



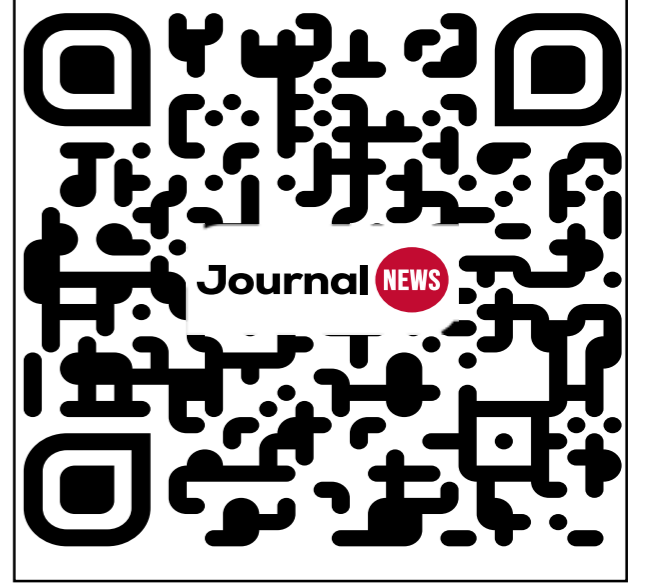
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PETRA RETRENCHMENTS PROVOKE PANIC

Around 1 800 mining jobs at risk as Finsch and Cullinan operations face financial crisis

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Maseko Mutes Bafana
Bafana Bashers Page 12



FS Doctor Chases Miss
SA Crown Page 10

Opposition Declares War on Moqhaka's Waste Crisis

Opposition demands urgent recovery plan while Moqhaka blames fleet shortages, staffing challenges and ageing equipment

By Nonkululeko Ngubeni

end what it describes as a collapse of a basic municipal service.

The letter was addressed to the Municipal Manager, Executive Mayor, Speaker of Council, Head of Waste and Fleet Management, and the MMC responsible for Waste Management.

According to the DA, residents have endured months of service delivery failures, including missed refuse collection schedules, growing backlogs and entire neighbourhoods being left without waste removal services for extended periods.

Despite explanations citing fleet breakdowns, fuel shortages, staffing constraints and overtime limitations, DA Councillor in Moqhaka, Marelize Boeije, says the situation continues to deteriorate.

She argues that the failures point to a systemic collapse of a service that residents pay for and are

entitled to receive.

"The people of Moqhaka deserve reliable refuse removal services and a clean, healthy environment. Municipal leadership can no longer hide behind excuses while communities continue to suffer the consequences of ongoing service delivery failures," said Boeije.

Responding to the DA's demands, Acting Municipal Manager Lizzy Ntshepe said the Solid Waste Management section had requested that part of the R20.7 million budget **Continues on Page 2**



Dihlabeng Scores Major
Audit Breakthrough Page 2

2026 QUALIFIED FOR ROUND OF 32

BAFANA BAFANA

SUNDAY. 28 JUNE 2026
LOS ANGELES STADIUM (SOFI STADIUM)
in Inglewood, California - United States

KICK OFF 21:00

Opposition Declares War on Moqhaka's Waste Crisis



Continues from Page 1

allocated for contracted services be redirected towards the purchase of refuse compactor trucks.

"A request has been placed with Human Resources for the appointment of additional personnel for refuse removal. Purchasing refuse compactor trucks and appointing more personnel is a long-term solution to the experienced challenges," said Ntshepe.

However, she cautioned that allegations of persistent missed collections and waste backlogs remain unsubstantiated.

"Suspensions without concrete evidence relating to alleged persistent missed collections and waste backlogs are hearsay and make it impossible to institute consequence management," she said.

Ntshepe added that municipal vehicles need to be fitted with tracking equipment to improve monitoring and accountability.

"Municipal vehicles need to be fitted with tracking equipment to make it easier to monitor the whereabouts of vehicles and ultimately institute consequence management where foul play is identified," she said.

Boeije maintains that the municipality's failure to provide reliable refuse collection may constitute non-compliance with the Constitution, the Municipal Systems Act, the National Environmental Management: Waste Act (Act 59 of 2008), and the National Domestic Waste Collection Standards.

Communities across Kroonstad, Steynsrus, Viljoenskroon and surrounding areas continue to live among piles of uncollected refuse, raising concerns over public health risks, environmental degradation and the growing presence of pests.

The DA has given the municipality five calendar days to provide a credible recovery plan and explain how sustainable refuse collection services will be restored and future disruptions prevented.

Petra Retrenchments Provoke Panic

Around 1 800 mining jobs at risk as Finsch and Cullinan operations face financial crisis

By Nonkululeko Ngubeni

Almost 1 800 workers face an uncertain future after Petra Diamonds announced business rescue proceedings at Finsch Mine and potential retrenchments at Cullinan Mine. The developments threaten the economic stability of communities dependent on these operations.

The mining company placed its Finsch operation in the Northern Cape under business rescue, affecting approximately 689 workers. Concurrently, a Section 189A retrenchment process at the Cullinan facility in Gauteng could impact around 1 090 employees.

"It is unacceptable for companies to continuously point fingers at labour costs whenever they face operational or financial challenges," National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) chief negotiator, Masibukeke Naki, said.

NUM strongly condemned the decisions, accusing the company of placing the burden of industry challenges on employees.

The union rejected suggestions that labour costs are responsible, pointing instead to executive remuneration, management decisions and operational inefficiencies.

"Workers are not a liability on a balance sheet; they are the creators of value and wealth in the mining industry. Without workers, there is no production, and there is no profit," Naki added.

Conversely, Petra Diamonds stated the decision was driven by an unprecedented downturn in the global market, geopolitical uncertainty, and the strong rand. Vivek Gadodia, Petra's Chief Executive officer, noted diamond prices deteriorated sharply in recent months, particularly for smaller stones.



"Our tender results for April 2026 and May 2026 have yielded an average price for Cullinan Mine of approximately \$81 (R1 333) per carat, compared to \$109 (R1 795) per carat in the third quarter, while Finsch average about \$47 (R774) per carat compared to \$56 (R922) per carat during the same period," Gadodia said.

The company implemented cash-preservation measures, including halting capital expenditure at Finsch Mine and increasing high-value production at Cullinan Mine.

Management stated that the business rescue process aims to protect the broader business, which remains viable due to Cullinan's unique product mix.

"Based on these assessments, it is with regret that the company today announces commencing a business rescue process at Finsch," Gadodia added.

NUM, on the other hand, has called for urgent government intervention from the ministries of mining, finance, and trade to safeguard jobs.

The union pledged to use every legal and collective bargaining mechanism available during the upcoming

proceedings to prevent unnecessary job losses.

"Retrenchments cannot become a business strategy. Every job lost means a family pushed closer to poverty, a child whose future becomes uncertain, and a community that suffers economic decline" Naki asserted.

Petra Diamonds expects to complete an updated business plan by the end of September 2026.

The unfolding crisis is set to become one of the most significant labour battles of the year within the South African mining sector.

Dihlabeng Scores Major Audit Breakthrough



Dihlabeng Local Municipality Mayor, Tski James Tseki. Picture: Baagedi Sethlora

By Matshidiso Selebeleng

Dihlabeng Local Municipality has scored a major audit breakthrough, with the latest Auditor-General's report showing significant improvement and earning praise from Auditor-General Tsakani Maluleke, who described the municipality as "inspirational".

Once ranked among the struggling municipalities in the Free State, Dihlabeng has steadily turned its fortunes around, improving from a qualified audit opinion to an unqualified audit report over a seven-year period.

Presenting the municipal audit outcomes for the 2024/2025 financial year to Parliament's Portfolio Committee on Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs, Maluleke said Dihlabeng's progress was particularly noteworthy, especially given that it operates in one of the country's worst-performing provinces in terms of municipal audits.

She attributed the municipality's progress to the council's decision to appoint a permanent Municipal Manager, Chief Financial Officer and senior management team committed to steering the municipality in the right direction.

Speaking to Journal News on Thursday, Dihlabeng Executive Mayor, Tseki Tseki, welcomed the achievement, saying the improved audit outcome was the result of teamwork and deliberate interventions.

"The audit outcome of 2024/2025 came as a result of concerted efforts that we have put in place as a municipality and a system that seems to be giving us positive results," said Tseki.

He said the municipality regularly receives pro-

gress reports during monthly mayoral committee meetings to monitor the implementation of the audit action plan and address emerging challenges.

Tseki added that strict bookkeeping practices, conducted daily, weekly and monthly, have improved record-keeping and enabled officials to provide the Auditor-General with information promptly when required.

Although proud of the municipality's progress, the mayor stressed that there is still room for improvement.

"We are very proud, but it is our view that we grow more to improve, maintain the unqualified audit and do our level best to reduce the matters of emphasis raised by the AG," he said.

Tseki acknowledged that turning the municipality around had not been easy, citing the previous absence of permanently appointed senior managers and the reliance on acting directors, which weakened accountability.

Despite the positive audit outcome, he admitted that Dihlabeng still faces significant service delivery challenges, particularly deteriorating roads and ageing asbestos water pipes that frequently burst.

To address these challenges, the municipality has set aside R49 million from internally generated revenue for road refurbishment during the current financial year. The municipality also constructed more than 10 kilometres of roads during the previous financial year.

Tseki urged residents to pay for municipal services, saying revenue collection is critical to enabling the municipality to reinvest in infrastructure and improve the quality of life of its communities.



Police Blow Lid Off 'Cat' Matlala's Bogus Clearance

Explosive testimony at the Madlaga Commission has revealed that a police clearance certificate used to vouch for tenderpreneur Vusumuzi "Cat" Matlala was fraudulent.

Suspended Ekurhuleni Metropolitan Police Department (EMPD) Deputy Chief Julius Mkhwanazi made the admission during his appearance before the commission on Wednesday.

The certificate, which indicated that Matlala had no prior criminal convictions, was allegedly sent to Mkhwanazi by Medicare24 Holdings CEO Mike Van Wyk. However, the document's authenticity was challenged when evidence leader Mahlape Sello read an affidavit from the South African Police Service (SAPS), which discredited the certificate.

According to the affidavit, the police clearance certificate purportedly issued to Matlala contained discrepancies relating to its unique transaction num-

ber and inquiry number, which did not correspond with any legitimate police clearance certificate.

SAPS further established that the document had originally been issued to another individual and that the signature appearing on it appeared to have been forged.

The revelations cast fresh doubt on the credibility of the document that had been used to support Matlala's standing.

Adding to the controversy, SAPS records presented to the commission showed that Matlala has a previous criminal conviction dating back to 2001. He was sentenced to four years' imprisonment for housebreaking and theft.

The commission is expected to continue probing the circumstances surrounding the fraudulent certificate and how it came to be used despite SAPS records reflecting Matlala's prior conviction.

Four Arrested Over Eastern Cape Massacre

The South African Police Service's (SAPS) Eastern Cape Provincial Serious Violent Crime Unit has arrested four suspects in connection with a mass shooting in Gqeberha that claimed four lives and left two others wounded.

The suspects, aged between 20 and 34, were arrested on Friday following an intensive investigation into the deadly attack that took place on the evening of 6 June in Mti Street, Govan Mbeki, Kwadwesi.

According to police, several masked suspects stormed a house and opened fire on the occupants. A 41-year-old man and three women aged 36, 41 and 26 were killed in the attack, while two other women, aged 39 and 50, sustained injuries.

The suspects allegedly stole the victims' cell-phones before fleeing the scene.

Police spokesperson Captain Andre Beetge said cases of four counts of murder and two counts of attempted murder were opened at Kwadwesi Police Station and assigned to the Provincial Serious Violent Crime Unit for investigation.

"The four male suspects, aged between 20 and 34,

made a brief appearance before the New Brighton Magistrate's Court on 22 June 2026 on these charges, and the case has been remanded to 29 June 2026 for formal bail applications," said Beetge.

The Acting District Commissioner for Nelson Mandela Bay District, Brigadier Loyiso Ngalo, welcomed the arrests, describing them as a significant breakthrough in a case that had shaken the community.

"I commend the dedicated members of the Serious and Violent Crime Investigation Unit for their relentless efforts, professionalism and commitment in bringing those responsible before the courts," said Ngalo.

"We trust that these arrests will provide some measure of comfort to the affected families and communities as the criminal justice process unfolds. The South African Police Service remains steadfast in its commitment to ensuring that those who commit violent crimes are held accountable."

The investigation remains ongoing as police continue to piece together the circumstances surrounding the brutal attack.

Fugitive Nabbed Over Child Kidnapping and Ransom Plot

A 48-year-old fugitive, Eddie Ncube, has been arrested in the Eastern Cape in connection with the kidnapping of a nine-year-old child and an alleged ransom plot.

The arrest follows an incident on 4 February 2025 when two siblings were walking from school to a local shop in Buffalo Flats, KuGompo. They were reportedly approached by occupants of a silver-grey Toyota Corolla, who allegedly abducted one of the children before fleeing.

Hawks spokesperson Warrant Officer Ndiphwe Mhlakuvana said a kidnapping case was opened and an intensive, intelligence-driven investigation was launched. During the probe, the suspects allegedly

demanding a ransom. After months of tracing operations, investigators arrested Ncube in KuGompo on 22 June 2026. However, one suspect remains at large.

Ncube appeared before the KuGompo Magistrate's Court for a formal bail application and remains in custody. The matter has been postponed to 7 July 2026.

Meanwhile, Gauteng police arrested five alleged kidnappers during a sting operation on Tuesday following the kidnapping of a 47-year-old woman in Edenvale on 17 June 2026. Police rescued two victims, who sustained minor injuries and were later reunited with their families.

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R2.5bn Water Boost Revives Sol Plaagje Municipality



The community of Sethlwathwe Village receives an upgraded, modern school. Picture: Supplied

By Bernel Simons

More than R1 billion has already been spent on upgrading of Sol Plaagje Municipality's ageing water infrastructure, with Northern Cape Premier Dr Zamani Saul declaring the project a game-changer that is restoring water security and reviving confidence in local government.

Speaking during an oversight visit to the River-ton Water Treatment Plant, Saul said the R2.5 billion project, now in its third year of a seven-year implementation period, is already delivering measurable results.

