



Friday 25 September 2026

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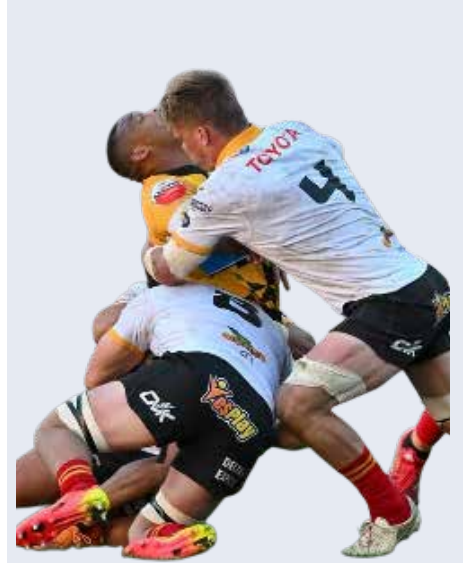
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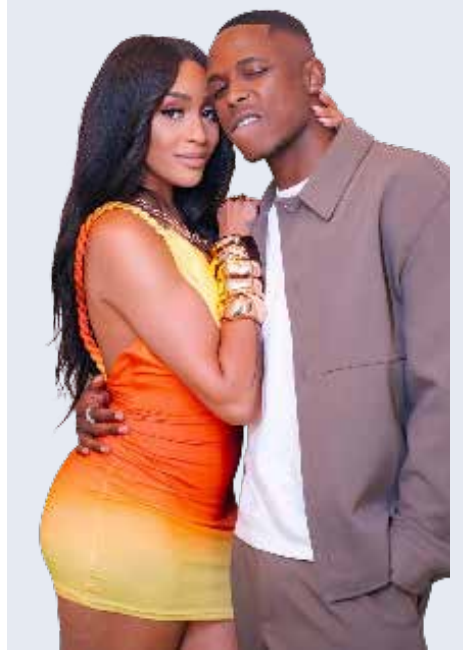
## MABUYANE DEMANDS ACCOUNTABILITY

- *Insists ANC Easter Cape candidates list was prepared on time and ready for submission*
- *Pushes for those found responsible for the IEC registration blunder to face party disciplinary action*

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## EFF Unfazed by AfriForum Prosecution Pursuit

By JNN Reporter

The Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) remain completely unbothered by AfriForum pushing the National Prosecuting Authority (NPA) to prosecute party leader, Julius Malema, for crimen injuria.

The political party claims the prosecution reflects a vindictive agenda driven by right-wing elements attempting to undermine the organisation's societal influence.

"The pursuit of this by the NPA at the behest of the racist reincarnation of the Boeremag in the form of AfriForum, is part of a vindictive ideological agenda by right wingers, who cannot bear the influence that the EFF and its leader continue to hold in various spheres of government and society," the Red Berets said in a statement.



The legal dispute stems from public remarks made by Malema regarding a seven-year-old school child abuse investigation. A local school principal allegedly refused to provide a voluntary DNA sample to police

officers during the inquiry. "His remarks were a political statement of outrage on behalf of a child and a grieving family, not a legal pronouncement; and they must be understood in that context, as

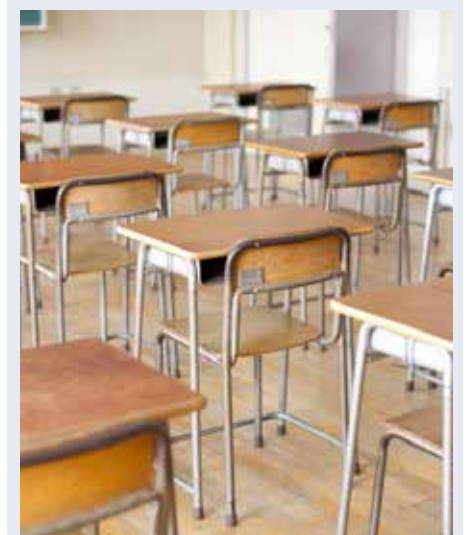
a political statement at a political event in defence of an unspeakable crime against a child," the party elaborated.

The organisation maintains that the principal chose to protect personal interests

over cooperating fully with law enforcement authorities.

According to the EFF, AfriForum allegedly intervened to safeguard the adult male instead of supporting the constitutional rights of the young victim. "AfriForum's relentless political prosecution against the President of the EFF has reached an unprecedented low in weaponizing the justice system in a child rape investigation by unseeing the rights of a seven-year-old African girl child for the rights of an adult white man who is a school principal," the statement continued.

The party insists it will continue prioritising child safety regardless of mounting legal pressures. "The EFF, therefore, makes no apology for protecting and pursuing the human rights of a child over that of an adult," said the Red Berets.



Shock as Learner Stabs DP Page 4

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## Sibiya Sinks Deeper Down Legal Abyss

Latest allegations compound a mounting series of legal battles that may rule out any possibility of career recovery



Shadrack Sibiya Pictures: Facebook

By JNN Reporter

Suspended police official Shadrack Sibiya is sliding rapidly into an irreversible legal abyss following a severe court appearance that shatters whatever remains of his professional reputation.

The Randburg Magistrates’ Court remanded the high-ranking senior officer in custody, with him subsequently being transferred to the Kgosi Mampuru Correctional Centre in Pretoria ahead of a formal bail application.

State prosecutors successfully argued for his detention at the maximum-security facility rather than a local police station due to pressing intelligence pointing to potential escape risks and active witness interference.

Sibiya’s detention hinges on multiple grave counts involving the alleged sexual grooming of a minor, human trafficking and the rape of an adult woman

The latest allegations, which included grooming a 16-year-old girl and the rape of an 18-year-old woman in Sandton, compound a mounting series of profound legal battles that have systematically derailed his once-prominent career within the South African Police Service (SAPS).

For scrutiny already linked Sibiya to fierce political controversies and intense administrative investigations regarding the contested removal of sensitive case dockets.

Acting SAPS National Commissioner, Lieutenant-General Puleng Dimpame, strongly condemned the misconduct while emphasising that internal accountability must apply universally.

“Our commitment to combating GBVF must apply equally within our own organisation. Rank, position or seniority cannot place anyone above the law. Where credible allegations of criminal conduct are brought against a police officer, they must be investigated without fear or favour,” Dimpame said.

The newest shocking charges transform his existing administrative challenges into a big personal and professional crisis from which recovery appears virtually impossible.

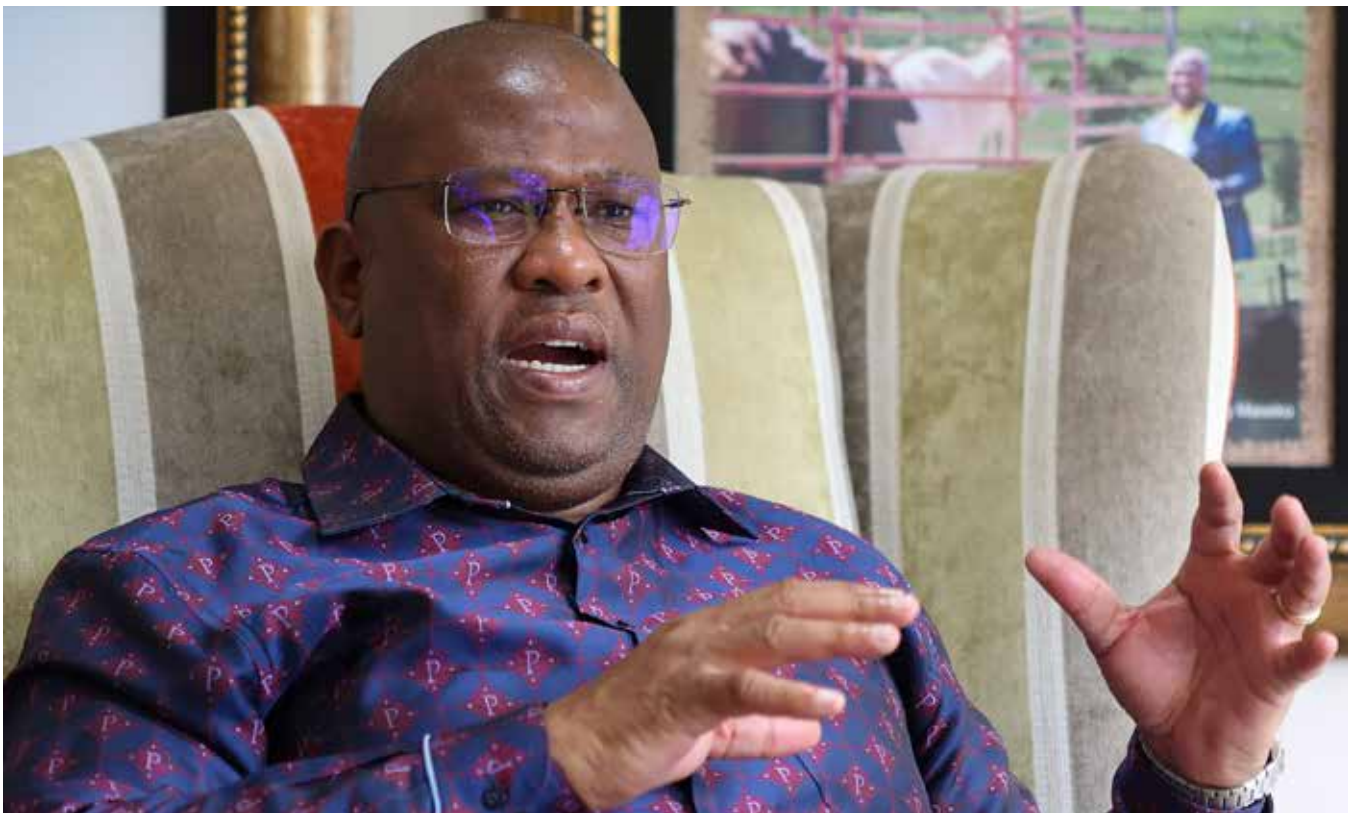
Dimpame stressed that those entrusted with public safety bear a solemn duty to protect society rather than exploit vulnerable citizens.

“Police officers are entrusted with protecting women and children. They cannot themselves be implicated in conduct that undermines this responsibility.

“As the country continues to confront the scourge of gender-based violence and femicide, there can be no room for anyone within the police service who is alleged to abuse their position or violate the rights of women and children,” said Dimpame.

# Mabuyane Demands Accountability

- *Insists ANC Eastern Cape candidates list was prepared on time and ready for submission*
- *Pushes for those found responsible for the IEC registration blunder to face party disciplinary action*



By JNN Reporter

**E**astern Cape - ANC Eastern Cape Provincial Chairperson, Oscar Mabuyane, has insisted that both provincial and national structures share collective responsibility for candidate nomination failures after regional lists were altered and regional

chairpersons removed.

However, he is also demanding an aggressive internal investigation to unmask those who manipulated electronic data, leading to the registration chaos that subsequently transpired with the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC)

An article published by the Sunday Times

on 13 September 2026, revealed that a report tabled by ANC secretary-general, Fikile Mbalula, to the ANC regarding the election list chaos blamed the party’s Eastern Cape provincial secretary, Lulama Ngcukayitobi, for submitting the provinces final list of candidates to the party’s operation centre a mere 29 minutes before the Independent

Electoral Commission (IEC) deadline.

Mbalula’s report further raised suspicion that Ngcukayitobi could have also altered the Eastern Cape list without mandate - thus unlawfully. Through his legal representative, Ngcukayitobi subsequently threatened to sue Mbalula for defamation prompting the SG to retract claims that he was responsible for the province’s local government election list failures. Ngcukayitobi’s legal team argued that Mbalula manufactured these allegations to shift blame for administrative delays tied to national leadership interference, while countersuing that Mbalula himself personally ordered the removal of specific candidates such as Andile Lungisa.

Mabuyane, however, is doubled down on Mbalula’s claims, insisting that the lists were indeed submitted on time with meetings prior to the submission process having been timeously concluded.

He further asserted that Mbalula had indeed given due instruction to Ngcukayitobi to process the submission, however reports regarding the candidate’s submission list debacle revealed that the final candidate list was indeed sent late.

