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Another GBV Tragedy Hits South Africa

GBV strikes again in Free State

By JNN Reporter

Less than 24 hours after President Cyril Ramaphosa delivered a solemn address on the devastating impact of gender-based violence (GBV), another woman has allegedly been killed by her boyfriend in the Free State town of Hoopstad.

The death of 31-year-old Tsholofelo Mohlodi has once again put the deadly scourge of violence against women under the spotlight, raising renewed concerns about the

safety of women in intimate relationships.

In his address, Ramaphosa announced a four-point plan aimed at tackling the country's high rate of gender-based violence and femicide (GBVF).

He said he had directed Acting Police Minister Firoz Cachalia and Justice and Constitutional Development Minister Mmamoloko Kubayi to undertake a national case recovery operation.

"Within 60 days, this audit must identify the number and age of unresolved cases,



cases awaiting forensic evidence, cases in which suspects have

been identified but not arrested and cases in which investigative or prosecutorial action has been unreasonably delayed," said Ramaphosa.

He added that individual recovery plans for priority and stalled cases must be in place within 90 days, identifying the outstanding action, responsible official and deadline for moving each case forward.

However, hours after the President's address, tragedy struck again.

According to police, Mohlodi was found lying unresponsive on a bed on Wednesday, with injuries to her head and face.

She was rushed to hospital by emergency medical services but later succumbed to her injuries.

Police Sergeant Palesa Thabana said preliminary investigations indicated that Mohlodi had allegedly been assaulted by her boyfriend in the presence of their two-year-old twins.

"The victim was taken to the hospital by emergency medical services for urgent medical examination and treatment and later succumbed to her injuries while in hospital," said Thabana.

She said the assault allegedly followed accusations of infidelity.

Free State MEC for Social Development Mathabo Hlalele described Mohlodi's death as another manifestation of a serious societal crisis and an attack on women's fundamental right to live. **Continues on Page 2**

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Falsely Accused

Seasoned Bloemfontein traffic officer that was acquitted after wrongful arrest fights back for justice



Pushing for Justice ... Traffic officer, Retshidisiswe Tshwanyane, is fighting to restore her reputation after she was accused of corruption Pictures: Supplied

By **Matshidiso Selebeleng**

Free State - What was supposed to be a normal traffic check routine in April 2021 turned the life of a seasoned traffic officer into a nightmare that resulted in her spending a few nights in jail.

Recounting what happened on the day in question, Retshidisiswe Tshwanyane narrated one of the most traumatic experiences she has ever encountered in her 19 years as a public servant.

“While I was patrolling, I saw a car causing obstruction without a driver. I stopped my vehicle to inspect; I was then approached by the driver, who was a foreign national, who said he was not aware where he parked; it was considered danger and obstruction (sic),” she told Journal News Network (JNN).

Upon further inspection, Tshwanyane told this newspaper that she found that the car did not have both number plates and a (licence) disc.

“He told me he bought it at an auction. I instructed him to follow me to the office (traffic department),” she added.

According to Tshwanyane, when they arrived at the office, she requested papers from the driver to issue tickets and realised that his licence was not clear. She subsequently impounded the car and consulted with her supervisor to check whether she had followed due procedure or not in this regard.

The driver came back the following day to present the required legal documentation as proof that the car was indeed bought at an auction. Tshwanyane revealed that the driver started offering her a bribe in front of the security. She also discovered that the foreign national’s asylum documents had also expired.

After duly serving the driver with a traffic ticket, Tshwanyane revealed that she once again consulted with her supervisor to make a final decision.

After the driver paid for the penalty, Tshwanyane then furnished the supervisor with the served traffic tickets as well as the proof of payment for the contravention. The supervisor subsequently signed the vehicle out.

Later in the day, while preparing for a roadblock, Tshwanyane and her colleagues were approached by members of the Hawks investigating illegal car impoundments.

“As we were about to get into the vehicles, we were approached by people who said they were from the Hawks, and they told us why they were there. They instructed me to get out of the car and leave everything inside, and I complied. They also asked to search my private car, but found nothing,” she continued.

Tshwanyane detailed how she was thoroughly searched and how the Hawks officials claimed they had found around R560 by her supervisor, whilst alleging that an initial payment of R1 100 had been paid by the driver in question.

As a result, the supervisor was detained for three days, while Tshwanyane, on the other hand, was arrested the following Monday on Monday, 26 April 2021. She was detained and then released two days later, Wednesday, 28 April 2021, on R2 000 bail. With no evidence to support the spurious charges, Tshwanyane was eventually acquitted. She has decided to push back and press charges herself against her accusers following the harrowing experience and the reputational damage she continues to endure.

Tshwanyane stressed that internal disciplinary processes should have been followed if any grievances existed, adding that the ordeal subjected her to severe threats and insults within her church community where she serves as a pastor.

“As a leader, this is sensitive even spiritually because you have children, married people, and women who look up to you,” said Tshwanyane.

The intense stigma deeply affected her marriage, her professional reputation, and her family’s financial stability while her daughter was studying nursing in Europe.

She concluded by advising others facing similar ordeals to fight hard for their reputations and refuse to let others dictate their narratives.

Mckenzie Promises Municipal Debt Reprieve

Patriotic Alliance president says his party will write-off all citizens’ municipal debt should his party be voted into power

By **Matshidiso Selebeleng**

The Patriotic Alliance leader, Gayton Mckenzie, has promised that all municipal debt would be wiped out to provide citizens with a clean slate should his party win the upcoming local government elections.

This commitment formed part of the party’s manifesto launch held in Mangaung on Saturday at the Dr Rantlai Molemela Stadium ahead of the upcoming municipal polls scheduled for 4 November 2026.

“We are going to write off all the debt that you owe the municipality, you can hold us to that... we are going to wipe out all debt, we must all start on a clean slate,” he said.

Mckenzie doubled down on this promise by pledging a three-month payment holiday for municipal rates to give residents a necessary breather from choosing between utility payments and purchasing food.

Addressing housing concerns, Mckenzie highlighted that many families live in rented properties owned by the municipality for decades without gaining ownership.

“Forty years of rent and it brought you nothing, while the councils still carry the house on their books,” he noted.

Mckenzie said his party intends to tackle illegal immigration because the local government bears the direct impact of foreign nationals opening businesses without proper documentation.

“We know Abahambe is a national job, it belongs to home affairs, border manage-



ment authority, and the police, but the Patriotic Alliance will keep on fighting for as long as it takes, but the pool of ‘abahambe’ is local government,” Mckenzie explained.

He added that nobody enters the country

illegally simply to observe the border, but rather because they know they can immediately open a shop.

McKenzie argued that every municipal failure is ultimately a council failure that can

be rectified by leadership genuinely committed to fixing local governance.

In addition, Mckenzie said municipal land will be redirected to benefit local residents rather than serving municipal interests

alone.

The sixth priority involves incorporating neighbourhood watch groups directly into the municipal budget to guarantee regular salaries for their community safety services.

Another GBV Tragedy Hits SA

Continues from Page 1

freely and safely.

“The killing of women by their intimate partners cannot be reduced to a private family dispute. No woman should have to fear that the person who professes to love her will become the person who takes her life,” said Hlalele.

She said intimate partner killings expose deeply rooted violence and patriarchal attitudes that continue to threaten women in communities.

“Tsholofelo’s death must strengthen, rather than weaken, the resolve to confront gender-based violence and femicide,” she said.

Hlalele urged society to reject the normalisation of violence against women and challenge the culture of silence surrounding abusive relationships.



“There can be no justification for a man killing a woman because she is his partner. A relationship does not give anyone ownership over another human being, and love can never be a licence to control, assault or murder,” she said.

Hlalele also called on law-enforcement

agencies to conduct a thorough investigation into the circumstances surrounding Mohlodi’s death and ensure that the law takes its course. Police confirmed that the suspect has been arrested and is expected to appear before the Hoopstad Magistrate’s Court on a murder charge.

FF Plus Leader Slams ‘Useless’ GNU



By **Nonkululeko Ngubeni**

The government of national unity (GNU) is totally ineffective. These are the general sentiments of Freedom Front Plus leader, Corné Mulder, who has asserted that the coalition arrangement has disintegrated due to months of inactivity and a lack of collective direction.

In an interview with the Sunday Times

newspaper, Mulder noted that party leaders have neglected their agreement to meet monthly, thus rendering it futile.

“The last time we sat around the table was November 2025,” Mulder stated.

He stressed that this situation is damaging the nation.

“It’s bad for South Africa because the government of national unity isn’t united; it’s not chasing a clear goal or motivating

the country.

“We’re like a car running on two flat tyres. Don’t expect that car to win any race,” said Mulder.

With the 4 November 2026 local government elections looming, it is clear that the FF+ is anchoring their campaign on discrediting the makeshift governance arrangement, while also positioning the party as an alternative solution.

CRIME REPORTS

SAPS Secures Conviction in Infrastructure Theft Case

The South African Police Service (SAPS) in the North West has secured a conviction in a case involving the theft of infrastructure at a reservoir in Lichtenburg.

Police spokesperson Colonel Anne Magakoe said the matter dates back to January 2025, when two suspects, Manyashe Thembeni and Orekgeng Oliver Mooketsi, were arrested following damage to a reservoir in the Lichtenburg area.

The case was initially registered as tampering with essential infrastructure at Lichtenburg SAPS, but the charges were later amended to theft. On Wednesday, accused one pleaded guilty to theft and was convicted.

Illegal Mining Suspect Nabbed in Namakwa

The South African Police Service (SAPS) in the Namakwa District has arrested a 54-year-old man during an operation targeting illegal mining activities at Beesbank. The arrest was made on Wednesday evening after members of Alexander Bay SAPS acted on information about suspected illegal mining in the area.

According to police spokesperson Captain Ivan Magerman, officers encountered four suspects when they arrived at the identified location.

The suspects allegedly fled on foot after seeing the police, but officers managed to apprehend one of them.

During the operation, police confiscated 13 bags containing suspected diamond-bearing

gravel, along with various digging implements believed to have been used in the illegal mining activities.

The suspect faces charges of illegal mining in contravention of the Mineral and Petroleum Resources Development Act, as well as trespassing.

He is expected to appear in the Springbok Magistrate’s Court soon.

Namakwa District Commissioner Brigadier Schalk Andrews said SAPS would continue taking decisive action against illegal mining and related criminal activities.

He said illegal mining threatens the country’s mineral resources, fuels criminality and negatively affects communities and the broader economy.

Immigrant Arrested With Firearm and Stolen Cable

A 43-year-old undocumented immigrant has been arrested in Wolmaransstad following a police operation linked to several alleged offences, including the contravention of a protection order, unlawful possession of a firearm and ammunition, and possession of suspected stolen property.

The South African Police Service (SAPS) said the arrest was made on Monday night after police received information that the suspect had allegedly visited a relative’s residence, where shots were reportedly fired.

Police monitoring the situation responded and attempted to stop the suspect, who allegedly tried to evade arrest by driving away. Officers pursued the vehicle and eventually apprehended him. During a search, police

allegedly recovered an unlicensed firearm, ammunition and suspected stolen Transnet cable. The investigation into the firearm, ammunition and suspected stolen critical infrastructure is continuing, with additional charges possible.

The suspect appeared before the Wolmaransstad Magistrate’s Court on Wednesday and was remanded in custody until 12 October 2026.

He faces charges including contravention of a protection order, pointing of a firearm, possession of suspected stolen property, damage to critical infrastructure and driving under the influence of alcohol.

North West Provincial Commissioner Lieutenant General Arthur Peter Adams commended the police members involved.

