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FS SAPS SALUTES SERGEANT KARELI

The spirited and affable Free State police spokesperson honoured at emotional memorial service attended by family, friends and colleagues

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Kempton Park Women's Death Horror: 9 Bodies Found

By Matshidiso Selebeleng

Kempton Park has been plunged into fear after the bodies of nine women were discovered in and around the area over a two-month period, with police investigating whether the deaths could be connected.

What began as a seemingly ordinary July day has turned into a disturbing series of discoveries that has left residents on edge and women questioning their safety when walking, running or exercising alone.

The alarm intensified following the disappearance and subsequent discovery of the body of Kempton Park runner Elizabeth "Tsontso" Moselakgomo, whose remains were later identified by her family.

Police have since urged residents, particularly women, to remain vigilant as investigations continue into the growing number



of bodies found in the area and surrounding parts of Ekurhuleni.

The first victim, a 37-year-old woman, was discovered near the R21 on 15 July. Police found her naked and restrained with cable ties.

A second victim, a 32-year-old woman, was found near the R21 on 24 August. She was also partially clothed.

On 10 September, police discovered the body of an unidentified woman in an ad-

vanced state of decomposition. She was found naked.

The fourth victim, a 38-year-old woman, was discovered on Saturday in Rhodesfield, behind a hotel.

A fifth body was subsequently discovered as police were investigating possible links between the cases.

The situation escalated on Monday when three more bodies of women were discovered, bringing the number to eight and trig-

gering outrage among residents and calls for intensified police action.

On Thursday morning, a ninth body was found in Villa Lisa in Ekurhuleni.

The discoveries have heightened fears in communities around Kempton Park, with residents demanding answers and increased police visibility as investigators work to establish whether the cases are connected and who may be responsible.

Police spokesperson Brigadier Athlenda

Mathe has urged women to avoid walking, running or exercising alone while investigations continue.

"If you don't feel safe, do report suspicious activities in your area. We have urged women and young women, those who exercise, take walks, run and jog, to do so in groups. Let's avoid walking alone while police continue with investigations," Mathe said.

She stressed that the advice was not intended to restrict women's freedom of movement, but rather to provide precautionary measures while police work to establish the circumstances surrounding the deaths.

Police are continuing with their investigations and have appealed to members of the public to report suspicious activity and provide any information that could assist in the cases.

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Metsimaholo Residents Object ANC ‘Manipulated’ Candidate List



By Matshidiso Selebeleng

Metsimaholo residents have challenged the ANC’s candidate list for the upcoming local government elections, alleging that the selection process was manipulated and that their preferred candidate was unfairly excluded.

The dispute erupted during the ANC’s regional manifesto launch at the Harry Gwala Multipurpose Centre on Saturday, where residents and ANC supporters confronted National Executive Committee member David Makhura, demanding answers over how the final candidate list was compiled.

Residents from Ward 6 claim their preferred candidate, Manana Mozolo, received the majority of votes during the selection process, securing 227 votes, but was subsequently left off the ANC’s final list.

Ward 6 resident Bongani Thompson said repeated attempts to obtain answers from the regional and provincial leadership had yielded no satisfactory response.

“We came here today not only for the manifesto, but to raise our frustration and disappointment on how our candidate was treated. We needed answers,” said Thompson.

“We have approached the region for answers and the provincial leadership, but nothing was forthcoming.”

Thompson said residents wanted the matter resolved so they could be represented by the candidate they had chosen.

Another resident, Teboho Mokoena, called on the ANC to intervene and resolve the dispute.

“We came here to ask for help from the ANC to come and help our comrade in Ward 6 because now, it seems like the ANC is an individual organisation and not a democratic organisation,” said Mokoena.

He said residents were surprised when a provincial employee recently introduced them to a candidate different from the person selected during the local process.

Residents also questioned whether the absence of an established branch in the area had contributed to the dispute, saying a branch would only be established later.

They said they supported Mozolo because she had previously served as a councillor and had, in their view, worked to secure services for the community.

Some residents warned that the dispute could cost the ANC support in the upcoming elections, although they said they still wanted the party to win.

Mozolo said she had repeatedly sought clarity on why her name was excluded from the final list.

“Since no one was giving us definite reasons, other comrades decided to come here today and hear from Makhura what should happen going forward,” she said.

“I believe if there was a problem, they should have sat me down and explained to me the reasons why I am not a candidate, even though the community voted for me. The Mooldrif community knows how I used to work for them.”

Addressing the masses, Makhura promised to investigate the matter and seek answers on what happened, saying communities should have a say in choosing their councillors.

“We will not install a councillor who was not elected by the community. The community must be the ones to choose who they want to represent them. They must tell the ANC who they want, and the ANC should respect that choice.

“We do not want councillors who are chosen behind closed doors by their friends. They must be chosen openly, at a community meeting. We will look into what happened in Ward 6 and take steps to correct it,” he said.

However, Fezile Dabi regional secretary Kau Khumalo said the candidates registered on the final list were the ones who would represent communities in the elections.

“It usually happens that other people are not satisfied with the selection,” said Khumalo.

Meanwhile, the ANC’s Fezile Dabi region expressed confidence that the unity and mobilisation demonstrated at the manifesto launch would provide a strong foundation for a renewed and vigorous campaign ahead of the Local Government Elections.

“We must carry the spirit of that historic day into every branch, every ward and every community. We must strengthen our organisation from the ground up, deepen political education, expand our mobilisation efforts and ensure that the ANC remains a movement that listens to and works alongside the people,” said Khumalo.

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EFF Targets Mangaung Takeover

Malema promises complete overhaul of the city should his party govern after the local government elections

By Nonkululeko Ngubeni

Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) leader, Julius Malema, has labelled Mangaung Metro as the worst managed municipality in South Africa, vowing sweeping administrative reforms should his party secure power in the upcoming local government elections.

Addressing supporters at the party’s 2026 Local Government Elections Manifesto event in Bloemfontein on Saturday, Malema committed to restoring operational integrity and tackling systemic corruption across the metro.

A primary focus of the proposed governance shift involves dismantling cadre deployment by introducing open recruitment systems that prioritise certified qualifications over political affiliation.

Malema also condemned municipal job exploitation, pledging an immediate end to alleged demands for sexual favours from female applicants seeking local employment.

He stressed that holding party membership would offer no preferential treatment during recruitment drives, emphasizing equal opportunities for all local youth.

“An EFF membership will not guarantee a job, a qualification will. We will not hire by favour, but we will include all the youth of Mangaung,” he said.



Complete City Clean-up ... EFF commander-in-chief, Julius Malema promised to clean Mangaung inside out should his party be given the opportunity to govern. Pictures: Thembisile Mlangeni

Turning to human settlements, the Red Beret’s commander-in-chief advocated for public housing lists to prevent queue-jumping and protect elderly applicants who have waited decades for shelter.

He condemned modern low-cost housing models, insisting that residents deserve spacious homes with private yards rather than cramped structures.

Malema highlighted critical service delivery failures, demanding that communal standpipes be replaced with individual household taps alongside reliable electricity grids and functioning sanitation infrastructure.

of Distress grant as inadequate and called for targeted financial aid for struggling tertiary graduates.

He concluded by urging local youth to pursue higher education, assuring them that an EFF administration would guarantee merit-based employment opportunities.

Motsumi Leads Delegation to International Convention

The high-level assembly has highlighted Motsumi as the youngest serving Speaker across all its geographic regions



By Katlego Mashwabi

Ntsetso Viola Motsumi is leading the North West delegation at the 69th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference (CPC) in Cape Town that is currently underway at the Cape Town International Convention Centre

The event, running from 13 to 19 September, has drawn over 900 delegates from nearly 150 countries with Motsumi leading a cross-party provincial delegation alongside Chief Whip, Motlalepula Roshu, under the summit theme of strengthening international law and parliamentary democracy.

The high-level assembly further highlighted Motsumi as the youngest serving Speaker across the Commonwealth’s nine geographic regions. The former MEC for Education transitioned to legislative head in August 2026, marking an evolving regional political landscape focused on governance.

Motsumi is also spearheading key discussions at the concurrent 10th Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians Conference targeting gender sensitivity and institutional ethics.

The two conferences are running concurrently, with the CPC taking prominence.

Delegates at both conferences are examining structural accountability, digital risk mitigation, legal implications of artificial intelligence, and constitutional diversity mandates requiring one-third female representation.

Opened on behalf of President Cyril Ramaphosa by Minister in the Presidency responsible for Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation, Maropene Ramokgopa, the current convention marks the second time South Africa hosts the gathering since 2013.

The influx of high-level lawmakers serves as a major economic multiplier for the regional hospitality, aviation and event management sectors.



Inquest opened after four people die in separate incidents

North West Provincial Commissioner Lieutenant General Arthur Peter Adams has expressed concern following two separate incidents in Hartbeespoortdam and Leeudoringstad that left four people dead.

In Hartbeespoortdam, police are investigating murder and inquest cases after a 57-year-old man and his 52-year-old partner were found dead in their bedroom at a smallholding in Melodie on 11 September. Both had sustained gunshot wounds to the head. Their 30-year-old daughter, who was asleep in another room, reportedly heard

a gunshot, forced open a burglar door and discovered the bodies. A revolver was found on the bed.

The circumstances surrounding the deaths remain under investigation.

In Leeudoringstad, a 33-year-old teacher at a School for the Deaf was allegedly fatally stabbed at her home by her 33-year-old former boyfriend, who then stabbed himself. Both were declared dead at the scene.

Adams urged communities to report domestic violence, threats and intimidation early, stressing that GBV should never be treated as a private matter.

Two sentenced to 27 years for police officer’s murder

Taolo Sebolai and Karabo Kunene have each been sentenced to 27 years’ direct imprisonment for murder and 15 years for robbery by the Vryburg High Court.

The pair were arrested on 5 April 2025 by the Hawks’ Mmabatho-based Serious Organised Crime Investigation Unit following the murder of Constable Gaerutwe Eric Tekolo, attached to Bray SAPS.

Tekolo was reportedly attacked and stabbed after arranging for his brother to collect him from his elder sister’s home so they could travel together to Madinonyane.

His brother found him on the street suffering from stab wounds. Tekolo allegedly told him that two unknown men had attacked and robbed him of his wallet and cellphone. He was declared dead at the scene.

A follow-up investigation led to the suspects’ arrest. They appeared in court several times before being convicted and sentenced.

North West Hawks Provincial Head Major General Nombuso Khoza and Director of Public Prosecutions Dr Rachel Makhari praised the investigation and prosecution teams for securing the convictions.

Malema granted R30 000 bail in R16m fraud case

The Vanderbijlpark Magistrates’ Court has granted Mpho Edward Malema, a service provider and director of Mabu-la Forestry and Construction, bail of R30 000.

Malema faces charges of corruption, fraud and theft relating to approximately R16 million. The charges stem from alleged transactions involving Emfuleni Local Municipality between July 2015 and July 2023.

The State alleges that Fleet Manager Lerato Selaelo Mpholo, who is Accused 1, received R50 000 and other undisclosed amounts from Malema in exchange for allegedly facilitating fleet procurement contracts

for Malema and his company.

The municipality subsequently allegedly ordered and paid about R16 million for 18 vehicles, including UD trucks and bakkies. The vehicles were allegedly never delivered. Seven have since been recovered from other entities, while the remainder remain outstanding.

The State opposed bail, but the magistrate ruled that it was in the interests of justice to release Malema.

The matter returns to court on 29 September 2026 for further investigations and for Malema to join co-accused Mpholo.

Colesberg man sentenced to 25 years for rape, assault

The Pixley Ka Seme District Management has welcomed the conviction and sentencing of 26-year-old Ronald Afrikaner for rape, assault with intent to cause grievous bodily harm (GBH) and kidnapping.

The incident occurred on the evening of 21 July 2023 when the 18-year-old victim was walking home and encountered Afrikaner, who offered to accompany her. After she refused his advances, he allegedly overpowered and assaulted her before dragging her to his home.

According to evidence before the court,

Afrikaner forcibly undressed and raped the victim before keeping her at his residence overnight. He released her the following day.

The victim reported the matter at Colesberg SAPS and underwent a medical examination. The case was assigned to the Family Violence, Child Protection and Sexual Offences Unit, whose investigation led to his prosecution.

On 9 September 2026, the Colesberg Regional Court sentenced him to 15 years for rape, five years for assault with intent to cause GBH and five years for kidnapping.



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SAPS Salutes Sergeant Kareli

The spirited and affable Free State police spokesperson honoured at emotional memorial service attended by family, friends and colleagues

By Nonkululeko Ngubeni

Sergeant Mahlomola Peter Kareli, the Free State provincial police spokesperson, was remembered for his warm sense of humour, humility and dedication during a memorial service held at Bobbiespark Sports Complex in Fichardt Park, Bloemfontein on Thursday, 17 September 2026.

Kareli passed away on 9 September 2026 following a period of ill health, leaving colleagues, friends, and family to gather and honour his life and contribution to the South African Police Service (SAPS).

Those who paid tribute described Kareli as a gentle spirit who consistently brought laughter to others through his jokes.

Colleagues and close associates reflected on his personality, highlighting his immense pride in serving as the provincial police spokesperson.

Lehlohonolo Mathabeng, Kareli's colleague, shared that Kareli was more than a co-worker, describing him as a mentor.