“When our list was taken to the NEC meeting - which was the last meeting on Thursday preceding Friday, which is the deadline - our list was already at a national level, idly ready to be registered. “That’s why we are all shocked about all the manoeuvring, tampering, changes that are alleged to have happened,” elaborated Mabuyane in an audio released by the Sunday Times. “Now we know (that) it is no longer an issue of just

tampering; it is no longer an issue of allegation; it is an issue of tampering. Our lists were tampered with. Regional chairpersons were removed,” Mabuyane insisted.

He firmly rejected claims that exclusions were merely unfortunate bureaucratic errors, warning that individuals purposefully delayed submissions or locked out candidates to settle internal political rivalries.

Anyone found guilty of replacing approved names must face swift prosecution through internal disciplinary frameworks, Mabuyane stated in the audio.

“Mbalula was the one who instructed him (Ngcukayitobi). At least they were both there around that precinct or in that vicinity of the registration. So, between them, one must speak the truth. “There must be the truth that is coming out. The blame game is not going to help for now. We just need answers, we just need truth,” Mabuyane added.

Meanwhile, the ANC has, through an official statement, welcomed the decision of the High Court of South Africa, Eastern Cape Division in Makhanda, to dismiss an urgent application challenging the party’s candidate lists for the upcoming 2026 Local Government Elections.

While expressing its respect for the rule of law and judicial authority the party urged members to utilise and exhaust internal grievance mechanisms rather than bypassing organisational structures.

Furthermore, the ANC called on its structures, supporters, and members in the province to close ranks and focus heavily on community engagement ahead of the elections.

## SIU Exposes R58m Land Fraud



By Nonkululeko Ngubeni

**T**he Special Investigating Unit (SIU) has uncovered the fraudulent transfer of 208 municipal stands valued at about R58 million into private hands in Ekurhuleni between 2018 and 2022.

The investigation found that these vacant stands in Villa Liza Township, near Boksburg, were transferred without council resolutions or lawful authority, leaving the municipality with zero payment.

Authorised by President Cyril Ramaphosa in October 2024 under Proclamation 195 of 2024, the probe examined 221 vacant stands for maladministration, unlawful conduct by employees or agents, legislative violations, and financial losses.

“I am pleased to report that the investigation has been completed and that we submitted the final report to the Presidency in July this year. We are making our investigation findings public,” said Leonard Lekgetho, SIU head.

The scheme involved transferring unallocated land using forged rates clearance certificates and fabricated powers of attorney submitted to the Johannesburg Deeds Office.

Moki Attorneys Incorporated, owned by Kabelo Valentine Moki, facilitated the transfers despite not being on the municipality’s approved panel. The firm falsely certified all documents as true and correct.

Moki and his spouse, Makhosazana Emelda Moki, personally benefited by acquiring 73 stands through the Velamelda Trust and Mokolane Investments. Properties valued between R80 000 and R3.7-million were acquired for just R18 000 each and subsequently resold at an average price of R250 000.

While the scheme involved a deceased estate agent who identified the land, investigators found no evidence that officials at either the Deeds Office or the municipality participated in the fraud.

Cash payments were utilised to obscure the financial trail.

Of the 221 properties under proclamation, 13 were handled outside this firm: eight by the Gauteng Department of Human Settlements, two privately owned, two remaining with the municipality, and one missing from official records.

The SIU has submitted 208 criminal referrals to the National Prosecuting Authority (NPA), referred the conveyancing firm to the Legal Practice Council, flagged tax irregularities with SARS, and filed 147 referrals with the Financial Intelligence Centre (FIC).

In June 2026, the unit secured an interim interdict from the Special Tribunal to freeze the properties and is pursuing civil proceedings to set aside the unlawful transfers.

The SIU also recommended that Ekurhuleni strengthen asset registers, verification processes, and controls in partnership with the Deeds Registration Office.

## CRIME REPORTS

### 140 Guns Seized as Security Boss Faces Firearms Charges

**A** 60-year-old businessman has been arrested for allegedly contravening the Firearms Control Act 60 of 2000 following a compliance inspection at the head office of his security company in Mthatha earlier this week.

The inspection was conducted by members of Operation Buyisa, who allegedly found the businessman in possession of a company firearm without the required permit, in contravention of Section 3(1)(a) of the Act.

Police also discovered that firearms registered to the security company were not accounted for in its stock register.

A total of 140 firearms were seized, while a further 135 firearms remain unaccounted for. The businessman was already out on bail

in connection with an attempted murder case involving a police official in July 2026. It is alleged that he discharged a firearm inside a tent during a traditional ceremony, resulting in an off-duty police official being wounded.

The accused is expected to appear before the Mthatha Magistrates’ Court on Tuesday, 29 September 2026, for a formal bail application following the latest arrest.

The seized firearms will undergo ballistic testing to determine whether they may have been used in other serious and violent crimes.

SAPS said compliance inspections would continue as part of efforts to enforce the Firearms Control Act and curb the unlawful possession and use of firearms.

### 10-Year Jail Term for Attempted Rape of Teenager

**T**he Bloemfontein Regional Court has sentenced 40-year-old foreign national Basile Steyn to 10 years in prison for attempted rape, with a further two-year sentence for contravening the Immigration Act.

The conviction stems from an incident on 28 April 2024, when Steyn allegedly pursued a 16-year-old girl and threatened her with a knife.

The victim attempted to escape and sought refuge at a nearby residence, but the accused allegedly forced his way into the home and damaged property in an attempt to reach her.

She was rescued by the homeowner and

his son, who intervened before the accused was arrested.

A subsequent investigation by detectives established that Steyn is a Lesotho citizen who was residing in South Africa illegally.

The investigating officer opposed bail and presented evidence before the court, despite Steyn denying the allegations.

The court ultimately sentenced him to 10 years for attempted rape and an additional two years for illegally remaining in the country. SAPS commended the investigating team for its work in securing the conviction and ensuring that the perpetrator was brought before the courts.

### R2m Heroin Bust at OR Tambo Airport

**S**APS and the Border Management Authority (BMA) have intercepted another suspected drug mule at OR Tambo International Airport, seizing drugs suspected to be heroin with an estimated street value of more than R2 million.

The latest arrest brings to three the number of suspected drug mules arrested at the airport during the past three weeks.

The 52-year-old South African national had arrived on a flight from Accra, Ghana, on Sunday when he was intercepted by police during an intelligence-led operation.

A search of his luggage allegedly uncovered

bullet-like objects and blocks containing substances suspected to be heroin.

The suspect is expected to appear before the Kempton Park Magistrates’ Court later this week on drug-trafficking-related charges.

Investigations are continuing as police work to establish possible links to broader drug-trafficking networks.

SAPS said it would continue intensifying intelligence-led and targeted operations aimed at dismantling drug-trafficking syndicates and preventing illicit drugs from entering the country.

### R200 000 Property Auction Scam Lands Woman in Court

**A** 32-year-old woman has been arrested in connection with an alleged fraudulent property auction scheme in Potchefstroom in which a complainant was reportedly defrauded of more than R200 000. The Provincial Commercial Crime Investigation Unit arrested Rebottle Ankie Mohlolo on Tuesday. She faces charges of fraud and contravention of the Prevention of Organised Crime Act, 1998 (Act 121 of 1998).

The investigation follows an incident in which the complainant responded to an advertisement for the auction of a house in Randlespark. After making contact through the number provided, she was allegedly sent documents to complete and informed that the property was available for purchase.

She was allegedly instructed to pay a R23 000 deposit, followed by an invoice for the outstanding amount, including attorneys’ fees. In total, she reportedly paid more than R200 000 as instructed.

The complainant was allegedly told that the property would be registered in her name within about 10 days. However, when the period elapsed, she could no longer reach the person involved.

Mohlolo appeared before the Klerksdorp Magistrates’ Court on Tuesday, where she was granted R4 000 bail. The matter was postponed to 20 October 2026.

A second suspect remains at large, with police continuing efforts to trace and arrest the individual. The investigation is ongoing.

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SCHOOLS  
DILEMMA

Shock as Learner Stabs Deputy Principal



By **Matshidiso Selebeleng**

**N**orth West - A Grade 10 learner at Mammutla Secondary School in Kamelput's Village, North West, was arrested after stabbing the school's deputy principal with a knife on the school's premises last week. The incident occurred after the learner allegedly failed to follow instructions.

The attack has sent shockwaves through the community and raised renewed concerns regarding school safety, particularly

because weapons are strictly prohibited on educational grounds.

However, the department clarified that dedicated school safety committees operate across all institutions to protect everyone within the premises.

"All schools have school safety committees and an adopted cop. We understand that the learner used a knife, and it was hidden when entering the school premises so that it won't be detected," said Dr Elias Malindi, the Director of Communications.

Malindi added that such violence is un-

precedented in their district, confirming that the injured deputy principal is currently recovering at home.

Authorities noted that a psychosocial support team has been deployed to offer counselling and trauma assistance to educators and learners affected by the ordeal.

North West Education MEC, Desbo Mohono, strongly condemned the violence, noting that it unfolded just a day after provincial authorities publicly denounced rising bullying within local schools.

"Today it is the worst incident to happen

in our schools again. I wish to condemn this incident in the strongest terms and call on full justice to take its course. I want to see justice happening in our schools for the learners who are transgressing the law. We are grateful that our Deputy Principal is alive, and I wish him a speedy recovery," she said.

Malindi confirmed that a formal case of assault was opened with the local police station and that the implicated learner remains in custody pending disciplinary proceedings.

Dilemma: Tackling Teen Suicides at Schools

North West education sends psychosocial support teams to provide counselling and emotional support to learners and educators



By **Nonkululeko Ngubeni**

**N**orth West - The North West Department of Education has raised concern over two recent suicide incidents involving learners in the province, saying the deaths have highlighted the need for stronger support systems in schools.

The department confirmed that the incidents involved a Grade 10 learner from Thuto Ke Maatla Secondary School in Groot Marico and a Grade 12 learner from Golfview Secondary School in Mahikeng.

The deaths have left the affected families and school communities grieving, while the department has called for greater cooperation between schools, parents and communities to support learners facing emotional and personal challenges.

The MEC for Education, Dr Desbo Mohono, shared her condolences to the families and said the loss of young lives remained a serious concern for the education sector.

"Every learner's life is precious, and the loss of even one learner is a serious matter for the Department," said Mohono.

She also raised concerns about bullying in schools and said learners should be able to attend school without fear of being intimidated or victimised by their peers.

Mohono warned that bullying would not be tolerated and said stronger action should be taken in serious cases.

"I wish to condemn bullying in the strongest possible terms. No learner has the right to bully, intimidate or victimise another learner, or to violate another learner's right to learn in a safe and supportive environment," she said.

According to Mohono, she has instructed the Superintendent-General of the department to ensure that bullying is treated as an extreme offence in schools.

She said suspension should not be the

only consequence in serious cases where bullying has been established, adding that appropriate action should be taken against learners found to be involved.

Mohono is also expected to meet with the South African Police Service to discuss ways of strengthening the response to bullying and improving the safety and security of learners.

The meeting, according to the department, would form part of broader efforts to ensure that schools remain safe environments where learners can access assistance when dealing with emotional, social or personal difficulties.

Parents, guardians, educators, school governing bodies and community members have been urged to be alert to signs that a learner may be experiencing emotional distress.

The department has encouraged learners who are struggling with feelings of hopelessness, emotional distress or thoughts of self-harm to speak to someone they trust, including a teacher, parent, counsellor or healthcare professional, stating that learners should not feel that they have to deal with such challenges on their own.

As part of the department's response to the two incidents, psychosocial support teams will be sent to both affected schools.

The teams will provide counselling and emotional support to learners and educators and assist the school communities in dealing with the trauma following the deaths, while stating the support would also help identify learners who may require further assistance.

The department stated that they would continue working with relevant stakeholders to strengthen learner well-being, mental health awareness and suicide-prevention initiatives in schools across the province.

COSAS Calls for Radical Reforms

This after learner kills another learner at Eastern Cape school



By **Lukhanyiso Khanyile**

**E**astern Cape - The Congress of South African Students (COSAS) has voiced its deep anger following the killing of 16-year-old, Siphosethu Jack, by another learner at Kuyasa Senior Secondary school in Dimbaza last Friday, 18 September 2026. The student organisation has subsequently demanded that there be sweeping structural changes across the education sector in an effort to prevent such gruesome incidents in future.