According to provincial government figures, the project has improved water quality, significantly reduced water losses and eliminated the need for routine nightly water shutdowns across much of Kimberley.

The initiative has also created 442 jobs and benefited 44 small, medium and micro enter-

prises (SMMEs).

Saul described the project as one of the most important infrastructure investments ever undertaken in the Northern Cape and evidence that focused government intervention can reverse years of service delivery failures.

However, he warned that infrastructure investment alone would not secure the municipality's future if political and administrative instability continued to disrupt governance.

Addressing municipal leaders, the Premier outlined what he termed five "No's" for Sol Plaagje Municipality: no Section 139 intervention, no disruptive council meetings, no litigation, no unplanned service interruptions and no suspensions.

He said political infighting, court battles and organisational instability had diverted attention away from residents and weakened the municipality's ability to deliver services effectively.

Saul also called for accelerated service deliv-

ery, strict adherence to organisational processes, respect for political office and the restoration of the municipality's dignity and integrity.

"The bugs end here," Saul said, urging the municipality to put an end to instability and governance failures that have hampered progress for years.

Executive Mayor Martha Bartlett agreed that stability and service delivery go hand in hand.

"Where there is no stability, there can be no service delivery," she said.

National Treasury approved the R2.5 billion Budget Facility for Infrastructure grant just over two years ago to repair and upgrade ageing bulk water infrastructure in Sol Plaagje Municipality. The project remains the largest water infrastructure investment in the Northern Cape's history and is increasingly being viewed as a test of whether sustained investment and stable governance can restore public confidence in local government.

Premier Guarantees Calm Ahead of June 30



North West acting Police Commissioner Ryno Naidoo and Premier Lazarus Mokgotsi address the media on the province's readiness for the 30 June shutdown. Picture: Supplied

By Matshidiso Selebeleng

As tensions rise ahead of the controversial 30 June deadline that some groups have dubbed the day for undocumented immigrants to leave South Africa, North West Premier Lazarus Mokgotsi has assured residents that the province will remain calm and that it will be "business as usual".

Speaking alongside Acting North West Police Commissioner Lieutenant General Ryno Naidoo, Mokgotsi urged residents not to panic or alter their daily routines.

"Nobody should doubt whether they need to go to town or go to work. It will be business as usual. The safety of citizens is being guaranteed by the North West Provincial Government," said Mokgotsi.

He said schools, churches, businesses and public spaces would continue operating normally and stressed that government was fully prepared for any eventuality.

"Our children will be able to go to school, our communities will still be able to go to churches and go to town. From the briefings we have received, this will be a normal day," he said.

Mokgotsi emphasised that South Africa is a constitutional democracy governed by the rule of law and reassured residents that authorities were ready to respond to any threats

to public safety.

Naidoo said law enforcement agencies have been working closely with provincial and national stakeholders to address any security concerns that could emerge.

He said the Provincial Joint Operational and Intelligence Structure (ProvJOints) has finalised its operational plans and is in the execution phase to ensure government services continue uninterrupted.

"There are threats of shutdowns in certain areas. We will address those within the prescripts of the law. We also call on people who want to usurp the powers of government to refrain from doing so," said Naidoo.

He added that maximum resources would be deployed across the province, including at ports of entry and other priority areas. A dedicated hotline will also be available for residents to report incidents and concerns.

North West MEC for Community Safety Wessels Morweng called on residents to respect the law and allow the state to fulfil its responsibilities.

"Everyone who embarks on demonstrations must do so within the prescripts of the Constitution. The state is not the enemy of the people. The state is one with the people," he said. Provincial authorities say they remain on high alert and are prepared to ensure the safety and security of all residents before, during and after 30 June.

Mokoena Pulls the Plug on Ngwathe Council

Court order triggers provincial takeover as administrators move in to rescue Ngwathe



Free State Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (COGTA) MEC Saki Mokoena. Picture: COGTA/Facebook

By Staff Reporter

In a dramatic move that effectively brings down Ngwathe Local Municipality's current political administration, Free State Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (COGTA) MEC Saki Mokoena has dissolved the Ngwathe Municipal Council in compliance with a court order.

The intervention follows a judgment of the Free State High Court, subsequently confirmed by the Constitutional Court earlier this month, which found that the municipality had failed to fulfil several constitutional and legislative obligations relating to governance, financial management and service delivery.

The case was brought before the courts by AfriForum, with the support of the Save Ngwathe community group, in May 2024.

Addressing council members this week, Mokoena outlined the intervention process and announced the appointment of Dr Solly Motingoe from COGTA to work with the municipal administration on an

interim basis until a full intervention team is established.

"The intervention is aimed at addressing identified challenges, strengthening service delivery, consolidating progress made and correcting systemic weaknesses.

A team of five administrators will be appointed to support service delivery and ensure the successful implementation of the recovery plan," said Mokoena.

The MEC thanked former councillors from all political parties for their service and pledged to work with all stakeholders to restore good governance and drive meaningful change in the municipality.

"The Free State Provincial Government remains committed to constitutional governance, accountability and the restoration of effective local government.

The intervention seeks to ensure that residents receive quality services and that the municipality is placed on a sustainable path towards institutional and financial stability," he said.

Attempts to obtain comment from municipal spokesperson Steve Naale were

unsuccessful.

The court found that Ngwathe Municipality had breached Sections 152(1) and 153(a) of the Constitution and ruled that conditions existed for provincial intervention under Section 139 of the Constitution.

Section 139 empowers a provincial government to intervene when a municipality is unable to fulfil its executive obligations, with the objective of restoring effective governance, ensuring legal compliance and improving service delivery.

The court ordered the Provincial Executive Council to implement a recovery plan, dissolve the Municipal Council, appoint administrators and approve any measures necessary to ensure the continued functioning of the municipality.

Following the judgment, the municipality sought leave to appeal in the Constitutional Court.

However, on 2 June 2026, the apex court dismissed the application, finding that it had no reasonable prospects of success, making the High Court order final and binding.



MATJHABENG LOCAL MUNICIPALITY

VACANCY

ADVERTISEMENT: INDEPENDENT CHAIRPERSON – FINANCIAL MISCONDUCT DISCIPLINARY BOARD

Matjhabeng Local Municipality hereby invites suitably qualified and experienced individuals to serve as the Independent Chairperson of the Financial Misconduct Disciplinary Board, established in terms of:

- the Municipal Finance Management Act (MFMA),
- the Municipal Regulations on Financial Misconduct Procedures and Criminal Proceedings (2014),
- Section 171 of the MFMA (financial misconduct),
- Section 139 of the Constitution (mandatory financial recovery intervention), and
- the Municipality's adopted Financial Recovery Plan.

The Financial Misconduct Disciplinary Board is responsible for considering and adjudicating cases of alleged financial misconduct by senior managers and officials, ensuring accountability, consequence management, and compliance with legislative provisions applicable to municipalities, including municipalities classified as distressed and under a mandatory Financial Recovery Plan.

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

The Independent Chairperson will be expected to:

- Lead and preside over disciplinary hearings relating to alleged financial misconduct in accordance with the MFMA and associated regulations.
- Ensure that proceedings are fair, impartial, procedurally compliant, and aligned to natural justice principles.
- Provide written findings, recommendations, and sanctions on cases brought before the Disciplinary Board.
- Guide the Municipality on the application of the Financial Misconduct Regulations, including referrals for criminal proceedings where required.
- Ensure compliance with Section 171 of the MFMA and the 2014 Financial Misconduct Regulations.
- Support strengthened governance, ethical conduct, and consequence management as required under the Municipality's mandatory Financial Recovery Plan (Section 139(5)(a) & (c)).
- Uphold the independence and integrity of the Disciplinary Board at all times.

MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS

Applicants must meet the following require-

ments:

- A relevant legal, financial, auditing, or governance qualification (NQF Level 7 or higher).
- At least 8 years' experience in chairing disciplinary hearings, arbitration, legal proceedings, or financial misconduct cases—preferably within the public sector.
- Strong knowledge of the MFMA, Municipal Systems Act, Municipal Structures Act, Public Sector Risk Management Framework, Public Service Regulations, and relevant municipal compliance frameworks.
- Demonstrated understanding of municipal governance, financial management, and disciplinary procedures.
- Proven ability to interpret legislation and apply it to complex misconduct cases.
- Independence from the Municipality (no current or past employment or contracts with Matjhabeng in the last 3 years).
- No history of criminal convictions, pending disciplinary matters, or listing on any register of misconduct.

ADDED ADVANTAGES

- Experience with municipalities under Section 139 interventions or Financial Recovery Plans.
- Legal or audit professional registration (e.g., admitted attorney/advocate, SAICA, IRMSA, IIA).
- Experience in municipal consequence management, Section 32 investigations, or forensic auditing.

TERM OF APPOINTMENT

- The Independent Chairperson will be appointed for a renewable term of three (3) years, subject to performance, continued independence, and compliance with legislation.
- Remuneration will be on a sessional basis, aligned to National Treasury guidelines for non-executive committee members.

HOW TO APPLY

- Interested candidates must submit:
 - A detailed CV,
 - Certified copies of qualifications and identity document,
 - Proof of professional registration (where applicable),
 - A declaration of independence and no conflict of interest, and
 - Three contactable referees.

Closing date 10 July 2026

Mmoho - Together - Sisonke - Tesame

R2.2bn Tourism Investment Surge for North West



Economic Development, Conservation, Environment and Tourism. Picture: Supplied

By Bernell Simons

The North West Provincial Government has received investment proposals worth approximately R2.2 billion as part of a new tourism commercialisation strategy aimed at revitalising underutilised tourism facilities, attracting private investors and creating much-needed jobs in the province.

Tabling the budget vote in the North West Provincial department of Economic Development, Conservation, Environment and Tourism, MEC Bitsa Lenkopane said the initiative is designed to unlock economic value from tourism assets that have long been underperforming or deteriorating due to lack of investment and management challenges.

Of the total investment pipeline, proposals valued at about R1.8 billion have already passed investor capability assessments, affordability evaluations and compliance checks, and are now moving towards implementation.

Lenkopane said the strategy marks a shift in how the province manages tourism infrastructure, moving towards a commercialisation model that allows

private investors to develop and operate selected facilities through Build-Operate-Transfer agreements, while ownership of assets remains in public hands.

"For many years, several tourism facilities and infrastructure assets remained underutilised, deteriorated over time and were unable to generate the level of economic returns required to support conservation, tourism growth and local development," said Lenkopane. "As a result, these assets increasingly became liabilities rather than drivers of economic opportunity."

A key feature of the model is community participation, with surrounding communities set to become direct beneficiaries through structured shareholding arrangements, job opportunities, procurement contracts and enterprise development initiatives.

"For the first time, communities residing around our reserves and protected areas are not merely spectators in tourism development. They are recognised as strategic partners and beneficiaries," she said.

The investment drive comes amid deep economic pressure, with national unemployment rising to 32.7% in the first quarter of 2026, while the North West continues to face an even higher unemployment

rate of 54.8%.

Despite the challenges, Lenkopane said tourism remains one of the few sectors capable of generating employment in the short to medium term. The province's tourism sector generated an estimated R10.9 billion in revenue in the past financial year, supporting 9,242 jobs and benefiting 344 tourism enterprises.

During the same period, the province attracted more than 462,000 international tourists and over 4.17 million domestic visitors, with Bojanala District remaining the dominant contributor, generating about R6.9 billion in tourism revenue and supporting over 5,600 jobs.

The commercialisation strategy forms part of a broader departmental budget of R70.3 million for tourism development and promotion and R440.4 million for environmental services.

Lenkopane said the province is also prioritising skills development and youth employment, including a partnership with North-West University to convert Mahikeng and Taung hotel schools into accredited hospitality training centres.

Discussions are also underway with Sun City to place 81 hospitality and tourism graduates into internship and employment programmes.

The department has also deployed 70 tourism monitors across the province, including at key border posts such as Ramatlabama, Kopfontein and Skilpadshak, to enhance visitor safety and service delivery.

While tourism is a key growth driver, Lenkopane also addressed efforts to stabilise state-owned entities, particularly the North West Development Corporation, which carries historical municipal debt exceeding R212 million. She said governance reforms are beginning to stabilise these institutions despite long-standing financial and administrative challenges.

"What is important is that we now have stable governance structures, clear turnaround strategies, committed boards and a shared determination to place these entities on a sustainable path," she said.

The department's total budget of R1.056 billion will support tourism promotion, environmental management, enterprise development, biodiversity conservation and investment attraction.

However, the R2.2 billion tourism investment pipeline remains the centrepiece of the province's economic strategy, with government banking on private sector partnerships to transform dormant tourism assets into engines of growth, employment and long-term development.

Mathae Leads Service Delivery Drive in Grassland



FS Premier MaQueen Letshosa-Mathae joined residents at the Grassland Community Hall. Picture: OTP/Facebook

By Nonkululeko Ngubeni

Free State Premier MaQueen Letshosa-Mathae joined hundreds of residents at the Grassland Community Hall on Monday as the Provincial Government rolled out its Integrated Government Services programme, designed to bring essential services directly to communities.

The outreach initiative, held under the theme of improving access to government services, brought together multiple state entities in one location, allowing residents to access a wide range of services without travelling long distances or standing in multiple queues.

Among the participating departments and agencies were the South African Social Security Agency (SASSA), the Department of Home Affairs, the Department of Human Settlements, the Electoral Commission of South Africa (IEC), and a mobile health clinic.

Residents were assisted with services including identity document applications, social grant registrations, housing queries, voter registration and basic healthcare services.

Premier Letshosa-Mathae said the programme forms part of government's ongoing commitment to improve service delivery and ensure that underserved communities have easier access to essential public services.

"We have made a commitment to help bring services to the people. By bringing services closer to the people, they do not spend money on transportation because services are in their communities," said the Premier.

Residents arrived throughout the day seeking as-

sistance, with officials processing applications, providing information and responding to queries on-site. Many community members said the initiative saved them time and transport costs, while also improving access to critical services.

One resident visited the hall to register her one-month-old child for a social grant and was assisted immediately.