"Sergeant Kareli was more than a colleague to me, I still cannot believe that he is not here. I am going to miss his sense of humour, because he always joked around making everyone around him laugh.

"He was my role model, what inspired me is that he loved his job and his family and he was also very professional. I would like to thank his family for sharing him with us as his colleagues," stated Mathabeng.

Harry Nagel remembered Kareli as someone who brought joy wherever he went, noting his practical skills and craftsmanship.

Nagel recalled how Kareli enjoyed showcasing home renovation projects

he undertook in his spare time.

"Kareli was very skilled with his hands and he loved to renovate his own house and used to show me.

"The last piece of work he showed me was incomplete, I cannot believe he will not get to finish it. I hope the kids that he spoke to and encouraged are truly inspired by him," said Nagel.

Kareli's role placed him at the centre of communication between law enforcement and the public, particularly through his routine interactions with media personnel.

Renowned radio veteran, Thuso Mot-aung, aptly referred to as Ntate Thuso, expressed shock over Kareli's passing, noting that the spokesperson had recently buried his mother, to whom he was deeply devoted.

"I can't believe he is gone. I can't believe I won't get to speak to you, you will not sit in the studio with me again. It is truly unbelievable.

"After burying his mother he would be teary when speaking about her so it is sad that he passed shortly after burying his mother," Ntate Thuso said.

For those who worked alongside him, his passing marked the loss of a trusted communicator who built strong professional and personal relationships throughout his career.

SAPS head of provincial communication, Thandi Mbambo, asserted that media houses and colleagues alike could attest to Kareli's work ethic and commitment to the service.

"Thank you for sharing him with us, he was a big part of the SAPS force. He served his country and his province so well," Mbambo said.

His passing leaves a lasting impression on all who knew him, with his legacy of service continuing to live on across the province.

FS Youth Expo Showcases Opportunities



By Katlego Mashwabi

In an effort to address severe provincial unemployment, the Free State Provincial Government hosted a multi-sectoral Youth Opportunities Expo under the theme Dare to Rewrite Your Future on Thursday.

The initiative aimed to empower young people aged 18 to 35 with practical skills, economic opportunities, and resources to support themselves in an evolving economy.

Officials highlighted the expo as a direct response to stark realities including digital inequality, skills mismatches, and staggering youth unemployment across Mangaung Metro and the Xhariep District.

Statistics show that the local unemployment rate stands at 62.1% for youth aged 15 to 24, and 40.7% for those aged 24 to 34.

The event targeted 5 000 active SASA SRD beneficiaries, youth living with disabilities, local entrepreneurs, unemployed graduates, and students from all wards across the municipality.

Speaking at the gathering, Mangaung Metropolitan Municipality Executive Mayor, Gregory Nthatsi, reminded attendees of the region's historic legacy in shaping the nation.

"You are in Mangaung, a city that gave birth to our democratic dispensation today in 1912. Leaders of the country and leaders of the Southern Africa, converged here, in this town to determine our today as we are sitting here," he said.

Nthatsi added that young people remain the pride and future of the province who will eventually take over the baton of leadership.

Key participating stakeholders included the national departments of Small Business Development, Employment and Labour, and Higher Education and Training, alongside representatives from the mining and corporate sectors.

Delivering the keynote address, Free State Premier, MaQueen Letsoha-Mathae, emphasised that high unemployment rates remain deeply concerning given the talent pool available in the province.

"As a leader of a small province like the Free State, it is worrying to see so many young people here at this time of the day converged at one place because it can only mean that they are not working, they don't have the opportunities to create jobs for themselves or be hired," she said.

Letsoha-Mathae noted that the turnout reflects a clear cry for leadership intervention regarding youth joblessness.

She added that widespread unemployment remains one of the primary issues keeping provincial leadership awake at night. Dignitaries in attendance included Minister of Social Development, Sisi Tolashe, and Minister in the Presidency for Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation, Maropene Ramokgopa.

The drive succeeded in connecting thousands of young beneficiaries with government and private sector opportunities.

48 Miners Dead: AMCU Demands Answers

By Nonkululeko Ngubeni

South Africa's mining death toll has reached 48 this year, with 21 contract workers among those killed, prompting the Association of Mineworkers and Construction Union (AMCU) to demand tougher safety measures and greater accountability from mining companies.

AMCU says the number of contract-worker fatalities has risen sharply from the five recorded during the same period last year.



The latest fatality occurred at Impala Platinum on 10 September, when a 62-year-old winch operator was killed in a Fall of Ground incident.

According to preliminary information received by AMCU, a Shift Boss contacted the Control Room at about 10:15 after the worker was reported trapped and unresponsive.

The worker, originally from the Eastern Cape, was reportedly cleaning a diagonal gully when the Fall of Ground occurred.

Emergency response procedures were activated, with paramedics and Proto Teams mobilised and an Emergency Control Room established. The worker was later confirmed dead.

The Mine Health and Safety Inspectorate has launched an investigation into the circumstances and underlying causes of the incident.

AMCU president Joseph Mathunjwa said the latest death brought Impala Platinum's 2026 fatality total to nine.

"This latest tragedy marks the ninth fatality at Impala Platinum in 2026. Impala and Harmony Gold have now jointly recorded the highest number of fatalities in the industry," Mathunjwa said.

According to the union, Harmony Gold and Impala Platinum have collectively recorded 18 of the industry's 48 fatalities this year.

The latest death follows an August incident at Impala's Mineral Processing Plant in

Rustenburg, North West, where a 45-year-old plant cleaner died after exposure to sulphur dioxide.

The 5 August incident followed a reported valve failure at the sulphuric acid plant, resulting in an uncontrolled release of the toxic gas. Eight employees were exposed.

The plant cleaner collapsed near the on-site clinic after reportedly experiencing distress while walking towards the change house. Despite emergency treatment, he died. Seven other employees were taken for medical assessment.

AMCU questioned whether adequate risk management, maintenance and emergency preparedness measures were in place, and

called for a review of critical safety controls.

The union's concerns also extend to Harmony Gold, where Mathunjwa referred to a fatal incident involving a reported seismic event that caused a face ejection and subsequent Fall of Ground. One worker died and another was injured.

AMCU has called for amendments to the Mine Health and Safety Act to strengthen personal accountability for mine safety failures.

"The law must have real consequences for those whose negligence, poor maintenance or failure to implement effective safety controls results in the death of a worker," Mathunjwa said.

The union has urged the Mine Health and Safety Inspectorate to thoroughly investigate fatalities and determine whether negligence or legal non-compliance contributed to the deaths.

AMCU said it would continue pushing for stronger enforcement and accountability, while extending condolences to the families, friends and colleagues of workers who lost their lives.

The union says every mineworker should be able to report for duty and return home safely after every shift.



SERVICE DELIVERY OUTREACH

The Premier of the Northern Cape, Dr. Zamani Saul will join Deputy Minister for Human Settlements, Ms. Tandi Mahambehlala at a joint service delivery outreach programme in Hartswater, Frances Baard District.



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Free State Tourism Turns Up The Vibe

By Katlego Mashwabi

The Free State is turning the spotlight on its people, culture and unique experiences as it positions itself as a destination to visit, experience and explore during the 2026 Provincial Tourism Month.

The Free State Department of Economic Development and Tourism officially launched the campaign on Sunday with a vibrant media launch at K-LA-K Lifestyle in Bochabela, Bloemfontein, hosted by MEC for Finance, Economic Development and Tourism, Hon. Ketso Makume.

Dubbed the Sunday Soul Session, the launch signalled a fresh approach to tourism marketing—one that moves beyond traditional brochures and scenic attractions to showcase the authentic experiences that make the Free State distinctive.

Set against the backdrop of a township lifestyle venue, with guests dressed in elegant white, beige, olive and gold, the event featured live marimba jazz and celebrated the province's vibrant cultural identity.

MEC Makume challenged the perception of the Free State as simply a province people travel through on their way to other destinations.

He said Tourism Month provides an opportunity to encourage Free Staters to explore their own province, discover destinations they may have overlooked, support local tourism businesses and recognise tourism as an important driver of economic development.

"Modern travellers are looking for a unique vibe and authentic experiences rather than generic brochures," said Makume.

He also highlighted the growing influence of digital platforms on travel decisions, noting that visitors increasingly search online, watch videos, read reviews and use artificial intelligence to plan their journeys.

This, he said, makes it critical for the province to showcase its real stories, people, culture and experiences to digital audiences.

From the energy of Siwelele supporters filling a stadium with song to township lifestyle experiences, nature, adventure and

heritage attractions, the province is positioning everyday Free State culture as part of its tourism offering.

Earlier, Head of Department Mr Zikhali welcomed guests and outlined the strategic importance of the campaign, saying Tourism Month provides an opportunity to reaffirm the department's commitment to positioning the Free State as a competitive, attractive and sustainable destination.

The province's five tourism routes—the Cheetah, Eden, Lyon, Flamingo and Special Routes—remain central to this strategy, offering visitors access to mountains, open spaces, game reserves, dams, adventure activities and diverse cultural experiences.

The choice of Bochabela for the launch also underscored the department's commitment to inclusive tourism growth, bringing township communities and businesses into the province's broader tourism economy.

Corporate and tourism industry partners also pledged their support.

Standard Bank South Africa Provincial Head of Merchant Solutions, Ms Mantshadi

Magkata, shared her experience as a new resident of the province and spoke highly of its natural beauty following a family visit to Golden Gate Highlands National Park.

She reaffirmed Standard Bank's commitment to growing local businesses under its motto: "Africa is our home, and we drive her growth."

The launch also showcased emerging tourism enterprises, including Qhoema Adventures and the Thaba Nchu-based Black Mountain Festival.

Festival founder Jojo Mokirisi said the event provided an important platform to contribute to the vision of positioning the Free State as a destination worth experiencing and exploring.

The launch was also attended by Ms Tankiso Morule, Deputy Chairperson of the Free State Gambling, Liquor and Tourism Authority. With its 2026 Tourism Month campaign, the Free State is making a clear statement: its greatest tourism asset is not only what visitors can see, but what they can feel, experience and take home with them.

Agriculture Imbizo Empowers Women

Department pledges dedicated funding to advance female smallholders within male-dominated farming sector



xxx. Pictures: Supplied

By Matshidiso Selebeleng

Women farmers across Mangaung assembled at Simon Sifuthi Hall in Botshabelo on Tuesday for a Women in Agriculture Imbizo hosted by the Free State Department of Agriculture, Rural Development and Environmental Affairs.

The gathering aimed to address core industry challenges facing female producers who remain largely restricted to small-scale farming within a male-dominated agricultural market.

Delegates representing diverse farming sub-sectors showcased processed goods and fresh produce at display stalls while sharing operational strategies.

Modulaghowa Primary Cooperative Manager, Lindiwe Ludada, who operates a plant nursery in Botshabelo, highlighted the educational value of peer engagement for emerging enterprise leaders.

"We specialise in shade trees, fruit trees, indoor and outdoor flowers, succulent plants, and vegetable seedlings. We came here to learn from other women's experience, which most emphasized patience and not expecting immediate results because things take time and sometimes you can wait close to three months to harvest," she said.

Ludada noted that networking provided crucial guidance on maintaining business resilience during early growth phases.

Servreca Farming owner, Sheila Malefane, who launched a vegetable enterprise in Thaba Nchu during COVID-19, shared expansion plans following a recent land acquisition.

Her operations focus on high-yield veg-

etable crops including cabbage, spinach, pumpkin, and potatoes.

"Recently we got a lease agreement of 5ha for ten years that we will be using to produce more vegetables than what we are currently making.

"We came here today to be with other women in farming to find motivation and also learn how they overcome their fair share of challenges in this industry," said Malefane.

Malefane emphasised that unpredictable weather conditions present continuous operational risks to crop quality and harvest yields.

Addressing attendees, Agriculture MEC, Elzabe Rockman, reaffirmed government commitments to enforce strict funding allocation quotas for designated demographic groups.

She highlighted that the Comprehensive Agricultural Support Programme (CASP) enforces targeted resource allocation to accelerate transformation across local supply chains.

"As much as we have CASP, the Comprehensive Agriculture Support Program, which determines that a minimum of 50% of CASP funding must go to women. In the past, it was difficult, and often that was neglected. "But we have taken a stance in the last two or three years to say we're not going to compromise on the 50% for women and the 40% for youth. We are still struggling to meet the 6% for disabled farmers," said Rockman.

Rockman concluded that strict quota enforcement ensures both financial resources and practical technical training directly reach target beneficiary groups.

NTI in Corruption Probe Wrangle

SIU targets State transport entity following presidential authorisation into widespread financial irregularities



xxx. Pictures: Supplied

By Nonkululeko Ngubeni

North West Transport Investments (NTI) faces a comprehensive corruption investigation after President Cyril Ramaphosa authorised the Special Investigating Unit (SIU) to probe widespread administrative and financial irregularities.

Issued under Proclamation 348 of 2026, the directive empowers the unit to investigate NTI alongside subsidiaries North West Star and Atteridgeville Bus Service.

The probe focuses on procurement contracts, specifically fuel supplies from Zentrfor Fuel, a July 2023 vehicle rental agreement, and sub-contractor commuter bus agreements.

Investigators will examine service payments to determine compliance with National Treasury guidelines and relevant provincial legislation.

The unit will also review claims processing and approvals involving Tansanat Coachlines, Ziggy Investments, and their associated joint venture.

