

Journal NEWS

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Top Player left out of Banyana Banyana Squad

DA Leadership Race...



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The Democratic Alliance front runners for the party's leadership position. Picture: Cape Independent/News24/DM



Conference Countdown: Mangaung ANC Faces Leadership Test

...IT'S GAME ON

Who Will Fill the Party's Leadership Void?

DOE DESTROYING PUPIL'S FUTURE

FS Education department 'endorses' school's supposed vendetta against struggling grade 11 learner

By: Matshidiso Selebeleng

The future of 19-year-old Khanya Mashee, a Grade 11 learner at Bluegumbosch Secondary School in Phutaditjhaba, hangs in the bal-

ance following a decision by the Free State Department of Education that has left him out of school since the start of the 2026 academic year.

Mashee and his family claim that he has been unfairly denied his constitutional right to education after failing Grade 11 by just one percent, despite what they describe as consistent academic performance throughout the year.

According to the family, Mashee has not attended school since the beginning of the year while awaiting the outcome of an appeal against his re-

sults — a situation they say has caused severe distress, as he continues to miss out on schoolwork and classroom support.

Mashee's parents, Julia and Likotsi Mashee, say they feel helpless and are pleading for their son to be allowed to complete high school without further obstacles.

Julia Mashee alleges that when she collected her son's third-term report card, his class teacher — who also teaches him Sesotho Home Language — told her that Khanya would "never set foot in

Grade 12", despite his overall performance during the year.

She says she was shocked by the remark, adding that she had never previously been called to the school regarding misconduct or disciplinary issues.

Julia further alleges that the teacher referred to her son as part of a "copying gang", an issue she believed had already been resolved.

In 2024, Mashee was caught cheating during examinations. He signed an acknowledgment letter with the school and was **Continues on Page 3**



Real Talk Takes Centre Stage



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Woman granted bail after allegedly shooting and killing her neighbour's four-year-old son



A 38-year-old woman accused of shooting and killing her neighbour's four-year-old son appeared in the Themba Magistrates' Court on Wednesday and was granted bail of R5,000.

Tselane Lebogang Mautlu, from Chris Hanani in Hammanskraal, Gauteng, faces a charge of murder in connection with the death of Abokeng Minyuko.

According to the National Prosecuting Authority (NPA), the incident occurred on January 25, 2026 at around 9pm, while the child was playing in the street near Mautlu's residence.

"It is alleged that upon realising that the child had been injured, the accused took him to a nearby clinic, where he was declared dead on arrival," said NPA regional spokesperson Lumka Mahanjana.

"Thereafter, the accused drove to the police station and handed herself over to the police."

During the bail hearing, the State opposed Mautlu's release, citing the seriousness of the offence and the fact that she is known to State witnesses.

However, the magistrate ruled that it was in the interests of justice to release her on bail, subject to strict conditions.

Mautlu's bail conditions include relocating from Chris Hanani, reporting to the police station twice a week, and refraining from possessing or using a firearm.

"The matter has been postponed to April 15, 2026, for further investigations," Mahanjana added.

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MAP Bolsters Road Maintenance Fleet

The acquisition of three new TLB's marks a tangible shift toward responsive governance and efficient service delivery in Maluti-a-Phofung

By: Mpho Sekharume

In an effort to expedite the rehabilitation and construction of road infrastructure, Maluti-a-Phofung Local Municipality Executive Mayor, Malekula Melato, joined by top municipal executives, unveiled three brand-new Tractor-Loader-Backhoe (TLB) vehicles on 4 February 2024.

This significant investment in the municipality's "yellow fleet" is designed to ensure that road maintenance and development projects are executed both quickly and effectively across the region.

The unveiling served as the capstone to a productive four-day Service Delivery Planning Session held at the University of the Free State's QwaQwa campus. The gathering brought together key leadership to address the pressing developmental needs of the community and to refine the municipality's operational strategies.

During the event, Melato emphasised the administration's commitment to improving the lives of residents through consistent service delivery.

"I am here at 'Uniqwa' just as I had previously highlighted, we as the municipality want to do our utmost best to ensure that the people of Maluti-a-Phofung get access to the services rendered by the municipality," she stated.



Boosting Service Delivery...MAP mayor, Malekula Melato. Picture: MAP

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Melato further explained that the planning session allowed leadership to identify specific gaps in their current resources, particularly regarding heavy machinery.

"The main reason why we were here for the past four days was to come together and brainstorm ideas and devise plans on how the Maluti-a-Phofung Local Municipality can ensure that the community gains full access to the services rendered by the municipality.

"Some of the foremost services we are focused on providing effectively are water, electricity and fixing the roads.

Today while we were brainstorming, we realised that we have a shortage of a 'yellow fleet'.

"We have just purchased three TLB's that will help us deliver services to people effectively and in a swift manner," Melato added.

The ceremony was attended by a broad delegation of municipal leadership, including Council Speaker, Mandlenkosi Dlamini, and Council Whip, Moeketsi Lebasa.

They were joined by Municipal Manager, Advocate Motsaahae Mofokeng, various Members of the Mayoral Committee, ward councillors, and senior officials, all of whom signalled their support for the reinforced fleet as a vital step toward modernising the municipality's technical capacity.

MAP Restoring Service Delivery Capacity

Maluti-a-Phofung concludes landmark service delivery strategic planning session

By: Mpho Sekharume

In an effort to expedite the rehabilitation and construction of road infrastructure, Maluti-a-Phofung Local Municipality Executive Mayor, Malekula Melato, joined by top municipal executives, unveiled three brand-new Tractor-Loader-Backhoe (TLB) vehicles on 4 February 2024.

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MAP, Eskom Target Electricity Stability



By: Mpho Sekharume

One of the key focus points of the Maluti-a-Phofung Local Municipality's (MAP) Strategic Planning Session at the University of the Free State's (UFS) Qwaqwa Campus was the revitalisation of the region's energy sector, as adequately outlined by Eskom through an extensive presenta-

tion by energy parastatal Eskom.

At the forefront of the discussions was the Distribution Agency Agreement (DAA) signed in May 2024. The DAA is a strategic partnership designed to restore the municipality's technical and financial stability while ensuring the sustainable payment of the bulk electricity account.

Under this arrangement, MAP retains its distribu-

tion license, with Eskom acting as the official service delivery agent. This initiative is managed through a Joint Project Management team responsible for overseeing implementation, while keeping the financial management strictly regulated.

This long-term commitment is set for an initial eight-year period, with the potential to extend to 15 years based on the realisation of the Joint Imple-

mentation Plan.

Another critical part of the MAP and Eskom partnership is the professional development of municipal staff. Fifteen employees have already completed intensive training between September and December 2025, gaining essential technical, safety, and workplace readiness skills to serve as mechanics, supervisors, and technical officers.

These employees are scheduled to graduate in March 2026, making way for the next group of 15 staff members who will undergo training from February to May 2026. This arrangement ensures that while employees work within the project to gain expertise, they remain permanent staff of the municipality.

The financial impact of Eskom's intervention has already been substantial, with R20.3 million invested in improving local electricity supply.

Furthermore, Eskom has reversed R426 million in interest charges from December 2025 and January 2026 and has committed to waiving monthly interest charges of approximately R17 million through February 2029. These measures provide the municipality with significant fiscal breathing room to redirect resources toward other essential services.

Technical milestones achieved to date include the installation of smart meters in Kestell and Harismith, alongside the refurbishment of several key substations.

Other standout projects include the total rebuilding of the 6.6kV Bosbou line and the refurbishment of the Tseseng, Greenlands/Tshiambe, and also Witsieshoek substations.

Ongoing maintenance has also been completed at the SS1 substation. Looking ahead, maintenance is scheduled for the SS3, SS5, and SS8 substations in mid-February 2026, with onsite assessments of Harismith's infrastructure beginning on 9 February 2026.

Doe Destroying Pupil's Future



The Family of Khanya Mathe in Qwaqwa. Picture: Supplied

Continues from Page 1

required to repeat Grade 11 in 2025 after failing the grade in 2024.

According to the Equal Education Law Centre (EELC), an organisation that provides legal support where learners' rights are prejudiced, a learner who has already repeated a grade — or who would not benefit from repeating — may be progressed to the next grade with appropriate support.

Progression, the organisation explains, allows a learner who has not met the minimum requirements to move to the next grade, provided that tailored academic support is put in place.

The EELC further states that progressed learners must receive structured support, which may include classroom assistance with the curriculum and assessments, and that progression should not occur without such support.

The Mashee family says they have exhausted all avenues for assistance, including approaching the district office, but Khanya remains excluded from the schooling system.

They also dispute alleged inconsistencies in Khanya's attendance records.

According to Julia, her son's first-, second- and third-term reports indicate that he was absent twice in the first term, three times in the second term, and not absent at all in the third term.

However, the fourth-term report reflects nine days absent in the second term, 13 days in the third term, and 28 days in the fourth term — figures the

family says were used to justify his second consecutive failure of Grade 11.

The family appealed the results and requested a remark from the Department of Education, but the appeal was rejected.

In a letter dated 22 January 2026, written by school principal Ernest Mbhele and seen by Journal News, the school outlined reasons for rejecting the request.

"The learner does not meet the minimum pass rate required in Home Language. The school never received any complaint during the year regarding distasteful remarks from the teacher," the letter reads.

"The policy on progression does not permit the learner to be placed in the next grade. The learner does not attend school regularly."

Free State Department of Education spokesperson Howard Ndaba confirmed that the remark process had been completed and feedback provided to the family, although the family disputes the outcome.

"We strongly advise the learner to attend classes and continue learning," Ndaba said.

"He failed to achieve the required 40% in his November examinations and does not meet the minimum progression requirements as per the DBE 2025 Circular," Ndaba added that Khanya was absent for more than 20 days, and that full attendance records were available to his parents.

Justice After Five Years: Three Accused Sentenced in Northern Cape Murder Case



By Bernell Simons

Two individuals have been sentenced to life imprisonment while a third received five years in prison for the brutal murder of 71-year-old Upington businesswoman Judith Geldenhuys.

Geldenhuys, who owned the local Woolworths branch, was killed in her home on June 30, 2020.

Her daughter, Leanne Arnon, raised the alarm after being unable to reach her.

