

# Journal NEWS

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**Mangaung Metro Spokesperson Suspended**



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## DE AAR'S WATER WOES SPIRAL

*Months without water, soaring bills and failing infrastructure leave residents desperate and demanding answers*



Montana resident Noreen Makamel has been without water since September. Picture: Supplied



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Power of Life

## Six Arrested in North West Mandrax Bust



By: Lerato Mutlanyane

On Monday, 8 December 2025, the Hawks executed a search warrant at a Makapanstad residence in North West, uncovering a clandestine Mandrax laboratory.

Members of the Hawks' Serious Organised Crime Investigation and Counter-Narcotics and Gangs units discovered large quantities of Mandrax powder and tablets being manufactured at the site.

Hawks spokesperson Colonel Katlego Mogale said the operation followed a tip linked to a suspect who had previously fled a separate drug case.

"Information traced by the Serious Organised Crime Investigation team in the Western Cape led us to a smallholding in Thulwe, north-west of Mabaane," Mogale explained.

"At the scene, six suspects, aged between 44 and 55, were found manufacturing Mandrax. We seized tablets, powder, a drug press, crusher machine, scales, and packaging materials. All six have been arrested and will appear in court on charges of drug manufacturing."

This bust follows a recent R20 million cocaine seizure in Midrand, part of a crime intelligence-driven operation. "Preliminary investigations suggest the drugs were brought into South Africa from a neighbouring country, destined for Cape Town, Western Cape," Mogale added.

## Next-Gen Female Scientists Take the Lead



Minister of Science, Technology and Innovation, Dr Nomalungelo Gina, is ready for women to spearhead science. Picture: SANews

By: Abigail Visagie

The Deputy Minister of Science, Technology and Innovation, Dr Nomalungelo Gina, has called on young African women, in particular, to claim their space in the science and innovation sector.

Gina spoke at the Fondation L'Oréal-UNESCO for Women in Science (FWIS) Sub-Saharan Africa Young Talents Programme, held earlier this week. She noted that the event gathered the next generation of female scientists and urged young African women to "make science and innovation great again."

During her speech, Gina encouraged young women to study science and mathematics at school and pursue STEM careers with confidence, stressing that achievements and success in these fields are attainable for females.

Globally, the programme supports over 4,700 female researchers in more than 140 countries. Now in its 16th year, FWIS annually recognises 25 doctoral and five postdoctoral female scientists, celebrating excellence, resilience, and impact across diverse scientific fields.

"As the children of the African continent, it is you who carry the responsibility to elevate scientific work in Africa to another level," Gina said, also highlighting

historical barriers that discouraged women from entering science.

The minister expressed gratitude to Fondation L'Oréal-UNESCO for steadily increasing women's participation in STEM careers, noting their enduring support for South Africa's flagship Women in Science Awards (SAWISA). "Through your partnership, you have shown that you are genuine champions of the women-in-science agenda," she said.

The 2025 young talents formed part of a group of 30 individuals who received the Women in Science Sub-Saharan Africa Awards for their promising research excellence and remarkable scientific contributions.

PhD candidate in physics at the University of Limpopo and 2025 L'Oréal-UNESCO Award recipient Keletso Monareng shared how her curiosity in science was sparked by "energy poverty" in Africa. Her research focuses on developing clean, affordable energy technologies as sustainable alternatives to lithium-ion batteries.

Pauline Avenel-Lam, Executive Director of L'Oréal's Foundation, emphasised that talents like Monareng are vital to building a more just, sustainable, and resilient world.

"Beyond your discoveries, it is your determination, passion, and commitment to passing on knowledge that drives us," she said.



Department of Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities (DWYPD) Minister Sindiwe Chikunga. Picture: Supplied

## SA Confronts GBVF Epidemic: 'Responsibility Starts at Home'

By: Lerato Mutlanyane

With femicide rates among the highest in the world, South Africa's GBVF emergency has prompted government to call for stronger partnerships and a nation-wide, 365-day commitment to preventing violence—not just brief awareness campaigns.

The Department of Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities (DWYPD) has urged all South Africans to take shared responsibility in the fight against Gender-Based Violence and Femicide, stressing that the epidemic can no longer be met with isolated efforts or short-term campaigns.

Minister Sindiwe Chikunga said stronger leadership and deeper partnerships across government, civil society and the private sector are crucial as the country accelerates implementation of the National Strategic Plan on GBVF (NSP-GBVF). The plan strengthens laws, expands survivor services and drives coordinated action across prevention, justice, response, economic empowerment and research.

But lasting change, the Minister emphasised, depends on communities standing together.

She noted that the fight against GBVF must go beyond the annual 16 Days of Activism, and instead become a continuous, 365-day national commitment to protect vulnerable groups and build a society rooted in dignity and equality.

"Every day is a day to end GBVF," the department stated, calling on citizens to create safe environments, support survivors and hold per-

petrators accountable.

Workplaces and institutions were urged to ensure that effective policies and reporting mechanisms are in place, while families are encouraged to instill values of respect, equality and non-violence from early childhood.

"The responsibility does not rest with government alone, but with every sector, every community and every individual," Chikunga said.

The Minister also issued a direct call to men to challenge harmful norms, attitudes and behaviours—and to speak out against abuse whenever it occurs.

"We cannot end GBVF through legislation alone. We need a united nation—men, women, youth, traditional leaders, religious formations, business, labour and civil society—working in one direction," she said.

"Ending GBVF is both a moral duty and a collective responsibility."

The department encouraged the public to utilise support services, including the GBVF Command Centre at 0800 428 428.

President Cyril Ramaphosa echoed the call for sustained national dialogues with men and boys, aimed at confronting the drivers of violence such as toxic masculinity, harmful cultural norms and damaging socialisation patterns.

The national call to action reinforces that ending GBVF requires more than policy—it requires the everyday choices of parents, teachers, colleagues and neighbours. Change begins with the conversations we initiate, the survivors we support and the behaviours we challenge.

# 'Time is not on our side'

## ANC reflects on GNU and declining voter support

The ANC has finally begun the uncomfortable but unavoidable task of dissecting its own decline

By: Abigail Visagie

At the ANC's 5th National General Council (NGC) in Boksburg on Monday, 8 December, secretary-general Fikile Mbalula moved from his usual defensive posture while delivering the party's mid-term report, saying the party's decline is long-standing rather than a sudden rupture.

According to Mbalula's analysis, a mid-term review between the party's 2022 and 2027 national elective conferences, the ANC's decline dates back to 2016.

"The electoral setback suffered by the ANC and the democratic movement began in 2016 with the loss of major metros, accelerating with the emergence of over 80 hung councils after the 2021 local elections, and culminated in the 2024 strategic setback when the ANC lost its outright majority in Parliament, Gauteng and KZN," reads his 294-page report.

Reflecting on the bruising 2024 election results, Mbalula said an "intense, coordinated and well-funded campaign" had been mounted to push the party below 50% and replace it with "a right-wing, anti-transformation coalition government (the so-called Moonshot Pact)."

The Moonshot Pact, later known as the Multi-Party Charter, was an agreement between opposition parties, including the DA, ActionSA, IFP, Freedom Front Plus and others, to form a coalition to unseat the ANC if they had the numbers after the 2024 elections.

"Objectively, this campaign produced a counter-revolutionary convergence between right-wing parties and breakaway parties formed by former leaders of the liberation movement," said Mbalula.

"Voters no longer captive" Those ANC "breakaway parties", such as the EFF and MK party, accelerated the party's decline in recent years as many of its traditional supporters either didn't vote or voted for alternatives.

Referring to the rise of the uMkhonto Wesizwe (MK) party, Mbalula's report says on Gauteng: "The ANC's core base has fractured. The shift of protest votes from the ANC, first to the EFF and now to the MK Party in Gauteng, shows that this discontent is becoming entrenched. Large sections of the working class and poor no longer believe ANC promises on jobs, housing and services."

"The ANC can no longer command support; it



President Cyril Ramaphosa arrives at the 5th National General Council of the African National Congress held at Birchwood Hotel in Boksburg on 08 December 2025. Picture: Dailymaverick

must now compete for it, and negotiate with other parties claiming to represent the same constituencies."

"Voters have demonstrated that they are not captive to the ANC and will 'shop around' for alternatives that better address their conditions: the DA for stability and middle-class interests; the EFF and MK party for alienated and protesting poor communities."

In its analysis of KZN, Mbalula's report, however, found the ANC was weakened but still had a chance to regain lost ground.

"At the same time, no opposition party has replaced the ANC ideologically or organisationally. The MK party's rise is largely emotional and reactionary; the IFP's resurgence remains geographically concentrated; and the DA and EFF remain marginal in African working-class communities."

"The balance of forces remains fluid and contestable. The core conclusion is that the ANC is weakened structurally, politically and morally, but not defeated. Restoring hegemony remains possible if renewal, governance reform and mass work are pursued decisively."