Scrutiny extends to the Business Rescue Practitioner appointed in July 2022, alongside appointed agents and NTI personnel.

The SIU aims to establish whether individuals or entities secured undue benefits, resulting in financial losses for the state.

Authorised under its mandate, the unit may initiate civil litigation in the High Court or Special Tribunal to recover misappropriated funds.

MEC for Community Safety and Transport Management in the province, Tsotso Thipi, welcomed the presidential proclamation as a crucial step toward accountability.

"The Department has full confidence in the capacity, expertise and independence of

the Special Investigating Unit in conducting a thorough and impartial investigation into the allegations levelled against the entity," said Thipi.

She emphasised that the findings will guide corrective measures and prosecution efforts.

"We trust that the investigation will provide clarity on all allegations currently under scrutiny and, where wrongdoing is identified, we will ensure that appropriate corrective measures are implemented and this includes the recovery of any public funds that may have been unlawfully lost and the prosecution of those found to have acted unlawfully," she said.

The North West Provincial Legislature's Portfolio Committee on Community Safety and Transport Management also welcomed the investigation following sustained oversight.

Committee chairperson, Freddy Sonakile, noted that lawmakers previously petitioned the Ramaphosa directly to expedite the proclamation.

"Our work does not end with the proclamation. The Committee will continue to monitor the progress of the SIU investigation, as well as matters that have already been referred to the Hawks," said Sonakile.

Thipi reaffirmed the provincial government's commitment to restoring institutional integrity and delivering reliable public transportation.

"We will fully cooperate and support the SIU during this investigation. It is through processes like this which restores public confidence in our department and its entities.

"This is an era of ensuring that public resources are used appropriately for their intended purpose," she concluded.

Silent Crisis: Youth Suicide Warning



By Matshidiso Selebeleng

As South Africa marks Suicide Awareness Month, mental health experts are warning that young people remain particularly vulnerable to suicidal behaviour, with social pressures, inadequate coping skills, family circumstances and economic challenges among the factors that can increase risk.

A 2021 World Health Organization (WHO) article identified people aged 15 to 29 as particularly vulnerable to suicidal behaviour, while South Africa was placed in a range of 21.1 to 23.5 deaths by suicide per 100,000 people.

September is observed as Suicide Awareness Month, while the South African Depression and Anxiety Group (SADAG) reports that about 23 people die by suicide every day in South Africa, alongside an estimated 460 suicide attempts daily.

Dr Ance George, a Principal Clinical Psychologist at the Free State Psychiatric Complex at the University of the Free State, said young people in the 15–29 age group are navigating critical developmental stages spanning adolescence and emerging adulthood.

"Society has shifted toward greater self-reliance on youth to manage themselves rather than to be monitored and supported. Socio-economic survival has insidiously required more time spent working or away from home by parents," George said.

He said adolescents often have inadequate coping skills and may be more prone to impulsive, emotionally heightened decision-making.

Peer pressure and the desire to identify with social groups also remain significant influences, potentially exposing young people to risk behaviours such as recreational drug use and alcohol abuse.

George explained that suicidal behaviour can occur along a spectrum, including sui-

cidal ideation, suicide attempts and death by suicide.

He said suicidal ideation involves recurring thoughts about ending one's life, while an attempt occurs when such thoughts progress to action but do not result in death. Death by suicide refers to a fatal act.

Psychological, academic, familial and medical challenges can all contribute to suicidal behaviour.

However, George said families, friends and communities can look out for warning signs.

These may include statements suggesting that a person believes their problems have been permanently resolved, excessive self-criticism, withdrawal from social activities, irritability or aggression, declining personal hygiene and losing interest in activities they previously enjoyed.

"Changes in personality: a sociable individual suddenly avoids social gatherings, is irritable, aggressive towards family or friends," he said.

George warned that people may also repeatedly say they are too tired or no longer interested in activities they once enjoyed.

He said suicide remains heavily stigmatised in many communities, where it is often treated as a taboo subject or viewed as shameful.

"National literature has moved away from the term 'committed suicide' to 'completed suicide' or 'death by suicide' as a way of decriminalising the behaviour," he said.

"Communities must stop seeing this behaviour as shameful and hiding it, as this further enables the stigma."

George called for stronger community support systems for people who have attempted suicide, as well as their families, saying the impact of suicide extends far beyond the individual.

He urged communities to create spaces where people can speak openly about emotional distress and seek help without fear of judgement or stigma.

Gqeberha Retirement Villages Targeted



By Lukhanyiso Khanyile

Gqeberha in the Eastern Cape has recorded two separate house robberies targeting retirement villages in Kabega Park and Ferngleng within a single week.

Ranked among the most violent cities globally by the Mexican Council for Public Security and Criminal Justice, the area continues to grapple with persistent residential property crime targeting vulnerable residents.

The first incident occurred at Great West Way retirement village in Kabega Park around 02:00 on Tuesday, 8 September 2026, when three men forced entry into a home.

Police confirmed that the intruders confronted a male resident in his bedroom before restraining him during the break-in.

"Three unknown males allegedly entered the residence and confronted the complainant in his bedroom. The suspects tied his hands with cable ties, threatened him with a knife and forced him to reveal the location of a safe," police reported.

The suspects fled with a .22 pistol, electronic devices, and personal belongings valued at approximately R20 000.

The second robbery unfolded on 11 September 2026 at a Ferngleng retirement facility, where three unidentified men broke in and physically assaulted a male resident.

While additional suspects ransacked several bedrooms, the intruders bound the victim's brother with cable ties before escaping through a window.

Following the surge in residential attacks, police issued an urgent safety directive advising residents not to rely solely on perimeter security.

"Lock up before lights out and make home security part of their nightly routine. Residents are reminded to ensure that all doors are properly locked and windows securely closed before going to bed, even when living in a security-controlled environment," SAPS urged.

Detectives are investigating both house robbery cases, with no arrests made thus far.



Ambulance Shortages: Eastern, Northern Cape Step Up Emergency Fleet

By Nonkululeko Ngubeni

Efforts to address persistent ambulance shortages are gaining momentum in the Eastern and Northern Cape, with both provinces adding new emergency vehicles and strengthening their Emergency Medical Services (EMS) capacity.

The Eastern Cape has taken delivery of 26 new ambulances, while the Northern Cape has launched 30 new EMS vehicles and appointed five Advanced Life Support (ALS) paramedics across its five health districts.

In the Eastern Cape, the latest delivery comes amid ongoing concerns over ambulance shortages, particularly in the Sanel area, where 21 ambulances are expected to be allocated.

Eastern Cape Health MEC Ntandokazi Capa said further deliveries were expected in October, February and March, with the province targeting 497 new ambulances by the end of the financial year.

“We are hoping that it is going to assist

our communities. We know the challenges that we are going through. We only want to appeal to our communities that they must really bear with us. We are trying our level best,” said Capa.

Capa acknowledged that the new vehicles would not immediately resolve all the province’s EMS challenges, but said they would make a meaningful difference to communities. “We know it’s not going to solve our issues, but it’s going to make a difference. And we promise our communities that by the end of the financial year, at least there will be 497 new ambulances,” she said.

She said the province’s priority remained ensuring that communities continued to receive emergency medical services while the fleet was being expanded.

In the Northern Cape, the Department of Health has added 30 vehicles to its EMS fleet as part of its ongoing fleet renewal programme.

The new fleet comprises 15 ambulances, 10 Planned Patient Transport Vehicles (PTVs)

and five specialised units. Each of the province’s five health districts will receive three ambulances, two PTVs, one specialised unit and one ALS paramedic.

Northern Cape Health MEC Nontobeko Vilakazi said the investment was necessary but acknowledged that vehicles alone would not resolve the province’s EMS challenges.

“The Department is under no illusion that vehicles alone resolve the EMS challenge,” Vilakazi said. She said the Northern Cape’s vast geographical area, long travelling distances, poor road conditions and high incident volumes continued to place significant pressure on EMS operations.

Vilakazi said the introduction of PTVs would help separate planned and non-emergency patient transfers from life-threatening emergencies, allowing ambulances to remain available for critical calls.

The department has also urged communities to avoid using emergency ambulance services for non-emergency situations, warning that unnecessary calls could delay

responses to patients facing life-threatening emergencies.

Since 2019, the Northern Cape has placed more than 180 vehicles into service and is decentralising its Computer Aided Dispatch system to establish dedicated emergency call centres in each district.

The province will also implement the IDEAL EMS Tool to monitor station readiness, fleet availability and response performance.

Northern Cape Premier Zamani Saul said the province would continue expanding its emergency fleet.

“We are committed to launching another 30 ambulances before the end of the current financial year,” Saul said.

While both provinces are increasing their ambulance fleets, officials acknowledge that vehicles are only one part of addressing wider EMS pressures.

Staffing, deployment, response times, road conditions and access to emergency services remain critical factors in ensuring patients receive timely care.

Major Road Upgrade in Bronkhorstspuit



By Gomolemo Winkel

Gauteng MEC for Roads and Transport, Kedibone Diale-Tlabela, has unveiled the upgraded R568 Road in Bronkhorstspuit, Tshwane, following the completion of a major infrastructure project aimed at improving road safety, connectivity and mobility for communities in the area.

The upgraded R568 Road functions as an important transport link between the N4 and D670 intersections in Bronkhorstspuit.

As a rural major arterial route, the road provides for long-distance travel and supports the mobility of light vehicles and medium-sized trucks.

The initiative involved the rehabilitation and upgrading of more than eight kilometres of road, construction of surfaced shoulders, improvements to key intersections, installation of road signs and markings, as well as upgrades to drainage infrastructure.

Additional work included the installation of culverts, concrete side drains, channeling systems and stormwater management structures.

Diale-Tlabela said that the opening of the upgraded route represents a critical milestone for Bronkhorstspuit and surrounding communities, emphasising the importance of investing in infrastructure that improves everyday life.

“The official opening of the R568 Road is an important milestone for the people of Bronkhorstspuit and surrounding communities. This is more than a road project; it is

an investment in safer mobility, improved access and the economic potential of this region,” the MEC said.

She added that a reliable road network plays a significant role in supporting economic development by connecting communities with markets, businesses and employment opportunities.

“A reliable road network is the backbone of a functioning local economy. The R568 connects farmers to markets, businesses to supply chains and communities to opportunities.

“By improving this corridor, we are creating better conditions for economic activity, supporting the movement of goods and strengthening the foundation for investment and job creation in Bronkhorstspuit and surrounding areas,” Diale-Tlabela said.

Additionally, the upgraded road is anticipated to enhance safety standards along the route, as well as to provide better travelling conditions for residents, commuters, public transport operators, freight companies and other road users.

Moreover, Diale-Tlabela said that the department will embark on prioritising road infrastructure projects that improve accessibility, and contribute towards safer mobility.

“The opening of the R568 Road reflects our commitment to ensuring that infrastructure investment translates into real improvements in people’s daily lives.

“We will continue working to build and maintain a road network that supports safer mobility and better access across Gauteng,” she concluded.

Indaba calls for stronger action against GBVF

The sixth National Shelter Indaba has called for a strengthened national and global effort to curb gender-based violence and femicide (GBVF), with stakeholders stressing the need for greater collaboration and collective action to address the scourge.

The three-day engagement, hosted by the Department of Social Development in partnership with the National Shelter Movement of South Africa (NSMSA), brings together government officials, shelter representatives and other stakeholders involved in providing services to women and children affected by violence.

Since its inception in 2021, the National Shelter Indaba has provided a platform for officials, practitioners and other role players to share knowledge, experiences and lessons aimed at strengthening the response to GBVF.

It also provides stakeholders with an opportunity to identify gaps and challenges affecting the delivery of services to abused women and their children, while developing strategies to improve support and protection. Reflecting on developments since GBVF was classified as a national disaster, Social Development Director responsible for the Victim Empowerment Programme, Sibusiso Malope, said South Africa continues to face a high prevalence of GBVF.

“The country is globally among the top five countries with a high rate of GBVF incidents. Following the classification of GBVF as a national disaster, NATJOINTS [National Joint Operational and Intelligence Structure] was established, involving various departments, including Social Development; Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities; Justice; the South African Police Service; and the Presidency,” Malope said.

He said NATJOINTS has established several workstreams to strengthen the national response, covering prevention and social cohesion, enforcement, care and support, the legal and regulatory framework, statistics and systems, accountability, funding and costing, communication and partnerships, as well as monitoring. “These workstreams are intended to assess whether all commitments are being actioned,” Malope said.

Tolerance and social cohesion were among the issues discussed on the first day of the Indaba, with government and shelter representatives highlighting their importance in addressing the social conditions that contribute to violence and inequality.

The discussions emphasised the need for South Africans to play an active role in preventing GBVF in homes, places of worship,



communities and workplaces.

This includes challenging cultures, norms and practices that perpetuate gender inequality and violence against vulnerable groups, including women, children, older persons and persons with disabilities.

The Department of Social Development leads Pillar 4 of the National Strategic Plan on Gender-Based Violence and Femicide

(NSP-GBVF), which focuses on response, care, support and healing.

The pillar is implemented in collaboration with other government departments, civil society organisations and stakeholder partners to ensure a coordinated response to survivors and victims of GBVF.

The annual National Shelter Indaba provides a platform for stakeholders to exam-

ine challenges confronting the shelter sector, exchange best practices and strengthen partnerships aimed at improving services to victims and survivors.