Geldenhuys was later discovered face down in her swimming pool inside a security complex, with her hands tied behind her back and jewellery missing.

Tumelo Mavlenter Sotho (44), Geldenhuys' gardener, and Nkosinathi Ntombela (39) were found guilty of murder, robbery with aggravating circumstances, and extortion. Martatjie Engelbrecht (36) was convicted as an accomplice in the robbery and murder but was acquitted of extortion.

Police investigations began after a local pawnshop

alerted authorities regarding a man who attempted to sell an expensive ring belonging to the victim. Ntombela had initially been released after Engelbrecht claimed the ring was hers, but investigators later confirmed it had been custom-designed for Geldenhuys, leading to the re-arrest of all three accused in May 2021.

During the trial, the court learned that Geldenhuys had been strangled with an electric cord, gagged with an apron, and thrown into the swimming pool.

Prosecutors stated that Sotho used the trust he had built with the victim through his work in the residential complex to help plan and execute the robbery.

All three accused remained in custody following their arrests, as the state successfully opposed bail.

The High Court in Upington has now sentenced Sotho and Ntombela to life imprisonment, while Engelbrecht received a five-year prison sentence for her role as an accomplice.

DA Leadership Race ... It's Game On

With two prominent contenders such as Geordin Hill-Lewis and Solly Msimanga, the Democratic Alliance finds itself in a tight, sticky spot.



DA leader John Steenhuisen. Picture: Cape Independent

By Abigail Visagie

Democratic Alliance (DA) leader John Steenhuisen took to the stage in eThekweni, KwaZulu-Natal, on 4 February to formally announce that he will not seek re-election at the end of his term in April — a move that has set off a high-stakes race for the party's top position.

With two prominent contenders emerging — Solly Msimanga and Geordin Hill-Lewis — the battle for leadership is shaping up to be fiercely competitive.

Hill-Lewis has risen steadily within both the party and government ranks. In 2011, at just 24, he became the youngest Member of Parliament in South Africa's history, marking an early milestone in his political career. He has served as Mayor of Cape Town since 2021.

During his tenure, Cape Town committed significant funding to infrastructure development, spending R10 billion last year and allocating R25 billion over the current term. Hill-Lewis introduced plans to mitigate load-shedding by procuring electricity from independent power producers and enabling residents to feed

excess solar power back into the grid.

Under his leadership, the city has reported growth in employment levels. While critics have suggested that tourism receives priority attention, the mayor has also placed emphasis on affordable housing. In 2025, he oversaw the deployment of additional Metro Police officers and advanced the expansion of the MyCiTi bus service to improve accessibility. Throughout this period, the city has maintained clean financial audits and sound reporting standards.

Beyond his parliamentary role, Hill-Lewis served as Deputy Provincial Leader of the DA in the Western Cape. He is widely regarded as a close ally of former DA leader Helen Zille, and comparisons have been drawn between his trajectory and Zille's time as both party leader and Cape Town mayor.

Meanwhile, Solly Msimanga stands as another formidable contender. He is currently the DA's Gauteng Provincial Leader and serves in the Gauteng Provincial Legislature. Msimanga previously acted as the party's spokesperson for Sports, Arts and Culture and Recreation in Gauteng, and has served on the Education and

Economic Development portfolios.

One of his most notable achievements was serving as Executive Mayor of the City of Tshwane for three years — a metro widely regarded as more politically diverse and socio-economically complex than Cape Town. According to the DA, Msimanga inherited a financially distressed municipality and turned a reported R2 billion deficit into a surplus within his first financial year as mayor.

The party further credits him with overseeing the construction of 40 RDP homes, removing 900 political appointees from the mayor's office, and launching an inner-city revitalisation programme aimed at restoring investor confidence. He also established the Tshwane Economic Development Agency, which reportedly attracted R1.5 billion in investment and contributed to the creation of approximately 1,850 jobs.

Both candidates bring distinct leadership styles and governance records to the table. As the DA prepares for its next chapter, the question remains whether executive experience at metro level will translate into the national leadership the party now seeks.

Conference Countdown: Mangaung ANC Faces Leadership Test

By Bernell Simons

The African National Congress (ANC) in Mangaung has officially set the stage for a high-stakes regional showdown, confirming that its 8th Regional Conference will take place from 13–15 March 2026.

The announcement was made by the Mangaung Regional Task Team (RTT) following its ordinary meeting on 4 February at the Kaizer Sebothelo Building in Bloemfontein. The decision comes after a proposal by the Regional Working Task Team (RWTT).

In a media statement issued yesterday, the RTT said final logistical details would be communicated to branches in due course to guide delegates.

Regional spokesperson Sabelo Pitso said the RTT adopted the RWTT report and confirmed the configuration of regional sub-committees, with a strong emphasis on organisational compliance ahead of the conference.

Branches have been instructed to conclude their Bi-Annual Branch General Meetings (BBGMs) within stipulated timelines and in line with ANC guidelines to ensure "credible and transparent" outcomes.

Pitso stressed that all members in good standing must be allowed full participation in branch processes.

The RTT also noted the gazetted outcomes of the Municipal Demarcation Board and committed to engaging party structures on the implications for the Mangaung region.

Echoing ANC Secretary-General Fikile Mbalula, the RTT warned against lobbying for national conference positions, calling instead for unity and discipline within party ranks.

"The RTT continues to work closely with provincial structures to ensure readiness for the upcoming conference," Pitso said.

Leadership race heats up

Behind the scenes, political manoeuvring is already under way.

Sources indicate that Pitso is expected to contest a leadership position, despite reported grassroots support for another candidate. At the same time, regional spokesperson Ncamile Nxangisa is said to be under pressure from party members to enter the race for the



top post, although she has not publicly declared her intentions.

Regional chairperson Lawrence Mathae is widely expected to seek a second term — and could return unopposed if no challengers emerge before the conference. Mathae, who also serves as Speaker of the Mangaung Metro Municipality, reportedly enjoys strong internal backing. Insiders say his campaign message will centre on unity, organisational renewal and improved service delivery as the ANC seeks to rebuild public confidence ahead of the 2026 Local Government Elections.

Allegations resurface

Mathae's anticipated re-election comes despite corruption allegations levelled against him last year alongside his wife, Free State Premier Maqueen Letsoha-Mathae.

Local businessman and New Beginnings CEO Patrick Phuti accused the couple of receiving substantial payments and luxury gifts. Phuti made the allegations public after his contract was terminated.

Both Mathae and the Premier have denied the claims, describing them as malicious and baseless.

A senior party source maintains that the allegations carry no organisational consequences, as no formal charges have been laid.

"The step-aside rule applies only to members who

have been formally charged or are appearing in court. In this case, neither the chairperson nor the premier meets that threshold," the source said.

The ANC's step-aside rule requires members facing criminal charges to voluntarily step aside from party and public duties to safeguard the integrity of the organisation.

Campaigning rumours dismissed

Provincial spokesperson Thabo Meeko has dismissed claims that internal campaigning has already begun.

"These are nothing but rumours spread by people seeking to distract the organisation. The ANC is focused on securing victory in the upcoming Local Government Elections and has not opened leadership campaigns," Meeko said.

However, information gathered by this publication suggests that campaign activity may already be spreading beyond Mangaung, with reports of similar mobilisation in Thabo Mofutsanyana and Lejweleputswa.

Regional chairpersons Thabo Mokoena and Xolile Toki are reportedly preparing to seek re-election at their respective conferences scheduled for November — setting the stage for a province-wide contest that could reshape the ANC's leadership landscape in the Free State.



PUBLIC NOTICE

INVITATION FOR COMMENTS OR INPUTS ON THE 2024/25 ANNUAL REPORT

In our efforts of deepening democracy and being a responsive, accountable, effective and efficient government, the Tokologo Local Municipality has published its 2024/25 Annual Report for comments or inputs.

A public notice is hereby given in terms of section 127 of the Local Government: Municipal Finance Management Act 56 of 2003 that the Tokologo Local Municipality noted the 2024/25 Annual Report at its council meeting on 30 January 2026.

Copies of the 2024/2025 Annual Report are available for at all Municipal Buildings, Libraries, Satellite Offices and on the Municipal website www.tokolologo.gov.za for comments and representation.

This written representation or submission may be addressed to the Municipal Manager, Mr. A.M. Sehloho, and must be hand delivered to the Office of the Municipal Manager by 20 February 2026 in order for the comments to be considered prior the finalisation of the Annual Report by end March 2026.

Any person who cannot and wishes to make a submission or representation in respect of the Annual Report may visit the Tokologo Local Municipality offices during office hours where a municipal official will be available to provide assistance by transcribing the comments or representation to be made.

Further enquiries can be directed to the following:

Manager: Performance, Ms. G. Hudson – Tel (053) 541 0014 or gail.tokolologo@gmail.com

Mr. MA Sehloho
MUNICIPAL MANAGER



Notice No.01

MUNICIPAL NOTICE NO: 01/2026

TOKOLOGO LOCAL MUNICIPALITY VALUATION ROLL FOR THE PERIOD 1 JULY 2026 TO 30 JUNE 2031

Notice is hereby given in terms of Section 49(1) (a)(i)(ii) read together with Section 78(2) of the Local Government Municipal Property Rates Act 2004 (Act No.6 of 2004), herein after referred to as the "Act", that the General Valuation Roll for the Financial years 2026 - 2031 is open for public inspection at the Municipal Offices as listed below from 9 February 2026 to 20 March 2026 during office hours. In addition the Valuation Roll is available on the Municipal website at www.tokolologm.gov.za

An invitation is hereby made in terms of Section 49 (1) (a) (ii), read with 78 (2) of the Act, that any owner of the property or other person who so desires should lodge an objection with the Municipal Manager in respect of any matter, including the category, reflected in or omitted from the valuation roll within the above mentioned period. Attention is specifically drawn to the fact that in terms of Section 50(2) of the Act an objection must be in relation to a specific individual property and not against the valuation roll as such. To be valid, your objection must state the specific reasons or factual grounds for your challenge.

Objections that only propose a change in the valuation amount without supporting reasons will not be considered by the Municipal Valuer. The forms for the lodging of objection are obtainable from the Municipal Offices as indicated below or Municipal website: www.tokolologm.gov.za

The completed objection forms must be returned by hand to the Municipal Offices, alternatively per email to the below email address.

