered from it. "I decided to make my own hair products to help women suffering from alopecia, just like myself, but also to create jobs. I have been in business for five years, having started in 2021. My business has taken me to Turkey and Egypt and I will soon be going to Kenya to showcase my product and hopefully, get a few customers," said Kubheka. She said the Free State Department of Economic Development, Tourism and Environmental Affairs has played a major

role in the growth of her business. "The department has been supportive and helped me get access to market. They took me to exhibitions to market my product and I am thankful for their assistance. I now have clients from as far as Afghanistan and countries such as Botswana and I am thankful for all the support I have been receiving," Kubheka said. Premier of the Free State province MaQueen Letsoha-Mathae said women empowerment remains a key government priority. "We have been calling on the women of our province to take advantage of the opportunities that government has in place. One of the ways we are going to reduce unemployment and also defeat gender-based violence is through the empowerment of women. Financially liberated women will not stay in abusive relationships because of reliance on their partners, therefore we are happy that women such as Mme Kubheka and many others have heeded our call. We further call on others to come forward because government wants to assist them," said Premier Letsoha-Mathae. Kubheka said her products can also be found on her website www.mckayhaircare.co.za

Street Store Turns Donations into Dignity

By Bernell Simons

There is a corner in almost every home where forgotten things go — a jersey that no longer fits, shoes bought with good intentions, a toy once treasured and now tucked away. In most houses, those items gather dust. In Bloemfontein, they are about to become something far more meaningful — warmth, dignity and, for many families, the difference between surviving winter or not. The Street Store returns this May for its eleventh year, transforming everyday donations into a one-day shopping experience for people who rarely get the chance to choose anything for themselves. On 23 May 2026, Hamilton, Louierpark and Heidedal will host pop-up stores where thousands of residents will browse clothing racks, try on shoes, sit down for a meal and, for a moment, feel like customers instead of charity recipients. For coordinator Maresa van der Walt, that distinction matters. "We are not giving hand-outs," she says. "We are giving people the chance to choose. That restores dignity in a way people don't always understand until they see it." The concept is simple but powerful. Instead of handing out pre-packed bags, organisers create a retail-like space — racks sorted by size, tables of shoes, and sections for children's clothing and toys. Visitors walk in and select what they need. Children gravitate to the toy tables. Parents check sizes carefully. Some move slowly, as if the experience itself is unfamiliar. Meals are served in a setting designed to feel more like a small restaurant than a feeding scheme. Volunteers assist, engage and sit with guests — reinforcing a sense of respect rather than relief. This year, organisers aim to reach at least 4,000 people across the three sites — a reflection of both the city's generosity and its growing need. Rising food prices, unemployment and housing pressures have made basic clothing unaffordable for many families, with winter placing additional strain.



Collection bins have been placed at schools, businesses and community centres across Bloemfontein, with donations open until 10 May. Volunteers will then sort each item by hand ahead of the event, with training scheduled for 18 May. What keeps the initiative alive is community ownership. Teachers, businesses, families and young volunteers all play a role in building what becomes, for one day, one of the city's largest pop-up stores. "You see someone realise a jacket fits, or a child hold onto a toy they love," says van der

Walt. "Those moments may seem small, but they mean everything." Beyond the day itself, the Street Store also provides meals, collects sanitary products and non-perishable food, and connects families with ongoing support through community networks. Because somewhere in a cupboard is something no longer needed. And somewhere else in Bloemfontein, someone is waiting for exactly that. On 23 May, those two realities will meet — in a store built not on charity, but on choice, dignity and shared humanity.

HEALTH

Why you're awake at 3am: the science of 'insomnia hour' and how to shut it off



It's 3am, and you're wide awake. Your brain is racing, rehashing work deadlines, grocery lists, and maybe even that one embarrassing thing you said a decade ago. Sound familiar? No, you're not alone. This middle-of-the-night insomnia is so frustratingly common that it practically feels like an unspoken rite of passage in adulthood. **So what can you do about it?** Falling back asleep after your mind starts whirring at 3am can feel impossible, but the good news is that it doesn't have to be. Here's how to head off that insomnia spiral and reclaim those precious hours of rest even in the middle of the night. **1. Resist your instincts** Seriously, resist. Do NOT pick up your phone. Ignore the temptation to check Instagram, glance at an email, or Google whether your cough last month was actually something ominous. This isn't just an arbitrary rule; blue light from screens can suppress melatonin, the hormone your body needs to help you fall back asleep. You might also feel like getting up to wander around the house or rummage through the fridge, but don't. Movement raises your heart rate, increasing alertness and making it harder to drift back to sleep. And the hardest rule of all? Don't look at the clock. As obvious as it sounds, knowing the time is the fastest way to kick your brain into problem-solving mode ("Oh no, it's 3.45am; how can I survive with only three hours of sleep?"). Instead, roll over, close your eyes, and trust that time itself is out of sight, out of mind. **2. Breathe your way to dreamland** You've probably heard of the 4-7-8 breathing technique, but if you haven't tried it, tonight might just be the night. The idea is simple:

