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MAAPE DEPARTS WITH DIGNITY

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MATJHABENG UNVEILS MASSIVE ECONOMIC REVIVAL PLAN

...Municipality targets billions in new developments, hotels and infrastructure projects as leaders push to restore investor confidence

By Matshidiso Selebeleng

The embattled Matjhabeng Local Municipality is positioning itself for a major economic revival, with more than R40 billion in investments secured since 2022 and fresh multi-billion-rand projects expected to reshape the region's economy and infrastructure.

Executive Mayor Thanduxolo Khalipa said the municipality is intensifying efforts to attract investors, create jobs, and rebuild confidence in Matjhabeng as a competitive destination for business and development.

"As part of these efforts, the municipality will host an Investment Summit in July 2026, bringing together government, business leaders, investors, development agencies, and strategic partners to explore economic opportunities within Matjhabeng," said Khalipa when briefing the media

on Sunday. The summit is expected to showcase opportunities in mining, agriculture, infrastructure development, tourism, and industrial expansion, while also promoting investment-ready projects across the municipality. According to Khalipa, the initiative aims to stimulate economic growth, support small businesses, create employment, and restore investor confidence in the municipality. He stressed that partnerships between government, business, and communities remain critical to unlocking inclusive growth and improving living

conditions for residents. Among the municipality's key priorities is the revival of the Liberty Centre, a once-popular shopping complex whose decline left many residents frustrated. Khalipa revealed that investors have already expressed interest in redeveloping the site, with a proposed investment of R250 million expected to transform the area. "They have already informed us that they want to invest an amount of R250 million, and if everything goes well, construction will start between September and October," he said. **Continues on Page 2**

Nigerian Busted for Illegal Trading

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Matjhabeng Unveils Massive Economic Revival Plan



Matjhabeng Municipality Executive Mayor, Thanduxolo Khalipha. Pictures: Baagedi Sethora

Continues from Page 1

The mayor added that developers have already presented plans that could significantly change the economic landscape of Matjhabeng.

"In the next two weeks, we will be interacting with organisations dealing with hotels and urging them to come and build hotels here in Matjhabeng," Khalipha said.

Another major development being considered is a R1.2 billion mixed-use investment near the former Vista University site, focused on student accommodation and retail infrastructure.

"It's not only student accommodation, but also a mall and several other developments that they are going to build on that piece of land," the mayor said.

Khalipha appealed to investors to continue backing the municipality's recovery plans and called for stability within local government structures.

"We are aware that there are people who want to destabilise this municipality," he said.

He accused certain individuals of attempting to disrupt the administration for personal gain.

"What they want to do in this municipality is loot, which is what they have been doing in the past. So we are people who are disturbing them," Khalipha added.

Despite ongoing political and financial challenges, the municipality believes the planned investments could mark the beginning of a major turnaround for Matjhabeng's economy and infrastructure.

State Accords Fitting Farewell for Maape

Special provincial funeral Category 1 declared for the former North West Premier

By Refilwe Mochoari

It is all systems go for the state funeral of former North West Premier, ANC stalwart, and anti-apartheid activist, Kaobitsa Abel 'Bushy' Maape, who will be laid to rest in his hometown of Vryburg tomorrow. Maape passed away last Saturday, 16 May 2026, at the Life Brenthurst Hospital in Johannesburg at the age of 68.

President Cyril Ramaphosa has declared a Special Provincial Funeral Category 1 for the late veteran, which includes ceremonial honours designated by the South African Police Service (SAPS).

President Ramaphosa also ordered that all national flags be flown at half-mast across the province from today until tomorrow in honour of the former premier.

Tributes continue to pour in for the ANC activist, who has been described as a hero, a father figure,



xxx. Pictures: Supplied

and praised as one of the most dignified leaders to emerge from the North West for steering the province through challenging periods of governance. Family, friends, and comrades from across the

country gathered in Mahikeng on Thursday for a memorial service to celebrate a life defined by struggle and service and are now moving to Vryburg to pay their final respects. Maape served as the seventh

Premier of the North West Province and was a member of the North West Provincial Legislature from September 2021 until May 2024.

"Comrade Maape was recruited into the underground structures of the ANC during the apartheid era and became an operative within the liberation movement," ANC national spokesperson Mahlangu Bhengu-Motsiri said.

"His passion for education remained a defining feature of his life as he believed deeply in the power of learning to liberate and uplift communities," she added.

Bhengu-Motsiri added that Maape dedicated his life to the struggle for liberation, the advancement of South Africans, and community empowerment through education, serving the ruling party with discipline, humility, and unwavering commitment.

In 1986, Maape was imprisoned on Robben Island for his political activities, where he continued to pursue education and intellectual development despite the harsh conditions of apartheid confinement.

"Following his release, he served the people in various leadership roles, including as chairperson of the ANC in the Kgalagadi region and as a senior government official in the province," Bhengu-Motsiri noted.

The late premier is survived by his family, comrades, and a province that will remember him as both an administrative leader and a dedicated veteran of the liberation struggle.

Gunfire Erupts Near Hartbeespoort Dam



Fierce Bullets Exchange... The SAPS and the SANDF exchanged fire with illegal miners this week. Picture: SAPS

By Bernell Simons

The government's intensified crackdown on illegal mining is beginning to produce visible results, with authorities saying the deployment of South African National Defence Force (SANDF) soldiers alongside police is finally shifting the balance against heavily organised zama zama syndicates.

In a dramatic pre-dawn raid near Hartbeespoort Dam on Tuesday, members of the SANDF and the South African Police Service (SAPS) stormed illegal mining hotspots in Scheerpoort and Hartbeespoortdam.

The raid triggered a fierce confrontation with suspected illegal miners, ending with 26 arrests and the seizure of industrial-scale mining equipment.

The operation formed part of 'Operation Prosper' - President Cyril Ramaphosa's national intervention targeting illegal mining syndicates, extortion rackets, and organised criminal networks operating across five provinces.

Authorities believe the latest arrests are among the clearest signs yet that increased boots on the ground are beginning to disrupt deeply entrenched illegal operations that for years operated with near impunity.

According to North West Acting Provincial Police Commissioner, Lieutenant-General Ryno Naidoo, suspected 'zama-zamas' (illegal miners) opened fire on law enforcement officers as security teams advanced on the mining sites in the early hours of the morning.

Despite the gunfire exchange, no SANDF soldiers or police officers were injured. One suspect sustained injuries which the police confirmed were not caused by the shooting.

As security forces tightened their line, several suspects attempted to flee into nearby bushland. Despite the chaos, authorities managed to detain 26 individuals.

Police confirmed that 15 of those arrested face

additional charges under the Immigration Act, highlighting the transnational nature of these syndicates. All 26 suspects appeared before the Brits Magistrate's Court on Thursday.

Beyond the arrests, officials say the scale of the confiscated equipment reveals the highly organised, industrial nature of modern illegal mining.

Among the items seized were a 9mm pistol with ammunition, six generators, 16 electric motors, 57 pendukas, two water pumps, three jackhammers, and large quantities of gold-bearing sand.

For provincial leaders, the operation has become a powerful symbol of what visible security deployment can achieve.

North West MEC for Community Safety and Transport Management, Wessels Morweng, praised the joint forces, saying Operation Prosper is already paying dividends in communities long terrorised by illegal mining violence.

"We cannot be held ransom by thugs who instill fear in our communities," Morweng said.

Support also came from Agriculture MEC, Madoda Sambatha, who warned that illegal mining continues to threaten public safety and economic stability, urging communities to report illicit activities.

"We call on residents to work with law enforcement by reporting any illegal mining activities and helping identify those who are behind these criminal networks operating in our communities."

Conversely, opposition parties argued that enforcement alone would not solve the broader crisis, with EFF MPL, Fanon Calvin Moema, arguing that the issue reflects deeper structural failures within the country's mining sector.

"As long as communities remain excluded from meaningful ownership and benefits of mining, these illegal activities will continue to emerge as a symptom of economic inequality and exclusion."

For years, communities near illegal mining zones have endured escalating violence and lawlessness. Tuesday's operation sent a definitive message that these high levels of criminality will not prevail.

CRIME REPORTS



FS man receives 20 years for rape and robbery

On Wednesday, Zwelibanzi Ephraim Leshoro was sentenced to twenty years' imprisonment for rape and five years' imprisonment for robbery, after being found guilty of the charges. The court ordered that both sentences run concurrently.

The incident took place in Bothaville on 21 August 2021, where the female victim was accosted and raped by the accused.

The 28-year-old victim shared with the court that on that day, she was walking in the street when she came across the accused.

The accused then demanded money from the victim and took an amount of R200 from her and demanded to have sexual intercourse with her.

The victim detailed how she pleaded with the ac-

cused not to rape her, as she had already given him money; however, her pleas fell on deaf ears because the accused proceeded and forcefully threw her to the ground before he undressed and raped her.

After the ordeal, the accused fled the scene, leaving the victim on the scene.

A case of rape was then reported and registered at Bothaville police station.

The case was assigned to the Welkom Family Violence, Child Protection and Sexual Offences Unit for further investigation, led by Sergeant Lehlohonolo Fonya, and an investigation ensued, and the accused was traced and subsequently arrested. With undeniable evidence led in court, the victim's testimony, and the investigating officer, the National Prosecuting Authority found the 34-year-old Leshoro guilty.

More arrests in the murder of a 75-year-old

The police have made two more arrests in connection with the murder of 75-year-old Nokhansala Sidiki in a stream near Ngcobo in the Eastern Cape, who was accused of witchcraft.

The two were arrested on Wednesday and are expected to make their first appearance in the Ngcobo Magistrate's Court today.

Meanwhile, the first two suspects were arrested on Monday and made their first appearance in the same court on Wednesday.

However, they have been remanded in custody and are scheduled to appear again on Monday.

All four accused in this case are women between the ages of 26 and 35.

Sidiki was brutally killed after she was allegedly dragged from her home in Zadungeni, Luthuthu Locality, by family members.

She was then taken to a nearby stream, where she was attacked and assaulted with a wooden plank and drowned.

Authorities continue to urge anyone with further information to contact Crime Stop on 08600 10111 or to send anonymous tips through the MySAPS mobile application.

Suspects nabbed for transporting illicit cigarettes

In a collaborative work between members attached to the Infrastructure Task Team, Highway Patrol Shift A, Viljoendrift Shift, and the Gauteng Crime Intelligence Gathering (CIG), two suspects aged 60 and 45 were arrested for possession of illicit cigarettes and bribery following an operation conducted on the R57 near Zamdela on Wednesday morning.

After receiving information on this, these members followed up on a truck travelling along the R57 road, and it was successfully stopped.

The truck was then escorted to Zamdela SAPS for further inspection and searching, during which the suspects reportedly attempted to bribe the law en-

forcement.

The suspects allegedly offered members a bribe of R900.00 in an attempt to prevent the search from being conducted, as they were unable to provide invoices for the goods being transported.

As the thorough search of the truck ensued, the members made a startling discovery of 499 boxes of illicit cigarettes concealed beneath 74 boxes of foam cups. The estimated value of the illicit cigarettes is approximately R3 119 750.00.

The two suspects are expected to appear before the Sasolburg Magistrate's Court soon on charges of possession of illicit cigarettes and bribery.

Bloemfontein police ask for assistance in locating a fugitive

The Provincial Serious and Violent Crime Investigation Unit is urgently appealing to the public for assistance as the manhunt intensifies for a fugitive wanted for rape, conspiracy to commit murder, and targeting women online.

According to reports, on Sunday, 11 May 2025, at approximately 14:00, Kopanong police responded to an incident at Muirfield Flats, in Navalsig where a 35-year-old victim had met a man using the alias "Shane Carson" on Facebook.

The suspect allegedly invited the victim to his residence for a first date.

The victim said that upon arrival, she was served juice, which caused her to feel severely disoriented and physically exhausted.

The suspect then forced the victim into the bath-

room, where he raped her.

The victim bravely managed to escape the flat after convincing the suspect to let her step outside for fresh air.

Following an intensive investigation, the Bloemfontein Magistrate's Court has issued a formal warrant of arrest for 32-year-old Lloyd McDonald Siswe Jacobs.

The police say that investigations have revealed that Jacobs actively uses Facebook and other social media platforms under various false identities to lure, drug, and attack unsuspecting women.

Furthermore, he is concurrently wanted by the Parkweg SAPS for a separate case involving conspiracy to commit murder after he allegedly threatened to kill the investigating officer.

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Saul Delivers Houses in Calvinia

...as Northern Cape provincial government turns policy commitments into visible change



Providing Dignified Housing... Premier Zamani Saul's administration continues to restore the dignity of communities across the province. Pictures: Supplied

By Bernell Simons

Northern Cape Premier, Dr. Zamani Saul, is drawing national attention for measurable service delivery progress following the handover of 50 newly built homes under the Calvinia 200 Housing Project in Hantam Local Municipality.