CLOSING DATE FOR OBJECTIONS IS 15:30 ON FRIDAY 20 MARCH 2026. No late objections will be accepted.

Municipal Offices:

Tokolologo Boshof Offices
Tokologo Dealesville Offices
Tokologo Hertzogville Offices

Objections email address: valuation2026.tokolologo@gmail.com
For any queries please contact Vuyani Khweshiwe: khwesh@yahoo.com

Mr. MA Sehloho
MUNICIPAL MANAGER

Jankielsohn Secures Third Term, Sets Sights on ANC

Re-elected provincial leader vows to dismantle the ruling party's long-held grip on power



The Newly Democratic Alliance Free State leadership. Picture: DA Facebook

By Matshidiso Selebeleng

Re-elected for a third term, Democratic Alliance (DA) provincial leader Roy Jankielsohn has doubled down on his mission to break the African National Congress' long-entrenched hold on power, positioning his renewed mandate as a direct challenge to the ruling party's dominance in the province.

His re-election signals continuity in the DA's provincial leadership at a time when political tensions are intensifying, with Jankielsohn arguing that voter frustration with governance failures has created an opening to unseat the ANC in the upcoming 2026 local government elections and reshape the province's political landscape.

Jankielsohn was re-elected to his position uncontested during the party's provincial congress held over the weekend at Bloemfontein's City Hall.

Accepting his re-election, Jankielsohn launched a scathing attack on the ANC's leadership in the Free State, declaring the party "morally dead" and politically directionless.

"The ANC in the Free State has, for the past few years, been wandering around aimlessly, looking for a political grave," he said. "As a caring party, we have the responsibility of digging that grave and burying them at the local government elections."

Jankielsohn expressed confidence ahead of the polls, saying the DA in the Free State remains united, disciplined and strategically focused, describing internal debate as a strength rather than a weakness in a party positioning itself to govern.

He said the DA is steadily expanding its footprint

across the province by directly confronting failures in service delivery, governance and accountability that continue to affect communities under ANC-led administrations.

"The DA's growth in the Free State is rooted in our issue-driven approach at local level, where we build consensus around a shared vision of an open society, clean and transparent governance, reliable basic services, safer communities and attracting investment that creates real, sustainable jobs for our people," he said.

At the same congress, Werner Pretorius was elected Free State provincial chairperson, with Jafta Mokoena elected as his deputy and Mbali Mnaba joining the provincial leadership. David van Vuuren retained his position as the party's finance chairperson.

Meanwhile, DA federal leader John Steenhuisen, delivering the keynote address, said the party's objective in the Free State is to reduce the ANC's municipal majorities below 50% and position the DA as the largest party in those councils.

"Free State is a province of enormous potential, but realising that potential requires more than functional municipalities — it demands competition and viable political alternatives," Steenhuisen said.

With a consolidated provincial leadership, an emboldened campaign message and national backing, the DA is positioning the upcoming local government elections as a decisive battleground in the Free State, framing the contest as a referendum on ANC governance and a chance for voters to shift the balance of power in the province.

Tzaneng Residents Protest Prolonged Power Cuts



Tzaneng community protesting for electricity cut. Picture: Baagedi Sethora

By: Matshidiso Selebeleng

Residents of Tzaneng in the Northern Cape took to the streets over the weekend to protest prolonged electricity outages that, they say, now last for days at a time.

By Saturday, the community had gone four consecutive days without electricity and water, prompting residents to blockade roads with stones in a bid to draw attention to their plight.

Residents claim repeated attempts to contact their ward councillor have been unsuccessful. When they eventually managed to get hold of the councillor, they were allegedly told that Eskom employees had already knocked off for the day.

"We couldn't reach the councillor, and when we finally did, we were told that Eskom employees had probably knocked off since it was Saturday. But this electricity problem did not start today; it has been happening for a very long time, and there seems to be no one willing to help us," said resident Mosi-manegape Moagi.

He said the outages have had devastating consequences for households. "We are sitting in the dark, our food has gone bad, and no one is coming to our rescue. Even when we try to find out what the problem is, we are never given clear answers about when it will be fixed," Moagi added.

According to Moagi, the electricity cuts initially

followed the load-shedding schedule for the area before becoming increasingly erratic and prolonged. "The power would go off in the morning, come back later in the evening for about three hours, then switch off again and only return whenever," he said.

Residents said they are exhausted by what they describe as a constant struggle for basic service delivery from the municipality. They stressed that restoring electricity is critical for children to return to normal school hours.

Parents say learners have been sent home early since the start of the academic year due to the lack of electricity and water at schools. Julia Morolong, whose child attends Tselancho Intermediate School, said the situation has disrupted learning.

"The children leave in the morning and come back around 12:30 because there is no water and electricity. The only time they can stay a bit longer is when we take buckets of water to the school so they can drink, but we can't do that with electricity," Morolong said.

Residents also complained about confusion over responsibility for the power supply, saying technicians deployed to assist often claim they are limited in what they can do because the area receives electricity from Vryburg, despite being closer to Kuruman.

At the time of publication, the municipality had not responded to requests for comment.



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MATJHABENG REGISTERS CONCERNS FOR INTER



The Executive Council (EXCO) of the Free State Provincial Government, led by the Honourable Premier MaQueen Letsoha-Mathae, has embarked on a Social Compact Imbizo in the embattled Matjhabeng Local Municipality in the Lejweleputswa District.

Matjhabeng remains one of the key economic anchors of the Free State, with significant growth potential.

It has also been identified as a cardinal pillar of the province's energy sustainability programme.

However, the municipality continues to face a myriad of service delivery challenges, chief among them unemployment, water and sanitation issues.

Held at the Thabong Multipurpose Centre in Welkom, the Imbizo provided a strategic platform for

government to account to communities on progress made in improving service delivery across various towns within the municipality.

Importantly, the engagement also afforded residents an opportunity to voice concerns affecting their livelihoods.

EXCO commenced the day's programme with oversight visits to water treatment facilities within Matjhabeng.

This was followed by a robust community engagement session; questions and answers, aimed at ensuring government accountability.

Residents raised several critical issues, including inadequate housing, unemployment, environmental hazards, and persistent water shortages.



HAVE SPOKEN!



FREE STATE PROVINCE

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In response, government has invested a substantial R4.4 billion towards the construction and rehabilitation of the Matjhabeng drainage programme. This includes the installation of new pipelines, the servicing of pump stations, and the construction, maintenance, and upgrading of water treatment plants. Despite ongoing challenges, work to improve the quality of life for residents continues. Current interventions include:

- Rehabilitation of pipelines, pump stations, and water treatment plants
- Construction of over 100 housing units currently underway
- Removal and replacement of 16 asbestos roofs, with further work ongoing

- Allocation of hundreds of residential sites
- Rollout of extensive road infrastructure projects in various towns, including Henneman
- Implementation of a solar energy programme valued at over R40 billion

"We coordinate our work," said Premier Letsoha-Mathae, "through the District Development Model (DDM), which enables us to consolidate and expand resources across all three spheres of government. This model empowers us to address service delivery challenges more effectively and with speed. We are a government committed to swift action. Anyone who undermines this commitment will be removed, swiftly. We are here to say: this is how far we have gone—now let us engage."



Opinion

Adeyemi Aremu

North West University



Medicinal plants support men's health in South Africa: why this knowledge needs safekeeping

Men's sexual and reproductive health may be awkward to talk about, but there's a need to do so. For example, about one-sixth of all couples worldwide have difficulty conceiving children, and in half the cases the man's fertility is part of the problem. In South Africa, nearly 65% of men attending primary healthcare facilities report some level of erectile dysfunction, as do 57.4% of men in Nigeria.

Not only is there a cultural stigma around these issues, there aren't always enough healthcare professionals and services to help. Consequently, traditional medicine is not just an alternative to "western medicine", it's at the frontline in African countries rooted in ancient knowledge. It's also sustained by necessity.

However, this knowledge is at risk as societies and cultures change.

These traditions can be lost when there is no systematic documentation and cross-cultural analysis of their uses. They have equally been excluded from mainstream medical discourse. Preserving and integrating traditional medicinal practices is critical to safeguard cultural heritage. It also has the potential to unlock new medical treatments and care for people's overall wellbeing.

We are medicinal plant experts and recently researched the value of medicinal plants for men's health in South Africa.

We searched various scientific databases for published articles focusing on the use of medicinal plants for male health in South Africa from 1996 to 2023. We identified and analysed 51 eligible studies. We looked at similarities and differences in how the ethnic groups in South Africa treat these health issues, how widely certain plants are used, and the types of health conditions treated.

Our study found that traditional plant remedies reinforce cultural identity and address essential health needs in men. This is even more important where there is limited access to conventional healthcare.

However, this knowledge is at risk as societies and cultures change. These traditions can be lost when



there is no systematic documentation and cross-cultural analysis of their uses. They have equally been excluded from mainstream medical discourse.

We conclude from our findings that preserving and integrating traditional medicinal practices is critical to safeguard cultural heritage. And that the plants in question should be protected to preserve both biodiversity and cultural heritage.

Indigenous health knowledge

We recorded 337 plants used for male health in rural communities across seven South African provinces.

Erectile dysfunction was the most treated urogenital condition, with 133 plants; these plants were also deemed aphrodisiac. Over 250 medicinal plants were used for sexually transmitted infections such as gonorrhoea, HIV, chlamydia and genital warts. *Hypoxis hemerocallidea* (African potato), *Entada elephantina* (elephant's root) and *Carica papaya* (pawpaw) were the most common plants for managing health conditions affecting men.

African potato was used to treat erectile dysfunction, sexually transmitted infections, prostate enlargement and bladder disorders. Its potential has

been shown in a study of its effect on rats. There is a need for further validation studies to see if it could help men.

Some of the studies we reviewed suggest that other natural ingredients in the African potato could contribute to balance hormones and support reproductive function. It also contains compounds that fight germs and reduce inflammation. These indicate potential to help the body defend itself against infections, including sexually transmitted infections and urinary tract infections.

Traditionally, the corm is either boiled or ground into powder and mixed with water or milk to drink. In some practices, preparations are applied to the lower abdomen or groin area to relieve inflammation and improve circulation. Collectively, these bioactive components make African potato a potentially valuable natural remedy for male reproductive and urinary health.

