



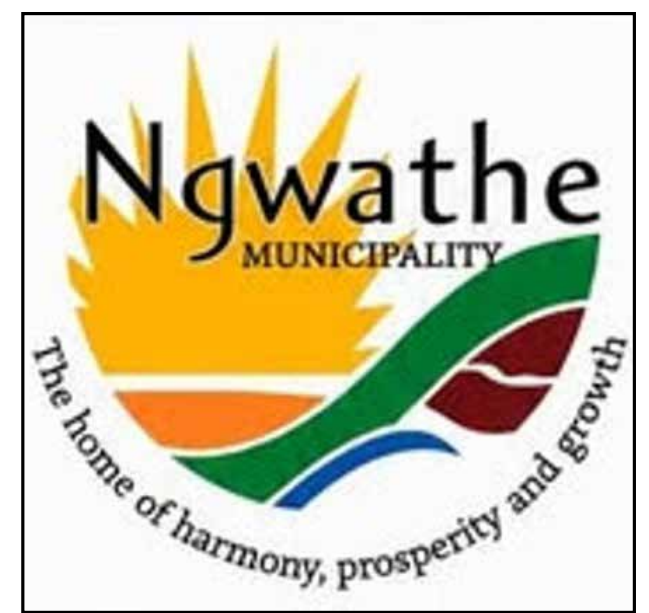
Friday 31 July 2026
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News Network



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Banyana Banyana Out for Redemption **Page 10**

REBUILDING NGWATHE, RESTORING COMMUNITY PRIDE

... Building a dignified future for every resident

... From commitment to community impact

... Restoring confidence through action



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Ngwathe Local Municipality Municipal Manager, Dr Futhuli Mothamaha and Dr Sive Dintsi, Director for Planning and Local Economic Development.

NGWATHE LOCAL MUNICIPALITY

NGWATHE OPENS THE DOOR TO HOMEOWNERSHIP, OPPORTUNITY AND INVESTMENT

More than 1 000 residential sites allocated as Municipality accelerates land release for families, youth and businesses



Ngwathe Local Municipality is making significant progress in expanding access to land, with more than 1 000 residential sites allocated to low-income beneficiaries across all towns in the municipality. The initiative forms part of the Municipality's ongoing Land Allocation Programme, which is focused on giving deserving residents access to land and creating a foundation for secure housing and sustainable community development. The programme remains ongoing, with additional land currently being formalised for allocation to qualifying

beneficiaries — particularly disadvantaged families and youth-headed households. By prioritising access to residential land, the Municipality is working to create opportunities for more residents to build secure futures and establish homes for their families. At the same time, Ngwathe is unlocking land for economic development. More than 300 farm, residential and business land parcels have been advertised for leasing or sale during the current financial year, creating opportunities for en-

trepreneurs, businesses and investors to participate in the local economy. The Municipality is also preparing to advertise additional land for leasing and sale to interested businesspeople and investors. This forms part of a broader effort to stimulate investment, support business activity and ensure that municipal land contributes directly to local economic growth. From residential sites for families to commercial opportunities for investors, Ngwathe is using land as a catalyst for development.

NGWATHE PUTS TOOLS IN THE HANDS OF ENTREPRENEURS — AND JOBS WITHIN REACH

More than 200 MSMEs receive business equipment to strengthen township economies and drive local growth



Ngwathe Local Municipality is putting practical support behind local enterprise development, with more than 200 Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) receiving operational equipment and tools to help strengthen their businesses and unlock new economic opportunities. The initiative, implemented through the Municipality's Planning and Local Economic Development (LED) Directorate in partnership with the Department of Small Business Development (DSBD), is designed to boost township economies, support youth- and women-owned businesses and contribute to job creation across Ngwathe. The equipment handover provides entrepreneurs with

machinery and tools to help them operate more independently, improve productivity and expand their services. Businesses across Parys, Vredefort, Heilbron, Koppies and Edenville are among those benefiting from the initiative, with equipment tailored to the needs of different sectors. Supported businesses include enterprises operating in hardware, manufacturing, services and water treatment, among other areas. The programme reflects a coordinated approach to local economic development, with the Municipality working alongside the DSBD, FSDESTE, Fezile Dabi District of-

officials and SEDFA to unlock opportunities and strengthen the local business ecosystem. For many small businesses, access to the right equipment can make the difference between surviving and growing. By placing practical tools directly in the hands of entrepreneurs, Ngwathe is helping local businesses improve their operations, expand their capacity and create opportunities for others. Local entrepreneurs and community members seeking information on future enterprise development programmes, tendering opportunities or business databases are encouraged to engage with the Municipality's official communication platforms and Planning and LED offices.

'VISIT NGWATHE' TOURISM CAMPAIGN DRIVES LOCAL ECONOMIC GROWTH

New tourism prospectus and strategic partnerships put local destinations, businesses and experiences in the spotlight



Ngwathe Local Municipality is stepping up its drive to grow the local tourism economy with the launch of a new Tourism Prospectus showcasing the municipality's key destinations, attractions and tourism businesses. The prospectus highlights Ngwathe's diverse tourism offering, while shining a spotlight on local establishments such as guesthouses, restaurants and other businesses that contribute to the area's tourism value chain. Taking the municipality's tourism message to a wider audience, a contingent of Free State tourism stakeholders — including Ngwathe Local Municipality employees

— recently participated in the African Travel Indaba in Durban. With the slogan "Visit Ngwathe", the municipality used the major tourism platform to market its local attractions, promote tourism businesses and encourage more visitors to discover what Ngwathe has to offer. Growing tourism in the municipality has the potential to stimulate local businesses, create jobs and unlock new opportunities for communities. The Municipality is also strengthening partnerships with key stakeholders to build a more inclusive and sustainable tourism sector.

Recent Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) with organisations including Pont de Val and the Edgar Legaale Foundation are supporting efforts to promote Ngwathe tourism and strengthen collaboration across the local tourism industry. Importantly, these partnerships are focused on ensuring that local destination owners, tourism businesses and other industry stakeholders are actively involved in shaping and growing the sector. Ngwathe's tourism drive is built on a clear vision: to showcase local attractions, support local businesses and position the municipality as a destination worth visiting.

PARTICIPATION TRAVEL INDABA

The Africa's Travel Indaba 2026 was successfully hosted at the Inkosi Albert Luthuli International Convention Centre (Durban ICC) from 11th to 14th May 2026. Operating under the theme "Unlimited Africa: Growing Africa's Tourism Economy," the four-day event established key milestones for continental collaboration, economic growth, and market access. The show attracted 1,225 exhibitors from 22 African countries, 999 buyers from 44 countries, and achieved a 97% hotel occupancy rate across Durban. Below is of the event's proceedings.

2 INTRODUCTION TO AFRICA TRAVEL INDABA

Africa's Travel Indaba is one of the largest and most prestigious tourism marketing events on the African calendar. Owned and managed by South African Tourism, the trade show acts as premier Pan-African platform designed to showcase the continent's diverse tourism products and services to global buyers. Hosted annually at the Inkosi Albert Luthuli International Convention Centre (Durban ICC) in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa, the event drives economic growth, fosters collaboration, and establishes invaluable business networks across the travel value chain.

3 CORE OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIC PILLARS

The event operates around three primary pillars that anchor its role in continental development. The Free State Department of Economic Small Business Development Affairs (DESTE) targets four primary commercial goals:

- Promote tourism offerings from Ngwathe and the broader Fezile Dabi District.
- Support FSGLTA and DESTE in showcasing the Free State as a competitive travel destination.
- Engage with domestic and international travel buyers.
- Facilitate exposure for local tourism entrepreneurs.

Itinerary Integration: Forcing the inclusion of Free State routes into global tour packages by matching local MSMEs directly with international travel agents and inbound buyers.

MSME Market Penetration: Funding and profiling local Micro Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME)- ranging from boutique accommodation to adventure outfitters- to convert local hidden gems into active trade entities. Cross-Border Route Development: Capitalising on its border linkage with six South African provinces and the Kingdom of Lesotho to establish joint, cross-border regional tourism packages. Investment Attraction: Showcasing high-yield regional expansion opportunities to developers, specifically targeting eco-lodges, wellness retreats, and conference facilities.

The 5 Strategic Product Pillars of the Free State

The province structures its entire destination offering around five core pillars:

1. Culture & Heritage
 - Focus: Immersive historical narratives and intangible cultural preservation.
 - Key Assets: The Vredefort Dome (a UNESCO World Heritage Site), historic battlefield sites, the Basotho Cultural Village, and the historical political architecture of Bloemfontein.
2. Active Adventure
 - Focus: High-adrenaline, outdoor activities targeting younger domestic and global travelers
 - Key Assets: White-water rafting on the Ash River, rock climbing, mountain biking, and 4*4 trail operators based out of adventure hubs like Clarens.
3. Scenic Beauty
 - Focus: Self-drive tourism taking advantage of the province's vast expanses and dramatic topography.
 - Key assets: The Maloti Route, the Golden Gate Highlands National Park (famed for its iconic sandstone cliffs), and scenic water expanses along the Vaal and Orange Rivers.
4. Safaris & Wildlife
 - Focus: Accessible, malaria-free game viewing and conservation experiences.
 - Key Assets: Private safari game farms, provincial nature reserves, and eco-friendly conservation models designed for family travel.
5. City Lifestyle
 - Focus: Modern MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, and Exhibitions) events, arts, and culinary tourism.
 - Key Assets: Craft beer communities, local gastronomy routes, urban art spaces in Clarens, and premium business tourism infrastructure in the Judicial capital.

4 OVERVIEW OF AFRICA TRAVEL INDABA 2026

Opening under the theme "Unlimited Africa: Growing Africa's Tourism Economy," The four-day trade show brought together approximately 9,800 visitors, over 1,200 exhibitors from 22 African nations, and 1,000 buyers from 44 countries. The

landmark event marked the first edition since the City of Durban secured a new five-year consecutive hosting agreement, cementing its position as the premier tourism marketing platform on the continent. The ATL 2026 took place at the Durban ICC, attracting thousands of delegates including buyers, sellers, media, and government officials. The Free State delegation featured 24 tourism products representing all five districts.

The FSGLTA stand served as a vibrant hub for Free State exhibitors to engage with potential clients. The stand featured marketing collateral, live product showcases, and meeting spaces for business matchmaking.

Day-by-Day Event Summary
Business Opportunity Networking Day (BONDAY)
Date: Monday, 11 May 2026

Focus: Thought leadership, knowledge sharing, and global tourism trends.

Key Event: Officially opened by South Africa's Deputy Minister of Tourism, Makhosho Sotyu.

Core Activities: Launched high-level panel conversations regarding policy alignment, destination competitiveness, culture, and digital transformation.

Day 1: Trade Show Launch
Date: Tuesday, 12 May 2026

Focus: Formal opening of the commercial market and economic development.

Key Event: Officially opened by South African President Cyril Ramaphosa.

Core Activities: Initiated thousands of pre-scheduled business-to-business (B2B) matching meetings, showcasing regional product routes and empowering small-to-medium enterprise (MSME) setup.

Day 2: Strategic Collaborations & Policy
Date: Wednesday, 13 May 2026

Focus: Sustainable tourism, aviation, and bilateral agreements.

Key Event: The formal signing of a Tourism Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between South Africa and Mauritius.

Core Activities: Commenced with a community wellness run and beach yoga on the Durban Promenade, followed by the SANParks Regenerative Tourism Power Panel

Day 3: Final Trade & Legacy Outcomes
Date: Thursday, 14 May 2026

Focus: Finalising procurement transactions and outlining future tourism roadmaps.

Key Event: Closed final business deals and integrated vocational student legacy programs, securing long-term workforce readiness for the continent.

5 ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE NGWATHE TOURISM MANAGER

The Tourism Manager operates as a macro-strategist, regional diplomat, and compliance officer, their core responsibilities, commercial networking, and small business empowerment.

1. Strategic Destination Marketing & Positioning
 - Brand Strategic: Curates and enforces the commercial narrative of the municipality. This includes aggressively marketing primary regional assets like the Vredefort Dome World Heritage Site and the Vaal River Adventure Corridors.
 - Exhibition Curation: Designs the visual framework and manages the budget allocation for municipal representation at travel trade platforms like Africa's Travel Indaba.
2. Business-to-Business (B2B) Matchmaking & Networking
 - Buyer Alignment: Initiates direct contact with international hosted buyers and inbound tour operators to include the Free State's northern route into mainstream travel packages.
 - Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs): Identifies and secures corporate partners, developers, and hospitality stakeholders to fund municipal infrastructure.
3. ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT AND GRASS-ROOTS TRANSFORMATION
 - MSME INCLUSION: selects and mentors regional small, medium and micro enterprises (SM-MES)-such as local guest houses, tour operators, and craft hubs—giving them access to global source markets.
 - Economic Alignment: Aligns local initiatives directly with the municipality's overarching integrated Development Plan (IDP) and LED strategy to foster long-term job creation.
4. Oversight, Compliance, and Reporting
 - Performance Monitoring: Superintends the operational conduct, workflow schedules, and service outputs of all division personnel and interns.
 - Post-Event Analysis: Compiles formal performance metrics and returns-on-investment (ROI) reports for submission to the Executive Management and Director of LED.