"It is better than spending money and going to town. I am happy that government brought these services to our doorstep because otherwise I would have been forced to use money to travel to town. I appreciate what the government has done for us," she said. Another resident, Mpho Vivian Thole, registered to vote for the first time and praised the efficiency of the IEC officials.

"It will be my first time casting a vote and I am happy. Many people sacrificed their lives for this privilege, and I intend to make full use of it. I am excited because I will have a say on the future of our province," she said.

The Premier also highlighted the importance of coordination between government departments and agencies to ensure residents receive comprehensive support through a single point of service.

The Integrated Government Services programme is expected to be rolled out in other parts of the Free State as the provincial government seeks to improve accessibility, efficiency and responsiveness in service delivery.

Residents welcomed the initiative and expressed hope that such outreach programmes would be held more regularly to strengthen communication between government and communities and address persistent service delivery challenges.

Motsumi Sets Sights on 95% Matric Pass Rate



North West Education MEC Ntsetsao Viola Motsumi. Picture: Supplied

By Bernell Simons

North West Education MEC Ntsetsao Viola Motsumi has set an ambitious new target for the province: pushing the matric pass rate to 95%, backed by a R24.17 billion budget aimed at strengthening the entire education system from early childhood development to secondary schooling.

Delivering her 2026/27 Budget Vote Speech before the Provincial Legislature, Motsumi challenged teachers, officials and learners to abandon doubt and embrace a culture of excellence, saying success depends on determination rather than difficulty.

"And so, sometimes I shudder when people say these targets are impossible to achieve. Success in hitting the target always depends on the person behind the rifle," she said.

The MEC said the province's education vision is rooted in building "a North West Province that works for all", with schools at the centre of social and economic transformation.

The confidence behind the new target follows steady academic gains. The province improved from an 87.52% matric pass rate in 2024 to 88.49% in 2025, ranking

fourth nationally, with all districts recording above 85%.

Among standout performers was Temogo Matong of Setswakgosing Secondary School, who became South Africa's top Quintile 2 learner with seven distinctions and a 96% average.

North West also celebrated excellence in younger learners, with 12-year-old Mbulelo Tolom from Dr Kenneth Kaunda District winning the National Spelling Bee and qualifying for international competition in China. The province further emerged as the country's best-performing region at the National Teaching Awards, securing seven national accolades.

The R24.173 billion education budget represents a 5.58% increase from the previous financial year, with more than 77% allocated to personnel costs to ensure schools remain adequately staffed.

Public Ordinary School Education receives the largest share at R18.17 billion, funding curriculum delivery, learner-teacher support materials, school nutrition, digital learning, and performance improvement programmes.

Motsumi announced R766.9 million for textbooks, stationery and digital learning tools, alongside R200 million for the Learner Attainment Improvement Plan. Schools

will also see increased use of digital platforms to enhance assessments and learner tracking.

School nutrition remains a major focus, with R746.9 million allocated to feed over 751,000 learners across 1,331 schools, sustaining more than 4,500 food handlers.

Teacher development receives R26 million for training programmes, supported by partnerships with North-West University, Wits University and TVET colleges to strengthen leadership and ICT skills.

Infrastructure investment stands at R1.38 billion, despite a backlog estimated at R21.5 billion. The funding will support new schools, classrooms, sanitation upgrades, Grade R expansion and asbestos removal, while creating about 4,200 jobs through the Education Infrastructure Grant.

Special schools, Early Childhood Development and examination services also receive funding aimed at improving inclusivity and assessment integrity.

Motsumi dedicated the budget to learners who died during the academic year, urging safer learning environments.

She closed with a message of determination: "Nothing is impossible until it is done," signalling a province intent on turning ambitious targets into measurable classroom results.

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DIHLABENG LOCAL MUNICIPALITY

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2021 – 2026 MUNICIPAL ACHIEVEMENTS REPORT

CLEAN AUDIT

Dihlabeng Local Municipality has achieved an unqualified audit opinion for the 2024/2025 financial year after years of qualified audit outcomes inherited by the Sixth Administration. This milestone reflects improved financial management, accountability, and adherence to governance regulations.

The municipality acknowledged that although the audit contains a few matters of emphasis, plans are already in place to address them during the 2025/2026 financial year with the aim of achieving a Clean Audit.

The administration credited this achievement to the appointment of qualified senior managers, strengthened governance systems, and the prevention of political interference in procurement processes.

The municipality further highlighted ongoing service delivery improvements, including better water provision, road maintenance, pothole repairs, refuse collection, and infrastructure development.

The Executive Mayor Cllr Tseki Tseki reaffirmed the municipality's commitment to transparent governance, improved service delivery, job creation, and restoring Dihlabeng Local Municipality to its former glory.

COMMUNITY SERVICES

The Executive Mayor has emphasized the importance of creating cleaner, safer, and more dignified communities. Programs focusing on town clean-up campaigns, grass-cutting initiatives, maintenance of public spaces, waste management, and environmental awareness continue to contribute toward building an attractive and healthy environment for residents.

Clarens/Kgubetswana: Resealing of 4 Tennis Courts

PROJECT STATUS

The municipality is in process of compiling a new business plan for submission to be funded for 2026/2027.

Bethlehem/Bohlokong/Bakenpak refurbishment of two swimming pools.

PROJECT STATUS

* Revised business plan and cope of work to accommodate the available budget which is fencing around swimming pool 2026/2027.

Distribution of wheel bins Ext4 Bohlokong



BOIKETLONG HALL [BEFORE]



BOIKETLONG HALL [AFTER]



ELECTRICITY

The municipality remains focused on strengthening electricity infrastructure through maintenance programs, repairs, upgrades, and interventions aimed at minimizing outages and improving reliability. Efforts continue to ensure stable electricity supply and improve response times to service interruptions.

BOHLOKONG: INSTALLATION OF 12X40m LEDAT BAKERNPARK EXT 5 AND SLABBERT FARM HIGH MAST LIGHTS

- Project Value: R7 265 140,53
- Duration: 5 Months
- Progress: Completed
- Job opportunities : 24 Labourers



SUPPLY OF ELECTRICITY TO FARMS

- Bulk point electricity: Installation of metre box Weltevrede 15 household and Lisbon Farm.



FARMERS WATER INTERVENTIONS

FARM	NO. HOUSE HOLDS
DE PROOY FARM	3
SHERIDAN FARM	26
KLEIFONTEIN FARM	11
HIGHLANDS FARM	19
LEIBON FARM	8
THUSANS FARM	12
LOGKOP FARM	24
MARA FARM	3
EXELSOR FARM	14
DUNLORES FARM	13
SCARFYARD FARM	20
GOESPONGBERG FARM	14
MARANDA FARM	13

FARM	NO. HOUSE HOLDS
SWEET AND VAAL	15
UYSELEIN FARM	13
WOOLWERKLOOF	1
DESIE FARM	20
SNYMANSHOKE	14
OKTOVAS FARM	1

DEVELOPMENT AND TOWN PLANNING

Dihlabeng continues working toward addressing community needs relating to land allocation/ distribution of title deeds and cemetery development. Initiatives aimed at identifying and establishing suitable sites and cemetery infrastructure seek to ensure sustainable planning and provide dignified services to residents.



DEVELOPMENT AND TOWN PLANNING

Dihlabeng Local Municipality acted swiftly in response to community complaints about a tuckshop in Bohlokong selling expired food and operating illegally.

A compliance task team conducted an inspection and immediately closed the businesses. Inspectors found expired food products on the shelves, posing a direct risk to public health.

The premises were in an unsanitary condition, with poor hygiene standards throughout the shop.

The tuckshop will remain closed until all contraventions are rectified and verified by the relevant authorities.



BIOGRAPHY



CLLR TSEKI J TSEKI EXECUTIVE MAYOR DIHLABENG LOCAL MUNICIPALITY 2021-2026

Hon. Cllr Tseki James Tseki was born and raised in Mashaeng, Fouriesburg. He completed his Grade 12 at Ipokelleng High School and went on to obtain a Diploma in Development Studies two years later. He further advanced his academic journey by earning a Bachelor of Arts in Human and Social Studies and is currently pursuing a BA Honours degree in Public Administration.

His academic background has equipped him with a solid foundation to navigate and contribute meaningfully within the political landscape in the post-liberation era. Hon. Cllr Tseki became politically active during his student years as a member of the South African Students Congress (SASCO) and later served as Chairperson of the Young Communist League (YCL).

Upon returning from university, he continued his political involvement, serving as the Chairperson of the African National Congress Youth League (ANCYL) and as a member of its Provincial Executive Committee (PEC). Over the years, he has consistently held the position of ANC Branch Chairperson in Ward 14 of the Dihlabeng Local Municipality,

based in Fouriesburg.

He is currently a member of the African National Congress (ANC) Regional Executive Committee in the Thabo Mofutsanyana District.

Cllr Tseki has served as a Ward Councillor since 2011. Throughout his tenure, he has held several key leadership roles, including Chairperson of the Municipal Public Accounts Committee (MPAC),

Member of the Mayoral Committee (MMC) for Integrated Development Planning (IDP) and Performance Management Systems (PMS), MMC for Finance, Chief Whip, and Council Speaker. He now serves as the Executive Mayor of Dihlabeng Local Municipality.

This progression of leadership roles has equipped him with the experience and expertise necessary to lead the municipality effectively. Supported by a strong team and the broader community, Hon. Cllr Tseki James Tseki is well-positioned to drive development and deliver meaningful progress for the people of Dihlabeng.

BACKGROUND:

TRAIL - Dihlabeng Service Delivery by Executive Mayor TJ Tseki

Under the leadership of TJ Tseki, Dihlabeng Local Municipality continues to drive a service delivery programs focused on improving the quality of life of residents, restoring community confidence, and building a responsive and developmental municipality. The administration remains committed to addressing key service delivery challenges while creating sustainable opportunities for communities throughout Dihlabeng. Dihlabeng Local Municipality, under the leadership of TJ Tseki, remains committed to delivering quality services and improving the living conditions of communities across the municipali-

ty. Guided by the principles of responsive governance, community participation, and sustainable development, the municipality continues to implement programmes aimed at addressing service delivery challenges while advancing socio-economic development.

Effective service delivery extends beyond infrastructure provision and includes improving access to basic services, creating economic opportunities, promoting community safety, empowering women and youth, and ensuring a clean and healthy environment.

Through Integrated Development Plan (IDP)

priorities and ongoing community engagements, the municipality continues to identify challenges and implement practical interventions that respond to the needs of residents. The administration has placed emphasis on improving water and electricity supply, upgrading road infrastructure, enforcing municipal by-laws, creating cleaner and safer public spaces, combating illegal activities, and strengthening development initiatives that contribute toward economic growth and social wellbeing. Additional focus areas include the fight against Gender-Based Violence and Femicide (GBV), fight against substance abuse.

CORPORATE SERVICES:

The municipality continues strengthening enforcement and implementation of municipal by-laws to promote compliance, maintain order, and improve governance. By-law implementation supports safer communities, protects municipal assets, and encourages responsible community conduct.



Formalization Of Townships

SELAHLIWE TOWNSHIP



SLABBERTS IN-SITU UPGRADING



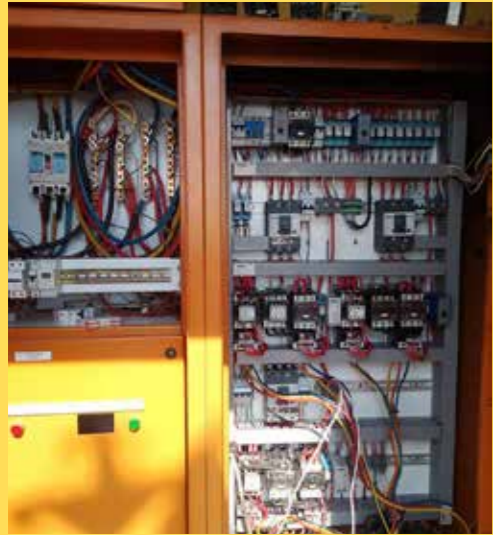
The Dihlabeng Local Municipality has launched a pioneering Rapid Response Public Works Programme, appointing 60 unskilled women and youth to participate in a SETA-accredited Road Skills Training Programme — the first initiative of its kind in the Free State. The programme aims to empower communities through skills development, job creation, and improved service delivery while addressing deteriorating municipal roads. By equipping participants with lifelong skills, the municipality is investing in both infrastructure development and the long-term growth of local communities and small businesses.





REFURBISHMENT OF 20 PUMPSTATIONS IN ALL TOWNS

- Project Value: Funded through OPEX (Internal) Scope of work: Repair of mechanical screen, electrical panels and backup bump at Bohlokong pump station 2.
- The refurbishment works of all 20 pump-stations could not be done due to budget constraints during 2024/25 FY, only 3 pump stations in Fouriesburg were done by end June 2025. In the 2025/26 FY; the section has prioritized the refurbishment of high risk pump stations in Bethlehem which are Bohlokong sewer pump station 1, 2 and 3. It should be noted that due to the limit in budget, certain unit operations are prioritized in order to avoid sewer spillages.



FIXING OF 600 LEAKING TAPS, METERS AND TOILET CIRSTENS IN THE YARDS IN ALL TOWNS

- Project Value: Funded through OPEX (Internal)
- Scope of work: Repair or replacement of toilet cisterns, leaking tabs and inside yard leakages as part of the war on leaks that was done for the closure of the Lesotho water tunnel. The unit was able to reach the 480 target of fixed taps due to delays in delivery of materials from SCM, meters in the 2024/25FY.
- The section has entered inside the yards of community to fix leaking toilet cisterns and internal leakages in order to reduce the water losses. There has been challenges in terms of acquisition of material due to supply chain processes but the section is in the process of getting a panel for the supply if material in place. The section continues to repair leaking meters and pipes across all Units as and when such are reported.

FIXING OF 600 LEAKING TAPS, METERS AND TOILET CIRSTENS IN THE YARDS IN ALL TOWNS



WATER AND SANITATION

The municipality continues to prioritize interventions aimed at improving water supply challenges affecting communities. Efforts include maintenance and repair of aging infrastructure, response to water interruptions, strengthening of water management systems, and engagements with relevant stakeholders to ensure sustainable access to water. Restoring reliable water services remains a critical priority in improving residents' daily lives.