Delivered alongside Northern Cape Cooperative Governance, Human Settlements and Traditional Affairs (Coghsta) MEC, Bentley Vass, the latest phase brings the completed total to 100 homes, with another 100 units expected to be finished before the end of 2026. The Calvinia project forms part of the province's broader R1 billion housing programme aimed at reducing backlogs and restoring dignity in underserved communities.

At a time when many provinces continue to battle collapsing municipalities and financial instability, the Northern Cape is increasingly positioning itself around implementation-driven governance.

Beyond housing, the provincial government has expanded investment into roads, healthcare, water security, and renewable energy, treating youth development and solar energy initiatives as central pillars to stimulate local economic activity.

Saul has consistently linked these interventions to stronger governance systems and tighter municipal oversight. He recently confirmed a Section 139 intervention in Sol Plaatje Municipality as part of a 10-point turnaround strategy designed to restore administrative capacity and rebuild public confidence.

Saul also highlighted improved municipal financial performance across the province, noting that Northern Cape municipalities achieved an 87% expenditure rate on the Municipal Infrastructure Grant during the 2024/2025 financial year.

According to Saul, this reflects marked improvements in local planning and implementation capacity.

During the recent Taking Parliament to the People programme hosted by the National Council of Provinces, Saul argued that South Africa is moving in the right direction under President Cyril Ramaphosa, particularly where coordinated interventions are used to stabilise struggling councils.

He stressed that turnaround plans are not simply about administrative recovery, but about rebuilding functional service delivery systems.

Political analyst, Sanet Solomon-Madonsela, a lecturer at the University of the Free State (UFS), believes the ANC in the Northern Cape has

adopted a noticeably more responsive approach to infrastructure implementation. She points to large-scale developments across Kimberley and surrounding townships as visible examples of investment that have helped the party maintain political support.

According to Solomon-Madonsela, struggling provinces like the Free State and North West - which frequently rank among the country's weakest municipal performers in Auditor-General reports - could draw valuable lessons from this approach.

She notes that several Free State communities continue to consist largely of informal housing, highlighting the urgent need for improved planning. She argues that political parties strengthen themselves when they focus on governance and respond directly to community needs.

As construction continues on the remaining units, Saul's administration continues to position itself around a delivery-driven agenda, turning policy commitments into visible change on the ground.

For residents in Calvinia, the housing development represents far more than governance reports or political targets. It stands as a visible sign of delivery, offering dignity, stability, and proof that government programmes can translate into meaningful improvements.

Eskom Restores Potch Power Grid

Second unit recommissioned at Potch substation to end emergency municipal load rotation



Protecting power infrastructure ... Emergency load rotation was implemented to protect infrastructure from damage because of bad weather. Picture: Facebook

By Katlego Mashwabi

Power utility Eskom has successfully returned a vital second transformer to service at the Potch DS 132/88kV Substation, bringing relief to residents of the JB Marks Local Municipality and surrounding areas following nearly a week of power disruptions.

The second power transformer was officially recommissioned on Wednesday, 13 May 2026. The network interruptions initially began on 8 May 2026, when severe, inclement weather conditions triggered a spike in electricity demand, overloading the substation's only other operational transformer.

To protect the remaining infrastructure from catastrophic damage and further overloading, the JB Marks Local Municipality was forced to implement emergency load rotation among its customers.

According to Eskom's media statement, technical teams

worked around the clock to expedite the commissioning of the second unit, successfully normalising the substation and stabilising grid reliability without the need for further load reduction on the customer side.

"This restoration reflects the dedication, professionalism and tireless efforts of Eskom employees and technical teams who worked under challenging conditions to restore supply safely and as quickly as possible," the power utility stated.

Eskom extended its gratitude to local ratepayers and municipal structures for their cooperation, while apologising for the inconvenience caused during the critical period of load rotation.

The utility further emphasised that the collaborative effort between Eskom and the JB Marks Local Municipality in protecting infrastructure, maintaining public safety, and restoring reliable electricity supply demonstrates a continued commitment to serving communities with excellence and resilience.



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Parents' Anger Boils Over After Mass Student Illness



Under Intense Scrutiny ... A huge spotlight has been cast on Bainsvlei Combined School following mass food poisoning and the exposure of poor hygienic conditions at its learner residences. Pictures: Bainsvlei Combined School

By Bernell Simons

Overcrowding, poor sanitation, unreliable hot water, inadequate food provision, and pest infestations are some of the issues that learners at the Bainsvlei combined school hostel in Bloemfontein are allegedly faced with daily.

This week 231 Learners fell ill and were admitted to different hospitals across the city cover a suspected food poisoning incident that triggered mass hospital admissions across Bloemfontein raising questions of accountability over food safety compliance and hostel living conditions.

The learners were allegedly transported to Pelenomi Hospital, Universitas Academic Hospital, National Hospital, and Bainsvlei Clinic after reportedly becoming ill following a hostel meal that they had on Tuesday evening.

The Free State Department of Education confirmed that 230 learners have since been discharged, while one remains under observation in stable condition.

For many parents, this outbreak has reopened long-standing concerns, not only about what happened this time, but about what they describe as a cycle of warnings, responses, and then silence.

"If one child had died, who would be taking responsibility?" asked one parent who wanted to remain anonymous for fears that her child would be intimidated. According to Spokesperson for the Free State Department of Health, Mondli Mvambi, the incident

has placed renewed scrutiny on whether environmental health inspections were properly conducted at the hostel kitchen, whether compliance certificates were valid, and whether earlier warning signs were ever meaningfully acted upon.

Mvambi says the latest crisis is not the first of its kind at the school. In a previous incident, about 175 learners fell ill after consuming a hostel meal, experiencing vomiting and diarrhoea.

"Ten learners required hospital treatment while others were treated on-site and later discharged.

"At the time, health authorities quarantined the hostel kitchen, deployed environmental health teams, and involved the Centre for Communicable Diseases to investigate.

"Chicken was identified as a common factor under review, with concerns raised over contamination or food handling practices," Mvambi said.

Despite assurances given then by authorities, parents say little appears to have changed, with the latest mass illness now raising fears that earlier warnings were not fully addressed.

Mvambi also confirmed that all affected learners received treatment and were discharged and said that environmental health officials and education authorities are conducting a full investigation.

He says the Disease Outbreak Response Team has been involved from the beginning and that coordinated efforts are underway to prevent recurrence.

The MEC for Education in the Free State Julia Ma-

boya visited the school this week after the incident and described the situation as deeply distressing and assuring parents that learner safety remained a priority. However, beyond official statements, pressure from some parents is mounting on the Department of Education to release inspection reports, hostel compliance records, and details of food suppliers linked to the kitchen, as frustration grows over what parents describe as a lack of transparency.

Several parents who spoke anonymously described repeated emotional distress linked to sudden illness outbreaks at the school. One parent said the conditions learners face at the school remain concerning, while another questioned whether inspections are being properly carried out and whether corrective action ever follows previous incidents.

"The way things are, one day we will be talking about deaths because of negligence," one parent warned, while another said families continue to send children to the hostel in hope of a better future despite difficult living conditions.

The South African Human Rights Commission in the Free State has also come under scrutiny following allegations that earlier inspections may not have fully reflected reported conditions across all sections of the hostel. The Department of Education has not confirmed these claims but says investigations into the latest incident are ongoing in collaboration with health authorities, while psychosocial support is being provided to affected learners.

Sol Plaatjie Workers Revolt Over Job Cuts



Termination of 137 Sol Plaatjie workers fuelled ongoing protests Pictures: Facebook

By Bernell Simons

Tensions boiled over in Kimberley this week as angry municipal contract workers brought operations at Sol Plaatjie Local Municipality to a standstill, protesting against looming job cuts that could leave more than 130 workers unemployed by the end of the month.

Labour tensions have escalated at Sol Plaatjie Local Municipality in Kimberley as contract workers continue protest action over planned job terminations.

The South African Municipal Workers Union (SAMWU) has accused the municipality of abandoning long-serving workers, while claims have also emerged that misinformation may have fuelled tensions surrounding the ongoing strike action.

Workers staged protests outside the municipal offices in Ashburnham over the alleged termination of 137 fixed-term contract workers whose contracts are expected to end on 29 May.

Thursday marked the third day of the strike action, which began last Friday.

Protesters burned tyres and disrupted operations at municipal offices, preventing members of the public from entering the building.

Many of the affected workers have been employed in road maintenance and other essential municipal

services and are now demanding permanent employment within the municipality.

SAMWU has vowed to intensify its fight against the planned terminations, arguing that workers who have served the municipality for years are being unfairly discarded without job security.

SAMWU Northern Cape provincial spokesperson, Papikie Mohale, said the union would not stand by while workers who helped keep the city functioning were left without jobs.

"We are demanding that the municipality immediately stop these dismissals and engage with labour to find a lasting solution," he said.

Mohale added that workers remain deeply frustrated by the uncertainty surrounding their employment and warned that tensions could escalate further if no intervention is made.

Anonymous sources claimed the unrest had also been worsened by misinformation circulating among workers regarding the status of contracts and possible permanent appointments.

Despite these claims, uncertainty remains over whether municipal management intends to review or reverse the termination notices.

Attempts to obtain comment from Sol Plaatjie Local Municipality were unsuccessful at the time of publication.

Mahikeng Activist Molosankwe Gunned Down



High-level investigations have been launched following the assassination of popular activist and traditional healer, Thato Molosankwe Pictures: Supplied

By Bernell Simons

Shock and fear have gripped Mahikeng after prominent community activist and traditional healer Thato Molosankwe was gunned down at his home, sparking outrage and urgent calls for justice.

North West police have launched a high-level investigation and deployed specialised units following the fatal shooting of Molosankwe in Lomanyaneng on Wednesday morning.

According to police, Molosankwe was shot multiple times at his home. A case of murder and robbery has since been opened and is being treated as a priority.

Molosankwe was widely known in Mahikeng and surrounding communities as a vocal anti-crime and anti-corruption activist who worked closely with local safety structures.

He was also a respected traditional healer and community figure who regularly used his platform to raise concerns about crime, governance and local economic challenges.

His death has triggered an outpouring of grief and anger on social media, with many describing him as a fearless voice against criminality and corruption.

Community members said his killing represents a devastating blow to grassroots activism in the area. Residents in Lomanyaneng and the

broader Mahikeng community have called for swift arrests, saying community leaders working alongside law enforcement need greater protection amid growing fears over targeted attacks.

Acting National Police Commissioner, Puleng Dimpene, has instructed provincial leadership to mobilise all available resources to track down those responsible.

Police have urged anyone with information to contact Crime Stop on 08600 10111 or submit anonymous tips via the MySAPS platform, assuring the public that all information will be treated confidentially.

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Phomolong Erupts Over Solar Jobs

Furious residents shut down the township, accusing a major solar project of sidelining locals while unemployment and poverty deepen



Angry residents shut down the Phomolong township burning tyres and rocks. Pictures: MMM/Facebook

By Bernell Simons

Anger boiled over in Hennenman this week as frustrated residents of Phomolong brought the township to a standstill, demanding jobs from a multi-million-rand solar energy project they say has excluded the very community it was meant to uplift.

The unrest, linked to recruitment disputes surrounding the Middelpunt PV Solar Project, triggered a full-scale shutdown that disrupted schools, health-care services and daily life as residents accused contractors of hiring workers from outside the township while locals remained unemployed.

For many residents, particularly unemployed youth, the solar project had represented a rare opportunity for economic relief in a community battling severe poverty and soaring unemployment levels. But tensions exploded after allegations surfaced that recruitment processes were unfair and lacked transparency.

Roads were barricaded, businesses were affected and access to clinics became increasingly difficult as the protest intensified. Anxiety also mounted over matric learners preparing for critical mid-year examinations amid the instability.

The escalating crisis forced urgent intervention from the Free State Provincial Government.

Premier MaQueen Letsoha-Mathae first met with

residents on 15 May, assuring the community that government would return after consultations with all parties involved.

By 19 May, Acting Premier Jabu Mbalula convened a high-level stakeholder meeting in Hennenman involving representatives from Middelpunt PV Solar, the Matjhabeng Local Municipality, provincial officials and community leaders in a bid to calm the situation. Also present were Health MEC Monyatsa Mahlatsi and councillors Maxie Badenhorst and Phehelo Nthuba.

During tense engagements, community leaders reportedly rejected a proposed 60/40 recruitment model, insisting that Phomolong residents should be prioritised for jobs linked to the project.

Residents further demanded that hiring processes be managed through a verified local database to prevent alleged favouritism, manipulation and the recruitment of outsiders.

Mbalula acknowledged the community's frustrations, saying their concerns were legitimate. "We have always said that local communities must be the primary beneficiaries of projects in their towns and we stand by that," he said.