In traditional settings elephant root and pawpaw are used to treat male reproductive conditions such as erectile dysfunction, infertility, prostate enlargement and sexually transmitted infections. Elephant root is valued for its roots, which contain flavo-

noids, tannins, phenolic compounds, triterpenoids, saponins and glycosides, according to the studies reviewed. These exert antimicrobial, anti-inflammatory, antioxidant and aphrodisiac properties. They support blood flow, hormonal regulation and infection control.

Traditionally, the roots of elephant root are harvested, dried and boiled to prepare a decoction (a concentrated liquid). It is then consumed to treat infections and improve sexual function. In some communities, the powdered root is mixed with water and taken as a tonic, or it's applied to the body surfaces to relieve inflammation and enhance circulation.

Pawpaw is rich in bioactive compounds such as papain, chymopapain, alkaloids, flavonoids, phenolic acids, tannins, saponins, β -sitosterol and vitamins.

They all contribute to improved circulation, reduced inflammation, immune enhancement and reproductive health. Pawpaw seeds and leaves are crushed or boiled to extract active compounds, and administered orally or applied externally to support reproductive health. They are also used to treat sexually transmitted infections.

Looking ahead

This research highlights the value of indigenous knowledge and its preservation. Since it is passed down orally, it can be lost over time. Assessing and documenting the usefulness of these plants will contribute towards preserving biodiversity and cultural heritage, and towards innovation.

Providing scientific validation and credibility for these herbal remedies could stimulate rural economy development and strengthen cultural identity. It could also pave the way for more inclusive and integrated healthcare.

It also aligns with the World Health Organization's Traditional Medicine Strategy (2025-2034). This encourages scientific validation and integration into healthcare systems.

By: Adeyemi Aremu – North West University, Makhotso Lekhoa – North West University and Mompoti Chakale – University of Mpumalanga

A school placement system that forces parents to fight has failed



Zandile Phiri, Acting Secretary General of the United Democratic Movement

The United Democratic Movement (UDM) is deeply concerned by the persistent school placement failures that continue to deny thousands of learners access to education as the 2026 academic year begins. Once again, school gates have opened while many children remain at home, uncertain of their future and deprived of their constitutional right to basic education.

These recurring crises are no longer administrative challenges. They represent a systemic failure of planning, coordination, and accountability within provincial education departments. Parents are forced to queue outside departmental offices, protest at school gates, and plead for placements that should have been finalised well before the first day of school. This situation is indefensible in a constitutional democracy where the right to basic education is immediately realisable.

The UDM is particularly alarmed by rising tensions at some schools, where desperate parents are being pitted against one another over limited spaces. The movement rejects any narrative that turns children into competitors based on nationality or origin. There is no competition between children. Every child living in South Africa has the right to basic education, and that right must never be undermined by discrimination or exclusion.

At the same time, the UDM recognises the deep frustration felt by South African parents whose children remain unplaced. That frustration is legitimate and understandable. However, it is wrong and dangerous to direct that anger at foreign learners, who are themselves children entitled to protection and dignity. The real source of this tension is the state's repeated failure to plan for school capacity, population growth, urban migration, and timely placement. When government fails to plan, communities are forced into conflict.

Poor infrastructure investment, weak enrolment forecasting, and delayed placement decisions have created conditions where fear, misinformation, and social division thrive. Online admission systems cannot compensate for the absence of classrooms, teachers, and new schools in high growth areas. Government cannot continue to hide behind technology while ignoring the physical realities on the ground.

The UDM rejects the normalisation of unplaced learners at the start of each academic year. This has become a predictable and recurring failure rather than an exception. It reflects deep structural weaknesses in education planning and exposes a lack of urgency in protecting one of the most fundamental rights enshrined in our Constitution.

The United Democratic Movement calls on national and provincial education authorities to act decisively. All unplaced learners must be accommodated without further delay. Placement criteria must be transparent and consistently applied. Clear communication with parents is essential to prevent confusion and conflict. In the medium to long term, government must accelerate investment in school infrastructure, improve learner population data, and ensure that placement processes are concluded before schools reopen.

Education is not a privilege to be fought over at school gates. It is a constitutional obligation of the state. As a member of the Government of National Unity, the United Democratic Movement remains committed to working constructively with all partners in government to ensure that every child is placed in a school without delay. However, cooperation does not mean silence in the face of failure. Where systems collapse and children are left behind, accountability must follow. Children must never pay the price for poor planning or administrative weakness.

The UDM will continue to engage within the GNU while firmly holding those in authority accountable for policies and practices that undermine the dignity, stability, and future of our children.

We are not disposable:

A message from the headset floor

Cape Town is now one of the most important "headset cities" in the world. We may not call it that in everyday conversation, but the figures are clear: the City of Cape Town has publicly celebrated a milestone of 90,000 people employed in Cape Town call centres, after the sector added more than 10,000 local jobs in a single year (March 2023 to March 2024). Nationally, the growth story is also real. South Africa's global business services sector created 20,518 jobs in 2024 and contributed \$328 million in export revenue, according to BPESA reporting. The dtic's Global Business Services incentive, effective from 1 January 2019, is explicitly designed to create employment through offshore servicing, with a specific emphasis on youth (18-34) and export revenue. BUT.... If this industry is a success story, why do so many workers experience it as a trap? Even CapeBPO admits the sector's growth has outpaced its human standards. Let me introduce you to 'Faieza Jacobs', 26 years old, single, Cape Flats mother working in call centres for the last 5 years. Like many, she knows how to calm an angry customer. She knows how to follow the script. She knows how to smile in her voice when she is tired. She knows what it feels like when a supervisor says, "Just improve your numbers." What Faieza also knows, even if nobody says it out loud, is this: If she breaks, the system will not stop. It will replace her. That is the truth of the call-centre economy in Cape Town. And it is time we spoke it plainly. The lie we are told: We are told: "At least you have a job." We are told: "Don't complain, the industry can leave." We are told: "This is global competition. This is how it works." But let's be honest. A job that keeps you tired, anxious, and scared to speak is not a gift. A job that cannot pay a living wage is not an opportunity. An industry that grows on fear is not development. It is an extraction. **Opinion by Faiez Jacobs**

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

Core Values



A church's core values are like the ballast in a ship. Although storms may buffet a vessel above the waterline, it is the weight of the ballast in the hull of the ship, beneath the waterline, that allows it to weather the storm and reach its destination safely. Likewise, when a church faces crisis, it is the shared values of the congregation—defined, taught, and embraced in times of calm—that sustain it through the storms of transition.

The values of our organizations reflect the importance we attach to something that serves as an influence and a guide for transitioning team members' behavior. Some churches have well-defined and explained core values, but many don't. If the "head" of an organization is its vision and the "heart" of an organization is its mission, the "soul" of an organization is its values. The values of an organization can often be described with the following metaphors:

1. **Glue:** Values hold an organization together. When there is a discrepancy, alignment and a solution can be settled by reviewing the core values.

2. **A foundation:** Values provide stability for growth. The ultimate groundwork is that of morality, as noted in Proverbs 16:11 (MSG): "Good leaders abhor wrongdoings of all kinds; sound leadership has a moral foundation."

3. **A yardstick:** Values set the standard for the transition team's behavior. We all know that what is measured is what gets attention, so clear expectations set the standard.

4. **A compass:** Values give direction and guidance. This can come in a variety of contexts, but values provide a clear path forward.

5. **A magnet:** Values attract good team members. Having the right people on the team is invaluable. How do you attract team members that promote the mission of the church? By having well-defined core values that they can identify with.

6. **An identity:** Values define and identify the team. This identity takes place when values align with behavior. Values without aligned behavior equals energy drain and ineffectiveness. Values with aligned behavior will produce energy bursts and effectiveness.

We all live by core values, whether we are aware of it or not. Organizational core values need to be identified and cultivated in the life of the church. These values not only guide the congregation and transitioning team's approach to ministry, but they also are key to attracting the right new leadership in times of transition. When core values are clearly expressed and practiced, they serve as a filter for identifying—and eliminating—candidates.

Anti-poverty programmes can change how people see the state and each other

When floodwaters washed away Woudou Oumar's home in northern Cameroon, he and his family lost not only shelter but hope. Then a government-supported cash transfer arrived. "The money transfer was a real boost for me and my family," he says, explaining how he rebuilt his house, bought seeds for farming, paid for his daughters' schooling, covered his son's medical care after the disaster, and became more hopeful.

Stories like Woudou's highlight how social transfers can shape more than incomes: they anchor people in their communities and influence how they experience and judge governmental support.

Governments and development partners around the world are now pouring unprecedented resources into social protection. From rural Bangladesh to urban Brazil, more than 120 low- and middle-income countries now provide some form of cash transfer to their poorest citizens. These programmes have succeeded in reducing poverty in both the short term and long term, improving education outcomes and promoting better health.

But what else are they doing and at what cost, or benefit, to social and political life?

Our new study reveals that social transfers are systematically reshaping how citizens relate to their governments and to one another. We reviewed nearly 90 empirical studies across six continents in a bid to establish causal effects of social transfers on outcomes beyond welfare and livelihoods. We found that these programmes influenced how people voted, how much they trusted institutions, whether they participated in civic life, and even how they felt about their neighbours.

The studies spanned Africa, Asia, Australia, Europe, North America and South America. The review included studies in 11 African countries—some in fragile and conflict-affected settings. Our findings identified consistent patterns alongside important contextual variation.

The effects weren't always what policymakers expected, and they depended heavily on programme design, recipient characteristics, and political context.

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The effects weren't always what policymakers expected, and they depended heavily on programme design, recipient characteristics, and political context. **Katrina Kosec**



Business

Markets and Indicators

Rand/Dollar	15.76	0.04%	▲
Rand/Pound	21.74	0.13%	▲
Rand/Euro	18.84	0.04%	▲
Platinum	1 979.76	-3.75%	▼
Brent Crude	69.53	2.96%	▲
Gold	5 312.15	-1.88%	▼
Etherium	2 797.76	-7.21%	▼
Bitcoin	84 011.35	-5.88%	▼

CENTLEC extends olive branch to illegal electricity users



By: Abigail Visagie

CENTLEC SOC Ltd has implemented a 60-day general amnesty on meter tampering, illegal electricity connections, and unauthorised meter relocations. This follows a council resolution taken by the Mangaung Metro Municipality, which approved the proposal submitted by the power utility and its board, a notion which approved early this year.