The engagement also promotes dialogue and collaborative approaches to addressing gaps in the national GBVF response, particularly in relation to care, support and healing.

- SAnews.gov.za

Madlanga Commission 1 year on: Chair notes evidence indicates serious criminality



The chairperson of the judicial commission of inquiry into corruption within the criminal justice system, acting Deputy Chief Justice Mbuyiseli Madlanga, addressed a media briefing in Sandton, Johannesburg on 28 July 2025. Pictures: EWN

By Matshidiso Selebeleng

As the Madlanga Commission marks one year since its public hearings began, chairperson Mbuyiseli Madlanga has noted evidence indicating serious criminality within the criminal justice system.

Madlanga addressed the commission’s anniversary on Thursday morning.

The inquiry was initially scheduled to sit for six months, but has been extended to probe widespread allegations of State capture in the South African Police Service (SAPS) and other municipal metro entities.

When the Commission first sat, Madlanga stated that if the allegations were found to be true, it would “spell doom for the country’s criminal justice system”.

On Thursday morning, he noted evidence is leaning towards these allegations.

“This is the result of the infiltration of, and undue influence on, the criminal justice system by elements of criminality.

“The fact that a number of players within the criminal justice system have been charged criminally, with some dismissed from their employment and others facing disciplinary charges, lends credence to these indications.”

The commission is due to submit its final report in two months.

National Commissioner for Correctional Services Makgothi Thobakgale testified on Thursday.

He noted there have been attempts by inmates to influence managers within his department.

Thobakgale referred to a specific attempt by convicted murderer Thabo Bester.

“I can give an example of inmate Thabo Bester, who has tried a number of times to get my attention alone.

And I’ve always referred him to the complaints. *EWN*

R27m flood lifeline for five Northern Cape municipalities



By Matshidiso Selebeleng

Five Northern Cape municipalities affected by severe flooding and extreme weather earlier this year have received a combined R27 million from the National Disaster Management Centre to repair critical infrastructure and restore basic services.

The flooding, which struck parts of the province during April and May 2026, damaged roads, bridges, houses, wastewater treatment plants and other essential municipal infrastructure.

Media Liaison Officer Tebogo Monyo said the funding would support targeted restoration projects based on the extent and nature of damage reported by each municipality.

“The allocation will not be distributed equally. It is based on the submissions of each municipality and the critical infrastructure they believe they should be assisted with to repair,” said Monyo.

He said limited government resources and the scale of the damage meant the allocation could not cover all requests. Municipalities have therefore been encouraged to explore additional funding avenues and use their own revenue where possible to address outstanding damage.

Northern Cape MEC for Cooperative Gov-

ernance, Human Settlements and Traditional Affairs Lebogang Motlhaping welcomed the national intervention, saying the funding would help municipalities accelerate recovery.

“This allocation of R27 million to five local municipalities provides vital support to our local municipalities.

“It allows us to move swiftly in repairing damaged infrastructure, ensuring that basic services are fully restored, accessibility is re-established, and community safety is guaranteed,” he said.

Motlhaping said the department would maintain strict oversight of the funds to ensure transparency, accountability and the speedy completion of repair projects.

He called on municipal leadership and technical teams to ensure that the money is used strictly for its intended purpose, with quality workmanship, compliance with financial regulations and timely implementation prioritised.

The department will also provide technical support and monitor implementation to ensure disaster recovery projects are completed as scheduled.

The five beneficiary municipalities are Gasegonyana, Gamagara, Phokwane, Tsantabane and Joe Morolong.

Law Enforcers Gets New Voice



By Gomolemo Winkel

A newly established trade union representing workers across South Africa’s law enforcement and criminal justice sector has officially launched, vowing to put employees at the centre of debates on workplace conditions, accountability and the modernisation of the country’s safety and justice institutions.

The National Union of Law Enforcement Civilians and Correctional Officials (NULECCO) was inaugurated at the Velmore Hotel in Pretoria on Wednesday, 9 September, bringing together provincial committee members and representatives from across the country.

NULECCO co-founder and President Rannele Msinto said the launch marked an important step towards ensuring that workers have a stronger voice in shaping the effectiveness, integrity and modernisation of the country’s law enforcement and criminal justice systems.

Msinto said the union would focus on representing workers, challenging complacency, advancing practical solutions and demanding accountability from institutions.

“As stated in our inaugural public statement, the Union intends to represent workers, challenge complacency, advance solutions and demand accountability,” said Msinto. The union represents a broad range of employees whose work supports South Africa’s safety and justice institutions, including police officers, correctional officials, traffic and metro police officers, civilian employees, border personnel, as well as administrative, technical and professional workers.

Msinto said NULECCO would prioritise persistent challenges affecting employees, including working conditions, inadequate resources, occupational safety and wellness, professional development, institutional accountability, technology and modernisation, and recognition of employees’ contributions.

NULECCO Secretary-General Phiri Matsemela said the country could not build effective law enforcement and criminal justice institutions while applying a blanket approach to the systems required to make them function.

“NULECCO’s purpose is not simply to exist but to change what organised labour can achieve for workers in this sector,” said Matsemela.

The union’s motto, “United in Justice, Stronger in Service,” reflects its vision of promoting improved service delivery, unity and accountability across South Africa’s safety and justice environment.

Since its formation in November 2025, Msinto said NULECCO had strengthened its organisational structures by establishing provincial committees and appointing interim provincial leadership to expand its presence nationwide.



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SIU investigation uncovers R58m Ekurhuleni fraudulent land scheme

A Special Investigating Unit (SIU) investigation has uncovered a R58 million scheme entailing the fraudulent transfer of land belonging to the Ekurhuleni Municipality.

The scheme involved the illegal transfer of 208 stands at Villa Liza township into the hands of private individuals without council resolution and without the municipality receiving any benefits.

“President Cyril Ramaphosa authorised this investigation in October 2024 under Proclamation No. 195 of 2024. The investigation examined serious maladministration in the transfer of 221 vacant stands in Villa Liza Township, near Boksburg.

“It assessed actions that violated applicable legislation, unlawful conduct by municipality employees or agents, and the potential losses suffered by the Municipality or the State arising from the land transfer,” SIU Head Leonard Lekgetho revealed in a media briefing on Wednesday.

The investigation uncovered: Fraudulent transfers of 208 of the 221 stands between 2018 and 2022. The transfers were carried out without council resolutions or lawful authority.

One deceased person allegedly acted as the so-called estate agent. The SIU confirmed through the Department of Home Affairs that the agent passed away on 10 January 2022.

A conveyancing firm not on the Municipality’s panel of approved attorneys lodged fraudulent documents at the Johannesburg Deeds Office.

The firm, Moki Attorneys Incorporated, is owned by Kabelo Valentine Moki.

The firm had certified that all the documents necessary for the transfer were true and correct upon submission to the Deeds Office.

Forged rates clearance certificates and fabricated powers of attorney were used to deceive the system.



The conveyancer and his spouse, Makho-sazana Emelda Moki, personally benefited, acquiring 73 stands through Velamelda Trust and Mokolane Investments.

Each stand was sold for R18 000 according to the Deeds Office. The municipal valuation ranged from R80 000 to R3.7 million. The stands were later resold at an average of R250 000 per stand.

Some stands have been developed by the new owners, but the Municipality derives no revenue from those properties.

“The ‘agent’ would identify unallocated land owned by the municipality in Vila Liza Township. The ‘agent’ would then orchestrate a fraudulent sale and transfer of this municipal land to private hands.

“This scheme involved the ‘agent’ collaborating with the conveyancing firm, Moki Attorneys. Moki Attorneys, together with the agent, played a key role in falsifying documents for the Deeds Office’s registration and transfer of land to private hands,” Lekgetho explained.

He noted that the SIU has not found any evidence indicating the participation of Deeds Office officials in the scheme.

“Payments for the stands were made in cash, complicating the tracing of the financial transactions. There is no evidence indicating

that municipal officials participated in the scheme.

“This matter has been referred to the National Prosecuting Authority for further action or potential prosecution, which will initiate a criminal investigation to ensure that all parties involved are held criminally accountable,” he added.

Taking action

Lekgetho stated that the SIU has taken several actions based on the findings of the investigation.

These include obtaining an interim interdict preventing the occupants or registered owners of the 208 stands from selling, transferring, marketing, disposing of, leasing, donating, developing and dealing with the property.

This Friday, the unit will also approach the Special Tribunal to file an application to review and set aside the unlawful transfers and to recover losses incurred by the municipality.

“We have [also] submitted 208 referrals in respect of the fraud to the National Prosecuting Authority for possible prosecution.

“Regarding the professional consequences management of Moki Attorneys’ matter, the firm has been referred to the Legal Practice Council.

Referrals have been made to the South African Revenue Service for investigation into undeclared income and tax irregularities.

“The SIU has also submitted 147 referrals to the Financial Intelligence Centre [FIC] due to the conveyancer’s non-compliance with FICA legislation whilst effecting the unlawful transfers,” Lekgetho added.

Furthermore, recommendations have also been made to the municipality.

These include:

Proper verification processes must be implemented by the Municipality before the registration of municipal services for all new properties. The Municipality maintains, updates, and verifies its asset register, ensuring that appropriate and effective control measures are in place to manage its immovable property. The Municipality conducts regular inspections of municipal-owned land to monitor these properties effectively and prevent future theft and loss.

An annual municipal audit should be conducted for immovable municipal assets.

The Municipality must consider establishing an MOU with the Deeds Registration Office to place safeguards on any transfers of municipal land.

“Fraudulent schemes of this nature not only erode public trust but also deprive communities of essential development opportunities, thereby undermining municipalities’ constitutional mandate to serve their constituents effectively.

“This investigation goes beyond mere investigation; it reveals a narrative of betrayal, misappropriation, and unlawful expropriation of public assets intended to benefit local communities.

“We remain committed to collaborating with law enforcement, regulatory agencies, and other relevant entities to recover financial losses and restore these properties to the rightful owners, the people of Ekurhuleni,” Lekgetho concluded. – SAnews.gov.za



Phokwane Welcomes Premier and Ministerial Delegation

National and provincial leaders launch rapid response oversight visit to address municipal service delivery crises

By Nonkululeko Ngubeni

A high-level government delegation led by Deputy Minister of Human Settlements, Thandi Mahamehlala, is in the Phokwane Local Municipality in the Northern Cape this Friday.

The oversight visit forms part of national Rapid Response interventions designed to resolve municipal service delivery breakdowns and improve intergovernmental co-ordination.

Spearheaded by Mahamehlala, the Integrated Service Delivery Outreach Visit to Hartswater is done on behalf of Deputy President Paul Mashatile - who is currently ill.

Mahamehlala will be accompanied by Northern Cape Premier Zamanai Saul, Transport Minister Barbara Creecy, Deputy Minister of Water and Sanitation David Mahlobo, and senior representatives from SALGA.

Delegates will consult with local municipal leadership and inspect strategic infrastructural sites to identify bottlenecks and implement corrective measures.

Primary inspection targets include degraded road networks and stormwater drainage systems across Hartswater, Jan Kempdorp, Pampierstad, Ganspan, and adjacent rural areas.

The delegation will also evaluate ongoing challenges affecting water supply, sanitation, public healthcare, housing developments, education facilities, and youth employment programs.

Operating under Mashatile's oversight portfolio, the mission leverages the District Development Model to streamline multi-sphere government intervention.

Following site inspections, the leadership team will host a public feedback session at Bonita Park Stadium in Hartswater starting at 12:00.

The community meeting provides residents a direct platform to air grievances and receive progress updates on municipal recovery efforts.

The official itinerary commences at 09:00 with an initial briefing session at the Phokwane Local Municipality Council Chambers before delegates depart for project sites.

Prieska Power Project Given Top Priority

Green Hydrogen Reserve Named Priority

Northern Cape energy project selected among first wave of national strategic initiatives



By Nonkululeko Ngubeni

The Northern Cape's Prieska Power Reserve (PPR) has been selected among the first six priority projects under South Africa's national green hydrogen programme.

Currently in its development stage, the Prieska initiative operates as a commercial green ammonia project targeting the domestic market.

President Cyril Ramaphosa announced the initial wave of priority projects during the African Green Hydrogen Summit in Cape Town on Tuesday. Electricity and Energy Minister, Dr Kgosishtsho Ramokgopa, delivered the presidential address on Ramaphosa's behalf at the summit.

The six featured projects emerged from a rigorous technical assessment aimed at strengthening financial viability and boosting international investor confidence.

Prieska represents one of five initial-wave initiatives working toward a final investment decision alongside regional projects in the Eastern Cape and West Coast.

The remaining developmental initiatives include the Coega Green Ammonia Project, the Saldanha Hydrogen Direct Reduced Iron Project, the Green e-Fuels Producers Green Methanol Corridor, and the Green Hydrogen Solutions Project.

Ramaphosa highlighted that priority status provides state mechanisms to support projects through final investment decisions, construction, and commercial production.

"By designating these as priorities, government and its partners now have a mechanism to help the remaining five projects reach final investment decision, construction and production. A second wave of projects will follow, bringing further credible projects

into the portfolio," he said.

The strategic designations mark a transition from an unmanaged project pipeline to a coordinated national portfolio focused on preparation and investment.