6 ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF TOURISM INTERNS

Tourism interns serve as the tactical, customer-facing, and operational backbone of the depart-



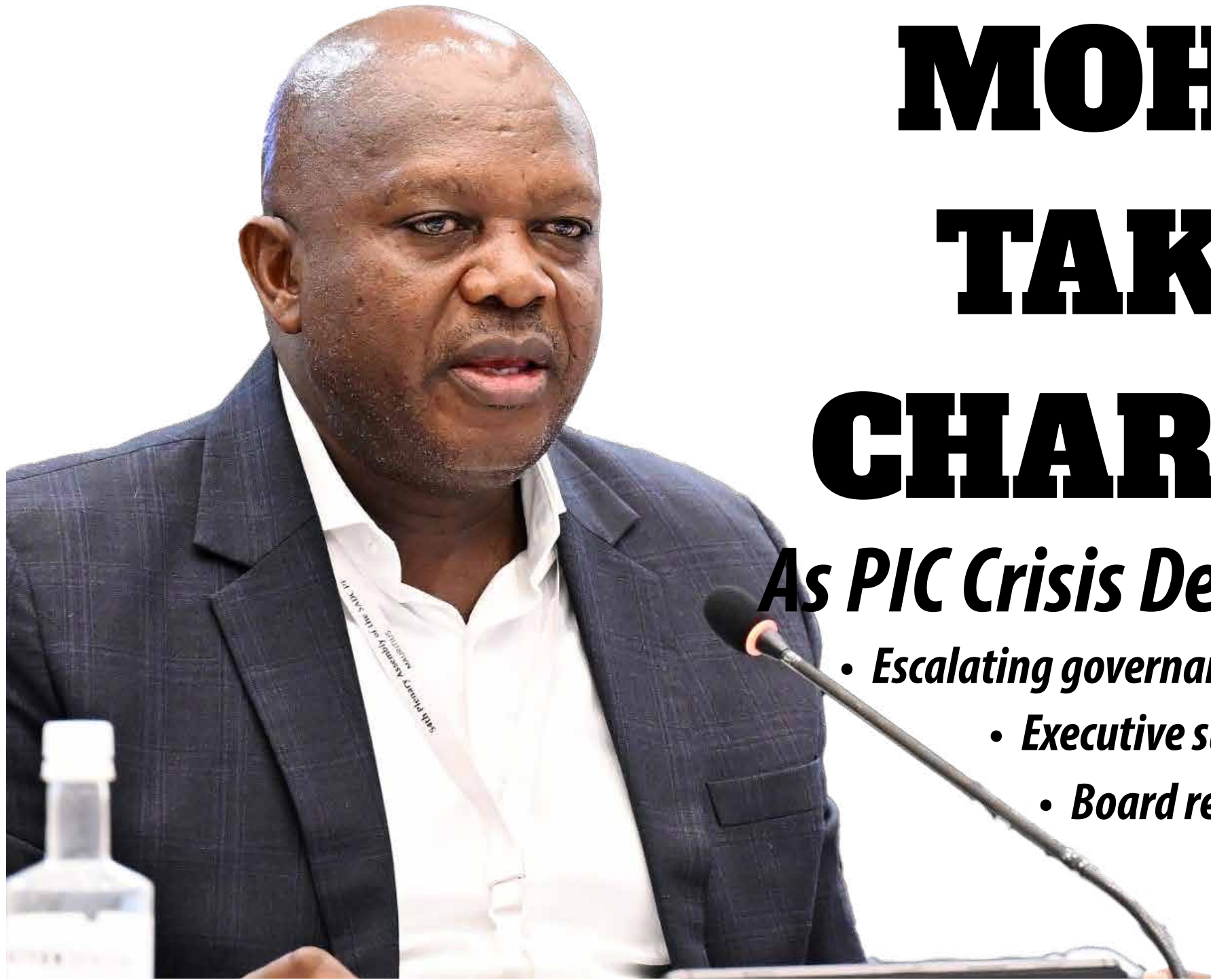
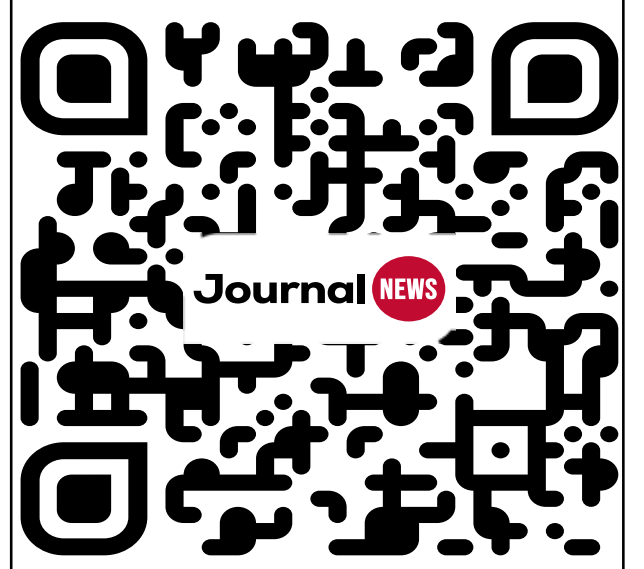
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MOHAI TAKES CHARGE

As PIC Crisis Deepens

- Escalating governance turmoil
- Executive suspensions
- Board resignations

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Banyana Banyana Out for Redemption **Page 10**



From Thaba Nchu to Africa's Hidden Gems **Page 8**



FS Bids Emotional Farewell to Skully Nxangisa **Page 5**

Adams appointed NW police Boss

- **Veteran police commander appointed provincial commissioner as crackdown on illegal mining and organised crime intensifies**

By Matshidiso Selebeleng

The fight against illegal mining and high crime rates in the North West province has intensified with the recent appointment of a new

police chief.

Yesterday the Acting National Police Commissioner, Lieutenant General Puleng Dimpane in Mahikeng announced the former Free State Deputy Police Commissioner Lieutenant General Arthur

Peter Adams as the newly appointed provincial commissioner effective from 1 August.

With 34 years of distinguished service in the police force, spanning specialized policing training and senior command positions, Adams succeeds Major General Ryno Naidoo, who has been acting in the position since December 2024, when former provincial commissioner Lieutenant General Sello Kwane retired.

Adams is expected to strengthen leadership across all five districts and 86 police stations.

Adams is a specialized operator and is qualified

as a Public Order police member, national intervention unit operator and trainer.

He is also an advanced VIP close protection specialist and among the members selected to serve within the elite counter-assault team, one of the country's most specialized tactical capabilities, designed to respond to medium- and high-risk operations.

Adams was also a commander of the Thabazimbi Technical Training Academy responsible for preparing members of the National Intervention Unit, Counter Assault Team and **Continues on Page 4**



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OPINION | Stop calling everyone a xenophobe

Adams appointed NW police Boss



Continues from Page 3

Special Task Force.

Dimphe during the announcement, said appointing Adams is a strategic move for the South African Police Service to drive the organisation's Reset Agenda.

"His leadership experience extends beyond specialized operations.

"Our responsibility was to identify a leader who is capable of confronting the increasingly complex policing environment in the province," she said.

Dimphe lauded Naidoo for the job he did while he was acting in the position.

She said Naidoo provided stable leadership and maintained operational consistency which ensured that policing services continued without interruption.

"His leadership has contributed significantly to operational successes achieved across the province while maintaining discipline, professionalism and organisational stability.

"Naidoo, on behalf of the leadership of the South African Police Service, I extend our sincere appreciation for your commitment, resilience and distinguished service," she said.

Highlighting that the province's richness with mining has exposed it to different crime syndicates involved in illegal mining, infrastructure-related crime, illicit firearms, money laundering, and cross-border criminal activities.

Dimphe said the appointment of a Provincial Commissioner is not merely a human resource exercise, but a constitutional responsibility that carries profound implications for public safety, economic stability, investor confidence and the restoration of public trust.

"The Constitution equally recognises policing as a concurrent responsibility requiring close collaboration between the National and Provincial spheres of government.

"It is for this reason that this appointment was undertaken through extensive consultation with the Premier Lazarus Mokgosi, and all other relevant authorities as prescribed by law," she stated.

Mohai Takes Charge as PIC Crisis Deepens

Cabinet moves to stabilise Africa's largest asset manager after board resignations, executive suspensions and escalating governance turmoil



Deputy Minister in the Presidency for Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation Seiso Mohai. Picture: Joburgetc

By JN Reporter

Deputy Minister in the Presidency for Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation Seiso Mohai has been appointed chairman of the troubled Public Investment Corporation (PIC), a move aimed at restoring stability to the state-owned asset manager as it grapples with a widening governance crisis.

Cabinet approved Mohai's appointment during its

meeting on Wednesday, with Minister in the Presidency Khumbudzo Ntshavheni confirming the decision during Thursday's post-Cabinet briefing. The announcement comes just days after the resignation of Deputy Finance Minister David Masondo, who had chaired the PIC board amid mounting tensions within the institution.

Cabinet also approved the appointment of additional non-executive directors to the board, includ-

ing Patience Nqeto, Lebogang Mokgabudi, Advocate Gatlelane Ouma Rasethaba, Vivien McMenamin, Babulile Swazi Tshabalala, Itani Mafune and Moipone Ramoipone, representing National Treasury.

Masondo's resignation followed reports of a breakdown in relations between himself, Finance Minister Enoch Godongwana and suspended PIC chief executive Patrick Dlamini.

His departure came ahead of a shareholder meet-

ing convened by Godongwana at which he and the remaining non-executive directors were expected to be removed.

Mohai has served in Parliament for more than 13 years and holds a Master of Science degree in Technology and Management as well as a postgraduate diploma in Management of Technology and Innovation from the Da Vinci Business School.

He previously chaired the Standing Committee on Appropriations and co-chaired the Joint Standing Committee on Financial Management of Parliament. He currently serves on the Select Committee on Finance.

"The appointment is aimed at addressing current governance challenges. The Minister of Finance will continue to drive the reforms of the PIC as recommended by the Judge Mpati Commission in consultation with Cabinet," Ntshavheni said.

The PIC manages about R3.6 trillion in assets, most of which belong to the Government Employees Pension Fund (GEPF), making it Africa's largest asset manager.

The latest upheaval follows the suspension of CEO Patrick Dlamini and Chief Investment Officer August van Heerden after whistleblower allegations linked to a R411 million payment involving Lanseria Airport shareholder Acapulco Trade and Invest.

The allegations form part of a forensic investigation into the PIC's decade-old investment in Lanseria Airport and are being examined by the courts and the Financial Sector Conduct Authority (FSCA).

The board has already lost six non-executive directors through resignations, leaving Mohai with the task of steering the institution through one of the most turbulent periods in its history.

Hawkers Permits Scandal Rocks Mangaung

• *Municipal officials face disciplinary action for trading trader permits for bribes*

• *Foreign nationals allegedly granted permits under 'fake' SA citizenships*

• *Intern amongst implicated employees*



By Matshidiso Selebeleng

As the nationwide anti-migration wave is starting to simmer down, the Mangaung Metropolitan Municipality finds itself caught up in a scandal that involves city officials allegedly selling permits to foreign national to allow them to operate Spaza shops and hawkers' stalls in the Bloemfontein city centre.

A well-placed source in the metro has revealed to Journal News Network that there are employees within the municipality that are believed to be trading trader permits for bribes. Amongst those implicated is an internship candidate at the municipality, whose name is known to this publication.

Journal News Network is also in possession of a municipal document, dated April this year, reflecting seven foreign nationals — together with their identity numbers, contact details and addresses — as being registered as South African citizens.

"Questions have been raised within the municipality about how foreign nationals allegedly obtained permits to operate spaza shops and business stalls while recorded as South African citizens," said the municipal mole.

"It was clear from the document that something bigger may have been happening behind the scenes. Their names and identity details indicate their countries of origin, raising serious questions about how they came to be registered as South African citizens," the source continued.

Journal News Network this week approached several permit holders listed on the document as South African citizens. Most declined to comment on the registration process.

However, one permit holder, Amadi Onyinyechi, said he has been operating his business for close to two decades.

"This table was originally registered in the name of a South African woman. I rented it from her from 2009, but when the municipality discovered the arrangement, officials asked me what was happening. I told them the truth, and after their investigation they transferred the permit to me," said Onyinyechi, while voicing his perception that the Free State has generally been a safer province for foreign nationals to operate businesses.

Another permit holder, Boatey Kwebena, a Ghanaian shoemaker, said he had experienced diffi-

culties because foreign nationals with work permits often faced greater administrative hurdles than people with South African identity documents.

"I eventually managed to obtain my permit, and it clearly reflects that I am not a South African citizen. I have legal documents that allow me to operate a small business here," he said.

Another trader, Mohapi Marygoretti Nthathi, revealed registering her permit was a lengthy process. "Initially I registered the business under my husband's name, and it wasn't difficult. But when I wanted to register it under my own name, the municipality required many more documents, including SARS compliance and other paperwork," she said.

Nicolette Maysiels, the acting general manager for communications at Mangaung confirmed that disciplinary action had been initiated against the employee responsible for processing the registrations, therefore suggesting that essential prior investigation may have found against the implicated parties.

"Mangaung Metropolitan Municipality acknowledges that allegations have been brought to its attention. In accordance with the applicable collective agreements, labour legislation and established disciplinary procedures, the Municipality has initiated an internal disciplinary process, which is currently underway," she said.

Maysiels added that the disciplinary process would be conducted independently, objectively and without undue interference. She further said the municipality would not disclose the identity of the employee concerned or comment on the merits of the matter while the disciplinary process is underway.

According to Maysiels maintaining confidentiality is essential to protecting the integrity of the investigation, safeguarding the rights of all parties and ensuring the matter is concluded fairly and lawfully.

Section 5 of Annexure B in the metro's Procedural Manual for Spaza Shop Establishment - which Maysiels included in her response to questions from this publication - a certified copy of South African ID or valid permit for foreign nationals are listed amongst others as set requirements to obtain a trader's permit.

Journal News Network will reliably bring you all relevant developments as this matter continues to unfold.

CRIME REPORTS

Stock Theft Bust: Nine Stolen Sheep Recovered, Two Arrested

An intelligence-driven operation by the Fouriesburg Stock Theft Unit and Bethlehem Crime Intelligence has resulted in the arrest of two suspects and the recovery of nine stolen sheep in Vogelfontein, near Bethlehem.

Police said the complainant discovered on Friday morning that nine sheep, valued at about R20 000, were missing from her farm during a routine livestock count. She immediately launched a search for the animals.

On Sunday, she received information that someone was urgently looking for a buyer for sheep and immediately alerted the police.

Acting on the tip-off, members of the Fouriesburg Stock Theft Unit and Bethlehem Crime Intelligence traced the information to a house in Vogelfontein,

where they found a 25-year-old suspect in possession of a sheep carcass. He was unable to provide a satisfactory explanation for its possession.

Further investigations led officers to a second house in the same area, where a 34-year-old suspect was also found with sheep carcasses. Police recovered all nine stolen sheep during the operation.

The recovered livestock was identified through ear tattoo markings, confirming ownership by the complainant. The sheep were subsequently returned to their rightful owner.

The two suspects, aged 25 and 34, appeared briefly in the Bethlehem Magistrate's Court on Monday on charges of stock theft. The matter was postponed to Wednesday, 5 August 2026, for a formal bail application.

R2 Million Illicit Cigarette Bust: Two Arrested in North West

A major police operation has dealt a blow to the illicit tobacco trade after officers seized illicit cigarettes worth more than R2 million and arrested two alleged undocumented migrants in Klerksdorp, North West.

Members of the Public Order Policing (POP) Unit and the Potchefstroom Flying Squad intercepted a two-ton truck on the N12 near Matlosana on Monday morning after acting on intelligence.

A search of the vehicle uncovered numerous master boxes of illicit cigarettes concealed inside the truck. The driver, 39, and his crew member, 41, both alleged foreign migrants, were arrested at the scene.