GNU 'a strategic setback'

After the ANC fell short of a majority in the 2024 elections, it entered the Government of National Unity (GNU) — a move Mbalula described not as weakness, but as a survival strategy.

"The electoral setback of 2024 initially gave these forces the illusion that the ANC had reached its end. The ANC's swift tactical manoeuvre to rally parties around an inclusive unity government defeated this pre-election strategy. Their shared goal of eliminating the ANC from governance did not materialise," Mbalula said.

Mbalula insists the party retains significant influ-

ence: "Despite our subjective weaknesses, we must not underestimate the strong position the ANC holds within the GNU — controlling two-thirds of the ministries critical to transformation and development."

Mbalula maintained that 18 months after the GNU was formed, it was the correct route to take to take the country forward, although it had faced repeated crises, particularly over ideological and policy differences. Its biggest test was perhaps in February 2025 when it failed to pass the national Budget, and again in March, a first for South Africa. It was finally approved in May 2025.

Although the GNU was able to work through some of the differences, Mbalula said the weaknesses in the GNU threatened the stability and credibility of the 7th administration, pointing to the DA's conduct.

"Relentless attacks on transformation policies and South Africa's foreign policy stance by the DA, despite their agreement to the Statement of Intent. These attacks have been amplified through global networks, the courts, the media and state roles they hold within the GNU."

The report warns that although the ANC sees opportunities in the current political mix, "time is not on our side."

"We must move with the speed of lightning in executing plans so that tangible results are felt on the ground, particularly on inclusive growth, job creation, poverty reduction, combating crime and corruption and improving service delivery... Ultimately, the GNU will be judged not on plans, but on execution."

Branches — old and rural The ANC's analysis of the state of its branches and why members leave the organisation, however, provides a sobering view.

Of the 811 branches that responded to an ANC

survey underpinning the NGC analysis, the mid-term report says the bulk of the party's branches are rural — mostly from Limpopo, Mpumalanga and the Northern Cape — followed by township branches. Suburban branches trail behind, with informal settlement branches providing the lowest response rate.

The age profile of members reflects another long-term challenge the party has been struggling with. The average branch chairperson is 49.3 years old, with women slightly older than men.

A "very limited" number of young cadres hold chair positions — even though the country's median age is 28.

Membership stability is patchy, with youth membership remaining far lower than adult membership. Branches say members leave because the organisation feels distant and inward-looking:

52% say the ANC is "not responsive to community issues".

40% cite factionalism and leadership conflicts. 22% point to poor internal communication. 23% blame irregular meetings.

Only 19% of branches report no major retention challenges.

2026 local government elections As the country prepares for the 2026 elections, the ANC said its employees ought to play the strategic role required to transform South Africa.

"Every ANC-governed municipality must demonstrate irrefutable progress in implementing the Spatial Development Framework to ensure that all rural and urban areas possess reliable infrastructure, thriving local economies, sustainable livelihoods, affordable quality services and shared prosperity."

"This National General Council must take tough decisions regarding the calibre of cadres who will lead local government in the coming term, and the firm accountability measures required to implement the District Development Model — so that government plans, budgets and acts as one seamless whole," Mbalula said.

In the next two days, delegates at the ANC's NGC will be split into commissions to continue policy discussions. Mbalula poured cold water over suggestions that there would also be a succession debate, following speculation that there would be calls for President Cyril Ramaphosa's removal and that the event is a precursor to the party's next elective conference.

"This general council is not going to discuss succession. That talk belongs to the branches at that stage relevant to it, which will be in 2027. This general council is about preparing the ANC to win elections, consolidating renewal of the ANC," Mbalula said. **DM**

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# De Aar's Water Woes Spiral

**Months without water, soaring bills and failing infrastructure leave residents desperate and demanding answers**

By: Abigail Visagie



Montana resident Noreen Makamel has been without water since September. Picture: Supplied

The small town of De Aar in the Northern Cape is once again up in arms as a severe water crisis continues to leave residents desperate, frustrated and without clear answers. With delays in restoring supply and water trucks failing to reach the poorest communities, many households say they have been left to fend for themselves.

Noreen Makamel, a resident of Montana, says her household has been without water since September.

"The situation has become so dire to the point where our health, sanitation and dignity are at stake," she said. Without adequate water to flush toilets, Makamel wakes up in the early hours of the morning to fill buckets to get her family through the day.

John Robertson, born and raised in De Aar, says the crisis is even worse in his area. He recalls a time when water supply was reliable, the fire brigade functioned well and service delivery "was intact".

"De Aar derives its name from the multiple boreholes it has, so water should naturally not be a problem for the residents. Yet as the years have progressed, service delivery has become dreadful and water more scarce," Robertson said.

Despite struggling to get water from his taps, Robertson recently received a R13 000 municipal bill—an amount he says he cannot understand. He added that neighbouring suburbs such as Schreiner, New Bright, Makariena, Barcelona, Residentia, Malay Kamp, Leeuwenshof, Nonzwakazi and Waterdal are all experiencing similar shortages. In many areas, water appears only in droplets in the morning and returns briefly late at night.

Patriotic Alliance (PA) mayoral candidate Cici van Syfer said residents have reached breaking point and called for accountability from the Emthanjeni Local Municipality.

"The municipality currently hires three water trucks at a reported cost of R600 000 per month, yet these trucks fail to reach all affected communities," said van Syfer. "Entire neighbourhoods go days without a single drop being delivered."

Van Syfer added that instead of addressing the root causes of the outages, the municipality continues investing in "temporary measures that clearly do not work". He said three residents recently repaired two major leaks

themselves—leaks that had been reported weeks earlier but ignored by officials.

He said residents deserve transparency around the true cause of the crisis, urgent repairs and a long-term stabilisation plan for the water system.

"They also deserve a full audit and a public explanation of the R600 000 monthly expenditure on water trucks, as well as clear accountability from the Municipal Manager and responsible officials," he added.

"Our people should not be treated as if a basic human right is a privilege."

Democratic Alliance (DA) councillor in Emthanjeni

Municipality, Gerhard Engelbrecht, said the municipality maintains that renting water trucks is necessary due to the urgency of the situation.

"The municipality has spent close to R10.8 million on rental costs, yet various communities are still not receiving a drop of water for months on end," said Engelbrecht. "The poorly managed water crisis in De Aar cannot be allowed to continue, placing unnecessary burden on the residents."

Both van Syfer and Engelbrecht say the situation violates residents' constitutional right to access sufficient water as outlined in Section 27(1)(b).



Suspended metro spokesperson, Qondile Khedama. Picture: MMM Facebook

## Mangaung Spin-doctor Suspended Over Harassment Allegations

By: Matshidiso Selebeleng

Mangaung Metro Municipality has placed its communications general manager, Qondile Khedama, on special leave as the City launches an independent investigation into sexual misconduct allegations brought forward through a formal grievance process.

According to the City Manager, Sello More, Khedama has been placed on special leave following the receipt of a formal report from the Employee Wellness Division. "This development follows a grievance held with organised labour and the General Manager," said Khedama.

Further assured members of the public and workers of MMM that the municipality takes sexual allegations extremely seriously and therefore has resorted to appointing an independent team to conduct thorough investigations and provide recommendations to the accounting officer within a strict timeline.

"The decision to place the General Manager on special leave does not constitute a finding of guilt; it is a precautionary measure aimed at en-

suring a fair, transparent and just process for all parties involved," said More.

Meanwhile, Khedama said that he welcomes and respects the decision taken late last month (27 November) by his employer regarding the sexual allegations against him and will remain committed to fully cooperating with the employer's process and will continue to avail himself to his employer.

"As a social activist against Gender-based violence and Femicide (GBVF), I fully understand and agree with the decision.

The issue must be handled with the seriousness and sensitivity it deserves, also given my responsibility in other public entities," said Khedama.

Khedama urged that processes should unfold without speculations and that no one, including the complainant, should be 'impugned.'

I please with all to allow formal processes to unfold without being speculative, protecting the integrity of investigations and all involved.

GBVF affects everyone, let's not politicise or weaponise it," concluded Khedama.

## New Ipelegeng School Ushers in a Fresh Start

By: Abigail Visagie



The choice to honour Lentsela came directly from the community, which strongly supported naming the new

Success drew closer for the community of Ipelegeng on 3 December 2025 when North West Education MEC, Ntsetsao Viola Motsumi, officially handed over the newly built, state-of-the-art Richard Tumahole Primary School in Schweizer-Reneke — marking a powerful step toward educational transformation.

With only one primary school previously serving the entire Ipelegeng area, the department prioritised expanding access to quality education while creating employment opportunities for local educators.

"Thank you, MEC Motsumi. Our teachers who have been unemployed now have a chance at employment," said community member Tshenolo Matlhare.

The school is named after exile icon Richard Tumahole Lentsela, who was born in Ipelegeng, began his early remedial education there, and later studied at Turfloop University. Lentsela was known for his humility, passion for justice and deep love for education.