The first wave is led by the Phelan Green Group electro-Sustainable Aviation Fuel project, which reached a final investment decision after securing a \$100-million equity commitment.

Construction on the Saldanha Bay facility is scheduled for early 2027, with international exports targeted for the first quarter of 2029. Ramaphosa emphasised that securing long-term off-take agreements remains essential to scaling Africa's broader green hydrogen economy.

"Since last year's Summit, we have moved from an undifferentiated pipeline to a managed priority portfolio.

"This demonstrates that with partner support, public and private financing and proper planning, African nations can move from a concept on paper to projects in development," he said.

He noted that Africa possesses exceptional solar, wind, water, and mineral resources required to become a dominant global energy hub.

Ramaphosa urged African states to secure full value-chain participation spanning technology partnerships, manufacturing, and international distribution.

He added that the emerging sector must drive regional industrialisation through green steel manufacturing, sustainable fuel production, and agricultural fertiliser development.

Ramaphosa concluded by calling for strict local procurement, job creation, and skills transfer to ensure host communities benefit directly as project stakeholders.

Masemola Charges Withdrawn



xxx. Pictures: Supplied

Acting Police Minister Professor Firoz Cachalia has expressed a sigh of relief over the withdrawal of charges against suspended National Police Commissioner General Fannie Masemola, stating that he always believed it was unjust for the police chief to face criminal prosecution. He also hinted that Masemola could soon return to his position as the top cop.

National Director of Public Prosecutions (NDPP) Advocate Andy Mothibi ordered that the charges against Masemola be withdrawn. This decision follows a review of the case brought against Masemola by the Independent Directorate Against Corruption (IDAC), which concluded there were no reasonable prospects of a successful prosecution.

IDAC had previously charged Masemola on four counts of contravening the Public Finance Management Act (PFMA). The charges were connected to a multimillion-rand police healthcare tender valued between R228 million and R360 million awarded to Medicare24, a company owned by alleged crime boss and business tycoon Vusumusi "Cat" Matlala. Following the initial charges, President Cyril Ramaphosa placed Masemola on a precautionary suspension. Speaking at a media briefing

at the Gauteng SAPS Park Town offices, Cachalia welcomed the development. "I am very happy for Masemola and very relieved. I always thought that it was unjust to join him in a criminal prosecution," he said. He added that discussions regarding Masemola's future would likely take place soon with the President, who holds the constitutional authority to appoint the national commissioner.

According to National Prosecuting Authority (NPA) spokesperson Kaizer Kganyago, the NDPP's instruction invoked Section 179(5)(c) of the Constitution alongside the NPA Act to intervene where policy directives—such as requiring reasonable prospects of success before enrolling a matter—are not complied with. Mothibi noted that enrolling a case lacking sufficient evidence to sustain a successful prosecution is not in the public interest.

The prosecution team will make arrangements for Masemola to appear in court formally to have the case against him withdrawn. Meanwhile, the NPA has ordered an investigation into the prosecution team's initial assessment of the evidence, the decision to enrol the matter, and the application of the law to determine if any misconduct occurred. - IOL

ANC Loses Electoral Court Bid



The Electoral Court has dismissed an application by the African National Congress (ANC) challenging the Independent Electoral Commission's (IEC) refusal to accept candidate lists for 181 candidates ahead of the upcoming local government elections.

The legal battle centered on whether candidate information captured on the IEC's online nomination system before the August 28 deadline constituted a formal submission, despite the party failing to complete the final submission steps.

The ruling affects 181 ANC candidates across six municipalities, including Port St Johns, Ngquzu Hill, Walter Sisulu, and Sundays River Valley in the Eastern Cape, uMshwathi in KwaZulu-Natal, and Mangaung in the Free State. During the proceedings, the court granted the Democratic Alliance leave to intervene in the matter while rejecting arguments regarding technical system failures.

IEC Chief Electoral Officer, Sy Mamabolo, confirmed that the commission will proceed with the established election timetable following the judgment to ensure administrative certainty.

ANC national spokesperson, Mahlengi Bhengu, stated that the party respects the judicial process but intends to pursue further legal appeal options.

"Having considered the judgment, the ANC will exercise its legal rights and pursue the appropriate appeal process. Our legal representatives will engage the court on the legal questions arising from the judgment," Bhengu said.

Despite the setback, the ruling party emphasized its continued commitment to contesting the November 4 local government polls and urged members to remain calm and disciplined. - Hope Ntanzu/IOL

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 Corner



Mpho Sekharume
Editor-in-Chief

Constitutional Supremacy
versus Capital
Punishment Ideal

As South Africa confronts a terrifying surge in gender-based violence (GBV) and femicide - underscored by the recent discovery of multiple women's bodies across Ekurhuleni - public fear has rapidly turned into collective fury.

The horrifying frequency of these crimes has left our already traumatised nation searching for answers.

In response to this crisis, calls for legislative reform have therefore intensified with demands for tighter bail conditions and harsher sentencing coming to the fore.

Meanwhile, a highly infuriated segment of society is advocating for a far more drastic measure: the return of the death penalty.

These very vocal proponents of capital punishment argue that extreme atrocities need to be reciprocated through equally harsh consequences.

For many grieving families and terrified citizens, State execution represents a necessary form of proportional retributive justice.

They contend that execution would send an unequivocal message to potential perpetrators, serving as a powerful deterrent in a country where violent crime often feels unpunished.

From this perspective, restoring the death penalty is not merely about punishment, but about asserting the value of female lives against systemic violence in our broad society.

Opponents of capital punishment, however, offer a fundamentally different perspective anchored in legal logic and human rights principles.

Human rights advocates and legal scholars argue that state-sanctioned execution does not solve the root causes of GBV.

They maintain that deterrence relies on the high probability of swift arrest and conviction, rather than the severity of the ultimate sentence.

With police investigative delays, severe forensic backlogs, and low conviction rates, introducing capital punishment risks executing innocent individuals without addressing the structural failures of law enforcement.

Furthermore, legal experts emphasise that violence cannot be cured by legitimising lethal force through the state.

Crucially, this heated public debate collides directly with South Africa's constitutional reality.

Section 11 of the Bill of Rights unequivocally guarantees that everyone has the right to life, while Section 10 protects inherent human dignity.

To reinstate capital punishment, Parliament would need to amend the Bill of Rights through a two-thirds majority - a move that would fundamentally alter the spirit of the nation's post-apartheid legal order that supplement the so-called 'Madiba Magic'.

Inasmuch as the death penalty might seem like an ideal measure to reciprocate brutal crimes or deter potential offenders, South Africa's Constitution blocks this popular ideal.

The Constitutional order deliberately prioritises fundamental human rights over popular demand, ensuring that the State itself remains bound by the supreme law of the land even in times of intense national grief.

I was taken aback this week when the ladies within my editorial team explained to me that they inherently walk around everyday in fear of what might happen to them on any random day. Is this really what our country has come to?

The death penalty sounds like a very viable solution, but at the same time there are other pertinent risks such as executing a wrongfully accused detainee who now has to submit his fate to an legal incoherence. That too is travesty and miscarriage of justice.

But at the same time, it is difficult to fathom the reality that most women in our country are forced to carry the burden of fear with them everywhere they go. They are held hostage by a constitutional framework that protects life even if it's bearer is an unrehabilitatable menace to our society.

Ekurhuleni murders: GBV envelopes SA women in panic, fear

Enough is enough!

I don't want to see another hashtag, banner or demonstration against Gender-Based Violence and Femicide (GBVF) in South Africa. Countless clarion calls have been made to upend this horrific fad over the years.

The scourge has, once again, reared its ugly head in the country. Oddly enough, GBVF was classified as a national disaster on 21 November 2025, but no tangible or substantive action has backed the declaration to date.

WOMEN'S FUNDAMENTAL RIGHT TO LIVE DENIED

On Tuesday morning, 15 September 2026, we received an alert of the discovery of a sixth woman in KwaThema, in the City of Ekurhuleni.

This came hot on the heels of the discovery of another woman's body dumped on the side of the road in Olifantsfontein on the previous day, also on the East Rand, sending shockwaves, setting in panic, fury and opening a never-healing wound due to the bane of GBVF.

Four other women's bodies were found in the Kempton Park area in the past few months, one of which is Elizabeth "Tsontso" Moselakgomo.

Her family has since positively identified her. At the time of publication, the other bodies were yet to be claimed and identified.

By the end of the day, the tally of bodies rose to eight after the body of the 8th woman was discovered floating in a stream in Clayville, near Tembisa Mall.

At least one suspect has been arrested in connection with one of the women's murder.

There appears to be a coordinated attack on the women because their profiles are similar. There is speculation that they could have perished at the hands of a serial killer, but this has yet to be confirmed by experts.

And guess what? The police are "investigating" after the deployment of a special task team.

In a statement, Soul City Institute for Social Justice reacted to the shattering news.

"Beyond the investigation lies a much bigger national crisis: the continued denial of women's fundamental right to live, move, work, exercise and exists without fear of violence.

"The is something profoundly disturbing about women repeatedly found abandoned, injured, partially naked and exposed in public spaces. A woman's body does not lose dignity because she has died," it reads.

Something has to give!

Reeva Steenkamp, Uyinene Mrwetyana, Anene Booysen, Karabo Mokoena, Mamelodi cousins Baleseng and Tshiamo, Kirsten Kluyts...

These are the notable victims of GBVF, a thorn in the side, particularly for women, whose safety is compromised and laced with vulnerability.

This, without overlooking or decimating cases in far-flung areas or those that never see the light of day, nor the justice system.

The irony is that they were all in relatively safe spaces at the time of their deaths.

Steenkamp was shot and killed by her Paralympian boyfriend, Oscar Pistorius, on Valentine's Day in 2013.

Mrwetyana died aged 19 after she was raped and murdered by a Post Office employee, Luyanda Botha, in Cape Town.

Booyesen was attacked on 2 February 2013, after leaving a local pub in Bredasdorp.

Mokoena died at 22. She was assaulted, killed, doused with acid, and set on fire by her ex-boyfriend, Sandile Mantsoe.

Justice has been served in the above cases. Kluyts, a high school teacher, was found dead along a jogging trail in George Lea Park, Sandton, in October 2023. Bafana Mahungela has since been convicted of murder, attempted rape, robbery with aggravating



circumstances and defeating the ends of justice.

Baleseng and Tshiamo Moramaga were found on the side of the street in Mamelodi, Pretoria, with gunshot wounds not far from where they lived in October 2025. The case against the accused, Tebogo Mnisi, is still before the courts for pre-trial and indictment proceedings.

BENEFITTING FROM PATRIARCHY

As a man, I am conscious about benefiting from patriarchy, a construct that gives men dominion over women. I have no worries about sporting my togs and going for a jog as early as 05:30.

Crime is rife in the country, but my fears or discomfort do not compare to any woman's. They have to always consider their safety despite the spaces that they have to occupy.

"Women cannot be made responsible for the violence committed against them," added the Soul City Institute for Social Justice.

I am on the same wavelength as the organisation here. Some of the questions used to blame GBVF victims include:

"Why was she out at night?"

"Who was she in the company of?"

"What was she wearing?"

According to the South African Police Service (SAPS) 2025/2026 crime statistics for the fourth quarter, rape comprised 77.7% of sexual offences recorded nationally in January–March 2026. If this does not make

your blood curdle, you have no conscience.

Some years back, shortly after sunset, I once walked behind two female students, judging by the backpacks and textbooks in hand. I could feel it in my bones that they were terrified.

I felt compelled to move past them swiftly so that they could be at ease. I avoided eye contact or greeting and moved right along. Why did I do this? It was my way of saying to them, "I am harmless", without making an utterance.

My sister, aunt, colleague, neighbour are susceptible to being GBVF victims, hence I will use my pen as a spear in this regard. Where's the empathy?

WHY WOMEN'S RIGHT TO EXIST IS EASY TO VIOLATE IN SA

This one is easy because it speaks to the lack of political will to forge a society where in women enjoy the same freedoms as their male counterparts. This country has seen many a talk shop regarding GBVF with little to no interventions to upend it. The justice system, in particular, has failed many a victim, planting a sense of hopelessness while perpetrators walk off scot-free due to no consequences for their heinous actions.

Without scoffing at the Department of Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities, under The Presidency, it has a deafening silence from my vantage point, which doesn't take the cohort it represents into its confidence. The State must move with the speed of light because, I repeat, I don't want to see another GBVF hashtag. By Vukile Dlwati

Free State Must Prepare Now for the Next El Niño Drought Cycle

Climate analysts and international meteorological agencies have signalled a high probability of a strong El Niño weather pattern developing during late 2026 and extending into 2027. Experts warn that the resulting hot, dry conditions could create an environment conducive to severe droughts and devastating wildfires across South Africa. This is a warning that cannot be ignored. The Department of Water and Sanitation (DWS) in the Free State province has expressed concerns over the adverse impacts that previous El Niño events have had on the Province's socio-economic and environmental sectors.

The local government sphere remains particularly vulnerable, with water service delivery among the most affected functions. Potable water supply is largely dependent on raw water sourced from rivers and stored in dams. Prolonged drought conditions associated with El Niño often lead to reduced water availability, placing significant pressure on municipal water supply systems, water treatment infrastructure, and the ability of local authorities to provide sustainable services to communities. The agricultural sector is also particularly vulnerable to the effects of this phenomenon, as it relies heavily on consistent rainfall patterns and stable water supplies.