Police confiscated the illicit cigarettes along with the two-ton truck, which is believed to have been used in the commission of the offence.

Authorities confirmed that the Department of Home Affairs has been engaged to verify the suspects' immigration status.

Acting North West Provincial Commissioner Major General (Dr) Ryno Naidoo praised the officers for their swift action and professionalism, saying the successful operation prevented the illegal products from reaching communities.

Naidoo said the seizure highlights the South African Police Service's commitment to disrupting the illicit trade, which damages the country's economy and fuels organised crime. He added that police will continue to intensify operations targeting criminal syndicates involved in the illegal trade of goods, warning that those engaged in such activities will be brought to justice.

Missing EFF Member Found Dead in Bush, Murder Probe Intensifies

The body of missing Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) member Aaron Masemola (51) has been found in a bush near Delmas, prompting an intensified murder investigation by the Gauteng Political Killings Task Team.

Masemola, who was from Bronkhorstspuit, was reported missing on 10 July 2026. His abandoned vehicle was discovered the following day, raising concerns over his disappearance.

According to the South African Police Service (SAPS), the Gauteng Political Killings Task Team formally launched its investigation on Monday after meeting with Masemola's family and gathering crucial information about his disappearance.

Following an intensive investigation, officers traced the case to Delmas on Thursday, where Masemola's body was discovered. Preliminary findings indicate that he was shot dead before his body was dumped in the bush.

His family has since positively identified the deceased.

Police said investigations are at an advanced stage to identify and arrest those responsible for the killing, including both the perpetrators and anyone who may have orchestrated the murder.

The Gauteng Political Killings Task Team is continuing its investigation to determine the motive behind the killing.

Online Fraud Surge Sparks SAPS Warning in Namakwa

The South African Police Service (SAPS) in the Namakwa District has issued a public warning following a sharp increase in online fraud cases reported across the district.

Police said investigations have revealed that fraudsters are increasingly impersonating banks, loan providers and legitimate service companies to trick unsuspecting victims into revealing sensitive personal and financial information, including identity numbers, banking details and one-time passwords (OTPs). Scammers are also targeting online shoppers through fake social media advertisements and fraudulent online marketplaces, convincing victims to pay for goods, vehicles or services that are never delivered.

According to SAPS, criminals often create a false sense of urgency by sending fake invoices, claiming there are problems with bank accounts or demanding immediate payment. Once they receive the money or obtain confidential information, they disappear, leaving victims with significant financial losses.

Police have urged members of the public to remain vigilant and follow these safety precautions:

- Never disclose your PIN, one-time password (OTP), banking details or other confidential information via telephone, SMS, email or social media.
- Report suspected scams immediately to your nearest police station, call the SAPS Crime Stop number on 08600 10111, or submit information anonymously through the MySAPS App.

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FS Secures R100 Billion With Chinese Businesses



By Nonkululeko Ngubeni

The Free State Provincial Government has secured R100 billion in investment commitments following engagements with Chinese investors, a move expected to create thousands of jobs and boost the province's economy.

The announcement was made by the Free State Premier, MaQueen Letsoha-Mathae, following an investment networking session held at her official residence in Bloemfontein this week.

Accompanied by MEC for Finance, Economic Development and Tourism Ketso Makume, MEC for Social Development Mathabo Hlalele and MEC for Education Dr Mamiki Maboya the meeting brought together senior executives from commercial vehicle manufacturer Jialong Intelligent Mobility (Joylong) and energy manufacturing company YJC Group as part of ongoing efforts to strengthen economic ties

between the province and Chinese investors.

The investment drive stems from Letsoha-Mathae's commitment in her 2026 State of the Province Address to attract investment that will stimulate economic growth, create employment and improve the lives of Free State residents.

During an earlier investment mission to China, the provincial government met with leading advanced manufacturing companies, toured production facilities and explored investment opportunities linked to the Maluti-a-Phofung Special Economic Zone (MAP-SEZ). According to the Letsoha-Mathae discussions have now progressed into formal cooperation agreements aimed at establishing manufacturing operations in the province.

"The projects are expected to position the Free State as a hub for new energy mobility and clean industrial manufacturing while creating employment opportunities in manufacturing, construction, legis-

tics, engineering, maintenance, renewable energy and supplier industries. "The investment proposal also prioritises local employment, technical training and skills development. "More than 2,000 certified electric vehicle technicians are expected to be trained over the next five years, helping prepare young people for careers in emerging industries, she said.

She says the province says the investments will also create opportunities for small businesses through supplier development, localisation and participation in new manufacturing value chains.

She also says attracting investment must ultimately improve the lives of Free State residents through sustainable economic growth and job creation.

The Premier thanked the Chinese delegation for engaging with the province and expressed appreciation for the hospitality extended to the Free State delegation during its investment mission to the People's Republic of China earlier this year.

Free State Bids Emotional Farewell to Skully Nxangisa



ANC Free State Provincial Secretary Polediso Motsoeneng. Picture: Baagedi Sethhora

By Matshidiso Selebeleng

The Bloemfontein City Hall fell silent on Thursday as political leaders, comrades, friends and family gathered to pay tribute to former Free State MEC for Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (COGTA), Thembeni "Skully" Nxangisa, during an emotional memorial service marked by heartfelt tributes, struggle songs and calls to preserve his legacy.

Nxangisa passed away at his home last Thursday after a long illness.

A respected member of the ANC Provincial Executive Committee (PEC), he was responsible for the party's political education committee. Throughout his political career, he also served as MEC for Agriculture, a Member of the Free State Legislature, and later as the ANC Free State Chief Whip after leaving the Executive Council.

ANC Free State Provincial Secretary Polediso Motsoeneng described Nxangisa as a principled leader whose life embodied unity, democracy, social justice and compassion for the poor.

"This giant carried on his shoulders, in his mind and in his soul, the struggles of the poor, the less fortunate and the oppressed. He dedicated his life to fighting for justice and human dignity," Motsoeneng said.

He added that remembering Nxangisa was not only about mourning his passing but celebrating a life devoted to serving others and inspiring future generations through meaningful action.

Free State Premier MaQueen Letsoha-Mathae also paid tribute, describing Nxangisa as a dedicated public servant whose contribution to government and community development would leave a lasting impact.

"He served with dedication and passion, always striving to improve the lives of the people of the Free State. On behalf of the Free State Provincial Government, I extend our heartfelt condolences to his family, friends, colleagues and all those whose lives he touched. May his revolutionary soul rest in eternal peace," she said.

Nxangisa will be laid to rest on Sunday, 2 August, at his home in Botshabelo during a Category 1 Provincial Official Funeral.

SIU probes construction of three Free State schools



By Nonkululeko Ngubeni

The Free State Department of Education is under fire for unauthorised, irregular, fruitless and wasteful expenditure incurred by the department during the procurement and contracting process for the construction of three schools in Bloemfontein.

Last week South African President Cyril Ramaphosa signed Proclamation 325 of 2026 authorising the Special Investigating Unit to investigate allegations of maladministration and unlawful conduct relating to the construction of Caleb Motshabi Primary School in Bloemfontein, Malebogo Primary School in Hertzogville and Tlholo Primary School in Botshabelo.

The proclamation empowers the SIU to investigate the procurement and contracting processes for construction services undertaken by, or on behalf of, the Free State Department of Education from 1 March 2014 to the date of the proclamation.

In addition, investigators will assess whether pro-

curement processes complied with applicable legislation, National Treasury and Provincial Treasury regulations, and the department's procurement policies and procedures.

The investigation will further examine any irregular, unlawful or improper conduct by department officials, employees, service providers or any other individuals or entities involved.

It will also include any related conduct involving the same persons, entities or contracts identified during the investigation.

Spokesperson for the Department, Howard Ndaba, told Journal news that the unit could not comment further as the matter remains under investigation.

"Given that the matter is still under investigation, we are not in a position to comment at this time," said Ndaba.

Meanwhile, President Ramaphosa has amended Proclamation 244 of 2025, which relates to an SIU investigation into procurement processes at the Great Kokstad Local Municipality in KwaZulu-Natal.

The original proclamation, published on 31 January 2025, authorised the SIU to investigate the procurement of goods, works and services, including Bid GKM 19-22/23 for software licences and Bid GKM 16-22/23 for a customer care and IT service desk solution.

The amended proclamation extends the investigation period to begin on 5 June 2020, instead of 1 January 2022, and continue until the publication date of the amended proclamation.

The proclamation broadens the scope of the investigation to include Bid GKM 43-19/20 for the supply and delivery of laptops and desktop computers, as well as Bid GKM 14-20/21 for the supply and renewal of software licences.

Under the SIU and Special Tribunals Act, the SIU is empowered to investigate matters referred to it by the President and institute civil proceedings in the Special Tribunal or the High Court to recover financial losses suffered by the State as a result of corruption, fraud, maladministration or other unlawful conduct.

Centlec Unleashes 14-Vehicle Fleet to Fight Cable Theft

New vehicles to boost rapid response, protect electricity infrastructure and improve service delivery across Mangaung



By Nonkululeko Ngubeni

Electricity utility Centlec SOC Ltd has strengthened its fight against cable theft and infrastructure vandalism with the handover of 14 new operational vehicles aimed at improving service delivery across the Mangaung Metropolitan Municipality.

The fleet will be deployed to crime hotspot areas where vandalism and cable theft are most prevalent, enabling Centlec teams to conduct regular patrols, respond faster to faults and incidents, and carry out maintenance and repairs more efficiently.

The investment is expected to enhance the protection of the municipality's electricity distribution network while improving the reliability of power supply to communities across the metro.

Speaking at the handover ceremony, Centlec Chief Executive Officer Dr Malefane Sekoboto described the new fleet as a major milestone in strengthening the utility's operational performance.

"The commitment, discipline and dedication demonstrated by the entity's management and staff are commendable. As a shareholder representative and board member, it is encouraging to see such a clear focus on excellence and serving our people. This commitment must continue to translate into meaningful results for the communities we serve," said Sekoboto.

He said the vehicles would support technical teams

in responding to electricity faults, conducting routine maintenance, implementing infrastructure projects and monitoring vulnerable areas more effectively.

Sekoboto noted that infrastructure vandalism and cable theft continue to pose a serious threat to electricity utilities, often causing prolonged power outages, costly repairs and damage to critical infrastructure.

"This investment forms part of our broader commitment to sound governance, operational excellence and ensuring we have the resources needed to deliver safe, reliable and efficient electricity services," he said.

He also thanked stakeholders for their continued support in helping Centlec build a resilient, customer-focused electricity distribution network.

Mangaung Executive Mayor Gregory Nthatisi welcomed the investment, saying the additional vehicles would significantly improve the utility's ability to protect electricity infrastructure and respond to service interruptions. "The fleet will strengthen maintenance operations, line protection, security and rapid response capabilities. We have allocated three double cabs for maintenance, four for line protection and maintenance, five for security, two for office operations and one single cab. This investment places the utility in a much stronger position to safeguard infrastructure and improve reliable electricity supply to our communities," said Nthatisi.



The EmpowerHer Luncheon Brings Together Inspiring Women

By Katlego Mashwabi

Set to take place on 8 August 2026, Ignite Women Magazine is back with the fifth edition of the EmpowerHer Luncheon.

Bigger and greener, the fifth edition of the luncheon will take place at Bedfordview Mercedes-Benz Dealership, Johannesburg. With the theme For Women Who No Longer Want to Play Small, the Rejuvenate, Refocus, Rise event is calling women in business, leadership, entrepreneurship and the corporate sector to lead boldly and pursue opportunities.

"We want every woman who walks into the room to leave believing she belongs in every space she has been called to occupy" said founder and editor of Ignited Magazine Kamogelo Seekoei.

Seekoei spoke positively about the event's success over the years.

"Over the past four years we've witnessed remarkable connections being formed around the Empow-

erHer table. Women have found mentors, business partners, clients, collaborations and perhaps most importantly renewed belief in themselves

This year's luncheon will be steered by Philanthropist, transformational speaker and Itsue Motseo, with Family Doctor and Entrepreneur Dr Andile Molokomme as the panel facilitator.

Agenda Key topics will be around financial freedom, legacy and personal development being on the table.

Netherlands Internal Auditor is set to be part of the discussions, driving women towards accountability across the borders.

Managing Director of Proactive HR Consulting Tshego Maringa will discussing Personal Development that Produces results with the women at the event.

"Over the years, every edition has become a platform for women to get out of their comfort zones, to think bigger and speak loudly as they lead boldly and discovering what it takes to build a business that can stand the test of time, said Seekoei.

NW primary schools infrastructure construction underway



By Matshidiso Selebeleng

Construction of a new R57 million structure is currently underway at the Mahube Primary School in the Ngaka Modiri Molema District in the North West province.

The project which started in March this year, is expected to conclude in September 2027. The new structures include a new Grade R block with 2 classrooms, a jungle gym, fencing, a multipurpose block with three classrooms an HOD Office and a clear-view perimeter fencing, among others. According to the Spokesperson of the Department of Education in the province, Vuyo Mantshule, the school will have a total of 16 classrooms and employs about 70 workers.

He said the project is meant to address many challenges that the school was already facing, including overcrowding. "The construction is part of the department's infrastructure programme to address overcrowding, replace inappropriate structures, and improve the overall teaching and learning environment. "The new structures will provide additional classrooms, learner support spaces, and ensure the school meets current safety and infrastructure norms and standards," said Mantshule. He says the completion of construction will also depend on weather, site conditions, and contractor performance, but the department conducts regular oversight visits to monitor progress.

Mantshule also highlighted that the department has multiple school infrastructure projects running across all four districts in the North West.

"These include new classrooms, renovations, sanitation, water, and electricity projects, he said.

Recent examples include projects at Makgori Primary School and other schools prioritized under the Accelerated School Infrastructure Delivery Initiative. On Tuesday, the MEC for Treasury in the North West, Viola Motsumi, conducted an oversight visit at a R6.7 million-worth Makgori Primary School, where she also met with the Makgori Tribal Authority to officially hand over the appointed contractor responsible for the building and renovation at the school. The Makgori Primary School project is estimated to cost about will last for 6 months. She says the school will receive six new classrooms, an addition to the current blocks, and renovation.

Gautrain Marks 16 Years of Service



By Refilwe Mochoari

This month the Gautrain celebrated 16 years of service reaffirming its position as one of South Africa's most successful and transformative public infrastructure investments.

Since its inception, the rapid rail network has recorded over 200 million passenger trips, firmly establishing itself as a vital part of Gauteng's transport system and a symbol of modern, efficient mobility in the province.

Launched earlier this month the train has grown from a landmark mega-project into a permanent feature of daily life, connecting people to work, education, business, leisure, and economic opportunity.