Project	Project Value	Status
Upgrading Of Saulspoort Wtw. Section F: Replacement Of 2 X 630mm Pipeline From Saulspoort To Birdcage Reservoirs	R120 320 574,00	On going
Clarens/Kgubetswana: Upgrading Of Raw Water Pump Stations Including Rising Mains To The Dam	R58 491 027,74	On going
Upgrading of Clarens WTW from 1ML to 4 ML per day	R62 713 001,50	Completed
Drilling and equipping of boreholes in Clarens	R9 775 000,00	Completed
Upgrading Of Caledon Raw Water Abstraction Point	R64 504 863,13	On going
Upgrading Of Saulspoort Wtw. Section C: Electrical Mechanical And Civil	R59 836 569,73	On going
Section E:UPGRADING OF SAULSPOORT WTW FROM 40mℓ TO 60mℓ PER DAY	R 385 114 389,05	On going

PROJECT: FOURIESBURG- UPGRADE OF KERK STREET BETWEEN REITZ AND DE LA HARPE STREET



CLARENS/KGUBETSWANA: UPGRADE OF RAW WATER PUMP STATIONS INCLUDING RISING MAINS TO THE DAM.



UPGRADING OF CLARENS WTW FROM 1ML TO 4 ML PER DAY.



DRILLING AND EQUIPPING OF BOREHOLES IN CLARENS



UPGRADING OF CALEDON RAW WATER ABSTRACTION POINT.



SECTION E:UPGRADING OF SAULSPOORT WTW FROM 40Mℓ TO 60Mℓ PER DAY



DRILLING AND EQUIPPING OF BOREHOLES IN FOURIESBURG.



MUNICIPALITY SUPPLY WATER TO 228 FARM DWELLERS ACROSS DIHLABENG



***DRILLING OF BOREHOLES: 10 Farms across Dihlabeng**

DIHLABENG INVESTS

Dihlabeng Local Municipality, under the current leadership, has made a significant investment to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the municipality's workforce, address...



ROADS AND S

Dihlabeng Local Municipality has achieved an unqualified audit opinion for the 2024/2025 financial year after years of qualified audit outcomes inherited by the Sixth Administration. This milestone reflects improved financial man-

agement, accountability, and adherence to governance regulations.

The municipality acknowledged that although the audit contains a few matters of emphasis, plans are already in place to address them during the 2025/2026 financial year with the aim of achieving an unqualified audit.

The administration's commitment to the appointment of managers, strengthening systems, and the pro-

Project	Project Value	Duration	Progress	Jobs Created
Bohlokong- Rehabilitation Of 3.0 Km Old Lomond Street To Interlocking Blocks And Stormwater Drainages Facilities	R 12 998 638.44	6 months	Completed	69
Bohlokong- Upgrading Of 3.0 Km 9th Avenue To Interlocking Concrete Blocks And Stormwater Drainage	R 11 517 163.71	6 months	Completed	30
Bohlokong: Reconstruction Of 3km Tarrd Road To Blocked Paved Road, Shupinyaneng & Khabane Str (External)			Completed	
Bohlokong: Construction Of 0,8km Ramskoko Street To Block Paved Road And Storm Water	R8 911 362,08	3 Months	Completed	15
Morelig: Rehabilitation Of Albara Street (1km) To A Block Paved Street (Internal)	R11 482 386.03	4 Months	Completed	15
Resealing Of Popolier & Bloekom Street			Completed	
Bethlehem: Repairing And Upgrading Of Intersection At Cnr James Van Huysteen And Langeberg Street(Internal)	R 1 844 757.34	2 months	Completed	25

BOHLOKONG- REHABILITATION OF 3.0 KM OLD LOMOND STREET TO INTERLOCKING BLOCKS AND STORMWATER DRAINAGES FACILITIES.



BOHLOKONG- UPGRADE OF 3.0 KM 9TH AVENUE TO INTERLOCKING CONCRETE BLOCKS AND STORMWATER DRAINAGE MANAGEMENT



BETHEHEM: REPAIRING AND UPGRADE OF INTERSECTION AT CNR JAMES VAN HUYSTEN STREET AND LANGEBERG STREET



REPAIR AND UPGRADE OF STORMWATER DRAINAGE OF STORM WATER FACILITY IN BOHLOKONG, BETHLEHEM



ROSENDAL/METATI: UPGRADE OF 1.5KM GRAVEL ROAD TO BLOCK PAVED ROAD AND STORM WATER CHANNELS



IN BETTER SERVICES

ant investment in service delivery infrastructure. The new fleet is expected to
 essing community needs more promptly and bridging service delivery gaps.

ET



TORMWATER

of achieving a Clean
 credited this achieve-
 ment of qualified sen-
 strengthened govern-
 ance prevention of political

interference in procurement processes.
 The municipality further highlighted on-
 going service delivery improvements, in-
 cluding better water provision, road main-
 tenance, pothole repairs, refuse collection,
 and infrastructure development.

The Executive Mayor Cllr Tseki Tseki re-
 affirmed the municipality's commitment
 to transparent governance, improved ser-
 vice delivery, job creation, and restoring
 Dihlabeng Local Municipality to its former
 glory.

Project	Project Value	Duration	Progress	Jobs Created
Bergsig Bokmakie & Suikerbekkie Crescent: Construction Of 1.2km Blocked Paved Road And Storm Water Channels (Internal)			50% In Progress	
Bethlehem: Rehabilitation Of 5.4km Baartman Street, La Provence Street And Paul Laesecke Street (Internal)			40% In Progress	
Repair And Upgrade Of Stormwater Drainage Of Storm Water Facility In Bohlakong, Bethlehem	R 4 999 420.39	4 months	Completed	15
Project: Fouriesburg- Upgrade Of Kerk Street Between Reitz And De La Harpe Street	R 4 115 863.11	4 months	Completed	13
Rosendal/Metati: Upgrading Of 1.5km Gravel Road To Block Paved Road And Storm Water Channels	R20 348 135,60	1 year	Completed	36
Fateng Tse Ntsho - Repair And Upgrade Of Existing Storm Water Portal Culvert And Interlocking Paved Drift	R 4 500 000.00	1 month	Completed	15
Project: Fateng-tse-ntsho, Paul Roux - Repair And Upgrade Of An Existing Concrete Drift Stormwater Crossing	R 5 000 000.00	3 months	Completed	0

PROJECT: FOURIESBURG- UPGRADE OF KERK STREET BETWEEN REITZ AND DE LA HARPE STREET



MASHAENG- REHABILITATION OF STORMWATER DRAINAGE FACILITIES



FATENG TSE NTSO – REPAIR AND UPGRADE OF EXISTING STORMWATER PORTAL CULVERT AND INTERLOCKING PAVED DRIFT



PROJECT: FATENG-TSE-NTSHO, PAUL ROUX -REPAIR AND UPGRADE OF AN EXISTING CONCRETE DRIFT STORMWATER CROSSING



SECTORAL PROGRAMMES 2021/2026 ARE DONE QUARTERLY/ANNUALLY AND ROTATE IN ALL UNITS

1. MAYORAL IMBIZO Outreach programme

Executive Mayor Cllr Tseki Tseki held quarterly meetings with communities across Dihlabeng Local Municipality as part of Mayoral Imbizo. The aim of this outreach is to engage communities regarding government programmes that seek to advance service delivery within the municipality. Different stakeholders which where part of today's Mayoral Rural Imbizo.



2.GENDER BASED VIOLENCE

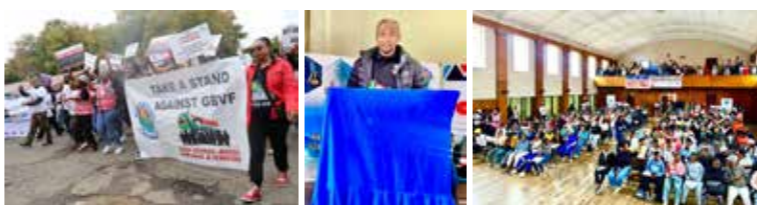
"Breaking The Silence Gender Based Violence and Femicide"

Dihlabeng Local Municipality, led by Executive Mayor Cllr TJ Tseki, hosted a powerful GBVF awareness gathering at Boiketlong Hall in Bohlakong under the theme "Breaking the Silence." The event called on communities, government departments, and stakeholders to unite against Gender-Based Violence and Femicide. Mayor Tseki emphasized the importance of speaking out against abuse, supporting victims, and holding perpetrators accountable. He highlighted the urgent need for collective action to create safer communities where women and girls can live free from fear. The event reinforced the municipality's commitment to fighting GBVF through community unity, awareness, and collaboration. #BreakingTheSilence #GBVF #EndGBV #DihlabengLocalMunicipality



Awareness programme

The Office of the Executive Mayor, Cllr. Tseki Tseki, in partnership with Maluti TVET College Bethlehem Campus, hosted a GBVF awareness programme aimed at empowering students and promoting safer communities. The programme included a solidarity march from the college to the Town Hall, followed by informative sessions on identifying abuse, prevention strategies, intervention measures, and access to professional support services. The initiative reinforced a strong message that Gender-Based Violence and Femicide must come to an end.



16 Days of activism

The Dihlabeng Local municipality's Executive Mayor Cllr TJ Tseki, led a powerful march and men's dialogue as part of 16 days of Activism against Gender-based violence campaign. The event held at Boiketlong hall in Bohlakong, Bethlehem, brought together stakeholder and community members to raise awareness and find solutions to the scourge of GBV. Unite Invest yo prevent violence against wiman and girls" the campaign aims to mobilize communities to take action against GBVF. # Enough is enough"



3.WOMEN EMPOWERMENT

Executive Mayor of Dihlabeng Local Municipality, Cllr Tseki Tseki, hosted quarterly successful Women Empowerment Convocation celebrating womanhood, cultural heritage, and community empowerment. Women from different backgrounds gathered proudly dressed in traditional Basotho attire, creating a vibrant atmosphere of unity and cultural pride. The event featured engaging discussions on the significance, importance, and well-being of women, encouraging self-worth, resilience, and empowerment. Other meetings aimed to encourage registration and compliance with government regulations, enabling these organizations to grow and explore new opportunities. Representatives from government departments and the private sector were invited to provide guidance on growth potential. Successful women entrepreneurs shared their experiences, showcasing how their stokvels have transformed their lives and inspiring others to think differently.

Honouring women in uniform

The office of Executive Mayor organised women in uniform event to honour and appreciate them for their exceptional work that they're executing in our communities. The theme was centered on how gender based violence affects women. Different speakers addressed the issue of GBVF which is now a pandemic in our country.



The Executive Mayor, Cllr Tseki Tseki thanked the women in uniform for their bravery and dedication to ensuring that women were granted equal rights to men. In attendance were: EMS, Working on Fire, Liquor board, Department of Health, SANDF, SAPS, Rhino Force, Department of Correctional Services, Provincial and Local Traffic departments.

4. ELDERLY EMPOWERMENT PROGRAMME

- Mandela day Elderly Commemoration (18 July), blankets and grocery distribution in all units/ 67 Minutes programme.
- Visitation of Luncheon club
- Will Awareness in collaboration with ABSA (Annual, October)
- Quarterly: Prevention/Education/ End GBVF Programme
- Awareness Campaign

5. Easter Annual Mayoral Soccer Tournament

Annual Easter Mayoral Soccer Tournament in Dihlabeng takes place over the Easter weekends. The tournament brings together teams from all towns within the Dihlabeng municipality, promoting unity and healthy competition.

6. Mayoral High School Tournament Soccer and Netball

Dihlabeng has a high rate of substance abuse, which includes all youth in and out of school. With the Dihlabeng mayoral High School Challenge, the Executive Mayor is planting a seed of encouragement and support for the youth of Dihlabeng.

7. 2025/2026 Mayoral League

The Executive Mayor, Cllr Tseki Tseki alongside Mr L.V Mokoining (Chairperson DLFA) and Mr T.D Sekhotho (Deputy Chairperson DLFA) lauched the 2025/26 Mayoral League season at Bethlehem, Townhall. The league is proudly sponsored by Premier Devco with Mr F. Ritief as the company's representative. The objective of the league is to take the children off the streets and encourage them to participate in sports

8. DRUG AWARENESS

- Random search
- Awareness campaign
- Peaceful march
- Men's dialogue

OTHER PROGRAMMES Annual

- Back to school
- New born
- Church outreach
- Church visits
- NSFAS drive



Engagements with different stakeholders: Monthly/Quarterly

- Intergovernmental Relation meeting (IGR)
- Business Forum
- High SchoolSport Committee
- Taxi Association
- GBVF Rapid Response Team
- Dihlabeng Council of Churches
- Duhlabeng Local Drug Committee

Opinion

Edgar Legoale

Former ANCYL Fezile Dabi Regional Chairperson



Ngwathe Delivered – Let’s Recognise Its Progress Rebuilding Ngwathe: A Five-Year Journey of Delivery, Dignity and Resilience Under ANC Leadership

When the Free State High Court ordered the dissolution of the Ngwathe Municipal Council in June 2025, many outsiders quickly concluded that our municipality was beyond redemption.

The judgement found that Ngwathe had failed to meet its constitutional obligations and called for provincial intervention under section 139. Residents of Parys, Heilbron, Koppies, Vredefort and Edenville had long felt the heavy weight of historical neglect and collapsing infrastructure.

In February 2026 AfriForum celebrated what they called a “decisive win” and insisted that dissolution was non-negotiable. They painted a picture of a completely failed municipality.

Their activism often hides behind legal language.

I am speaking as a resident and activist who has watched our municipality fight its way back from the edge of collapse.

The administration under former mayor Victoria de Beer-Mthombeni and Municipal Manager Dr Futhuli Mothamaha — whom the municipality council appointed — inherited a local government in chaos.

Basic services were failing across all five towns, senior posts stood vacant for years, financial records were in disarray, and community trust had almost disappeared. Yet instead of retreating or looking for scapegoats, this administration got to work with determination.