Four Nabbed as Operation Shanela II Hits Botshabelo

Four suspects aged between 22 and 30 are expected to appear in the Botshabelo Magistrate’s Court following their arrests during a multidisciplinary Operation Shanela II deployment in Boithuso.

The operation was conducted on Tuesday and involved Boithuso police members carrying out intensive patrols and searches across the precinct. Police said two of the suspects were arrested for possession of dagga and suspected stolen copper, while the other two face charges relating to the possession and dealing of drugs.

During the high-visibility operation, authorities also identified and shut down four illegal second-hand goods dealerships. The dealers were charged accordingly, while two weighing scales were confiscated.

Police made several seizures during the operation, including Mandrax tablets and crystal methamphetamine with an estimated street value of R500.

Officers also confiscated copper cables and an undisclosed amount of cash suspected to be the proceeds of crime.

Police said investigations into the arrests and seizures are continuing.

The South African Police Service said Operation Shanela II forms part of ongoing multidisciplinary efforts to combat crime, disrupt criminal activities and strengthen law enforcement visibility in communities.

Authorities have pledged to continue integrated operations targeting drugs, stolen property, illegal businesses and other criminal activities.



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Zastron Gets Major Primary Healthcare Boost



By JNN Reporter

Free State Health MEC Monyato Mahlatsi has taken the province's healthcare drive directly to communities in Zastron, leading a service-delivery outreach aimed at bringing essential primary healthcare services, specialised medical support and critical health information closer to residents.

Mahlatsi, joined by Mohokare Local Municipality Executive Mayor Cllr Irene Mehlomakhulu, led the "Taking Primary Healthcare Services to the People" programme, which seeks to strengthen existing services by bringing specialised interventions from the province's tertiary and academic health platforms to communities.

The outreach placed a strong focus on the growing burden of non-communicable diseases, particularly diabetes and hypertension.

Residents were urged to take their medication consistently and adhere to

prescribed treatment plans to prevent complications.

The Department also intensified awareness around vaccine-preventable diseases, with parents urged to ensure that children receive their vaccinations, particularly amid the ongoing measles outbreak.

Snake bites were another key concern raised during the outreach, following reports of increased snake activity in the area.

Residents were urged to remain vigilant, keep their surroundings clean and seek immediate medical attention if bitten.

Mahlatsi said the province was also strengthening Emergency Medical Services through the distribution of new EMS vehicles across the province to improve ambulance response times and the quality of emergency care.

"We will continue taking healthcare to the people because access to quality healthcare must reach every community," said Mahlatsi.

Saul Marks Calvinia Housing Milestone



By JNN Reporter

Northern Cape Premier Dr Zamani Saul is set to mark a major housing milestone in Calvinia today, as the province celebrates the 100% completion of the 200-housing project in Blikkiesdorp, Hantam Local Municipality.

Saul, accompanied by MEC for Cooperative Governance, Human Settlements and Traditional Affairs (COGHSTA) Lebogang Motshaping, is expected to hand over the final batch of completed houses to beneficiaries, bringing the project to completion and providing more families with access to decent housing.

The Calvinia development forms part of the Northern Cape's broader R1 billion housing programme, which is aimed at reducing housing backlogs, improving living conditions and restoring dignity in communities that continue to face significant housing needs.

According to the Premier's office, Executive Mayor of the Namakwa District Municipality Alinda Beukes, Hantam Local Municipality Mayor Koos Alexander and other government and community leaders are expected to join Saul and Motshaping during the handover.

The completion of the project is being presented as part of the provincial government's focus on turning policy commitments and infrastructure plans into tangible projects that directly benefit communities.

The housing programme comes amid broader provincial investments in infrastructure and essential services, including roads, healthcare, water security and renewable energy.

The provincial government has also identified youth development and renewable energy initiatives as important areas for supporting local economic activity and creating opportunities.

For Calvinia residents, the completion of the project represents more than the construction of houses.

The new homes are expected to provide beneficiaries with greater stability, security

and improved living conditions, while contributing to the broader development of the Blikkiesdorp community.

The Calvinia milestone follows another housing handover earlier this week in Upington, where Saul and Motshaping handed over 20 completed houses to beneficiaries at the Dakotaweg and Jurgenskamp Housing Projects in the Dawid Kruiper Local Municipality.

The two handovers form part of the province's ongoing implementation of its R1 billion housing programme, as government continues efforts to address the housing backlog and expand access to decent housing across the Northern Cape.

Threats Target SASSA Eastern Cape Boss



By Lukhanyiso Khanyile

Eastern Cape - The regional head of the South African Social Security Agency (SASSA) in the Eastern Cape, Bandle Maqetuka, received death threats linked to intensive anti-fraud investigations targeting corruption within the region.

Maqetuka uncovered that five official employees from the SASSA Dutywa office formed part of a criminal syndicate supplying criminals with confidential information. That syndicate supplied bank account details, physical addresses, and data associated with existing beneficiaries to outside criminals.

The syndicate was discovered during an anti-fraud clampdown, leading to the identification of those five SASSA employees linked to the operation.

Maqetuka opened a case in September 2026 with the South African Police Service (SAPS) after discovering an alleged assassination plot against him.

The investigation followed a recent anti-fraud crusade for justice after Maqetuka discovered a syndicate generating false grant applications with artificial beneficiaries. It is alleged that the syndicate was responsible for an estimated R10-million loss through fraudulent SASSA grant applications at the Dutywa offices.

The consequences whistleblowers and managers faced after the dismissal of five officials in July included harmful threats.

Maqetuka supposedly received a tip-off that a hitman had been assigned to kill him.

Following the discovery of the assassination plot, Maqetuka opened a criminal case in KuGompo City at the Fleet Street police station on 11 September.

Police spokesperson, Brigadier Nobuntu Gantana, confirmed that a criminal case has been opened and passed over to specialised investigators.

"The case is currently under investigation by the Serious and Violent Crime Investigation Unit," she said.

Court freezes millions linked to Tembisa Hospital bribes



By Nonkululeko Ngubeni

Gauteng - Around R42.4-million in cash, properties, pensions, and investments linked to about R100-million in alleged bribes paid to officials at Tembisa Hospital has been secured by the Special Investigation Unit (SIU).

The alleged bribes were reportedly paid by businessman, Stefan Joel Govindraj, to secure procurement deals worth approximately R600-million.

The Special Tribunal granted the SIU a preservation order last month preventing the disposal of assets belonging to Zacharia Tshisele, his wives, and entities and associates linked to the corruption network.

The order also prevents payments and dealings by companies and individuals allegedly involved in the network, including Joseph Fhumulani Muthaphuli and former Tembisa Hospital Area Manager, Ernest Monnakgotla.

Tshisele and Monnakgotla allegedly worked together to siphon funds from Tembisa Hospital's coffers into two major syndicates.

The first was the Govindraj syndicate, which used 75 companies to trade with the hospital and received approximately R600-million.

The second was the Mazibuko syndicate, operated by Rudolf Mduduzi Mazibuko, which used 17 companies and received approximately R283-million.

The SIU said both syndicates relied on the

cooperation of hospital officials to facilitate unlawful procurement.

Tshisele, appointed operational manager of the hospital's theatre in 2017, allegedly abused his position by initiating supply chain processes and confirming the receipt of goods.

The investigation found that he was directly involved in transactions worth approximately R15.9-million, with each transaction kept below the R500 000 threshold to avoid competitive bidding.

"Some of the transactions were for unnecessary goods, while others involved goods that were not delivered or were only partially delivered."

The Tribunal also froze two properties linked to Tshisele and his wives.

A Birchleigh North property in Kempton Park registered in the names of Tshisele and his wife Phumudzo is valued at approximately R1.3-million.

A second property in Delmore Park, Boksburg, registered in the name of his customary wife, Fulufohelo Lineth Tshililo, is valued at approximately R820 000.

Tshisele's pension, valued at R1.09-million, has also been frozen.

"Money from the Govindraj syndicate was channelled through Create 10, which was co-directed by Tshisele, Monnakgotla and Muthaphuli."

The money was allegedly used to finance properties, mining ventures, and a film project. The SIU found that Tshisele and Monnakgotla invested R17.5-million in Manngwe

Mining and Solmag Mining, while R15.5-million was advanced through Time Bomb towards the production of The Bad Bishop.

A further R1.5-million was transferred into the account of Tshisele's nine-year-old daughter.

In 2025, Tshisele signed an Acknowledgement of Debt with the SIU and agreed to repay money allegedly obtained unlawfully.

He has since repaid R13.53-million in four installments, while Manngwe Mining also agreed to repay R17.5-million over 36 months.

In May, the SIU obtained an order freezing a R6.4-million luxury property in Midstream Estate and R1.8-million in pension benefits belonging to former Tembisa Hospital official Duduzile Nobungwana.

The SIU said the preservation orders and payment agreements involving Tshisele and Nobungwana bring the total value of preserved cash and assets to approximately R42.4-million.

Neither Tshisele nor Nobungwana is challenging the SIU's actions.

The SIU has further referred evidence of alleged criminal conduct uncovered during its investigation to the National Prosecuting Authority for further action.

The referral led to Govindraj's arrest last month on multiple charges linked to the alleged procurement of medical supplies and equipment at Tembisa Hospital.

He faces 70 counts including fraud, theft, money laundering, and corruption-related offences.

From Small-Scale Farming to Commercial Success

Agriculture department empowers farmer, Mpho Morobe, to acquire, grow and sustain his Viljoenscroom-based Vreugde Farm



By **Matshidiso Selebeleng**

Free State - Farmer and owner of the Vreugde Farm, Mpho Morobe, has managed to transition from being a fledgling farmer to becoming a shining beacon of farming development and empowerment in the Free State.

The flourishing Viljoenskroon farmer has managed to transform his farm from being a commonage - land owned collectively or by the municipality - to being an extensive successful agricultural operation within the Moqhaka Local Municipality.

This is all thanks to the vital financial and structural intervention from the Free State Department of Agriculture, Rural Develop-

ment and Environmental Affairs, to enable this successful transition. After several funding application rejections, Morobe finally secured the 670 hectare property after enduring multiple application rejections before finally receiving approval during the 2021 and 2022 financial period. In the following years, he got capacitated and empowered with essential farming equipment.

"I got help from 2024/2025 with inputs, a tractor, and planters, among others, and I got help after the MEC got in office and realised that the youth were underfunded and she emphasised that young people are the future of farming and should therefore be prioritised," said Morobe.

"The process is not complicated, and

when you apply, they don't make it a tiring process that will make you want to stop in the middle of applying.

The process is also transparent now because all the applications are taken to a panel that looks for the qualifying individuals instead of letting the responsibility fall on one person," he added.

Current agricultural operations across the property encompass 470ha of grazing land, alongside 200ha dedicated to arable production. Livestock holdings feature one hundred and twenty cattle including four bulls and 45 calves alongside 35 sheep, complemented by an additional mixed-breed group. Market distribution and animal sales are carried out through the Han-

sie Muller Voerkraal facility - also located in Viljoenskroon. Employment opportunities at the Vreugde Farm increased steadily to create permanent positions for five individuals alongside four temporary workers.

Industry recognition followed when Morobe achieved the Best Commercial Entrepreneur Award at the Young Agrarian Forum in 2023 where he also secured R200 000. Subsequent accolades include winning the Overall Achiever title at the same event, where he collected an additional R250 000 in prize money.

Strategic partnerships with the provincial agriculture department, local municipalities and other farmers continue to support his long-term operational vision and success.



Free State Female Farmer Scales on Success

From humble beginnings to running a one successful farming enterprises, Puseletso Lipali is setting the standard for rising female farmers

By **Matshidiso Selebeleng**

Free State - Puseletso Lipali transformed a modest agricultural beginning into a thriving commercial enterprise at Gilboa farm within the Setsoto Local Municipality.