According to Gautrain Management Agency Board Chairperson Professor Mfanelo Ntsobi, the Gautrain operates an 80-kilometre rail network across 10 stations, supported by an integrated bus and midibus feeder system that extends access to thousands of passengers daily.

He says the system continues to play a key role in easing congestion and improving mobility in one of Africa's largest economic hubs.

"Over the past 16 years, Gautrain has expanded beyond rail transport through innovation and strategic partnerships.

"These include its pioneering collaboration with the minibus taxi industry through the Gautrain Midibus Service, as well as the establishment of smart Driver's Licence Testing Centres at selected stations.

In line with its commitment to inclusive mobility, Gautrain introduced the KlevaMova affordability product, an initiative that provides qualifying pas-

sengers with a 50% discount on train fares, targeting individuals from households earning R350,000 or less annually, as well as scholars, pensioners, and SASSA disability grant recipients.

KleVaMova now accounts for approximately 11% of total Gautrain passenger trips, reflecting strong demand for accessible and affordable public transport.

Ntsobi, says the system represents a long-term national investment in infrastructure that continues to deliver value.

"Gautrain stands as a lasting legacy of what South Africa can achieve when it invests boldly in infrastructure that serves people for generations. It is more than a transport system, it is a catalyst for economic activity and sustainable mobility, connecting people to opportunities every day."

He added that, as Gautrain enters its next chapter, the Gautrain Management Agency is overseeing a seamless transition to a new concessionaire, ensuring uninterrupted service and preserving the high standards of safety, reliability and operational excellence that passengers have come to expect.

"Gautrain will continue to operate as a Public-Private Partnership (PPP), a model that has underpinned its success over the past 16 years and established it as one of South Africa's leading infrastructure projects and a recognised example of effective public-private collaboration.

"Sixteen years on, Gautrain continues to play a vital role in shaping the future of mobility in Gauteng. "As the province grows, the system remains focused on delivering safe, reliable, and efficient transport that connects people to opportunity and supports long-term economic development, said Ntsobi.

UFS and Rosebank College forge public-private partnership for the future of African higher education



By Refilwe Mochoari

A public-private partnership between the University of the Free State (UFS) and Rosebank International College was established last Thursday to form a five-year framework of academic exchange and cooperation in research, teaching and learning to strengthen higher education relationships.

The two institutions signed the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), opening a new chapter in higher education collaboration and bringing together the strengths of public and private higher education in the post-education and training sector.

The main purpose of this collaboration is to explore how higher education institutions can respond collectively and collaboratively to the changing needs of South Africa and the continent.

Vice-Chancellor and Principal of the University of the Free State Professor Hester Kloppe together with the President of Rosebank International Linda Meyer, signed the MoU on Thursday 23 July on the UFS Bloemfontein Campus.

During the MoU ceremony, Kloppe, said the significance of the agreement extends beyond the activities listed in the MoU.

She says it is about deliberately choosing partnerships and using the complementary

strengths of different institutions to create something with wider societal value.

Kloppe says she sees the agreement as a potential 'springboard for many more things to come' and highlighted the importance of working with institutions that demonstrate steadfastness and credible leadership.

"We need to be careful about who we make partnerships with," she said.

She described the partnership as purposeful and closely connected to the UFS vision of contributing meaningfully to responsible societal futures.

She also said that the partnership speaks directly to an issue close to her heart, which is the future of higher education and the role that universities must play in shaping it on the African continent.

"How can we also collectively serve the continent?" she asked.

"This question is particularly significant because the partnership brings together institutions from two components of the higher education system that have traditionally operated largely in separate – and sometimes competitive

"Rather than viewing these differences as boundaries, the partnership creates space to explore how complementary institutional models can generate new approaches to higher education collabora-

tions, Kloppe said.

Meyer described the agreement as a 'landmark achievement in the private and public education sector'.

She said the partnership is especially important within the context of South Africa's youth unemployment crisis, where access to relevant, high-quality higher education can contribute to meaningful systemic social change.

"We both understand the importance of higher education. We see this as a meaningful partnership not only in South Africa, but also on the African continent," said Meyer. From competition to collaboration

Executive Dean: Academic at Rosebank International, Oliver Seale said this partnership is an even broader shift needed in higher education.

Reflecting on his own journey, he said universities and private higher education institutions have historically operated in a competitive environment.

"This opportunity, is to move beyond individual institutions and consider the wider higher education ecosystem: how public and private institutions can collaborate, expand capacity, and develop approaches that are increasingly Pan-African in their reach. The MoU is therefore 'the start of the process', rather than an end in itself, said Seale.

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Opinion

Belinda Matore

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Children’s rights, autonomy and compulsory school activities during exams

Childhood is increasingly defined by structure, schedules and achievement. From organised sport and cultural activities to extra lessons and enrichment programmes, many of the experiences intended to support children’s development are becoming ever more demanding. This raises an important question: what happens when activities designed to enrich children’s lives cease to feel voluntary and begin to feel compulsory?

Schools play a vital role in promoting sport, culture and extracurricular activities. Yet when participation is mandated without flexibility, particularly during examination periods, tensions arise between institutional expectations and children’s rights. The issue is no longer simply about sport, choir or chess. It becomes a question of autonomy and whether schools are genuinely placing the best interests of the child at the centre of decision making.

Whose benefit? Whose voice?

One increasingly common policy insists that learners may not be excused from sport, choir or chess during exams. The argument is usually framed in predictable ways, such as that commitment builds character; resilience is valued above marks and requests to be excused are often treated as evidence of poor preparation. Who does this serve? The child

or the school’s reputation? Who decided that academia isn’t more important during exam week? And where is the child’s voice in any of this?

South Africa’s Constitution, the Children’s Act, the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child and the UNCRC all recognise children as rights holders.

The right to be heard, protected under Article 12 of the UNCRC, means that children capable of forming their own views must be able to express those views in matters affecting them, with due weight given according to their age and maturity. A blanket “no excuse” policy does not ask learners what they need; it treats them as passive recipients rather than active participants in decisions that directly affect their wellbeing.

The best interests of the child, protected under Section 28(2) of South Africa’s Constitution, are paramount in every matter concerning a child. A one-size-fits-all policy assumes that every learner will handle exam pressure in the same way. Yet one child may thrive with a full schedule, while another may need rest or flexibility. Where a policy leaves no room for individual circumstances, it places institutional consistency above individual well-being.

The principle of evolving capacity recognises that

what is appropriate for a younger learner is not necessarily appropriate for an older adolescent. A Grade 12 learner facing significant exam pressure may be capable of making informed choices about how to balance competing commitments. A policy that treats a 17-year-old like a seven-year-old ignores this foundational principle and fails to respect the learner’s growing autonomy.

When participation stops feeling like participation Sport and choir begin, for most children, as joy. They are platforms to play, create and belong. Play is a right under Article 31 of the UNCRC. But when participation becomes compulsory during exams, the fun drains out. What remains is exhaustion, anxiety, resentment towards activities once loved and silence, because children learn quickly that their views do not matter. If we asked learners directly, as Article 12 requires, they might say something along the lines of, “I used to love choir, but now it feels like another thing I have to do,” or “No one ever asked me what I think.”

A better approach

Supporting commitment does not require inflexible rules. A child-centred model would encourage participation as the norm while allowing reasonable exemptions during exams. It would create opportunities for learner input on policies that affect them and recognise differences in age, maturity and individual circumstances. Instead of treating requests for flexibility as signs of weak character, schools should respond with practical support and ask how they can help children manage competing commitments? This does not undermine resilience. It teaches learners to exercise judgement, communicate needs and balance responsibilities – skills that are equally important for adulthood.

The question is not whether sport, choir and chess matter. They do. Nor is it whether schools should encourage commitment. They should. The real question is whether a blanket “no excuse” policy during exams respects the principles of participation, best interests and evolving capacities. Children are not simply participants in school programmes. They are rights holders whose perspectives deserve consideration.

A school committed to developing character should be willing to trust children with a voice in decisions that affect them. Character is not built through compliance alone. It is built through autonomy, responsibility and the opportunity to exercise informed judgment. Anything less serves institutional convenience and not the child.

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SA’s economy is failing its young people

Almost 12.5 million South Africans are unemployed. Many of them are young people desperately trying to find their first job. However, President Cyril Ramaphosa recently said only that “too many South Africans remain unemployed”, and “too many young people struggle to find their first job”.

In a country facing one of the world’s worst unemployment crises, those statements sound like a dramatic underestimation of the crisis. The scale of unemployment should continue to shock us. So too should its trajectory: things are getting worse, not better.

Since Ramaphosa took office in 2018, the number of unemployed South Africans has risen from just fewer than 10-million to nearly 12.5-million. Apart from occasional, temporary improvements that are more likely to be statistical noise than anything else, the trend has been relentlessly upwards.

Young people bear the brunt of this crisis. Almost 55% of South Africans aged 15–34 who want work cannot find it. About 7-million young people are unemployed, including many discouraged workers who would like to work but have given up actively searching. Most have not had a proper job.

A central part of the government’s response has been to promise “work and livelihood opportunities through public and social employment programmes”. These programmes offer a degree of relief, albeit temporary. In truth, compared with the scale of the crisis they are little more than Band-Aids. They cannot change the structural realities of mass unemployment.

South Africa will not solve unemployment without faster economic growth. Reaching 3% growth quickly — and then moving beyond it — must be a national priority. Only sustained expansion can create the millions of new jobs needed to reverse current trends.

There is one piece of encouraging news. Over the past decade job creation has broadly kept pace with economic growth. In 2015–25 the economy grew at about 0.76% per year, while employment increased at about 0.77% annually — almost a one-to-one relationship. When growth accelerates, as it did during the 2004–08 expansion, many jobs can be created. So, let’s urgently go for much faster growth. It’s the only viable strategy to make a real dent in our unsustainable unemployment rate.

However, there is one critical exception: young workers. Over the past decade youth employment fell by about 520,000 jobs. In other words, while the economy expanded modestly, employment among young people shrank by about 8%. Growth in South Africa thus creates jobs, but not for the young. This means even if economic growth improves, the economy will continue to struggle to absorb young job seekers.

Why does growth benefit older workers but not the young? Young workers, by definition, lack experience. They are less proven, less predictable and often less productive than older workers. In more flexible labour markets this disadvantage is offset by experimentation: firms can hire young workers at wages that reflect their lower productivity and can let them go relatively easily if things do not work out.

In South Africa that flexibility is severely constrained. When a firm advertises a vacancy it often faces hundreds, sometimes thousands, of applicants for only a handful of positions — far too many to evaluate properly. In a country where most job seekers have limited skills and long periods of unemployment behind them, filling a vacancy becomes a high-stakes screening exercise. Faced with so many applicants, employers minimise risk; they choose experience.

That preference becomes structural exclusion when labour regulations turn every new hire into a potentially costly legal commitment. If an employer cannot adjust wages and faces expensive, time-consuming dismissal procedures when a hire does not work out, the safest choice is not to take the risk on an inexperienced worker. This is the wall of risk that keeps young people locked out.

The following reforms could help:

- The law should allow probation periods of up to 12 months for all new hires, regardless of job complexity. During this period employers should be able to terminate employment more easily if a worker proves unsuitable, while prohibiting dismissals that are automatically unfair, such as those based on discrimination. Probation should function as a genuine trial period rather than an irrevocable long-term commitment.
- The government should remove the automatic extension of bargaining council agreements to non-signatories. For many small firms, rural businesses and new entrants these agreements impose wage levels and conditions that make hiring high-risk, low-productivity workers unaffordable.

The sector education & training authorities (Setas) are widely recognised as ineffective. Rather than attempting minor, piecemeal reform — such as Ramaphosa’s recently announced plan to “reform and reduce” them — they should be closed and replaced with employer-driven apprenticeships and high-quality private training programmes. Technical and vocational colleges must also be strengthened through partnerships with industry and a far larger expansion of work-based learning.

South Africa’s youth unemployment crisis is already severe, and it continues to deepen. Young people are the majority of the unemployed and consistently find themselves at the back of the hiring queue. An economy that absorbs more labour requires real reform, not more public employment programmes. The goal must be to make it easier and less risky for firms to hire young workers in the ordinary course of doing business. That requires targeted changes in the laws regulating the terms of employment, real reform of the education system and a far more effective skills system.

Without reform, economic growth will continue to benefit those already inside the labour market while young people remain locked out. As Nobel laureate Paul Romer once warned, if South Africa cannot solve the problem of getting young people into work, it may not matter what other problems we do solve.

This article was first published on Business Day. By Ann Bernstein

Letter to the Editor

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Pastor
Motsamai Kareli
Empowerment Ministries
International

Attitudinal Leadership: The Leadership Advantage That Cannot Be Taught



Leadership is often associated with intelligence, education, experience, charisma, and technical competence. While these qualities are valuable, they are not the greatest predictors of long-term leadership success. The distinguishing characteristic of exceptional leaders is attitude.

John C. Maxwell famously said, “People may hear your words, but they feel your attitude.”

Leadership is not merely about what we know or what we can do; it is equally about how we approach people, challenges, opportunities, and responsibilities. A leader’s attitude becomes the atmosphere in which an organization either thrives or struggles. Attitude is a settled way of thinking that influences how we respond to circumstances. It determines whether we see obstacles as barriers or opportunities, criticism as an attack or as feedback, and failure as defeat or as a lesson.

While skills can be developed through training, attitude is cultivated through personal discipline, character, and intentional growth. History consistently demonstrates that organizations rarely rise above the attitude of their leaders. Positive leaders inspire confidence during uncertainty, while negative leaders create fear even during seasons of prosperity. Employees, volunteers, church members, and communities often mirror the emotional climate established by those who lead them.

One of the greatest attitudes a leader can possess is humility. Humble leaders recognize that leadership is stewardship rather than ownership. They are willing to listen, admit mistakes, seek advice, and celebrate the success of others. Arrogance isolates leaders, but humility attracts wisdom and builds trust.

Another essential leadership attitude is resilience. Every leader will experience disappointment, criticism, setbacks, and failure. Projects collapse, people disappoint us, and plans do not always succeed. What separates remarkable leaders from average ones is not the absence of adversity but their response to it. Leaders with resilient attitudes refuse to surrender to temporary setbacks. They rise, learn, adjust, and continue moving forward.

Attitudinal leadership also requires optimism.

This is not blind positivity that ignores reality; rather, it is the confidence that every problem carries the possibility of a solution. During crises, people look to leaders not merely for answers but for hope. Hope is contagious, and so is despair. Leaders must therefore choose carefully which attitude they spread. Closely connected to optimism is gratitude. Grateful leaders appreciate people, recognize contributions, and celebrate progress. Appreciation costs nothing, yet it generates loyalty, commitment, and higher levels of performance. Teams flourish when people know they are valued rather than merely used.