In the past five years, from 2021 to 2026, Ngwathe has implemented the most ambitious programme of infrastructure renewal, service restoration and governance reform in our recent history addressing issues the court highlighted. This opinion piece offers account progress.

My aim is not to deny the real failures of the past but to celebrate the concrete strides made and to call on everyone — including critics — to acknowledge what has been achieved and to build on it for the benefit of all our people.

The Inheritance: A Municipality at the Graveyard

Before we celebrate the achievements, we must understand exactly what De Beer-Mthombeni’s administration inherited.

Municipalities placed under administration often suffer further collapse because appointed caretakers from outside take a long time to understand local conditions, political realities and community dynamics, and they often lack real accountability to the people on the ground. When Victoria took office, Ngwathe was on the brink of total collapse. Streets were dark at night, water seldom flowed from taps, financial records were chaotic, and critical senior posts remained vacant for far too long. As one observer rightly noted, this administration “headed this Municipality when it was already at the graveyard” but still fought with everything they had to revive it. I take my hat off to them for refusing to surrender and for proving that visionary, committed leadership can still make a profound difference even in the most difficult circumstances.

The problems did not begin with this administration. They were the result of years of accumulated neglect, under-investment and weak governance that predated the current ANC-led council. This team took over a broken system and chose to confront it head-on rather than make excuses. That choice deserves recognition.

Addressing the Court Order’s Concerns

The High Court’s order cited failures in service delivery, leadership instability, by law enforcement and financial management. While those criticisms were valid at the time, the progress outlined above demonstrates that Ngwathe has acted decisively to rectify the problems:

1. Water quality and sewerage. The municipality has upgraded water and waste water infrastructure, replaced asbestos pipes, installed bulk pipelines and secured Blue Drop corrective action approval.
2. Electricity and service reliability. Electrification programmes have connected hundreds of

households and the new Vredefort substation will connect 2 000 more. The municipal fleet expansion ensures faster responses to faults.

3. Governance. Permanent appointments of senior managers and legal advisors have stabilised administration and improved compliance. A fully funded budget and improved grant performance reflect financial recovery.

4. By law enforcement and public safety. The resuscitated traffic unit and appointment of security officers strengthen law enforcement.

5. Economic development and job creation. Renewable energy projects, mixed use developments and infrastructure upgrades are creating thousands of jobs. This growth will broaden the tax base and enhance municipal revenue.

Conclusion: Building on Progress and Protecting Our Gains

Ngwathe still faces real challenges. Financial constraints, ageing infrastructure and the deep legacy of past mismanagement will not disappear overnight. But it would be dishonest and unfair to ignore the significant progress achieved under the leadership of Executive Mayor Cllr Victoria de Beer-Mthombeni and Municipal Manager Dr Futhuli Mothamaha over the past five years. The municipality has:

- Replaced 15 km of asbestos water pipes, refurbished treatment works and built new bulk pipelines reaching 99 percent completion, including the critical Koppies to Edenville link and the 1.97 km Kwakwatsi pipeline.
- Installed boreholes and restored water to communities that had been without supply for decades.
- Upgraded waste-water treatment works, started new reservoirs and expanded sanitation networks.
- Electrified 740 households and installed new substations while restoring street and high-mast lighting across all towns.
- Purchased a full municipal fleet including refuse trucks, a honeysucker, bakkies, TLB and cherry

pickers to improve response times and end over-reliance on outsourcing.

- Revived the Traffic Department after nearly a decade, unveiled new vehicles and created a learnership for 27 young people.

- Attracted major private investment including the Sedibe and Damlaagte solar projects and the Parys Mega Development with its hotel, truck stop and related infrastructure in the Vaal de Grace area, creating thousands of jobs.

- Supported around 200 local entrepreneurs through the LED directorate with equipment and business development support, with strong focus on youth and women.

- Presented fully funded budgets, filled critical senior management posts, improved financial oversight and achieved an approved Blue Drop corrective action plan.

- Launched a trained Red Cross-linked disaster management volunteer brigade and continued support for local NPOs including the Edgar Legoale Foundation.

These achievements are not just numbers on paper. They translate into real improvements in the daily lives of our people. Children in Tumahole now drink clean water without walking long distances. Young entrepreneurs in Heilbron and Parys have access to machines and start-up support. Elders in Parys can walk down well-lit streets at night with greater peace of mind. Job seekers in Mokwallo and Vredefort are training as traffic officers or solar technicians. These changes restore dignity, create hope and lay the foundation for a more prosperous future. With unity, continued accountability, community participation and sustained investment, Ngwathe can move from a story of struggle and failure to one of genuine rebirth, pride and shared prosperity. Let us keep the lights on, keep the water flowing, keep our streets clean and safe, and keep creating opportunities for our young people. The people of Ngwathe deserve nothing less.

Coloniality of youth in South Africa: Why the youth unemployment crisis is unique



In June 2024, I was part of a workshop on epistemic reparations and the right to be known in post-apartheid South Africa held both in the city of Johannesburg and at Uncle Tom’s Community Centre, Soweto. It was a gathering of academics from North America, Europe and Africa.

Also present were former freedom fighters — including Antoinette Sithole, the sister of Hector Pieterse, and Mongane Serote — as well as youth leaders from the 1976 Soweto uprising, such as Seth Mazibuko.

For me, the event was a reminder of the unforgettable role that the youth played in resisting the colonial domination of the apartheid regime and its implications for fracturing both the cultural identity and development of young black South Africans.

It was also a moment of understanding and reflection on the youth condition during and after apartheid in South Africa and on the continent at large, for the youth condition in today’s Africa is partly shaped by coloniality.

Highlighting and reflecting on the nature of the challenges of South African youth

As South Africa commemorates yet another youth month and the challenges facing its youth persist or worsen 50 years after, it is time again to reflect even deeper on the nature and uniqueness of these challenges. South Africa’s youth unemployment ranks highest in Africa and one of the highest in the world. Its youth-related crime and violence are at a high rate.

There are also high economic disparities with the South African youth mostly bearing the brunt. In the context of identity erosion, the country is the most fractured in Africa in terms of its cultural fabric, with serious implications for the identity of its youth.

One underlining factor in these challenges is coloniality in nature and one step towards addressing them is perhaps to name the factor. Naming a problem helps to make it less vague, more concrete and manageable.

In naming the challenges South African youth face, one might ask whether these can be understood as the coloniality of youth? Coloniality of youth is a way of naming youth-related challenges resulting from the effect and legacies of colonialism and similar Western hegemonic influences such as apartheid on the youth population of formerly colonised regions.

In the context of South Africa, coloniality of the youth enables understanding of why, for example, the country’s youth employment crisis is unique.

Systemic inequality in education drives youth employment crisis in South Africa

South Africa’s youth unemployment crisis is fundamentally driven by deep-rooted systemic inequality embedded in the structural legacy of colonialism and apartheid, one that manifested in the 1974 decree that Afrikaans be used as a medium of instruction in black secondary schools.

The decree was intended to extend the apartheid regime’s control not just over black people’s education but over their existence through cultural assimilation. Control over black people’s existence also meant placing limitations on what they can do and be as a race. It also meant control of labour.

In short, central to the 1974 decree was the agenda to ill-equip and disadvantageously position black youth for opportunities in relation to work and socio-economic and political life.

This pattern of control continues to date, though not in the form of a decree to make Afrikaans a medium of instruction in schools but in the very nature and structure of the school curriculum and pedagogical strategies that are overwhelmingly Eurocentric.

That is, the education young South Africans receive today basically transmits the culture, values and worldview of Europeans, including how to survive in Europe, not in (South) Africa.

It is an education that teaches the European mode of production, distribution and exchange of goods and services. This Eurocentric-African education continues to be a mechanism for reproducing black South African youth that are unfit to leverage the abundant opportunities in the country.

This type of education also occasions miseducation that constrains indigenous capabilities in young South Africans in ways that amount to the coloniality of youth. **Beyond coloniality: youth agency and the Ubuntu imperative**

Despite the constraints of coloniality of youth, South African youth must also be agentic in charting the course of their lives towards meaningful achievements.

The youth must begin to develop the capacity to bring about positive changes in their own communities and society by making the right decisions and taking right actions in the interest of the country.

They must realise that violence and other forms of risky behaviours, e.g., illicit substance abuse, will only worsen the coloniality of youth condition. In the spirit of the Ubuntu aphorism — a person is a person through other persons — which not only highlights the state’s responsibility towards youth development, but also personal efforts, the youth are expected to strive towards self-development and the development of the state. What the youth of the 1976 Soweto uprising had and expressed was agency and it made all the difference. Youth Month calls for agency on the part of the youth, while the state on its part must enact policies to dismantle the deep-rooted inequalities that drive the coloniality of youth in South Africa.

***By: Dr Paul K. Michael, Higher Education and Human Development Research Group, University of the Free State.**

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

Letter to the Editor

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



Pastor
Motsamai Kareli
Empowerment Ministries
International

The Laws of Strategic Leadership

Part One

Leadership is more than occupying a position of authority; it is the ability to influence people toward a desired future. Strategic leadership takes this a step further. It is the capacity to see beyond the present, anticipate opportunities and challenges, align people around a vision, and guide an organization toward sustainable success. Great leaders do not merely react to circumstances—they strategically position themselves and their organizations to thrive. Throughout history, successful leaders have understood and practiced certain timeless laws that govern strategic leadership. These laws are not optional; they are principles that consistently determine whether leaders succeed or fail.

1. The Law of Vision

Every strategic leader must have a clear vision of the future. Vision provides direction, purpose, and motivation. Without vision, organizations drift and eventually decline.

A leader must be able to answer three critical questions:

- Where are we now?
- Where are we going?
- How will we get there?

Vision transforms ordinary activities into meaningful pursuits and inspires people to commit themselves to a greater cause.

Key Principle: People do not follow plans; they follow vision.

2. The Law of Preparation

Strategic leaders understand that success is often determined long before the moment of opportunity arrives.

Preparation creates confidence and readiness. Leaders must continuously:

- Develop their skills.
- Train future leaders.
- Build systems and structures.
- Prepare for both opportunities and crises.

When preparation meets opportunity, progress becomes inevitable.

Key Principle: What you do before the opportunity arrives determines what happens when it does.

3. The Law of Priorities

Not everything that is urgent is important. Strategic leaders distinguish between activity and productivity.

They focus on:

- High-impact decisions.
- Long-term objectives.
- Core organizational values.
- Mission-critical activities.

Leaders who fail to prioritize become overwhelmed by distractions and lose strategic focus.

Key Principle: Strategic leaders do not major on minor things.

4. The Law of Influence

Leadership is influence. Position may grant authority, but influence earns followership.

Strategic leaders build influence through:

- Integrity.
- Competence.
- Consistency.
- Service.

The stronger a leader’s influence, the greater their ability to mobilize people toward a common vision.

Key Principle: People follow leaders they trust.

5. The Law of Adaptability

The environment is constantly changing. Markets change. Communities change. Technology changes. People change.

Strategic leaders remain flexible without compromising their values. They adjust methods while preserving their mission.

Organizations that refuse to adapt eventually become irrelevant. Key Principle: Flexibility in methods preserves effectiveness in mission.

Court Challenge Raises Questions Over SARS’ Power to Impose Tax Penalties

(Will Supreme Court Appeal refuse to answer these crucial questions in Ditsonea v CSARS)



A legal challenge before the courts has placed the spotlight on the powers of the South African Revenue Service (SARS) to impose understatement penalties on taxpayers, raising important questions about the limits of administrative power and the protection of taxpayer rights.

The dispute centres on whether SARS has the legal authority to investigate a taxpayer’s conduct, classify that conduct as “intentional tax evasion”, and impose penalties without a clear legislative foundation authorising such action.

The taxpayer argues that the formation of a SARS committee tasked with considering the conduct and imposing penalties was unlawful and outside the powers granted to SARS by tax legislation. According to the taxpayer, any decision arising from such a process should be reviewed and set aside.

The alternative argument is that, even if SARS had the power to establish such a committee, the process followed was unfair because the taxpayer was not given a proper opportunity to be heard before the decision was made.

At the heart of the matter is the relationship between two provisions of the Tax Administration Act (TAA): the section dealing with understatement penalties and the provision that criminalises conduct involving an intention to evade tax.

The taxpayer contends that the law does not clearly explain the difference between “intentional tax evasion” as a basis for an administrative penalty and conduct that amounts to a criminal tax offence. This, the taxpayer argues, creates uncertainty and raises concerns about whether SARS may be imposing administrative penalties for conduct that should instead be dealt with through criminal proceedings.

The argument is that public power must always be exercised within the boundaries of the law. If a government body acts without a clear legal authority, its actions may be declared invalid under the

constitutional principle of legality.

The taxpayer further claims that previous court decisions failed to resolve the central legal question: whether SARS had lawful authority to conduct the enquiry and impose the penalty. The failure to determine this issue, the taxpayer argues, leaves taxpayers and SARS without proper guidance on the interpretation of the law.

The matter also raises broader constitutional concerns. The taxpayer maintains that access to justice requires courts to determine important legal disputes rather than avoid difficult questions involving the exercise of public power.

The case is being pursued through an application asking the President of the Supreme Court of Appeal (in Ditsonea v CSARS) to reconsider a refusal of leave to appeal. The taxpayer argues that the matter involves a substantial point of law, affects many taxpayers, and requires clarity to prevent ongoing uncertainty in the administration of tax law.

SARS has opposed the application, arguing that the taxpayer’s case lacks sufficient prospects of success and that the dispute improperly focuses on the merits rather than the requirements for reconsideration.

The taxpayer rejects this argument, saying that the legality of SARS’ conduct is precisely the issue that must be examined. According to the taxpayer, the courts must determine whether SARS acted within the authority granted by Parliament.

Legal experts say the outcome of the matter could have significant consequences for the relationship between SARS and taxpayers, particularly regarding the balance between effective tax enforcement and the requirement that state institutions exercise their powers lawfully and fairly.