Operating under the Samjoy Legacy Project, the Lipali expanded her production significantly through vital intervention from the Free State Department of Agriculture, Rural Development and Environmental Affairs.

Departmental funding programmes assist aspiring producers who lack personal capital by providing essential resources and mentorship opportunities.

Lipali completed specialised training

through the department alongside GrainSA and Sernik to strengthen her operational capabilities.

The 656 hectare (ha) property purchased through the Proactive Land Acquisition Strategy (PLAS) in 2009 now yields impressive agricultural results.

"I deal a lot with cattle, eggs, sunflower, and soya, and when the department started helping me, I only had 30 to 40ha of land to plant on. But last year the land grew, and I was able to farm about 200ha after the department intervened to help me.

I am proud to be able to speak about what the department has done and the difference it has made because it helped not only me, but also the people around me," said Lipali.

Initial livestock numbers began with five cattle in 2013 before authorities loaned 35 heifers and one bull for a five-year period.

Successful herd management enabled her to harvest 80 cows from the loaned livestock alongside a current total of 150 Bonsmara cattle.

Poultry operations also expanded steadily from an initial flock of 250 layer chickens to 600 birds with targets reaching 1 000.

Arable land cultivation progressed from 40 to 409ha of productive land involving maize, sunflower, and soya.

Departmental support during the 2024 and 2025 financial period enabled yellow maize cultivation across 100ha alongside her personal investment.

Subsequent reinvestment in the 2025

and 2026 seasons led to the incorporation of another 200ha of maize plantation.

Job creation metrics improved alongside commercial expansion as permanent staff members increased from two individuals to six dedicated workers alongside 15 temporary personnel.

"They have also helped me get recognised as one of the women whose work is admirable, so I was nominated and won the Woman Entrepreneurship Award, hosted by the department. I believe the department is helpful, regardless of age, gender, and race."

Recognition culminated in winning the departmental Woman Entrepreneurship Award for exceptional agricultural excellence and rural development leadership.

Police Grapple with Mass Shootings Conundrum

Twenty-eight people died and 25 others sustained injuries following 2 separate mass shootings that struck South Africa within hours of each other



By **Nonkululeko Ngubeni**

Gauteng - Eighteen people were killed and 14 injured when 8 armed suspects stormed a tavern in Wedela near Carltonville last Saturday. This after unidentified assailants allegedly opened fire on patrons outside before continuing their rampage inside and torching 2 vehicles prior to fleeing the scene.

Gauteng Police Commissioner, Lieutenant-General Tommy Mthombeni, confirmed that some of the victims included South African citizens alongside nationals from Ethiopia and Lesotho.

Authorities noted that robbery likely served as a primary motive because personal belongings were stolen, though investigators continue examining potential turf wars involving illegal mining syndicates.

"Police believe the motive behind the shooting was robbery, as personal belongings had been taken, but we cannot rule out turf wars between illegal mining groups," Mthombeni said.

Adding to Mthombeni's suspicions, Deputy Provincial Police Commissioner, Major-General Fred Kekana, believes the attack might represent retaliation for a violent incident occurring the previous month. Police have confirmed that investigators possess clear photographs and identities for several key suspects linked to the mas-

sacre.

The National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) Carletonville Region condemned the violence while urging law enforcement agencies to deploy all resources to apprehend the perpetrators.

Union representatives appealed to local community members to share vital information with police while demanding decisive crackdowns on illegal firearms across the West Rand.

"Our deepest sympathies and total solidarity go out to the grieving families, the injured victims, and the broader Wedela community. The tragic loss of 18 lives has left families without parents, children without care, and an entire community plunged into mourning," the union said.

In a separate mass shooting attack during the early hours of Sunday morning, 10 individuals were killed and 11 others injured outside an entertainment spot in Lwandle near Cape Town. Five victims succumbed to their wounds at the scene while an additional five died after arriving at local hospitals.

Police confirmed that no arrests had been executed for either massacre by Sunday morning while motive inquiries regarding the Cape Town shooting remain ongoing. These devastating incidents occurred merely days after a similar and unrelated assault left 11 people dead following a home invasion in KwaMakhutha township.

Health Contracts Under Scrutiny

Motsoaledi prompts SIU to investigate as department's communications contracts spending closes in on R200m

By **Nonkululeko Ngubeni**

Concerns over procurement and finances at the National Department of Health have intensified after two communications contracts reportedly grew to a combined value of about R182 million.

NEHAWU has called for full transparency over the National Health Insurance (NHI) Marketing and Health Communications contract, warning that the allegations raise concerns similar to those exposed by the Digital Vibes Scandal.

According to ActionSA, about R146 million has been paid to KMTV Media and a further R35-million to Dots Design Agency, with payments reportedly made from at least eight departmental programmes, including initiatives dealing with HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, and child nutrition.

"South Africans deserve answers about how contracts could grow to this magnitude, what services were actually delivered and whether proper procurement and contract-management processes were followed," said ActionSA member of parliament (MP), Kgosi Letlape.

NEHAWU stressed that the department must avoid another communications contract scandal following Digital Vibes, which involved allegations of corruption, fraud, maladministration, mismanagement of public funds, and money laundering.

The union noted that the Digital Vibes scandal exposed weaknesses in procurement, governance, and accountability at the department. "The department cannot afford another communications contract scandal following the Digital Vibes saga," NEHAWU stated. The union also linked these concerns to wider allegations of corruption within the health sector, pointing to R2-billion allegedly diverted from Tembisa Hospital between 2018 and 2023. Health Minister, Dr Aaron Motsoaledi and Deputy Minister, Dr Joe Phaahla, have formally called on the Special

Investigating Unit (SIU) to investigate allegations surrounding the National Health Insurance communications contracts.

NEHAWU welcomed the decisions by Motsoaledi and Phaahla to request investigations by law enforcement agencies into the contracts, while also calling for investigations to be expanded to other hospitals, asserting that there should be no assumptions that Tembisa Hospital was an isolated case.

ActionSA also welcomed the referral of the matter to the SIU, Auditor-General, and Public Protector while demanding clarity on how the contracts expanded to such a significant value.

The opposition party questioned who authorised the expenditure, what specific services were delivered, and whether proper procurement and contract-management processes were followed.

Questions were also raised regarding financial oversight within the department, with the party arguing that the Minister, Director-General, and Chief Financial Officer should account for how the expenditure was allowed to continue.

This controversy unfolds as the government continues preparations for implementing the National Health Insurance (NHI), which aims to expand healthcare access and address inequalities in the country's two-tier system.

NEHAWU emphasised that the NHI is vital for achieving universal access to quality healthcare, warning that allegations of corruption or public fund misuse could undermine confidence in its rollout.

ActionSA similarly questioned how much public funding has already been spent on NHI-related projects, pilot programmes, consultants, healthcare practitioners, and other initiatives, and what outcomes have been achieved. Both organisations demanded thorough investigations without fear or favour and called for the full recovery of any funds found to have been improperly spent.

NGWATHE MUNICIPALITY STEPS UP ROAD REHABILITATION DRIVE

Mothamaha intensifies War on Potholes to restore roads, improve safety and unlock local economic activity



Ngwathe Local Municipality is intensifying its War on Potholes, with road rehabilitation and infrastructure maintenance taking centre stage in a renewed push to improve service delivery across the municipality.

The ongoing programme is targeting damaged road surfaces and internal roads, with municipal teams deployed on the ground to address potholes, undertake essential repairs and improve the condition of key routes used daily by residents, businesses, public transport operators and visitors.

Spearheaded by Municipal Manager, Dr Futhuli Mothamaha, who since took office in August 2024 with a solid background in public administration and governance, the municipality says the road rehabilitation programme forms part of its broader commitment to restoring vital infrastructure and ensuring that service delivery results in visible improvements in communities.

In Parys, municipal road teams are currently working on key routes, including Bree Street and the R59, while additional road rehabilitation work is being undertaken in other areas of the municipality.

Mothamaha's war on potholes has also reached the town of Vredefort, with Koppies, Edenville and Heilbron next in line.

Residents and motorists have been urged to exercise patience and cooperate with municipal teams while construction and maintenance activities are underway.

Where necessary, roads or sections of roads may be temporarily closed to allow work to proceed safely. Motorists are encouraged to use alternative routes, obey road signs and follow instructions from municipal personnel working on site.

At the Schonkenville entrance, essential upgrades and repairs are also underway, with the entrance temporarily closed to facilitate the work.

The Municipality has advised motorists to use clearly marked detours and to comply with instructions from roadwork teams to protect both motorists and workers.

MANAGEMENT TAKES SERVICE DELIVERY TO THE GROUND



A key feature of Ngwathe's approach is the direct monitoring of infrastructure projects by senior municipal management.

Through its Service Delivery Check programme, Mothamaha and senior management join supervisors and municipal workers on the ground to monitor service delivery projects.

The approach is designed to ensure



that municipal interventions are not only planned from offices but are followed through at project level.

During inspections in Parys, municipal management engaged directly with technical personnel and road maintenance teams, assessing work standards, surface preparation, safety compliance, tar patching and compaction operations.

The Municipality says this direct involvement is part of its continuous drive to improve the quality of infrastructure projects and ensure that communities see tangible results from municipal programmes.

For Ngwathe, road maintenance is not simply about repairing potholes. It is about protecting road users, preserving infrastructure and maintaining the transport corridors on which communities and businesses depend.

BUILDING MUNICIPAL CAPACITY

The road rehabilitation drive is being supported by an expanded municipal fleet.

Ngwathe has acquired two motor graders and three Tractor-Loader-Backhoes (TLBs) to strengthen its ability to respond to infrastructure and service delivery needs.

The new machinery will significantly support road maintenance, upgrading and rehabilitation work, while also providing additional capacity for the graveling of streets in



newly established residential areas.

This is particularly important in areas where the Municipality has allocated sites for housing and human settlements, creating a need for supporting infrastructure as



communities expand.

The investment forms part of a broader strategy to strengthen the Municipality's own operational capacity and reduce dependence on outsourced plant hire.

By investing in its own machinery, Ngwathe aims to ensure that equipment is available when needed, improve response times and increase operational efficiency.

The expanded fleet is therefore an important component of the Municipality's wider service delivery programme.

ROADS ARE THE BACKBONE OF THE LOCAL ECONOMY

For Ngwathe, the importance of road rehabilitation extends beyond convenience and mobility.

Good roads are essential to economic development.

Parys, in particular, serves as an important

economic hub and tourism gateway, connecting communities and businesses within Ngwathe with North West and Gauteng.

Well-maintained roads make it easier for residents to travel to work, schools, health-care facilities and commercial centres. They also support businesses transporting goods, enable customers to access local enterprises and strengthen the movement of visitors and tourists.

Reliable road infrastructure can therefore contribute to creating an environment in which businesses can operate more effectively and economic opportunities can grow.

The Municipality's road rehabilitation programme is consequently positioned as both a service-delivery intervention and an investment in the future of Ngwathe's local economy.

A PROGRAMME BEYOND PARYS

While Parys remains a major focus of the current roadworks, the Municipality has emphasised that its road rehabilitation programme is ongoing and will be rolled out across the towns that make up Ngwathe.

The programme was launched earlier in the year as a skills-development-based



project, with the intention of strengthening municipal capacity while addressing infrastructure needs.

The continued deployment of municipal teams and machinery forms part of a broader effort to improve the condition of roads across communities and ensure that infrastructure receives sustained attention.

The Municipality has also expressed appreciation to road users, including the Parys taxi association, for their cooperation during road maintenance operations.