At the same time, he warned against individuals attempting to exploit the unrest for personal agendas and appealed for calm.

"Despite the differences between different parties, the education and future of learners must not

be compromised," Mbalula said as concerns grew over matric pupils scheduled to write exams.

After marathon negotiations, a breakthrough was finally reached on 20 May when a Memorandum of Demands was signed between the provincial government, Middelpunt PV Solar investors and community representatives, officially ending the shutdown.

The agreement commits the company to implementing a more transparent and inclusive recruitment process, with local residents expected to receive priority consideration for employment opportunities.

Mbalula welcomed the resolution and praised residents for protesting peacefully despite heightened tensions.

"I commend the community for maintaining peace and not vandalising state property. Their demands are reasonable, and residents must be prioritised in projects implemented in their area," he said.

With calm restored, schools, clinics and other essential services have resumed operations. However, the standoff has once again exposed growing tensions around large infrastructure and renewable energy projects across South Africa, where communities increasingly demand direct economic benefits from developments taking place on their doorstep.

For Phomolong residents, the message was unmistakable: development means little if local communities are left behind.

Nigerian Busted for Illegal Trading

Law enforcement authorities collaborate on Bloemfontein inner-city blitz that busted foreign national running an illegal business



The Nigerian Ugo Emmy Akaeze found in his illegally trading room. Pictures: Supplied

By Gomolemo Winkel

A joint law enforcement operation in the Bloemfontein Central Business District (CBD) has resulted in the arrest of a foreign national allegedly operating an illegal business behind Central Park.

The suspect, identified to be Nigerian national, Ugo Emmy Akaeze, was arrested on Wednesday, 20 May 2026, after officials discovered his shop operating hidden under a staircase inside a CBD building.

The Mangaung Metro Municipality's Law Enforcement Unit and the South African Police Service (SAPS) seized a jewellery scaling machine, a ma-

chete, and found the trader operating without the required certification under the Legal Metrology Act.

Free State Roads and Public Safety Head of Department (HOD), Israel Kganyane, stated that the heightened operations were launched in direct response to widespread lawlessness in the city centre.

"The intensified joint operations were prompted by growing concerns around organised crime, counterfeit goods, illegal trading, drug-related offences and general lawlessness within the Bloemfontein CBD.

"Law enforcement and SAPS have therefore strengthened integrated operations to restore order, enforce municipal bylaws, protect compliant busi-

nesses and improve public safety," Kganyane said.

He emphasised that illegal and unlicensed businesses severely impact compliant enterprises, compromise public safety, disrupt pedestrian movement, and damage the local economy.

The integrated crackdown forms part of the ongoing Safer City initiative, which aims to boost law enforcement visibility, enforce municipal bylaws, and restore public confidence.

"The integrated approach also helps restore public confidence, protects compliant businesses and creates a safer environment for residents, commuters and visitors within the city centre," Kganyane added.

Relief Fund launched for FMD-affected farmers



By Gomolemo Winkel

As South Africa's agricultural sector continues to battle the devastating effects of the ongoing Foot-and-Mouth Disease (FMD) outbreak, motor company ISUZU Motors South Africa has stepped forward with a financial relief initiative aimed at supporting affected farmers and rural communities.

The company officially launched its Farmer Solidarity Campaign at NAMPO Harvest Day, held in Bothaville last week.

Nampo Harvest Day put the growing challenges faced by farmers in the spotlight due to the spread of the disease across several provinces, including the Free State, North West, and Northern Cape.

The campaign centres around the Farmer Stories Fund, where a relief initiative will provide R250,000 in practical support packages to selected farmers who are impacted by the outbreak.

Farmers are encouraged to share personal stories explaining how the outbreak has affected their livelihoods, farming operations, and communities.

The initiative comes at a time when concerns around FMD continue to escalate across South Africa's farming sector.

At the time of a recent parliamentary committee visit, Free State MEC for Agriculture Elsabe Rockman reported 396 confirmed FMD cases and 164 suspected cases spread across 17 municipalities in the province.

Rockman says figures showcase the scale of the crisis facing livestock farmers in one of the country's key agricultural regions.

North West recorded 247 cases of FMD, while the Northern Cape remained the least affected province, with only three reported cases.

Nationally, the outbreak has placed severe pressure on livestock movement, trade, and farming operations, with many farmers struggling to maintain production and protect their animals from infection.

Furthermore, ISUZU said that the campaign was introduced to not only provide financial assistance, but also to give farmers a platform to share their experiences during one of the most difficult periods facing the agricultural sector.

The campaign was launched at NAMPO and will run until 30 May 2026.

Speaking during the launch, Department Executive for CV Sales and Revenue Generation at ISUZU Motors South Africa, Mpho Nkhumeleni, said that the outbreak has had both operational

and emotional consequences for farming communities across the country.

"For many farmers, this outbreak is not just an agricultural issue, it is a daily operational and emotional challenge that affects families, businesses, and rural communities," said Nkhumeleni.

He further added that the campaign seeks to put farmers and their experiences at the heart of the conversation, while also providing meaningful support to those facing challenges.

"The Farmer Solidarity Campaign places farmers and their experiences at the centre of the conversation.

"As a brand with deep roots in the agricultural sector, we believe it is important to show support in a way that is practical, respectful, and meaningful," he said.

In addition to the three R50,000 relief awards, ISUZU indicates that the initiative also includes practical spot prizes designed to ease operational pressure on farms. These include after-sales service relief packages intended to assist farmers with vehicle maintenance and mobility support during the outbreak.

On the other hand, according to available national figures, more than 1 317 FMD cases had been recorded across the country by April 2026. Authorities also confirmed that over 2.03 million animals had been vaccinated since February 2026, with no new disease breakthroughs reported among vaccinated herds.

While government continues to implement containment measures and vaccination programmes; nonetheless farming organisations and private sector partners have increasingly called for collaborative efforts to support struggling producers and rural economies.

Moreover, Nkhumeleni said that farmers remain essential to driving South Africa's economy forward, despite the ongoing challenges affecting the agricultural sector. "Farmers play a critical role in keeping South Africa moving, often under extremely challenging conditions. Through this campaign, we want to encourage South Africans to listen to these stories, stand with farming communities and recognise the resilience that exists within the sector," he added.

Selected farmer stories will continue to be shared across ISUZU's digital platforms and agricultural media partnerships throughout the campaign period.

"Farmers are encouraged to submit their stories before entries close on 30 May 2026," said Nkhumeleni.

Farmer on Trial for Murdering Friends

High Court trial for Northern Cape farmer accused of killing two friends has commenced



By Gomolemo Winkel

The double-murder trial of 61-year-old Vioolsdrift farmer, Jaco Dawid Malan Claasens, has officially commenced in the Northern Cape Division of the High Court sitting in Springbok.

The State alleges that Claasens intentionally shot and killed two of his friends, Coenraad Edward de Beer and James Kriel, inside his house in the early hours of 31 October 2023.

In addition to the two counts of murder, the accused faces a charge of unlawful possession of ammunition for allegedly keeping more than 200 cartridges in contravention of the Firearms Control Act.

NPA regional spokesperson, Mojalefa Senokoatsane,

stated that the two victims had stopped over at Claasens' Namaqualand residence with companions while travelling to a holiday destination.

The State has already called its first witness to the stand - identified as the son of one of the deceased - who was present on the farm when the fatal shooting occurred. According to the prosecution, both victims succumbed to abdominal gunshot wounds at Mediclinic Upington on 1 November 2023.

Medical records show De Beer died from severe blood loss, hypovolemic shock, and multi-organ failure, while Kriel succumbed to injuries that led to multiple necrosis, fasciitis, and sepsis.

The National Prosecuting Authority (NPA) confirmed that the trial started on 20 May 2026.



MATJHABENG LOG

Khalipha Targets Service Delivery Crisis

It was all systems go at the Matjhabeng Investment Summit — a gathering that shimmered with promise and purpose. And at the heart of it all, Free State Premier Maqeen Letsoha-Mathae added her own spark to what she described as a defining moment for the province's economic revival.

Radiating optimism, Mathae said she was thrilled to witness the declaration of unleashing the economic potential of the Free State take shape.

With stakeholders pledging over R60 billion to support Matjhabeng's proactive investment drive, the premier described the summit as a milestone in the province's pursuit of sustainable growth.

"The Matjhabeng Investment Summit is a testament to the commitment of unleashing the economic potential of the Free State, showcasing the province's dedication to creating an environment conducive to investment and growth," Mathae said.

In her address to investors and municipal leaders, Mathae called for unity of purpose and a renewed focus on strengthening the basics that make business thrive.

She reminded the municipality that a prosperous investment climate begins with solid foundations — reliable infrastructure, ethical governance, and clean, well-managed towns.

She stressed that roads, electrici-

ty, water, and sanitation were not merely services but the arteries of economic life.

"If we can get these basics right, I can assure you, investors will not hesitate to come flocking to Matjhabeng," she said confidently.

Mathae also commended Matjhabeng's bold approach to sourcing investment, noting that it had already borne fruit with a substantial R5.5 billion commitment from American investors in the energy sector.

"This significant investment aims to transform the Goldfields region into a hub of economic opportunity, aligning with the provincial vision of renewal, action, and inclusive growth," she said.

But the premier's message was not just about attracting outside capital — it was also about responsibility from within.

She reminded contractors working on government projects that they carry a duty to give back to the communities they serve.

"Contractors benefiting from government projects must understand their social responsibility — to plough back into communities and create opportunities for our people," she urged.

Looking ahead, Mathae revealed that the provincial government plans to provide land to the municipality for student accommodation projects — a move set to create jobs, stimulate local enterprise, and strengthen the area's education infrastructure.

The Matjhabeng Investment Summit, she said, is more than a single event — it's a declaration of intent.

A call for collaboration, innovation, and inclusion.

A symbol of a province ready to chart a new economic course, powered by shared purpose and community growth.



MATJHABENG DOWN ON CORRUPTION Executive Mayor declares ghost workers, bribery claims salary payments

A sweeping anti-corruption drive is unfolding in Matjhabeng Municipality after explosive allegations of ghost workers, bribery and fraudulent salary payments prompted several cases to be handed over to the Hawks for investigation.

Executive Mayor Thanduxolo Khalipha said the municipality is intensifying efforts to root out corruption, recover lost funds and ensure those implicated face criminal prosecution.

Khalipha has also appealed to the police to fast-track investigations so that completed cases can be referred to the National Prosecuting Authority for possible prosecution.

Among the shocking cases uncovered is that of an alleged ghost worker who reportedly continued receiving a municipal salary despite serving a life sentence in prison.

"We have been suspecting, and we are now proving right, that there is one individual who was a former employee

of this municipality. In February this individual was sentenced to imprisonment, but surprisingly, despite not doing some work, this individual was getting a salary from Matjhabeng," Khalipha said.

He said the individual allegedly received payments from the municipality last month, despite being behind bars.

According to the mayor, some municipal officials are suspected of covering up the scheme by allegedly falsifying attendance registers on behalf of ghost employees to make it appear as though they were reporting for work.

Khalipha revealed that another case involved an individual who had been granted bail in Kroonstad, but who still managed to submit a fraudulent salary claim while in custody.

The mayor said officials became suspicious after discovering the employee remained active on the municipality's payroll while incarcerated.

The municipality has also un-

Khalipha Warns Laggards ... Urges Residents to Pay

R4.4 billion recovery plan launched as Matjhabeng

Matjhabeng Municipality has issued a stern warning to residents who fail to pay for municipal services, saying tougher credit control measures are on the way as the cash-strapped municipality fights to restore financial stability and improve service delivery.

Executive Mayor Thanduxolo Khalipha said the municipality cannot continue providing electricity and water services while many residents refuse to pay, placing further strain on an already struggling system.

Speaking during a media briefing, Khalipha urged residents to honour their municipal accounts as part of efforts to help Matjhabeng meet the targets of its financial recovery plan.

"We want to urge all our people in Matjhabeng to start paying for services, paying electricity and paying water," he said.

The mayor also appealed to unemployed and struggling residents to register as indigent beneficiaries through their ward councillors so they can qualify for municipal support.

"Those who are not working, we are requesting them to be in touch with ward

councillors to make sure they are registered as indigent so they can be supported by the municipality," Khalipha said.

He warned that the municipality will intensify action against defaulters, cutting services to those who fail to pay.

"We are appealing to those who are not paying that we are going to bring them on them as part of implementing our credit control policy of the municipality," he said.

The municipality's financial recovery efforts come amid ongoing water and infrastructure challenges across Matjhabeng.

Earlier this year, the Department of Water and Sanitation handed over R4.4 billion in grants for completed pump stations as part of interventions aimed at addressing persistent water problems in the municipality.