Inhale for 4 seconds. Hold your breath for 7 seconds. Exhale slowly for 8 seconds. This isn't just mindfulness fluff; it's science-backed. Techniques like this slow your breathing, activate the vagus nerve, and nudge your parasympathetic nervous system (a.k.a. your "rest and digest" system) into action. That shift helps calm racing thoughts and lowers your heart rate, making it easier to fall asleep. **3. Tame your midnight worries** We've all been there: replaying money worries, work dramas, or even existential dread at 3:23 a.m. Spoiler alert: nighttime catastrophising is a brain trick, and tomorrow, everything probably won't feel as dire as it does right now. One proven trick? Meditation. No, you don't need apps or candles, just a little focus. A body scan meditation can anchor your attention and ease the swirl of overthinking. Start by tensing your toes, then releasing the tension. Work your way up, focusing on one body part at a time. Or, try cognitive shuffling. Which is basically distracting your brain by imagining random, calming images, bananas, balloons, beaches (in my case, lounging on Lake Como or that money from my possible lotto winnings). This mimics the wandering randomness of pre-sleep thoughts and can help you slip into that dreamy state sooner. **4. Prep for better sleep tomorrow** If you're consistently struggling with middle-of-the-night insomnia, it might be time to revisit your habits. Watch your caffeine intake after lunch. Keep your sleep environment cool and dark. And build a calming pre-sleep routine, turn off screens, dim the lights, and try a cup of chamomile tea or a warm bath (classic advice, but true for a reason). **IOL**



Food Recipes

Easter Roast lamb with Madeira gravy

Recipe by Philip Friend



This slow-cooked lamb dish makes an amazing dinner for a lazy Sunday lunch and is wonderfully complemented by the rich gravy.

Ingredients:

- 2kg/4lb 8oz leg of lamb, bone in
- 8 garlic cloves, thickly sliced
- 2 rosemary sprigs, leaves picked
- 1 lemon, zest only
- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 1 onion, cut into wedges
- 350ml/12fl oz Madeira
- 40g/1½oz unsalted butter
- 2 tsp cornflour
- sea salt and freshly ground black pepper

Method

- Preheat the oven to 200C/180C Fan/Gas 6.
- Make deep incisions all over the lamb and stuff the garlic slices and half of the rosemary leaves into the incisions. Rub the lemon zest and olive oil all over the surface of the lamb. Season with salt and pepper.
- Put the onion wedges into a roasting tin, sit the lamb on top and roast for 1 hour. Pour 200ml/7fl oz of the Madeira and 300ml/½ pint water into the tin and return to the oven for 30 minutes.
- Remove from the oven, transfer the lamb to a warmed serving dish, cover with kitchen foil and leave to rest for at least 30 minutes.
- Tip the contents of the roasting tin into a saucepan, together with the remaining rosemary, Madeira and another 300ml/½ pint water. Bring to the boil, then reduce the heat and simmer for 10 minutes until slightly reduced. Strain everything through a sieve into a jug, pressing through as much liquid as possible.
- Melt the butter in a frying pan over a low heat. Stir in the cornflour until you have a smooth paste and cook, stirring all the time, for a minute. Slowly whisk in the strained liquid, a little at a time, until smooth. Simmer for 10 minutes over a low heat, stirring frequently, until thickened. Add any juices that have come out of the lamb while resting and stir well. Carve the lamb and serve with the gravy.