Residents are encouraged to continue supporting the programme by exercising caution around construction zones, following traffic instructions and reporting road-related challenges through the appropriate municipal channels.



KEEPING THE MOMENTUM GOING

Ngwathe's road rehabilitation programme forms part of a wider service-delivery drive aimed at improving municipal infrastructure and responding more effectively to community needs.

The Municipality's growing fleet — including graders, TLBs, service vehicles and other specialised equipment — is intended to provide the operational foundation required to maintain infrastructure and improve response times.

The road programme also demonstrates the importance of sustained maintenance. Roads require continuous attention to prevent small defects from becoming major in-

frastructure problems. Through its War on Potholes, Ngwathe is seeking to keep roads functional, safer and accessible while building greater municipal capacity to respond to infrastructure challenges. For motorists, residents, businesses and visitors, the work may mean temporary disruptions in the short term. However, the Municipality says these interventions are necessary to deliver better and more durable road infrastructure. The message from Ngwathe is clear: road rehabilitation is a service-delivery priority. With municipal teams working on the ground, senior management monitoring projects, new machinery strengthening operational capacity and roadworks continuing across communities, the Municipality is pushing ahead with its commitment to improving infrastructure.

The War on Potholes continues — restoring roads, strengthening communities and laying the groundwork for a more connected and economically active Ngwathe.



Mantashe Dispels Fuel Shortage Fears

... assures SA that fuel supply remains stable



Minister of Mineral and Petroleum Resources Gwede Mantashe has called on South Africans not to panic as the South African fuel supply remains stable.

The Minister was answering questions in Parliament on Wednesday.

Fuel supply security has come under scrutiny following heightened tensions in Iran which led to the closure of the Strait of Hormuz – causing a disruption in the flow of global oil and liquefied natural gas supplies.

“Despite the heightened geopolitical risk, including disruptions in the Middle East shipping routes, the Republic’s current petroleum supply security arrangement remains robust. The latest monitoring report confirms the overall supply is stable across petroleum products, with imports arriving as planned through the mid-April 2026.

“Inland supply is supported by stable refining. Sasol, SAPREF [South African Petroleum Refineries] and the coal to liquid refinery in Secunda is ensuring that there is a reliable supply of energy.

“The reason why we are confident is that our department meets the petroleum producers - all of them - twice a week to monitor the situation. So, when we articulate a position, it’s not only for the state-owned entities, but we are also talking for everybody,” Mantashe said.

The Minister added that the Cape Town refinery’s maintenance shutdown ends at the end of April, which is expected to “add to the reliability of the supply in the country”.

Turning to Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG), Mantashe assured that supply on this front has also remained stable.

“Our crude oil is sourced from Africa and the Atlantic basin – not in the Middle East. So, every arrangement that we do is supplementing what we normally source from the Middle East. Our refining capacity is giving us 40% security in energy supply. But forward imports are covering for longer periods as we look for diversification.

“Even the Strait of Hormuz allows cargo that comes to South Africa without interruption. That means, we are having the chance of having stable supply over a long period. There should be no panic in society,” he explained.

Mantashe added that supply is secured “until the end of April, including jet fuel”.

“Jet fuel...has been announced as short. It is not short. The price has gone up dramatically, almost double. But there is no shortage of supply of jet fuel,” the Minister said.

He revealed that South Africa has at least 8 million barrels of crude oil in its strategic fuel stock.

“That is not used. It will be used when it’s a real crisis. Our supply of energy is divided into two. [Some] 60% is imported processed products and 40% is processed by our own refineries and Sasol,” Mantashe said. – *SANews.gov.za*

Ramaphosa Advocates for Teachers at Birchwood

President calls for deepened investment in educators at National Teaching Awards



By JNN Reporter

President Cyril Ramaphosa has emphasised that South Africa’s educational transformation hinges entirely on empowering educators, declaring that better learning outcomes require creating conditions where teachers can focus singularly on teaching.

Addressing the 26th National Teaching Awards at the Birchwood Hotel and Conference Centre in Ekurhuleni on Thursday, the President noted that classrooms remain the primary crucible where the nation’s future is shaped.

He underscored that teaching must be re-

stored to its rightful standing as one of society’s most respected professions through targeted structural backing, safe infrastructure, and a reduction in administrative burdens.

“If we want better educational outcomes, we must invest in better teaching. We must attract talented young people into the profession. We must support new teachers as they enter the classroom. And we must enable experienced teachers to continue developing their skills,” President Ramaphosa said.

Reflecting on his own formative years, the President shared a personal tribute to his former school principal, Mr Ntsandeni, who intervened to protect him from expulsion when his inquisitive nature clashed with rigid school rules.

Highlighting how the principal looked beyond initial friction to recognize his potential, Ramaphosa stressed the profound, enduring impact of mentorship.

“He gave me the opportunity to continue learning, to develop and to become the person I am today,” Ramaphosa said, adding that he would have liked to present his late mentor with a National Teaching Award “not only for what he did for me, but for understanding what lies at the heart of teaching: seeing the promise in a young person and giving that promise the opportunity to flourish. That is what great teachers do.”

The event, held under the theme “Uniting for Excellence: Elevating Achievement, Empowering Educators to Shape South Africa’s Future,” also spotlighted foundational literacy, numeracy, and the growing intersection of technology in education. While acknowledging that digital tools and artificial intelligence can expand access to resources, Ramaphosa cautioned that human empathy cannot be digitised.

“Artificial intelligence may be able to provide an answer, but a teacher helps a learner understand the question. Technology can transmit information, but it cannot replace the encouragement, discipline, empathy and human connection that a good teacher provides. The teacher remains essential,” he stated.

Furthermore, the President called on educators to champion school safety and actively combat gender-based violence and femicide. Addressing behavioural norms from early childhood development through to high school, he stressed that schools must foster mutual respect and constructive conflict resolution.

Marking the 50th anniversary of the 1976 Soweto Uprising, Ramaphosa also paid homage to educators who suffered persecution, imprisonment, and exile during the anti-apartheid struggle.

Concluding his address, he lauded the resilience of finalists across categories such as Grade R instruction and mathematics, reaffirming that South Africa’s collective progress relies on teachers who refuse to give up on a child.

Soutpan Hosts Alzheimer’s Awareness Event



By Matshidiso Selebeleng

The Free State Department of Social Development held an event at Ikgomotseng Community Hall in Soutpan on Tuesday to raise awareness about Alzheimer’s and dementia. The Mangaung Metro Older Persons Directorate organised the gathering to commemorate World Alzheimer’s Day.

Officials stressed the importance of increasing education about both conditions in local communities where early symptoms often go unrecognised.

The Free State Department of Health, Tlhabologang Organisation, and the Alzheimer’s Dementia Association of South Africa shared their insights with attendees.

World Alzheimer’s Day provided an important platform for the Free State Department of Social Development to strengthen community awareness and encourage meaningful collaboration in supporting older persons.

The department continues advocating for the rights, dignity, well-being, and social inclusion of the elderly. Supporting vulnerable individuals requires a coordinated approach involving government, families, communities, civil society, and service providers.

The central message focused on identifying early signs of the disease to ensure prompt intervention. Increased awareness, early action, and stronger community support help create an environment where people living with dementia are treated with dignity.

Fee Protocol Remonstration at Rhodes

Festival unveils star-studded 11-day entertainment calendar



By Katlego Mashwabi

Rhodes University students have pushed back against the 2027 protocol that requires self-funded undergraduate students with outstanding fee balances to pay at least 50% of their outstanding debt.

The protocol also requires self-funded students to accept a plan of at least R3 000 per month towards the remaining balance.

Terms and conditions associated with the protocol mention that students other than those with confirmed NSFAS funding will only be admitted into residence at registration if their debt is below R25 000.

The Student Representative Council (SRC) at the Makhanda-based university has noted the disruption caused by the university’s inability to communicate with students about a decision that can affect a student’s ability to register, access residence facilities, and continue with their studies. According to Keketso Dibakwane, SRC Secretary-General (SG), the student body met with management on 29 September 2026 following the protest against the proposed 2027 fee protocol.

“Senior management has also been formally informed of the position we have taken as the student body. Our reality is not an afterthought. Financial sustainability must not only look at the benefits for the university. However, students’ constitutional right to education is paramount,” stated Dibakwane.

In a media statement, the SRC declared that the academic timetable consisting of lectures, tutorials, or other academic programmes will be boycotted by students until management can bring students towards a revamped way forward where payment timelines can be implemented.

However, they also stressed that all prospective SRC-led protests will be peaceful, responsible, and be carried out within legal bounds.

“Violence, intimidation, vandalism, destruction of property, or any reckless or dangerous conduct will not be permitted. This is not what our mandate is, and we want to be clear about that,” Dibakwane asserted. The student protest, which began on 29 September 2026, is still ongoing.

Empowering Workers Through Prayer

Bloem prayer organisation fuels the spirit of workers before they go to their jobs



By JNN Reporter

Free State - Every morning from Monday to Friday, a faith group gathers in the Bloemfontein city centre to pray for workers as they make their way to their respective jobs. Founded in 2010 by Themba Mayekiso, who also serves as its chairman, Thapelo Ke Matla fuels ordinary people with hope, strength and positivity as they go to their place of employment to make a living. Member, Eunice Majoqo, said the purpose

of the organisation is to boost the spirit of prayer among people, especially those who are emotionally hurt. She said the group meets every morning at the Central Park bus terminal in Bloemfontein to pray before people go to work. "We pray Monday to Friday from 6:00 to 6:55 every morning at Central Park. We pray for people who are going to work, those who are sick, and those who are facing challenges," said Majoqo. She said the organisation does not only pray but also supports its members during dif-

ficult times. "We normally visit our members when they are sick or down emotionally, and when they face other challenges; we are like a family," she said. According to Majoqo, the organisation is growing stronger, with about 145 members in its WhatsApp group and 153 members recorded in its books. She added that the organisation holds two main events each year. This year the organisation celebrated National Heritage Day in Chris Hani, Bloemfontein, where members - particularly women - were clad in their bright and beautiful traditional attires. Traditional songs and dances were the order of the day. These included mokgibo, where dancers skilled dancers do rendition of synchronised moves with their necks and shoulders while on their knees. Local traditional cuisines were such as dipabi (fried maize powder), dikgobe (boiled maize), mqhušo, and others kept the attendees' appetites satisfied. "We have two events, the Heritage Day celebration and the year-end function. These events help us to come together as one family and thank God for His grace," said Majoqo. She added that Thapelo Ke Matla continues to be a source of strength for many workers in Bloemfontein who want to start their day with prayer. She invited those who want to join the morning prayers to meet them at the Central Park bus terminals every weekday morning at 6:00.