The Department of Water and Sanitation is encouraging municipalities in the Free State to develop early preparedness action plans to mitigate challenges that might prevail during springs and summer. Preparations should include repairing leaks and reducing non-revenue water losses. Accelerating maintenance of water treatment plants, pumps and pipelines. Expanding monitoring of dam levels, river flows, groundwater reserves and water quality. Protecting reservoirs, boreholes and strategic wellfields. Reviewing and updating drought-response and water-restriction plans. Developing emergency water supply and contingency measure. Strengthening public awareness campaigns and promoting water conservation practices.

The Free State enters this potential drought cycle in a stronger position than during previous El Niño periods. Two successive La Niña seasons have delivered above-average rainfall, replenishing rivers, dams and groundwater reserves across much of the province. Current dam levels in the Free State stand at approximately 100.4% of capacity, compared with 100% at the same time last year. However, these encouraging figures should not lead to complacency. The province is currently transitioning from winter to spring, a period often associated with rising temperatures, increased evaporation and increases in water demand. What may appear to be a comfortable water position today could rapidly deteriorate under a prolonged El Niño event.

The Department of Water and Sanitation has identified several municipalities across the Free State that face varying degrees of water-resource vulnerability during severe drought conditions. These assessments focus specifically on raw water availability, excluding infrastructure failures and operational challenges. Key risks include declining river flows, accelerated evaporation, limited catchment yields and depleted groundwater reserves.

Among the most vulnerable areas is Mangaung Metropolitan Municipality, which serves Bloemfontein, Botshabelo, Thaba Nchu, Soutpan, Dewetsdorp and Vanstadensrus. The municipality relies heavily on water from the Caledon River, supplemented by Groothoek, Rustfontein, Welbedacht and Knellpoort dams, as well as regional groundwater aquifers. Extended periods of drought and heatwaves could significantly reduce runoff from the Lesotho highlands, lower dam levels through excessive evaporation and place additional pressure on groundwater reserves.

Moqhaka Local Municipality, which serves Kroonstad, Vlojoenskroon and Steynsrus, depends primarily on the Vals River system, Bloemhoek Dam and Serfontein Dam. The Vals River is highly seasonal and vulnerable to prolonged droughts. Reduced river flows and declining inflows could leave reservoirs exposed to severe evaporation losses while limiting groundwater recharge in surrounding areas.

Mafoebe Local Municipality, serving Villiers, Tweeling, Frankfort and Cornelia, relies largely on direct river abstraction from the Vaal and Wilge river systems. Without substantial storage infrastructure or balancing reservoirs, reduced river flows during El Niño conditions could rapidly affect water availability at abstraction points. Low levels of Vaal dam will also expose the Villiers abstraction point.

In the eastern Free State, Maluti-a-Phofung Local Municipality depends on the Upper Wilge River catchment, as well as the Fika-Patso and Metsi Matsho dams. Despite the municipality's location within a generally high-rainfall region, its relatively small catchment areas remain susceptible to prolonged drought. Reduced mountain runoff could significantly affect reservoir storage levels.

Nketoana Local Municipality, including Arlington, Lindley, Reitz and Petrus Steyn, relies on the Vals River, Liebenbergsvlei River and smaller tributary systems. These highly seasonal water sources are vulnerable to rapid flow depletion during prolonged dry spells. Within Dihlabeng Local Municipality, Fouriesburg depends heavily on the Caledon River. Reduced runoff from the Lesotho highlands combined with high evaporation rates could substantially diminish available water resources during extended drought conditions.

Similarly, Setsoto Local Municipality, serving Ficksburg, Senekal and Clocolan, derives much of its water from the Caledon River and associated storage dams. Reduced river flows and declining reservoir levels would increase the municipality's exposure to water shortages.

Mantsopa Local Municipality, including Ladybrand, Tweespruit and Excelsior, relies on the Caledon River, several local dams and shallow groundwater systems. During prolonged drought periods, both river flows and groundwater levels can decline simultaneously, placing additional strain on municipal water supplies.

Mohokare Local Municipality, serving Zastron, Rouxville and Smithfield, obtains water from the Orange and Caledon rivers and several smaller municipal dams. Although the Orange River provides a relatively stable source, smaller dams remain highly vulnerable to evaporation losses during intense heatwaves. Kopanong Local Municipality, responsible for Trompsburg, Jagersfontein and Fauresmith, depends on groundwater resources, the Riet River and bulk transfers from Kalkfontein Dam. Prolonged drought would increase demand on already stressed groundwater systems.

Meanwhile, Tokologo Local Municipality, serving Boshof, Dealesville and Hertzogville, remains heavily dependent on groundwater and bulk water schemes. Limited natural recharge during prolonged dry conditions could lead to declining borehole yields and increasing water-security risks. The lessons from previous drought cycles are clear. Water security cannot be measured solely by current dam levels. Municipalities must prepare well in advance by reducing water losses, strengthening infrastructure resilience and improving resource management.

El Niño remains a natural climate phenomenon, but its impacts can be managed through proactive planning and responsible water stewardship.

The Free State has a valuable opportunity to prepare while its dams remain full, and water resources are relatively stable. Waiting until reservoirs begin to decline will be too late. The time to act is now! By Marcus Matshegwa

*****The views expressed do not necessarily reflect those of this publication (Journal News Network).***

Politics in arrears: the tragedy of confusing nostalgia with political analysis

There is a disturbing tendency in South African politics where the past is permanently glorified and the present moment is characterised as total disappointment. The dead become intellectual giants and the living are templated political dwarfs. Somewhere between the two sits nostalgia, disguised as political analysis.

Malaika Mahlatsi's recent article, How the mighty Secretary-General position in the ANC has fallen, comes dangerously close to this tendency. It raises legitimate questions about the deterioration of organisational culture in the African National Congress. But it makes a familiar mistake of taking the personality of Fikile Mbalula and stretching it into evidence for the collapse of the movement itself.

That is a far bigger claim than the evidence can carry. The easiest way to make Mbalula look historically insignificant is to stand him next to Oliver Tambo or any other struggle stalwart. It is also the laziest. Put anyone beside Tambo and they will look like dwarfs. That is not political analysis. It is a conclusion in search of a comparison.

Tambo led the ANC in exile, running an underground movement. He was a direct product of a specific historical moment, shaped by specific political tasks. Mbalula belongs to a different generation entirely; one that operates inside a constitutional democracy, within an ANC that has governed for more than three decades and speaks to millions of our people through television, radio and social media in real time.

So, the question is not whether Mbalula resembles Tambo. Of course he doesn't. Nobody in the current ANC does. The real question is whether he has the political and organisational credentials that his historical moment demands. And on that question, the record is far more complicated than Mahlatsi's article admits.

Mbalula did not arrive at Luthuli House by taxi from Botshabelo. He entered politics as a teenager, rose through youth league structures and served as Secretary-General of the ANC Youth League from 1998 to 2004 before becoming its president from 2004 to 2008. He went on to join the ANC's National Executive Committee and held several Cabinet roles, including Sport and Recreation, Police and Transport.

This matters because the position of Secretary-General is not an honorary one. It is a senior ANC position that requires the ability to organise, mobilise, communicate, negotiate and survive the most poisonous terrain of internal party politics. Whatever else we may want to say about Mbalula, nobody can honestly claim he lacks organisational experience. His credentials, borne out of decades

of struggle, cannot justly be likened to a man who waltzed in on a celebrity ticket. He is a deliberate product of the struggle for the total emancipation of our people.

None of this makes Mbalula infallible. Far from it. There is ample room to criticise aspects of his conduct. But such criticism curdles into intellectual laziness the moment every weakness is treated as proof of civilisational decline.

Take our electoral performance for instance. Whereas our national vote climaxed in 2004, it has fallen at every election since. From the two-thirds majority in 2004 to a mere 58 percent in 2019, long before Mbalula became Secretary-General. Serious declines took shape during the tenures of Kgalema Motlanthe and Gwede Mantashe. Remarkably, these are the very leaders Mahlatsi holds up as models of organisational sobriety; and one does not necessarily disagree. One can accept that our fall to 40 percent in 2024 is a crisis that Mbalula, as sitting Secretary-General, cannot wash his hands of entirely.

But chronology is an inconvenient truth. If organisational decline is proof of the Secretary-General's political incompetence, that logic implicates the two men Mahlatsi treats as the standard Mbalula fails to meet. Our long organisational descent began on their watch, not his. Mbalula only became Secretary-General in December 2022, inheriting an organisation already deep in structural decline.

To argue that he personally caused the organisational decline, one first has to explain the decline that preceded him. Otherwise, we are doing what has become normal practice in our politics, i.e., expropriating a complicated historical process (out of context even) and hunting for one individual to blame for it.

Here is the irony. Mbalula was elected Secretary-General at the ANC's 55th National Conference. Delegates voted for him, against two competing candidates, in an actual internal electoral contest. His election is itself evidence that a significant constituency within the organisation judged him politically capable of holding the office.

One may disagree with the wisdom of those delegates. But disagreement alone cannot be the basis upon which to template such wisdom irrational.

And this is where the argument about personality collapses entirely. Yes, Mbalula is loud. Yes, he is dramatic. But since when did loudness become a measure of incompetence? Mass politics demands the ability to speak to ordinary people, mobilise supporters, fight political battles in public and translate complicated questions into language

that lands. The ANC has always had leaders with different political temperaments; leaders who speak like university professors and leaders who speak like organisers, some who persuade through instinct and mass mobilisation. There is no clause in the ANC constitution that requires its Secretary-General to sound like Oliver Tambo.

The real debate should be about function, not affect. Has branch life improved under Mbalula? Has political education improved? Has membership administration improved? Has organisational discipline improved? At least these questions are measurable against the resolutions of the very conference that elected him.

Saying the Secretary-General position has "fallen" simply because the incumbent lacks the gravitas of historical giants is not wisdom; it is nostalgia.

Perhaps the more uncomfortable truth is that the problem is bigger than Mbalula. The ANC itself has changed. The organisation that produced Sisulu and Tambo was shaped by conditions demanding extraordinary discipline, sacrifice and political education. Today's ANC operates in a radically different political economy; a ruling party wrestling with patronage, professional politics, electoral competition, factional battles, decaying branch dynamics, social-media politics and a generation of members whose relationship to liberation history cannot be identical to their predecessors.

For genuine renewal to obtain, we should drop the fantasy that swapping one personality for another will restore the ANC to 1955. It won't. Installing a more solemn-looking comrade in the Secretary-General's chair will not magically manufacture a Tambo. History cannot metamorphose into the present. The real task is building an ANC that fuses the political seriousness of its tradition with the realities it actually faces today.

That means criticising Mbalula where criticism is earned and defending him where the criticism is really just conjecture dressed up as analysis. The Secretary-General should be judged by his work as the chief administrator, not by whether he passes a personality test set by political nostalgia.

Otherwise, we will keep staring backward at heroes of yesterday while failing to build political role models of tomorrow. And perhaps that, more than Fikile Mbalula, is the real indictment of our political moment.

****Thediso Mangope is an ANC member in good-standing in Botshabelo, a township where the Secretary General started his politics.***

*****The views expressed do not necessarily reflect those of this publication (Journal News Network).***

Business

Markets and Indicators			
Rand/Dollar	16.26	0.83%	▲
Rand/Pound	21.73	0.97%	▲
Rand/Euro	18.66	0.73%	▲
Platinum	1,770.47	1.54%	▲
Brent Crude	104.19	-1.34%	▼
Gold	4,342.98	1.86%	▲
Ethereum	2,438.44	1.60%	▲
Bitcoin	76,219.62	1.63%	▲

VW Pumps R4bn Into Eastern Cape



By Lukhanyiso Khanyile

President Cyril Ramaphosa officially welcomed a R4 billion investment from Volkswagen Group Africa during the manufacturer's 75th anniversary celebration at the Kariega plant in the Eastern Cape.

The capital injection will facilitate the assembly of the new Volkswagen Tongo alongside the Polo and Polo Vivo models currently produced at the facility.

Ramaphosa highlighted that the substantial funding commitment demonstrates strong international belief in local industrial capability despite a highly competitive global market.

"It is a vote of confidence in our workers. It is a vote of confidence in our manufacturing capability. And it is a vote of confidence in South Africa as an investment destination," President Ramaphosa said.

The automotive sector remains a vital economic driver, sustaining over 115,000 direct jobs and more than half a million positions across the broader value chain.

Locally manufactured Volkswagen vehicles continue to supply international markets across Europe and the United Kingdom, boosting domestic export revenues.

The historic Kariega facility has assembled nearly five million vehicles since launching production with the original Volkswagen

Beetle in August 1951.

In 2025, the plant produced 156,000 vehicles, exporting 120,000 units as the sole facility outside Europe manufacturing the Polo for European and Asia-Pacific markets.

Government aims to leverage expanded local production to accelerate employment creation while capitalizing on the African Continental Free Trade Area.

The continental trade agreement eliminates tariffs on 90% of goods, reducing trade barriers and strengthening intra-African industrial supply chains.

"And we want South Africa to remain an important manufacturing base for vehicles made for South Africa, for Africa and for the world," he said.

Celebrating the 75-year milestone, Ramaphosa noted that Volkswagen forms an integral part of South Africa's socio-economic fabric, having historically become the first local motor company to employ black artisans.