The deceased Jack had been transferred to the school specifically to protect him from surrounding community violence, only to meet his tragic end within what should have been a safe learning environment. The teenage suspect was swiftly taken into custody as the tragedy sparked nationwide outrage.

At the moment, the case is currently before the courts while police investigations continue.

"What happened at Kuyasa Senior Secondary School should shake the conscience of the entire country and, most of all, that of the government," COSAS said in condemnation through an official statement.

The student organisation argued that classrooms are being turned into crime scenes because authorities have failed to provide adequate protection.

In response to the growing crisis, COSAS has issued severe criticisms against the De-

partment of Basic Education (DBE) while laying out non-negotiable demands for systemic reform.

The organisation insists that the government must immediately employ professional psychologists in all schools, replace unqualified security guards with well-resourced personnel, and deploy regular police visibility.

Furthermore, COSAS called for the strengthening of Life Orientation as a vital social intervention and demanded decisive leadership intervention from the Presidency to combat the root causes of school violence.

Eastern Cape Department of Education spokesperson, Malibongwe Mtima, noted that provincial psychosocial support teams have been deployed to counsel traumatised learners and educators at the school, while urging parents to actively check their children's bags for weapons.

Meanwhile, Social Development Minister, Dina Pule, also condemned the senseless violence.

"Our thoughts and prayers are with Siphosethu's family during this incredibly difficult time," said Pule.

As investigative teams gather forensic evidence and interview eyewitnesses, communities and student bodies alike continue to demand stronger, proactive measures to ensure that educational facilities across South Africa remain safe havens for every child.

NSFAS Records Over 51 000 Applications in First Four Days



**T**he National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) has received 51 474 applications within the first four days of the opening of the 2027 application cycle.

The early application figures demonstrate the continued importance of NSFAS in enabling access to higher education and training for deserving South African students and reflect growing awareness of the opportunities available through government-funded student financial aid.

According to the latest application dashboard statistics, the scheme has recorded a student headcount of 49 413 applicants, indicating that thousands of prospective students have already begun their journey towards accessing higher education and training opportunities in the 2027 academic year.

Of the applications received since the application cycle opened on Friday, 18 September 2026, 43 297 applications were submitted by first-time entering students and prospective applicants, while 6 865 were from Further Education and Training (FET) applicants.

A total of 1 312 applications were also submitted by senior applicants seeking funding, with 12 625 applicants indicated that they are beneficiaries of the South African Social Security Agency (SASSA), and 52 received from students with disabilities.

"The data further indicates that female applicants continue to make up the majority of applications received, accounting for 38 121 applications (74.06%), while male applicants account for 13 353 applications (25.94%)."

"The majority of applications have been received from young people between the ages of 18 and 29, highlighting the con-

tinued demand for financial assistance amongst learners and prospective students transitioning from secondary education into the post-school education and training sector," NSFAS said in a statement on Tuesday.

NSFAS also noted progress made in processing applications received to date.

The scheme said it is encouraged by the high level of participation and commended learners, parents, guardians, schools, and stakeholders for actively supporting prospective applicants since the opening of the application period.

NSFAS also reminded all prospective applicants that the application period will close on 31 October 2026.

"Prospective applicants are strongly encouraged to submit their applications as early as possible and not wait until the closing stages of the application period. Applicants are also urged to ensure that all required supporting documents are submitted correctly and that consent forms are completed where required to facilitate verification processes.

"The NSFAS Board has already communicated that there will be no extension of the application period, and all eligible applicants are therefore encouraged to submit their applications before the closing date," NSFAS said.

The scheme said it will continue to provide regular updates on application trends and progress throughout the application period as part of its commitment to transparency and stakeholder engagement.

Applications can be submitted online through the NSFAS website or via the NSFAS mobile application, which is available on Android and Apple devices. – **SAnews.gov.za**

Farmer Convicted of Heinous Crimes



By **Lukhanyiso Khanyile**

**A**cting Judge Judith Roberson found 42-year-old farmer, Louis Stephanus Lategan, guilty in the Makhanda High Court on 16 September following an 18-month trial. Lategan faced multiple charges including human trafficking, rape, assault with intent to do grievous bodily harm, common assault, and unlawful ammunition possession.

Lategan lured six young women aged 18 to 21 from various cities between 2020 and 2023 using Facebook and recruitment agencies with false promises of high-paying au pair positions.

"The accused, on different occasions, made the complainants consume alcohol or a drink laced with a drug that made them ex-

tremely drowsy, and they would find themselves naked on the following morning, with pain in their genital area," said the National prosecuting Authority (NPA).

Investigations in 2023 additionally uncovered severe physical abuse against adult farm workers who were assaulted with a broomstick, a sjambok, kicked, and pushed into water.

Deputy Director of Public Prosecutions, Nickie Turner, led 24 witnesses to secure the convictions despite Lategan pleading not guilty and testifying alongside four defense witnesses.

Pre-sentencing proceedings faced a delay after Lategan appointed new legal representation to replace his former team, engaging prominent Bloemfontein attorney Delano Mapoe.



# EC Village Gets Sheep Shearing Shed Boost

New facility aims to empower local farmers by increasing wool production and boosting economic growth



By **Nonkululeko Ngubeni**

**E**astern Cape - Ngonyama Village community members turned out in large numbers for the official opening of a R1.4 million shearing shed aimed at boosting wool production and improving the livelihoods of local farmers.

The facility was officially opened by Eastern Cape Agriculture MEC, Nonceba Kontsiwe, alongside Mbhashe Local Municipality Executive Mayor Dr Samkelo Janda.

The Department of Agriculture invested more than R1.4-million in the construction of the facility, which is equipped with a plunge dipping tank, ablation facilities, an office, removable animal-handling equipment and fencing.

The investment comes as communities in rural Mbhashe continue to face high levels of unemployment and limited economic opportunities, making agriculture an important

source of livelihoods and income.

The Masibambisane Woolgrowers Association (MWA), formed in 2017, has 48 members, comprising 23 women and 25 men.

The association also received 10 Dohne Merino rams from the department to improve the quality of its flock and wool clip.

During the last shearing season, the farmers sheared 3 409 sheep and produced 19 bales of wool, which were sold to Cape Mohair and Wool (CMW) in Gqeberha for R98 342.

Before the construction of the facility, farmers had to travel more than 15km to a shearing shed in Xeni location in another ward.

Masibambisane Woolgrowers Association chairperson, Mtutuzeli Vayisi said the new facility would improve the conditions under which farmers operate and create opportunities to increase both the quantity and quality of their wool.

"We are very happy that the government has provided us with a shed. Over the past nine to 10 years, we were using our houses to shear sheep. We are hopeful that using this shed will increase the quality and quantity of wool," said Vayisi.

He said he was encouraged by the growing interest in wool production among young people and women.

"We are also happy that the youth and women are showing interest in wool production because, as an elderly man, I want to pass the baton to younger people to continue," he said.

Vayisi added that the Dohne Merino rams provided by the department in 2022 had contributed to improvements in the quality of their flock.

"The rams have changed the quality of our flock, and we are now producing good quality wool," said Vayisi.

Kontsiwe encouraged farmers to make

full use of the new infrastructure to increase production and work towards becoming commercially sustainable.

"Farmers should grow and be able to export their own wool for even better returns instead of only supplying other people. This structure should encourage you to roll up your sleeves and work for the development of the community and participate in the economic growth of the province," said Kontsiwe.

She also urged community members to work with police to combat stock theft and report suspicious activities.

Meanwhile, Janda also called on the community to protect the government-funded infrastructure and ensure that it remains dedicated to its intended purpose.

"The community should not convert the sheds into churches and creches. You should use them for what they are intended for," Janda said.

## PSA Issues Two-Pot Withdrawals Warning

Public servants organisation cautions against repeat withdrawals amid rising costs of living



By **Nonkululeko Ngubeni**

**T**he Public Servants Association has urged state employees to exercise caution before tapping into their retirement savings through the Two-Pot Retirement System, warning that recurring withdrawals severely diminish future financial security.

The advisory addresses intensifying cost-of-living pressures, as households grapple with surging expenses spanning housing, food, transport, health-care, and education against lagging salary adjustments.

National Treasury and revenue data reveal widespread utilisation since the legislative rollout in September 2024, with cumulative disbursements surpassing R57-billion across nearly four million transactions by mid-2025. Prior to leaving the South African Revenue Service (SARS), former commissioner, Edward Kieswetter, had confirmed that taxation on these disbursements yielded approximately R15-billion, with nearly four hundred and seventy-eight thousand transactions representing repeat

withdrawals.

Recent analysis from Momentum Corporate underscores that 44% of claimants utilise funds for debt liquidation, while 23% cover living expenses and twenty percent fund educational costs.

Furthermore, Momentum indicated that claims following subsequent withdrawal windows predominantly reflect repeat applicants rather than first-time users.

While acknowledging that genuine financial distress may leave workers with few alternatives, the PSA cautioned against treating long-term investment funds as short-term bank accounts.

"This creates a damaging cycle that progressively erodes an employee's retirement security," the association stated.

PSA advised members to exhaust alternative debt-management interventions, negotiate creditor arrangements, and consult professional financial advisors prior to application. Additionally, the association called upon the government and employers to tackle systemic economic drivers to ensure workers can eventually retire with dignity.

## No Foul Play in Witrand Patient Death

The North West Health department probe clears assault claims, but uncovers operational and governance failures at facility



By **Gomolemo Winkel**

**N**orth West - There was no foul play in the death of 44-year-old mental health patient Quinton du Plessis at the Witrand Psychiatric Hospital in Potchefstroom.

This is according to a report released by the North West Department of Health which found that there is no evidence to support allegations of physical assault after examining hospital records and conducting staff interviews.

Health MEC, Sello Lehari, launched the multidisciplinary inquiry following public concern and social media pressure during an oversight visit to the Potchefstroom-based facility on the twenty-first of July last year.

"The investigation team constituted various managers and experts including, specialist psychiatrist, Advocate, Director; Mental Health, Director: Communications, Forensic nurse, Labour relations expert and chaired by one of our experienced Clinical managers in the department," stated Lehari.

Official findings indicated that visible bruises on the patient resulted from medical complications rather than physical abuse.

Regarding separate allegations of a sexual nature, investigators deemed current documentation and interviews inconclusive while law enforcement continues police inquiries.

"It is important to indicate from the onset that regarding the allegation of sexual assault, that the interviews conducted and documentation reviewed were inconclusive. The investigation therefore did not establish sufficient evidence to make a conclusive finding on the allegation.

"The matter relating to the allegation of sexual assault also remains part of the South Africa Police Service investigation process, and the department will await the finalisation of that process," Lehari added.

Despite clearing staff of assault, the probe uncovered severe management gaps, communication failures, staff shortages, security weaknesses, and maintenance backlogs.

"The investigation established that what

seemed like bruises can be attributed to complications of his medical conditions. While the investigation did not find evidence to substantiate allegations of physical abuse, it did identify some management gaps in patient care, inadequate communication and escalation of patient concerns, staff shortages, weaknesses in infrastructure and security, inadequate maintenance of equipment, challenges with laundry and other support services and weaknesses in management and governance."

Corrective interventions are already underway to address infrastructural defects and improve operational standards across the facility.

"The department has already made progress in several key areas identified by the investigation. Staff appointments have reached seventy-nine percent, with forty-three of the fifty-five approved nursing positions filled. The heating system has been substantially addressed, with twenty-six new air-conditioners installed. All identified lighting problems have been addressed, etc."

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# NATIONAL HERITAGE MONTH

## NW Set to Celebrate Its Cultural Roots

By **Nonkululeko Ngubeni**

The North West is turning the spotlight on its cultural roots as the provincial government prepares to officially open and hand over the Ganalaaagte Cultural Village in Tswaing, an initiative aimed at preserving local heritage while strengthening communities' connection to their history and identity.

The celebration – scheduled to take place on Monday, 28 September at the Ganalaaagte Cultural Village in Tswaing – will feature the official opening and handover of the cultural village, with ACSR MEC Wessels Morweng expected to lead the proceedings.

The provincial celebration forms part of Heritage Month, which culminates annually in Heritage Day on 24 September and provides South Africans with an opportunity to reflect on the diverse cultures, traditions and histories that shape the country.