According to the power utility's spokesperson, Tseliso Leba, the amnesty initiative is integral to the utility's efforts to restore financial sustainability, protect electricity infrastructure, and enhance service delivery in the Mangaung area.

"Consumers who have engaged in meter tampering, illegal connections, or unauthorised shifting of meter boxes are encouraged to voluntarily come forward and

apply for the amnesty to normalise their status without facing immediate heavy fines or criminal charges," said Leba.

He says that affected consumers are required to complete a Declaration of Electricity Meter Tampering/Illegal Connection Form as well as a Request for Electricity Meter Normalisation Form.

"Added to that, applicants must also provide proof of home ownership where applicable, a quotation or fine imposed and a valid Identity Document," said Leba.

Leba says a five-day waiting period should be expected to assess the application, as the amnesty plans to address a significant portion of revenue loss due to non-technical losses as a result of illegal connections, meter tampering, and unauthorised meter shifts.

"These illegal connections, metering tampering and unauthorised meter shifts compromise the sustainabil-

ity of the electricity supply system, creating a strenuous addition on infrastructure.

"The amnesty is therefore designed as a clean-slate intervention aimed at reintegrating informal and low-income electricity users into the regulated system, while promoting fairness, compliance, and long-term system stability.

"Consumers who voluntarily disclose meter tampering or illegal connections during the amnesty period will qualify," Leba said.

Leba urges consumers to make use of this opportunity to regularise their electricity supply and contribute to a sustainable and reliable electricity network for all.

"For a full waiver of tampering fines and back-dated billing penalties pending final approval by the CENTLEC Board, please contact the following number 051 412 2621 anytime during office hours, he said.

Alarm bells for South Africans earning R25,000 a month

Financial pressure being felt by South Africans earning R25,000 or less a month after the festive season has set off serious alarm bells in the debt counselling industry.

As South Africa starts a new year, many homes are already feeling the pressure. Credit cards are maxed out, debit orders are piling up, and daily expenses are clashing with stagnant incomes.

This is the feedback from Christiaan Coetzee, CEO of FinFix, who said one of the most worrying trends is the growing dependence on payday loans among lower- to middle-income earners.

These loans, intended as short-term relief for emergencies, have quietly become a permanent feature in many household budgets.

What started as a small advance to pay for groceries, transport, or school costs often turns into a monthly obligation that chips away at already limited disposable income.

Coetzee noted that this shift has been very noticeable in 2026. He explained that consumers earning R25,000 or less are now the dominant users of payday loans.

"What's truly worrisome is that we seldom encounter a consumer seeking assistance with their debt who is burdened by only one payday loan," Coetzee said.

"We routinely see individuals grappling with three, even four, of these loans from different companies, often applied for on the very same day."

The appeal is easy to understand. Payday loans are marketed as fast, simple, and accessible, often requiring little more than proof of income and a bank account.

However, Coetzee explained that behind the speed lies a costly structure. Initiation fees, monthly service charges, compulsory credit life insurance, and interest all pile on quickly.

These costs are usually recovered through debit orders that run on or just after payday, leaving consumers with little breathing room.

Coetzee warned that once this pattern takes hold, it becomes extremely difficult to escape. "The devastating result is a credit profile scarred by an extensive borrowing history and a consumer utterly unable to cope," he said.

Many borrowers take out loans early in the month just to cover basic living expenses. When payday ar-



rives, the full amount plus fees is deducted, leaving them short again and forcing them to borrow anew.

In some cases, the situation becomes destructive. Coetzee noted that some consumers take time off work every month to move from lender to lender, securing new loans to replace the money that has just been deducted from their accounts.

The financial impact adds up far faster than many people realise. A consumer who borrows R3,000 from two different payday lenders each month receives R6,000 in cash.

However, the combined interest and fees can amount to around R1,326 per month. When debit orders run, R7,326 is taken from the bank account.

Because the consumer still needs the R6,000 to survive, the same loans are taken out again the following month. Over a year, this pattern results in nearly

R16,000 in fees and interest alone, while the original debt never actually decreases.

This revolving debt is leaving thousands of working South Africans with damaged credit records, stress, and fewer options when real emergencies arise.

Debt counsellors have stressed that short-term loans should only be considered after careful budgeting and a clear plan to repay without re-borrowing the next month. Coetzee and his peers have urged consumers to reduce borrowing amounts where possible, repay loans gradually instead of repeatedly replacing them, and consider structured short-term loans over three to six months rather than payday advances.

He added that comparing lenders, understanding total credit costs, and questioning whether a loan is truly affordable can make a meaningful difference. — **Business Tech**

NW Aims for SEZ Status to Power Industrial Park Revival



By: Lerato Mutlanyane

The launch of a comprehensive revitalization of North West's Special Economic Zone (SEZ) status in the Bojanala industrial land is at an advanced stage of coming into existence.

The MEC of the Department of Economic Development, Environment and Tourism Bitsa Lenkopane last week summoned the wildlife and economic sector to a high-profile level engagement for the SEZ designation programme.

The gathering was for the consultations of the multisector guiding the application of the proposed Bojanala SEZ.

Special economic zones are designated areas within a country aimed at promoting economic growth and attracting foreign investment.

They also feature specific regulatory measures, such as tax incentives and reduced tariffs, to create an appealing business environment.

According to Lenkopane the engagement brought together role players across the wildlife economy, which amongst others include Wildlife Ranching South Africa (WRSA), the Sustainable Use of Coalitions of Southern Africa (SUCO), SA HUNT, and the Parrot Breeders Association, among others.

He says their participation is to ensure that conservation, hunting, breeding, ranching, export, and beneficiation interests are represented in shaping the SEZ discussion.

He also said the department's vision is to revitalise three key industrial Bodirelo Industrial Site, Babellegi, and Ga-Rankuwa Industrial Parks.

Bitsa stressed that with the province's rich biodiversity, wildlife resources, and tourism-driven industrialization, the multisector consultations will present business opportunities for small-scale businesses to venture into the wildlife value chain and effectively deliver measurable returns on investment and tangible community development benefits.

Aspects of permission, regulation, and the decentralization of wildlife activities were raised as key concerns as the industry stakeholders urged for support on collaboration.

Lenkopane also welcomed the sector's frank inputs and noted that these issues guide the government in refining a realistic and enabling SEZ framework.

He affirmed that "there is no intention to impose a one-size-fits-all model, but rather to work with the industry."

"A long-term partnership between the two sectors will drive industrialization, job creation, and export growth.

"These engagements form a critical component of the consultations and technical processes are required to ensure that the SEZ application is credible, inclusive, and aligned with provincial and national development objectives.

"The path to an SEZ and a revitalized industrial park is a team effort. Its success depends on strong local support and attracting the right investors. NW DEDECT has the plan, the people, and the potential. Now, it solely relies on the built momentum," said Lenkopane.

Great news for people who bank with Capitec in SA

By: Abigail Visagie

Following a restructuring of its fees in 2025, Capitec's banking fees remain virtually unchanged in 2026, with new pricing taking effect from 1 March 2026.

The new fee structure introduced in 2025 is based on five key price points: R1, R2, R3, R6, and R10.

By simplifying over 30 price points into these clear tiers, Capitec moved to make its banking fees more transparent.

This continued in 2026, with the bank not increasing any of its fees for key transactions, including the monthly account fee, which remains R7.50 per month.

Capitec is South Africa's biggest bank by customer numbers, with the group recording over 25 million active clients in the last quarter of 2025.

The bank built its business in South Africa on the back of simplicity and ease, disrupting the traditional banking giants by offering only one account and fee structures that were simple, stable and extremely competitive.

While most of South Africa's major banks now offer competing accounts—often marketed as 'entry-level' and 'simplified'—that compete on pricing, Capitec carved a massive lead in the market.

Despite this lead, Capitec also experienced competitive pressure from newer entrants into the market, particularly from digital banks, where pricing structures could provide near-zero-fee banking.

This led to the pricing restructure from Capitec in 2025, and the fee freeze seen in 2026/

While most pricing remains unchanged, Capitec did flag a few alterations, including new fees, such as the Smart ID service fee of R10, which will apply soon as the bank rolls out these services.

There is also a new Entrepreneur Card, which can be issued in-branch at a cost of R70.

Regarding existing fee changes, the voucher fee is increasing from R2 to R3, and the balance enquiry fee on International Mastercard Machines is decreasing from R3 to R2.

Expanded services
Running counter to most legacy banks, which are downsizing branches, scaling back on ATMs, or going cashless, Capitec is expanding its services and networks.

The group recently told MyBroadband that it is planning a net increase in both branch footprint and ATM network in 2026, while also relocating some of its existing infrastructure to better serve shifting communities.

The bank is also one of nine participating in the Department of Home Affairs' new digital partnership model to expand smart ID applications to more bank branches nationwide.

Capitec has committed to rolling out Smart ID services to 100 branches by mid-2026 and to have 300 branches active at the end of 2026.

This marks the first time that Capitec customers will be able to use the group's branches for these services.

Capitec will charge a R10 Smart ID service fee on top of the standard R140 Smart ID service fee charged by the DHA.

The group previously outlined how the Smart ID process will work at its branches once they go live:

GET TO KNOW YOUR DJ

Where Deep House Meets the Soul



By Lerato Mutlanyane

Known for commanding main stages, events, and festivals, DJ Sabziro turns every set into a living, breathing moment. As the bass drops, the crowd pulses to his rich melodic and rhythmic soundscapes—smooth, warm, and undeniably captivating.

Pulling back the velvet rope on one of South Africa's sonic visionaries, we introduce Seabelo Kevin Tshehlo (35), better known as DJ Sabziro, a skilled weaver of sound who continues to shape the local music scene.

With an impressive 18 years in the game, Sabziro's seamless blends have become a signature, creating collective moments of release on the dancefloor. His sets effortlessly fuse melodic deep and soulful house, delivering music that feels both fresh and timeless.

Polished from a young age by industry heavyweights such as Stone Candi, Glen Star, and Lulo Café, Sabziro credits their guidance for his growth. "They saw potential in me and guided me to where I am today," he shared.