***Anonymous letter to the editor.**

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

Business

Markets and Indicators

Rand/Dollar	16.47	0.44%	▲
Rand/Pound	21.72	0.17%	▲
Rand/Euro	18.73	0.29%	▲
Platinum	1,594.41	2.64%	▲
Brent Crude	74.75	2.15%	▲
Gold	4,024.02	0.61%	▲
Ethereum	1,569.34	-2.94%	▼
Bitcoin	59,783.40	-1.97%	▼

Exclusive Interview:

“The Northern Cape’s Growth Story ... Is Just Beginning”

This week, *Journal News’ Bernell Simons* sat down with Northern Cape Premier Dr Zamani Saul to discuss the province’s bold economic vision and how R105.3 billion in investment commitments, nearly 20,000 projected jobs, renewable energy expansion and major infrastructure projects are positioning the Northern Cape as one of South Africa’s fastest-growing economic hubs.

Thank you, Premier, for the opportunity to sit down with us and discuss the key issues shaping the Northern Cape’s growth and development. To begin, the province recently hosted its inaugural Investment and Jobs Conference, attracting business leaders, investors and policymakers from across South Africa and beyond. Looking back, what would you regard as the conference’s biggest achievement?

Without question, the biggest achievement was securing investment commitments totalling R105.3 billion and unlocking the potential creation of nearly 19,800 jobs. But beyond the numbers, the conference fundamentally changed perceptions about the Northern Cape. It elevated the province onto the global investment map and renewed confidence among investors, businesses and communities.

What excites me even more is that the conference forged important partnerships. We are now working with Business Unity South Africa, the Department of Trade, Industry and Competition, and other stakeholders on a provincial industrialisation strategy. This will ensure that the investments we have secured become catalysts for even greater economic growth and job creation.

R105.3 billion is a remarkable figure. Many South Africans may struggle to comprehend the scale of that investment. Where exactly will this money be spent?

The investments span multiple sectors that are central to the Northern Cape’s economy and future growth.

We have significant renewable energy projects in the Pixley ka Seme and ZF Mgcawu districts. Mining investments are concentrated in the John Taolo Gaetsewe and Namakwa districts, while agriculture, agro-processing and fishing investments are also gaining momentum, particularly in Pixley ka Seme and Namakwa.

In addition, there are strategic projects such as the Kimberley Big Hole stabilisation project in Frances Baard. Companies such as Vedanta Zinc International, Kumba Iron Ore and South32 are making substantial commitments that will strengthen existing industries while opening new opportunities.

These investments are not isolated projects. Together, they form part of a broader vision to position the Northern Cape as South Africa’s new growth frontier. One of the most talked-about outcomes of the conference is the projected creation of nearly 19,800 jobs. How realistic is that target?

It is a very realistic target because these are not hypothetical figures. The investors themselves provided the employment projections linked to their investments. Importantly, many of these projects are already operational. Companies such as Kumba, Vedanta, South32 and Dune Foods are already creating jobs and stimulating economic activity.

We expect the full impact of these investments to be realised by the time we host our next Investment and Jobs Conference in 2028. We are also seeing momentum from projects such as the recently launched Envusa Koruson 2 energy cluster, which further strengthens our ability to meet and even exceed the employment targets we have set.

The Northern Cape has become synonymous with renewable energy investment. How important is this sector to the province’s future?

It is absolutely critical. The Northern Cape has some of the best solar and wind resources in the world.

Projects such as the Mulilo and Upington Energy Parks are not only supporting South Africa’s Just Energy Transition but are also creating jobs, attracting investment and laying the foundation for future industrial development. Renewable energy is no longer simply an environmental conversation. It is an economic opportunity, and the Northern Cape is ideally positioned to lead that transformation.

While attracting investment is important, many residents want to know how ordinary people benefit. What does success look like for communities?

Success means jobs. It means opportunities for young people. It means local businesses participating in economic growth. It means improved infrastructure and better services.

Economic growth must be inclusive. The purpose of attracting investment is not simply to increase num-

bers on a spreadsheet. It is to improve lives and create opportunities for our people.

Speaking of opportunities, the Premier’s Golf Day has become one of the province’s most successful fundraising events. How did this year’s event perform?

We are extremely encouraged by the support we continue to receive. The Premier’s Golf Day is now in its fourth year and continues to grow.

This year, we raised R10.6 million through the support of our sponsors and partners. Kalagadi Mangane Mines served as the title sponsor, while Standard Bank, several mining companies and members of the business community also contributed significantly.

What impact will those funds have?

Education remains one of the most powerful tools for changing lives. The Premier’s Bursary Fund currently supports more than 300 learners.

We are hopeful that the additional funding raised this year will allow us to expand that number and create opportunities for even more deserving young people across the province because investing in education is investing in the future of the Northern Cape.

Residents of Kimberley and surrounding areas have closely followed progress on the R2.5 billion Sol Plaatje bulk water infrastructure programme. What progress has been made?

Significant progress has been achieved. To date, more than R1 billion has been spent through the Budget Facility for Infrastructure programme. Extensive upgrades are underway at both the old and new Riverton Water Treatment Plants. These upgrades are improving water quality, increasing production capacity and reducing treatment losses.

Importantly, many residents will remember the days of frequent water shedding and recurring disruptions. We are now seeing far fewer interruptions than before, demonstrating that this investment is beginning to deliver tangible results.

Beyond infrastructure, has the project delivered economic benefits?

Absolutely. A total of 66 local emerging subcontractors have benefited through the programme, while 454 local labourers have been employed. Our target over the lifespan of the project is to create 1,000 local job opportunities.

This project is about more than pipes, pumps and treatment plants. It is about empowering local businesses, creating employment and ensuring communities benefit directly from public investment.

Finally, Premier, when you look at the Northern Cape today compared to a few years ago, what

gives you the greatest sense of optimism?

The confidence people are beginning to show in our province.

When investors commit more than R105 billion, when businesses choose to expand, when students receive bursaries, when infrastructure is upgraded and when jobs are created, it tells us that we are moving in the right direction.

There is still much work to be done, but I firmly believe that the Northern Cape’s best days lie ahead. We are building an economy that is more inclusive, more diversified and more resilient.

The Northern Cape is no longer simply a province of potential. It is a province of opportunity, progress and growth.

North West Youth Expo Pushes Skills Drive



By Bernell Simons

The North West Provincial Treasury has hosted a Youth Career Expo aimed at bridging the province’s skills gap and expanding opportunities for young people in both education and employment pathways.

Held under the theme “50 Years of Youth Employment: Advancing Financial Sustainability, Economic Inclusion and Service Delivery”, the expo brought together learners, university students and job seekers to explore career opportunities across the public and private sectors.

The event also formed part of the province’s commemoration of the 1976 youth uprising under the broader theme “Reset at 50: The Future Calls”, reflecting on the role of education in economic freedom and opportunity.

North West MEC for Finance Kenetswe Mosenogi said the initiative should become a regular platform to better understand and respond to the province’s skills shortages.

She said the Treasury, as the coordinating department responsible for budgeting and oversight, has a critical role to play in ensuring that government departments, municipalities and public entities are properly capacitated.

“It is important for us to do so as a department that is responsible for overseeing the implementation of the budget and supporting all other departments, including municipalities and public entities across the province,” said Mosenogi.

The MEC also pointed to concerns raised by the Auditor-General, noting that the province had spent more than R300 million on consultants in the previous financial year, funds she said could have been used to employ young graduates.

She said reducing reliance on external consultants would help create more job opportunities for young people and strengthen internal government capacity.

Mosenogi emphasised that education is about more than qualifications, describing it as a foundation for dignity, freedom and opportunity.

“The greatest tribute we can pay to the generation of 1976 is to ensure that the opportunities they fought for are used to build a better South Africa. That responsibility now rests with me and you,” she said.

She urged young people to actively shape their future by developing their skills and embracing innovation, saying the province needs a generation ready to participate in the economy.

The MEC also announced that the provincial treasury has signed a memorandum of agreement with North-West University to conduct a root cause analysis of all 22 municipalities in the province. The study will examine over-reliance on consultants and identify capacity gaps.

This will be followed by the development of an implementation plan and targeted capacity-building programmes for municipalities.

Mosenogi said the province has allocated R25 billion to basic education as part of its broader investment in human capital development.

She said the funding ensures access to teachers, learning materials and school nutrition programmes, particularly for learners from disadvantaged households.

“As we pursue inclusive economic growth and sustainable development, we will need skilled young people in areas such as municipal finance, infrastructure development, digital transformation, local economic development, agriculture and the green economy,” she said.

The MEC encouraged young people to take advantage of these opportunities, stressing that they are open to all who are willing to learn, upskill and participate in building the province’s future economy.

Cell C Puts Kimberley Operations Under the Microscope



By Gomolemo Winkel

Major South African mobile network operator, Cell C has conducted verification checks across Kimberley on Thursday as part of a nationwide drive to assess compliance, operational performance and customer service delivery.

The visit forms part of an ongoing programme in which senior executives travel across provinces to engage directly with employees, business partners and customers while evaluating how effectively the company’s services are being delivered on the ground.

Cell C Chief Officer for Sales, Distribution, Regions and Customer Care, Chris Lazarus, said the initiative is aimed at gaining first-hand insight into customer experiences and operational realities.

“We travel to our various provinces with our teams almost on a monthly basis. Over the last three weeks we have been in the Western Cape, KwaZulu-Natal and now the Northern Cape, specifically Kimberley,” said Lazarus.

He said the inspections involve intensive engagements over several days to assess what is working well, identify challenges and ensure that the company is meeting its commitments to customers.

Lazarus added that the visits allow management to engage directly with a wide range of customers, including businesses, informal traders and government institutions.

During the Kimberley visit, Cell C also engaged stakeholders in the education sector to explore op-

portunities around digital learning and improved connectivity, particularly as schools increasingly adopt electronic learning platforms.

“There is a growing need for devices and internet access as schools move from physical books to e-learning systems,” he said, adding that the company is working with public sector partners to support this transition.

He further emphasised that partnerships are central to Cell C’s operational model, with the company collaborating with government and other stakeholders rather than working in isolation.

The verification checks also focused on ensuring product visibility, service accessibility and overall customer experience across Cell C outlets in the region. Lazarus said the company has invested significantly in strengthening its network infrastructure and improving service quality over the past three years.

He added that customer feedback has been largely positive, particularly regarding pricing and value offerings.

“These ground visits help us maintain accountability and ensure we are not relying only on reports from offices, but seeing the situation as it is,” he said.

Lazarus said direct engagement with customers and staff provides an accurate picture of operational performance and helps executives quickly identify gaps.

“For us, it is important to be on the ground, speak to stakeholders, and get a real sense of whether things are working as they should,” he said.

The Rise of DJ CuppaDeep



By Bernell Simons

For DJ CuppaDeep, success was never a gift — it was built through years of sacrifice, hustle and an unwavering belief that his passion for music would one day change his life.

Born and raised in Welkom, Nhlanhla Earl Twala, known on stage as DJ CuppaDeep, has spent more than a decade carving out a name for himself in the local entertainment scene. Today, he is a familiar face behind the decks, but his journey began far from the spotlight.

A former learner at Badelia Primary School, Welkom Preparatory School and Unites Secondary School, Twala discovered his love for DJing in high school.

"I started DJing around Grade 10 and Grade 11. Private schools used to book me for matric dances, prom nights and year-end functions. Then there were block parties, and that's where everything really started taking off," he said.

But before recognition came, there was struggle. Twala recalls starting out as both a DJ and a bouncer at events — often working for free just to be in the room.

"I did all the work because I wanted to be seen and to learn," he said.

Those early sacrifices eventually opened doors to local residencies and paid gigs as his reputation slowly grew. His love for music, he says, was sparked by his late mother, who frequently bought CDs and built a home collection that shaped his taste.

"My mom used to buy a lot of CDs. I would borrow music from friends, burn discs and build my own collection," he said.

Now 32 and approaching his 33rd birthday on July 5, Twala's journey reflects resilience and adaptability. Outside of music, he has taken on multiple jobs over the years, including baking, waitering, bartending, computer repairs and even helping elderly residents with yard work.

"By day, I'm a baker. I fix computers and help older people with their yards. Then by night, I'm a DJ," he said.

The road has not been easy. He has faced transport challenges after late-night gigs, delayed payments and industry gatekeeping. Still, he has pushed forward with determination and discipline.

Twala credits several mentors for shaping his career, including DJ Uneek, DJ Sabotage and Kismet, while DJs such as DJ Chillies, Rayzor Minora, DJ Konopo and Guy Pianoz helped him gain exposure. However, he reserves special gratitude for his brother, DJ SANACRO.

"He played a huge role in making me the DJ I am today. He's a straight talker. If something wasn't right, he'd tell me to fix it and try again," Twala said.

Looking ahead, his ambitions go beyond music. He hopes to become a nightclub shareholder, invest in property, build an international DJ brand and launch a charity feeding underprivileged primary school learners.

Despite his goals, one milestone stands out. With earnings from DJing, he was able to buy a geyser for his family home — fulfilling a promise to his late mother.

"It was a struggle, but I finally made my mom proud," he said.

For DJ CuppaDeep, that moment captures everything: a journey driven by passion, perseverance and gratitude, from Welkom's block parties to a future still unfolding.

GET TO KNOW THE DJ

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FS Doctor Chases Miss SA Crown

By Katlego Mashwabi

A young doctor from the small Free State town of Hobhouse is taking her dreams to the national stage after securing a place in the official Miss South Africa 2026 Top 24.

At 27, Dr Palesa Van Rooyen is the province's sole representative in this year's competition and is determined to use the platform to champion children's health and nutrition.

Born and raised in Hobhouse, Van Rooyen currently serves communities in Hobhouse, Ladybrand and Bethlehem as a medical doctor. She describes being the only Free State contestant as both an honour and a responsibility.

"I am the only woman holding the mantle for this wonderful province I call home. What that feels like is a deep gratitude for how the Free State has shown up for me thus far and a serious sense of responsibility to carry this journey with integrity," she said.

"I hope other Free State women see my journey and feel encouraged to pursue their wildest dreams too."

Van Rooyen's pageantry journey began at the ACE Models agency in Bloemfontein, where she initially joined to build her self-confidence. Today, she finds herself among the country's Top 24 contestants and one step closer to the coveted Miss SA crown.

Her "Beauty with a Purpose" campaign will focus on underserved and often overlooked communities, particularly addressing challenges in child health and nutrition.