FASHION

MaXhosa Africa's SIYI'KULTURE stuns at MXS Kulture Festival 2026 despite rain delays



MaXhosa Africa's SIYI'KULTURE collection took centre stage at MXS Kulture Festival 2026, delivering a bold celebration of fashion, music, and culture even as rain threatened to disrupt the highly anticipated showcase. In its fourth year, MXS Kulture Festival 2026 brings together lovers of MaXhosa Africa, music, and food for a day of fun and fashion. Usually, the fashion show is done at sunset, but the weather said no, and organisers were forced to adapt and factor in the special guest that was the rain. MaXhosa Africa's Autumn-Winter 2026 collection, SIYI'KULTURE, meaning "We Are Culture," made its global debut at Paris Fashion Week and had everybody talking. Local audiences got to experience the entire fashion show and understand how the viral Ultra Mel custard fits. The collection plays on South African cultural elements, and dance is an integral part of that. Dancers added a distinct Mzansi flavour to the showcase, elevating the runway beyond a traditional fashion presentation. This year, patrons got to sit and see the models in their full glory, compared to last year, when everyone stood around hoping to catch a proper

glimpse of the showcase. Ahead of the final walk, the dancers gave the audience a show that paid homage to the culture, as they did popular dance moves before Izikhothane dancers came to wow audiences, with the Ultra Mel viral moment. The multi-talented Robot Boii brought his model A game, serving a stern face as he walked the runway before joining the dancers. There is something about a good time that makes you forget your woes, like the rain messing with your freshly installed wig or your sneakers stepping into mud, and MXS Festival delivered that and more for its patrons. Chemistry flowed between MXS Kulture Festival 2026 hosts "Shaka iLembe" actress Nomzamo Mbatha and personality Siphosiphiso "Alphi" Mkhwanazi, who kept the vibes flowing between performances. Mkhwanazi recently hosted the 19th South African Film and Television Awards alongside award-winning presenter Anele Mgudlwa, and he is proof that taking that leap of faith might lead to your destiny. Mbatha loves her supporters and was camera-ready, not turning down a single request, even making sure they get the best pictures. The Creme of Nature ambassador hosted the event for the first time and shared that she wore a power suit to honour the occasion. MXS Kulture Festival 2026 knows how to curate a line-up that blends popular music genres into one afternoon. From soulful DJs to set the tone, to hip hop acts, K.O and Yanga Chief that have patrons ready to start their own rap careers, to Makhadzi, who knows how to get the crowd moving on their feet, and a back-to-back set from DJ Tira and Goldmax is enough to convince patrons that a trip to the Hollywoodbets Durban July is a must. As with any festival, MXS Kulture Festival 2026 was not without delays; African time was the order of the day, and surely the weather forecast was taken into account, and umbrellas or raincoats could have been provided for patrons who spent their hard-earned money on tickets and hospitality. While the festival delivered on fashion, music and cultural celebration, logistical challenges highlight the need for better planning at future editions. **IOL**

Sport



Griquas' Promotion Mission on Course



By Mpho Sekharume

The Suzuki Griquas have signalled their serious intentions for the 2026 season by securing a commanding 52-15 away victory over the Valke. This latest performance at Barnard Stadium in Kempton Park, Gauteng, confirms that the Kimberley-based side is operating with a clinical edge necessary for top-flight ambitions.

By clinching back-to-back bonus-point wins, the team has firmly established itself as a frontrunner in the early stages of the SA Cup.

The match began with a display of pure intent as the Griquas pack applied relentless pressure through structured forward play.

This disciplined execution at the breakdown allowed the visitors to settle into a dominant rhythm and turn territory into vital points.

Reflecting on the early stages of the encounter, the franchise stated that "the early phases allowed us to settle into our rhythm, gradually turning territory into points."

This patient approach ensured they headed into the halftime break with a comfortable 21-10 lead.

The second half saw the visitors raise the intensity even further with a tempo that the home side simply could not match.

Quick ball movement and sharp decision-making created significant space out wide, allowing the backline to capitalise on a tiring Valke defence.

According to the official match report, improved tempo and clinical finishing were the catalysts that allowed the visitors to pull away on the scoreboard.

The defensive effort was equally impressive, as the team remained organised and disciplined to limit the opposition to a single score after the interval.

This result represents a well-balanced team performance where both the forwards and backs contributed significantly to the final tally.

The ability to control the match tempo under pressure is proving to be a key factor in their current winning streak.

"Back-to-back victories see Griquas firmly positioned among the early pacesetters in the competition, maintaining momentum as the SA Cup campaign gathers pace.

"With two bonus-point wins from our opening fixtures, we continue to strengthen our position in the race for a top four finish and qualification for the Carling Currie Cup Premier Division later this year," the franchise shared on their website.