This year, the North West programme will focus strongly on museums and heritage institutions as custodians of the country's collective memory, knowledge and cultural identity.

The department said the programme will examine how communities and society continue to evolve in the face of social, economic and technological changes, while considering how museums can respond to these developments and remain relevant to

communities.

"Museums are custodians of memory and knowledge and are well positioned to contribute to the preservation of heritage while helping communities understand their history and cultural identity," said Morweng.



The celebrations will begin with a march against gender-based violence and femicide (GBVF), highlighting the importance of community mobilisation and social responsibility. Proceedings will then move to the Ganalaaagte Cultural Village for the official opening and handover.

According to the department, the event is aligned with its broader mandate to preserve, promote and protect the province's cultural, historical and heritage assets.

The Ganalaaagte Cultural Village is expected to serve as an important platform for showcasing local heritage and strengthening community participation in cultural preservation.

The department said the facility could also contribute to social cohesion and nation-building by providing communities with opportunities to engage with their history and cultural traditions.

The Heritage Month programme further seeks to encourage South Africans to embrace the country's cultural diversity while developing a stronger shared sense of identity.

Through the celebrations, the North West government aims to reinforce the importance of preserving heritage for future generations while ensuring that cultural institutions continue to play a meaningful role in changing communities.

### Social Development Staff Flaunt Cultural Pride



By **Matshidiso Selebeleng**

Officials from the Free State Department of Social Development, including district teams, marked Heritage Day in style by proudly showcasing their diverse cultural attire.

The celebration brought the department's officials together to honour South Africa's rich and diverse cultural heritage, while creating an opportunity to embrace and celebrate the traditions, customs and identities that form part of the province's social fabric.

Dressed in colourful traditional outfits, officials used the occasion to celebrate their roots and share their cultural pride with colleagues.

The celebration highlighted the importance of preserving and promoting cultural heritage while recognising diversity as an integral part of South Africa's identity.

Through the event, officials reaffirmed the spirit of unity in diversity – celebrating their heritage, embracing different cultures and honouring the traditions that continue to shape communities across the Free State.

### Dihlabeng Staff Turn Heritage Into a Cultural Showcase



By **Matshidiso Selebeleng**

Dihlabeng Local Municipality employees brought culture to life yesterday as the Employee Wellness Section hosted a vibrant Heritage Day celebration honouring South Africa's rich cultural diversity.

The event brought employees together to celebrate the different cultures, traditions, languages and customs represented across the municipality's workforce and communities. It also provided an opportunity for staff to share their heritage, learn from one another and strengthen a shared sense of identity.

Municipal departments embraced the occasion by preparing traditional dishes, creating cultural displays, performing dances and wearing traditional clothing associated with their assigned cultures.

The departments competed in three categories – food, cultural displays and traditional clothing – with creativity and presentation taking centre stage.

In the food category, Rioli claimed first place, followed by Finance in second and Roads in third.

For cultural displays, Electricity took top honours, with Rioli securing second place and Solid Waste finishing third.

In the traditional clothing category, Rioli again emerged victorious, while Electricity took second place. Solid Waste and Finance shared third position.

The celebration highlighted the diversity within Dihlabeng while giving employees a platform to showcase their cultural heritage through food, clothing and performance.

The event reinforced the message that diversity can serve as a source of unity, pride and stronger workplace relationships.

## Springbok Comes Alive for Heritage Day Celebration



By **Matshidiso Selebeleng**

Thousands of people gathered at the Matjieskloof Sports Field in Springbok for the Northern Cape's Provincial Heritage Day celebrations, marking the occasion with a vibrant showcase of the province's rich cultural heritage.

Northern Cape Premier Dr Zamani Saul delivered the keynote address at the event, held under the theme, "Celebrating Our Living Heritage: Strengthening the Ties That Bind Us."

The theme highlights the im-

portant role of living heritage in promoting national unity, social cohesion, Ubuntu and a shared sense of belonging among South Africans.

The celebrations also featured the Indigenous Games Festival (IGF), aimed at preserving and promoting traditional games while encouraging social cohesion, nation-building and appreciation of South Africa's diverse history and cultures.

Premier Saul also led the provincial launch of the Presidential 1 Billion Trees Flagship Programme, which seeks to mobilise communities and stakeholders to contribute to greener, more resilient communities while helping mitigate the effects of climate

change.

As part of the national initiative, the Northern Cape has been allocated a target of one million trees to be planted across the province.

Premier Saul emphasised that achieving this target will require collective action from government, the private sector, businesses, interfaith organisations and traditional leaders.

The Heritage Day celebrations therefore combined culture, sport and environmental responsibility, reinforcing the importance of working together to preserve the province's heritage while building more sustainable communities for future generations.



## President Ramaphosa to celebrate t

President Cyril Ramaphosa has called on South Africans to celebrate the country's extraordinary diversity while strengthening the values of unity, ubuntu and human dignity that bind the nation together.

"Today, across our country, as South Africans, we are celebrating who we are. We are celebrating the languages we speak, the songs we sing, the food we prepare, the clothes we wear, the stories we tell and the customs we observe," President Ramaphosa said.

The President delivered the keynote address during the National Heritage Day celebrations at Bongoletu Sports Stadium in Oudtshoorn, Western Cape, on Thursday, held under the theme: "Celebrating Our Living Heritage: Strengthening the Ties That Bind Us."

The President said this year's Heritage Day theme is important because heritage is not simply about the past but remains alive in people and communities.

"Our heritage is living because it resides in people."

He noted that living heritage can be found in homes and communities, in the knowledge of traditional healers, the work of craftspeople, music and dance, ceremonies, faith, ritu-

als, languages and the African understanding of ubuntu.

President Ramaphosa also paid tribute to the country's Living Human Treasures, including traditional practitioners, storytellers, musicians, healers, craftspeople and knowledge holders who preserve South Africa's collective memory.

He said the country has a responsibility to ensure that indigenous knowledge and traditions are passed from one generation to another.

"We must record it. We must teach it. We must practise it."

"And above all, we must pass it on," President Ramaphosa said.

The President further noted that Heritage Day is an opportunity to remember both the painful chapters of South Africa's history and the courage and solidarity of those who resisted injustice.

He stressed the need for South Africans to remember dispossession, slavery, colonialism, apartheid and forced removals, as well as millions of people who resisted oppression and ultimately chose to build one country together.

**"That too is our heritage."**

The Constitution and belonging



# MONTH CELEBRATIONS



## osa calls on citizens their diversity

The President said the Constitution is part of the country's heritage.

"It is the tie that binds us together," he said, adding that the country's diversity of cultures, languages, religions and histories does not make it less of a nation.

"Our diversity does not make us less of a nation; our diversity is what makes us the nation that we are," the President said.

The President emphasised that South Africa's challenge is to bring its different identities together and use diversity as an opportunity to learn from one another.

However, he warned that belonging cannot only be something written in the Constitution.

"It must be something people experience in their daily lives. And that is where the challenge of our generation lies."

**Equality and gender-based violence**

The President said belonging should be reflected in access to education, healthcare, social protection, housing, basic services and economic opportunities.

"This freedom is not equally lived by someone who lives in a community where the streets are safe, and someone who lives every day with the fear of crime. It is unequally lived by a household that can provide its own electricity and water, and a household dependent on a municipality that is failing to provide basic services.

"It is unequally lived by a young person with access to education, technology and opportunity, and another young person whose circumstances deny them those opportunities.

"And it is profoundly unequally lived by a man who can walk the streets without fear, and a woman who must constantly consider whether she will be safe," the President said.

President Ramaphosa added that under the umbrella of the National Dialogue process, government wants to write the next chapter of the South African story and craft a new vision for the country.

"We have attained our freedom; the next step in our collective journey is giving meaning to that freedom," the President said.

In addition, he said violence against women "will not be part of the inheritance we leave to the next generation."

"In a few days, I will address the nation on the steps government is taking to confront gender-based violence, and to update South Africans on the investigation into the killings of women in and around Ekurhuleni," he said.

**-SAnews.gov.za**



## FS Heritage Fest Honours Cultural Diversity

By Gomolemo Winkel

The rich cultural diversity of the Free State took centre stage as the Department of Public Works and Infrastructure celebrated Heritage Day on Wednesday, 23 September, at the Visitors Information Centre (VIC) in Bloemfontein.

The celebration brought together MEC Dibolelo Mance, HOD Molato Tshabalala and department employees in a colourful showcase of South Africa's diverse cultures and traditions.

The event featured performances by Free State Musicon and the department's Creative Explosive Team, creating an energetic atmosphere that saw Mance herself join performers on the podium.

The department said Heritage Day provides an important opportunity to celebrate cultural differences while strengthening unity and a shared commitment to serving the people of the Free State.

Mance said cultural celebrations play an important role in strengthening relationships among employees and creating a more cohesive workplace.

"Employees of the department come from diverse backgrounds and, therefore, celebrating together not only fosters a spirit of team building but also helps in appreciating

and learning about each other's cultures," she said.

She emphasised that Heritage Day should extend beyond traditional celebrations and serve as a reminder of the responsibility carried by public servants when serving communities.

"As public servants, we are guided by constitutional principles and we, therefore, have a responsibility to treat all people with respect and dignity, irrespective of their social or cultural background," Mance said.

She added that the department would continue working towards an inclusive workplace that reflects the values of Batho Pele and places communities at the centre of public service.

The MEC said embracing diversity within the department could contribute to stronger working relationships and a greater understanding among employees from different backgrounds.

The Heritage Day celebration combined music, performance and cultural expression while reinforcing the department's message of unity, respect and inclusion.

For the Free State Department of Public



Works and Infrastructure, the occasion was not only a celebration of the province's heritage but also an opportunity to remind employees of the values underpinning their role as public servants.

The event ultimately highlighted the importance of celebrating diversity while building a workplace united by a common purpose: serving the people of the Free State with dignity, respect and commitment.

## Mabuyane Leads Qumbu Heritage Celebration Honouring Mpondomise Legacy



By Lukhanyiso Khanyile

The rich heritage and history of the Mpondomise nation took centre stage in Qumbu on Heritage Day as Eastern Cape Premier Oscar Mabuyane joined communities in celebrating culture, tradition and indigenous knowledge.

The celebration was held at Kroza Great Place on Thursday, 24 September 2026, where Mabuyane was welcomed by members of the royal family.

The occasion featured a vibrant heritage parade and a showcase of traditional-inspired fashion by Saved Makoti Clothing, a brand dedicated to celebrating Xhosa heritage through clothing.

The event also paid tribute to the late King Mhlonlto, a renowned 19th-century monarch of the amaMpondomise nation who is remembered for his leadership and resistance during a significant period in Eastern Cape history.

Saved Makoti Clothing founder Lelethu Feni used her social media platforms to promote the event and highlight the significance of the fashion showcase.

"I will be at the Heritage Day event as the founder of the Saved Makoti Clothing line, to showcase the clothing lineup that carries the symbolism of the heritage, pride and historical lineage of the Xhosa nation," Feni

said.

Addressing the gathering, Mabuyane emphasised the importance of preserving the history, genealogy and indigenous knowledge of the Xhosa-speaking communities and ensuring that these remain part of future generations' understanding of their heritage.

"This year is for the Mpondomise so other nations can see and acknowledge their existence," Mabuyane said.

He highlighted the historical significance of the Eastern Cape's traditional leadership institutions and the role played by traditional communities during periods of conflict.

"We have eight kings in the Eastern Cape, and one of those kings left Xhosa initiation

school to fight for his kingdom during the frontier wars in 1912; that is how the Mpondomise nation came into existence," Mabuyane said.

The Premier also referred to the historical use of Robben Island, noting that it had been used to imprison Xhosa kings before it became widely associated with political prisoners.

The Qumbu celebration demonstrated how Heritage Day can provide a platform for communities to honour their history, showcase cultural expression and strengthen awareness of the traditions and identities that form part of South Africa's diverse heritage.

## Gauteng's Living Heritage Shines Through Community Celebrations

By Matshidiso Selebeleng

Heritage Day celebrations across Gauteng have highlighted the province's cultural diversity, with children, senior citizens and township communities coming together to celebrate traditions, creativity and the shared heritage that connects South Africans.

The Gauteng Department of Social Development hosted a Heritage Day celebration for children living in care at the Walter Sisulu Child and Youth Care Centre in Noordgesig, Johannesburg, on Thursday.