"Tonight, we celebrate this proud history. We celebrate generations of Volkswagen employees who have built this company. We celebrate the suppliers, dealers, organised labour and communities that have been part of this journey," he said.

The President concluded his address by thanking Volkswagen management for their enduring partnership and continued economic commitment to South Africa.

New tariffs on the cards for South Africa

The International Trade Administration Commission (ITAC) has been requested to review South Africa's trade policy on paper products, as local manufacturers struggle to compete with cheaper imports.

The Minister of Trade, Industry, and Competition, Parks Tau, requested the review in response to calls from local manufacturers for higher tariffs on international paper products.

These calls led to an investigation into pressure being placed on the industry in June 2026, brought by two of South Africa's largest paper manufacturers.

The Minister requested that ITAC "review a sector-wide paper and paper products industry and recommend an appropriate trade policy instrument that can drive the industry towards sustainability and resilience."

The request noted that South Africa's paper manufacturing industry is facing pressure from international competition.

"The South African pulp and paper industry is under tremendous strain, particularly in the uncoated paper, newsprint, packaging, and tissue segments," it said.

"The sector has raised concerns about the growing challenges of rising import penetration, declining demand for print paper, and the slowdown in the domestic economy."

It said this pressure was also coming from rising manufacturing costs in South Africa, driven by high electricity and transportation costs.

"Increasing input costs, particularly electricity and transportation expenses, are placing significant pressure on local manufacturers and squeezing local producers' profit margins," it said.

Electricity tariffs have risen sharply in recent years, roughly doubling over the past decade due to the compounding effect of consistently high tariff increases.

"If these challenges are not effectively addressed, the economy risks losing significant industrial investments, employment opportunities, and the economic sustainability of many rural communities that depend on the sector," the Minister's request said.

The paper and pulp industry employs approximately 35,000 people, who may be at risk due to the sector's challenges.

The paper manufacturing industry in South Africa has a large footprint, and the Department of Trade, Industry, and Competition estimated that R33 billion has been invested in it in the past seven years.

It said the industry had "made substantial investments in recent years and currently possesses technological innovation, sufficient



installed production capacity, and over the past seven years, over R33 billion has been invested in the sector."

In August 2026, paper manufacturer Sappi said that rival imports were damaging its business and could threaten manufacturing jobs in South Africa.

This followed the company reporting a loss of roughly R2.77 billion in the last financial year, which it partly attributed to the increased competition in South Africa.

The company saw its selling price for paper products fall by approximately 5% in the last financial year, due to the increased competition.

"Profitability continued to be impacted by intense competition from low-priced imports, which placed significant pressure on selling prices," it said.

Sappi CEO Steve Binnie echoed this sentiment at the time, saying that cheap imports were a challenge in a strong market for the company.

"South Africa remains a strong business with competitive assets and healthy demand in several of our markets," he said.

"However, increasing levels of imported products continue to create challenges for local manufacturers and deserve greater policy attention."

The Department of Trade, Industry, and Competition previously initiated an investigation into the need to safeguard the country's paper manufacturing sector.

This investigation was supported by both Sappi and Mondi, two of South Africa's largest paper product manufacturers.

At the time, the companies alleged that the domestic market was suffering as global demand for paper products declined, due to increasing digitalisation.

This would leave foreign countries with an oversupply of paper products, which they would then seek to offload in surplus-output markets like South Africa. **BusinessTech**

SA Creators Demand a Bigger TikTok Paycheque

By Katlego Mashwabi

South Africa's booming creator economy has reignited debate over whether local TikTok creators should be able to earn directly from the platform, with Communications and Digital Technologies Minister Solly Malatsi calling for greater monetisation opportunities.

South African creators can build audiences of millions on TikTok, but the platform's Creator Rewards Programme has not been available to them. Malatsi has previously described the exclusion of South African and other African creators as a digital economic inequality issue, arguing that local creators generate significant cultural and commercial value on the platform.

In July 2026, Malatsi publicly raised the issue of direct creator payments, calling on TikTok to extend its monetisation infrastructure to South Africa. The minister said the size and influence of the country's creator community did not justify its exclusion.

The issue has gained further momentum among creators, with some backing calls for a boycott of TikTok over the absence of direct payments based on video performance.

For now, South African creators rely largely on alternative revenue streams, including brand partnerships, live-stream gifts and directing audiences to other monetised platforms.

Creator Trisha, who has more than 400,000 followers, said she does not earn directly from TikTok views and instead relies on brand deals and other opportunities.

Another creator, Nombulelo, said she charges between R10,000 and R15,000 per sponsored post, while acknowledging that



creators still cannot earn directly from their views.

The broader creator economy is growing. A 2026 report by Humanz, based on payment data from more than 1,200 South African creators and over R100 million in creator payments, found that paid creator opportunities have more than doubled annually over four years.

Government has continued pressing plat-

forms on creator monetisation. In March 2026, Deputy Communications Minister Kenny Morolong said TikTok had committed to working with content creators to properly monetise their content.

The debate now centres on whether South African creators will eventually gain access to direct TikTok monetisation and how such a system would affect the country's rapidly expanding digital creative economy.

Dihlabeng Cracks Down on Non-Compliant Tuck-Shops



By JNN Reporter

Dihlabeng Local Municipality has stepped up compliance inspections and enforcement operations targeting tuck-shops in Mautse and Rosendal, warning business owners to comply with municipal by-laws and health, safety and legal requirements.

The latest operation was carried out by a multi-agency task team comprising the South African Police Service (SAPS) and municipal officials from Town Planning, SMME Development, Fire Services and Collections.

The inspections focused on compliance with municipal regulations, health and safety standards and other

applicable legal requirements.

Several tuck-shops were found to be non-compliant and subsequently closed during the operation. One tuck-shop owner was also arrested after allegedly being found hiding and selling illegal cigarettes.

The municipality has urged business owners to ensure that their establishments meet all regulatory requirements and to cooperate with municipal and law-enforcement officials during inspections.

Dihlabeng said the ongoing enforcement operations are aimed at promoting safe, lawful and compliant business practices while protecting the health and safety of communities across the municipality.

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NOTICE IN TERMS OF REGULATION 68 OF THE DEEDS REGISTRIES ACT, 1937, IN RESPECT OF A LOST TITLE DEED

Notice is hereby given in terms of Regulation 68 of the Deeds Registries Act, 1937, of the intention to apply for the issue of a certified copy of Deed of Transfer Number ST31616/2005 passed by THE TRUSTEES OF TSOENYANE FAMILY TRUST, REGISTRATION NUMBER IT20641/2014 in favour of THE TRUSTEES OF LEKALA TRUST, REGISTRATION NUMBER IT120/2017(B) in respect of
A Unit consisting of

(a) Section No. 33 as shown and more fully described on Sectional Plan No SS 29/1985 in the scheme known as MALDANMOR in respect of the land and building or buildings situated at BLOEMFONTEIN, MANGAUNG METROPOLITAN MUNICIPALITY, of which section the floor area, according to the said sectional plan is 63 (Sixty Three) square metres in extent and

(b) An undivided share in the common property in the scheme apportioned to the said section in accordance with the participation quota as endorsed on the said sectional plan.

which has been lost or destroyed.

All interested persons having objection to the issue of such copy are hereby required to lodge the same in writing with the Registrar of Deeds at Bloemfontein within two weeks from date of the publication of this notice.

Dated at Bloemfontein this 14TH day of September 2026

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SA Fashion Takes Moscow by Storm



By Katlego Mashwabi

September has officially become a major month on the global fashion calendar, with fashion houses unveiling new collections, hosting runway shows and announcing upcoming fashion weeks. This year, South Africa is taking its style credentials to Russia for the annual BRICS+ Fashion Summit, set to take place at Zaryadye Concert Hall in Moscow from September 20 to 30, 2026.

The summit will bring together fashion industry leaders from more than 100 countries, with a focus on challenging traditional Western-centric fashion structures and creating new trade and business opportunities.

Africa remains a key sourcing and manufacturing hub, while a new generation of African fashion entrepreneurs is developing distribution networks that extend beyond domestic markets.

South Africa's delegation brings together leading figures from the country's fashion, retail, creative, media, education and public sectors. It forms part of a wider African contingent that includes Mastafa Hassanali of Swahili Fashion Week in Tanzania, Tery Carola of Seychelles Fashion Week and Nana Addo Tamakloe of Accra Fashion Week in Ghana.

Leading the South African delegation is Stephen Manzini, founder and CEO of Soweto Fashion Week and head of the South African Fashion Association. Manzini also serves on the summit's International Committee.

On the commercial front, Colleen Eitzen, co-founder of retail platform The Space, will focus on commercial expansion and retail export models.

South Africa's creative representation includes acclaimed designers David Tlale and Palesa Mokubung, founder of Mantsho. Tlale is set to showcase his latest collection at the parallel Moscow Fashion Week under the banner "Proudly Made in South Africa by South Africans", while Mokubung returns to present her work on the BRICS International runway.

The delegation also includes Vusi Ngobeni, Deputy Director of Design at the National Department of Sport, Arts and Culture, while media and industry discussions will feature Molife Kumona, Editor-in-Chief of GQ South Africa.

Education and skills development will be represented by Gregg Maragelis, Director of the Cape Town College of Fashion Design, alongside academic perspectives on textile ethics.

This year's programme will explore creativity, manufacturing, marketing, entrepreneurship, artificial intelligence and wearable technology.

A key discussion will be alternative supply chains, including the Northern Sea Route, which organisers say could offer shorter trade corridors than traditional routes through the Suez Canal.

The summit follows the establishment of the BRICS International Fashion Federation, which aims to strengthen collaboration and create new opportunities for fashion industries across emerging markets.

MACUFE 2026: 11 Days, One Cultural Pulse

By Katlego Mashwabi

The Mangaung African Cultural Festival (MACUFE) 2026 has wrapped up its 11-day cultural marathon, bringing music, theatre, dance, comedy, film and heritage to venues across the City of Roses.

Held under the theme "11 Days, One People, Countless Stories," the festival activated cultural hubs including the Rose Garden, Lemo Mall, City Hall and the Old Greys Sports Ground, showcasing both established performers and emerging Free State talent.

Following the final curtain call, the Free State Department of Sport, Arts, Culture and Recreation (DSACR) thanked festivalgoers for continuing to support MACUFE "even in the face of adversity". The department described the festival as an important platform for celebrating African cultural heritage and promoting social cohesion.

However, the festival also faced challenges, particularly around attendance. While dedicated patrons praised the quality of performances and technical execution, crowds varied across the programme. Some entertainment reviewers described attendance at selected events as more intimate than the large crowds historically associated with the MACUFE brand.

Despite this, organisers maintained a diverse programme, with 68% of the mainstream performance roster consisting of Free State talent, highlighting the festival's focus on local creative development.

The Arts and Craft Village at Lemo Mall provided a platform for heritage and creative exhibitions, while veteran actor Tony Kgoroge led specialised film masterclasses.

Theatre also featured prominently, with the PACOFS Andre Huguenet Theatre hosting the Dramatists Against GBV showcase alongside the opening Dance Festa productions, *Made to Move*, *Flame We Carry* and *Life After Tears*.

City Hall later provided a change of pace with comedy performances from industry names including Celeste Ntuli, Shaun Dihoro, Shaxe Khumalo and Rasta Eye and Eye.

Music took centre stage towards the weekend with the return of the female-led Divas Music Festival at Lemo Green Park. Returning after a six-year absence, the showcase featured performances from Zonke, Lira, Brenda Mtambo and Puleng Phoofofo.

The youth-focused Amapiano vs Hip Hop battle brought another musical dimension to the Rose Garden Park, where hip-hop star Emtee delivered a standout performance.

Saturday's Main Music Festival at the Rose Garden provided one of the weekend's biggest highlights, featuring Vusi Nova and Shandesh.

The festival concluded on Sunday with the Gospel Festival at Old Greys Sports Ground. Gospel performers included Lebo Sekgobela, Winnie Mashaba, Teboho Moruti, Puleng March and William Mthethwa, with Teboho Thapong and Tina Mnumzana as MCs.

In a candid assessment, DSACR acknowledged that late preparations had affected the festival's marketing window and other logistical elements. The department said consumers needed earlier notice to plan for travel and ticket costs, particularly amid challenging economic conditions.

The department also acknowledged that the return of the Divas Concert could have been introduced more gradually.

Looking ahead, DSACR announced a permanent panel of 11 events management service providers to handle departmental events throughout the year. The move is intended to reduce delays associated with appointing service providers from scratch.

MACUFE 2026 closed with a renewed focus on culture, local talent and the creative economy, leaving Mangaung's cultural calendar with another chapter to build on.

Netflix SA Turns 10 in High-Fashion Style

By Katlego Mashwabi

Netflix South Africa celebrated its 10th anniversary with a glamorous, futuristic-themed event at Divine Sunset in Midrand, where Mzansi's entertainment stars embraced the "Tomorrow's Black Tie" dress code.

The red carpet became a showcase of bold fashion, with Pearl Thusi turning heads in a metallic chainmail slip dress, while Khanyi Mbau brought sculptural drama in a custom Patrick Ferguson creation.

Thando Thabethe dazzled in an intricate Gert-Johan Coetzee design, and Connie Ferguson made a statement in a sleek white jumpsuit and modern short coat.