Passionate about improving children's lives, Van Rooyen says she hopes to specialise in paediatrics after her Miss SA journey. She is also looking forward to community outreach projects, believing that sustainable solutions are created by working alongside communities.

"The most important thing is to meet communities where they are, take their hand and walk with them towards solutions that will outlive my reign," she said.

As she prepares for the national pageant, Van Rooyen says she will carry with her the lessons of growing up in the Free State.

"I want every person who comes from a small, underserved and overlooked place to believe in the power of their

dreams. Hobhouse and the Free State at large have shaped who I am, and I am incredibly proud of that," she said.

The Miss South Africa organisation announced the Top 24 contestants on 20 June and opened public voting on 22 June across its digital platforms. The date of the Miss SA 2026 finale is yet to be announced.



PACOFs Throws Spotlight on Young Talent



By Katlego Mashwabi

The Performing Arts Centre of the Free State (PACOFs) has put young creatives centre stage, hosting a three-day series of workshops to commemorate Youth Month and empower emerging artists with practical tools to grow their careers.

The workshops brought together creatives, stakeholders and independent media houses to explore how the media can help artists gain exposure and unlock opportunities in the creative sector.

Acting Artistic Director Wits Lesenyehlo said the theatre and arts industry must be handed over to the youth, urging young people to use media platforms to amplify their voices and talents.

He reminded participants of the historic role media played in mobilising social movements such as the Soweto Uprisings and said the same power could be harnessed to transform the arts sector.

"Media and performing arts institutions can assist local artists to bridge gaps in the economy by creating policies that bring synergy in the sector," said Lesenyehlo.

He expressed concern over the long-standing neglect of the arts in the Free State, warning that valuable resources continue to go to waste. He also highlighted the need to activate vacant spaces at PACOFs to create more opportunities for artists and communities.

The final day of the workshops featured a dialogue focused on practical solutions for young creatives.

Lesedi FM content creator Thabang Morobane encouraged artists to refine their craft and understand how to package their work for radio and digital platforms.

"The rise of podcasts calls for artists to be more mindful of their content. Instead, they should intentionally use podcast platforms to create radio demos and build their profiles," he said.

Representatives from Mangaung Metro Municipality's Community Services Office also addressed participants on accessing municipal spaces for workshops and creative activities.

Lesedi FM broadcaster and Free State Music Association co-founder Nathi Kachela outlined the process of submitting music to radio stations and encouraged young people to seek mentorship opportunities, including shadowing media professionals.

Meanwhile, NYDA representative and artist Mhau Nhlapo urged young creatives to take advantage of agencies designed to support youth development and entrepreneurship.

"It saddens me to hear that PACOFs is no longer hosting plays due to a lack of funding," said Nhlapo, who also cautioned artists against failing to register their businesses and losing out on royalties and other benefits.

The workshops concluded with a clear message: young artists must seize available opportunities, professionalise their craft and work together to build a thriving creative industry in the Free State.

Nota accuses Sjava of hijacking 'The Trap Temptations' collaboration

"The Trap Temptations" has been welcomed by many fans as a long-awaited reunion between Ruff, Emtee, Sjava and Saudi, but not everyone is impressed.

Music executive and "Music Pulse" co-host Nhlamulo "Nota" Baloyi has shared his thoughts on the collaborative album, arguing that the project sounds more like a Sjava album than a balanced effort from all four artists.

Released on Youth Day, the album marks a reunion for the "African Trap Movement" collaborators, who rose to prominence during their time at "Ambitious Entertainment". The project sees the four artists reconnect years later after building successful solo careers of their own.

As part of "African Trap Movement", Ruff, Sjava, Emtee and Saudi became known for bringing a uniquely local flavour to trap music, mixing each of their street narratives, soulful melodies and personal storytelling in a way that helped define an era of South African hip hop.

While fans have praised the chemistry between the artists and the nostalgia the album brings, Baloyi believes the album lacks enough individuality from some of its contributors.

Speaking about the album on the podcast, Baloyi said it reminded him more of Teargas than a trap project.

"They are recreating the Teargas vibes by joining

up together. They sound like Teargas, I won't lie. It's like if Teargas did a trap album. Instead of 'The Trap Temptations', it should have been the Trap Teargas," he said.

He went on to suggest that the album relies too heavily on Sjava's familiar sound and creative direction.

"You don't hear Emtee adding something new. What's the difference between that album and Logan? Sjava's on it. It's the same sound, Ruff, same producer," Baloyi said.

According to Baloyi, the album does not do enough to separate itself from previous projects associated with Sjava and producer Ruff. He believes the formula feels too familiar, making it difficult for the collaboration to stand out as something entirely new.

His comments have sparked debate among fans online, especially as many listeners have been celebrating the reunion of four artists who played a major role in shaping South Africa's trap scene.

Ahead of the album's release, the group described the project as a reflection of both their growth and their longstanding brotherhood.

"This album represents our brotherhood, and we are also trying to give our people a picture of how much we have grown musically as a collective," Ruff previously said.

Sjava echoed a similar sentiment, saying the mu-



sic carries the weight of their individual journeys and experiences over the years.

Baloyi's criticism has divided fans, with some agreeing with the music executive while others continue to praise the project as one of the strongest local releases of the year, applauding the reunion of the former ATM collaborators. *IoL*

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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 Title Deed number T14775/2009 passed by Teboho Samuel Kgomo, Identity Number 7506067309087, and Dimakatso Alinah Kgomo (previously Khoel), Identity Number 8004050265085, Married in community of property to each other, in favour of Sizwe Nhlanhla Radebe, Identity Number 9202015200085 and Dianah Desire Radebe, Identity number 9408280117082, Married in community of property to each other, in respect of Erf 20018 Heidedal Extension 29 District Bloemfontein Province Free State In extent: 350 (Three Hundred and Fifty) Square Metres

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Dated at Bloemfontein this 24 day of June 2026.

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SA To Experience Kenny Lattimore for One Night Only

By Refilwe Mochoari

American Grammy-nominate R&B legend and superstar, Kenny Lattimore, makes his way back to South Africa for a magical one-night-only show in the summer.

Cape Town's longing to experience a Kenny Lattimore show is finally coming to fruition. The much-loved legend will give a special live performance for fans at Grand Arena, Grand West in Cape Town on Sunday 20 September, a crowd he has not performed in over a decade.

Boasting an incredible music catalogue the audience will be serenaded with hits such as 'For You', 'Never Too Busy', 'All My Tomorrows', 'When I Said I Do', 'Weekend', 'Stay On Your Mind' and many more.

Vertex Events artist liaison, Thato Mokoena, happily expressed that Lattimore is loved for his sing-along ballads that are always a favourite for the South African crowd.

"As an R&B fan-favourite, Kenny Lattimore is an exciting artist for us to bring back to South Africa for the Cape Town crowd.

"This is a crowd he has not performed for in a long while and as a team, we look forward to a show that will be one to remember, Mokoena said. Lattimore is no stranger to performing for

various and versatile South African audiences.

He is expected to bring his smooth, soulful voice to Cape Town's enjoyment.

With eight studio albums and two collaborative albums under his name, Kenny Lattimore offers an endless selection of timeless music.

Tickets are available for purchase on Webtickets - www.webtickets.co.za and at Pick'n Pay stores nationwide, priced from R990 to R1490.

Gates will open at 5PM on show day.



American superstar, Kenny Lattimore set to return SA. Picture: YouTube



HEALTH

Hair loss after menopause is common, but experts warn that waiting could make it worse

For many women, menopause brings a range of well-known symptoms, from hot flushes and night sweats to mood changes and sleep disturbances. But there is another common issue that often receives far less attention: hair loss.

Research published in the journal "Menopause" found that 52.2 per cent of postmenopausal women experience female-pattern hair loss, making it one of the most common changes women face after menopause.

Despite its prevalence, experts say it is frequently overlooked in medical consultations and often dismissed as a normal part of ageing.

Why menopause affects hair growth

Hormonal changes play a significant role in what happens to hair during and after menopause.

As oestrogen levels decline and hormone balances shift, hair follicles can gradually shrink. This process causes strands to become finer, shorter and less dense over time.

While some degree of thinning is expected with age, specialists warn that prolonged, untreated hair loss can eventually become difficult to reverse.

"When we say irreversible, we mean that the follicle has become so damaged or inactive that it can no longer reliably regenerate a healthy terminal hair on its own," says Dr Kashmal Kalan, medical director at Alvi Armani South Africa.

"Medical therapies may help stabilise surrounding hair at that stage, but they may not recover what has already been lost."

The challenge, according to experts, is that many women are reassured rather than thoroughly assessed when they first notice thinning hair.

Explanations such as stress, ageing or temporary hormonal fluctuations may delay further investigation, even when underlying medical issues are contributing to the problem.

More than a cosmetic concern

Hair loss is often viewed as an aesthetic issue,



but medical professionals say the causes can be far more complex.

Hormonal changes associated with menopause may be a factor, but hair thinning can also be linked to thyroid disorders, nutritional deficiencies, metabolic conditions and inflammatory processes.

Experts say these potential causes should not be ignored simply because the symptom appears on the scalp.

The emotional impact can also be significant.

Research has shown that female-pattern hair loss becomes increasingly common with age and often affects quality of life. The authors of the "Menopause" study noted that greater awareness and earlier intervention may improve well-being among affected women.

For many women, hair is closely linked to confidence and self-image. Visible thinning can affect how they feel in social settings, at work and in everyday interactions.

A condition that affects women differently

Although hair loss has long been associated with men, specialists say women often experience a very different pattern of thinning.

Rather than developing a receding hairline, women typically notice widening part lines, reduced vol-

ume and diffuse thinning across the crown.

Because these patterns differ, experts argue that assessment and treatment approaches should also be tailored accordingly.

"Applying male-based protocols to women can absolutely compromise outcomes," says Dr Kalan.

"Female hair restoration requires an understanding of female-specific patterns of loss, progression risk, and the long-term hormonal picture.

"Preservation of softness, natural density gradients, and age-appropriate framing are considerations with no real equivalent in the male framework."

The importance of early diagnosis

Dermatologists stress that the first step should always be identifying the cause of hair loss rather than rushing into treatment.

A comprehensive assessment may include blood tests and evaluations for hormonal imbalances, nutritional deficiencies or underlying health conditions that could be contributing to thinning hair.

"Not every patient is an immediate candidate for surgical restoration and recognising this is itself part of responsible practice," says Dr Kalan.

"Medical stabilisation, non-surgical therapies, and hormonal management in collaboration with relevant specialists all form part of the treatment landscape – guided by individual diagnosis, not assumption."

For women experiencing noticeable thinning during or after menopause, experts say the key message is simple: hair loss may be common, but it should not automatically be dismissed.

The sooner the cause is identified, the greater the chance of preserving existing hair and slowing further loss.

As awareness around menopause continues to grow, health professionals hope conversations about hair loss will become part of the discussion, too. lol

Sister Duo SAI HLE Step onto SA's Biggest Stage at Red Bull Symphonic 2026



By Refilwe Mochoori

Held at Montecasino in Johannesburg between 13 and 14 June, this year's edition of the Red Bull Symphonic Orchestra was blessed with the voices of sisters Siphosethu and Amahle Koom who lent their voices to Sun-El Musician's "Koyika" before a sold-out, nationally broadcast audience.

This performance marked SAI HLE's most significant appearance yet in their fast-rising career, with new music set to arrive in August.

SAI HLE performed alongside a full symphonic orchestra in front of two sold-out audiences and a national television broadcast.

They say this is the largest stage that they have performed on to date, saying that it was a defining moment in a career that they have been building quietly and deliberately toward exactly this kind of arrival.

This year's Red Bull Symphonic made history when two headliners, house pioneer Sun-El Musician and Durban powerhouse Dala Thukzen shared a single stage for the first time in the history of the global series under the banner Afro House, Our Home.

Night two streamed live on SABC 1, also making it the first Red Bull Symphonic ever to broadcast live on a national external broadcaster.

SAI HLE featured within that landmark production and delivered the vocals on Sun-El Musician's "Koyika."

A Breakout Moment, Years in the Making

For most audiences watching, the harp-led opening of "Koyika" was a first encounter with SAI HLE, but for the sisters, it was the culmination of a journey that began in church choirs around the Gauteng province.

The sisters have a six-month residency performing across Spain, and a steady run of credits that have made them one of the most quietly in-demand vocal acts in South Africa for the dance, house, and amapiano music scenes.

Born in Gqeberha and raised between the Eastern Cape and Gauteng, the sisters were singing harmonies before they were teenagers.

They were first coached by their mother, and their professional career launched in 2021.

Throughout the years they have lent their voices to tracks with Karyendasoul, BokkieUlt, Marcus Har-

vey, and podcast host MacG.

They performed as the sole musical act at a presidential event for President Cyril Ramaphosa which focused on women's rights.

In 2024 they signed an exclusive global deal with UK label Platoon, alongside their mentor Khuli Chana and manager Pheno Kgaffe of My Throne Group, positioning them to grow as Africa's sister duo on the world stage.

"Standing on that stage, with an orchestra behind us and the whole country watching, felt like every choir rehearsal and every late night finally meant something.

"We have always believed that from little, much can come. This was that belief made real. To everyone who found us through 'Koyika': welcome. There is so much more coming, the sisters said.

"SAI HLE has done the unglamorous work for years, the features, the choirs, the rooms that do not make headlines

"Red Bull Symphonic is the stage that matches the talent. What people saw on that broadcast is not the beginning. It is a duo arriving exactly on time," said Pheno Kgaffe Managing Director of My Throne Group.

SAI HLE follows the Symphonic performance with a new single in August, with further releases and a debut EP that is expected to come as the duo continues an international roadmap spanning Africa and Europe through 2026 and 2027.

Their current single, "UBUMNND," is out now across all platforms.

SAI HLE is a South African sister duo comprising Siphosethu and Amahle Koom, rooted in amapiano and afrotech and known for their blended vocals, songwriting, and arrangement.

Raised between the Eastern Cape and Gauteng on a foundation of church choirs and family, the sisters have built a reputation as one of the country's most sought-after vocal acts, with credits alongside Sun-El Musician, Karyendasoul, BokkieUlt, Marcus Harvey, and others.