His résumé boasts residencies at Platinum Lounge and Sandy's Bar, with previous headline performances at Thoughts Lounge, Ekhayeni, and Rio Cocktail Lounge. Sabziro has also shared stages with some of the country's biggest names, including Black Coffee, Rocco Rodamaal, Viny Da Vinci, Lulo Café, and Christos, among others.

For Sabziro, success is not measured by streaming numbers, but by the moments he creates behind the decks. While he continues to build his presence nationally, his sights are firmly set on global recognition.

Now stepping into music production, Sabziro is ready to take his craft to new heights—this is only the beginning.

Catch DJ Sabziro live this Saturday at Sandy's Bar and Restaurant, Street Corner Braai, and Ekhayeni. Expect exclusive edits and a vibe that builds from sunset to sunrise.

Real Talk Takes Centre Stage

By Lerato Mutlanyane

In a world dominated by polished soundbites and scripted sincerity, South Africa is set to receive a refreshing dose of unfiltered conversation with the launch of Eintlek Let's Connect, premiering on 9 February 2026 on SABC 2. The new talk show brings together an unexpected yet dynamic duo — the straight-talking radio voice of RSG's Fran-Rico Lucas and seasoned television broadcaster Penny Lebyane — united by one mission: real, honest conversations.

The feel-good show dives into the heart of what South Africans are talking about, blending trending topics, uplifting and inspirational stories, and deep, meaningful discussions with heart-warming features that leave viewers smiling. With authentic voices and everyday stories at the centre, Eintlek Let's Connect promises relatable, engaging content — with a few exciting giveaways along the way.

Bloemfontein-born radio and television presenter Fran-Rico Lucas is no stranger to storytelling. Audiences may recognise him from SABC 2's 50/50, while radio listeners know his bold, familiar voice from RSG, where he tackles local issues and amplifies everyday experiences. His strength lies in creating genuine connections that make people feel heard.

"My journey has been shaped by movement, people, and storytelling," Lucas shared. "I was raised in a church-centred family, with a father who preached and a home rooted in music and community. That's where my love for communication began."

Alongside him is Penny Lebyane, a respected media powerhouse with decades of television experience. From live interviews to investigative reporting and heartfelt profiles, Lebyane brings depth, poise, and structure — expertly framing

conversations for the screen.

"Penny brings calm and experience, while I bring curiosity and warmth," Lucas said. "My role isn't to teach, but to create a safe space where people can be themselves. When people feel comfortable, real conversations follow."

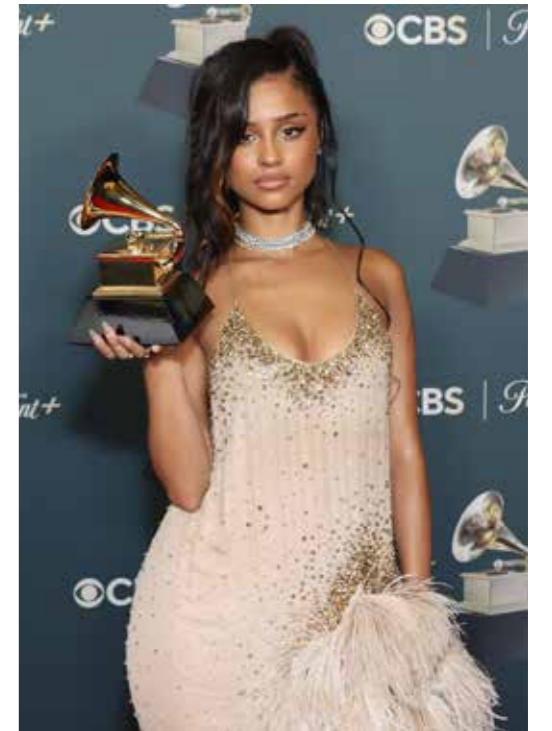
The show celebrates culture, creativity, food, and lived experience, allowing stories to unfold naturally without pressure or spectacle. Viewers can expect guest appearances from Gail Mabalane, Zakes Bantwini, Somizi Mhlongo, Buffalo Souljah, Siv Ngesi, and Jonathan Boynton-Lee, among others.

Reflecting on his journey, Lucas said growth does not mean losing oneself. "This step is about expanding while staying grounded. Radio taught me how to listen and respect people's stories — that foundation shapes everything I bring to television."

Don't miss the premiere of Eintlek Let's Connect on 9 February 2026, airing Monday to Friday from 16:30 to 17:30 on SABC 2.



Tyla Bags a Second Grammy



By Lerato Mutlanyane

South African singer Tyla has once again made history, clinching the Best African Music Performance award at the 68th Grammy Awards, marking her second consecutive win in the category.

The prestigious ceremony took place on Sunday, 1 February, at the Crypto.com Arena in Los Angeles, United States. Tyla, born Tyla Laura Seethal, won the award for her hit single Push 2 Start, beating strong contenders including Davido and Omah Lay's Lay With You, Eddy Kenzo and Mehran Matin's Hope & Love, and Ayra Starr and Wizkid's Gimme Dat.

This latest victory follows her historic 2024 Grammy win for Water, a breakthrough track that catapulted her onto the global stage and cemented her status as one of South Africa's most successful musical exports.

Since her first Grammy triumph, Tyla has continued to rack up international accolades. These include two Billboard Music Awards for Top Afrobeats Artist and Top Afrobeats Song for Water, the iHeartRadio World Artist of the Year award, and her second consecutive MTV Video Music Award, which she received in September last year.

Tyla's achievements have drawn praise from government officials, with Deputy Minister of Sport, Arts and Culture Mabe describing her as a powerful symbol of South African creativity and excellence.

"From township beginnings to international arenas, Tyla has carried our music and identity to the highest stages. She embodies resilience, creativity, and pride," Mabe said.

She added that Tyla's success demonstrates the global competitiveness of South African artists. "Her journey proves that South African artists are not only competitive, but capable of setting global trends."

Mabe emphasised that Tyla's accomplishments go beyond personal recognition. "Tyla's triumph is not just hers. It belongs to the millions of young South Africans who see in her story a reflection of their own potential," she said.

"It also belongs to every artist who works tirelessly, often without recognition, to carry our culture forward — and to a country that continues to prove that its creative spirit is indomitable."

As Tyla continues to dominate international stages, she remains a shining example of South African talent flying the nation's flag high on the world's biggest platforms.

After the Applause: Nosipho Pehlo Gets Honest



By Lerato Mutlanyane

Currently portraying Nolwandle Biyela on Showmax's hit series Outlaws, which airs new episodes every Monday, actress Nosipho Pehlo remains a familiar face on South African screens. In Season 2 of the show, she plays the wealthy farmer's wife, Nolwandle, married to Bandile Biyela. But while the series was filmed months ago, Pehlo has revealed that life off-screen tells a very different story.

In a candid Instagram post, the actress opened up about the harsh financial realities many performers face once the cameras stop rolling, reminding fans that visibility on television does not equal financial security.

"Just a gentle reminder: please don't assume someone is financially okay based on what you see on TV or how they show up in public," she wrote.

Pehlo explained that acting does not offer a stable income. "I'm a freelancer. Work comes in seasons, not monthly guarantees," she said.

"Projects you see today were often completed long before they aired, and whatever came from them has already gone into surviving the in-between. So seeing me now doesn't mean there's money still coming in."

The actress has previously spoken about her journey on Outlaws and the evolution of her character between the two seasons. In Season 1, Nolwandle is introduced as a fearful supporter, but in Season 2 she transforms into a woman who actively defends what she believes is hers, even at great personal risk.

Reflecting on her character's exit from the series, Pehlo said she processed the emotional impact privately after reading the script.

"When I realised Nolwandle would die, leaving

behind a husband and two children, I went through that grief on my own," she said, adding that she felt emotionally prepared by the time filming began.

She acknowledged the difficulty of accepting changes to the storyline but emphasised her respect for the writers' vision.

"As an actor, my role is to bring what's written to life. During the table read, the writer explained why Nolwandle's death had to happen, and his reasons were valid."

Despite her character's exit, Pehlo described the role as one of the most meaningful of her career. "Nolwandle was the perfect character for me. Her journey, strength, and emotions resonated deeply with me. I wouldn't trade her story for anything."

Nosipho Pehlo's story serves as a powerful reminder that a role does not define one's worth — and that true stability often begins when the applause fades and honest conversations begin.



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GIG Guide

Saturday 07 February 2026

The LAB 2.0 Sundowners

THE LAB

Bloemfontein

Saturday 07 February 2026

Lovers Walk

Vegas Club

Bloemfontein

Saturday 07 February 2026

Monate Saturday

Sechaba Lounge

Bloemfontein

Sunday 08 February 2026

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Heritage, Arts, Fashion and Culture at the Heart of NW Tourism

By Dennis Auckaly

Arts Meet Fashion-Mahikeng delivered a powerful celebration of African creativity, successfully transforming Cookes Lake, Mahikeng into a vibrant hub of fashion, art, and cultural expression.

The one-day multidisciplinary event brought together fashion designers, visual artists, performers, models, creatives, small businesses, and cultural stakeholders, highlighting the growing creative economy of the North West Province.

Attendees experienced a carefully curated program that blended fashion runway showcases, art exhibitions, music, food and lifestyle experiences, and creative networking opportunities.

At the center of the event was a fashion runway, which featured collections from emerging and established designers, celebrating African aesthetics, innovation, and storytelling through design. The runway was complemented by arts exhibitions, showcasing visual art, crafts, literature, and creative works that reflected both contemporary and traditional influences.

Arts Meet Fashion also provided a platform for local entrepreneurs and vendors, allowing small businesses and creatives to engage directly with audiences, promote their brands, and participate in the broader

creative value chain.

According to, acting CEO of the North West Park and Tourism Board Jonanathan Denga heritage tourism is no longer limited to monuments and museums.

He says today's travelers seek immersive experiences that bring history to life.

"The North West province, with its liberation history, indigenous knowledge systems, royal heritage and mining legacy, has the foundation to develop compelling heritage routes and storytelling experiences. Therefore events such as Arts Meet Fashion are one of the strongest drivers of tourism flows, said Denga.