The gentlemen also embraced the futuristic theme. Blood & Water star S'dumo Mtshali arrived in a galaxy-print tuxedo, while Ntobeko Sishi paired sharp tailoring with an oversized statement handbag. Luyanda Zwane showcased local luxury in a custom creation by acclaimed designer Thebe Magugu.

Other notable arrivals included Sonia Mbele, Thembi Seete, Nthathi Moshesh, Zikhona Sodlaka, Rosemary Zimu and Motsaledi Setumo. Lwazie Keith Tsebesha made a memorable debut in a custom dress featuring the faces of 10 South African acting legends.

Hosted by Azania Mosaka, the invite-only celebration brought together leading figures from the local entertainment industry.

Netflix announced an expanded slate of South African films and series, noting that its partnerships had supported more than 8,000 jobs through collaboration with over 30 local production companies.

The night ended with performances by Shakhina and DJ Maphorisa, bringing the celebration to a high-energy close.

Rustenburg Runway Celebrates Local Creativity

By Katlego Mashwabi

The creative heart of Bokone Bophirima came alive as the Mmabana Arts, Culture and Sports Foundation transformed Rustenburg Mall into a vibrant showcase of heritage, craftsmanship and high fashion.

Held at Gate 1 on 11 September 2026, the Threads of Culture Exhibition & Fashion Show provided a platform for local artists, designers and crafters to showcase the rich cultural tapestry of the North West to an enthusiastic audience.

Ms Lydia Naidoo, Acting Regional Director of Mmabana Rustenburg, and her team received praise for delivering an event rooted in local pride. Organisers said the strong turnout reflected the community's appreciation for arts, culture, fashion and home-grown talent.

"The event provided a powerful platform for local artists, designers and crafters to showcase their creativity, celebrate heritage, connect and network," a Mmabana Foundation representative said.

"The turnout was a true reflection of the community's appreciation for arts, culture, fashion and local talent. Together, we continue to create platforms where creativity can thrive and talent can shine."

The afternoon began with a two-hour visual arts and crafts exhibition celebrating regional craftsmanship. Among the featured artisans was Wilson Moitsheki, who impressed visitors with his specialised bottle crafts and intricate string art, demonstrating how ordinary materials can be transformed into striking works of art.

At 14:00, attention shifted to the runway as the fashion showcase got underway.

Tokyo Masinda opened the show with a sophisticated collection centred on formal, black-tie couture. His sharply tailored tuxedos and striking white mermaid dresses brought glamour and elegance to the runway.

Nelly Kgasoe, the creative force behind Kwa Mphara PTY/LTD, brought vibrant African energy to the showcase. Kgasoe modelled handmade sunglasses decorated with yellow and red pompoms, while her collection featured beaded bracelets, bangles and statement earrings crafted from multi-coloured soft-drink can tops. Traditional-print heels and matching headbands completed the bold looks.

The runway then welcomed Salome Tlhipi, founder of Pheqlia Designs and a product of local empowerment initiatives. Tlhipi was trained by renowned Mmabana tutor Tshepisio Chepape.

Her collection combined bold West and North African prints with structured camouflage fabric, khaki skirts and playsuits.

Peers from the Mmabana Echoes of Excellence programme praised Chepape's mentorship, saying: "Mama Tshepisio always push n polish designers with passion and love."

Samira Chavane followed with MiraKloset Designs, unveiling a futuristic and colour-



**WEEKEND Gig Guide**

ALL OVER BLOEMFONTEIN
18 - 20 SEPTEMBER 2026

SKA PHACE BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION
FRIDAY - 18 SEPTEMBER 2026
IZA - BLOEMFONTEIN

DR PHIL BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION
FRIDAY - 18 SEPTEMBER 2026
VEGAS CLUB

DEEP HOUSE VS AMAPIANO
SATURDAY - 19 SEPTEMBER 2026
PARLIAMENT LOUNGE

SATURDAY SHOWDOWN
SATURDAY - 19 SEPTEMBER 2026
VIBE LOUNGE

EXTENDED SOUL SUNDAYS
SUNDAY - 20 SEPTEMBER 2026
SECHABA LOUNGE

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LEGOODY & FANTAS THE DJ DJ LEBZA DJ KID LEFA AFRIKA TRILL KAY LITCHYLEE
WALTER SEFATSA MOHAU MAPRINZOZO RAPSIKO PIANO KINZ KINGTBOS

ON STAGE MC'S

SOMIZI LEBU MOLAX HAPPY K BINOBOY MAKHWENKHWE BA2CADA MS VEE

EVENT HOSTS

NOTA THAKGI MSHEPEPE WASE VAAL BONOLO MISS KAY MBATHA SKATANA

GENERAL
ACCESS

EARLY BIRD
~~R60~~
15 MAY - 01 JUN

PRE-SALE
~~R200~~
02 JUN - 01 JUL

PHASE 1
R350
02 JUL - 20 SEP

GENERAL TICKET
R450
AT THE GATE

COOLERBOX
R100
COMPUTICKET

COOLERBOX
R150
AT THE GATE

AVAILABLE AT

VIP

EARLY BIRD
~~R60~~
15 MAY - 01 JUN

PRE-SALE
~~R600~~
02 JUN - 01 JUL

VIP NORMAL
R750
02 JUL - 19 SEP

VIP NORMAL
R1000
AT THE GATE

COOLERBOX
R100
15 MAY - 19 SEP

COOLERBOX
R150
AT THE GATE

VVIP

TABLE PACKAGE
R4K
4 PEOPLE

TABLE PACKAGE
R8K
8 PEOPLE

INDIVIDUAL
R1.5K
1 PERSON

**NO COOLERBOX
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SPORT



Volleyball's Elite Meet in Bloem

Bloemfontein hosts thirty-two clubs for premier national championship showdown at Tempe Military Base

By Gomolemo Winkler

Bloemfontein will host thirty-two top men's and women's clubs this weekend for the annual Volleyball South Africa Champions Cup at the Tempe Military Base Sports Hall.

Running from 21 to 26 September 2026, the elite national tournament serves as a qualifier for the upcoming Zone 6 Club Championship in Windhoek, Namibia.

Local contenders Central University of Technology and Panthers Volleyball Club will represent the Free State against elite national opposition on home turf.

VSA Media and Marketing Director, Zwonaka Tshivhase, emphasised that the tournament showcases the continuous expansion of competitive club structures nationwide.

"Remember, this is a once in a year tournament of which it only happens once where we brought together all the clubs. We have a lot of clubs in the country. These clubs come from their provincial leagues. This is the tournament where we need to see those clubs," he said. High national demand has forced the federation to cap division entries

at sixteen teams despite surging participation across provincial leagues.

While volleyball continues to lag behind football, rugby, and cricket in corporate funding, grassroots investments have strengthened the sport's developmental framework.

VSA has expanded school and community programs across Limpopo, Mpumalanga, and the North West to introduce youths to the sport early.

However, Tshivhase warned that the decline of organized school sports forces universities to rely on raw talent rather than fully polished athletes.

"For example, there some government schools, they are drifting away from sports totally. You find that the school has a programme of academics from minor to senior. When you try to get access to kids, they deny you and it affects matters besides the development because the only time where a learner is exposed to sports is when he or she is in university, of which university is no longer developing you are expecting a fully developed player," he said.

Free State Volleyball Association Secretary-General, Itumeleng Khomo, noted that

hosting the Champions Cup helps dispel perceptions that volleyball is merely a recreational pastime.

"For a lot of people around the country, volleyball has been seen just as a social sport. VSA together with its provincial affiliates has changed that and tournaments such as Club Champs are there to showcase that the sport has moved to being a professional one and can also be commercialised and also attract sponsors," he said.

"Club Champs provide a platform for us to showcase all 16 of the best clubs in the country for both male and females. You get a chance to see all the best players we have in the country," added Khomo.

Tournament Director and VSA Secretary General Donovan Nair highlighted that international continental success and hosting high-profile beach volleyball events continue to draw corporate interest.

"With our nationals, indoor and beach volleyball performing well in our zone and on the continent, volleyball is gaining the attention of corporate South Africa, especially when we hosted the Pro Tour World Series Beach Volleyball Championship in Cape Town



in 2022 and 2025. The next one is in November 2026," he said. "The Champions Cup is the biggest event hosted in the Zone 6 which

comprises 10 member countries. Teams participating in the CC fund themselves. With 32 teams at this year's championship, the CC

promises to thrill and excite the fans. Hopefully big business will take note of volleyball as a marketable commodity," said Nair.

SPU Chases Club Champs Glory

The Kimberley rugby ladies will be flying the Griquas flag high at the national tourney in Gauteng

By Gomolemo Winkler

Sol Plaatje University (SPU) Women's Rugby Team is heading to Gauteng from 20 to 25 September to compete in the Betway Women's Club Championships.

Representing both SPU and the Northern Cape under the Suzuki Griquas banner, the squad secured their spot after thrashing Sis-hen Rugby Club 47-7 in the inaugural AVBOB Griquas Women's Rugby Super League.

Head coach, Alvero Baartman, praised the institution's recruitment, training, and player support structures for establishing a reliable level of performance.

"The systems we have put in place, from recruitment and training to player development and support structures, are producing results. It speaks to the commitment of the players, the coaching staff, and the institution, and it confirms that women's rugby at SPU is on an upward trajectory rather than a temporary spike in performance," he said.

Building on their previous national appearance where they finished third overall, the coaching staff relies heavily on returning players to lead the campaign.

"The experience from our first appearance was invaluable. It gave us a clear picture of the standard at national level: the intensity, the pace, and the physicality required. It also exposed areas where we needed to grow, both technically and tactically.

"The players who were part of that first squad are now better equipped to lead and guide the newer members, which gives us a much stronger foundation heading into this year's competition," Baartman continued.

During their debut national tournament, the team opened with a historic 24-17 win over Riders before falling 12-24 to Titans Rugby Academy.

They wrapped up that previous campaign on a high note by demolishing Embalehnle



54-5 on the final day.

Claiming the recent regional league title provided crucial momentum and self-belief as the team finalises preparations for the upcoming championship.

"It was hugely important. Winning the league gave the team belief, but the manner in which we won it, the character, the composure under pressure, and the execution in key moments, was what really mattered," Baartman said.

He added: "Those are exactly the qualities you need at a national championship. Confidence is everything at that level, and that performance gave us the momentum and self-belief we needed. It also reinforced the standards we've set for ourselves as a

squad."

Baartman maintains that the primary target is remaining competitive in every fixture while striving to progress deep into the knockout stages.

"We want to improve on our previous showing and show that SPU belongs at this level. Beyond that, we are not limiting ourselves.

"We believe this squad is capable of progressing deep into the competition.

"We have prepared well, we have the talent and the belief, and we're going there to compete, not just to participate. Whatever happens, we want to leave with our heads held high, knowing we gave everything," added Baartman.

NWU Trains Student Referees

By Gomolemo Winkler

North-West University, through its Football Officials Programme, is building new avenues for aspiring football referees to be well equipped with the theoretical knowledge and practical experience required to oversee matches at high levels.

The project was inaugurated earlier this year to produce certified match officials from within the university, instead of depending only on external referees for campus-related competitions.

From the NWU Sports Department, Thabo Raborifi, expressed that the programme provides in-depth instruction on the rules of the game, ensuring that participants understand every element of football officiating.

"We cover almost everything under the Laws of the Game because that is what they are supposed to apply when they are officiating. It starts from Law One, through to the final law, including identifying fouls, handballs and applying the laws correctly, during matches," said Raborifi.

According to Raborifi, students first undergo a selection process before attending workshops that grant theoretical instruction and outline the expectations of being a football referee.

Afterwards, they are introduced to practical officiating through the university's residence league showdowns.

"And when our NFD team have their friendly matches, we use those too. And the ladies league, when they are playing, we sometimes use them," he said.

He further elaborated that the programme was launched after the university realised that there is a need to assemble its own pool of qualified match officials, instead of relying on external referees.

"We have been using external referees to officiate our regional leagues, and our friendly matches. Then we had to change this year. Not everyone can play football. Not everyone can officiate. So we need to start building our own team in our own campus," said Raborifi.

Moreover, beyond the university, NWU



has established alignments with SAFA's regional local football association, creating a partnership that enables students to progress into recognized footballing structures.

He disclosed that five students from the programme are already poised to officiate in Local Football Association (LFA) competitions, while two others recently completed fitness evaluations to officiate Hollywood regional league matches.

The programme has received a promising reception from both female and male students, particularly those passionate about football and eager to pursue officiating.

Raborifi indicated that the university remains committed to extending support to those who are firmly dedicated to the programme.

Despite that fact, he added that some females found the technical demands challenging.

"Most of the referees love football, and they want to learn. The response is very positive because they are learning almost

every day. They are not repeating the same mistakes. Although the females specifically started to separate themselves from the team because of the intensive requirements for them to be officials," said Raborifi.

However, rather than showing struggling officials an exit door, the university has launched extra indoor workshops to tighten embattled officials' understanding of the Laws of the Game, with additional classroom-based lessons to guarantee upcoming officials are competent before returning to practical match officiating.

Raborifi added that the workshops are facilitated by local officiating experts to offer insights, following amendments to the Laws of the Game, to ensure struggling students are on par with the demands of officiating.

"Now we are going back to the indoor workshops. Last month, we engaged a local referee and came after the amendment of laws of the game.

"They came and they had a workshop with the new laws," he said.