Integrity is another attitude that shapes leadership credibility. Honest leaders build confidence because their words and actions align. They do the right thing even when no one is watching. In a world where public trust is increasingly fragile, integrity has become one of the greatest leadership assets.

A teachable attitude is equally important. The

best leaders never stop learning. Regardless of age, title, or experience, they remain students. They read, listen, ask questions, and embrace correction. The moment a leader believes they know everything, growth begins to decline. Organizations become stagnant when leaders stop learning.

Attitudinal leadership also influences how leaders treat people. Great leaders understand that every individual carries dignity and potential. They do not lead through intimidation or manipulation but through encouragement, respect, and service. They create environments where people feel safe to contribute ideas, develop their gifts, and reach their full potential. Perhaps one of the greatest tests of attitude appears during difficult seasons. Anyone can lead when budgets are healthy, attendance is growing, and results are impressive. However, true leadership is revealed during crises. It is in adversity that attitudes become visible. Leaders who remain calm, hopeful, decisive, and compassionate during storms inspire confidence and stability in those they lead.

In the biblical account of Joshua, God repeatedly commanded him to “be strong and courageous” before leading Israel into the Promised Land (Joshua 1). Before Joshua was given military strategies or administrative systems, God addressed his attitude. Courage, confidence, obedience, and perseverance were essential because leadership begins in the heart before it is demonstrated through action.

The marketplace provides similar examples. Many highly qualified professionals fail in leadership positions, not because they lack intelligence, but because they possess poor attitudes. Conversely, individuals with average qualifications but exceptional attitudes often become transformational leaders.

Employers increasingly recruit for competence but promote for attitude.

Every leader should therefore ask themselves a few important questions: How do I respond when I am criticized? Do I inspire hope or spread negativity? Do people become better after interacting with me? Am I still teachable? Does my attitude unite people or divide them? The answers to these questions may reveal more about our leadership effectiveness than our qualifications or achievements ever could.

Ultimately, leadership is influence, and influence is shaped by attitude. Our attitude determines how we lead our families, organizations, churches, businesses, and communities. It shapes our decisions, relationships, communication, and legacy.

The good news is that attitude is a choice. Every day presents an opportunity to choose humility over pride, gratitude over complaint, courage over fear, resilience over defeat, and service over selfish ambition. These choices, repeated consistently over time, form the character of outstanding leaders.

As leadership expert John Maxwell wisely reminds us, “Your attitude, not your aptitude, will determine your altitude.” Leaders who cultivate the right attitude do more than achieve success—they inspire others, build healthy cultures, and leave a legacy that outlives their position.

TikTok is becoming an entertainment discovery engine

South African stories have always had the power to travel. What is changing is how quickly those stories are now being discovered, discussed and interpreted by audiences around the world. Netflix’s The Polygamist has become one of the clearest examples of this shift.

Since its release, the series has sparked conversations across Africa, the United States, Europe and the Middle East. Much of that conversation has been amplified on TikTok, where viewers are not only reacting to the show, but also searching for context, analysing characters, debating storylines and introducing the production to new audiences.

The result is that The Polygamist has grown beyond being a programme people simply watch. It has become a cultural conversation that continues long after the credits roll.

TikTok has traditionally been associated with short-form entertainment, trends and viral challenges. However, the platform is increasingly influencing what people choose to watch on streaming services.

According to GWI data covering the first to fourth quarters of 2025, 47% of South African TikTok users aged 18 and older are interested in films and cinema.

More than a third of those users watch streaming services every day, while another 20% stream content two to three days a week.

This relationship between TikTok and streaming platforms points to a broader change in entertainment discovery.

Audiences are no longer relying exclusively on trailers, billboards, television interviews or traditional entertainment reviews to decide what to watch. They are also discovering programmes through creator recommendations, reaction videos, fan commentary and conversations appearing in their feeds.

In the case of The Polygamist, TikTok has become both a discovery platform and a companion to the viewing experience.

From watching the show to searching the culture One of the strongest indicators of the show’s international impact is how viewers have used TikTok Search to learn more about its characters, fashion and storyline.

TikTok says there have been more than one million searches relating to The Polygamist and its characters across the United States and selected European markets.

Searches have included phrases such as “Matipa’s red dress outfit”, “Matipa hairstyles”, “Who is Jonas Gomora?” and “Jonas Gomora backstory”.

These searches demonstrate that audiences are not only interested in the central narrative. They are curious about the cultural details surrounding the show.

Fashion, hairstyles, language, music, symbolism and character development have all become entry points through which international audiences are engaging with South African storytelling.

This is significant because it shows that cultural specificity does not necessarily limit the global appeal of local productions. In many cases, it is precisely those distinctive details that make audiences curious.

Rather than diluting the South African identity of the story, The Polygamist has shown how local content can become a global point of interest.

Audiences are no longer passive viewers The rise of social platforms has changed the relationship between audiences and entertainment.

Viewers no longer simply consume a programme and move on. They respond to it, remix it, debate it and contribute to the meaning surrounding it.

Since the debut of The Polygamist, more than 43,000 TikTok posts have reportedly been created using the hashtag #ThePolygamist, with a further 23,000 posts using #Polygamist.

These posts have included reactions, reviews, character analysis, fashion commentary, emotional responses and discussions about the programme’s most memorable scenes.

Creators have become cultural interpreters

Creators have played a central role in helping viewers engage with The Polygamist on a deeper level.

South African creator Tumi Malunga, for example, developed a dedicated playlist analysing different elements of the series. Her content explores the soundtrack, colour symbolism, character development and differences between the television adaptation and the original book.

This kind of content moves beyond a conventional review.

It invites audiences to interpret the story collectively, with comment sections becoming spaces for discussion, disagreement and shared analysis.

Other creators, including Nombulelo Fox, have focused on the emotional impact of the story, sharing reactions to key moments and encouraging viewers to contribute their own perspectives.

International creators have also helped expose the series to audiences outside South Africa.

US-based creators such as Renny Vonne, KevOnStage and I’m in the Ladies Room have shared reviews and reactions that have extended the show’s visibility into new communities.

This illustrates the evolving role of creators in entertainment marketing.

Global personalities can accelerate local conversations

The visibility of The Polygamist has also reportedly been fuelled by reactions associated with well-known global entertainment personalities.

Online conversations involving names such as Davido, Sherri Shepherd and Taraji P. Henson have added another layer of interest to the series.

TikTok says searches for “Taraji P. Henson reaction to The Polygamist” increased by 98% following the show’s premiere.

When global personalities engage with, react to or are associated with a local production, they can introduce that story to audiences who might otherwise not have encountered it.

Social platforms make these cultural intersections possible at speed.

A South African series can be discussed by a creator in Johannesburg, discovered by a viewer in London, reviewed by a personality in the United States and debated by fans across multiple continents within the same content cycle.

#WhatToWatch is influencing what audiences stream next

TikTok’s #WhatToWatch community has emerged as a major destination for entertainment recommendations, with more than seven million posts created under the hashtag.

The community gives audiences access to spoiler-free reviews, episode reactions, performance commentary and creator-led recommendations.

These recommendations often feel more personal than conventional advertising because they come from people whom audiences already follow and trust.

Creators are also using TikTok LIVE to host watch parties and post-episode conversations, allowing viewers to discuss storylines and character decisions in real time.

This creates a shared viewing culture that extends beyond the streaming platform.

A viewer may discover a series through a TikTok review, watch it on Netflix, return to TikTok for analysis and then join a live discussion about the episode.

The viewing journey is no longer linear. It moves continuously between streaming, search, social conversation and creator communities. **By Pat on Brands**

Zanele Potelwa and Thuso Mbedu unite at the ‘Children of Blood and Bone’ trailer launch in New York



TV and radio presenter Zanele Potelwa attended the trailer launch of “Children of Blood and Bones” in the United States and has been sharing moments with her followers about her trip.

One of the highlights from Potelwa’s latest international trip is her hanging out with South Africa’s internationally recognised actress Thuso Mbedu.

Mbedu plays the lead character Zélie Adebola in the upcoming film adaptation of Tomi Adeyemi’s bestselling novel “Children of Blood and Bone”.

Potelwa posted a video of herself with the multi-award-winning actress. In the clip, the 5FM presenter asks Mbedu about what it meant to portray the character.

“It has meant a lot to me for a very, very long time. So, very honoured, very grateful, very excited.

“I hope, you know, just in playing it, that the same feeling I felt when I read the books, and now seeing a film, I hope that others can have that as well. You know, the hope, the strength, the resilience, and the want to really fight for what they believe in, and I really, yeah, I want people to enjoy it, guys.

“Like, we fought hard for this, we worked hard for this. You know, we had a South African crew. Everybody, yeah, people from all over the world came together for this,” Mbedu told Potelwa.

“Children of Blood and Bones” is scheduled for release on January 15, 2027 and features cast members Damson Idris, Amandla Stenberg, Tosin Cole, Academy Award nominee Cynthia Erivo, Lashana Lynch, Zackary Momoh, Richard Mofe-Damijo, Academy Award nominee Chiwetel Ejiofor, Academy Award winner Regina King, Idris Elba and Academy Award winner Viola Davis. **IoL**

Tyla is coming home for A*POP World Tour 2027

Grammy Award-winning artist Tyla is taking the music world by storm as she prepares to launch her highly anticipated sophomore album, “A*POP.” Following her electrifying performances at major international events, she shows no signs of slowing down.

Tyla has just announced an impressive 34 dates for her World Tour, featuring shows across Europe and the US, including the Netherlands, London, Sweden, Germany, Denmark, New York, and Las Vegas. The tour kicks off on October 12 in Paris at Zenith, promising an unforgettable experience for fans worldwide.

The global superstar has not forgotten her homeland, with her set to wrap up her tour in Africa. On December 22, Tyla will perform in Lagos, Cape Town on January 4, and Johannesburg on January 9.

Presented locally by Showtime Management and Anything Goes, Tyla returns in early 2027, opening the South African leg of the A*POP World Tour at Green Point Track Cape Town, followed by the Expo Centre, Nasrec, Johannesburg.

Tyla announced the news in a sizzling video that was shot on the beaches of Portimao in Portugal.

As she sits on the beach, Tyla opens up her notebook and starts penning all the cities she will be performing in. The video features the signature “A*POP” neon colours and ends with her announcing the cities in South Africa.

“THE A*POP WORLD TOUR 🌍 Sign up for early access now at TylaWorld.com. Presale begins this Wednesday at 10am local, on sale this Friday at 10am local,” she captioned the video.

The upcoming tour follows Tyla’s 2025 We Wanna Party Tour across Asia, which included sold-out performances in Japan and the

UAE as well as a sold-out tour in South Africa. THE A*POP WORLD TOUR marks her first full headline tour across North America, Europe, the UK, and Africa.

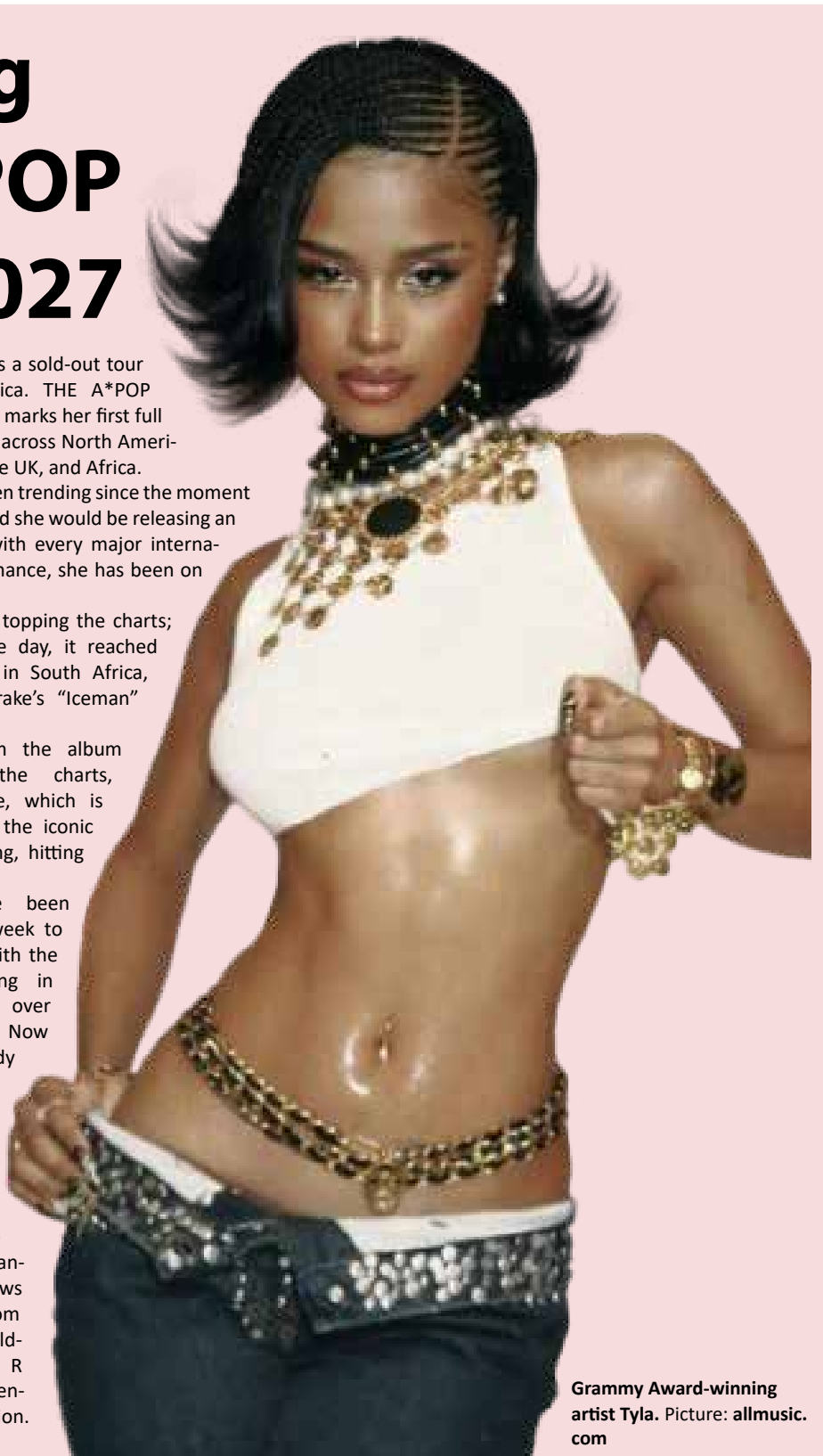
Tyla has been trending since the moment she announced she would be releasing an album, and with every major international performance, she has been on people’s lips.