"He was humble and quiet, but a fanatic for justice and fairness. I want to thank the Department of Education. Having this school named after my cousin is a huge gift, and it has made the family extremely proud," said family member Lebogang Gasialawale.

school after the local icon.

Richard Tumahole Primary boasts 21 classrooms, a functional library and science laboratory, a computer lab, Grade R facilities, an administration block, sports amenities, security fencing and a kitchen.

The project is also expected to empower local residents through skills development and business opportunities.

MEC Motsumi urged parents and community members to protect the facility, particularly during service-delivery protests.

"Let's all work together to take good care of our newly built school. I encourage the community, our learners, and School Governing Bodies to help protect the school from theft and vandalism by reporting any suspicious activities to the authorities," she said.

Newly appointed principal Teledimo Harry Kgaswane said maintaining high standards will be a priority.

"The plan is to maintain the school, protect it, and uphold the educational standard while instilling discipline," he said.

When the first bell rings at Richard Tumahole Primary, it will signal more than the start of the school day — it will mark the beginning of a new chapter for the entire Ipelegeng community.

## Matjhabeng Turns the Corner on Sewer Spillages

By: Abigail Visagie

Matjhabeng Local Municipality is finally showing signs of improvement after years of struggling with sewer spillages. The turning point came when the Department of Water and Sanitation (DWS), following a Ministerial directive, stepped in to assist the municipality.

DWS helped by refurbishing and upgrading the Thabong and Kutlwanong Waste Water Treatment Works (WWTW) and the surrounding pump stations, aiming to put an end to recurring sewer spillages. The projects in the municipal area included pump station refurbishments, sewer unblocking, and wastewater treatment works upgrades.

According to DWS spokesperson Larry Crisp, nine wastewater treatment works and 42 previously non-functional pump stations have been refurbished and upgraded. Approximately 400 km of sewer network lines, including outfall lines and chambers totaling 1,543 km, were unblocked.

"Both Thabong and Kutlwanong WWTWs are

nearing completion, with progress above 98%," Crisp said. "Nineteen pump stations, including Bronville North, Bronville South, Rheederspark, and Akasia, have been completed and handed over to Matjhabeng LM for operation."

Crisp also acknowledged challenges with connecting the upgraded infrastructure to electricity, citing vandalism of electrical infrastructure and delays in payments by the municipality to Eskom. "The municipality is in consultation with Eskom and hopes to reach an agreement that will allow the community to benefit from the refurbished infrastructure," he said.

While both WWTWs are equipped with generators, reliance on them alone could be costly. "Running Thabong WWTW on generators alone is estimated to cost the municipality R2 million monthly," Crisp noted.

The municipality has assured the committee that competent plant operators will be hired and security measures strengthened to prevent vandalism, especially during the contractor's break. With the break scheduled for 15 December 2025, all stakeholders are working relentlessly to ensure the projects reach practical completion.

METRO MUNICIPALITY

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### MANGAUNG METRO EXECUTIVE MAYOR'S

# Festive Season Greetings

FELLOW MANGAUNG RESIDENTS,

THE FESTIVE SEASON IS A SPECIAL TIME WHEN LOVED ONES COME TOGETHER TO REFLECT ON THE YEAR THAT HAS PASSED. IT IS ALSO A MOMENT TO REMEMBER THOSE FACING HARDSHIPS, WHO MAY RELY ON OUR COMPASSION AND GENEROSITY. I ENCOURAGE ALL OF US TO EXTEND A HAND OF KINDNESS, ESPECIALLY TO FAMILIES AND CHILDREN WHO NEED OUR SUPPORT DURING THIS PERIOD.

THE YEAR 2025 HAS BEEN ONE OF MEANINGFUL PROGRESS FOR MANGAUNG. AS WE CONCLUDE THIS YEAR, WE REAFFIRM OUR COMMITMENT TO TRANSFORMING OUR CITY INTO A WORLD-CLASS METRO. WE WILL CONTINUE WORKING TIRELESSLY TO DELIVER EFFICIENT, RELIABLE, AND UNINTERRUPTED SERVICES TO ALL OUR RESIDENTS. TOGETHER, LET US CONTINUE BUILDING A BETTER MANGAUNG METROPOLITAN MUNICIPALITY.

AS MANY WILL BE TRAVELLING TO AND FROM OUR METRO, I URGE EVERYONE TO PRIORITISE SAFETY ON THE ROADS AND AT PLACES OF LEISURE. LET US ENSURE THAT EVERY JOURNEY IS A SAFE ONE.

MAY ACTS OF KINDNESS AND LOVE FILL OUR HEARTS, AND MAY THE FESTIVE SPIRIT SHINE ACROSS OUR METRO. ON BEHALF OF THE MANGAUNG METROPOLITAN MUNICIPALITY, I WISH YOU ALL A MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR.

EXECUTIVE MAYOR

CLLR. GREGORY NTHATSI



# DA Steps In as Municipal Split Sparks Legal Storm

By: Lerato Mutlanyane

The Democratic Alliance (DA) in the Free State has announced its full support for the New Greater Harrismith Association's review application filed in the Gauteng High Court, seeking to overturn the Municipal Demarcation Board's (MDB) decision of 30 July to reconfigure the boundaries of the Maluti-a-Phofung (MAP) Municipality.

After years of institutional collapse, repeated governance failures, and deep financial mismanagement, Maluti-a-Phofung is now on track to be divided. While the MDB's move has been welcomed by those who see it as a long-awaited escape from dysfunction, others argue the split could further destabilise essential services for residents already living with chronic municipal failures.

The Greater Harrismith Association represents residents across Harrismith, Intabazwe, Tshiame, Kestell, and Thlolong. Their proposal to the MDB calls for Wards 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, and 22 to be separated to form a new municipality—one they argue would be more financially sustainable, constitutionally compliant, and capable of rebuilding the local economy and creating jobs.

Maluti-a-Phofung is ranked among the 10 most distressed municipalities in South Africa and is considered incapable of meeting its obligations. Advocates for the split say the region can no longer bear the weight of a large, dysfunctional municipality. The MDB's own 2023 research report supports this position, warning of severe consequences if its findings are ignored.

The MDB is the constitutional body responsible for determining municipal and district boundaries and demarcating wards for local elections.

"The MDB's 1999 decision to create the vast and cumbersome Maluti-a-Phofung Municipality from four transitional councils, including the former homeland of QwaQwa, was flawed from the outset. Forming an economically unviable municipality never made sense," said DA provincial leader Roy Jankielsohn.

The municipality's financial liabilities remain crippling: it owes Map Water R500.3 million and Eskom R9.7 billion, with the real figure likely higher.

By November 2025, Maluti-a-Phofung had spent only 8% of its R199.5 million Municipal Infrastructure Grant, largely due to a lack of capacity.

The Auditor-General's latest findings paint an equally dire picture.



All 23 Free State municipalities were flagged as among the country's worst-performing, with widespread unauthorised expenditure, collapsing governance systems, and failing services.

The Auditor-General noted that persistent "non-governance and non-compliance has disabled essential services," adding that Parliament has now "drawn a line, demanding urgent intervention to break the cycle of dysfunction."

"As the provincial government steps in, the public will be watching closely to see whether meaningful reform takes place or whether the culture of impunity continues," the AG's office said.

Jankielsohn added that the MDB now has "an opportunity to correct past mistakes and establish a new municipality with a far greater chance at financial and administrative stability."

He emphasised that, given the widespread dysfunction seen across Free State municipalities—which often encompass multiple towns and large rural stretches—it is "necessary to re-examine municipal boundaries and create smaller, more manageable entities to improve service delivery."

Ultimately, the proposed redrawing of Maluti-a-Phofung's boundaries is being positioned as a step toward a

more efficient, sustainable governance model—one that can better meet the needs of the people it is meant to serve.

Meanwhile: The splitting of Kopanong Local Municipality into two municipalities is to be implemented after local elections, according to the MDB.

It said that the splitting will improve service delivery in the area and was necessary, as the Free State municipality was too vast, making it difficult for officials to effectively deliver service to the residents.

On Wednesday, the board handed over its final report to the Electoral Commission (IEC), which includes newly drawn ward and municipal boundary lines.

The MDB's chairperson, Thabo Manyoni, explained, "That decision which we have taken, it will only be implemented post [local government] elections because by that time you will need to have new councillors, some councillors will belong to the new municipality and others will belong to the, let's call it, the old municipalities."

"Of course, there are financial implications; the minister of finance has to come in.

"Even if he doesn't agree, at the end of the day, the implementation will have to be decided by them; the decision [to split] remains because it's our decision as an independent body."

## GQ Rapper Junior King Dies in Free State Car Crash



Rapper, Tik Tokker, dancer and influencer Junior King has died. PHOTO: Facebook

The family of well-known South African dancer and rapper Dugulth "Junior King" Ferreira has confirmed his sudden and untimely passing.