Arts meet fashion – Mahikeng was made possible through the support and collaboration of key partners, including the North West Parks and Tourism Board, the North West Department of Arts, Culture, Sports & Recreation, the Mmabana Arts Culture and Sports Foundation and Mahikeng FM whose involvement played a critical role in the successful delivery of the program.

"While wildlife and nature-based tourism remain important, the future of competitive destinations lies in offering authentic cultural experiences that connect visitors to people, stories and creativity" said Denga.

He says the province wants to identify and grow signature festivals in different districts and the tourism board has encouraged travel beyond major urban centres and distribute tourism income more widely.

"By strategically investing in heritage, fashion, culture and the arts, the North West Tourism Board can position the province as a distinctive, experience-driven destination for both local and international travellers.

He added that through collaboration with communities, creatives, event organisers and the private sector, the province can position itself not only as a place to visit, but as a place to experience, learn and be inspired.



Self-care for singles: 5 ways to give pamper your skin

Don't let the month of love get you down

February is known as the month of love, and beyond the flowers and romantic gestures, it's also an opportunity to reconnect with yourself.

Self-love isn't only about grand declarations or picture-perfect solo dates; it's built quietly through habits that make you feel comfortable, confident and at ease.

We spoke to Su-Marie Annandale, Clere brand manager, for simple ways to turn everyday skincare into an act of self-love this February.

1. Start with comfort; confidence follows
Dry, tight or uncomfortable skin is more than a physical irritation; it can chip away at confidence. Studies consistently show skin comfort influences mood and self-perception, particularly among women who experience dryness as a daily concern.

Prioritising deep, long-lasting hydration helps restore the skin barrier, improving not only how skin looks but also how it feels throughout the day. When skin is comfortable, confidence tends to follow naturally.

2. Simplify your routine to stay consistent
Self-care shouldn't feel like another item on a to-do list. Research shows people are far more likely to stick to routines that are simple and intuitive.

Choosing body care products that deliver many benefits in one step — nourishment, hydration and skin-loving ingredients — makes it easier to care for your skin consistently, even on the busiest days. Consistency, not complexity, is what delivers real results.

3. Nourish your skin with ingredients that work
February is the perfect time to check what you're putting on your skin. Ingredients such as oils and vitamins play a key role in maintaining softness, elasticity and an even-looking tone.

Formulations enriched with nourishing oils and vitamins help support healthy-looking skin, especially when used daily after bathing, when skin is most receptive to moisture. It's a small



It's important to check what you're putting on your skin. Ingredients such as oils and vitamins play a key role in maintaining softness, elasticity and an even-looking tone. Picture: 123RF / rido

habit that delivers long-term benefits.

4. Make your nightly routine a moment of self-care

Night skincare is more than maintenance; it's a moment to slow down. Applying body lotion or cream before bed helps lock in moisture overnight while also creating a calming ritual that signals rest and reset.

"Skincare is deeply personal. It's often one of the few moments in the day where women pause and do something purely for themselves," said Annandale. "When skincare combines comfort, nourishment and ease of use, it becomes part of a healthy self-love routine rather than a chore."

5. Choose skincare that supports your confidence

Confidence doesn't come from perfection; it comes from feeling good in your own skin. Using products that are deeply moisturising and designed for everyday use helps build trust in your routine and in yourself.

Ranges such as Clere Gly-Co-Oil® Enriched Lotions & Crèmes, enriched with Black Castor Oil and Vitamin B3, are designed to deliver long-lasting hydration while supporting smooth, healthy-looking skin, a reminder that effective skincare doesn't need to be complicated or indulgent to feel empowering.

This February, let self-love show up in small, consistent ways. Caring for your skin is not about chasing flawless results, but about creating comfort, confidence and moments of care that last far beyond the month of love. **Times Live**

HEALTH

Free Vaccine Quietly Changing the Future of South African Girls



South Africa's Department of Health has initiated a nationwide HPV vaccination programme, aiming to protect girls aged 9 and older from cervical cancer, with over 3.6 million girls already vaccinated. Picture: Supplied

The national Department of Health has embarked on a country-wide Human Papilloma Virus (HPV) vaccination drive targeting girls aged 9 and older, in a bid to combat cervical cancer.

Introduced in 2024, more than 3.6 million girls, mostly from public schools, have been vaccinated. The department said the programme has since been expanded to girls from private schools.

HPV is a common sexually transmitted infection usually spread through skin-to-skin contact during sex.

While most infections have no symptoms, many are cleared by the immune system within two years.

In most cases, the immune system clears HPV from the body. Persistent infections with high-risk HPV, however, can cause abnormal cells to develop, which can go on to become cancer.

Why is matters

In South Africa, nearly 3,000 women die each year from cervical cancer-related com-

plications while more than 5,700 cases are reported annually.

Cervical cancer ranks as the fourth most common cancer among women worldwide. It is the second most common cancer among South African women aged 15–44 and the leading cause of cancer-related death in this age group.

More than 95% of cases are caused by HPV. Almost all sexually active people will be infected with HPV at some point in their lives, usually without symptoms.

Clinical and Managed Care Executive at Bonitas, Dr Themba Hadebe, explained that HPV infects cells in the cervix where in some cases, the virus can persist.

He said two screening tests that also help with HPV detection are pap smears and an HPV test.

"It is recommended that between the ages of 21 and 65, women should have a pap smear every two years and, from the age of 30 onwards, a pap smear and HPV test should be done every five years," he said. **!OL**



Food Recipes

Sticky Braai Pork Ribs



These pork loin ribs are made for the braai – smoky, juicy and glazed until finger-licking good. They're simple to prepare but feel indulgent, especially when served with bold, crunchy sides. A great option for relaxed entertaining where the fire does most of the work.

Ingredients

- 1 kg Woolworths Sweet & Sticky Pork Loin Ribs
- To serve:
- 4 sweetcorn cobs
- 3 mixed peppers
- 80 g Woolworths Medium Fat Butter with Garlic & Herbs
- 250 g Woolworths Deli-Style Potato Salad
- 160 g Woolworths Crunchy Asian-Style Slaw
- 250 g Woolworths Smoky Four-Bean Salad

Method

1. Light a braai fire or preheat the oven grill. Cook the spare ribs according to package instructions for 15–18 minutes, or until caramelised and tender. Turn the ribs occasionally and baste frequently with the marinade.

2. Lightly brush the sweetcorn and peppers with oil and braai or grill until charred. Transfer to a serving dish and place knobs of garlic and herb butter on the hot sweetcorn.

3. Rest the ribs for 10 minutes before slicing and serving with the sides.

Cook's note: Baste the ribs little and often towards the end of the cooking time for maximum stickiness without burning.

TASTE

FASHION

Celebs bring the glamour for a 'Symphony of Style'

Cape Town's social calendar is officially in full swing as the 164th edition of the World Sports Betting Cape Town Met bursts onto the scene. Hosted at the iconic Hollywoodbets Kenilworth Racecourse, with Table Mountain's breathtaking silhouette setting the scene, the event once again cemented its place as one of the city's most anticipated lifestyle, fashion and sporting events.

And this year's theme, "Symphony of Style", delivered exactly what it promised: a dazzling celebration of couture, culture, celebrity glamour and racing excellence.

More than just a horse race, the Cape Town Met is a tradition steeped in history and prestige. Since its inception in 1883, the event has evolved into a spectacle where the worlds of sport, fashion and entertainment collide – and 2026 has proven no different.

With a staggering R5 million purse up for grabs, racing fans have their eyes locked on trainer Justin Snaith, a three-time Met winner, who is aiming for a fourth consecutive victory with defending champion Eight on Eighteen.

But beyond the track, the Met remains a magnet for high-profile personalities, stylish tastemakers and media favourites, who arrive ready to serve looks, pose for cameras and soak up the energy of one of the most iconic

days on the South African social scene.

Fashion takes centre stage

In true Met style, this year's "Symphony of Style" theme inspired racegoers to push boundaries with bold, artistic expressions. From avant-garde couture to classic elegance, the fashion stakes felt just as thrilling as the races themselves.

Beloved media personality, Jeannie D, turned heads in a white mini dress with striking black seam detailing, paired with chic Dior pumps and an oversized hat that screamed timeless sophistication.

Despite confessing she's allergic to horses, the media personality told "Independent Media Lifestyle":

"This year's theme feels like a perfect melody of fashion, sport and beautiful people – my kind of day!"

Another standout was Carissa Cupido, who interpreted the theme in a vivid explosion of Dark Avant-Garde meets Modern Noir. Her look blended experimental high-fashion structure with polished classic elegance – proof that Cape Town's style set understands the assignment.

Cupido also revealed she had a wardrobe malfunction ahead of the day, but like any seasoned fashion girl, she had a plan – and her final look came together beautifully, setting the tone for the bold, statement-making outfits seen throughout the event.

Across the lawns, impeccable tailoring, vibrant hues, dramatic headpieces and daring designs dominated, proving once again that South Africans know exactly how to master the art of the race-day look. **!OL**



Sport



Early Exit for Chiefs in Nedbank Cup



Kaizer Chiefs' title defence came to an end at the first hurdle after they were beaten 2-1 by Stellenbosch at the Cape Town Stadium in the Nedbank Cup round of 32 on Wednesday, February 4.

First-half goals from Ibraheem Jabaar and Devin Titus did the damage for Gavin Hunt's side before Flavio Silva pulled one back in the second half to give the Glamour Boys hope.

The Maroons honoured the memory of Jeandre Gaffoor, who passed away at the age of 20 on February 1, just one day after featuring for their DStv Diski Challenge team against Magesi.

Stellies were hoping for a cup tonic following back-to-back defeats against CR Belouizdad in Africa's second-tier club competition, while Amakhosi looked to keep the momentum going after winning their opening four games in the new year.

An action-packed first half brought early chances for both teams, with Gaston Sirino shooting wide in the second minute before Chumani Butsaka and Flavio Silva failed to hit the target with their respective headers.

The hosts were presented with a golden chance to break the deadlock on 10 minutes when Silva caught Thabo Moloisane with a raised boot inside the box and Jabaar kept his composure on an emotional evening to convert the resulting penalty.

Cedric Kaze and Khalil Ben Youssef's side almost found a quick response, but Sage Stephens stood firm to deny Mduzuzi Shabalala, who found himself one-on-one with the goalkeeper in the 17th minute.