Khalipha said additional infrastructure projects are still being rolled out in Vaal Central and the department is conducting performance assessments every two weeks to ensure progress.

The mayor confirmed that urban intervention contractors appointed for the intervention programme would face consequences, adding that some contractors had already been dismissed.

AL MUNICIPALITY



G CRACKS RRUPTION es war on ghost and fraudulent ents

ary 2025, allegations that some officials were soliciting bribes from residents in exchange for services they are legally required to provide. "We have just been informed that again there are some officials in Matjhabeng who have been taking bribes from our ordinary people when they are supposed to do their work," Khalipha said. He confirmed that cases had been opened against several officials and warned that arrests could follow soon as investigations continue to gather momentum.

Khalipha insisted that the municipality is determined to clean up governance and restore accountability within the institution. "We have no doubt that we will succeed with all the decisions that we have taken on fighting corruption in this municipality. We will succeed," he said.

He added that the municipality's leadership was committed to rebuilding Matjhabeng and fulfilling the oath they took to serve residents with integrity and transparency.

Defaulters Municipal Account beng cracks down on non-payers

re regis- "We are working as a team to make support- sure that the intervention works in Mat- said. jhabeng," he said.

Khalipha also referred to findings by the Auditor-General South Africa, which indicated that the municipality was losing more than 55% of its water through leakages and infrastructure failures.

To help address the crisis, the municipality partnered with Harmony Gold and Sibanye-Stillwater to assist with repairing water leaks and stabilising supply systems.

In a major boost for long-term infrastructure recovery, Khalipha announced that the Development Bank of Southern Africa has approved more than R4.4 billion for infrastructure projects in Matjhabeng.

The funding, which is expected to be implemented from 1 July in the new financial year, forms part of a broader long-term recovery strategy developed with Infrastructure South Africa and championed by Electricity and Energy Minister Kgosientsho Ramokgopa.

"Finally, the DBSA has approved our application of more than R4.4 billion that is going to be implemented in Matjhabeng from the first of July," Khalipha said.

Matjhabeng Secures R100m Boost

Matjhabeng Municipality is banking on a R100 million National Treasury injection and the roll-out of smart prepaid meters to rescue its finances, improve revenue collection and restore confidence in a municipality battered by years of financial instability and service delivery failures.

Executive Mayor Thanduxolo Khalipha said the funding will be implemented during the current financial year as part of efforts to achieve 75% of the municipality's financial recovery targets.

The municipality has already spent about R30 million on the installation of smart prepaid electricity meters, a programme expected to conclude at the end of the financial year.

"You will remember that we have been implementing an amount of about R30 million in this financial year as part of implementing your smart prepaid meters," Khalipha said.

He added that the municipality now wants to expand prepaid systems to water services in a bid to improve payment compliance and stabilise municipal finances.

"We also want to engage with the Minister of Finance, not only to focus on electricity. We also want prepaid water systems because the old system is not working," he said.

Khalipha said the municipality's financial troubles were worsened by years of excessive outsourcing and disputed claims from companies alleging that Matjhabeng owed them hundreds of millions of rand.

According to the mayor, the municipality discovered that more than 90% of its services had previously been outsourced, prompting leadership to investigate contracts and spending patterns.

"More than 60% of outsourcing was stopped since 2021. We decided to investigate allegations from companies claiming we owed them more than R400 million after they took us to court," he said.

The mayor also revealed that some court judgments against the municipality went unchallenged internally, contributing to financial strain and attached bank accounts.

"There was a month in 2023 where our employees received their salaries late because the bank account of Matjhabeng was attached," Khalipha said.

He confirmed that a forensic investigation into the municipality's finances has now been completed and that the findings have already been presented to municipal leadership.

Khalipha said the investigation helped the municipality save millions of rand and that the final report will be tabled before council at the end of the month.

"After the presentation, council will respond and inform the people of Matjhabeng about the final report of the forensic investigation," he said.

The municipality hopes the reforms, coupled with tighter financial controls and improved revenue collection, will help rebuild public trust and place Matjhabeng on a more stable financial footing.

Matjhabeng Pushes Smart Meter Rollout

Matjhabeng Municipality is ramping up efforts to stabilise its finances and rebuild public confidence after securing a R100 million boost from National Treasury to expand smart electricity meter installations and strengthen its financial recovery plan.

Executive Mayor Thanduxolo Khalipha said the funding approval marks a major step in the municipality's turnaround strategy as it works to restore service delivery and improve revenue collection.

Khalipha said the municipality had already implemented a R30 million smart meter programme during the current financial year, which is expected to conclude at the end of the financial cycle.

"You will remember that we have been implementing an amount of about R30 million in this financial year as part of implementing your smart prepaid meters," he said.

The mayor added that the municipality also plans to engage the Minister of Finance on expanding prepaid systems beyond electricity to include water services.

"We also want to engage with the Minister of Finance, not only to focus on electricity. We also want prepaid water systems to make sure that people are able to pay because the old system is not working," he said.

The municipality believes the rollout of smart prepaid systems will improve payment collection and help place Matjhabeng on a path towards financial sustainability.

Khalipha also reflected on the municipality's financial struggles, revealing that several companies had previously claimed Matjhabeng owed them hundreds of millions of rand, leading to court battles and attached municipal accounts.

According to the mayor, the municipality discovered that more than 90% of services had been outsourced, prompting leadership to review contracts and investigate financial irregularities.

"More than 60% of outsourcing was stopped since 2021. We decided to investigate these allegations that people were claiming we owed them more than R400 million," he said.

He added that some court judgments against the municipality went unchallenged internally, worsening the financial crisis.

"There was a month in 2023 where our employees received their salaries late because the bank account of Matjhabeng was attached," Khalipha said.

The municipality has since appointed a forensic investigation company to probe the allegations and financial disputes.

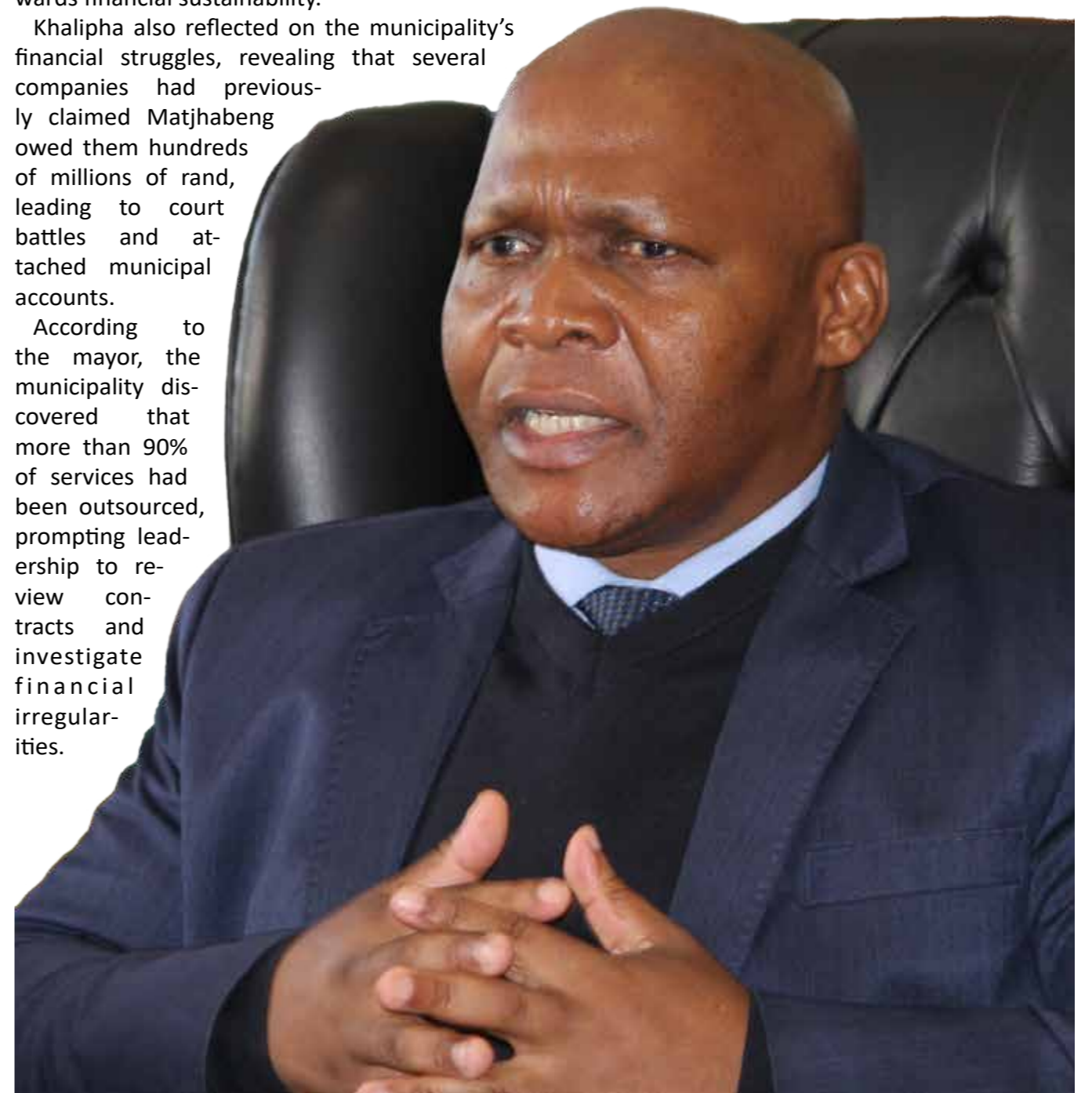
Khalipha confirmed that the investigation has been completed and that the municipality has already been briefed on the findings.

He said the probe helped the municipality save millions of rand and that the final forensic report will be presented at the next council meeting scheduled for the end of the month.

"After the presentation, council will respond and inform the people of Matjhabeng about the final report of the forensic investigation," he said.

The municipality hopes the reforms and financial interventions will help restore stability and rebuild trust among residents who have long endured service delivery and financial management failures.

Written by Matshidiso Selebeleng. Pictures: Baagedi Setlhora



Opinion

Dr Nasaret Ruswa

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One profession, many roles: Why South African teachers are being set up to fail

Teachers in South Africa are leaving the profession at an alarming rate, raising urgent questions about their working conditions. How can teaching be regarded as the "mother of all professions" when the system fails to adequately prepare and support those entering it?

Across South African classrooms, teachers are constrained in their ability to focus on what they were trained to do: teach despite the existence of policy frameworks intended to support them. Although such frameworks, including the Integrated Strategic Planning Framework for Teacher Education and Development and the New Teacher Induction Guidelines, exist, their implementation remains uneven. For many beginning teachers, support exists in principle but is rarely experienced in practice.

Alongside this, expectations continue to expand. Teachers are expected to fulfil multiple roles, including counsellors, social workers, administrators, mediators, and disciplinarians. While these responsibilities are acknowledged in the Curriculum Assessment Policy Statements (CAPS) policy, the conditions required to support them are often absent. In many public schools, classrooms can exceed 60

learners, with limited time per lesson. Under such conditions, it is unrealistic to expect a single teacher to manage behaviour, provide emotional support, complete administrative tasks, and deliver meaningful instruction. Instead, the system compels teachers to rush through content without deliberate attention to each learner.

Consequences for learners

This has direct consequences for learners. Repetition and dropout rates persist not because learners are unwilling to work, but because systemic conditions shape what is possible in the classroom. When teaching is reduced to coverage rather than meaningful engagement, it raises critical questions about the quality of learning and helps explain persistent patterns of dropout and grade repetition across the South African education system. How can quality education be expected when teachers are not adequately prepared and supported? These challenges are especially pronounced in under-resourced schools, particularly in rural and township communities shaped by apartheid-era conditions. High levels of unemployment, poverty, and community violence are carried into classrooms, placing addi-

tional demands on teachers. Reports of violence in schools further highlight the risks associated with working in such environments. Under these conditions, teaching is largely displaced by administrative demands and crisis management. What was once a profession grounded in purpose and passion is now, for many, associated with exhaustion and burn-out. Teachers move through the curriculum rather than engaging meaningfully with learners, reducing teaching to delivery rather than interaction.

Reflecting on my own experience, I did not remain in the school system for even a year after qualifying as a teacher. The demanding and, at times, unsafe conditions I encountered, including in the schools where I grew up in Kimberley, compelled me to pursue further studies rather than remain in the profession. My experience is not unique. Many beginning teachers enter with passion, only to leave before they are fully developed in their roles. The profession is losing its younger cohort, while experienced teachers remain until retirement. This raises important questions about the quality of education being produced.