The 29-year-old died in a head-on collision between a truck and a sedan on the N1 near Verkeerdelei in the Free State at around 07:25 on Thursday morning.

The family released an official statement on Thursday afternoon, after unconfirmed rumours had circulated on social media earlier in the day.

Lucinda Windvogel, who released the statement on behalf of the family, wrote: "It is with profound sorrow that we, the family of Dugulth Ferreira, known to many as Junior King, announce his untimely passing following a tragic accident on the N1 early this morning."

"Junior King was a beloved son, father, brother, and artist whose talent and energy touched countless lives."

The statement confirmed that two of his children, who were in the vehicle with King at the time of the accident, were safe, and reported on the status of the two other passengers.

"While we grieve deeply, we wish to reassure the public that his children are safe.

"The other two passengers involved in the accident are currently hospitalised, and we ask that you keep them in your prayers as they recover," the post stated.

The family said they are humbled by the outpouring of love and tributes from fans, friends, and fellow artists across South Africa and asked for privacy during their time of mourning.

"His legacy as a performer and cultural voice will live on in the hearts of all who knew him.

"We kindly ask for privacy during this time of mourning, and we thank everyone for their continued support and compassion."

In a statement, police said emergency services were activated to a head-on collision between a light truck and a sedan on the N1 near Verkeerdelei at 07:25 this morning.

Spokesperson, Lieutenant Colonel Thabo Covane, said upon arrival, responders found the two vehicles had collided head-on, resulting in one fatality, who was declared dead at the scene.

According to Covane, three "moderately injured" individuals were transported to Pelonomi Trauma in Bloemfontein for further treatment.

"The report from first responders indicates that the Grey Volkswagen Polo TSI was driving on Southbound lane towards Bloemfontein, whereas the truck was driving towards Winburg on the Northbound lane.

"There were four passengers and the driver inside the Volkswagen Polo. The deceased was seated behind the driver with two children. The two kids, together with the passenger who was occupying the front seat, were rushed to the hospital. Both the driver of the Volkswagen Polo and the truck escaped unharmed. The police visited the family members at the hospital, and it was confirmed by the sister that the deceased is Dugulth Darian Denver Ferreira (29)," Covane said in his statement.

The SAPS extended its condolences to the family and confirmed that a case of culpable homicide was opened for investigation. *Algoafm*

# Readers Spread Festive Cheer

By Abigail Visagie

As twinkling lights go up and families gather near and far, Journal News invited readers to share the messages closest to their hearts this festive season. From tender notes of gratitude to wishes of joy, peace and new beginnings, these voices remind us what truly matters at this time of year: love, connection, and the people who make life meaningful. Here's what our readers had to say:



**Sadé Tanda** from Oranjesig, Bloemfontein, wishes her loved ones a season filled with warmth, joy, peace and love. "May this season be filled with so many happy memories spent with friends and family," she said.



**Ronell Botha** from Gqeberha in the Eastern Cape shared a heartfelt message for her husband, wishing him a happy and safe festive season. She thanked him for everything he does for her and their children. "May we celebrate many happy years together," said Botha.



**Karen Assy** from Bloemfontein in the Free State wishes all Journal News readers a prosperous 2026. "May this Christmas season bring lots of love and prosperity to everyone, and may 2026 be a year full of wealth, health and love," she said.



**Morapeli Lebaka** from Johannesburg, Gauteng, extends warm wishes to everyone for a Merry Christmas filled with love, peace and happiness. "May this festive season bring you joy, good health, and special moments with the people who matter most. As you celebrate, please stay safe and take care of one another. As we welcome the New Year, may it bring fresh beginnings, success and a prosperous 2026," he said.



**Kakanyo Mokoto** from Hoopstad, Free State, may not be celebrating with her brother Thabang this year, but she wishes everyone a happy holiday and says she can-

not wait to reunite with her friends and family to create new memories.



**Rethabile Monyaki** from Botshabelo, Free State, sent a touching message to her brother's girlfriend, Kedibone Mhlakaza, who will be celebrating her first festive season as a mother. "Merry Christmas to you as a first-time mom. Watching you step into motherhood has been so beautiful—you're handling everything with such love, strength and grace," said Monyaki.

She added that she hopes this festive season and new chapter bring Mhlakaza unforgettable moments with her loved ones.



**Thuto Pitso** from Bloemfontein, Free State, expressed heartfelt gratitude to her husband, Pitso, thanking him for his unwavering support during the festive season. "Thank you for being beside me and reassuring me through it all," she shared. She also wished her sons, Bohlale and Bohlakoa, a prosperous 2026 and a blessed festive season.

As 2025 draws to a close, may these messages inspire us to hold our loved ones a little closer, spread kindness a little further, and welcome the new year with brighter hope and fuller hearts. From all of us at Journal News, we wish you a joyful Christmas and a prosperous, love-filled 2026.

## Free State Steps Up Festive Season Safety Operations



By: Lerato Mutlanyane

The Free State, a vital corridor linking South Africa's provinces, is gearing up for intensified festive season safety measures as holiday travel begins to peak.

With Mangaung Metro serving as the gateway to major cities across the country, integrated law enforcement agencies have rolled out a series of high-impact visibility and crime-prevention operations to ensure a safer holiday period for all travellers.

As thousands prepare to travel for pilgrimages and family reunions, the South African Police Service (SAPS), supported by multiple specialised units, has activated heightened multidisciplinary deployments across strategic routes.

The high-density operations are geared towards combating aggravated robberies, curbing illicit economies and organised crime, clamping

down on illegal firearms and drugs, ensuring tourism safety, securing economic hubs, and enforcing road safety regulations.

On the N8 national route between Bloemfontein and Maseru, Lesotho's capital city, officers from several Provincial Units—including the Anti-Gang Unit, Public Order Policing, POCC, Inspectorate, VCIU and Corporate Communication—conducted a major roadblock as part of the ongoing #SaferFestiveSeason campaign.

During the operation, police stopped and searched 294 vehicles and 562 individuals. A 28-year-old man was arrested after officers found him in unlawful possession of ammunition. He is expected to appear in the Bloemfontein Magistrate's Court soon. Authorities say similar operations will continue throughout the festive period as law enforcement intensifies efforts to protect road users, communities, and the province's key economic arteries.

# Report Cards First, Fees Later - NW MEC Motsumi



North West Department of Education MEC Ntsetsao Motsumi. Picture: NWPT Facebook

By: Lerato Mutlanyane

In a move prioritizing student welfare over administrative disputes, North West Department of Education MEC Ntsetsao Motsumi insists learners must not become collateral in financial battles.

A quiet but significant stand is being taken within the corridors of North West education offices.

As tensions simmer between schools and parents over outstanding fees, MEC Motsumi has issued a clear directive: withholding a learner's report card on financial grounds is unacceptable, and learners must be given their report cards.

The North West Department of Education has expressed serious concern over instances where report cards have been withheld from learners.

Across the province and the country, schools are in the process of issuing learners' reports.

In some cases, learners have been denied their report

cards due to outstanding fees owed to the school.

However, the South African Schools Act (SASA) is clear: "a parent is liable to pay school fees determined in terms of section 39 unless or to the extent that he or she has been exempted from payment in terms of the Act."

Debates on the matter have raised questions about school choice and affordability.

"Does this include fee-paying schools? My kids go to a fee-paying school and every year some parents say they don't have money. Why register at a fee-paying school when there are two no-fee schools in the township? Why do I pay when others don't? How does the MEC suggest schools deal with parents without withholding reports? Is this an end to fee-paying schools?" asked Thono Rantlhoa.

"The South African Schools Act is being undermined by many schools. The child is not responsible for school fees—the parent is. Denying learners their report cards violates their rights," added Jahguide Heyman.

MEC Motsumi strongly condemned schools that deny learners their report cards.

"I have received numerous calls from parents and learners across the province who complain about learners being denied their report cards.

"This action is highly unacceptable, and those school principals should desist. Every year, I continue to repeat the same message: learners must receive their report cards," said MEC Motsumi.

She emphasized that schools should deal with parents, not learners, to recover outstanding fees, and reminded parents to honor their commitments to schools.

By drawing this line, MEC Motsumi reaffirms a foundational truth: in education, the learner must always be the protected center.

Ensuring report cards are given freely safeguards not just pieces of paper, but the confidence, future, and inherent right to progress of every student, regardless of financial battles around them.

# Free State principal arrested for allegedly sexually abusing pupil

From being a bubbly child who shared everything with her mother, an allegedly sexually abused teenager now isolates herself from her and friends and family.

This is how the life of a 15-year-old girl has changed after her alleged abuse by a school principal, who has been arrested and placed on suspension.