Held under the theme, "Celebrating Our Living Heritage: Strengthening the Ties That Bind Us," the event focused on the importance of preserving cultural heritage while strengthening social bonds and creating a sense of belonging among children and com-

munities.

The department said the celebration provided children in its care with an opportunity to learn about and appreciate South Africa's diverse cultural heritage while expressing themselves through cultural activities.

It said programmes of this nature are aimed at ensuring that children in care are not excluded from cultural celebrations, but are instead given opportunities to participate meaningfully, develop their identities and build pride in their heritage.

The department also extended its Heritage Day programme to Ekurhuleni, where more than 100 senior citizens gathered at Actonville Community Hall.

The senior citizens were honoured under the theme, "Honouring Our Seniors, Building a Stronger Tomorrow." The gathering recognised the contribution of older people to

families and communities while creating an opportunity for them to celebrate their heritage together.

Meanwhile, the Gauteng Department of Sport, Arts, Culture and Recreation joined the people of Diepsloot as the township marked its heritage and history through the vibrant Diepsloot Spring Carnival.

The carnival brought together music, dance and other forms of performance, showcasing the creative energy and cultural expression that have become part of Diepsloot's identity.

The department said it remains committed to supporting platforms that provide opportunities for artists and communities to participate in cultural activities and showcase their talents.

Across the province, the Heritage Day activities demonstrated the different ways



communities can preserve and celebrate their cultural identities.

From children in care and senior citizens to township artists and residents, the celebrations provided spaces for people of different generations and backgrounds to connect through culture.

The activities also reinforced the broader significance of Heritage Day as an opportunity to recognise South Africa's diverse heritage while strengthening social cohesion and a shared sense of belonging.

OPINIONS

Letter to the Editor

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EDITOR'S JOURNAL



Mpho Sekharume  
Editor-in-Chief

Freedom Demands  
Real Economic Equity

Only by taking decisive action to  
dismantle systemic inequality can  
we truly honour the heritage of  
our shared freedom

In his National Heritage Day address yesterday at the Bongoletu Stadium in Oudtshoorn, President Cyril Ramaphosa highlighted a profound truth regarding South African democracy.

He said: “Belonging should be reflected in access to education, healthcare, social protection, housing, basic services and economic opportunities.”

Indeed, true belonging to South African society cannot remain merely a conceptual promise written on paper within our foundational Constitution but must become a lived reality for every citizen.

Stark social and economic disparities across local communities continue to expose deep fractures in how political freedom is actually experienced across our country.

As evidenced by recent unfortunate events in Kempton Park and other parts of Gauteng, safe streets and secure neighbourhoods remain an everyday privilege for some, while many others battle constant fear and systemic crime.

Reliable basic municipal services serve certain affluent suburbs, while neglected townships and rural regions struggle endlessly without proper water and sanitation.

This persistent gap in service delivery undermines the core promises of human dignity and equal citizenship established at the dawn of democracy.

“**Economic opportunities and quality education remain severely skewed along historical lines**”

Economic opportunities and quality education also remain severely skewed along historical lines, perpetuating generational poverty across vulnerable households. A young person equipped with advanced digital technology and robust schooling navigates an entirely different universe compared to peers trapped by structural disadvantage.

Ramaphosa further warned that freedom is profoundly unequally lived when a household dependent on a failing municipality cannot secure basic human needs.

These everyday failures create an environment where millions of citizens feel excluded from the national project.

Addressing these persistent gaps surely demands urgent, practical intervention from all leadership tiers across government and civil society.

Government and those elected to be in charge must actively reorganise administrative priorities to ensure that resources reach the most neglected corners of our nation without further delay.

Local government structures must be held strictly accountable for failing to deliver basic infrastructure to vulnerable communities. Public officials need to recognise that administrative negligence directly erodes the social contract between the State and its people.

Bridging the inequality divide is the defining social and political challenge of our generation. Therefore, moving beyond symbolic freedom requires dedicated, collaborative action to build an inclusive economy that serves all citizens rather than a privileged few.

Real transformation will only be achieved when every family experience physical safety, economic security, and reliable public utilities in their daily lives.

Until these fundamental rights are realised across every province, our constitutional democracy remains incomplete.

Isintu sithi: Contemporary South African heritage

September 24 is previously known as Shaka Day and was observed primarily in KwaZulu-Natal to commemorate the Zulu King Shaka. It was in the mid-1990s that the post-apartheid government decided to change what was known as Shaka Day to Heritage Day to foster, embrace, and honour diverse traditions, beliefs, and identities.

This was a period when the concept of a rainbow nation appealed to many South Africans, with the hope of realising diversity, inclusivity, equality, and freedom.

The concept of heritage is deeply rooted in traditional values, distinctive cultural attributes, and natural properties that were passed down by our predecessors. The socialisation process plays a crucial role in instilling traditional values and knowledge relating to social norms.

In the African context, this process requires a communitarian effort to pass down knowledge of socially desirable and undesirable behaviour and actions. The recent events on social media (celebration of Spring Day, altercations between teachers and learners, drug abuse, and delinquent acts) demonstrate the disconnection between communitarian expectations and actions.

Though some view these acts as an indication of normlessness and social disorder, it would be beneficial for society to reflect on the values to be instilled in young people and to seek mutually beneficial ways. South Africa's heritage identity is anchored by the core principles of Ubuntu: care, respect, kindness, and compassion. These attributes of Ubuntu are instrumental in inculcating what is perceived as socially acceptable and promote a humanistic approach to resolving challenges.

The celebration of Heritage Day should include conversations about Ubuntu and embracing our authentic selves.

Celebrating our heritage: Strengthening

the ties that bind us

This year marks 32 years into democracy. South Africans are still in search of the ties that bind us together, apart from sport. Many are still captured by the unbreakable shackles of historical displacement, and generational poverty. The capitalists took over and commercialised sacred spaces that are meant for the restoration and healing of sons and daughters of the soil. Ordinary South Africans are unable to access tangible heritage sites due to commercialisation and monetisation. Though the government claims co-ownership of such properties with communities, these locations are used to attract tourists and maximise profits.

In contrast, native communities are confronted with poverty, hunger, and unemployment. The historical legacy of displacement of many non-white South Africans, by colonialism and apartheid, from their native land denies South Africans little if no access to land. The debate relating to land reform has become political rhetoric without tangible results. Statistics South Africa report indicates that 13% of South African households reside in shacks. There are over 4 297 informal settlement areas in South Africa, with an estimated five million people living in shacks. Before the 1994 elections, Letta Mbulu released a song titled Not yet Uhuru on the March 11 1994, while South Africans were eagerly waiting for freedom. In her song, Mbuli alludes to South Africans sleeping in shacks due to unbroken shackles of injustice and oppression:

*Silaf'emikhukhweni*  
(We sleep in shacks)  
*Akukho mehluko kulelizwe*  
(There is no difference in this country)  
*Qhawul'amakhamandela*  
(Break the chains)

The lyrics of this song reflected on the housing conditions of many South Africans while predicting the current, growing num-



ber of informal settlements, even though South Africans have voting rights. It speaks to the disadvantaged position of the majority group of South Africans.

The unfolding fraudulent cases in the media indicate the government's lack of interest in ensuring that South Africans not only celebrate heritage but also inherit that which should have been passed down through generations by freedom fighters.

Mbuli sensitises the notion about the ancient culture that states the inheritance of

fools is appropriated by the wise. She foresaw the false dream sold to many South Africans regarding access to heritage rights.

**Weh sizwe sakithi**  
(Hey our nation)  
**Weh qaphelani lungani**  
(Hey, be vigilant and ready)  
**Isintu sithi**  
(Tradition says / African heritage says)  
**Isintu sakudala**  
(Ancient heritage / traditional ways of old)  
**Ilifa lezithutha (lezithutha bo)**

(The heritage of the ancestors / traditional customs)

**Lidliwa ngabahlakaniphileyo**  
(Is consumed or inherited by the wise)  
**Ilifa lezithutha (lezithutha bo)**  
(The heritage of the ancestors / traditional customs)

**Lidliwa ngabahlakaniphileyo**  
(Is consumed or inherited by the wise)  
**Nontombi Velelo, Lecturer in the Department of Sociology, University of the Free State State**

Why African leaders must stop  
blaming the West for their own failures



As heads of state gather this week at the United Nations (UN) General Assembly in New York, African leaders will once again invoke colonialism, slavery, apartheid and climate justice.

They will demand reparations and moral reckoning. Then many will fly home to preside over the same systems of corruption, tyranny, patronage and decay that keep their people poor, in squalor and in degradation.

The continent holds some of the world's largest reserves of cobalt, lithium, gold, and oil. It has the youngest population on earth. Yet it remains the poorest continent. That is not an accident of geography. It is the result of a political elite that has mastered the blame game.

This is because for decades, African leaders have travelled to Western capitals demanding justice for the past. They speak eloquently at the UN about historical sins yet they return home to systematic corruption, institutional collapse, sponsored conflict and squalor.

But it is time we remind African leaders that we know the West and Arab conquerors are responsible for much of the past, but they are responsible for the present.

Consider the economic record. After independence, countries such as Nigeria, Ghana, Kenya and South Africa had GDP levels comparable to South Korea and Malaysia. Today they lag far behind. Was this solely the West's doing? Or did post-independence elites choose cronyism and state capture over institutions and human capital?

We are watching leaders who claim the mantle of liberation heroes while governing with the impunity of tyrants. They want the moral authority of Nelson Mandela and Sékou Touré without the sacrifice, and the wealth of Elon Musk and Strive Masiyiwa without the innovation.

Instead of holding those elites to account, citizens are often turned against one another. Xenophobia is used as a political tool in South Africa, Kenya and Ghana. When young people demand accountability in Senegal and Uganda, governments scapegoat the LGBTQ+ community.

When President William Ruto of Kenya is pressed on his own failures, foreigners become the convenient enemy. When the economy collapses, tribalism, religious fanaticism and homophobia fill the vacuum in Nigeria.

Democracy in much of Africa has been hollowed out. It has become a device for

legitimising imposed power rather than reflecting popular will. The choice is too often a corrupt civilian government or a military junta. The ballot box secures the elite; afterwards the public is left hopeless. What is practised is frequently illiberal: majoritarian tyranny dressed as democracy.

These are not mere “developing nations” with growing pains. Too many are failed states run by kleptocrats.

To be clear: the West, the East and the Middle East share responsibility for extraction, arbitrarily drawn borders and a lingering architecture of dependency. That history still matters. But there is a statute of limitations on using it as a shield for present incompetence. The West is accountable for the past. African leaders are accountable for the present.

They cannot keep shouting “colonialism” to avoid explaining cabinet-level theft. They cannot keep shouting “slavery” while children starve and young people are wasted under their watch. This narcotic habit, the weaponisation of history, has paralysed African political life for sixty years.

Confronted with collapsing hospitals, ruined roads and looted treasuries, the reflex is always the same: Pivot to the slave trade, colonialism or neocolonialism.

The strategy is dangerous. It turns the poor against the poorer. It breeds a culture of dependency on a hollow state. Leaders remind us constantly of Western sins so we will not look too closely at their own atrocities against their own people.

This week in New York, the United Nations, the West and the East should stop treating African heads of state as victims who need coddling. Hold them to the same standards of governance expected elsewhere. More important still: Africans must reject the infantilisation of their own leadership.

Demand leaders who care about the starving child, the boy who has been turned into a soldier, the trafficked girl, the men crossing the Atlantic for a “better” future, and the unemployed youth.

The narrative of the permanently victimised continent cannot remain the staple of kleptocratic rule. African leaders cannot keep using the past to steal the future.

**\* Phapano Phasha is the chairperson of The Centre for Alternative Political and Economic Thought.**

**\*\*The views expressed here do not reflect those of the Journal News Network.**

Correcting the world map is an expression  
of spatial and cognitive justice

The motion passed overwhelmingly with 164 nations voting in favour, 6 abstentions (Estonia, Georgia, Lithuania, Moldova, Serbia, and Ukraine), and 1 dissenting vote from the United States.

On the 4th of September 2026, the United Nations General Assembly officially passed the “Correct the Map” resolution, endorsing a global shift away from the traditional 16th-century Mercator projection in favour of the Equal Earth projection.