Learning to Listen Differently



For Kelebogile Boleu, becoming a mother also meant becoming a student who had to learn a new language and how to advocate for a child whose experience of the world is different from her own. "I don't know what it is like to have a son who is not Deaf. He is my firstborn and the person who introduced me to parenting. It has been a remarkable calling and I am grateful to be trusted to be his parent," Boleu, who is a lecturer at the University of the Free State (UFS), said. Like most children, soon-to-be 11-year-old Nathanael is a handful. "He has always been a handful. He is very confident and very courageous. I enjoy how independent he is now and how he can be placed in any room, and he will not feel small, but he will take up that space and make it his own," the 36-year-old mother of two said. She described her son as competitive and kind, recalling an incident when one of his classmates came to school with a damaged bag and how her son came home, washed one of his older school bags and gave it to the classmate. "To this day, he does not remind his friend or talk about it at home, and that is the character I enjoy most about him - helping quietly. I hope he does not change," she says of her son who she affectionately refers to as 'Nate'. Boleu's comments come as the country commemorates Deaf Awareness Month, in September. Deaf Awareness Month provides an opportunity to raise awareness of the rights, experiences and aspirations of Deaf people and to promote greater understanding of the importance of sign language. According to the Pan South African Language Board (PanSALB), an estimated 600 000 people in the country are Deaf. This year's Deaf Awareness Month is marked under the theme, Declaring Deaf People's Human Rights. Prior to the birth of Nate, neither Boleu nor her husband had a family member who was hard of hearing or Deaf. She had an "easy" pregnancy with nothing of his development being flagged. "I flagged it when he was just older than two years. I took him to a speech therapist who gave us activities to do, which were mostly what we did at home: reading, puzzles, singing and so on. But it took two different opinions until I landed on a speech therapist who is also an audiologist. "The very first assessment she highlighted that Nate did not have a speech problem but a hearing aid problem, and so the testing and hearing aids came until we landed on SASL (South African Sign Language)," she explained. **Hearts project** Boleu, who is a lecturer at the university's Department of Criminology and a PhD student, said she tries her best to advocate for her children's rights while empowering them to do the same. She started the Hearts project, where parents can learn SASL and children can improve their reading skills. "I write a lot of opinion pieces about Deaf education, and through that and recognising the barriers in education that exist for Deaf children, I began a project called

Hearts where parents can learn SASL and children can improve their reading skills. My current academic work is centred around Deaf Rights; for PhD, my research is titled: Exploring the procedural justice for Deaf people in the South African criminal justice system: From arrest to corrections," she said. Hearts was initially formed with Nate's education and the related challenges in mind. "But I also realised that for him, reading would be his most important route in terms of access, to be able to read and write, which is a global issue, which can be solved through intentional reading development opportunities. "Speaking to other parents, I also realised we are different because Nate comes home to a family that signs, which creates an environment of being and relationship. I soon realised this is not the common experience. Many parents struggle to sign," explained Boleu. Because many parents struggled to sign, it was difficult for them to help their children with homework. Maintaining meaningful conversations and relationships with Deaf children in their families also became difficult, leaving some Deaf children feeling isolated. Boleu then consulted a friend and colleague in the South African Sign Language and Deaf Studies Department at UFS. She also consulted another friend and colleague in the university's library department. "I knew they were both passionate about their work, and they are practical in how they help communities. So, I asked them to help the community of Deaf learners and their parents; this is how the collaboration began. "They both put their time and resources, and I gathered up the troops - all the parents and children I could find, who have remained consistent in attending and learning. The improvement in their signing has been remarkable. I am encouraged and inspired by the Hearts community," she says of the initiative. Nathanael began using SASL when he was six, learning to sign fluently in three months. Boleu's own introduction to SASL came during a year of her undergraduate studies. She admits that she is still "very intimidated" by first-language SASL speakers. "I am still trying to catch up. My daughter and I, with a few close friends, had a few months of formal lessons. We now sign at home and learn as we go, through engaging with Nate. My daughter also attends the Hearts project, so through learning how to read in SASL, her signing has advanced far beyond mine. Our interaction with the Deaf community is really the biggest influence on all our SASL learning." She added that SASL is not an easy language to learn. "My broader family and friends do their best, but it is not an easy language to learn, nor is it a widely used language, so learning should be intentional and practising is essential." **Capacity building** President Cyril Ramaphosa signed into law the recognition of South African Sign Language as one of the country's official

languages in July 2023. Since that recognition, PanSALB has continued to support its practical implementation through awareness and capacity-building programmes. These include basic SASL workshops for frontline service workers and for parents, siblings and families of Deaf children; the verification and authentication of SASL signs and dictionary vocabulary in consultation with diverse Deaf stakeholders; and ongoing advocacy during Deaf Awareness Month. In a statement earlier this month, PanSALB said plans to establish a dedicated SASL National Lexicography Unit are also underway. "These initiatives are intended to ensure that the official recognition of SASL results in meaningful access to information, public services and full participation in society for Deaf people," said PanSALB. Boleu said while the enactment of SASL as the country's 12th official language is a start, more needs to be done. "I think SASL being an official language is a start, the efforts towards interpreters and other accommodations in the effort to reduce barriers and allow access to services. However, there can be a better sense of inclusion, knowledge sharing, and practical applications of intentions. Policy and legislation need to be practical." Asked about what Nate would like the world to know about Deaf people, in her view, she said that they are people and barriers exist structurally, but these should not take from their livelihoods, their experiences of life and success. "He would say that he and his friends are just kids, and they enjoy being able to take part in the same activities as other children. My son loves people and enjoys life, and would want everyone to see, experience, and know that." She added that a Deaf child is a blessing just as any child is. "Deafness or any disability, though not an easy road, is a call to parent, a call to love, a call to be intentional about the life you've been called to guide and shape." **Pride in Deaf culture** Boleu urged parents to learn SASL, adding that the Deaf community is proud of its culture. "I encourage you to learn SASL. Create an environment for your child to feel a sense of belonging that begins at home in their household through their people. Learn and meet the Deaf community around you. Lean on their experiences and see your child through their brilliance, excellence and courage. "The Deaf community is one that is proud of their culture, their language and welcoming to those who engage with them, accept them and allow their Deaf children to be who they are born to be," she explained. Asked about the lessons Boleu learned in her journey of parenthood, she said parents of Deaf children are no different from other parents. "We are simply doing what parents have always done: loving intentionally, learning continuously and loving fiercely. I love my son, and I cannot imagine him to be anyone but who he is. He has created a better human in me, as has my daughter," she said. - **SAnews.gov.za**

SA Aviation Amongst World's Best



South Africa has retained its position as the highest-ranking country in Africa and the seventh-ranking country globally for the effectiveness of its civil aviation safety system. This is according to Transport Minister Barbara Creecy, who received confirmation from the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) last month, that the country had achieved a final safety rating of 94.99%. "This outcome from the United Nations' specialised agency for international aviation safety and security affirms once again the strength and maturity of the country's aviation safety oversight system," the Minister said on Thursday in Midrand. The Minister was speaking at the launch of Transport Month, held under the theme, Building a safe, sustainable, reliable and affordable transport system. This year marks 21 years since the inaugural October Transport Month in 2005. To keep pace with rapid developments in digital technology and artificial intelligence, which are changing transport ecosystems and regulatory processes, government will establish a Transport Digital Authority. Immediate priorities include launching online registration for e-hailing vehicle owners and drivers from November this year; digitising Flight Operator Permits by December; and accelerating the implementation of a new

online licensing system to clear renewal backlogs for taxi operators and support provincial regulatory authorities. "Across the world, the rapid development of digital technology and artificial intelligence is changing transport ecosystems and regulatory processes. "To catch up with the times, the Department of Transport and its entities have taken a decision to establish a Transport Digital Authority with the aim of developing an integrated digital transport platform for all online permitting services through one citizen interface," the Minister said. Creecy outlined the National Roads Agency's (SANRAL) investment in public infrastructure projects, highlighting their significant role as catalysts for job creation and economic development. Through SANRAL, government will undertake several large-scale projects to improve safety, shorten travel distances, create more than 35 000 job opportunities and support over 2 000 small enterprises. SANRAL projects connect communities. Major projects include the following: - The upgrading of the 160 km Moloto Road corridor linking Gauteng, Mpumalanga and Limpopo; - Upgrades to the N2 at Piet Retief in Mpumalanga, improving links with northern KwaZulu-Natal and Richards Bay;

- Resurfacing, drainage improvements and road widening on the R52 from Koster to the N4 near Rustenburg in North West; - A new northbound carriageway and upgrades to section 16 of the N1 from Zandkraal to Scotland in the Free State, increasing capacity and reducing delays; - Ongoing improvements to the N2 in the Eastern Cape; and - Improving flood resilience on the R37 and R40 between Mpumalanga and Limpopo through stabilised embankments, reinforced drainage and flood-resistant resurfacing. SANRAL has committed more than R260 million to repairing and climate-proofing roads damaged in this year's Mpumalanga floods. We hope to show you some of these developments next week. "In response to recent court cases, SANRAL will end pre-selected panels for routine road-maintenance tenders and return to open, route-by-route competition to widen participation and competition. "Open tendering will be supported by procurement reforms, revised supply-chain procedures, updated committee terms of reference, and mandatory templates and checklists. "SANRAL has strengthened governance by adding independent specialists to its Audit and Risk, Loss Control, and Road Infrastructure and Projects committees," Creecy said. - **SAnews.gov.za**

OPINIONS

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

EDITOR'S JOURNAL



Mpho Sekharume
Editor-in-Chief

FF+ Displaying their
Apartheid Nostalgia

Party's NMB mayoral candidate choice reeks of apartheid arrogance and unremorsefulness

Nelson Mandela Bay voters face a profound moral and political test as the Freedom Front Plus (FF+) officially fields Bill Harington as its executive mayoral candidate ahead of the upcoming local government elections.

The nomination of Harington - a former apartheid-era riot police officer who spent nearly 14 years behind bars following his 1991 conviction for the brutal murder of young ANC activist, Mbongeni Jama - serves as an alarming symptom of a broader, festering malaise in post-democratic South Africa.

Despite having been denied amnesty by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), Harington's elevation exposes FF+ as a political organisation that remains fundamentally unrepentant about the darkest chapters of this country's history.

To fully understand how such an appointment is even possible 32 years into our democracy, I guess one must examine the broader political decay.

It is clear that all it took for this unmasked apartheid arrogance to rear its head again was for the ANC electoral and administrative power to dwindle. The ruling party's systemic failures, corruption scandals, and severe governance deficits have created a fertile, chaotic ground for Apartheid nostalgia to emerge.

Those who derive their internal pride from this nostalgia feel increasingly emboldened to drop any pretense of reconciliation and show their true colours. Despite all the unity rhetoric that shaped the dawn of post-apartheid South Africa, it is now glaringly obvious that the country is still profoundly far from true healing. Opting to recycle figures tied to State-sanctioned violence is a blatant rejection of South Africa's core democratic ideals.

The FF+, acting through these types of provocative political choices, is simply demonstrating that genuine remorse for the systemic crimes of apartheid was never truly internalised.

But if you pay closer attention, this brazen political posture itself mirrors and feeds into a wider reactionary ecosystem.

Case in point is the dangerous, manufactured "white genocide" narrative currently being aggressively peddled by lobby groups like AfriForum in active collusion with powerful sympathetic actors in the United States.

This toxic disinformation campaign seeks to invert the historical reality of oppression. Another compounding factor is the alarming continued proliferation of exclusive, whites-only small towns and enclaves across South Africa. I am referring to the likes of Kleinfontein outside Pretoria, as well as Orania and Eureka near Springbok in the Northern Cape. Earlier this year, while attending the Northern Cape State of the Province address delivered by Northern Cape Premier, Dr Zamani Saul, in Springbok, the existing reality of these white's only enclaves hit home.

Finding basic accommodation in Springbok was an immense struggle as every lodge and guesthouse was fully booked.

Although lodging was eventually secured in the tiny coastal town of Port Nolloth, I recall a local Springbok resident casually mentioning that an adjacent, nearby town that supposedly had vacant rooms. The catch? It was an explicitly whites-only enclave where non-whites would face absolute rejection - irrespective of whether there was space or no space in their accommodation facilities. Reality harshly dawned on me that, amid all reconciliatory efforts, hostile exclusionary zones still operate with impunity. This severely underscores how deeply entrenched racial separation remains beneath the fragile surface of our democracy. Elevating a convicted apartheid-era killer to a mayoral contest fits seamlessly into this exact regressive ideological patterning. It signals to black South Africans that the beneficiaries of the old regime feel no obligation to respect the dignity of the majority.