The teen's 42-year-old mother, who cannot be named to protect the identity of her child, said the incident happened last month at a private boarding school in Harrismith in the Free State. It is alleged the headmaster, 50, summoned the child to his office, and when she arrived, he asked for a hug. They then went to an old office block where he allegedly touched her inappropriately.

The teen's mother said the harassment of her daughter started during term two when the headmaster on several occasions asked her child about her virginity status.

**"As soon as they were in the office, the principal asked for a hug, but my daughter politely refused"**

- Mother of the 15-year-old

"My child told me she was summoned on November 11 by the principal. When she went to his office, there were other staff members present, and the principal told her to go back and said he would call her later on," she said. "Later he called her through the res lady, and as soon as they were in the office, the principal asked for a hug, but my daughter politely refused."

The principal allegedly wouldn't take no for an answer and instructed her to go to an old office block on the premises, where he touched her private parts.

The child told her friends about her ordeal, and they advised her to tell her parents in Johannesburg. The parents immediately drove 280km to the school. The mother said they met the principal, who conceded he said inappropriate things to the girl.

The mother alleged local police seemed hesi-

tant to open a case against the principal. She said the next day, when she was at the school trying to meet staff members, police allegedly called her and said that she must leave the school. The school security guard also allegedly told her they were instructed to deny her access.

"They asked me to leave the school. I asked them what they are doing and they told me they will not guard my child."

She then approached the Free State education department, which helped her register a case with police.

The mother said her daughter's experience had changed her behaviour because she had been a lively girl. "I was trying to get a psychologist for her because I don't know what is wrong with her. She is always in her room playing games and not saying a word to anyone."

Free State education department spokesperson Howard Ndaba said: "The school may be an independent institution but let it be

stated clearly and without ambiguity that no independent school, no governing body and no principal is above the law.

"Every school remains subject to the oversight of the provincial education department, which is the ultimate custodian of pupil safety and welfare in the province."

The mother told Sowetan the man she met during the interview for her daughter's admission to the school is different from the man who is in the dock for allegedly abusing her daughter.

"I loved how the Free State is always No 1 in terms of matric results. I learnt about the school through a former colleague and during the interview the accused appeared as a strict principal," she said.

The National Prosecuting Authority confirmed the principal faces charges of sexual assault, intimidation and rape. **Sowetan**



Free State Legislature

## Season's Greetings

The Speaker and Presiding Officers of the Free State Legislature extend warm festive season greetings to all residents of the Free State, Honourable Members, Public Servants and fellow South Africans.

Speaker  
Free State Legislature

This festive season: drive safe, obey the rules, put every road user's safety first. Arrive to your destinations alive. Celebrate responsibly, and to strengthen the bonds of family and friendship in the spirit of ubuntu.

As we prepare to enter 2026, we remind all eligible voters in the Free State of the importance of active participation in the democratic process. Register and exercise your constitutional right to vote so, we can build the prosperous Free State we all desire.

May the festive season be safe, peaceful and joyous for all.

M.A. Dukwana  
Free State Legislature  
Speaker

# Lioness in Heels highlighting symbolic GBVF shift in NW

By: Abigail Visagie

The Lioness in Heels movement will be hosting a gender-based violence and Femicide (GBVF) awareness event, to highlight the high rates of GBVF in Vryburg, North West.

The event will take place at the Vryburg Banquet Hall on Monday (15 December) to change the narrative, while advocating for equality between genders.

According to Executive Director of Lioness in Heels Thompho Mekgwe, many cases of GBV go unreported and unsolved in the town, and will therefore have a 15-minute moment of silence to commemorate the voices that have been silenced by GBVF.

"It is a moment of honour, reflection, and collective acknowledgement of the pain many women, queer bodies, and families

carry in silence. It reminds us that silence is not acceptance – it is a call for action," said Mekgwe.

Mekgwe also said this event aims to promote the independence of women and the LGBTQI community to have income streams, skills development, and opportunities saying that they are less vulnerable to abusive and toxic environments.

"Abuse moves in a cycle, and it is often passed through households, communities, and silence. Breaking it requires education, empowerment, therapy, safe spaces, and community accountability where abuse is no longer normalised.

"We have sponsored ten women-owned businesses, as our contribution to the economic emancipation of women and creating a local economic value chain that can help them thrive," said Mekgwe.



Tokologo Local Municipality subscribes to the principles of employment equity. Applications are hereby invited from suitably qualified and competent applicants for appointment to the following vacant position:

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Those are contract-based positions, in terms of MFMA Financial Management Grant, not exceeding two years, with a stipend of R90 000.00 per annum with no increase for the duration of the contract.

**Minimum requirements:** A minimum of three year Bachelor's Degree or National Diploma with majors in Accounting, Economics, Finance, Risk Management and/or Auditing, among others.

**Main duties:** The interns will work in the financial services, income and expenditure section and the Supply Chain Management unit on a rotational basis. They will also perform any other administrative duties as and when required by the Supervisor/Manager.

All shortlisted candidates will be subjected to background screening checks (verification of qualifications, criminal record checks and security vetting).

Applications can be posted to Tokologo Local Municipality, Human Resources Division, Private bag x 46, Boshof, 8340 or hand deliver to any Tokologo Local Municipality Offices. For any enquiries contact Mrs Tsholofelo Morena-Saul or Mrs Nomsa Sehloho on 053 5410 014/52.

If you do not receive any response within 3 months, please accept that your application has been unsuccessful.

**Closing Date:** 07 January 2026 – 16:00pm

Mr Mpho Sehloho  
Municipal Manager



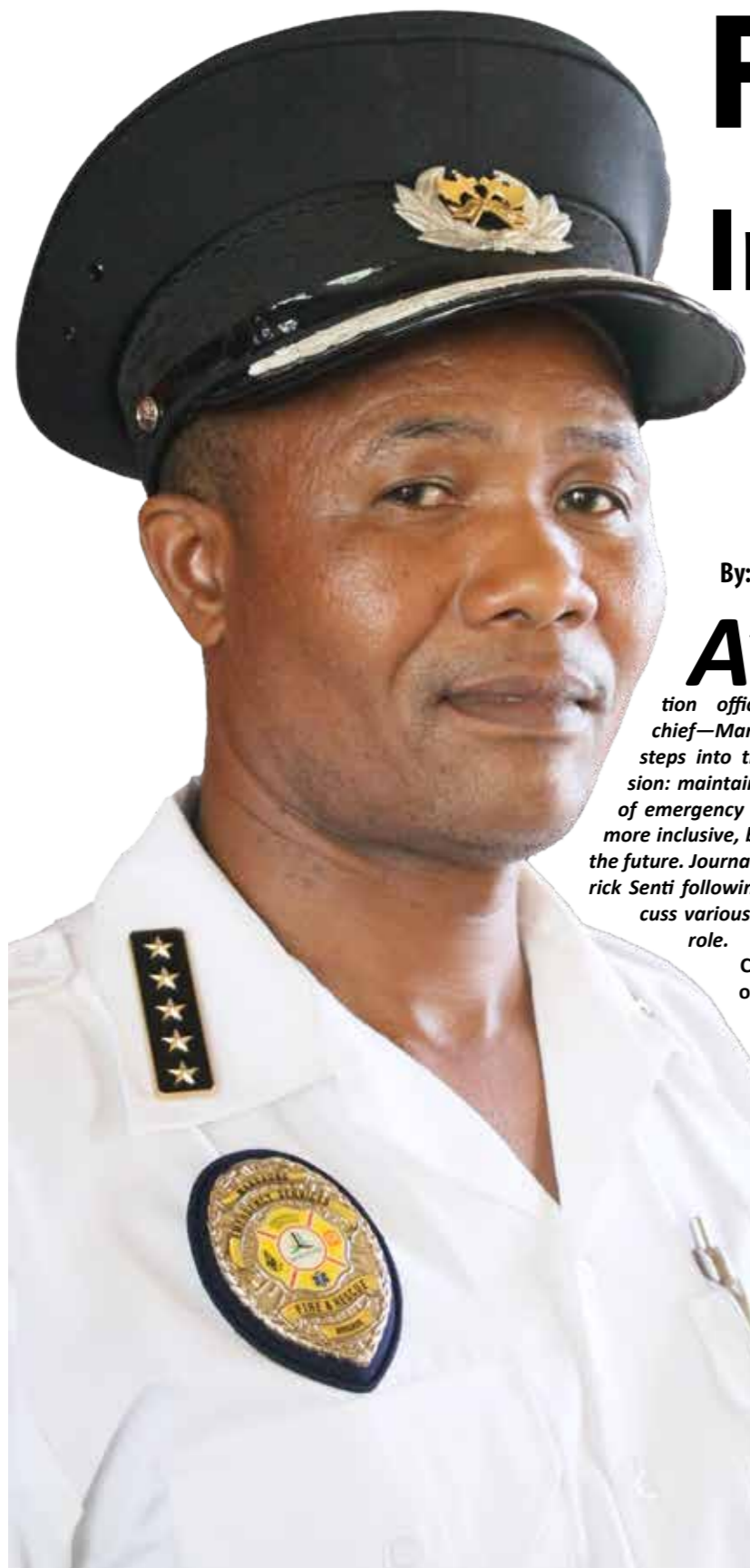
**HAPPY**

# **Festive**

**As 2025 draws to a close, may these messages inspire us to hold our loved ones a little closer, spread kindness a little further, and welcome the New Year with brighter hope and fuller hearts.**

**FROM ALL OF US AT JOURNAL NEWS, WE WISH YOU A JOYFUL CHRISTMAS AND A PROSPEROUS, LOVE-FILLED 2026.**

**Journal NEWS**



# From Firefighter to Chief: Inside a 27-Year Journey of Service

*Veteran firefighter reflects on a career spanning nearly three decades and outlines plans to strengthen readiness, discipline and community safety.*

By: Matshidiso Selebeleng

**A**fter 27 years of rising through the ranks—from rookie firefighter to station officer, educator and now chief—Mangaung’s new Fire Chief steps into the role with a clear mission: maintain the city’s high standards of emergency response while building a more inclusive, better-equipped service for the future. *Journal News* caught up with Patrick Senti following his appointment to discuss various issues relating to his new role.