However, the Cape Winelands outfit struck again five minutes later and there was little Brandon Petersen could do as Titus pounced on a loose ball outside the area before unleashing a screamer that flew into the top left corner of the net.

Shabalala had another sniff at goal on 35 minutes after latching onto the ball inside the box, only to be repelled by the out-stretched leg of Stephens.

The visitors were given a lifeline 11 minutes into the second half when Mosa Lebusa handled inside the area to concede a penalty which was tucked home by Silva.

Stellies nearly their two-goal cushion on 65 minutes as Langelihle Phili looked to make an immediate impact off the bench, but Petersen pulled off a superb save to keep the Soweto giants in the contest.

Chiefs pushed for an equaliser in the closing stages as the Maroons dropped deeper and deeper, although the closest the came was a shot from Thulani Mabaso that flashed inches over the crossbar in the 87th minute.

Stellenbosch (2) 2 (Jabaar 10' PEN, Titus 22')

Kaizer Chiefs (0) 1 (Silva 56' PEN)

Stellenbosch: S. Stephens, M. Lebusa, E. Kazie, T. Moloisane (H. Stanic 15'), A. Tiwani, W. Jooste, I. Jabaar, M. Mthiyane, C. Butsaka, D. Titus, W. Makhubu.

Kaizer Chiefs: B. Petersen, P. Mako (G. Lilepo 46'), I. Miguel, A. McCarthy, G. Msimango, T. Monyane, T. Mabase, S. Ndlovu (L. Maboe 46'), M. Shabalala (M. Vila-kazi 67'), G. Sirino (P. Mmodi 75'), F. Silva.

- *PSI.co.za*

Top Player left out of Banyana Squad

Banyana Banyana coach Dr Desiree Ellis has unveiled a 38-player squad for an Alignment camp that will run through the COSAFA Women's Championship and into the Women's Africa Cup of Nations (WAFCON).

The camp begins on Friday, 13 February 2026, as the African champions prepare for a crucial year on the international stage.

The COSAFA Women's Championship will be staged in Polokwane from 18 February to 1 March 2026, while the WAFCON takes place in Morocco from 17 March to 3 April 2026. International-based players are expected to join the camp on 25 February, coinciding with the FIFA window.

The draw for COSAFA placed Banyana Banyana in Group A, alongside Malawi, Lesotho, and Angola. Ellis's squad will train together throughout the regional tournament before being trimmed ahead of WAFCON, with the camp continuing seamlessly across both competitions.

One of the biggest talking points is the omission of Leandra Smeda, who recently walked away with the Hollywoodbets Super League Player of the Season and Top Goal Scorer awards.

The TS Galaxy Queens forward was the standout performer at the awards ceremony in Johannesburg on 1 February 2026, where she scooped two major accolades. Despite her stellar form, she has not been included in the provisional squad, sparking debate among fans and analysts.

Other Hollywoodbets award winners, however, were rewarded with national team call-ups. Bonolo Mokoma of JVV, who claimed both Young Player of the Year and Players' Player of the Year, earned her place after a breakout season in which she net-

ted 18 goals.

Dineo Magagula, crowned Goalkeeper of the Year, also made the cut, while Karabo Dhlamini and Jessica Wade, winners of the newly introduced Defender of the Season and Midfielder of the Season awards respectively, were included.

Full Squad List
Goalkeepers: Kaylin

Swart, Andile Dlamini, Dineo Magagula, and Casey Gordon

Defenders: Fikile Magama, Asanda Hadebe, Bambanani Mbane, Karabo Dhlamini, Shakira O'Malley, Sinegugu Zondi, Yolanda Nduli, Antonia Mponya, Lonathemba Mhlongo, Unathi Simayile, Khutso Pila, Sibahle Maneli, and Lebogang Ramalepe

Midfielders: Gabriel Salgado, Sbona-konke Mzobe, Gugu Dhlamini, Sibulele Holweni, Zoe October, Thorisho Mphelo, Bongeka Gamede, Jessica Wade, Linda Motlhalo, Nonhlanhla Mthandeni, Refiloe Jane, Amogelang Motau, Regina Mogolola, Bongive Thusi, and Isabella Ludwig

Forwards: Noxolo Cesane, Hildah Magaia, Thembi Kgatlana, Nthabiseng Majiya, Bonolo Mokoma, and Thato Mofola

- *SuperSport.com*



Tshepo Tshite smashes SA 3 000m short track record



Middle-distance runner Tshepo Tshite spectacularly opened his 2026 season on Tuesday night, breaking the South African 3,000m short track record at the Czech Indoor Gala in Ostrava.

Tshite took second place in the 15-lap race in 7:38.17, eclipsing the previous national record of 7:39.55 set by Elroy Gelant in Belgium in February 2014. He finished just 0.12 behind Portuguese athlete Isaac Nader, who won the race in 7:38.05.

The 29-year-old South African now holds four national records, having already set SA marks in the 1500m indoor (3:35.06) and 1500m outdoor (3:31.35) events, as well as the indoor mile (3:54.10).

World indoor champion Prudence Sekgodiso, the only other South African competing at the Czech Indoor Gala, finished seventh in the women's 800m contest in 2:04.26. Nigist Getachew of Ethiopia secured victory in 1:59.98.

"Congratulations to Tshepo, his coaches and support team! It's a great start for him so early in the season," said Athletics SA's Acting President, John Mathane. - *EWN*

African basketball to grow beyond the court

The Basketball Africa League (BAL) says its Future Pros programme is helping grow African basketball by training young professionals, not just players, in countries including South Africa.

Speaking at a BAL Future Pros season 6 media roundtable in Sandton yesterday, BAL director of social responsibility and player programmes Marie-Laurence Archambault said the programme was created because the league needed strong local skills to operate.

"When the league started, we were importing many services to run it. We realised we needed local people to make this league sustainable."

Now in its third year, the Future Pros programme places young Africans inside BAL and NBA Africa offices, where they work across departments, such as operations, branding, and community programmes.

Archambault said the programme is not about

guaranteed jobs, but about growth and access. "The goal is not for everyone to be hired. The goal is to help them grow as professionals and understand what opportunities exist after the programme."

BAL ambassador and former NBA champion Ian Mahinmi said the programme helped change how people see basketball. "It opens your eyes to the business side of the game. You start to understand branding, licensing and how many jobs exist beyond playing."

The current Future Pros group includes participants from Kenya, Egypt, Senegal and South Africa.

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"It opens your eyes to the business side of the game. You start to understand branding, licensing and how many jobs exist beyond playing."

The current Future Pros group includes participants from Kenya, Egypt, Senegal, and South Africa. - *Caxton news*

Blitzboks seek redemption in Perth

Captain Siviwe Soyizwapi says the Blitzboks aim to execute better at this weekend's Perth Sevens.

The eight teams contesting the SVNS series are at it again and for the Springbok Sevens team, the weekend cannot arrive any sooner.

According to Siviwe Soyizwapi, who leads the Blitzboks into battle at HBF Park in the fourth tournament of the 2025-26 series, they are eager to redeem themselves after some uncharacteristic errors tripped them up last weekend in Singapore.

That was quite a let-down for the team who conquered all in Cape Town in December and they had to take a hard inward look at themselves, the captain admitted before posing with his opposing counterparts at the traditional captains photo, this time at the scenic Scarborough beach in Perth.

"It was a tough weekend in Singapore, so coming here and out to the local beach for the captains' photo does perk you up, especially on a beautiful day such as today," Soyizwapi said before turning his attention to the weekend's action again.

"We know how much potential we have as a group,



so making silly errors is frustrating. We don't mind the odd bad call that comes our way, that will happen but dropping a ball or making a bad pass or missing a tackle, those things are on us and no one else can be blamed for that."

What will make the weekend's action more compelling to watch for the pundits will be the change in tactics from the various teams as many faced off last weekend as well.

The Blitzboks will again face Spain and Fiji, with Argentina their only "new" opponent in Pool A. Where they outplayed the Spanish for a 21-14 win, they lost to Fiji in extra-time after scores were level (19-19) at the end of normal time and for Soyizwapi, it will be a matter of expecting the expected, but to execute

better.

"The teams know each other by now and tactically each one will be well aware of what the others bring to the game," he said. "We still have some things up our sleeve, but so will the other teams, so we need to be strategic and better in our execution in order to be successful."

Some good attention to detail went into their training session and Soyizwapi is confident that they will come out on top.

They will have time to clear the heads on Thursday, when the players have the day to themselves.

"We will have a day off tomorrow and that down time will come in handy as we could go sightseeing a bit, but the mindset is pretty much on fixing what went wrong last time around. We messed up, so we need to fix that ourselves."

Soyizwapi will play in his 62nd World Series tournament and will equal the tally of Blitzboks coach, Phillip Snyman. Branco du Preez remains the most experienced Springbok Sevens player, with 85 tournament appearances. - *SA Rugby Mag*

Chippa Confirm Nwabali Exit



Chippa United have parted ways with Nigeria international goalkeeper Stanley Nwabali by mutual consent, the club confirmed on Thursday.

The move was not an unexpected one with the 29-year-old having made clear his intentions to leave in the past, but the timing outside the transfer window means he is not a free agent.

That is unless the deal was struck inside the January window and has only been communicated now, something that Chippa did not make clear in their statement.

"Chippa United FC confirms that Stanley Nwabali has formally submitted a request to depart the

club," the Betway Premiership club said.

"After careful consideration, the club has agreed to grant his release. We would like to thank Stanley for the years of service, commitment and professionalism he has shown during his time at Chippa United.

"His contribution to the club will always be appreciated. The club wishes Stanley every success in the next chapter of his career and all future endeavours."

Nwabali joined Chippa in 2022 and his exploits with the club led to a call-up to the Super Eagles side, where he entrenched himself as the number one at successive Africa Cup of Nations finals.

Chippa caused some controversy back home when they made it clear they were supporting Nwabali, and Nigeria, in the semi-final against South Africa in the 2023 edition of the continental finals, something that did not go down well with all fans.

Nwabali made 12 appearances this season and 76 in all for the club.

Chippa has also used Dumisani Msibi and Elson Sithole in goal this campaign. - *Flashscore.co.za*