“A*POP” is topping the charts; on its release day, it reached number one in South Africa, surpassing Drake’s “Iceman” album.

Songs from the album dominated the charts, with Fairytale, which is a remake of the iconic Liquideep song, hitting number one.

Fans have been reacting all week to the album, with the reviews rolling in from fans all over the world. Now fans are ready to purchase tickets to see Tyla back in Mzansi.

Tickets for her Cape Town and Johannesburg shows range from R1695 for Golden Circle and R 895.00 for General Admission. **IoL**



Grammy Award-winning artist Tyla. Picture: allmusic.com

Robot Boii Partners with Urban Playground

By Refilwe Mochoari

The Urban Playground in Johannesburg has expanded its creative reach with a new, dynamic and multi-functional space designed to bring people together through movement, play, creativity and community, and will officially open its doors to the general public tomorrow (1 August) with media personality Robot Boii at the forefront.

Last week, The Urban Playground hosted a ribbon-cutting ceremony to launch its new venue at the Rosebank Mall.

This space is created to be a go-to for the adventurous creative and social entrepreneurs while providing a vast diverse range of services.

It is set to create a space for young people to express their passions in a safe and secure environment. Beyond his role as an entertainer, Robot Boii will help shape the venue’s strategic direction, brand development and cultural programming as it establishes itself as a leading destination for youth culture and entertainment.

Creator of The Urban Playground Adriano Franco, said: “It is a dream come true to open the Rosebank venue. The purpose is to create a first-of-its-kind in the world that has been built by people within the community and partnering with Robot



Boii just makes sense, as he is a brand within the creative community that speaks to the youth and beyond. “A big part of what we do is collaborating with various people and spaces. We look forward to The Urban Playground’s steady growth and expansion.”

During an interview, Roboi Boii said, “I think this is a fitting partnership because The Urban Playground wears multiple hats. It is a multifaceted space that offers a variety of experiences and services, making this partnership a natural fit that I am excited about.”

From Thaba Nchu to Africa’s Hidden Gems

By Katlego Mashwabi

Zambia, Botswana, Namibia and Lesotho are just a few of the destinations featured on travel and lifestyle content creator Boitumelo Chabaesele’s growing African bucket list.

Originally from Thaba Nchu and now based in Gauteng, Chabaesele has built a loyal online following by documenting her travels, homemaking journey and family life. Holding qualifications in Public Management and Human Resources Management, she chose to pursue her true passion—content creation.

As a wife and mother, she says balancing family life with a successful digital career is only possible because of the support she receives at home.

“I don’t really know how I balance everything, honestly. I just wing it, but my husband helps me a lot, especially with chores around the house and taking care of our son,” she said.

Her social media platforms feature everything from boutique stays and scenic retreats to off-grid cabins and hidden destinations across South Africa and neighbouring countries. On Sundays, however, her focus shifts to YouTube, where she shares cosy cooking sessions, traditional meals and her love for slow living.

Chabaesele credits her husband for encouraging her to start creating content.

“I had a lot of videos on my phone that would just sit there without being posted. My husband suggested I start YouTube. I was reluctant at first, but eventually decided to do it,” she said.

Her online presence grew even further after she began sharing DIY home décor projects during renovations at her home. The strong response from viewers inspired her to make homemaking a central part of her brand.

Although she enjoys interior styling, travel remains her greatest passion. Among her favourite destinations is Victoria Falls in Zimbabwe, where she was captivated by the warm hospitality and what she describes as “the best chicken I’ve ever tasted.”

She regularly searches for unique destinations, especially off-grid cabins, using travel apps.

“I choose off-grid places because I want to relax and take a break from our busy lives,” she explained. Despite sharing intimate moments online, Chabaesele is intentional about protecting her family’s privacy. She avoids filming in crowded public spaces, keeps personal conversations off-camera and believes in knowing when to put the camera away to be fully present.

Behind the polished videos and beautifully styled photographs is careful planning and consistency.

“Homemaking will always be at the forefront because that’s what I do every day, and I’ll always have content for it,” she said.



Shannon Benting named Miss Supranational South Africa 2026



African Beauty International has named Shannon Benting of Northcliff, Gauteng, as Miss African Beauty Miss Supranational South Africa 2026 – the woman who will carry this country’s flag onto one of the world’s most prestigious international pageant stages in Poland next month.

The announcement was made alongside the reveal of the Miss African Beauty South Africa 2026 Top 20, from which a further two contestants will be selected to compete on the world stage.

Miss Supranational 2026 takes place on July 31 at the Strzelecki Park Amphitheatre in Nowy Sącz, Poland. Reigning titleholder Eduarda Braum of Brazil will crown her successor on the night. Benting will carry the South African flag onto that stage as Miss Supranational South Africa 2026.

A model and content creator, 30-year-old Benting uses her platform to empower women and bridge the gap between potential and opportunity. Her multicultural heritage, with South African Coloured roots on both sides and Chinese ancestry through her grandmother on her father’s side and her great-grandfather on her mother’s side, has shaped her into someone who celebrates diversity, family and unity. Through her initiative, Beauty in Action, she works to connect underserved youth with mentorship, skills development and community outreach, driven by her conviction that talent is universal but opportunity is not. Grounded, teachable and purposeful, Benting dreams of building platforms that remind young South African girls that where they come from should never limit where they are going.

“Representing South Africa at Miss Supranational 2026 is a moment I will carry with me for the rest of my life. I have worked hard, dreamed big and stayed grounded in my purpose, and this feels like confirmation that showing up with authenticity and intention truly matters. I do not take this responsibility lightly. I am walking onto that stage in Poland not just for myself, but for every young woman in South Africa who has been told that where she comes from is a limitation rather than a launching pad. I want her to see me and believe that it is possible for her too,” she says. Bokang Montjane-Tshabalala, CEO of African Beauty International, national director of Miss Supranational South Africa and a former Miss South Africa 2010 and Miss World Africa 2011 titleholder, says she knows intimately what it takes to represent a nation on the world’s most competitive stages.

“Shannon stood out not simply for her beauty – though that is undeniable – but for the quiet, unshakeable clarity she has about who she is and what she wants to do with her platform. She has a natural ability to connect with people from all walks of life, which speaks directly to her multicultural heritage and her life experience. On an international stage, that quality is rare and immensely powerful. Shannon understands that this title is not about a crown; it is about the doors it opens and the lives that can be changed as a result. That is exactly the spirit Miss African Beauty South Africa was built to amplify, and I have every confidence she will make this country incredibly proud in Poland.”

Miss African Beauty South Africa is the country’s most exciting beauty and purpose pageant, celebrating women of extraordinary achievement, conviction and community impact. Benting was one of 21 finalists drawn from seven of the country’s nine provinces, spanning fields from civil engineering and audiology to law, cancer biology, drama therapy and digital marketing. Three finalists will represent South Africa at three of the world’s most prestigious pageants: Shannon Benting, named Miss Supranational South Africa 2026, will compete at Miss Supranational 2026 in July, while the Miss World South Africa 2026 and Miss Universe South Africa 2026 representatives will be drawn from the remaining Top 20. Miss World 2026 is scheduled for September 5 in Vietnam, and Miss Universe 2026 – the 75th edition – takes place at the José Miguel Agrelot Coliseum in San Juan, Puerto Rico.

The remaining Top 20, from whom Miss World South Africa 2026 and Miss Universe South Africa 2026 will be chosen, are:

- Annedernive Brown (Reiger Park, Boksburg, Gauteng)
- Ashleigh Alves (Bassonia, Johannesburg, Gauteng)
- Bajabulise Thela (Mbombela, Mpumalanga)
- Bongisiwe Ndumela (Sterkspruit, Eastern Cape)
- Casey Esmeraldo (Vereeniging, Gauteng)
- Charlotte Mogotlane (Molelane, Zebediella, Limpopo)
- Dominique Manuel (Ersterust, Pretoria, Gauteng)
- Jesmika Singh (Durban, Kwa-Zulu Natal)
- Jessica Nel (Wierdapark, Centurion, Gauteng)
- Joey Roman (Bellville, Cape Town, Western Cape)
- Joretha Mafane (Mabocha, Burgersfort, Limpopo)
- Londotani Mudau (Thohoyandou, Limpopo)
- Musa Daweti (Salonsville, Gqeberha, Eastern Cape)
- Ontshiametse Tlhopane (Protea Glen, Soweto, Gauteng)
- Romanda Hombir (Mbombela, Mpumalanga)
- Stacey-Lea April (Silverlakes, Pretoria East, Gauteng)
- Tiziana Devipursad (Midrand, Gauteng)
- Tlotlago Molefe (Rustenburg, North West)
- Whitney du Bruyn (Glenvista, Johannesburg, Gauteng)
- Zamokuhle Vilakazi (Morningside, Sandton, Gauteng)

By: Glamour

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Batho Location, Mangaung
Bloemfontein, 9323

JJJ NOTICE OF LOST OR DESTROYED TITLE DEED

Notice is hereby given in terms of Regulation 68 of the Deeds Registries Act 1937, of the intention to apply for the issue of a certified copy of Deed of Transfer No. T410/2026 passed by 1. THE EXECUTOR IN THE ESTATE OF THE LATE ERIC VAB ZYL, 2. GERHARD BLAAUW and 3. JACO PIEK in favour of NICOLAAS FRANCOIS VAN DER MERWE in respect of certain ERF 2654 BLOEMFONTEIN, DISTRICT BLOEMFONTEIN, PROVINCE FREE STATE, which has been lost or destroyed.

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

SIGNED at BLOEMFONTEIN on this 28th DAY OF JULY 2026.

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CONTACT: (+27) 65 862 3469

WEEKEND Gig Guide

ALL OVER BLOEMFONTEIN FROM 01 - 03 AUGUST 2026

PRIDE UNLAUNCHED
SATURDAY - 01 AUGUST 2026
THE DAWN LOUNGE

ART BEATS FRIENDS
SATURDAY - 01 AUGUST 2026
ART CAFE

IZA ROOFTOP OPENING
SUNDAY - 02 AUGUST 2026
IZA - BLOEMFONTEIN

RE IMETWE BASADI ACTIVATION
SUNDAY - 02 AUGUST 2026
SECHABA LOUNGE

MONDAYS ARE THE NEW SATURDAYS
MONDAY - 03 AUGUST 2026
EKHAYENI

BROUGHT TO YOU BY Journal News Network



HEALTH

Bethlehem to Clarens Fun Walk and Marathon Celebrated

The Eastern Free State community came out in numbers last Sunday to celebrate the eighth annual Bethlehem to Clarens fun walk and marathon, with over 600 people participating in a 37km route race.

The race started at the Wimpy in Bethlehem and finished at the Clarens entrance where enthusiastic supporters welcomed them.

According to communications and media officer, Lekgutsa Mbele, the event demonstrated the transformative power of sport in promoting healthy lifestyles, strengthening social cohesion, encouraging active living, boosting tourism and contributing to local economic development.

He says participants travelled from various towns and provinces, reinforcing the marathon's growing reputation as a premier community sporting event in South Africa.



“Although 2026 marks nine years since the marathon was established in 2017, this year’s event proudly celebrated its 8th Anniversary. The marathon was not held in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the national restrictions on public gatherings, making this year’s edition a significant milestone in its remarkable journey.

“What started with only two or three participants has steadily grown into a vibrant community event attracting hundreds of runners and walkers annually.

“The 2026 edition welcomed more than 600 participants, highlighting the continued growth and popularity of the marathon, he said.

He says the race has evolved into far more than just a sporting event, but has now become a platform to promote healthy living, youth development, tourism and economic growth.

“From only two or three participants in our early years to more than 600 participants today, this journey reflects determination, resilience and the unwavering support of our communities and partners.

“Visitors travelling from outside the region increased demand for accommodation, restaurants, retail businesses and transport services throughout Bethlehem and Clarens. “Local guesthouses, hotels, hospitality establishments and tourism operators benefited from the influx of participants and supporters, he said.

He also said that the event created temporary employment opportunities for young people who served as marshals, registration officials and event support personnel responsible for participant safety and operational logistics.

The Chairperson of the Bethlehem to Clarens Fun Walk and Run Marathon, Lefa Sechele, described the success of the event as both emotional and inspiring.

“My heart is filled with gratitude and joy as we celebrate another successful marathon. What began as a humble vision with just two people has grown into a remarkable community event that now inspires hundreds of participants and reaches thousands more through our partners, supporters, volunteers, spectators and the media.

“This incredible journey proves that every great achievement starts with a single step. “Together we have built a marathon that promotes healthy living, community unity, tourism and social development throughout the Free State.

“I sincerely thank every participant, sponsor, partner, volunteer, government department, emergency service, media house and community member who believed in this vision. Your unwavering support has transformed this marathon into one of the region’s most anticipated sporting events.

“As Chairperson, I am proud of how far we have come, and I am excited about the future. Together we will continue to grow this marathon, create more opportunities, touch more lives and leave an even greater legacy for future generations, he said.

Some of the participants expressed their excitement as said they are looking forward to next year’s event. First-time participant, Dineo Mphuthi said,

“It felt as if I had been attending for the whole year.”

“The experience was energizing and inspiring. I used the opportunity to encourage other community members to discover their own pace and purpose through sport and active living.

FASHION

Glamour Most Glamorous Awards Celebrate SA’s Fashion Elite

By Katlego Mashwabi

The South African fashion calendar reached a dazzling peak last Saturday as the highly anticipated Glamour Most Glamorous (GMG) Awards took center stage.

Hosted by Glamour Fashion Director Tania Durand and media personality Toolz Hadebe at the opulent Divine Sunset in Midrand, the indoor banquet hall was transformed into a high-fashion sanctuary, complete with a striking white GMG2026 backdrop and a lavish floral installation.

The prestigious event celebrated bold vision, exceptional creativity, and the individuals redefining personal style across the nation’s fashion and beauty industries.

The star-studded guest list featured a constellation of celebrities, influencers, and industry visionaries, each aiming to cement their place in fashion history with daring red-carpet looks.

Among the night’s corporate highlights were key brand partnerships with Crocs, Nivea, Liqui Fruit and a red-carpet moment from DJ Zinhle, who turned

heads in a striking silver and navy sequined creation by House of Fabrosanz.

The evening reached an emotional depth when the night’s most coveted award, the Fashion Icon Award was presented to legendary media mogul and businesswoman Basetsana Khumalo, marking a monumental milestone in her enduring career as a pillar of South African style and influence.