**Congratulations once again on your appointment. Can you please share more about your career — where it started and how you rose to this point?**

I started my career in 1997 as a firefighter here at Mangaung Fire and Rescue Services. At the time, ambulance services still fell under the municipality, so we had to complete

both the basic firefighting course and the basic ambulance course as part of our training.

In 2007, I was appointed to my first line-supervisor position as a station officer. I served in operations, which is the division where everyone begins before branching into other specialised units such as training, public education, or fire safety. After about five years of operational experience, firefighters can choose a specialised stream.

Over the years, I completed several courses within the fire department. Ahead of the 2010 FIFA World Cup, for instance, we went to Sasol in Secunda for hazardous material technician training, funded by FIFA.

In 2014, I became the Head of Public Education across all seven regions of Mangaung. My role involved community awareness programmes, school engagements, training, and fire-safety education for both the public and private sectors. During this period, I also worked closely with Provincial Disaster Management to ensure our outreach extended beyond the municipality to other towns and districts.

When my Chief resigned in 2022, he recommended me — without my knowledge — to serve on the provincial Category of Authorised Persons (CAPS) committee. This structure, appointed by the MEC for COGTA, advises on fire services across the province and conducts assessments and audits of all fire departments. In September this year, I was further recommended to serve on the national structure.

**This facility responds not only to fire incidents but to all kinds of emergencies. Would you say that Mangaung is fully ready for any type of emergency?**

As Mangaung Fire and Rescue Services, we have always been ready. Since I began in 1997, this city — the capital of the Free State — has consistently responded to all types of emergencies and operated with the necessary preparedness.

We have the equipment, the experience, and qualified personnel capable of handling any incident that may occur in or around Mangaung. Even during the

2010 World Cup, when we underwent specialised hazardous-materials training, the objective was to ensure we were prepared for any possible threat, including chemical or biological incidents in crowded venues.

In terms of equipment readiness, we are up to date. We have dedicated officers responsible for maintaining, servicing, and recording all rescue and fire equipment. This morning, before you arrived, our support services officer updated me on ongoing equipment servicing to ensure we never find ourselves unprepared.

**Now that you are the Chief Officer, what are your short-term and long-term priorities?**

My long-term priority is to empower women within the department. We want to ensure women can rise through the ranks and eventually lead, even at the level of Fire Chief. We want to see more women occupying senior and specialised positions.

My short-term priorities focus on training and mentorship. By giving personnel learning opportunities and guiding them closely over the next two to three years, we can ensure they are fully capable and confident in their duties.

Above all, I want to preserve and elevate the legacy of Mangaung Fire and Rescue Services. I have made it clear that our standards, discipline, and professionalism cannot drop. We aim to raise the bar so that every staff member is competent, prepared, and able to serve the community at the highest level.

**As we enter the festive season, what common challenges do you encounter at this time of the year — particularly those that can be avoided?**

During the festive season, we typically see incidents linked to drinking and driving. People go out to enjoy themselves and often leave their homes unattended, sometimes with small children left behind.

To address this, we work closely with other departments and the Mangaung Fire Protection Association through festive safety campaigns. Each year, we launch awareness drives aimed at motorists and communi-

ties, reminding them to travel safely, obey road signs, and avoid behaviours that put lives at risk.

Our plea is simple: we do not want to see lives lost on the roads during the holidays.

We want everyone to reach their destinations safely and return home safely.

Let’s talk about the burning of the Premier’s House. About two years ago it gutted by fire, where you part of the response team, how was your experience?

The house did indeed catch fire, but at that stage, I had not yet received the final report.

For incidents of that magnitude — especially at a National Key Point — Mangaung Fire and Rescue Services, SAPS, and Forensic Services conduct a joint investigation to determine the cause. Once they complete their findings, the report is handed to the Chief Fire Officer, who then submits it to the HOD. The HOD then informs the council and the Office of the Premier. Because the incident happened before my time, I did not receive that final report.

However, our response on the day was strong. We managed to extinguish most of the fire and save what ever could be saved.

**What is your message to the community of Mangaung now that you have been appointed Chief Officer?**

We are here to serve you — with dignity, pride, and commitment. Our mission is to protect lives and property. If you need help, you can contact our Disaster Management Centre at any time, and we will respond. But we also need the community’s support. Please take steps to safeguard your homes and families. Those who will be travelling must avoid drinking and driving. Parents must ensure that children are not left unattended, especially around items that can cause fires.

We have seen incidents where children unintentionally start fires when adults are not present. By working together, we can reduce such risks and keep Mangaung safe.

Newly appointed Mangaung Fire and Rescue Chief Fire Officer, Patrick Senti. Picture: Baagedi Sethora

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# A gendered path to resilience:

## Celebrating women PhDs who transform disaster risk reduction in Africa



According to the Department of Agriculture, women represent nearly 60% of smallholder farmers, yet they continue to face unequal access to land, markets, insurance and climate-smart technologies. When COVID-19 disrupted supply chains, market access and labour mobility, these inequities deepened, placing many, including smallholder farmers, at heightened risk of hunger. Dr Maisiri's work makes a compelling case for proactive investment in climate-smart agriculture, localised food systems, resilient value chains and early-warning mechanisms that support rural households mainly dependent on rain-fed agriculture. With her research study titled Investing in resilience and disaster risk reduction to reduce food insecurity among smallholder farmers in South Africa: Lessons learnt from the COVID-19 pandemic, she highlights how these strategies directly support SDG 2 (Zero Hunger) and SDG 13 (Climate Action) while advancing Agenda 2063's aspiration for a prosperous, food-secure Africa.

### Guidelines to bridge policy-practice gaps

In parallel, Dr Mariëtte Marthia van Straaten's study on disaster social work highlights another critical, often underappreciated dimension of resilience. The social workspace in which social workers who rightly are predominantly women became front-line responders during the pandemic. They were in the front line tasked with providing psychosocial support, counselling, social assistance facilitation and community care but were not fully equipped with structured guidance or integration within formal disaster management frameworks and regulations as put forward by the COVID-19 regulations, especially during various lockdown levels in the country. Despite estimates that more than 85% of the country's social workers are women, their expertise remains undervalued or not fully integrated in national disaster policy as witnessed during the pandemic. Dr Van Straaten's proposed guidelines in her thesis titled, Developing disaster social work guidelines to bridge policy-practice gaps based on the COVID-19 response in Mangaung Metropolitan, South Africa, she proposed clear, actionable processes to bridge this gap by defining roles, strengthening coordination, improving training and embedding social work within all phases of the disaster management cycle. Her work further advances SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-being) that aligns with the Sendai Framework's prioritisation of strong institutional capacity and reflects Agenda 2063's commitment to people-driven development.

Women bear disaster burdens yet lack a voice in

decision-making

From the two graduates' perspectives outlined above, it is within this broader landscape that the 2025 International Day for Disaster Risk Reduction (IDDR) theme, "Fund resilience, not disasters", acquires deeper meaning. These two women's research demonstrates that resilience is not simply achieved through infrastructure or technology, it is relational, gendered and deeply influenced by the social fabric of communities. Building resilience requires investing not only in physical systems but also in human systems, such as knowledge systems, leadership pathways, and inclusive governance that recognises diverse experiences of risk. Critically, it requires acknowledging that women disproportionately bear the brunt of disasters yet continue to be underrepresented in leadership and policy-making roles that shape national agendas such as disaster risk preparedness planning.

It is openly articulated in the UNDRR reports that women and children are up to 14 times more likely to die in disasters due to social constraints, unequal access to resources and caregiving responsibilities that limit mobility during disasters like COVID-19. Statistics South Africa found that women accounted for two-thirds of all job losses during the pandemic which eroded communities' economic resilience. Such realities underscore why gender-responsive research, such as that produced by Dr Maisiri and Dr Van Straaten is important to national resilience.