The electorate deserves ethical, forward-looking leadership grounded in human rights, not candidates whose past is stained with the blood of anti-apartheid activists.

By backing Harington, the FF+ has proven that it is trapped in a bygone era of white supremacy and unrepentant defiance. Nelson Mandela Bay, and South Africa at large, must reject this calculated regression.

BEE has enriched a connected few, not empowered the black majority

I HAVE previously argued that Black Economic Empowerment (BEE) was never designed to empower the black majority.

Thirty-two years of evidence confirm this assessment. Professor William Gumede of Wits University notes that 46 politically connected individuals secured 60% of all BEE mining deals, becoming billionaires overnight.

These are not architects of broad-based prosperity; they are beneficiaries of a system meant to transform lives but which instead entrenched elite access.

Since 2004, cumulative damage may exceed R5 trillion, with annual growth cut by 1.5% to 3% and around 192 000 jobs lost yearly. The ANC's response is predictable: Criticise the policy, and you are accused of opposing justice itself.

But there is nothing just about a system that excludes millions while enriching a few. BEE has created a class of tenderpreneurs who profit from political connections while the majority remains locked out. The policy must be rejected, not because black empowerment is wrong, but because this version has failed. Black South Africans do not need BEE.

The loudest advocates of Broad-Based BEE (BBBEE) are not black entrepreneurs, but ANC NEC leaders who own land and control the economy's commanding heights. They have systematically abused BBBEE for personal enrichment.

The policy has become an engine for capital flight. Billions earmarked for liberation are extracted into luxury goods — German cars, French handbags, Italian suits, Swiss



watches, Brazilian butt lifts — enriching foreign economies while domestic poverty persists. We must remember that today's ANC is a miscarriage of its founders' ideals. The men and women who gathered in Bloemfontein in January 1912 were not pseudo-communists. They were aspirant capitalists and elites who did not need political power to self-actualise, despite the Boer regime's monstrosities.

Pixley ka Isaka Seme, the ANC's founder, was a scholar, lawyer, entrepreneur, and Pan-Africanist visionary. Educated at Columbia and Oxford, he became one of the pioneering black lawyers in South Africa.

He established a national newspaper and initiated a huge land-buying scheme through his company, the Native Farmers Association, registered in 1912. Seme and his colleagues did not ask for an equivalent of BEE or social grants. They asked for equal rights and the freedom to build.

John Langalibalele Dube, the first President of the ANC, built the Ohlange Institute to cultivate self-reliance and self-determination. He stressed industrial training alongside academic skills, teaching shoemaking and other trades. His philosophy was clear: native empowerment through value addition and entrepreneurship, not state dependency.

Before 1910, black South Africans were not passive recipients of welfare. They were active economic participants. Black farmers dominated produce sales to colonial markets. In the Cape and Natal, an independent African peasantry emerged, with black entrepreneurs succeeding in agriculture.

Black people owned farms, transport businesses, brick-making operations, and wagon-making industries. This success intimidated the Boers, who seized this self-made wealth through draconian race policies upon gaining political power in 1910. Today, the ANC and many parties tell black

South Africans they only need jobs and a minimum wage. This infantilises them, suggesting they are incapable of building their own enterprises. It sells them the bare minimum while black leaders own companies, afford private health and education, and divert public monies into tenders and proxies.

The founding fathers of Africa's oldest liberation movement did not want a helpless society dependent on the state. They wanted a meritocratic generation to amplify their work, integrating neither into a system dependent on whites nor on government.

They wanted to build their own institutions, economies, and futures. The current ANC has abandoned this vision, replacing self-reliance with dependency, enterprise with entitlement, and agency with victimhood. As Anton Lembede often said: We must reject the "Ja Baas mentality."

Rejecting BBBEE is not the end of this argument; it is the beginning. My next article will address social grants, as both are expressions of the same failing philosophy: that black people need to be managed, fed, and empowered from above rather than freed to build from within.

I will turn to the welfare state and ask the uncomfortable question few are willing to confront: What happens to a people given everything except the opportunity to stand on their own feet? Thomas Sowell's work will be central to that discussion.

** By Phapano Phasha, the chairperson of The Centre for Alternative Political and Economic Thought. The views expressed here do not reflect those of the Journal News Network.*

Fragmented vote puts coalition politics at the heart of upcoming elections



ON NOVEMBER 4, South Africans will vote for the councils that control essential daily services, from water and electricity to roads, waste management and municipal budgets.

Yet, with more than 136 000 candidates and an ANC already locked out of contesting some seats, this will be the country's most fragmented local election yet. In several major cities, the decisive battle will not be which party comes first, but which parties can work together afterwards.

The sheer scale of the contest illustrates how far the electoral landscape has moved from the dominance of a handful of major parties. A record 136 790 candidates are contesting 10 526 council seats. Of these, 98 219 are contesting ward seats, 38 571 are on proportional representation lists, and 621 are independent ward candidates.

This crowded field has created practical ballot challenges; in Johannesburg alone, 75 parties are contesting the PR ballot, necessitating double-column ballots. Consequently, smaller parties will hold powerful kingmaker positions in councils where no single party secures an outright majority.

The ANC enters the election with an unusual handicap: The Electoral Court dismissed its challenge against the exclusion of 181 candidates. The ANC argued its candidate information had been loaded onto the IEC's online system before the deadline, but the commission maintained the final submission process was incomplete.

The Court found that failure to comply with the election timetable had consequences in law. This exclusion, particularly significant in the Eastern Cape municipalities of Port St Johns and Ngquzu Hill, alters the political balance in areas where the party has traditionally been dominant before a single vote is cast.

Meanwhile, polling data remains volatile and contradictory. An Ipsos survey places the ANC at 31% nationally, followed by the DA at 25%, MKP at 14% and the EFF at 11%. Yet, another radically different poll puts the DA at 42% and the ANC at just 18% in Johannesburg.

In Tshwane, Ipsos gives the DA 31% against the ANC's 22%, while MKP is projected at a dominant 55% in eThekweni. These discrepancies highlight the difficulty of reading the contest from polling alone, though they confirm that the major metros are highly competitive with no uniform national pattern.

Consequently, smaller parties are projected to become kingmakers. Experience with hung councils since 2021 shows a party need not finish first to exercise considerable influence.

In metros like Johannesburg, Tshwane, Ekurhuleni, Nelson Mandela Bay and eThekweni, the balance of power will hinge on post-election coalition negotiations. Ultimately, polling numbers are not council seats; a party's ability to govern depends on seat distribution and the agreements struck after the results are declared.

Crucially, South Africa may be heading into this cycle of coalition negotiations before the regulatory framework is fully settled. The proposed Coalition Bill seeks to create a legislative framework to address hung council instability, including provisions for coalition agreements and the removal of office-bearers.

Earlier versions proposed a controversial 1% threshold for council representation, which critics argued would disadvantage smaller parties. For residents, businesses and investors, the critical question is whether the governments emerging from these negotiations will be stable enough to pass budgets and keep councils functioning.

Beneath the coalition arithmetic lies a severe turnout challenge. Following a record low of 45.79% in 2021, estimates suggest turnout could fall to around 42%.

With younger South Africans less likely to be registered, the parties are not just competing for votes, but for the attention of apathetic citizens who may decide not to vote at all.

This "missing voter" is at the centre of a new initiative by the International Centre for Political Campaigns and the Nelson Mandela School of Public Governance to develop the Global Political Campaign Index. As IPCP's Glen Mpani notes, election results show who won but do not reveal whether citizens were heard or offered meaningful choices.

The index aims to assess campaign integrity, inclusion, policy substance, and the citizen experience, asking whose concerns went unheard and what campaigns can do better.

South Africa is heading into an election with an exceptionally crowded political field, but the paradox of 2026 is that the most important numbers will not be on the ballot paper. Voters will determine the council composition, but parties will determine who governs through post-election negotiations.

The ultimate question is not just who wins the most votes, but whether this increasingly fragmented system can produce stable municipal governments that actually govern. That answer will only emerge in the weeks after the votes are counted.

** This article was first published in the African Chronicle.*

*** By Karabo Ngoepe, a journalist with over 15 years of experience in political, investigative, and human interest journalism who specialises in pan-African politics. The views expressed here do not reflect those of Journal News Network.*

When the candles go out: Why the fight against GBVF cannot end with a vigil

Beyond the placards: what comes after a day of protest?

In recent weeks, South Africa has seen renewed public anger over gender-based violence and femicide (GBVF) — ranging from memorial runs and shutdowns to smaller, quieter gestures, such as the candlelight vigils held across the University of the Free State (UFS) Bloemfontein, South, and Qwaqwa Campuses, where staff and students stood in silence in solidarity with survivors and in memory of women whose lives have been lost.

Moments such as these matter. However, they also raise a harder question: what happens after the candles are blown out and the placards come down? For a crisis this entrenched, a single day of visible anger, however sincere, cannot be the end of the response.

Nine lives, one crisis
Since mid-July 2026, the bodies of nine women have been found across Ekurhuleni — beside the R21, in the veld at Olifantsfontein, in a river at Clayville, on a roadside in KwaThema, and in Dawn Park. Only three have been identified; police say four were sexually assaulted.

It is a pattern that the data has long confirmed: the HSRC's National GBV Study of 2022 found that more than 35% of South African women aged 18 and older have experienced physical or sexual violence in their lifetime, from partners and non-partners alike.

The vigils were — in that sense — a response not to a single incident, but to a crisis that has continued to deepen even after South Africa formally declared GBVF a national disaster in November 2025.

The state's duty, not a woman's burden
South Africa's Constitution leaves little room for ambiguity on where responsibility for that safety lies. Section 12(1)(c) of the Bill of Rights guarantees everyone the right to be free from all forms of violence from either public or private sources — holding both street and home to the same standard.

Recently writing on this question for the University, Prof Narnia Bohler-Muller, Research Theme Leader for Flourishing Life, argued that the burden of safety cannot be shifted onto women themselves through caution, curfews, or company. The duty, she wrote, belongs to the state — "It is not ours to discharge by staying indoors".

Gatherings such as Friday's vigils are one expression of what Bohler-Muller describes as a 'plural right to appear': people coming together publicly to insist on a safer, more liveable life for everyone, particularly for the women among us. It is an assertion that does not replace the state's obligations but refuses to let them go unspoken.

More than a single afternoon



Through these moments of unity, the UFS community reaffirmed its shared commitment to raising awareness, driving meaningful change, and building a safer, more compassionate campus and society for all.

The events in Ekurhuleni make it clear that commitment cannot end with a single afternoon of reflection; it must be carried into the everyday choices institutions make about safety, support, and solidarity.

From solidarity to organised action
Clinical psychologist and academic Anele Siswana says the challenge now is to turn the public consciousness created by protests into sustained action. "Solidarity has to become organised action," he says. The question is not only what happens on the day of a protest, but what changes afterwards — in institutions, communities, and everyday life.

A national responsibility
Siswana brings this perspective to the national conversation through his appointment to the National Council on Gender-Based Violence and Femicide. In his recent UFS News profile, he describes the role as 'a call to servant leadership and public service', and argues that prevention, healing, accountability, and justice require the country to look beyond individual incidents to the conditions that allow violence to persist.

Accountability starts before violence
That perspective also places men and boys firmly within prevention efforts. Siswana argues for confronting harmful ideas about masculinity, power, and relationships, while strengthening understandings of consent, responsibility, and non-violence. Prevention, he says, has to begin before violence occurs, by challenging attitudes and behaviours that normalise misogyny and harm.