In 2024 they signed an exclusive global deal with UK label Platoon. Managed by My Throne Group alongside mentor Khuli Chana, SAI HLE is building toward a global breakthrough with their debut EP and an international touring roadmap through 2026.

FASHION

Inside ISPO's Fashion & Textiles Hub

If you love fashion, sport, or simply want a glimpse into what you'll be wearing in the future, the Fashion & Textiles Hub at ISPO on 4-5 November 2026 is the place to be.

Across two inspiring days, this space will bring together fresh ideas, creative energy and the innovations shaping the next era of style, from trend forecasts and sustainability to inclusive design and cutting-edge materials. And it's not just conversations, expect standout moments including a live runway show and a special pop-up experience from designer Christopher Raeburn, bringing these ideas to life in a way you can see and feel.

What's next for fashion?

The experience kicks off by looking ahead.

An opening keynote explores the cultural shifts, lifestyle changes and consumer trends set to influence fashion up to 2030. In other words, it's your insider guide to what's coming next and why it matters for the way we all shop, dress and express ourselves.

Real conversations that matter

Sustainability is no longer just a buzzword; it's something we all care about when choosing what to wear.

A headline panel looks at how brands can make sustainability feel more real and relevant to every-



day consumers, while Paul Kerssens from United Repair Centre shares how repair and reuse are helping extend the life of our wardrobes.

Where style meets performance

Love activewear that looks as good as it performs? You're not alone.

Designer Christopher Raeburn showcases how creativity and circular design are transforming sportswear, while Ben Ewy from Carhartt reveals how heritage brands stay relevant by blending authenticity with innovation.

There's also a deeper dive into materials, with Marwa Zamaray from Eco Age, unpacking the hid-

den stories behind colour. From dyeing processes to environmental impact. It's a fascinating look at the choices behind the clothes we wear every day.

Fashion for everybody

Fashion is becoming more inclusive and that's a big focus on this stage.

With experts like Alice Sainsbury, sessions explore adaptive clothing, accessibility and designs that truly reflect real people. From sensory-conscious materials to women-focused products, it's all about making fashion work better for everyone.

A global view

Fashion doesn't stand still and neither does the world.

The Hub looks at how trends are influenced by different cultures and emerging markets, highlighting new ideas and opportunities from across the globe. It's a chance to see how style connects us all, while still celebrating individuality.

Experience it for yourself

If you're curious about where fashion is heading and want to be part of the journey ISPO's Fashion & Textiles Hub is your chance to explore it all up close.

Secure your expo ticket at ispo.com and to discover new ideas, get inspired and see the future of fashion in action.

National Youth Dialogue Inspires Action for South Africa's Future



By Katlego Mashwabi

One hundred delegates from all across South Africa gathered at O.R Tambo International Airport in Johannesburg from 13 to 15 June in a strive to move beyond dialogue to find practical solutions that can take South Africa to a place that involves the youth in 20% in decision-making processes.

The National Youth Dialogue convened under the leadership of President Cyril Ramaphosa and brought together activists, youth, entrepreneurs, community builders, and policy makers.

The dialogue was a consultative platform that was hosted to discuss solutions to challenges facing young people and to help shape the future of our nation.

It also served as a platform to develop a structured advisory council that will feed into the government departments, to create sustainable entrepreneurship and innovation hubs that will be accessible to young people across all communities.

The dialogue consisted of meaningful conversa-

tions around issues such as education, entrepreneurship, youth participation, economic transformation, and skills development.

Entrepreneur and youth development advocate, Dr Rito Madingana who was the Free State delegate, said the lack of meaningful youth representation in decision-making processes is not good.

"I am sincerely grateful to the organizers of the National Youth Dialogue and to partners who made this important engagement possible, particularly Kagiso Trust, for creating a platform where young people could meaningfully participate in shaping the future of the country. Such partnerships are essential in ensuring that youth voices are heard, valued, and transformed into action that advances development and economic inclusion" said Madingana.

The dialogue was graced by leaders and contributors from relevant platforms sectors committed to advancing youth development in the country, the Minister of Women, Youth, and Persons with Disabilities, and representatives from the National Youth Development Agency.

FOOD Recipes



Easy Grilled Pork Chops

PREPARE
1 hr 15 min

cook
10 minutes

Serve
4

Ingredients:

- 1/4 cup honey
- 2 tablespoons vegetable oil
- 1 tablespoon apple cider vinegar
- 1 teaspoon ground cumin
- 1/2 teaspoon red pepper flakes
- Eight 1/2-inch bone-in pork chops (about 3 ounces each)
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper

Method

1. Begin by making the marinade. In a small bowl, whisk together the honey, oil, vinegar, cumin and red pepper flakes. Easy, right?
2. Sprinkle both sides of the pork chops with salt and pepper and place in a re-sealable plastic bag with the marinade. Let rest on the counter for 1 hour. That's easy.
3. Heat a grill or grill pan over medium heat. Remove the pork chops from the bag and lightly sprinkle with salt and pepper. Place on the grill and cook until the pork chop releases from the grill, about 4 minutes. Flip and cook on the other side for another 3 minutes. If using a grill pan, be sure to do in batches so you don't steam the chops. And don't worry if you have neither; you can do this in a pan. See, easy!

SPORT



Maseko Mutes Bafana Bafana Bashers

Left winger vows national team will keep going as they defy critics to secure a historic knockout spot at the FIFA World Cup

By Gomolemo Winkel

Bafana Bafana's Thapelo Maseko expressed deep disbelief following his historic performance, stating that scoring the definitive goal felt completely like a dream.

After the solitary goal win over South Korea on Thursday morning, the fast-paced nifty winner extended his gratitude to his teammates and the passionate supporters who gave everything during the tense group matches.

He highlighted that global critics gave the squad a mere seven percent chance of advancing past the tournament group stage. Their historic progression becomes even more significant after defying the heavy odds stacked against the nation.

"Honestly, they said we have a 7% chance of getting out of the group and here we are. So we are thankful to everyone - supporters back home, South Africans. We keep going," Maseko said after the match.

Reflecting on the emotional journey, Maseko discussed how the squad navigated a series of challenging and stressful periods. Following their opening match defeat, the team faced heavy public criticism and became an easy target for viral social media memes.

Despite being widely written off, he emphasised that the players demonstrated incredible mental strength and true capability by reversing their fortunes. He concluded by thanking the passionate fans back home and telling them to celebrate the moment.

"We have been through a couple of rough patches you know. From the first game the media was bashing us, we were all over the media (and) the memes were trending, but this team showed that they are capable and they are strong."

They have some mentality in them," said the left winger, who is currently on loan from Mamelodi Sundowns to AEL Limassol in Cyprus.

The crucial turnaround culminated in Monterrey on Thursday midmorning when Bafana Bafana secured a place in the FIFA World Cup knockout stages for the first time ever.

Maseko scored the decisive second-half goal to defeat South Korea 1-0 and silence the global sceptics.

The historic victory ensured Hugo Broos' men ad-

vanced to the Round of 32 from Group A. South Africa completed a remarkable tournament comeback after initially suffering a disappointing opening match defeat against hosts Mexico.

Bafana Bafana will now face co-hosts Canada in Los Angeles on 28 June

2026, with hopes of extending their historic World Cup journey. A hard-fought draw against the Czech Republic previously kept South African hopes alive heading into the final match. South Korea threatened early when stand-in captain, Kim Min-jae, had a powerful header cleared off the line by Aubrey Modiba.

South Africa gradually settled into the contest and began creating major opportunities of their own.

Evidence Makgopa missed a golden chance after the South Korean goalkeeper parried a shot from Thalete Mbatha.

Tshepang Moremi delivered a dangerous cross into the penalty area during the tense sixty-third minute.

Maseko timed his run perfectly and fired a clinical finish inside the near post to secure the crucial points.

Goalkeeper, Ronwen Williams, and the resilient South African defence stood firm to preserve the narrow lead.

The vital victory sees South Africa finish second in



Match Day Hero ... Left winger Thapelo Maseko's solitary goal helped Bafana Bafana qualify for the FIFA World Cup knockout stages for the first time in history. Picture: Citizen

Group A behind undefeated table leaders, Mexico.

Netball Legends Nurture Local Talent



By Gomolemo Winkel

Former SPAR Proteas netball captain, Bongi Msomi, led a grassroots talent identification and skills clinic at Tiitsang High School in Bethlehem on Tuesday. The initiative, hosted by Telkom as part of its Stand Tall campaign, aimed to recognise and nurture promising young athletes in the Free State.

Aspiring players participated in intensive training sessions focused on improving their technical skills, game awareness, and teamwork.

The event provided local learners with valuable insight into development pathways that lead to higher levels of competition.

Tiitsang High School netball coach and educator, Nthabeleng Keele, emphasised that local learners possess exceptional talent but often lack the necessary exposure to realise their full potential.

"The talent is there. When you watch them play, you can see their technique and willingness to learn. They have the potential to go far. What they need is exposure and opportunities," Keele remarked.

She added that the sports clinic reinforced vital life skills that are critical for personal development both on and off the court.

"The visit gave learners a chance to see what is possible through sport while also building confidence and reinforcing the importance of discipline and teamwork."

This sports initiative forms part of a broader corporate strategy to modernise youth development by combining sport with education.

Beyond the netball court, the institution is one of four regional schools selected for a three-year coding and robotics programme.

Learners Keketso Mofokeng and Lethukuthula Mthabela explained that the digital programme has equipped them with essential technical and collaborative skills.

"We learned coding languages like Python, how to build websites and how important teamwork is. Even today, we are still using those skills and developing projects that can help our school."

Telkom Free State Area Manager, Refilwe Setloboko, stated that corporate investment remains essential to support children in underserved communities who face limited access to resources.

"Not every child has access to the same opportunities. That is why it is important for organisations like Telkom to invest in disadvantaged communities. There is incredible talent here, and our role is to help nurture and support it," Setloboko said.

Winners Clinch Championship Chalice

By Gomolemo Winkel

Winners FC have been crowned the Mangaung LFA Super League champions for the 2025/2026 season following a dominant performance in the positional play-offs at the Clive Solomon Stadium this past Sunday.

The local football club secured the prestigious title just two years after its formation in 2024.

Head coach, Xolisile Mbudlela, explained that the historic triumph represents the ultimate fulfilment of a long-term vision built on player discipline and grassroots development.

The team successfully bounced back from a disappointing fifth-place finish during the previous campaign.

"Many people wrote us off and did not expect us to challenge for the title, but we believed in ourselves and trusted the work we were doing. We used that disappointment as motivation to come back stronger," stated Mbudlela.

Preparations for the critical play-offs were heavily disrupted as the squad went three weeks without playing any competitive matches.

During this challenging period, Mbudlela was also retrenched from his formal employment, choosing to channel his energy entirely into mentoring the team.

"Our players went three weeks without playing a competitive match, while other teams were active. During that same period, I had been retrenched from my job after only three months of employment. Instead of allowing that setback to discourage me, I used that time to focus entirely on preparing the team" he told Journal News Network.

The Mangaung champions operated under severe resource constraints throughout the league season, frequently sharing a single training ball with their development sides.

Mbudlela praised his players for remaining steadfast and dedicated despite the lack of basic athletic equipment.

"We do not always have the resources that other clubs enjoy. There were times when we trained with only one ball, and that ball had to be shared with our development teams. Training equipment was limited, and we often had to maximise the little time and re-



sources we had available. Despite those difficulties, the players never complained. They remained committed, worked hard, and believed in the process.

"Winning this championship is proof that success is not always determined by resources, but by heart, commitment, sacrifice and belief," Mbudlela added.

A severe player injury during the final championship match served as the ultimate turning point for the squad on the pitch.

The misfortune galvanised the team to elevate their fighting spirit and secure the victory for their fallen teammate.

"From that moment, the determination and fighting spirit of the players was incredible. Every tackle, every run, every challenge was made with extra purpose. They made a decision among themselves that they were going to win the match for their injured teammate," Mbudlela said.

Mbudlela noted that rigorous tactical analysis of their opponents allowed Winners FC to neutralise disadvantages and execute their game plan effectively.

Moving forward, the club plans to focus heavily on refining their defensive organisation and finishing skills to retain their competitive edge.

"We faced an opponent who was very familiar with the ground and conditions. We knew that could give them an advantage, so we spent time gathering information and studying their style of play. As a result, we were able to prepare effectively, disrupt their strategy, and execute our own plan successfully," Mbudlela concluded.

John Comititis slams CRB as Mayo transfer dispute escalates



By Gomolemo Winkel

Cape Town City chairman John Comititis has confirmed to SABC Sport that the club has taken CR Belouizdad to FIFA over an outstanding payment relating to the transfer of striker Khanyisa

Mayo. The Algerian giants are already serving two FIFA-imposed transfer bans and now face further scrutiny amid claims they failed to honour the final instalment of Mayo's transfer fee.

The former Cape Town City forward joined CR Belouizdad two years ago before returning to the Premier Soccer League on loan with Kaizer Chiefs last season.

Speaking to the public broadcaster, a frustrated Comititis questioned how the club could negotiate player transactions while still defaulting on existing obligations.

"That is correct. I believe they have done a deal with Kaizer Chiefs but have not yet paid us our last instalment.

"The money was due in February. It's disappointing when clubs don't respect their transfer agreements when they sign them," Comititis said.

The dispute comes at a sensitive time for Mayo's

future with the striker expected to turn his loan spell at Chiefs into a permanent move from 1 July, although the latest developments could complicate matters.

SABC Sport recently reported that CR Belouizdad's newly elected president, Mohamed Arar, intended to review the futures of several players, with the club understood to be reluctant to sell assets while operating under FIFA sanctions that restrict their ability to register replacements.

Chiefs, meanwhile, are believed to be eager to retain Mayo, with new coach Fernando Da Cruz understood to view the striker as part of his plans for the upcoming campaign.

Comititis suggested the matter could become increasingly significant as CR Belouizdad look to navigate the transfer window.

"I'm sure when they need to acquire players in the coming transfer window, they will need to lift the ban. Let's see," he added. **SABC Sport**