Teachers cannot be everything at once

This is not a question of teachers lacking skill or commitment. It is a structural problem. In the absence of systematic induction systems, beginning teachers are expected to function as fully developed professionals without adequate support or guidance. In effect, they are expected to either "sink or swim" in complex, demanding school environments. High attrition rates among early-career teachers suggest that many are sinking rather than being supported to develop and succeed. Teachers are burning out not because they cannot teach, but because they are expected to be more than what they were trained to be.

If we are serious about improving education in South Africa, we must rethink how teachers are supported. This requires manageable class sizes, reduced administrative burdens, and the formalised and effective implementation of induction for early-career teachers. Most importantly, it means recognising that teachers cannot be everything at once. Teachers enter the profession to teach. Creating the conditions that enable them to do so effectively is not optional; it is essential for improving teacher retention and learner outcomes.

The Paradox of a United Africa



Refilwe Mochoari
Editor-in-Chief

Every year on 25 May, leaders across different countries on the African continent preach unity. Celebrations take place and there is a showcase of the rich diverse African culture and traditions.

On this day, we remind ourselves that we are one, but are we really one people?

This day is celebrated annually to commemorate the founding of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) in 1963.

Although it was originally declared by OAU to push for total decolonization, it is now driven by the African Union (AU) to celebrate Pan-Africanism.

Hi everyone, my name is Refilwe Mochoari. Are we united, or are we just pretending? Let's talk about low-key hate among Africans.

There is a confusing paradox between the idea of a united Africa and the realities of violence between African countries.

South Africa has been labelled a highly xenophobic country across the whole continent.

Gauteng, KwaZulu-Natal, Limpopo, and Mpumalanga are the worst when it comes to xenophobic attacks.

This vividly illustrates the contradiction of Africa's supposed united front.

Although the Presidency has emphasized that South Africans are not xenophobic people, last month we saw how the anti-foreigner group March and March embarked on some anti-migrant marches in Tshwane and Johannesburg where they were calling on illegal foreigners to leave the country and demanding that the government tighten immigration laws and deport undocumented immigrants whom they are accusing of committing crimes and overcrowding public schools and hospitals.

I acknowledge these concerns, considering that there are indeed some officials from the Department of Home Affairs who have been charged with corruption for giving illegal foreigners fake IDs and false identities.

This is a crime committed by both the officials and the illegal immigrants.

However, the international community also raised its concerns and warned that South African trucks and citizens would be prevented from entering neighboring African countries.

The Ghanaian and Nigerian foreign ministries summoned South Africa's High Commissioners in both Accra and Abuja to address the long-standing xenophobic concerns in the country.

During a working meeting that took place this week both President Cyril Ramaphosa and the Mozambican President Daniel Chapo said that they expect law enforcement to play its role to prevent any acts of violence against any individual.

According to data that was released by the South African Human Rights Commission, South Africans are more hostile towards foreigners than at any other time since the survey began in 2003.

Then there are the tensions between the two neighbors, Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). According to the Human Rights Watch (HRW), investigations have found evidence of the execution of civilians in the city of Uvira after the M23 rebels widely believed to be backed by the Rwanda military forces carried out an abusive month-long occupation of the resource-rich eastern DRC where over 400 civilians were killed, during door-to-door raids, women were raped and many were forcibly disappeared.

Rwanda has consistently denied supporting the M23 rebels. As we celebrate Africa Day, I am thinking of the foreign entrepreneur whose business is not entirely supported because he comes from Kenya.

A South African legal practitioner who is told that they cannot practice in Nigeria because their qualification is not recognised in that country.

A driver with a valid driver's license in Mozambique is not allowed to drive in Morocco because his license is not valid in that country.

I am thinking of the story of Chidimma Adetshina a South Africa-born model who lived in South Africa her whole life, participated in the Miss SA pageant but was forced to withdraw from the competition because her parents are Nigerian.

What is the purpose of celebrating Africa Day and singing unity when Africans hate one another?

Unity among Africans is replaced by #Abahambe, a campaign that saw Art and Culture Minister Gayton McKenzie win votes that were able to afford him a seat in Parliament and #OperationDudula, a campaign that was pushed by Nhlhla Lux and afforded him prominence as a young South African.

Happy Africa Day.

Letter to the Editor

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



Pastor Motsamai Kareli
Empowerment Ministries International

The Architecture of Purpose: A Blueprint for Pursuing Your Destiny

The word "destiny" often conjures images of a pre-written script, a fixed point in the future waiting to be discovered. But true destiny is rarely a matter of chance; it is a matter of choice. It is the intersection where your deepest passions, your unique capabilities, and intentional execution meet.

Pursuing your destiny is not a passive waiting game. It is an active, strategic pursuit that requires a shift from living by default to living by design.

1. Shift from Sight to Vision

The first step in pursuing your destiny is understanding the difference between sight and vision. Sight tells you where you are; vision tells you where you could be. Sight captures your current environment—the limitations, the current market, or the immediate challenges. Vision looks past the present to see potential.

To unlock your destiny, you must develop a clear, compelling vision for your life and work. Define what success looks like on your own terms, independent of external noise.

Document the vision. A vision left unwritten is merely a wish. Writing it down crystallizes your focus and serves as a compass when distractions arise.

2. Build Your Internal Capacity

You cannot step into a bigger future with a limited mindset or an outdated skill set. Your destiny will demand more of you—more resilience, more knowledge, and greater leadership capacity.

*** Commit to Lifelong Learning:** Expand your intellectual horizon. Whether through formal education, deep market research, or studying the strategies of those who walked the path before you, execution requires expertise.

*** Master Self-Leadership:** Before you can lead an organization, a movement, or a family toward a grand future, you must master yourself. This means managing your time, disciplining your focus, and guarding your energy.

"Your capacity to handle success must grow at the same rate as your ambition, or the success you achieve will be unsustainable."

3. The Power of Strategic Alignment

Destiny is accelerated by association. No one reaches their ultimate purpose in a vacuum. To move forward, you must align yourself with the right environments, the right principles, and the right people.

*** Audit Your Circles:** Align yourself with mentors, peers, and collaborators who challenge your comfort zone and stretch your thinking.

*** Create Synergy:** Look for partnerships where mutual value is created. True alignment multiplies your efforts, turning individual momentum into institutional impact.

4. Embrace the Process of Becoming

The gap between where you are and where you are destined to be is bridged by process. Many people fall in love with the trophy, but destiny requires you to fall in love with the training. Every challenge, every setback, and every delayed breakthrough is not a denial of your destiny; it is the preparation for it. The seasons of obscurity are where your character is tested and your foundations are built. When the platform arrives, your character must be strong enough to sustain the weight of your assignment.

5. Take Decisive, High-Stakes Action

Vision without execution is a hallucination. The defining characteristic of those who fulfill their destiny is the willingness to take bold, decisive action. You do not need to see the entire staircase to take the first step. Clarity comes through engagement, not just thought. Start where you are, use what you have, and refine your approach as you move.

The Ultimate Arrival

Pursuing your destiny is ultimately about leaving a legacy. It is about transforming your potential into a tangible contribution that outlasts you. The road is demanding, requiring a fusion of faith, strategy, and unyielding perseverance. Step up, take ownership of your narrative, and execute with precision. Your future is not waiting to happen; it is waiting to be built.

6. Overcome the Gravitational Pull of Comfort

The greatest enemy of your future is often your current comfort zone. Success can breed complacency, tempting you to settle for "good enough" when you were engineered for excellence. Fulfilling your destiny requires a willingness to disrupt your own status quo. It means volunteering for the difficult assignments, entering unfamiliar territories, and continuously raising your personal standards. When you outgrow a season, have the courage to leave it behind.

7. Cultivate Emotional and Mental Resilience

The path to destiny is rarely a straight line; it is punctuated by storms, criticism, and moments of profound uncertainty. Without inner fortitude, external pressure will cause you to compromise on your vision. Resilience is built by mastering your response to adversity. View failure not as an identity, but as feedback. Guard your mind against negative narratives, filter out constructive critique from destructive noise, and anchor your emotions in your ultimate purpose rather than temporary circumstances.

8. Master the Art of Stewardship

Destiny is a progressive journey. You will not be trusted with a global platform or a massive enterprise if you cannot effectively manage a small team or a local project. Stewardship means managing your current responsibilities with absolute excellence, integrity, and diligence. Treat your current position as a training ground for your ultimate destination. When you maximize the resources, time, and relationships currently in your hands, you naturally qualify yourself for the next level of influence.

9. Identify and Walk in Your Authenticity

You cannot fulfill your specific destiny by copying someone else's blueprint. True impact is found when you operate in your unique zone of genius—your distinct combination of gifts, background, passion, and perspective. While it is wise to learn from the success models of others, you must filter those lessons through your own authenticity. When you attempt to replicate another person's path, you only become a second-rate version of them. Destiny requires the courage to stand out, speak with your true voice, and possess your unique space in the world.

10. Anchor Your Ambition in Legacy and Service

True destiny is never entirely self-serving. If your vision begins and ends with your own comfort, recognition, or financial gain, it is too small. True greatness is measured by how much of your potential is poured out into the service of others. Shift your perspective from success to significance. Ask yourself how your business, your leadership, or your creative work will solve real problems and elevate the lives of those around you. When your ambition is anchored in leaving a legacy, you tap into a deeper well of motivation that carries you past personal exhaustion.

The Ultimate Arrival

Pursuing your destiny is ultimately about transformation. It is the process of transforming your raw potential into a tangible, lasting contribution that outlasts you.

The road is demanding, requiring a rare fusion of faith, strategy, and unyielding perseverance. Step up, take ownership of your narrative, and execute with precision. Your future is not waiting to happen; it is waiting to be built.

MRM will always treasure Maape's contribution



The Moral Regeneration Movement (MRM) in the North West will always treasure the contribution of former Premier Kaobitsa Bushy Maape, one of the 1976 June 16 generation of firebrands that sparked youth resistance to Bantu Education and apartheid oppression to be laid to rest in Vryburg on Saturday.

The Civil Society led movement promoting the Charter of Positive Values expressed appreciation for the support it received from Maape that contributed to the relaunch of the civil society led independent MRM movement after eight years of its collapse and non-existence in the province.

The meeting he held with MRM National Chairperson Father Smangaliso Mkhathshwa was a turning point and gave impetus to the establishment of an inclusive Provincial Committee, highlighted MRM Provincial Convener Pastor Lesiba Kgwele.

Former Premier Maape was reliable as an embodiment of strong moral conviction, ethical values and integrity who leaves behind an inspirational legacy as a patriot, a humble servant leader who was committed to serving society as well as a visionary who worked tirelessly for nation building, reconciliation, unity and development, he pointed out. "We wish to convey our deepest condolences

to the Maape family, his comrades, friends, former colleagues in the Provincial Executive Council and the broader liberation movement of which he was its trusted combatant as a Freedom Fighter and a grassroots organizer," he emphasised.

He stressed that an appropriate tribute to Maape would be to strengthen partnerships as well as intensify mobilization for an active citizenry to combat moral degradation that manifests itself in disintegrated families, drug and substance abuse, lawlessness, violent crime, corruption and unethical conduct.

Kgwele underscored that MRM will work closer with communities and partners to enhance sound family and community values, promote respect for the rule of law, accountability and ethical leadership.

The MRM Provincial Committee includes members of the academia, farmers, SANTACO, Traditional leaders, business, Civic organizations, labour organisations, Sports Personalities such as Former Bafana Bafana Striker, Katlego Killer Mphela.

Women & Youth Organisations, People with disabilities, Representatives of the Men's Sector, NGO's and faith-based organizations and church leaders. **By PASTOR LESIBA KGWELE**

ACMIC statement on the death of Thato Molosankwe

We are saddened to learn about the untimely passing of Mafikeng-born crime and social activist, Traditional healer, Thato Molosankwe who was gunned down in the early hours of Wednesday in his home by unknown suspects.

His death has caused a shockwave not only in the Mahikeng community, where he was very vocal about local issues and the destruction of Mahikeng but it has caused a national outcry.

Molosankwe's death by gun violence is a painful reminder of the escalating gun problems that have become a pestilence in the country. We cannot, as South Africans, allow guns to intimidate activism into silence and those who stand up for the betterment of our country into inactivity out of a sheer fear of losing their lives. We call for a stronger, active and visible policing that prevents disputes from escalating into deadly outcomes.

We also recognise that Molosankwe was vocal on matters that stirred controversy, including the presence of undocumented foreign nationals. SACMIC believes that such issues must be ad-

ressed through peaceful dialogue, lawful processes and constructive solutions, never through violence and xenophobia.

We also believe that as he stood for justice for the less privileged, this could be a political move to silence him, since we are drawing closer to the local

government elections, where he fought tooth and nail for service delivery.

The people's voice will never be silenced! God will always raise those who will protect the rights of His vulnerable people from the vultures.

This tragedy must serve as a wake-up call: our communities need safety, our debates must be done peacefully and our nation needs unity.