### Addressing the challenges

South Africa, like much of the continent, continues to face several structural weaknesses in its resilience architecture. Disaster governance remains fragmented across departments, with limited coordination and inconsistent resource allocation. Municipal disaster management centres often operate with insufficient budgets and limited staffing. Early warning systems, though improving, are not universally accessible, particularly in rural areas where digital divides persist. Furthermore, community-based disaster risk reduction, which is the Sendai Framework's most emphasised strategy, is allocated barely 5% of South Africa's DRR funding, despite being globally recognised as one of the most cost-effective resilience investments. These systemic gaps hinder the country's ability to respond rapidly and equitably when crises emerge.

Addressing these challenges requires bold, actionable reforms. First, South Africa should establish a National Gender-Responsive DRR Framework that ensures gender analysis is integrated into all phases of disaster planning, budgeting and imple-

mentation. This must include ring-fenced funding for gender-inclusive DRR initiatives and strengthened partnerships with women's organisations, researchers and local communities. Second, government and academic institutions should invest in expanding women's leadership in resilience research through targeted grants, postdoctoral programmes, mentorship networks and collaborative research platforms that amplify women's contributions. Third, informed by Dr Maisiri's work, national and provincial governments should accelerate support for climate-smart agriculture through subsidised technologies, farmer training, improved extension services and resilient local food markets that strengthen smallholder systems.

Fourth, aligned with Dr Van Straaten's findings, South Africa should institutionalise disaster social work by formally embedding social workers within municipal and provincial disaster management structures, supported by clear operational guidelines, capacity-building programmes and adequate resourcing. This integration would ensure that psychosocial support, vulnerability assessments and community strengthening are recognised as essential components of resilience. Fifth, the country should establish Community Resilience Hubs, especially in vulnerable districts, offering early-warning education, disaster preparedness training, women-led leadership programmes and locally stored emergency resources.

### PhDs illuminate the way forward

Ultimately, resilience is a choice that requires political will, sustained investment and a commitment to inclusion. The achievements of these two women PhDs illuminate the pathway forward and their work embodies the essence of the IDDR 2025 theme, demonstrating that funding resilience means funding knowledge, equity and leadership. Their scholarship reinforces the Sendai Framework's priorities, advances the SDGs and contributes meaningfully to Agenda 2063's vision for an Africa that is peaceful, prosperous and resilient.

As South Africa confronts intensifying climate risks, deepening inequalities and new forms of uncertainty, the question we must ask is not whether we can afford to invest in resilience, but whether we can afford not to. These women remind us that the future of DRR in Africa will be shaped by those who understand risk not only through data, but through lived experience. Celebrating their achievements is therefore a celebration of the inclusive, evidence-driven and gender-responsive resilience Africa urgently needs.

## Orderliness, Arrogance and Disrespect in our once-beloved City of Roses. Who cares?

The time for ill-discipline, arrogance, and delinquency has once more dawned in Mangaung. The very first and extremely disturbing trend of carelessness which is compounded by the arrogant behaviour that is displayed by the informal refuse removal people. Of course, one cannot outrightly disregard and condemn the services that these people are rendering for the inhabitants of the city. Yes, they play a great role in ensuring that our residential areas, our streets and business sites and buildings are kept clean, but what I cannot celebrate and withstand, is their conduct when they move about in the streets. We need to be conscious of the domino-effect of their unacceptable behaviour during the peak hours, when the traffic is heavy in the mornings and in the afternoons. You see them pulling their abnormal huge plastic refuse bags right in the middle of the roads with no respect for other road users at all. This irrational behaviour normally leads to unnecessary road rage incidents where motorists clash amongst themselves for time wasting or unsafe driving modes, a lot of near-miss unsafe incidents and some accidents and fatalities. It is as if they are more entitled to the use of the roads more than any other taxpayer and anyone else, and who cares?

Get to the CBD Area and you will undoubtedly regret why you will have gone there. The small walkways are forever not user-friendly and can be very hostile for peace loving people who would be there for their business and or work-related errands. The walkways are always overcrowded by informal business ventures such as fruit and vegetable stalls, informal hair salons, braai stalls and the rogue criminals and drug addicts. The health and safety conditions leave much to be desired especially considering that in most cases a lot of those people will not even bother to look for any ablution facilities when they are rendering their businesses. They consequently have no shame to relieve themselves or urinate anywhere whenever the need arises and nature calls. The smell is extremely disheartening and unbearable to say the least and of-course, who cares?

These despicable circumstances are disheartening for those of us who are still very passionate and patriotic about the city which was at one stage referred to as a City on the Move. How can we seriously hope to see some new investors coming to open up their businesses in a place where there is no discipline, law and order.

What I further find extremely devastating is the fact that our city and perhaps our province as a whole is regarded as one of the poorest provinces in this country. The deafening heartbreaking cries of our people for joblessness, hopelessness and desperation is the one that no one could ever imagine post the 1994 emancipation of our nation.

Looking back at the cleanliness, law and order as well as discipline that was prevalent in those years prior to 1994, is something that only an idiot in the third degree cannot bear testimony to. Every time we discuss this appalling state of affairs, people hide behind the unscientific trajectory that the foreign nationals are responsible for this chaotic, horrific and shameful face of our city. That may be true but then the question is why do we allow them to destroy our beloved city? What meaningful, doable and implementable actions do we take to display our love and patriotism for what rightfully belongs to us, our children and the upcoming generations? How will history judge us? Do we honestly subscribe to the notion that charity begins at home? Are we not giving up like cowards to the foreigners and allow them and our children to be just harmless onlookers who can be used as accomplices? What has happened to those historic and memorable parks, buildings and heritage sites that we used to cherish and treasure? Those that we used to visit on Sunday afternoons for photo-shooting sessions and picnics with our families and our loved ones? There would be no policing to ensure that we left them tidy, spick and span after the visits all due to the love, discipline and patriotism that we had in us. Think of the historic railway locomotive that used to be the symbol of history and heritage in front of the Railway station? It used to be unbelievably taken care of. What happened to it?

### Who cares and What went wrong?

Crime, sometimes self-inflicted poverty, visionless and lack of innovation have engulfed our leaders and our youth to such an extent that we no longer see opportunities which the foreigners immediately pounce on and tap on them. There's a saying that goes like "Cleanliness is close to Godliness". Perhaps if we could all take up a concerted effort to rescue what belongs to us from the evil hands of those unpatriotic and careless wrongdoers, there could be some hope for the resuscitation of our God Given Glory. Is our already blurry vision exacerbated by the smoke, dirt and filth that we have allowed ourselves and our children to accept and embrace as normal?

Who cares? Our province has dominated in the Grade 12 examinations results in this country for unaccountable consecutive years, but what happens to those learners prior to or after tertiary education? What do they evaporate into? A good number of them were given bursaries and scholarships to study overseas. In what way has this city or even the province benefitted from that? I strongly believe that they should have come back with tons and tons of skills, knowledge and competencies to improve the appalling state of affairs in our once beloved Centre City, Sengangata, Pere E Tshweu, is it still there or is it still white? They went out there to exotic institutions to acquire competencies, skills and qualifications as Medical Doctors, Motor Mechanics and Technicians inter alia, but we see them aimlessly loitering the filthy streets of our city, let alone filling the taverns and bottle stores at any given opportunity. We see them being employed and exploited by the very foreign nationals. We hardly see them in the sports fraternity. We now have two Premier League clubs in the city, how many local players do we have in them? Who of them have raised their hands to emanate the erstwhile stars and the pride of "Lefatshe La Masele"? Bo Rhee Benjamin Reid, Gaba David Modise, Bro Never My Love Madikgetla, Jeff Majeff Lekgetla, Chippa Sefadi, Willelem Vries, Thabo Nthetha and Reamogetse Wolf, the least is endless!!!! Who cares?

### Cry The Beloved City!!!

Let's go back to our drawing boards, think deeply and take a concerted and narcissistic patriotic action to resuscitate the historic status of our decaying City. **By: Modise Rantseng**

Letter to the Editor

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



**Pastor  
Motsamai Kareli**  
Empowerment Ministries International

## HEART, HEAD and HANDS

What sets extraordinary leaders apart isn't just what they know or the results they achieve. It's how they lead – with authentic values, clear vision, and a willingness to roll up their sleeves to make things happen. In other words, great leadership blends heart, head, and hands.

This three-part framework can guide you in growing as a leader and in mentoring the next generation. By cultivating the Heart (integrity and emotional intelligence), the Head (strategic thinking and wisdom), and the Hands (action and mentorship), you can ensure you not only excel personally but also leave a legacy of strong leadership in your organization. Let's explore each of these aspects and how to develop them in yourself and others.