In another major highlight, Eastern Cape-born MAC Cosmetics Icon beauty and fashion influencer Sinagile Tusi walked away with the High Fashion Visionary Award.

The award was presented on behalf of Issey Miyake by Nonku Ncobo, recognizing Tusi’s cutting-edge impact on contemporary style trends.

Celebrating the Industry’s Trailblazers, the 2026 GMG Awards put a bright spotlight on a diverse group of creatives, designers, and public figures who have pushed the boundaries of style over the past year.

The roster of esteemed winners included: the Classic Elegance Award to Former Miss South Africa, Jo-Ann Strauss, the Fashion Forward Award to Pon-

ahalo, Celebrity Transformer Award to Kgosi Lesego, Celebrity Style Transformation Award to Sorisha Naidoo, Emerging Style Icon Award to Ratile Boitumelo and the Style Influencer Award to singer Thabsie. Thabsie, who stunned attendees in a dramatic, pink pencil cut gown, later took to social media to celebrate her win with her fans.

“Style but make it award-winning. I am Glamour’s Style Influencer of 2026,” she shared.

An exclusive selection process that departs from traditional reader-voted formats, the GMG awards selection process seamlessly blends editorial recognition with industry expertise and strategic brand partnerships.

Winners were meticulously chosen based on their tangible cultural impact and outstanding contributions to South Africa’s fashion and beauty landscape.

“The event functions as a key moment in South African celebrity red-carpet season, with attendees praised for bold fashion statements,” noted Glamour magazine in an official statement, solidifying the awards’ status as the ultimate benchmark for local style excellence.

FOOD Recipes

Crispy Bang Bang Shrimp

An easy family dinner bursting with crispy seafood flavor

Ingredients:

- 1 lb large shrimp, peeled and deveined
 - 1 cup buttermilk
 - 1 cup cornstarch
 - ½ cup all-purpose flour
 - 1 tsp garlic powder
 - 1 tsp paprika
 - ½ tsp cayenne pepper (optional)
 - Salt and black pepper, to taste
 - Vegetable oil, for frying
- Bang Bang Sauce:**
- ½ cup mayonnaise
 - ¼ cup sweet chili sauce
 - 1 tbsp Sriracha (adjust to taste)
 - 1 tsp honey
 - 1 tsp lime juice
 - ½ tsp garlic powder



Method:

Marinate the shrimp: Place the shrimp in the buttermilk for 15 minutes. In a separate bowl, combine the cornstarch, flour, garlic powder, paprika, cayenne, salt, and pepper. This easy seafood recipe, crispy shrimp recipe, and quick dinner idea creates the perfect coating.

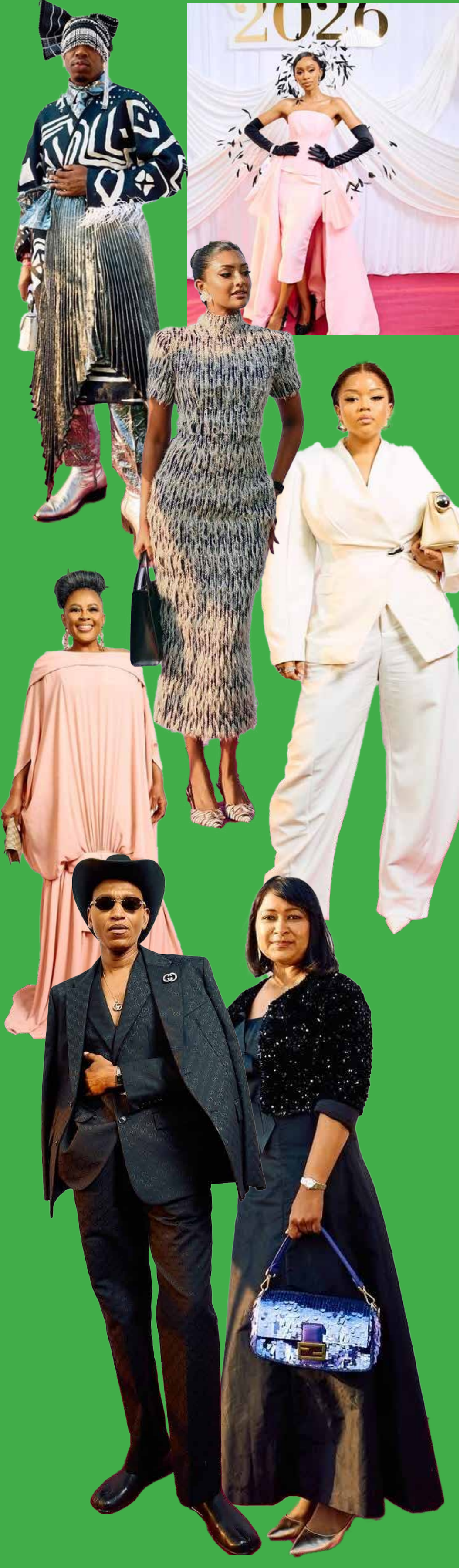
Fry until golden: Heat vegetable oil to 350°F (175°C). Remove the shrimp from the buttermilk, coat thoroughly in the seasoned flour mixture, and fry for 2–3 minutes until golden brown and crispy. Drain on a paper towel-lined plate. This crispy fried shrimp, restaurant-style appetizer, and family favorite meal delivers an irresistible crunch.

Make the Bang Bang sauce: Whisk together the mayonnaise, sweet chili sauce, Sriracha, honey, lime juice, and garlic powder until smooth and creamy. This creamy spicy sauce, homemade dipping sauce, and easy comfort food is sweet, tangy, and just the right amount of spicy.

Coat the shrimp: Toss the hot crispy shrimp gently in the Bang Bang sauce or drizzle the sauce over the top for extra crunch. Garnish with chopped parsley and a pinch of red pepper flakes. This best shrimp appetizer, easy party food, and restaurant-quality recipe is packed with flavor.

Serve & enjoy: Serve immediately with extra Bang Bang sauce for dipping. Pair with rice, tacos, lettuce wraps, or a fresh salad for the ultimate seafood dinner, crowd-pleasing appetizer, and easy family meal.

Glamour Most Glamorous Awards Celebrate SA’s Fashion Elite





SPORT



betway
premiership

2026/27
BETWAY PREMIERSHIP
KICKS OFF

Gallants Rustenburg Return, Results Required



Resolute Rustenburg Return ... Gallants move back to North West aims to revive team's virtuosity. Picture: Supplied

By Gomolemo Winkel

Marumo Gallants have confirmed their return to Rustenburg ahead of the 2026/27 Betway Premiership campaign. The question remains: given the reasons cited by club president Abram Sello, will the relocation finally translate into improved performances?

Gallants' record during their two-season stay in Bloemfontein paints a mixed picture. The club finished 14th in the 2025/26 campaign, recording four victories while struggling to convert performances into consistent results. A season earlier, Gallants secured a 10th-place finish after registering eight wins, eight draws and 12 defeats. Both campaigns were played in the City of Roses.

Ultimately, Gallants developed an unwanted habit of falling short of a top eight finish, missing out on the lucrative MTN8 competition in successive seasons.

Before relocating to Bloemfontein, Gallants returned to the topflight after purchasing a Premiership status. They previously competed in the Motsepe Foundation Championship, where they finished 11th with 36 points from 30 matches.

Equally notable is the club's willingness to relocate over the years. Speaking during a press confer-

ence in Sandton, Sello acknowledged that Gallants have called several provinces home before their stint in Bloemfontein.

"Gallants has always been a club that belongs to South Africa. We have played home matches in Limpopo, North West, Gauteng and the Free State. For the past two seasons, Mangaung has been our home, and we want to sincerely thank the Free State government, Mangaung Metro, local businesses, football stakeholders, and especially our supporters in the City of Roses," Sello said.

While expressing gratitude to the Free State, Sello said that one of the key factors behind the club's return to North West was the rising cost and logistical challenges associated with hosting matches in Bloemfontein.

Another factor was the practical challenges that we experienced with the stadium facilities and the costs involved. When we were using the Petrus Molemela Stadium, there were times we could not play where we wanted to, and we had to move some of our matches to Pretoria and other stadiums," he said.

"The Toyota Stadium in Bloemfontein was also becoming increasingly challenging and expensive for the club. We had to make a decision that makes football sense and also business sense for the long-

term future of the club," Sello said.

Sello further said that reducing travel demands was another major consideration. He argued that the long journeys placed unnecessary strain on players and affected their performance levels.

"After careful consideration, we have decided to relocate our home back to the North West province. It makes more sense because our players are based in Gauteng, and the long-distance travelling every second week was taking its toll. The long hours before and after matches created unnecessary fatigue, making it difficult for players to be in the best possible condition to compete," he said.

"I can also confirm that all our home matches in the new 2026/2027 season will be played at the Royal Bafokeng Stadium," added Sello.

Additionally, the club president assured residents that the team's relocation to North West is not merely a move home but a tactical approach towards developing football in the province.

"As we return to the North West, we are not just coming to play football, we want to become part of the Rustenburg and Bafokeng community. We are committed to working with local communities, government, schools, businesses, and the private sector to grow football and create opportunities for the young players in the area," he said.

Banyana Out for Redemption



With the Tanzania hiccup behind them, the former WAFCON champs hope to turn the corner against Cote d'Ivoire this weekend. Picture: NovaNews

By Gomolemo Winkel

Banyana Banyana players are determined to bounce back after a shocking opening defeat to Tanzania at the Women's Africa Cup of Nations (WAFCON) on Monday. The defending champions suffered a bitter 2-1 loss despite commanding possession and creating numerous scoring opportunities.

Reflecting on the setback and the path forward, the squad remains focused on their unity and redemption.

"It's not the start that we wanted, but I think the biggest thing now is just to reflect on where we went wrong and we take the positives out of that game and we get them to the next game," said Banyana forward, Linda Motlhalo, who clocked 100 caps for Banyana in the loss to Tanzania.

Defender, Isabella Ludwig, echoed Motlhalo's statement while conceding that they are under immense pressure to deliver positive results in their next fixture.

"It's obviously tough going into the next game not with the result that we wanted behind us, but I think it's important that the team sticks together and we just put our best foot forward, 100%," Ludwig said.

South Africa previously enjoyed an unbeaten record against the East African side across five historical meetings.

Diana Msewa opened the scoring for Tanzania be-

fore Bamabani Mbane equalised right before halftime. Hasnath Umba ultimately sealed the upset with a late winner in the second stanza.

Banyana Banyana coach Desiree Ellis and her squad now face immense pressure ahead of their upcoming Group C fixture against Ivory Coast. The team must convert their chances quickly to keep their continental title defence alive in Morocco.

Reflecting after the loss, Ellis stated they were also disappointed and said her team knows that they can do better than what they displayed in their opening fixture.

"We know we are better than that and we are disappointed as well about the result and the performance. Now the next two games become a must-win game and that is what we said in the beginning, but we are disappointed that we disappointed ourselves and also disappointing the people back home," she said.

Ellis further admitted that the performance itself was not the major concern, but rather the inability to convert opportunities.

"But the effort that they put in in the second half, we could easily have gotten a win out of it, easily have gotten an equaliser out of it, but you cannot create so many opportunities and that is the name of the game. They literally had two chances and they scored," added Ellis.

Bloemfontein Boy Right on Cue!

By Gomolemo Winkel

Bloemfontein pool sensation, Katlego Nkosi, is set to represent South Africa at an upcoming international Blackball tournament in England. Hosted by the British Pool Federation, the prestigious global competition will take place at the Thistle Hotel Heathrow from 20 to 28 October.

The 17-year-old Mangaung Metro Thursday League player secured his berth at the tourney following a stellar showing at the provincial championships in Durban, where he finished fourth overall on the national rankings.

Katlego, who represents Ramblers City Brothers, has rapidly established himself as one of the Free State's brightest young sporting talents.

His path into structured competitive cue sports began when a local club representative recognised his potential and approached his family.

He recalled how his journey into the professional ranks officially commenced, explaining,

"Mr. Mafereka came to my mom, to ask her if I can play for a Professional Pool Team called City Brothers. Then my mother agreed. That is how I got into pool professional league (sic)," Katlego told Journal News Network (JNN) this week.

Despite the monumental opportunity to test his skills on the international stage, the teenager faces pressing logistical and monetary hurdles. He expressed mixed emotions as the departure date approaches



without secured financial backing.

"I am happy and at the same time I'm anxious. Things are not coming together. Financially and sponsorships, I am struggling a bit," he noted.

Nkosi's passion for the sport was cultivated early at home under the guidance of his mother, Mapule Nkosi.

"I have always loved pool and eventually bought a

table for our home, where I also started a small academy. Katlego learned the game while standing on a crate because he was still too small to reach the table," Nkosi said.

She recalled how Katlego's transition into formal structures in 2024 immediately yielded impressive results.

Therefore seeing him rise through the national ranks

to achieve overseas selection marks a major milestone for the family, she noted.

"Since joining the professional league, he has continued to win trophies and medals. Watching him qualify to represent South Africa in England is a dream come true. I am incredibly proud of him."

Teammate and mentor, Sam Mafereka, identified Katlego's raw capabilities during informal neighbour-

hood matches. He stepped in after noticing older players taking advantage of the youngster's natural skill.

"I found this boy playing local pool games. I then realised that this boy is talented. Some players took him and exploited his abilities. He was winning a lot. Some were angry when he would win over them. Then I asked him to join the professional league at Ramblers, under BSA (Blackpool South Africa)," Mafereka told JNN.

Now in his second professional season, Nkosi holds ninth position in the league standings while consistently displaying a distinctive tactical approach. Mafereka highlighted how his protégé's technical composure separates him from veteran competitors, remarking,

"He is currently ninth in our league standings and continues to improve every week. His style of play is specific and separates him from many experienced players."

The teenager's steady progression also earned him a coveted spot in the club's primary squad. Mafereka hopes Nkosi's rapid rise inspires other aspiring local players to emulate international icons, concluding,

"I encouraged him to make it top five so that he can play for Team A.

"Team A always gets the first preference in terms of tournaments arranged, it is like a first team. Team B is second team. And he ended up qualifying for Team A. My dream is to see him follow in the footsteps of South African pool star Aden Joseph, who has competed around the world."

MUNICIPALITY AT WORK!

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AFRICA IN AFRICA ATIBA (ATI) 2026

ment. Their task focus on marketing deployment, data capture, and logistical execution.