As we grieve this loss, we hold firm to the words of Psalm 34:8: "The Lord is close to the broken-hearted and saves those crushed in spirit." May this tragedy remind us to seek peace, justice and unity in our land. We pray that those who deprived South Africa of this committed servant of the needy and poor, be brought to book, as a matter of urgency.

Business

Markets and Indicators

Rand/Dollar	16.46	-0.09%	▼
Rand/Pound	22.08	-0.02%	▼
Rand/Euro	19.13	-0.06%	▼
Platinum	1 965.54	0.69%	▲
Brent Crude	104.92	-0.12%	▼
Gold	4 512.90	-0.56%	▼
Ethereum	2 135.15	0.31%	▲
Bitcoin	77 700.82	0.29%	▲

SA's Drive to Unlock Billions in Reserve Capital

President Cyril Ramaphosa has urged domestic corporates to lead economic rebuilding as investment drive yields R634-billion on the ground, writes Mpho Sekharume



UNLOCKING LOCAL CAPITAL: Ramaphosa has signalled that the presidency is now shifting its focus toward a massive pool of untapped local capital to ignite domestic markets. Picture: Independent Newspapers

South Africa's sustained campaign to secure high-value economic commitments is yielding tangible industrial infrastructure, yet a significant gap remains between investor sentiment and actual fixed capital formation.

Writing in his official newsletter on Monday this week, following a series of high-level business forums, President Cyril Ramaphosa defended the state's aggressive investment drives against critics who dismiss them as empty public relations exercises.

In response, Ramaphosa emphasised, in his weekly communique, that targeted international summits are essential strategic platforms to secure foreign direct investment within a highly competitive global landscape. He highlighted that concrete projects are steadily materialising across multiple manufacturing and industrial sectors.

"On the back of R1.5-trillion in pledges, a total of R634-billion has already been invested into factories, mines, data centres, power plants and other infrastructure, and have been creating jobs," Ramaphosa noted.

According to him, these realised capital injections include BMW's R4.2-billion electrification upgrade at its Rosslyn plant in Gauteng and a R5.4-billion digital expansion by Microsoft to scale up local cloud and arti-

ficial intelligence infrastructure by 2027.

Moving complex industrial projects from an initial corporate pledge to full-scale employment creation takes considerable time.

The broader macroeconomic reality indicates that South Africa remains far from its long-term development targets. Gross fixed capital formation (GFCF) - which is the money spent on buying long-lasting physical assets like buildings, machines, and vehicles and intangible assets like software - currently stagnates at approximately 14% of the country's gross domestic product. This is a sharp decline from the 21% high achieved during the 2008 commodity boom.

The National Development Plan (NDP) explicitly mandates that GFCF must reach 30% by 2030 to achieve sustainable, inclusive growth.

To close this gap, the State is heavily focusing on structural reforms to resolve the energy crisis and stabilise public finances.

The presidency is, therefore, now shifting its focus toward a massive pool of untapped local capital to ignite domestic market momentum.

According to official data from the South African Reserve Bank, non-financial corporate entities held a staggering R1.8-trillion in reserves by mid-2025.

"We aim to encourage the substantial private capital that is in reserve to be used for productive domestic investment," Ramaphosa added.

The State's strategy relies heavily on local business confidence to pave the way for international financiers. Government's current efforts focus on refining project planning, execution, and funding models to provide absolute policy certainty for corporate balance sheets.

Encouragingly, the largest block of financial commitments secured during the sixth South Africa Investment Conference at the Sandton Convention Centre in March this year came from domestic market players.

Local executives are therefore actively stepping forward to fund expanding operations within their immediate operating environments.

"As we forge ahead with efforts to attract new investment, we call on the local private sector to be at the forefront of rebuilding investment momentum in our economy," stated Ramaphosa.

A resurgent domestic private sector remains the single most effective signal to reassure international markets. Sustainable economic transformation depends on transforming idle corporate balance sheets into active industrial sites that can generate sustainable employment for millions of citizens.

New shopping mall with its own flea market opening in South Africa in three months



A major new shopping centre with its own long-running flea market is set to open east of Johannesburg in just three months.

Developers Stoneman Projects and Retail Network Services have announced that the new Rondebult Shopping Centre will open in August 2026, bringing a 25,000sqm retail hub to an area about 25km south-east of Johannesburg's CBD.

The development is being built next to the existing Vegieland Centre, a well-known local centre that currently houses tenants including Shoprite, Roxana Fruit Market and Liquor City.

One of the unique features of the project is that it will retain the popular Rondebult Flea Market, which has built up a loyal customer base over many years and already attracts shoppers to the area.

According to Retail Network Services, the combination of the flea market and the new mall is expected to strengthen what has become a fast-growing retail node within the Ekurhuleni Metropolitan Municipality.

The developers said the area has experienced "significant growth in terms of new residential developments on what was previously agricultural land."

It added that the Rondebult area has seen rising housing demand, driven largely by middle-income residents employed in the formal sector.

The shopping centre has been positioned to serve both shopping and leisure needs for the surrounding communities.

It sits along the busy Van Dyk and Heidelberg Roads and is close to major transport routes, including the N3 and N17 highways.

Retail Network Services said the new centre will be anchored by Shoprite, Boxer and a butchery, alongside a broad mix of fashion stores, health and beauty retailers, restaurants and service-focused businesses. The completed development will include 84 shops, and plans to include two drive-thru eateries aimed at grab-and-go customers.

The company said the retail mix would focus strongly on convenience shopping, with banks, ATMs and other service-related tenants forming part of the centre.

"Popular fast-food restaurants are in, two drive-

thru eateries will cater for grab-and-go customers, Shoprite, Boxer and a butchery will anchor the centre, fashion as well as Health & Beauty will dominate as categories," Retail Network Services said.

The developers believe the project will become the dominant community shopping centre in the area due to its scale and tenant mix.

Once the new shopping centre is completed, the existing Vegieland Centre will be demolished and replaced with a 4,500m² Build It flagship superstore, further expanding retail options in the node.

According to Retail Network Services, the combined development will eventually comprise roughly 29,000m² of retail space.

The project is also expected to benefit from strong population growth in the surrounding neighbourhoods.

The primary catchment area already includes more than 24,000 dwellings and an estimated population of nearly 77,000 people.

Housing developments in the broader Rondebult area have accelerated over the past five years, with estates and projects such as Dawn City, Sun Rock Village and Windmill Manor adding more than 1,000 households to the existing residential base.

Retail Network Services said the number of households in the area is expected to continue growing steadily as additional developments are completed.

"The vast majority of these middle-income households occupy houses, and more than half of Rondebult's residents are formally employed. There is also a strong youth component living in these mini-suburbs," the company said.

The developers estimate that the retail potential in the centre's primary market is worth around R2.5 billion annually, with Rondebult Shopping Centre expected to capture about 18% of this.

The centre will also include free parking and taxi facilities to accommodate the large number of commuters and shoppers expected to use the development.

Retail Network Services added that the flea market's continued success has already helped establish the area as a recognised shopping destination.

-BusinessTech

Judgment reserved in Working on Fire, Tefla Group tender dispute



The North Gauteng High Court in Pretoria has reserved judgment in a multi-billion-rand tender dispute, brought by the Working on Fire consortium against the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment and Tefla Group Centres.

Working on Fire says there were serious problems in how the national veld fire management tender was awarded.

They want the court to urgently stop the contract and launch a full review. Their primary arguments also seek to invalidate the R5-billion contract awarded to Tefla.

Working on Fire says the process was unfair and unlawful, as the department allowed Tefla to fix its SARS tax status, after the bid deadline had already passed.

Speaking for the applicants, Trevor Abrahams says, "There has been an issue with the tender awarded in 2022. Initially the department had not treated some of the other tenders fairly and we were awarded a tender at that point."

"You know we have raised concerns about that process as well. So we presented our case to the judge and we in fact asked for an urgent interdict and we'll await

the ruling."

Meanwhile, the respondents on the other hand believe their case is also strong.

Their spokesperson Itumeleng Mndebele from the Mabuza Attorneys, says justice will prevail.

"As you have heard from the applicant, I'm not going to go through the issue of what the matter is about, but what they're trying to do is to run down the contract that was awarded to us. But be as it may, we are looking forward that justice may prevail in this matter," adds Mndebele. **SABCNews**

Ekapa Minerals in Kimberley officially up for sale

Ekapa Minerals in Kimberley, where five mineworkers died in a mudslide in February, is officially up for sale.

Local and international investors are invited to submit offers in an effort to save the mine and resume operations.

The mine applied for provisional liquidation in late February, stopping all operations and leaving over 1 000 workers jobless.

National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa (Numsa), which is opposed to the liquidation, wants

the former mineworkers to be paid all the money owed to them. Numsa's local organiser Lerato Mokatlane says, "We are fine with the auction if the company is auctioning and the new buyer is willing to take it through the process of section 197, where it will be an ongoing concern. Nothing will change because in this case, our interest is the workers. If workers can continue having employment and their salaries are kept as usual, and if anything that is owed to them is paid back, even by the new buyer of the company, we will be happy."

Django Shoznega's Rise in Amapiano



By Bernell Simons

While many artists chase viral fame and quick success, Django Shoznega is focused on building something lasting through authenticity, hustle and pure township rhythm. The 36-year-old Amapiano producer and performer, born Sello Carrington Lesholi, has quietly carved out a name for himself as one of the underground creatives helping shape the evolving sound of modern Amapiano.

Originally from Welkom, Django spent more than a decade in Bloemfontein between 2009 and 2022 before relocating to Johannesburg in 2023 to further grow his career. Nearly six years into the industry, he has earned recognition for his soulful productions, layered percussion and emotionally driven sound that blends storytelling with dance-floor energy.

From township studios to packed club stages, Django's music reflects the pulse of South African street culture while maintaining the refined sound that has made Amapiano a global phenomenon. His collaborations with artists such as DzaDzy, Bon Jow, Divine Vee and Malum Sethu continue to strengthen his reputation within the scene, while tracks like Hlala Nami alongside Zocks showcased his ability to create music that resonates beyond the groove.

Away from the decks, Django also serves as an ambassador for Glory Wines, the premium wine brand founded by Seabelo Senatla.

Behind the growing recognition lies years of sacrifice and self-investment. Unlike many artists supported by labels or sponsors, Django built his career entirely through his own funding.

"I funded my own career from the start," he says. "I still believe there's more I can do with the right support and funding behind me."

He credits industry figures such as T-Gedi Miyagi, Sega, STU DeeJay and TeeJay Shotgun for helping sharpen both his craft and mindset throughout his journey.

Despite his progress, Django says one of the biggest challenges artists face is unfair treatment within the entertainment business.

"Some clubs and event organisers want top-tier performances but don't want to pay the booking fee properly," he explains. "It becomes unfair when the event clearly has the budget but still chooses to underpay artists."

Looking ahead, Django Shoznega plans to officially release new music in 2027 while expanding his brand into large-scale lifestyle and outdoor events that celebrate music, culture and entertainment.

As Amapiano continues dominating both local and international stages, Django Shoznega remains committed to representing the heart of the movement — independent, resilient and deeply rooted in township culture.

GET TO KNOW THE DJ

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Inquiry Clears Khoza of On-set 'Assault'

SAPS and NPA involved as Bomb Productions clear Bonko Khoza of 'Red Ink' assault allegations

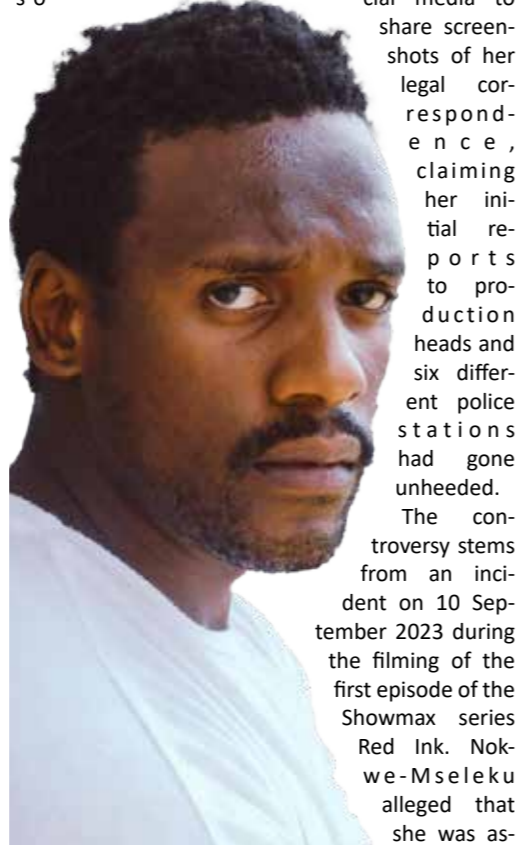
By Katlego Mashwabi

An internal investigation into allegations of on-set sexual assault levelled by actress, Nirvana Nokwe-Mseleku, against her co-star, Bonko Khoza, has officially concluded without sufficient evidence to substantiate the claims.