The resolution, sponsored by Togo and heavily backed by the African Union, seeks to correct centuries of cartographic distortion that visually minimised equatorial regions while inflating the size of northern landmasses.

The motion passed overwhelmingly with 164 nations voting in favour, 6 abstentions (Estonia, Georgia, Lithuania, Moldova, Serbia, and Ukraine), and 1 dissenting vote from the United States.

As the resolution is non-binding, the UN cannot compel nations or private companies to throw out old maps, and the Mercator map remains fully accepted and legal for its intended original purpose: maritime and aerial navigation.

However, the Equal Earth map is expected to replace the old layout in school curricula, textbooks, newsrooms, and official government communications.

Togo announced intentions to update its geography books before the end of the year, and other countries, including France, pledged to drop Mercator from their official ministry maps.

The Mercator projection, designed in 1569 for marine navigation by Flemish cartographer Gerardus Mercator, has been the default projection for 450 years.

It has been used by online mapping tools like Google Maps, government maps, and in education curricula.

It greatly exaggerates the size of landmasses near the North and South Poles, making places like Greenland and North America look significantly larger while shrinking regions near the equator, making the African continent look much smaller than it actually is.

On a Mercator map, Africa appears roughly the same size as Greenland even though the continent is roughly 14 times larger.

The Equal Earth projection, created in 2018, shows continents and countries in correct proportion to their actual surface area.

It maintains true relative areas, introducing minor, balanced compromises to the true shapes of countries, giving Africa and South America their true visual scale.

There have been arguments in some quarters that the resolution was insignif-

icant – that there are much more serious issues the African continent should be focusing on.

This argument fails to recognise how historical Eurocentric narratives about the Global South have shaped not only how people of the global majority are perceived, but how history, which continues to shape the present, is understood.

Colonial historiography did not only shrink Africa, but it also legitimised narratives about its people, including that they were underdeveloped until colonial infrastructure in the form of railways and roads were developed by Western settlers.

This narrative leaves out two important facts: that African civilisations had facilitated development long before settler colonialists laid sights on the continent, and that this infrastructure was never about development but rather, extractivism.

The logistics map designed by colonialists with the use of the Mercator projection lays bare the intention of the railroad and road infrastructure – the need to move extracted natural resources from the African mainland to the coast so as to ensure easier extraction through the seas.

This is not a story of development but rather of colonial extraction and the disenfranchisement of African societies.

It is also a story of the colonial making of nation-states, at the centre of which is the displacement of African people and the imposing of artificial political boundaries over indigenous societies.

Colonial officials drew borders on maps derived from the Mercator projection, using lines of latitude, and longitude while ignoring existing ethnic, linguistic, cultural, and political boundaries.

Single ethnic or cultural groups were separated into different colonial territories. For example, the Somali people were divided across British Somaliland, French Somaliland, Italian Somaliland, and Ethiopia.

Prior to European arrival, African kingdoms and chiefdoms were evolving organically through trade, diplomacy, and conflict. Colonisation froze these native political systems, stripped local leaders of genuine sovereignty, and replaced them with centralised foreign rule.

This disruption of organic state formation shaped administrative control on the continent.

Colonial powers created a two-tier system, separating urban areas under direct European law from rural areas governed through manipulated “tribal” authorities.

The devastating impact of this is evident

# Business

## Markets and Indicators

|             |           |        |   |
|-------------|-----------|--------|---|
| Rand/Dollar | 16.30     | 0.71%  | ▲ |
| Rand/Pound  | 21.60     | 0.35%  | ▲ |
| Rand/Euro   | 18.58     | 0.60%  | ▲ |
| Platinum    | 1 771.20  | 0.77%  | ▲ |
| Brent Crude | 105.45    | -1.47% | ▼ |
| Gold        | 4 307.45  | 0.86%  | ▲ |
| Ethereum    | 2 710.62  | 0.86%  | ▲ |
| Bitcoin     | 83 714.58 | 0.50%  | ▲ |



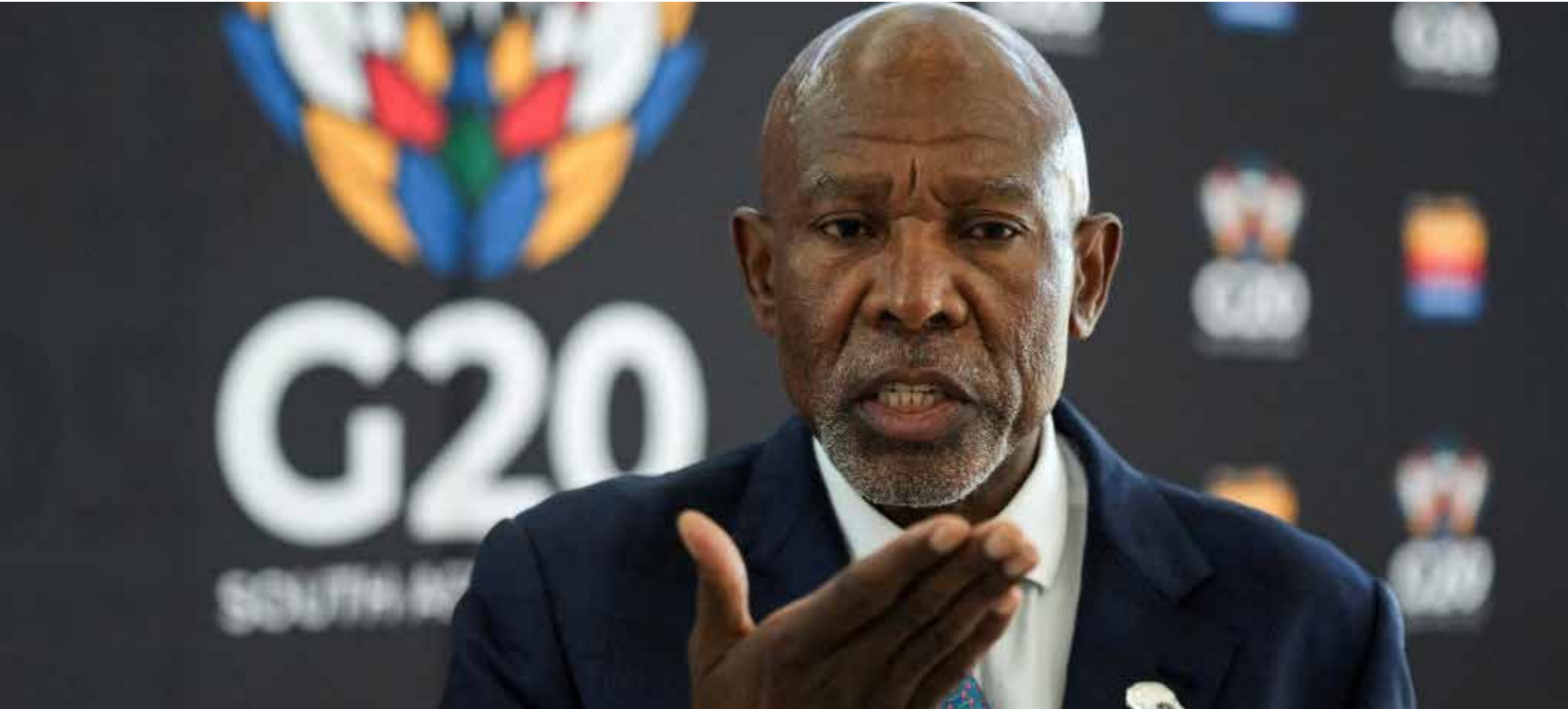
## Spaza Shops Compliance Policies Criticised

By Gomolemo Winkel

The South African union of Spaza Shops (SAUSS) came out guns blazing in criticism of the general spaza shop compliance policies at the recently held Free State Micro, Small and Medium Enterprise Compliance and Support Indaba in Bloemfontein. Union leaders argue that the spaza shop compliance requirements and processes are too costly and overly complicated, thus barring sustainability and entry into the sector. While supporting government initiatives to regularise micro-retail outlets, the union's Secretary-General, Nomsa Morule, criticised heavy-handed enforcement and complex municipal procedures that hinder township traders. "As the union, we support the president's drive to formalise spaza shops, but municipalities also need to make compliance accessible," Morule said. SAUSS President, Teboho Selelane, echoed the latter sentiments adding that traders frequently encounter deliberate delays and political interference when seeking permits.

However, Selelane praised positive municipal interventions like those in Mohokare, where officials assisted traders with on-site registration. "When somebody says, 'I'm struggling with a Certificate of Acceptability', I don't find any reason why it should be rocket science for us to assist somebody with compliance," Selelane said. Hosted by the Free State Department of Economic Development and Tourism (DEDT), alongside municipal and foundation partners, the gathering aimed to connect local entrepreneurs with trade regulations, development resources, and financial support. Gregory Nthatsi, the mayor of Mangaung Metropolitan Municipality, stated that the event contributes toward building an inclusive, growth-directed small enterprise ecosystem in the province. "The aim is to connect entrepreneurs and create support systems for enterprises to comply with trade regulations, business development, finance, markets, innovation and investment opportunities," said Nthatsi.

## Repo Rate Raised to 7.25%



The Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) unanimously decided to increase the policy rate by 25 basis points to 7.25%, effective today, 25 September 2026. South African Reserve Bank (SARB) Governor, Lesetja Kganyago, announced the decision, saying that the inflation outlook faced upside risks, with inflation at 4.4%. "Based on the latest survey from the Bureau for Economic Research, expectations have eased slightly, after rising in the previous quarter. That said, they remain high, with longer-run expectations around 4% rather than our 3% target. "A few months back, it seemed that the fuel-price shock might be unwinding, but now it has intensified. We are also seeing global rates moving higher," the Governor said. He said the MPC had adopted a measured approach to setting rates amid heightened uncertainty while remaining focused on its price-stability mandate. "It is crucial that inflation reverts to 3% as the current shock fades, and we take responsibility for delivering that outcome. "The forecast from our Quarterly Projection Model (QPM) has the policy rate broad-

ly stable through the remainder of this year. The model shows cuts later in the forecast, as inflation falls to 3% and the QPM moves to a more neutral policy stance. "As before, this rate path remains a broad policy guide. Our decisions will continue to be taken on a meeting-by-meeting basis, with careful attention to the outlook, data outcomes, and the balance of risks to the forecast," Kganyago emphasised. He highlighted the challenging and uncertain global environment. "Global supply chains are being disrupted by intensifying conflict in the Middle East, as well as the Russia-Ukraine war. This adds to inflationary pressures. In this context, central banks in major economies are raising rates," the Governor said. Inflation is expected to remain elevated through 2027, driven largely by fuel and services inflation. "We currently project that inflation will return to the 3% target towards the end of 2027. The global shocks continue to hurt the South African economy. Despite a contraction in the second quarter, we expect a rebound in the second half of the year. Annual growth is now projected at 1.2%, revised down from 1.4%," Kganyago continued. He noted that fuel prices had begun rising again after moderating between June and August, while services inflation remained elevated. "By contrast, food inflation is at its lowest level since 2010. This reflects strong harvests and more stable meat prices following the foot-and-mouth outbreak. The rand has stayed resilient, helping contain import prices," stated Kganyago. At this meeting, the MPC considered a scenario involving higher global interest rates. "Our baseline forecast has the major central banks raising rates by about half a percentage point, between this year and next. Our scenario doubled that, taking the increase to a full percentage point. "This causes rand depreciation, which lifts inflation. The model responds with a tighter policy stance, with rates about one hike above the baseline path and slower cuts subsequently," the Governor added. The MPC also considered a scenario involving higher inflation expectations and wage increases. This scenario also pointed to a tighter pol-

icy stance, with the policy rate rising by the equivalent of one to two additional hikes above the baseline peak and remaining higher for longer. "Overall, this is proving to be a difficult year for the global economy, and for South Africa. Geopolitical conflicts have caused severe negative supply shocks, which weaken output and raise inflation. South Africa's growth recovery has slowed, while inflation has increased well above our target. "Our approach is to look through the initial effects of price shocks, while ensuring that they do not entrench higher inflation. Unfortunately, large and sustained shocks, like those we are experiencing now, are more likely to trigger second-round effects, where individual price changes evolve into widespread increases. To prevent this, we are adopting a more restrictive monetary policy, with rates above longer-term levels," Kganyago said. He stressed that the MPC's primary role is to protect the currency's value by bringing inflation back to 3% over time. - **SANews.gov.za**

## Private Sector Helps Boost Local Vaccine Production



By JNN Reporter

Agriculture Minister, Willie Aucamp, secured unanimous agreement from the Agricultural Research Council (ARC) board to let qualifying private companies utilise the council's intellectual property. This partnership aims to manufacture effective Foot and Mouth Disease vaccines at a large scale to overcome existing production

constraints. Aucamp noted that partnering with external firms marks a decisive breakthrough for safeguarding the livestock sector, strengthening national biosecurity, and securing food supply chains. "Partnering with the private sector to manufacture the ARC vaccine marks a decisive breakthrough in safeguarding South Africa's livestock sector, strengthening na-

tional biosecurity, and securing food supply chains," said Aucamp. The council will simultaneously rebuild its internal manufacturing capacity, ringfencing all income derived from licensing agreements specifically for this purpose. Furthermore, representative virus isolates will be sent to the Pirbright Institute in the United Kingdom during October 2026 for advanced vaccine-matching assessments.