1. Information Dissemination & Desktop Representation

- Frontline Ambassadorship: Acts as the initial point of contact for visitors and buyers on the exhibition floor, executing rapid-fire pitches about the municipality's geography, accommodations, and activities
- Collateral Management: Distributes regional maps, official tourism guides, brochures, and digital QR codes to visitors to drive lead generation.

2. Administrative Support and Data Tracking

- Lead Capturing: Systematically collects the contact data, email networks, and specific business needs passing travel agents and hosted buyers.
- Scheduling Coordination: Tracks and manages the daily diary of the Tourism Manager, ensuring that critical pre-scheduled B2B buyer appointments are met on time.

3. Operational and Exhibition Logistics

- Stand Maintenance: Manages the physical layout of the pavilion, ensuring digital displays are working, promotional stock is replenished, and meeting tables remain clean.
- Social Media Activation: Captures live photos, video, and visitor testimonials to the municipality's presence at the event.

5.1 Pre-Event Engagement: Free State Stall at Africa's Travel Indaba

Before the main trade show floor opened at the Durban ICC, the Free State Gambling, Liquor and Tourism Authority (FSGTLTA). And the Department of Economic Small Business Development, Tourism and Environmental Affairs (DESTE) executed a meticulous pre-event engagement strategy. This phase focused on digital profiling, strict product vetting, administrative readiness, and scheduling optimization to ensure maximum return on investment (ROI).

1. Vetting and Selection of Stall Exhibitors

The FSGTLTA managed a highly competitive regional selection process to finalize the products that would join the official provincial contingent:

- Product Diversification: Vetted a wide range of enterprises to form a complete regional solution, filtering them into categories like high-end MICE facilities, cultural immersion, lifestyle, and niche adventure portfolios.

- Exhibitor Finalisation: Handpicked dedicated tourism MSME to be hosted at the main pavilion, alongside additional emerging enterprises positioned in the "Hidden Gems" sections.

- Featured Representatives: Vetted and secured slots for prominent regional entities- such as De Stijl Gariep Hotel, Cavas Republic, Rise Up T, Phela Moya, and Shepherd Tourism Tours-ensuring a diverse provincial showcase.

2. Digital Diary and B2B Scheduling setup

The primary mechanism for commercial success at the trade show is the official Africa's Travel Indaba (ATI) Matchmaking Platform.

- Diary Launch Execution: The online diary officially opened to allow the Free State delegation and its hosted MSME to begin looking at international buyer profiles

- Pre-Scheduled Matchmaking: Exhibitors actively engaged with the system to fill their daily rosters. Vetted international buyers and inbound tour operators were targeted to book 20-minute B2B transaction, meetings weeks in advance.

- Advance Call to Action: The province ran targeted digital media campaigns encouraging global buyers to secure open slots at Stand DEC1J06 before arriving in Durban.

3. Sustainable Tourism and Capacity Building Workshops

To guarantee that small businesses could hold their own against competitive international standards, the province executed pre-event training:

- Kroonstad Sustainable Workshop: LED by the National Deputy Minister of Tourism, Makhotsa Maggie Sotyu, the department hosted localized workshops for selected MSME in regions like Kroonstad.

- Skills Upliftment: Equipped local suppliers with critical business compliance information, negotiation tactics, product packing framework, and dynamic pricing strategies

5.2 During-the-Event Execution: Free State Pavilion at Africa's Travel Indaba 2026

During the live trade show at the Durban ICC, the Free State Gambling, liquor and Tourism Authority (FSGTLTA) converted its pre-event strategies into active commercial operations. Operating out of Stand DEC1J06, the delegation deployed its full workforce- including executive management, municipal tourism managers, and tourism inters- to aggressively position the province under the banner "More Than a Drive-Thru."

- High-level contract negotiations.
- Ministerial & VIP walkthroughs.
- Delivering 20-minute B2B pitches.
- Securing regional route agreements.
- Frontline visitor greeting.
- Badges scanning & lead logging.
- Maintaining stand presentation.

- Coordinating daily diary changes.
- 5.3 Collaborative Engagement
Operating under the realization that modern tourism cannot survive in isolation, the Free State Gambling, Liquor and Tourism Authority (FSGTLTA) and the Ngwathe Local Municipality formed vital partnerships across multiple sectors. These collaborations focused on driving regional integration, enhancing commercial market access, and establishing sustainable socio-economic development.

Regional Integration

- Multi-provincial routes.
- Lesotho cross- border links.
- Unified destination networks

Commercial Access

- State-funded MSME platforms
- Direct B2B inbound matches
- Shared Marketing agreement

Workforce Development

- Higher education partnerships.
- Live Student Mentorships.
- Practical industry exposure.

7 BENEFITS REALISED

- Elevated the visibility of Ngwathe's tourism assets.

- Sparked interest among several buyers in exploring Ngwathe-based experiences.

- Strengthened institutional relationships with provincial tourism bodies.

- Built capacity and knowledge for future tourism promotion activities.

- Enhanced readiness for participation in similar events.

Economic Output

- R835m total economic boost.
- 97% Durban hotel occupancy.
- 1,122 Local jobs sustained.

Regional Policy

- SA-Mauritius MOU finalized
- Regional ETA visa alignment
- 22 African nations aligned

Enterprise Growth

- Direct global buyer access
- 300 student interns upskilled
- Grassroots MSME intergration

7. Challenges Encountered

- In need of QR code to gather more information like attraction, accommodation and activities in Ngwathe.

- Limited human resources at the exhibition stand.

- Need for more comprehensive marketing materials and tourism promotional video for Ngwathe products to be played on Free State stand at the screen.

8 POST EVENT ACTIVITIES AND WAY FORWARD

8.1 Debriefing and Feedback Sessions

- Dispatch thank-you emails.
- Share targeted Parys links.

- Transition leads to sales.
- Links township tourism loops.

- Expand high-contract QR visual
- Compile and relay feedback from Ngwathe-based product owners.

8.2 Preparations for ATI 2027

- PHASE 1: Tech & Compliance
Update local Parys registries.

- PHASE 2: Designed & Links
Prints high-contrast QR hubs.

- PHASE 3: Targeted Diary
Synchronize offline backup excel master diaries.

8.3 Strengthening Local Tourism Development

- Develop a local tourism promotion strategy informed by ATI insights.

- Organize regular forums with product owners and stakeholders.

- Foster collaborations with buyers and tour operators met at ATI.

9 RECOMMENDATIONS

- Broaden support and inclusion for rural and emerging tourism enterprises.

- Allocate dedicated resources for pre-event preparation and marketing.

- Enhance training on ATI expectations and requirements.

- Foster inter-municipality cooperation for stronger district visibility.

- Institutionalize a Ngwathe Tourism Expo to identify prospective products.

10 CONCLUSION

The Africa Travel Indaba 2026 provided a valuable platform for Ngwathe Municipal to market its tourism potential and build strategic partnerships. The active involvement of the LED and Tourism Manager ensured meaningful participation and laid the groundwork for future growth and inclusion.

Continued commitment and collaboration with provincial stakeholders will be essential in achieving our long-term tourism development goals.

NGWATHE BOOSTS SERVICE DELIVERY WITH POWERFUL NEW MUNICIPAL FLEET

Two motor graders and three TLBs strengthen the Municipality's ability to respond faster to community needs



Ngwathe Local Municipality is strengthening its service delivery capacity with the acquisition of two new motor graders and three Tractor-Loader-Backhoes (TLBs), marking another significant investment in the Municipality's ongoing drive to improve services for residents.

The expansion of the municipal fleet will enhance the Municipality's ability to respond more rapidly to infrastructure and service delivery needs, particularly the maintenance, upgrading and rehabilitation of municipal roads.

The newly acquired machinery will also support urgent work such as the gravelling of streets in newly established residential areas, including areas where the Municipality has allocated sites for housing and human settlements.

The investment forms part of the current administration's broader commitment to building long-term municipal capacity while reducing reliance on outsourced plant hire. By investing in its own equipment, the Municipality aims to reduce operational costs, improve value for public funds and ensure that essential machinery is available when communities need it most.

A growing fleet for a growing municipality
The expansion of the municipal fleet forms part of a

broader legacy project aimed at strengthening service delivery across Ngwathe.

The Municipality has already introduced a range of new vehicles and equipment to improve its ability to respond to community needs.

New vehicles for the Traffic Department have helped

The introduction of cherry pickers has strengthened the Municipality's ability to respond to illegal electricity connections, which can damage municipal infrastructure and contribute to rising electricity costs.

The Municipality has also acquired new refuse removal trucks, increasing its capacity to collect waste and extend services to growing communities.

In Heilbron, refuse removal services have been extended to newly allocated residential sites in Extension 10 in Phirtona Township.

Keeping Ngwathe clean

The fleet expansion also supports the Municipality's "Keeping Ngwathe Clean" campaign, which focuses on removing illegal dumping, maintaining refuse collection and improving environmental health across communities.

While the Municipality continues to intensify efforts to keep towns clean, residents are urged to play their part by disposing of waste responsibly.

Illegal dumping remains a serious challenge, creating health and environmental hazards and undermining efforts to maintain clean and safe communities.

The expansion of the municipal fleet is therefore more than an investment in machinery — it is an investment in faster response times, greater efficiency and sustainable service delivery.

NGWATHE'S WAR ON POTHOLES ROLLS ON



Road rehabilitation gathers
pace as Schonkenville
entrance undergoes
essential upgrades

Ngwathe Local Municipality is intensifying its War on Potholes as part of an ongoing drive to rehabilitate roads, improve infrastructure and enhance road safety across the municipality.

Roadworks are currently underway at the Schonkenville entrance, where essential upgrades and repairs are being carried out.

To facilitate the work and ensure the safety of motorists and construction teams, the entrance has been temporarily closed.

Motorists are urged to use the clearly marked alternative routes and to comply with all road signs and instructions from on-site personnel.

The Municipality apologises for any inconvenience caused and thanks residents and motorists for their patience and cooperation while the improvements are being undertaken.

The programme forms part of the Municipality's ongoing service delivery efforts and achievements highlighted during the State of the Municipality Address (SOMA).

Ngwathe Local Municipality remains committed to improving road infrastructure, creating safer roads and ensuring that service delivery interventions translate into visible improvements for communities.





SPORT



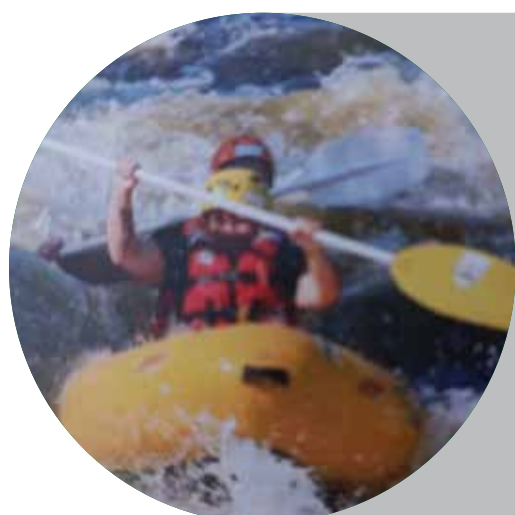
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Natural setting and outdoor activities

One of Parys' most striking features is its proximity to the Vredefort Dome. The Dome, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, is the eroded central structure of a crater created by a meteorite impact some 2 020 million years ago; the impact originally produced a crater about 300 km wide. The semi-circular ring of hills, combined with the Vaal River's channels, creates a landscape of forests, gorges, rapids and panoramic viewpoints. This environment invites a multitude of outdoor activities:



River rafting and kayaking

The stretch of the Vaal River near Parys contains the only rapids along the river; rapids range from grade 1 to grade 3 and include obstacles nicknamed Big Daddy and Gatsien. Professional tour operators organise white-water rafting excursions for families and thrill seekers. Nature paddles are available for those seeking a gentler experience.

Rock climbing and abseiling

Sheer quartzite cliffs within the Dome attract climbers, while adventure companies offer abseiling and rappelling experiences from heights up to 50 meters. Courses are available for beginners and advanced climbers.



Hiking and mountain biking

The hills of the Vredefort Dome are criss-crossed with trails that pass bushman rock paintings, Iron Age stone villages and indigenous woodland. Guided hikes provide insight into the geology and cultural history of the crater. Mountain biking routes range from gentle farm roads to technical single-track.



Bird watching and wildlife

The diverse flora of the Dome supports more than 256 bird species; a local landowner spent seven years compiling an illustrated book called The Vredefort Koe-pel Birds. Birdwatching tours often coincide with sunset game drives in nearby wildlife conservancies, where antelope species, zebras and smaller mammals roam freely



The 1919 Parys Suspension Bridge

The beautiful Suspension Bridge is over the Vaal river in Parys, Free State, South Africa. The Bridge was built in 1919 that means that the bridge is 98 years old this year.

Golf and sports

Golf Island (also known as Koedoes Island) features a 9-hole course accessible via a suspension bridge. Additional sports include skydiving, hot-air ballooning over the crater, quad biking, 4x4 trails, horse riding and fly-fishing.



NGWATHE UNITES STAKEHOLDERS TO BUILD A STRONGER, COMPLIANT BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT

First-of-its-kind intergovernmental roundtable drives collaboration, business compliance and local economic growth

Ngwathe Local Municipality has taken a significant step towards strengthening local economic development by convening its first-ever Intergovernmental Business Compliance Roundtable, bringing together government institutions, business leaders and community stakeholders to address key issues affecting the local business environment.

The strategic engagement was led by Municipal Manager Dr Futhuli Mothamaha, supported by Dr Sive Dintsi, Director for Planning and Local Economic Development, Ms Mojabeng Makibinyane, Director for Community Services, and their respective teams.

The roundtable brought together representatives from Ngwathe business forums, civil movement

groups, the Department of Small Business Development, the Department of Home Affairs, the South African Police Service (SAPS) and Fezile Dabi District Municipality Health Services. Discussions focused on strengthening business compliance, improving the regulation of spaza shops, enhancing licensing processes and creating greater access to business development and funding opportunities.

The initiative provided a valuable platform for open dialogue between stakeholders responsible for regulatory compliance, law enforcement and economic development, with the shared goal of creating a fair, safe and enabling environment for businesses to thrive.

A key focus of the engagement was a presentation by the Department of Home Affairs, which clarified the legal framework governing asylum seekers and refugees operating businesses in South Africa.

The department also outlined the investment requirements applicable to foreign nationals establishing businesses in the country.

The roundtable concluded with a shared commitment from all stakeholders to strengthen cooperation, improve institutional capacity and respond more effectively to the immediate challenges facing businesses and communities across Ngwathe.

By bringing all role players to one table, Ngwathe Local Municipality is reinforcing its commitment to good governance, regulatory compliance and sustainable economic development.