Production companies Red Ink and Bomb Productions confirmed the outcome following an extensive review involving producers, directors, and key personnel present during the September 2023 filming.

"The investigation concluded without sufficient evidence to substantiate the allegations," the production companies confirmed.

The National Prosecuting Authority (NPA) also declined to prosecute the matter following a separate criminal investigation by the South African Police Service (SAPS). The decision brings a climax to a multi-year industry dispute that re-ignited when Nokwe-Mseleku took to social media to share screen-shots of her legal correspondence, claiming her initial reports to production heads and six different police stations had gone unheeded.



The controversy stems from an incident on 10 September 2023 during the filming of the first episode of the Showmax series Red Ink. Nokwe-Mseleku alleged that she was assaulted by Khoza during an intimate scene, claiming that two crew members later approached her to express concern over Khoza's alleged inappropriate behaviour.

"Two of the crew members asked me on the side if I was okay, noting Khoza's behaviour as inappropriate," Nokwe-Mseleku previously stated.

However, official statements from both the production house and Khoza strongly dispute this narrative, clarifying the explicit nature of the shoot.

The producers revealed that the shoot was a highly choreographed, fully clothed violent stunt scene within a serial killer storyline where no simulated sex was required, meaning a safety officer was utilized on set instead of an intimacy coach.

"The scene was not a sex scene, it was a violent scene within a serial killer storyline in which both actors were fully clothed, and no simulated sex was required or requested," the production statement clarified.

Khoza broke his silence by issuing a comprehensive public statement detailing the extensive internal and legal reviews that occurred behind closed doors. The actor revealed that on 30 November 2023, representatives from Red Ink Productions, M-Net, industry advocacy group SWIFT, senior crew members, and talent agents collectively reviewed the unedited footage of the scene.

"All parties confirmed that no thrusting, sexual misconduct, or criminal behaviour occurred. The footage simply did not support the allegation," Khoza stated.

The actor further emphasized that more than twelve professionals were present on set—including the director, script supervisor, lighting technician, and stunt coordinator—and none reported any inappropriate behaviour.

Khoza noted that prior to filming, Nokwe-Mseleku was explicitly offered a stunt double for the sequence, which she declined.

"Every action I performed on set that night was strictly in line with the script, the choreography agreed upon with

the directors and stunt coordinator," Khoza added.

The documentation also exposes a breakdown in early resolution talks between the parties. While producers immediately shut down the set on the day of the incident and offered emotional support, a subsequent resolution meeting failed after Nokwe-Mseleku requested a formal letter of apology from her co-star.

"Mr Khoza stated he did not agree with the allegations made by Ms Nokwe-Mseleku and was thus not willing to write any letter," the producers noted.

Khoza, who described the two-and-a-half-year ordeal as an indescribable emotional toll on his wife and young daughter, stated that authorities dropped the criminal case early last year after reviewing the facts. The actor concluded by indicating he will take steps to legally protect his reputation.

"My integrity, my career, and my role as a parent were all placed under a cloud because of an allegation that has been disproven by footage, by witnesses, and by the legal process," Khoza said.



Cultural pioneer Maria McCloy remembered

The death of Maria McCloy does not feel real because she existed with such fullness. Some people occupy rooms. Others occupy cities. McCloy belonged to Johannesburg in a way that made it difficult to separate the woman from the place. Her fingerprints are all over its nightlife, its fashion, its music, its media and the fragile ecosystem of culture that has kept this city alive through decades of reinvention.

McCloy died on Tuesday 12 May in Johannesburg due to heart failure. She was 50 years old.

For many, the first instinct is to attempt to summarise her life through a list of accomplishments. Publicist. DJ. Fashion designer. Writer. Cultural producer. Entrepreneur. But Maria's life refuses neat packaging. It spills over categories because she herself moved through the world with instinct rather than limitation. She understood culture as something living. Something worn, danced to, argued over, documented and protected.

Long before "creative industry" became a buzzword, Maria and her collaborators were building worlds from almost nothing.

In the late 1990s, alongside Kutloano Skosana and Dzino, she co-founded Black Rage Productions, the influential multimedia company that helped define post-apartheid urban youth culture. The trio met at Rhodes University at a moment when the country itself was trying to imagine what freedom could look and sound like. Through television shows like Bassiq, through Outrageous Records and through documenting youth culture with honesty and style, Black Rage Productions captured a generation learning itself in real time.

Their work mattered because it took black urban life seriously. It understood that fashion, music, par-



ties, slang and aesthetics were not frivolous things but markers of identity and political expression. Maria was central to that language. She understood cool before South Africa knew how to market it back to itself.

She would continue carrying that sensibility through every chapter of her life.

Maria wrote for numerous publications, including the Mail & Guardian, where her observations carried the same sharpness and curiosity she brought into conversation. She worked as a publicist for artists including Thandiswa Mazwai, Sjava and Nakhane, helping shape how some of the country's most important voices moved through the public sphere.

But even that feels too small.

Maria was a hustler in the purest sense of the word. Not in the shallow capitalist language that dominates today but in the deeply Johannesburg way. She sold clothes and jewellery. She managed people and personalities. She connected artists to opportunities. She organised meaningful events that gave the city texture. She moved between worlds with ease, from fashion circles to music venues to

media launches to late-night conversations in spaces where culture was still being invented.

She cared deeply about Johannesburg. Not as an abstract city but as a living organism. She gave it colour, patterns and rhythm. There was always something intentional about how she dressed, how she decorated spaces, how she brought people together. Maria understood that beauty could be political. That joy could be resistance. That style could tell stories.

And perhaps that is why her death feels particularly difficult to process. Because there is no real way to summarise what she meant to people in a breaking news alert or a social media post. It would not be fair to a life that moved with such expansiveness.

For many younger creatives, Maria represented possibility. She came from a generation that built platforms without waiting for permission. A generation that documented itself because it knew mainstream institutions would not do it properly. She belonged to the architects of black urban culture in democratic South Africa, those who insisted that the stories of young black people deserved style, complexity and permanence.

Johannesburg has always been a city carried by personalities. By people who become unofficial landmarks. Maria McCloy was one of them.

To speak about her only in past tense already feels insufficient because her influence remains everywhere — in the sound of the city's nightlife, in its fashion sensibility, in the artists she championed, in the media spaces she helped shape and in the many people who learned from watching her move through the world unapologetically.

Maria McCloy did not simply participate in culture. She was part of its DNA. — Mail and Guardian

Xenophobia Fears Cancel Ferré Gola Joburg Concert



By JN Reporter

The highly anticipated South African debut of Congolese Rumba maestro Ferré Gola was abruptly cancelled over the weekend due to acute security concerns. The multi-award-winning vocalist was scheduled to deliver an intimate acoustic showcase at the Lyric Theatre at Gold Reef City on Saturday, 16 May 2026.

"The promoter regrets to announce the cancellation of the concert due to the current security climate and ongoing xenophobic attacks in certain regions of South Africa," confirmed event promoter Bob Richard Makandalele.

The unique unplugged concert was expected to draw a massive crowd of Central and Francophone African diaspora members from across Gauteng. However, escalating anti-foreigner rhetoric and localized protests made hosting the high-density gathering a major security risk.

"The safety and well-being of fans remain our absolute priority," the organisers noted.

The volatile climate has triggered diplomatic ripples, with the Democratic Republic of Congo embassy advising its citizens to exercise heightened vigilance. This marks the second setback for the showcase, which was previously postponed from March, and Webtickets has now initiated full refund protocols for patrons.

Fae Fae YFM 'All Girls On Deck' Birthday Tour



By Refilwe Mochoiri

South African radio host, hip-hop DJ, and influencer Faith Makubung celebrated her 32nd birthday in style this year with a multi-day birthday tour that traveled from the upscale suburbs of Joburg North to Alexandra township, featuring a powerful, women-led lineup.

"It's my birthday, and we are throwing a party on air," she announced on her social media pages.

From May 14 to 18, Makubung took the YFM 'All Girls On Deck' tour to the streets, celebrating her passion for female DJ excellence as a special gift to herself.

With over ten years in the music industry, she is on a mission to elevate women in the music scene.

Inspired by the late DJ Milkshake, she felt a strong responsibility to provide a platform for female DJs to showcase their craft once she got her opportunity to be on air.

Growing up in a musical family, her father was a gospel choir conductor, and her mother sang in the choir and that is where Makubung developed a deep love for music.

Her radio career started at UJFM as a news anchor where her then manager encouraged her by her to take deejaying seriously.

Makubung says she recognized that there were not many female hip-hop DJs in the industry.

Makubung's career gained significant momentum when she became the first South African DJ to perform a live streaming set on the Atlanta-based beat portal BPM Supreme.

Currently, she hosts the "All Girls On Deck" show on YFM every Saturday from 18:00 to 20:00.

The birthday tour featured several female DJs, including Miss Cosmo, Binnz, SheJay, DJ Tshegu, and Miss Bee Moloko, performing in venues such as Pretoria, Rockets, Ce La Vi in Sandton, and the Gentleman's Hangout in Alexandra.

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Name of Executor or Authorised Agent and Advertiser: Ponoane Attorneys, 44 Westburger Street, Suite 110 Library House, Bloemfontein, 9301
TEL: 051 430 7700
Email: ponoaneattorneys@gmail.com

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GIGGuide

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Saturday 23 May 2026
ToniQville Saturdays
Venue: CENTRAL LIFESTYLE

Saturday 23 May 2026
Rio Fusion Saturday
Venue: RIO COCKTAIL LOUNGE

Saturday 23 May 2026
Saturday Groove
Venue: THE ROOFTOP GARDEN BAR LOUNGE

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LIFESTYLE

HEALTH

South African laboratory set to manufacture innovative HIV treatment: Unitaid

A South African laboratory will produce a generic version of a new HIV treatment, in a major step forward for medical sovereignty in Africa, the international health agency Unitaid said on Tuesday.

Lenacapavir, developed by the US pharmaceutical company Gilead, is an injectable HIV treatment that only needs to be administered twice a year.

According to experts, that represents a huge advance compared with treatments that require taking a tablet every day, especially for women, who can be stigmatised. Studies show that lenacapavir reduces the risk of HIV transmission by 99.9 percent.

"Together with Gilead, we have an agreement with the government of South Africa for this drug to be produced in South Africa as soon as possible," Unitaid executive director Philippe Duneton said.

Unitaid works to fight diseases in poor countries at lower cost.

Duneton, speaking at a Franco-African economic summit in Nairobi, called the move "a very important step" as investment in regional production of medicines in Africa was "absolutely essential".

The issue came to the fore during the coronavirus pandemic, when developed countries largely kept vaccine doses for themselves.

Duneton told AFP that a "preliminary agreement" with Gilead will be finalised once South African laboratories have been identified to manufacture a generic version of lenacapavir.

A call for tenders has already been launched. "I have every confidence in what is going to hap-



pen. It takes months of discussions. We have been talking for years," he told AFP.

Once the South African laboratory has been chosen, Unitaid hopes that actual production will take "one to two years", he added.

"When there are tensions, competition or disruptions in supply chains, it's better to have medicines produced close to home.

"That holds true everywhere, in Europe as well as in Africa." - IOL

FASHION

Soweto Fashion Week AW2026 - fashionCelebrating the designers behind the season

Soweto Fashion Week Autumn/Winter 2026 brought together an exceptional range of design talent across its three-day showcase.

Beyond the headline moments, a number of designers delivered collections that deserve recognition for their creativity, craftsmanship and distinct design voices.

560 Rebirth by Lumka Takane arrived with an energetic streetwear offering in a vibrant palette of lime green, orange, blue and red.

The Soweto born designer showcased the versatility of working with nylon fabrication to create lightweight, breathable pieces that can be styled up or down for any occasion.

Luthando Mboobo, a self-taught designer behind Mboobo Movement, a store rooted in the heart of Vilakazi Street, brought a deeply rooted philosophy to the runway.

His collection explored innovative patchwork, textiles and silhouettes using denim to celebrate diverse cultures, languages and communities across Africa.

According to Mboobo, patchwork is not just a technique but a language of unity.

Bravo & Co by Gift Nematel from Pretoria brought sharp tailoring to the occasion with suiting options for both men and women anchored by an oversized



blazer dress that balanced structure with contemporary wearability.

The collection proved that sharp tailoring remains a powerful statement on the runway.

Kemi-Soul presented a confident men's collection on Day two - denim influences, leather detailing, military pockets and stylish silhouettes sitting alongside a striking women's offering.