For Siswana, the real measure of a protest is what people, institutions, and leaders do afterwards. That is where the symbolism of the candles must become practical action, sustained accountability, and safer everyday environments. By Siquhamo Hlubi Jama

Business

Markets and Indicators			
Rand/Dollar	16.73	-0.28%	▲
Rand/Pound	22.05	-0.28%	▲
Rand/Euro	18.80	-0.17%	▲
Platinum	1,724.50	-0.50%	▲
Brent Crude	102.58	0.33%	▲
Gold	4,146.84	-0.74%	▲
Ethereum	2,699.69	0.41%	▲
Bitcoin	84,556.9	0.12%	▲



Petrol and diesel set to surge above R30 in October: these are the latest projections

Next week's fuel price increases could be worse than originally anticipated, with strong under-recoveries for petrol and diesel worsening the outlook as each day passes.

The latest information from the Central Energy Fund indicates potential petrol price increases of between R3.21 for 95 Unleaded and R3.01 for 93 Unleaded. Diesel costs are projected to rise by between R2.75 for 500ppm and R3.15 for 50ppm.

These predicted hikes will see all fuel types breaking new price records, with 95 Unleaded petrol expected to reach around R29.26 at the coast and R30.13 in Gauteng, with 93 Unleaded rising to around R29.93. The wholesale price of 500ppm diesel looks set to reach about R30.98 for those at the beach and R31.86 for inland residents.

These projections are significantly higher than they were just two weeks back, when petrol was predicted to rise by around R2.40

and diesel by between R2.04 and R2.40.

These increases come in the wake of Significant price increases in September, when both grades of petrol rose by R1.34 a litre and diesel increased by between R2.94 and R3.15. The Slate Levy, which compensates oil companies for fluctuations in the preceding month, could add further pressure to fuel prices in October - particularly given the volatility seen in markets during the preceding month.

Surging oil prices

Steep international oil prices have created significant under-recoveries for both petrol and diesel, with Brent crude having touched a four-month high of \$108 per barrel this month following escalating tensions in the Middle East, and more specifically, fresh attacks on Saudi Arabian infrastructure by Iran-based fighters.

Oil markets have been swinging sharply on every twist in the US-Iran standoff, with the

Strait of Hormuz remaining the key pressure point. Brent crude initially jumped by more than \$4 a barrel on Monday after US President Donald Trump rejected an Iranian proposal that would have paved the way for a seven-day ceasefire and the reopening of the strategic waterway.

Prices later pared some of those gains as Qatar-mediated talks offered a glimmer of hope for a deal, but prices remained volatile this week, surging to around \$106-\$107 a barrel on Tuesday before dipping below the \$100 mark later in the week.

This as traders weigh signs of recovering Middle Eastern crude exports against continued uncertainty over the US-Iran conflict and stalled peace efforts. Saudi Arabia's resumption of tanker loadings from Yanbu and the restoration of its East-West Pipeline have eased some supply concerns, while hopes of a diplomatic breakthrough have provided further pressure. - **IOL Business**

New Agricultural Hubs Launched in Taung



By **Nonkululeko Ngubeni**

North West - Farmers in Taung are set to benefit from new agricultural infrastructure and support services following the launch of the Jantjies Boerdery, Lucerne Packhouse and the Hemp Hub at Taung Agricultural College.

The development creates opportunities for enterprises to expand operations and contribute to rural economic activity. Lucerne is widely used as animal feed to support livestock farming.

The packhouse for lucerne - a deep-rooted plant that farmers grow to feed livestock, because of richness in protein and other healthy nutrients - will, therefore, strengthen agro-processing by providing infrastructure for handling and packing lucerne -

North West MEC for Agriculture, Madoda Sambatha, officially launched the initiatives alongside Deputy Minister for Agriculture, Nokuzola Capa, and other regional stakeholders. Sambatha noted that the project aims to strengthen lucerne production and processing as part of broader efforts to support farmer-led enterprises.

"This investment is not only for Jantjies as

an individual. Taung has one of the greatest concentrations of lucerne producers, which is why we are supporting lucerne aggregation.

There are a number of lucerne farmers in the area, and our vision is to position Taung as a provincial lucerne hub."

"The development of the Lucerne value chain has the potential to increase agricultural production and create employment opportunities in the municipality.

The production of lucerne in Taung should help increase the capacity of the area to create jobs."

Sambatha explained that the department supported the initiative with harvesting machinery, processing and value-adding equipment, and packaging materials.

The event also featured the official launch of the Hemp Hub at Taung Agricultural College.

The hub provides support to hemp producers, including assistance with permit applications, training, skills development, and market access.

Meanwhile, Tshepo Jantjies of Jantjies Boerdery, revealed that the facility specialises in producing, harvesting, processing,

packaging, and distributing Lucerne products for livestock feed.

The enterprise supplies markets beyond the North West and exports to Botswana, Namibia, and Lesotho.

"I specialise in lucerne. It took us more than three years to get to where we are because there are a lot of compliance procedures that we had to meet to work across the entire value chain."

Jantjies noted that government support with machinery enabled the enterprise to transition from primary production into value addition.

"With the lucerne pellet mill, I can process the product into pellets. Had it not been for the department's support with the machinery, I would not have been able to produce a product such as pellets."

Jantjies also develops emerging farmers through mentorship and regular masterclasses.

"The packhouse is expected to strengthen this support by creating a platform where local producers can access processing and value-adding opportunities without having to operate across the entire value chain individually."

Godongwana warns municipalities can expect shake-up in budgeting, spending processes

He said Treasury intends to clamp down on the authorised spending of conditional grants that are intended for a specific purpose



Minister of Finance Enoch Godongwana has warned that municipalities can expect a shake-up in their budgeting and spending processes after the local government elections.

He said Treasury intends to clamp down on the authorised spending of conditional grants that are intended for a specific purpose.

Godongwana said he will make announcements in this regard when he tables the Medium-Term Budget Policy Statement in three weeks' time.

The finance minister faced backlash in July when he withheld the equitable share from 69 municipalities that failed to comply with Treasury guidelines to get their finances in order.

Answering questions in the National Assembly on Wednesday on corrective steps taken by the Treasury to assist these municipalities, Godongwana said he had not taken the punitive step lightly.

"We are looking at different instruments which may include laying criminal charges. We are exploring all of those options so that

we do not penalise the residents."

Godongwana said while it would be difficult to introduce budgetary changes during the throes of an upcoming election, a plan is already being formulated that will require municipalities to provide Treasury with its cost drivers.

"Once new leadership is appointed in the new municipalities, we will ramp up the process."

He said the new municipal councils will also be expected to strictly operate within a funded budget. - **EWN**

SA's producer inflation cools to 5.0% year-on-year in August

Statistics South Africa says annual producer inflation for final manufactured goods slowed to 5 percent in August from 5.7 percent in July



South Africa's producer price inflation has continued to cool.

Statistics South Africa says annual producer inflation for final manufactured goods slowed to 5 percent in August from 5.7 percent in July.

That suggests some easing in the costs facing producers, although businesses are still paying more for goods at the factory gate than they were a year ago.

Petroleum-related costs remain a major

source of price pressure for manufacturers, but the latest monthly decline suggests some of that pressure eased in August.

Coal, petroleum and chemical products remain the biggest contributor to the annual inflation rate.

Prices in this category were 13.6 percent higher than a year ago, contributing 2.9 percentage points to the overall 5 percent producer price inflation rate.

But there was some relief during August.

Prices in the category fell by 1.4 percent month-on-month, making it the biggest downward contributor to the monthly PPI rate.

On a month-to-month basis, the producer price index fell by 0.4 percent.

Petroleum-related costs are an important part of the inflation story for manufacturers because changes in these costs can feed into transport, production and other operating expenses. - **EWN**

Maxhosa Hits Paris Runway

Maxhosa Africa makes history with official Paris Fashion Week runway debut



By Katlego Mashwabi

South African luxury fashion house MaXhosa Africa has officially made fashion history by becoming the first Southern African brand to stage a full runway show on the official Paris Fashion Week calendar.

Led by founder and creative director Laduma Ngxokolo, the monumental event marked the brand's triumphant transition from its 2023 independent presentation formats to earning a coveted, official slot on the prestigious Fédération de la Haute Couture et de la Mode schedule.

This milestone Spring/Summer 2027 showcase took place amidst a star-studded Paris Fashion Week running from 28 September through 6 October 2026, positioning the African luxury brand alongside global titans like Dior, Chanel, and Louis Vuitton.

The collection, titled 'Izihlewe Zivumile' - an isiXhosa phrase translating to "the ancestors have approved" - reflects a deeply emotional 16-year journey for Ngxokolo.

He described the showcase as a definitive new chapter reflecting on the generations that shaped the brand and the long road that brought them to Paris.

A central narrative piece of this journey was the introduction of the MaXhosa Africa Passport, designed as a physical symbol of the roots, travel, and cultural stories the team carries with them, culminating in a collection defined by cultural diplomacy and regal artistry.

In a deliberate move of cultural diplomacy, Ngxokolo staged the show within the gilded rooms of the South African Ambassador's residence in Paris, hosted by Ambassador Ayanda Dlodlo.

Thebe Ikalfeng, founder and chairman of Brand Africa, noted that Ngxokolo appropriately chose the venue because charity begins at home.

To deeply ground the European venue in African heritage, the traditional runway was entirely replaced with woven African straw mats.

Across this texturised runway, the brand debuted 54 unique looks heavily rooted in Pan-Africanism, including a standout knitwear dress bearing the names of every African country, alongside an outfit referencing the United Nations' newly corrected map that accurately scales the African continent.

The artistry on display expanded far beyond the brand's signature knitwear, introducing dramatic, structured head and eye pieces that added an avant-garde dimension to the silhouettes. The Regal Beaded Cowrie Crown, a crown-like headpiece embellished with cowrie shells and the white MaXhosa symbol, paid striking homage to ancestral royalty and instantly captured the hearts of international fashionistas.

Furthering this spirit of continental collaboration, the brand introduced sculptural eyewear created in partnership with renowned Kenyan artist Cyrus Kabiru, while the core garments seamlessly integrated intricate geometric patterns with traditional weaving techniques and fringed jacquard fabrics.

This historic runway was soundtracked by the music of South African artist Sjava, adding a powerful emotional layer to the presentation.

As models completed their final walk, the showcase closed with the debut of a poem titled "I AM Africa", written and performed by Ikalfeng from the residence balcony, which is scheduled for an official streaming release in 2027.

Lauding the flawless execution of the evening, Ikalfeng praised Ngxokolo and his core team, specifically highlighting the intense operational efforts of Lihle Ngxokolo Ngini and Ntsika Tyatya for bringing the pioneering brand to a full house in Paris and delivering an epic showcase of brilliant, culture-inspired couture.

CUFA 2026 Launched!

Festival unveils star-studded 11-day entertainment calendar

By Katlego Mashwabi

Free State - The Cultural Urban Festival Africa (CUFA) has officially unveiled a spectacular 11-day entertainment itinerary, promising a completely transformed patron experience driven by immersive technology and an iconic artist lineup.

Delivering the core calendar rollout, CUFA Creative Director, Palesa-Yarona Moseme, reflected on the rapid evolution of the initiative under this year's theme, Ke Ya Rona (It is ours).

"Three years ago, CUFA was an idea, a conviction that when we create together, we build something bigger than ourselves; today that idea has a crowd, a home, a family," Moseme stated.

She revealed that the iconic Old Greys venue has been thoroughly reimaged over the past ten months, featuring brand-new sound and lighting engineered to make every performance feel immersive.