## NAD Seals Upington's Kalahari Mall Acquisition



New Africa Developments (NAD) has finalised an eight hundred million rand acquisition of the Kalahari Mall in Upington from Hosken Consolidated Investments following unconditional Competition Tribunal clearance. Situated along the Orange River, the 33 000 square metre retail node attracts around

300 000 shoppers every month with anchors like Woolworths, Checkers, and Game. Management plans to implement a major capital expenditure programme to modernise infrastructure and optimise tenant layouts. The transaction expands the developer's national portfolio to over 37 prime prop-

erties. NAD founder and Chief Executive, Japie van Niekerk, noted that the purchase reflects a strategy targeting high-performing retail assets in peripheral municipal markets. "Isolated communities frequently suffer from limited institutional retail access," Van Niekerk noted.

## Heritage Meets Diversity

Art, nature and conservation converge at Oliewenhuis Heritage Day Celebration



By Katlego Mashwabi

The Oliewenhuis Art Museum hosted a diverse Heritage Day celebration today, drawing local residents to its historic grounds for a programme that integrated fine art, community history, and ecological conservation.

The day began on the terrace lawn with a live bird-ringing demonstration presented by Dawie de Swart and Zingisile Mbo. Following the wildlife demonstration, the manicured green grass was transformed as bright blue yoga mats were rolled out for a public outdoor yoga session led by Darya of the Bloem Yoga Collective.

The midday programme shifted to the Terrace stoep for a highly anticipated live snake demonstration by reptile expert Stephan Fourie, which drew large crowds of adults and children eager to touch the live reptiles.

The demonstration complemented a “Snakes of Bloemfontein” exhibition staged by the National Museum, which featured preserved specimens, distribution maps, and educational staff. Fourie emphasized that wildlife conservation is an inseparable part of South African identity, explaining how these animals fit into the context of Heritage Day.

“Our natural environment is the foundation of our heritage,” Fourie said. “Without snakes, our whole ecosystem will collapse. Then we are looking at diseases spread by rats, mice, and other pest animals. They do rodent control... everything we basically need to keep our environment intact. Without our environment, there’s no food, there’s no life. It’s a crucial link in our ecosystem. Protecting them is protecting the land we inherit.”

Fourie highlighted the Puff Adder as the species that best symbolises South African wildlife heritage due to its widespread presence and ecological resilience. Following the reptile demonstration, attention turned back to the grounds as Dr Oladayo Idris and Dr Lydia Khumo Madika led a guided botanical walk through the museum gardens. The facilitators highlighted the abundance of *Buddleja saligna* (commonly known as the False Olive tree) and noted that the museum likely derived its historic name from these indigenous trees.

Inside the museum galleries, three major exhibitions opened to the public. The Department of Architecture at the University of the Free State presented the 37th Annual Sophia Gray Memorial Exhibition, titled *Spatial Tactics*. The exhibition honoured Gray, South Africa’s first active female professional architect, and featured floor plans and 3D drawings by the 2026 laureates, SAVAGE + DODD Architects.

The museum also showcased *Swing Time*, a contemporary art exhibition curated by Candice Thikeson from the ArtbankSA Collection. In the gallery corridors, a conversation with Mosa Rabanye brought the exhibition’s themes to life, shedding light on how art festivals directly support the preservation of museums and cultivate a broader culture of appreciation. The dialogue centred on several contemporary pieces, noting how their rich mahogany wooden frames evoked a deep sense of conserved history, reminiscent of the Neapolitan and Jan van Riebeeck eras.

Concurrently, the museum presented *A Touch of Red*, a collaborative exhibition exploring the history and resilience of South African women through archival photography and fine art, anchored by the historic phrase, ‘Wathint’ Abafazi, Wathint’ Imbokodo’ (You strike a woman, you strike a rock).

“The blend of art history inside and the lively cultural activities outside makes this a deeply meaningful celebration,” noted local visitor visual artist Johan Du Toit. “It makes you proud of how diverse our culture truly is.”

Ground entertainment throughout the day included live music by the Mangaung String Programme, local DJ performances, wood-carving demonstrations, and family activities including an African Carousel and local food stalls.

# Honouring African Ancestral Heritage on Global Stage

Maxhosa Africa releases a cinematic behind-the-scenes film capturing the gruelling, emotional yet historic journey that took ‘Izipho Zabadala’ collection to Paris Fashion Week

By Katlego Mashwabi

South African luxury fashion house Maxhosa Africa has given the world an intimate window into the high-stakes world of global haute couture with the release of its new documentary, *Izipho Zabadala* SS25/26, *The Making*.

The cinematic behind-the-scenes film chronicles creative director Laduma Ngxokolo’s deeply spiritual mission to present his ancestor-inspired collection at Paris Fashion Week, capturing the raw pressure, sleepless nights, and cultural pride required to project African heritage onto the world’s most prestigious runway.

This documentary serves a dual purpose by building momentum for the upcoming Women’s SS27 Fashion Showcase in Paris while paying tribute to dedicated artisans and backstage crew members. The film acts as a narrative prelude, showing the immense effort behind the *Izipho Zabadala* (“Gifts for the Ancestors”) presentation, setting the stage for the highly anticipated debut of their brand-new collection, *Izihlewele Zivumile* (“The Ancestors Have Approved”).

Ngxokolo explained the framework behind the *Izipho Zabadala* collection, which revises successful designs from the past

fifteen years.

“We are repackaging it and presenting it as a form of imaginative showcase of how our speculative ideas of how heaven looks like where we come and visit and give gifts to a few ancestors from multiple backgrounds from around the world,” he said.

The collection features older individuals and middle-aged people alongside traditional models to authentically represent ancestral figures and move beyond standard runway expectations.

Factory production involves intricate collaboration as Designer, Senzo Mavuso, translates heritage imagery into complex knitwear patterns while perfecting garment



ing.

Production challenges escalated when the team encountered freezing eighteen-degree temperatures, open-roof venues, and torrential rain just twenty-four hours before the show in France.

Emergency measures forced the team to erect an entirely new venue from scratch within two hours while laying down signature Maxhosa rugs as the countdown ticked away.

Iconic singer, Yvonne Chaka Chaka, anchored backstage energy before walking the runway alongside multi-award-winning indigenous instrumentalist, Zawadi YaMungu, providing a live handpan soundtrack.

Celebrity attendee, Pearl Thusi, praised the powerful cultural resonance and stated that the audience experienced a tangible ancestral presence during the Parisian event.

“There was a spiritual presence in there that was incredibly powerful that I felt. I felt the ancestral spirit. Even the rain before the show was a sign,” said Thusi.

Attendees hailed the gathering as a landmark celebration of African storytelling within the global luxury market as anticipation mounts for upcoming collections.

Maxhosa Africa will debut the *Izihlewele Zivumile* collection at Paris Fashion Week, which will run from 28 September to 6 October 2026.

## Nadia Nakai, Toss Hard Launch Romance

By Katlego Mashwabi

South African music stars Nadia Nakai and Toss officially confirmed their romantic relationship by releasing a collaborative extended play titled *Do’s & Don’ts* on 18 September 2026.

The joint project marks a definitive transition from hidden dating rumors to a public partnership following an onscreen kiss in a music video on Valentine’s Day.

Toss, whose real name is Pholoso Masombuka, publicly claimed the title during a podcast appearance by describing himself directly as “Nadia’s boyfriend” before posting online:

“God took his time with her.”

Nakai opened up about the relationship during an interview on the Podcast and Chill Network, describing the Umlando hitmaker as her soft landing following the passing of her late partner, Kiernan Forbes, also known as AKA.

The new six-track offering explores the collision of Masombuka’s township upbringing against Nakai’s suburban roots, navigating class differences, cultural barriers, jealousy

and compromise.

“We made worldly music - music that can really resonate with a person that’s 60 years old and a person that’s five years old,” noted Nakai as she explained their sonic direction.

The track list features standout tunes like *Choose Me* and *Blind*, which includes guest appearances by vocalists Nkosazana Daughter and Sino Msolo.

Alongside the musical release, the couple addressed national gender-based violence following the discovery of nine murdered women in Ekurhuleni by releasing a joint video statement.

Nakai spoke movingly about women lacking safety in South Africa, while Masombuka challenged his male peers to provide active, collective protection and accountability.



# Bloem Gin Fest Sets New Standard

By Katlego Mashwabi

**Free State** - Even a late-afternoon drizzle could not spoil the atmosphere as the outer fields of the Toyota Stadium came alive, as the highly anticipated Schweppes Bloemfontein Gin Festival made its triumphant return to the City of Roses on Saturday, 19 September 2026.

Hosted by The SA Gin Society, South Africa’s premier platform for celebrating craft spirits, this year’s edition proved that the country’s gin culture is thriving.

Moving to a larger venue this year, the festival grounds offered a picturesque outdoor aesthetic.

Under a sprawling white marquee dome, the green lawns were dotted with bright orange and yellow Schweppes umbrellas, setting a picture-perfect scene.

The food lineup brought total outdoor food-truck energy, featuring retro Volkswagen trucks and vintage ice cream caravans serving up a feast.

While options were endless, it was the gourmet lamb rolls and cheese griller rolls that completely dominated the food scene as this year’s ultimate festival fuel.

Of course, the star of the show was the liquid gold - or rather, liquid pinks, yellows, and vibrant greens.

Gin culture has evolved far beyond your standard clear drink, and the festival had the colourful cups to prove it.

From standard gin-and-tonics for the purists to sophisticated blends of craft gin infused with citrus, bitters, and sparkling wine, there was a pour for everyone.

Top local distillers served directly from the taps, perfectly dashed with crowd favourites like Schweppes Pink Tonic and Schweppes Ginger Ale.

“At the Schweppes Gin Festival, what a

“**Bloemfontein, all we can say is THANK YOU.**”

time to be alive!”, said mixologist, Zama Lekhula, shaking up a storm behind a colourful bar loaded with fresh-cut fruit and gleaming metal shakers.

Beyond the tasting tables, the festival was packed with interactive experiences. For

those looking to upgrade their hosting skills, exclusive mixology masterclasses unlocked the secrets to the perfect cocktail.

Meanwhile, the wildly popular Sip & Paint sessions had festivalgoers unleashing their inner artists on A4 canvases, paintbrushes in one hand and premium drinks in the other.

As day turned to night, the energy shifted directly to the dance floor.

Beneath a massive main stage lit up by glowing Schweppes lettering, local legends, TK Tequila and DJ Neps, set a massive mood before passing the torch to the iconic Sketchy Bongo.

By the time the legendary Oskido took over the decks, the crowd was in absolute euphoria, dancing straight through the rain well into the night.

Founded by Wayne Burrows to showcase

local and international craft distilleries, The SA Gin Society knows exactly how to throw an accessible, high-energy bash for beginners and connoisseurs alike.

The event also doubled as a showcase for their own premium handcrafted brand, The Gin Society, which comes in original, pink, blood orange, and blue variants.

With its perfect blend of artisanal spirits, rich food culture, and top-tier entertainment, the 2026 Schweppes Bloemfontein Gin Festival did not just raise the bar for the city’s nightlife - it completely rewrote the rules.