Supporters have plenty of reason to be optimistic as the team pursues its promotion ideal with such clinical precision.



Blitzboks dig deep to do the double in New York

The Springbok Sevens outlasted a charging Fiji in the final of the HSBC SVNS New York on Sunday, with their 10-7 victory not only bagging them a fourth tournament title in the season, but also the crown as 2026 series champions.

The Blitzboks and Fiji entered the final level on log points and tries on each side of the break handed the South Africans a 10-0 lead, setting them up for the series title.

Although the South Sea Islanders pulled one back later in the half, brilliant defence in their own half from the South Africans held sway in the end.

It was drama until the very end though as Fiji attacked in the final 30 seconds, but a knock-on with the tryline begging handed possession back to the Blitzboks. From the resulting scrum, Fiji conceded a penalty and much to the relief of all in green and gold, the ball was kicked into touch.

The opening try of the final came from a defensive turnover. Impi Visser ripped a ball from a tackle

and some crisp passing later, Gino Cupido raced in after two minutes in what was the only score of the first half.

The second half was as tight as the first with razor thin margins determining the outcome. Tristan Leyds scored two minutes after the break after Fiji lost the ball in a tackle close to their line and suddenly the Blitzboks were two scores clear with five minutes to play.

But the Fijians are not known as comeback kings for no reason and when Terio Veilawa scored and converted shortly after, it was a one score game. That score never game though, mainly through gutsy Blitzbok defence forcing their opponents into errors, while sound game management also kept Fiji at bay.

The Blitzboks, who also won in Cape Town, Perth and Vancouver, proved they are the best sevens team in the HSBC SVNS Series.

Earlier on Sunday, the Blitzboks booked their tick-

et to the final with a hard-fought semi-final victory over Argentina, scoring two first half tries and then defending like Trojans to win 14-5.

Sebastian Jobb opened the scoring in the second minute after turning defence into attack in the blink of an eye. Argentina attacked hard, but there was no way thr

ough the SA defence, forcing them into a stray pass.

The turnover involved Visser and Leyds and once Jobb got the ball, there was only one outcome. Leyds converted and it was 7-0 to the Blitzboks.

A 70m run by Selwyn Davids secured the next try and a 14-0 lead at the break, but Argentina scored the opening try of the second half when Marcos Moneta finished off in the corner two minutes after the restart to make it 14-5.

The next five minutes was a frantic rush of penalties, turn-overs and a call back when the Springbok Sevens scored, but the try was cancelled.

PSL 2025/2026

CLUBS	P	W	PTS
1 Orlando Pirates	22	16	51
2 Mamelodi Sundowns	21	18	50
3 AmaZulu FC	22	11	37
4 Kaizer Chiefs	20	10	36
5 Durban City	22	10	35
6 Sekhukhune United	22	8	34
7 Polokwane City	21	7	29
8 Golden Arrows	22	8	28
9 Stellenbosch FC	22	7	28
10 Siwelele FC	21	6	26
11 TS Galaxy	22	7	25
12 Richards Bay	22	8	23
13 Chippa United	22	4	20
14 Marumo Gallants	22	4	18
15 Orbit College FC	22	5	18
16 Magesi FC	21	2	14

betway

Premier League 2025/2026

TEAMS	P	W	PTS
1 Arsenal	31	21	70
2 Man City	30	18	61
3 Man Utd	31	15	55
4 Aston Villa	31	16	54
5 Liverpool	31	14	49
6 Chelsea	31	13	48
7 Brentford	31	13	46
8 Everton	31	13	46
9 Fulham	31	13	44
10 Brighton	31	11	43
11 Sunderland	31	11	43
12 Newcastle	31	12	42
13 Bournemouth	31	9	42
14 C Palace	30	10	39
15 Leeds	31	7	33
16 Nottingham Forest F.C.	31	8	32

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REGISTERED TEAMS

- Unicom Agric School FC
- Tweespruit Combined School
- CF Keyona
- Rising Eagles FC
- Real Mountains FC
- Juventus FC
- Milane Stars FC
- La Masia FC

- Makuru United FC
- Juventus 2.0 FC
- FC Knights
- TK FC
- Export International FC
- Academy FC
- Spartans FC
- Sporting Aces FC

FRI - MON
3-6 APRIL 2026
REGISTRATION IS CLOSED

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