Describing the extensive lineup as a journey of where we come from, who we are, and where we are going, Moseme praised the backstage crews as unsung heroes before charting the path ahead.

The festivities kicked off on the 26 September 2026 with a heritage instalment of Pitiki with Famo at Old Greys.

The main programme officially resumes on Friday, 2 October, at News Café with the Woman-to-Woman Economic Breakfast, a daytime networking event focused on ambition, wealth, and enterprise featuring, Boijane Mshumela, from SEDFA.

On Saturday, 3 October, the musical energy shifts dramatically as the high-octane Back-to-Back Series takes over the Old Greys Convention Centre from noon.

The event features heavily anticipated sets from DJ Tshedu, Sam Deep, and Legoody.

In an interview with Journal News Network, Legoody shared his enthusiasm, stating, "I am excited about the event, I am looking forward to wowing a new crowd and seeing new faces."



The pace slows down on Sunday, 4 October, for CUFA Gospel Sunday.

This powerful afternoon of worship brings back launch highlights Thoko Nogabe - who captivated attendees with the hymn Ntate Ke Mang - and gospel singer Manana, alongside industry giants Benjamin Dube, Hlengiwe Mhlaba, and Khaya Mthethwa.

Following the mid-week CUFA Business Indaba on Tuesday, 6 October, the entertainment shifts back to comedy on Wednesday, 7 October.

The CUFA Comedy Installation features a stellar lineup including Mashabela Galane, the legendary Trevor Gumbi, local favourite Shaun Dihoro, and Tall A\$S Mo.

On Friday, 9 October, female excellence takes the stage with performances from Mawhoo, Zee Nxumalo, Lwah Ndlunkulu, and DJ Zinhle.

The ultimate musical crescendo arrives on Saturday, 10 October, with the Lesedi FM CUFA Global Stage, boasting legendary music icon Zonke, alongside Sjava, Vusi Nova, Amo Africa, DJ Finzo, Sannere, and Puleng Phoofofo.

The massive 11-day journey reaches its final destination on Sunday, 12 October, wrapping up with an elegant RnB and Soul Session.

The launch concluded with a keynote address from CUFA Chairman Ben Moseme, who dropped a surprising hint about entering the political arena, explaining that he is leaving the business in the capable hands of his daughters.

Moseme stated, "You've seen the girls are strong, so they've got the guts. I need to start a new chapter, and I know you will be there to back me up in the new journey."

Langa Mavuso Langa Mavuso An-

Langa Mavuso announces his ten-date national tour bringing soul and contemporary African music nationwide



Following a career defined by powerful storytelling, emotional depth and an unmistakable vocal presence, The Other Side Tour invites audiences to experience Langa Mavuso beyond the expected - exploring the music, emotions and perspective that exist on the other side of the artist and his journey.

The tour officially kicks off on 2 October 2026 at the Kumalo Turpin Gallery, presented by Stella Artois, before travelling to Emperors Palace in Johannesburg on 24 October.

At its heart, The Other Side Tour is about creating a space where audiences can connect with Langa Mavuso through his music in a deeper and more intimate way.

Known for music that explores love, identity, vulnerability, heartbreak and personal transformation, Langa has consistently used his artistry to tell stories that resonate beyond the stage. The tour provides an opportunity to bring those stories to life through a carefully curated live experience.

Rather than simply presenting a collection of songs, The Other Side Tour is designed as

a journey - moving audiences through different emotional landscapes while showcasing the musicianship, performance and artistry that have become synonymous with Langa's live shows.

Audiences can expect a performance that moves between the intimate and the expansive, with Langa's vocals and storytelling at the centre of the experience. As the tour moves from city to city, it promises to be a celebration of where Langa Mavuso has been, where he is now and the artistic territory that lies ahead.

The Other Side Tour takes a journey through a decade-long career of music that is filled with love and healing.

The tour will explore the extensive catalogue from Liminal Sketches to Therapy: The Other Side.

Audiences can expect all the favourite classics and some new sounds too - and along the tour, some special guest surprise acts. He will also have the introduction of brand-new music from his upcoming deluxe album - scheduled to be released on 16 October 2026. - B Kool Media/At Handle



Spring Sparks Festival Frenzy

By Katlego Mashwabi

Ngwathe Spring Experience
Thousands of music lovers braved the rain at Fezile Dabi Stadium in Tumahole, Parys, for the Ngwathe Spring Experience Music Festival from 26 to 27 September 2026.

The two-day cultural fixture featured diverse stalls and high-energy sets from Kwesta, Mawhoo, and Shandesh. A surprise appearance by Jub Jub performing Ndikhokhele sparked a massive crowd eruption, cementing the event's premier status

MSB 2026
The Free State's Matjhabeng Spring and Soulful Blow (MSB) 2026 lit up Robs Cricket Club in Riebeeckstad, Welkom, this past weekend. Saturday's high-energy phase featured urban and Amapiano giants like Nasty

C and Felo LeTee. Sunday shifted to deep house rhythms and exceptional food, starring legendary performances by Ringo and local artist Sannere, cementing the festival as a premier cultural highlight. Metro FM turns 40 at La Parada

South Africa's leading commercial radio station, Metro FM, launched its 40th-birthday celebrations with a weekend takeover at La Parada, Kyalami Corner on 26 September 2026.

The star-studded event featured live



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Xaba Chases Fourth Tile at Jozi Race



By **Gomolemo Winkel**

Gauteng - Reigning SPAR Grand Prix champion Glenrose Xaba is on the brink of securing her fourth title at the final race of the series at Marks Park in Johannesburg on Sunday morning.

Xaba enters the Jozi SPAR Women's 10km Challenge in scintillating form after winning the Gqeberha leg last weekend in 31:17 minutes.

She faces stiff competition from Boxer teammates Cacisile Sosibo, Karabo More, and Karabo Mailula, alongside Ethiopian Nedbank runner Salam Gebre and junior debutant Dirbe Dogne.

Ultra-marathon star, Gerda Steyn, will also compete and lead a moment of silence for the SPAR End Gender-Based Violence initiative.

"Something must be done about the horrific levels of GBV in South Africa. These have been highlighted by the

spate of killings in Ekurhuleni.

"Women should be able to go about their daily lives without fear and if they want to run, they should be free to do so without wondering whether they will get home safely," said Steyn.

The technical one-lap course takes runners through Emmarentia, Green-side, Linden, and Parkview, passing the Johannesburg Botanical Gardens and Melville Koppies.

Race Director, Brad Glasspoole, noted that multiple athletes remain in contention for podium finishes alongside Xaba.

SPAR National PR, Communications and Sponsorship Manager, Mpudi Maubane, emphasised the brand's ongoing advocacy. "On Sunday, we will 'Celebrate Her' by honouring and remembering the countless women and girls who have lost their lives to gender-based violence. We will stand together, raise our voices, and send a clear and united message enough is enough."

Ralenkoane Living His Premiership Football Dream



By **Gomolemo Winkel**

Free State - Orapedi Nelson Ralenkoane is carving out a professional football career after rising from a small town in the Free State to make his debut for Marumo Gallants in the top-flight division.

The 24-year-old defender grew up in the small town of Wepener in the Free State, before moving on to Bloemfontein to hone his skills at Navalsig High School.

His talent was then tracked by top flight football scouts at various school tournaments.

"We used to play a lot of school tournaments. So I think the national team saw me at those tournaments," the defender said

in an exclusive interview with Journal news Network (JNN).

Ralenkoane's performances earned him a contract with Orlando Pirates in August 2018 and selection for South Africa's junior national teams under Molefi Ntseki.

Ralenkoane later played for Pretoria Callies in the Motsepe Foundation Championship from 2022 to 2024 before joining Marumo Gallants this season.

"For me, as you can see, I am still new in the league and even in the team. So for me it will be to get more minutes, to play more. "So with that, playing more games builds confidence obviously. For us to push so that we can get out of where we are currently," Ralenkoane said.



By **Gomolemo Winkel**

Bafana Bafana head coach, Pitso Mosimane, expressed his delight after fielding veteran midfielder, Themba Zwane, since his red card incident at the World Cup when his charges thrashed Eritrea 5-0 at Al Salam Stadium in Cairo on Wednesday evening.

Speaking in a post-match press conference, Mosimane said that Zwane's introduction in the last 15 minutes was meant to restore his conviction.

"I am happy one of the most experienced players, Themba Zwane, managed to get the chance because I would not like him not to play, after the red card he got from the World Cup. So bring him back. Give him respect and confidence," he said.

Eritrea started the game like a house

on fire during the opening minutes of the match, forcing the South African side to settle down quickly and begin to tighten the screws on the East Africans.

The fierceness was blown down when Relebohile Mofokeng opened the account in the 19th minute, netting the second goal before the interval in added time, marking the start of a relentless attack that was to come in the second period.

Yaya Sithole expanded the lead shortly after the restart in the 52nd minute of the game.

Iqraam Rayners converted the fourth 10 minutes later in the 62nd minute before second-half substitute Luther Singh seized the advantage in referee's optional time.

Goalkeeper, Ronwen Williams, while his teammates were ruthless in front of goal, adopted a no-nonsense attitude in the back

and made several stunning saves to deny the East African side a consolation goal.

Although social media turned into a frenzy following the head coach's comments about the rotational play between Oswin Appollis and Aubrey Modiba, Mosimane commended the Orlando Pirates attacker on the shift he put in throughout the game.

"Yeah, I'm happy with the two assists from Appollis. Can play anywhere. Can come in and all that. Good boy, good player. And yeah, I'm happy for Appollis. He gave us assists. He gave Luther Singh the opportunity to come back. He's been out for a long time to score," said Mosimane.

On the other hand, Eritrea head coach Hesham Yaka said that his players are yet to gain experience equivalent to South Africa, and they were outmatched by quality opposition.

"We faced a team that is classified as a top 5 team in Africa, it was difficult," the Eritrea coach said.

Furthermore, Mosimane said that Bathusi Aubaas was very mum after a forced substitution due to injury in the early phases of the game, adding that the Mamelodi Sundowns midfielder is at the wrong end of the outcome after he missed the global showdown.

"Aubaas is one unfortunate player. Aubaas missed the World Cup because of injury. And he was ready to come on and to play. Again, broke down.

"Yeah, shame. He was crying in the dressing room. But we are there to support him and give him the confidence (sic). He is a very good football player. And it was his chance to play again, because he missed the World Cup," said Mosimane.

Navalsig Lift Kay Motsepe Cup



By **Gomolemo Winkel**

Free State - Navalsig High School Under-19 have clinched the 2026 Kay Motsepe School Tournament for the first time after defeating Eastern Cape side Urban Academy by two goals to nil on Wednesday, 30 September 2026.

The Bloemfontein-side netted twice in the second half to secure the championship, obtaining the first position.

Head coach, Mzwakhe James, saluted his players, technical team, and the entire Navalsig community from the teachers, and the School Governing Body (SGB) for their participation leading up to the historic triumph.

He said that the victory is a rewarding experience following a challenging journey from the provincial stages to the national tournament.

"We are humbled and honoured to be here and winning the tournament.

The journey was a very difficult one for us as a team, from the zonals in Bloemfontein all the way to the nationals. The boys did well," James said.

James also commended his charges' defensive resilience throughout the competition, indicating their clean record of conceding a few goals.

"We conceded three goals throughout the entire tournament, from zonals to nationals. We conceded one goal at the zonal stage,

one goal provincially, and one goal at nationals.

That says a lot about the boys and the team we have," he said.

The coach stretched his thankfulness to everyone involved in the journey, including his support staff, as well as leadership.

"This is for the entire Navalsig community at large. This is for everyone in Bloemfontein and the Free State. We did it for you guys," James added.