Despite the weather, you turned up in numbers. Good gin, good music, good times! See you next year!” read the SA Gin Society’s thank you note on its official Instagram page.



IN PICTURES: SamKay Rsa, Sketchy Bongo, Zizipho Mondli, Paseka Mareekopane, Nelson Nomongo, Gontse Chabaesele, Terrence Modise, Kebaabecoe Tau, Puseletso Maletse, Tshepiso Marungwane, Tsholofelo Ntsekang, Disebo Pholoana

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GENERAL  
ACCESS

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

PRE-SALE  
~~R60~~  
02 JUN - 01 JUL

PHASE 1  
**R350**  
02 JUL - 26 SEP

GENERAL TICKET  
**R450**  
AT THE GATE

COOLERBOX  
**R100**  
COMPUTICKET

COOLERBOX  
**R150**  
AT THE GATE

AVAILABLE AT

VIP

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

PRE-SALE  
~~R60~~  
02 JUN - 01 JUL

VIP NORMAL  
**R750**  
02 JUL - 19 SEP

VIP NORMAL  
**R1000**  
AT THE GATE

COOLERBOX  
**R100**  
15 MAY - 19 SEP

COOLERBOX  
**R150**  
AT THE GATE

VVIP

TABLE PACKAGE  
**R4K**  
4 PEOPLE

TABLE PACKAGE  
**R8K**  
8 PEOPLE

INDIVIDUAL  
**R1.5K**  
1 PERSON

**NO COOLERBOX  
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# SPORT



## Cheetahs Chase Redemption in Georgia

By **Gomolemo Winkel**

Free State - Toyota Cheetahs have launched their international campaign in the expanded second-round away fixture of the 2026 Toyota Challenge Tbilisi Cup, securing a commanding 38-26 victory against Portugal's Lusitanos in Tbilisi, Georgia, on Thursday, 24 September.

The Bloemfontein-based outfit is battling for the Tbilisi trophy alongside the Airlink Pumas, Suzuki Griquas, Portugal's Lusitanos, Spain's Iberians, and Georgia's Black Lion, marking the first time a Free State senior rugby team has toured Georgia.

The opening leg of the Tbilisi series took place at Toyota Stadium in Bloemfontein earlier this year, uniting African and European teams to foster international competition and cultural exchange.

Head coach Frans Steyn explained that the tournament serves as a vital test to assess younger players while helping returning athletes regain match fitness.

"The focus is primarily on match fitness and allowing players to get valuable game time, particularly those returning from injury. It is important that we get them back to full fitness and into a competitive environment."

Steyn highlighted the inclusion of new and recovering talent within the touring contingent. "Siya Ningiza is returning from injury and, as a new signing, this will be his first opportunity to play for us. Shaun Ray has been part of our system

and needs game time, while Juandre Schoeman has recently joined us from the Bulls. We also have players such as Ntokozo Makhaza returning from injury, and this tour will help us assess where they are physically."

The overseas stint also provides rising talent with critical exposure to professional environments.

"Duncan Basson, Sibabalwe Boo and Darius Erwee are young players who are coming through into the senior setup. We want to allow them to experience our team culture, understand how the senior environment works and gradually integrate them into the squad."

Following Thursday's opening fixture, the Cheetahs face Spain's Iberians on 29 September before concluding their tour against Black Lion on 4 October.

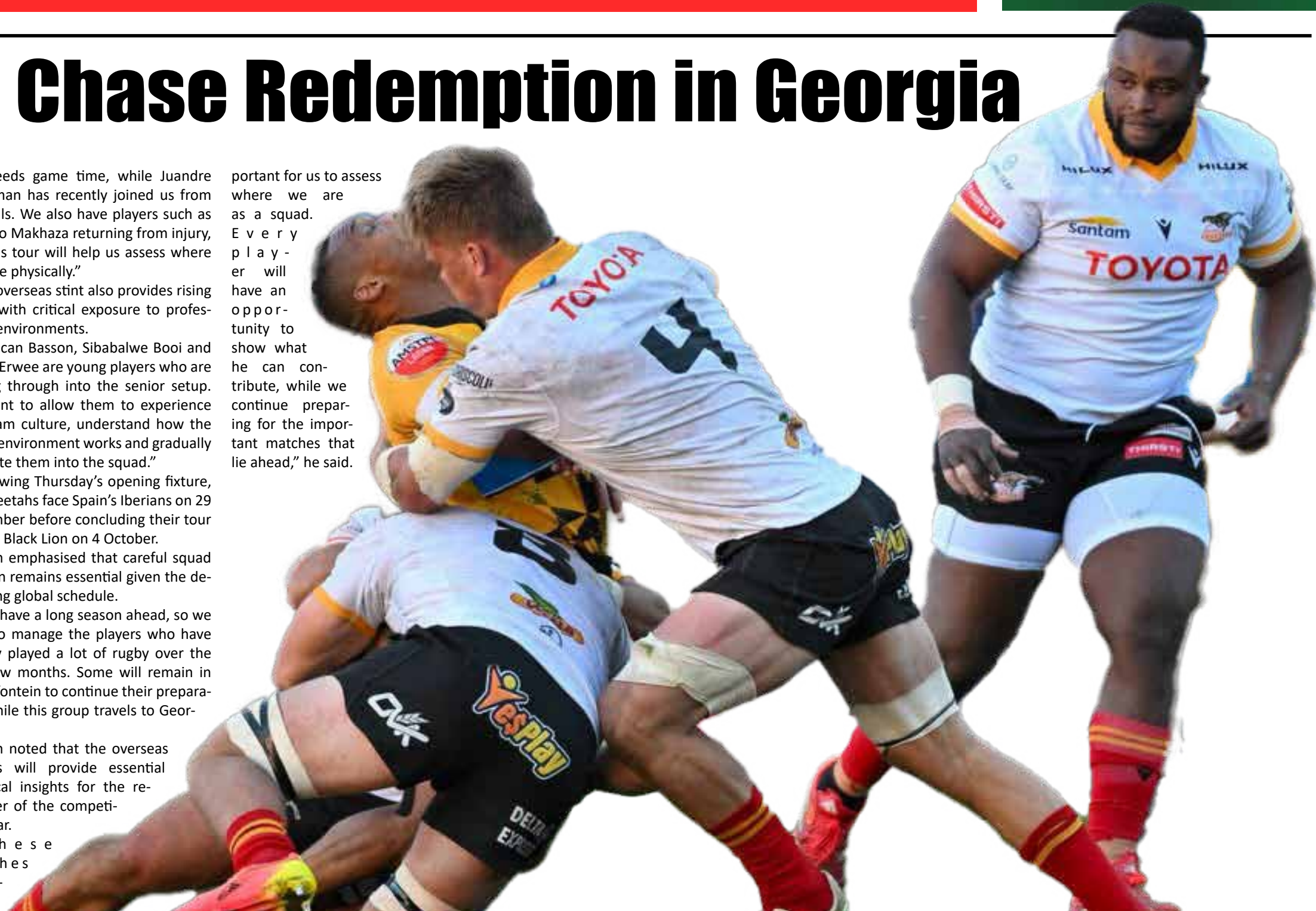
Steyn emphasised that careful squad rotation remains essential given the demanding global schedule.

"We have a long season ahead, so we need to manage the players who have already played a lot of rugby over the past few months. Some will remain in Bloemfontein to continue their preparation while this group travels to Georgia."

Steyn noted that the overseas fixtures will provide essential technical insights for the remainder of the competitive year.

"These matches are im-

portant for us to assess where we are as a squad. Every player will have an opportunity to show what he can contribute, while we continue preparing for the important matches that lie ahead," he said.



## Dragons Target T20 Title Triumph

By **Gomolemo Winkel**

North West - After finishing as the runners-up in 2025, the North West Dragons blind cricket team is hoping to come out triumphant in this year's edition of the Blind Cricket Premiership Division T20 national tournament, which takes place in Polokwane, Limpopo, from 1 to 4 October 2026.

Team manager, Samuel Bareng, revealed that players are working around the clock to reach peak physical condition ahead of the prestigious tournament.

"We are busy preparing the team. Our players are eager to put everything in training, improve their tactics and skills so that when we get to the tournament, we are going to perform and not just go there for sake of going," Bareng said.

"Remember, we lost in the finals last year when we competed against Central Gauteng. So this time around, we just want to make sure that we bring the cup home," he added.

The blind cricket team was established in 2022 and later collaborated with the professional North West Dragons cricket franchise, who helped the side emerge as a competitive force in the blind cricket fray.

Last year, the team finished as runners-up after losing the final to the DP World Lions.

They now return with ambitions of lifting the national title while representing the visually impaired community.

Nevertheless, head coach, Jacob Kaweng, explained that player retention remains a major hurdle due to limited employment opportunities.

"The biggest challenge for us is, there are no job opportunities for people who are living with visual impairment. So, time and time again, if we want to organise a strong team that can represent the province, it becomes an issue of players leaving for greener pastures, to other provinces," said Kaweng.

Despite these circumstances, Kaweng believes the region continues to produce talented players capable of sustaining progress.

"Given those kinds of circumstances, we have a lot of talent in Bokone Bophirima.



It is that kind of a thing that makes us able to move positively.

"We started in 2022 until today, we are still pushing forward involving new ones. And those who are talented help the young ones, and make team to win," added Kaweng.

Blind Cricket South Africa spokesperson, Issac Bidla, noted that national T20 competitions are great player preparation platforms for the global stage, while helping expand the sport locally.

"These tournaments are also important

for the Blind Proteas.

"As we prepare for the World Cup next year, having strong domestic competition gives our players more opportunities to compete, improve their skills, gain match experience and challenge themselves against quality opposition.

"A stronger domestic structure ultimately helps us build a stronger national team capable of competing internationally," added Bidla.

## Resilient Baliti Chasing Glory

*Siwelele FC left-back hopes to inspire the next generation while chasing silverware with the team*

By **Gomolemo Winkel**

For Aphiwe Baliti, wearing the Siwelele jersey is the ultimate fulfilment of a dream that began on dusty fields in George and was forged through relentless perseverance.

The resilient left-back spoke candidly with Journal News Network about a journey defined by rejection, sacrifice, and an unwavering belief in his abilities.

Although his family originates from Cofimvaba in the Eastern Cape, Baliti was raised in George in the Western Cape, where his passion for the sport blossomed at the age of nine.

After representing his school, he joined the Academy of George to further hone his technical capabilities.

Determined to accelerate his professional development, Baliti relocated to the Free State in 2018 to join Bloemfontein Celtic's development structures.

"I migrated to Bloemfontein. I started from 2018, playing for Bloemfontein Celts development. That is where it started. I began at Under-17, Under-19 then to DStv Diski Challenge," Baliti stated.

The promising move hit a major hurdle when the historic club was sold before he could graduate to the senior side, forcing him to seek opportunities elsewhere before eventually returning to Bloemfontein through Siwelele FC.

Baliti admitted that learning about the acquisition of top-flight status brought an immense sense of relief and excitement.

"When I heard the news, it came as a shock because I have always wanted to play for Bloem Celts first team.

"So when the opportunity came, it made me happy - a lot. I saw the opportunity to return to Bloemfontein where I started my football career and finished my grade 12," he added.

The path to the professional ranks required enduring countless unsuccessful trials across Limpopo, Venda, Cape Town,



and the Northern Cape during traditional off-season breaks.

Despite consistently impressing coaching staff, opportunities repeatedly slipped away through initial rejections.

"I trialled with so many teams. And they all rejected me. Even before I joined SuperSport United, I went for trials. And they rejected me. They had to call me back again. And that is how I joined them," he revealed.

SuperSport United eventually handed Baliti a professional contract, providing a welcome reward for his persistence and mental fortitude.

He continued: "I only understood later that those challenges were teaching me football values. When I joined SuperSport, it was a relief because I would be under contract, I would have time to enjoy my off

season."

Representing Siwelele carries deep personal significance, because he intimately understands the passionate bond supporters share with the institution.

"It meant a lot," he said "Siwelele is a team with big-hearted supporters. I know as a young kid, how it feels to play for Siwelele. You know how the fans are passionate about their team."

With the club navigating a challenging campaign, Baliti remains laser-focused on etching his name into the club's history by securing silverware.

"Most importantly is to win cups. At least if I can go with a trophy that I have won for the team. We will be the first group to win something for the team."