Collectively, the Autumn/Winter 2026 season reaffirmed what Soweto Fashion Week has always stood for, that exceptional design talent exists across every corner of South Africa, and that the platform remains committed to giving those voices a stage.

The range of stories told through fashion this season was a testament to the richness and diversity of South African Creativity. -IOL

FOOD Recipes

Slow cooker chilli con carne

PREPARE less than 30 mins Try it with soured cream, fluffy rice and a scoop of guacamole.	cook over 2 hours	Serve Serves 6	Dietary Egg-free Nut-free
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This slow cooker chilli recipe has a little bit of chocolate for a richness. It uses beef brisket, but you can also use braising steak or even beef mince if that's what you have. Try it with soured cream, fluffy rice and a scoop of guacamole.

- Ingredients:**
- 1 onion, sliced
 - 1 red pepper, deseeded and thickly sliced
 - small bunch fresh coriander, stalks finely chopped
 - 1 tsp sunflower oil
 - 500g/1lb 2oz beef brisket, trimmed of excess fat and cut into matchbox-size pieces
 - salt and freshly ground black pepper
 - 2 fat garlic cloves, crushed
 - 1 tsp ground cumin
 - 1 tsp ground coriander
 - 2 tsp hot chilli powder
 - 1 tsp dried oregano
 - 2 tsp tomato purée
 - 400g/14oz can chopped tomatoes
 - 300ml/1 1/2 pint hot beef stock
 - 2 x 400g/14oz can red kidney beans in water, rinsed and drained
 - 1 cube good quality dark chocolate, minimum 70% cocoa solids

- Method**
- Place the onion, red pepper and coriander stalks into a slow cooker.
 - Heat the oil in a large non-stick frying pan, season the beef with salt and freshly ground black pepper, then fry in two batches until golden-brown, transferring to the slow cooker when ready.
 - Add the garlic, spices and oregano to the pan juices and fry for one minute until fragrant. Stir in the tomato purée, tomatoes and stock then bring to a boil. Pour the hot sauce over the beef in the slow cooker, then cover with a lid and cook on low for seven hours. Stir in the beans, then cook the chilli for an hour more until the meat is very tender.
 - Pop the chocolate into the chilli, let it melt, then stir. Season the chilli to your taste, then scatter with the coriander and serve with rice or cornbread.

Fourways to Host Major Coffee Festival

The inaugural festival is set to go down as the biggest coffee celebration in South Africa



By JN Reporter

The much-anticipated Jo'Burg Coffee Festival lands at the Fourways Mall Rooftop in just under two weeks, bringing a major upgrade to the local event calendar. Running from Friday to Sunday, 29 to 31 May, this multi-day caffeine paradise is officially stepping up as South Africa's largest and most expansive celebration of coffee culture.

The premier gathering marks a bold new era for local lifestyle events, completely replacing the much-loved Specialty Coffee Expo. Driven by the extraordinary growth of the regional coffee community, the event has literally been elevated to a spacious, vibrant rooftop setting.

While the show has expanded its horizons significantly, coffee purists can rest easy knowing that the festival keeps premium specialty coffee entirely at its heartbeat.

At the absolute center of the event is the famous Roasters Village. This area remains strictly dedicated to high-end, specialty-grade bean production, showcasing premium coffee from across the geographic spectrum. In a massive win for local enthusiasts, more than half of the featured roasters are traveling into Johannesburg from outside the province, making this an unprecedented national gathering of top-tier coffee talent under one single roof.

Attendees can interact directly with boutique roasters, sample rare flavor profiles, and learn the distinct stories behind various local bean origins.

Beyond the exceptional cups of coffee, the rooftop will feature extensive Sample and Education Bars alongside interactive workshops presented by the African School of Coffee. These spaces are specifi-

cally designed to educate, inspire, and spark curiosity for both seasoned connoisseurs and casual drinkers alike.

Whether you are looking to sharpen your home brewing skills or differentiate your Pour-over from your Aeropress, the live brewing demonstrations and premium espresso machine showcases offer plenty of technical insight. You will also find an array of premium coffee equipment and specialised brew tools available to shop.

What truly transforms the event this year is its deliberate evolution into a full-scale sensory weekend. For the first time, the premium coffee lineup is layered with a diverse, upscale lifestyle experience that extends well beyond the cup.

Visitors can explore local food trucks, street food stalls, and an array of fresh artisanal bakes and pastisseries curated to complement the flavor profiles of the roasts.

For those looking to transition from day to night, the venue will host a dedicated Craft Beer and Wine Bar, offering a relaxed social space to wind down. Combined with a curated lineup of live music performances setting a vibrant background atmosphere, the rooftop promises an epic, well-rounded weekend out for groups of friends and families alike.

The festival kicks off daily at 09h00, closing at 17h00 on Friday and Saturday, and 15h00 on Sunday. Tickets are officially live and can be secured online via iTickets.co.za, with various options available including standard day passes and comprehensive weekend packages. Whether you are deeply embedded in the specialty coffee scene or simply hunting for a premium lifestyle experience in Gauteng, lock in your tickets now before the rooftop fills up.

The uncomfortable money conversations that could save your marriage



Love may be priceless, but marriage certainly isn't.

Between lobola negotiations, weddings, rent, black tax, school fees, debt, groceries and trying to build a future in an economy that feels heavier by the month, money has quietly become one of the biggest relationship stressors for modern couples.

And yet, many people still spend more time discussing wedding décor than discussing financial values.

The truth is, money can make or break a relationship, not because couples don't love each other, but because financial silence slowly creates resentment, shame and distance.

A 2024 Couples & Money Study found that more than one in four couples consider money their greatest relationship challenge. Not infidelity. Not communication. And according to Certified Financial Planner Shaun Chennells from BDO Wealth, the issue is rarely just about income.

"Money is rarely just about numbers; it's tied to security, independence and vulnerability," explained Chennells. If those underlying beliefs aren't acknowledged, finances can quickly become emotionally charged."

In other words? Your spending habits are often carrying childhood fears, survival instincts and personal insecurities into the relationship too.

What did money look like growing up? This conversation matters more than people realise.

One partner may have grown up in a home where every cent was stretched carefully. Another may have been raised believing money is meant to be enjoyed while you have it.

Neither is wrong, but those differences shape everything from saving habits to emotional reactions during financial stress.

Understanding someone's financial upbringing creates empathy instead of judgment.

What debt are we bringing into this marriage? This is the conversation couples avoid until reality forces it open.

Student loans. Credit cards. Clothing accounts. Personal loans. Black tax responsibilities. Hidden financial pressure has ended many relationships long before the vows are settled.

What kind of life are we actually trying to build? One of the biggest relationship mistakes couples make is assuming they share the same vision.

How will we split financial responsibilities?

What happens if one person earns significantly more? What if one partner loses a job?

These conversations feel uncomfortable because they force couples to confront pride, ego and power dynamics. But avoiding them creates even bigger conflicts later.

What does financial security mean to you? For some people, financial security means having savings and investments. For others, it means being able to enjoy life without constantly stressing about tomorrow.

SPORT



TITLE DECIDERS: Orbit College's performance against Orlando Pirates this weekend will determine who ultimately lifts the Betway Premiership title Picture: FARPost

Orbit to 'Decide' League Winners

Orbit College are uniquely positioned as this season's Betway Premiership title race kingmakers, while also fighting to survive possible relegation

By JN Reporter

The Betway Premiership is heading toward a dramatic photo finish as league debutants Orbit College find themselves holding the keys to the South African football kingdom. In a classic David versus Goliath season finale, the relegation-threatened outfit will act as the ultimate kingmakers - deciding whether the trophy heads to Mayfair or remains in Chloorkop.

For Orlando Pirates, the final day assignment remains crystal clear as only an absolute victory will secure them the coveted championship. Securing maximum points against Orbit will elevate the Sea Robbers to a historic 69 points, officially ending Mamelodi Sundowns' long-standing domestic tyranny.

Conversely, a draw or a defeat for the Buccaneers will see Sundowns crowned champions for a record-extending ninth consecutive season. A mere point for the Soweto giants would leave them stranded on 67 points, handing the Brazilians yet another league title by a single point margin.

Pirates missed a golden opportunity to wrap up the championship race last Saturday in front of a

capacity crowd at the Orlando Amstel Arena. The faithful Ghost left the stadium deeply disappointed after a frustrating 0-0 stalemate against a stubborn Magesi FC side.

The unexpected home draw also robbed the Soweto giants of a traditional champions' guard of honour in their final match of the campaign. Instead of a triumphant celebration parade, the technical team faces a high-stakes psychological test to get the players over the line.

Speaking after the frustrating stalemate against Magesi, a defiant Pirates coach looked to rally his troops ahead of the final hurdle.

"We are focused on ourselves. The destiny is between our feet.

"We are focused on how we want to play and our organisation. You can see a strong Pirates team. We don't concede goals; we score goals.

"I told the boys we must focus on how we want to play. We don't expect anything from anyone. We are focused on our team. We are confident about what we want to achieve, and we feel strong about it," Abdeslam Ouaddou said.

While the hosts chase historic championship

glory, Orbit College are fighting a desperate, mathematical battle for top-flight survival. The North West-based newcomers can reach 25 points with a shock victory, which could dramatically alter the bottom of the log.

A win could see Orbit miraculously secure 14th position and avoid the dreaded PSL promotion-relegation playoffs entirely. However, their ultimate safety depends on Stellenbosch FC defeating Marumo Gallants in a simultaneous final-day fixture.

To pull off this football miracle, the underdogs are widely expected to employ an ultra-defensive "parking the bus" tactic. Deploying a low defensive block for ninety minutes and attacking strictly on transition transitions could frustrate the nervous title contenders.

The stage is set for a nerve-wrecking afternoon where raw survival instincts collide head-on with elite championship ambition. All eyes turn to the ultimate decider as Orbit prepares to write the final, defining chapter of the football calendar.

The match will take place at 15:00 on Saturday, 23 May 2026, at the Mbombela Stadium in Mpumalanga.

Siwelele Superfan Going to World Cup



By Gomolemo Winkel

Bloemfontein's iconic football supporter, Botha Msila, has officially secured his place among the South African superfans set to travel to the 2026 FIFA World Cup in the United States, Canada, and Mexico.

The die-hard Siwelele supporter was selected by Sports, Arts and Culture Minister, Gayton McKenzie, as part of a special ministerial initiative aimed at rewarding passionate, self-funding football enthusiasts who consistently stand behind the national team.

Known for his tireless dedication and trademark vocal backing, Msila has become a legendary face in South African football circles, frequently hitch-hiking across the continent to support Bafana Bafana and local clubs.

The announcement of his selection has been warmly welcomed by football fans in Bloemfontein and across the broader sporting community, who view his inclusion as a well-deserved honour for a lifelong servant of the game.

The initiative by McKenzie seeks to ensure that committed, grassroots local supporters are represented on the global stage when Bafana Bafana compete in the prestigious tournament.

Meanwhile, high-profile football superfan, Mama Joy Chauke, was notably omitted from the department's selected list. Her exclusion follows intense public debate and a ministerial audit into the state funding of superfans, with the department shifting its policy away from sponsoring lavish travel packages for a select few.

NC MEC Backs Griquas in Final

By Mpho Sekharume

The Suzuki Griquas are set to face defending champions, Airlink Pumas, in the highly anticipated 2026 SA Cup Final this Saturday, 23 May 2026, and the Northern Cape Sport, Arts and Culture MEC, Mangaliso Matika, has backed the Northern Cape franchise to clinch their second title after winning the Currie Cup Premier Division in 2025.

The upcoming clash, which is scheduled to take place at the iconic Suzuki Stadium in Kimberley, follows an exciting SA Cup campaign that has showcased the high standard, resilience, and growing competitiveness of provincial rugby in South Africa.

"The MEC for Sport, Arts and Culture has extended a message of support to Suzuki Griquas ahead of the highly anticipated final, commending the team for their outstanding performances throughout the tournament and for proudly representing the Northern Cape on the national stage," according to the department's statement.

"The MEC has further wished the team well for the upcoming final and has encouraged rugby supporters across the province to rally behind the Griquas as they prepare for this important championship encounter," the statement continues.

The SA Cup Finals will not only showcase the highest standard of provincial rugby talent in South Africa but will also highlight the critical importance of investing in



local sport development.

According to the release, rugby will continue to serve as a powerful vehicle for youth empowerment, social cohesion, talent identification, economic stimulation, and community pride, while hosting a national final of this magnitude in Kimberley will further position the Northern Cape as an active contributor to the growth of the sport.

"Through sustained support for local sporting platforms such as the SA Cup, (the) government will continue to recognise sport as a catalyst for development, nation-building, healthy lifestyles, and economic participation," the statement notes.

The department further concluded that events of this nature will contribute positively towards tourism, local business activity, and community morale, while simultaneously creating a platform for young players to showcase their talent on a national stage.

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