### Heart

(Leading with Authenticity and Emotional Intelligence) Imagine a manager who genuinely cares about their team's well-being and growth. They listen intently to concerns, celebrate others' successes, and stand by their principles even under pressure. Such a leader leads with their heart.

The heart of leadership is about character and connection – your core values, integrity, and emotional intelligence.

Leaders who lead with heart inspire trust and loyalty. As the saying goes, "people don't care how much you know until they know how much you care." Cultivating your Heart: Developing the heart aspect of leadership starts with self-awareness and authenticity. Take time to reflect on your personal values and ensure your actions align with them. Practice integrity in the small everyday decisions; consistency builds credibility. Work on your emotional intelligence by soliciting feedback and being mindful of others' perspectives. For example, if a team member is struggling, an emotionally intelli-

gent leader notices and offers support or coaching rather than just pushing for results. These habits foster an environment of trust and empathy.

Growing others' Heart: To develop heart in future leaders, lead by example. Show your team what empathy, honesty, and humility look like in action. Mentoring is critical here. Up-and-coming leaders don't absorb values from mission statements on the wall – they learn by observing mentors in real situations. Dr John C. Maxwell in one of his podcast interviews puts it aptly:

"Heart is not cultivated by a book or a podcast. Heart is cultivated by proximity."

In other words, spend time with your mentees and let them see how you handle tough decisions and treat people. If you navigate a crisis with integrity and calm, discuss with your protégés why you chose that approach. Humility is another key part of heart-driven leadership; by admitting your mistakes and showing willingness to learn, you encourage emerging leaders to do the same. Over time, this close mentorship instills in your successors a "heart of honor and humility."

### Head

(Cultivating Strategic Thinking and Wisdom) While heart forms the foundation, effective leadership also demands a sharp head – the knowledge, wisdom, and strategic thinking to make sound decisions. The head aspect of leadership is about intellect and vision. It means setting direction, solving problems, and using good judgment.

Leaders who lead with their head are able to see the big picture and chart a course forward. They analyze information, anticipate challenges, and devise strategies grounded in wisdom. This intellectual engagement is often what turns good intentions into smart plans (Time to Rethink Leadership: a Head, Hand and Heart Approach.

Cultivating your Head: Developing strategic savvy takes continuous learning and reflection. Stay curious and keep expanding your knowledge base – read widely, seek training, or learn from experts inside and outside your field. Many top leaders are voracious learners, whether by devouring books or actively asking mentors for advice. Equally important is learning from experience. After each project or major decision, take time to reflect: what went well, what didn't, and why? This habit of reflection turns experiences (even failures) into wisdom.

You can also sharpen your "head" by involving yourself in strategy discussions beyond your comfort zone.

If you're in marketing, for instance, learn about financial metrics; if you're technical, spend time understanding client needs. The more holistic your perspective, the wiser your decisions will become.

Growing others' Head: To build the head in your successors, involve them in thinking through real business challenges. Instead of shielding junior leaders from high-level discussions, bring them to the table in planning sessions or brainstorming meetings. Give promising individuals a chance to tackle complex problems, and then debrief with them. For example, if you're working on a new strategy, ask a mentee to research a segment of the market and propose ideas. Discuss their analysis together, guiding their thought process. This not only builds their confidence but also teaches them how to think strategically. Moreover, share the reasoning behind your own decisions openly. Explaining the "why" behind your choices helps upcoming leaders develop their decision-making framework. Over time, they'll start connecting the dots and offering insights that mirror a seasoned leader's wisdom.

### Hands

(Executing with Excellence and Empowering Others) The finest values and smartest plans mean little if they never materialize. That's where the hands of leadership come in – execution, action, and empowerment. Leading with your hands means being results-oriented and willing to do the work to turn vision into reality. Think of a leader who doesn't just issue directives from the corner office but occasionally jumps in the trenches: for instance, a department head who sits with the customer service team during a product launch, or a project lead

who writes a section of the report alongside the team. These leaders lead by doing. Their willingness to roll up their sleeves builds credibility and motivates others. After all, when your team sees you working hard and holding yourself accountable, they're more likely to go the extra mile as well.

Cultivating your Hands: To strengthen your own hands aspect, make sure you stay action-oriented and connected to the execution of your plans. Set clear goals and hold yourself accountable to the same standards you expect of your team. Don't be afraid to get your hands dirty on occasion – it keeps you grounded in the realities your people face. For example, a retail store manager might periodically work the sales floor to stay attuned to customer needs, or a software team leader might test the product themselves to understand the challenges engineers encounter. This practice not only informs your decision-making (connecting back to the head aspect) but also shows your team that you walk the talk. Moreover, be decisive and follow through on commitments. Cultivating a bias for action – even if it means you sometimes course-correct later – sends a message that execution matters. As a famous saying goes, "vision without execution is just hallucination." Turning ideas into results is the crux of the hands-driven leadership.

Growing others' Hands: Developing the hands of your successors means giving them opportunities to lead and build something themselves. Empower and mentor them through real responsibilities. Delegate projects that are challenging and visible, so they learn to deliver under pressure and take ownership. Importantly, resist the urge to micro-manage; instead, let them find their own approach to getting the job done, and be available as a coach. If you have a promising junior manager, you might put them in charge of running the next quarterly planning meeting or leading a new client initiative. Let them handle it end-to-end, then afterwards discuss what went well and what could improve. This hands-on experience is invaluable.

By involving future leaders in real work and guiding them through it, you help them develop the confidence and practical know-how to execute effectively. Over time, they'll not only master the skills of the job but also learn how to mentor others in turn – continuing the cycle of hands-on leadership.

# Business

## Markets and Indicators

Rand/Dollar	16.85	0.35%	▶
Rand/Pound	22.60	0.11%	▶
Rand/Euro	19.81	-0.12%	▶
Platinum	1 704.40	3.02%	▶
Brent Crude	61.14	-2.31%	▶
Gold	4 267.09	0.91%	▶
Etherium	3 196.22	-4.32%	▶
Bitcoin	90 727.4	-1.80%	▶

## Incompetent contractors lead to collapse of Free State roads

Road construction projects in the Free State are grinding to a halt as political ideologies dominate procurement processes



A 200m stretch of the R59 bypassing Viljoenskroon was flooded three years ago but has yet to be fixed. Picture: farmersweekly

While a few projects were successfully completed and new ones launched in 2025, Free State Agriculture (FSA) has said that a trail of failed projects, poor management, and squandered funds, all in the name of job creation, leaves nothing to celebrate this year.

Speaking to Farmer's Weekly, Dr Jack Armour, commercial manager at FSA, said roads managed by SANRAL had seen significant improvement over the last few years, while those managed by the Free State Department of Community Safety, Roads and Transport (DCSRT) had largely collapsed.

He said FSA believes the reason for the poor state of the province's roads is political interference "imposing socialist ideologies and race-based policies that aid in the appointment of select cadres to do the work".

"Jobs created are reported as a target and not kilometres repaired," Armour added.

He explained that as part of the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP), contracts were allocated to contractors based on requirements that included sourcing at least 30% of the labour locally and fulfilling black economic empowerment requirements.

However, Armour said this was a guise for cadre employment and resulted in the appointment of inexperienced contractors who could provide a 'kickback' to the DCSRT.

"The contractors soon go bankrupt, abandoning the projects before they have been completed. Another contractor must then be brought in to complete the job, at an added expense," he said.

Francois Wilken, FSA president, added that the Contractor Development Programme, which sought to provide opportunities for the youth, had been misused.

"The only logical explanation for the repeated failures of fly-by-night contractors is that the public procurement process is also captured by the construction mafia or the politicians themselves," he explained.

A case in point was the raising of a 200m stretch of the R59 bypassing Viljoenskroon that was flooded

three years ago but which remained submerged, while the detour through the town's industrial area had now decimated those roads, too.

Two critical road projects were terminated during the last year: the R709 between Tweespruit-Excelsior road and the R708 Clocolan-Marquard road. The DCSRT cited incompetence as the reason for the terminations.

Wilken said that if the DCSRT had heeded FSA's calls to appoint external consulting engineers to oversee and manage the projects, as was standard practice globally, instead of cadre-deployed internal engineers, this may not have happened.

### False empowerment cripples communities

FSA also disputed the true value of empowerment and job creation. Wilken said the salary component of the DCSRT's budget continued to rise but was concentrated on top-level salaries.

"The work of the lower ranks is being substituted with EPWP workers who are employed at the special EPWP rate that is almost half the minimum wage," he said.

He added that while job creation remains a national imperative, it cannot be the key performance indicator for the maintenance of critical infrastructure.

"If the DCSRT was really serious about job creation, it should have started with restructuring its own top-heavy personnel and appointing many more desperately needed grader operators and pick-and-shovel workers."

The poor state of the roads has far-reaching consequences for the economies of small towns.

Armour noted that a dairy farm in the northern Free State, employing 300 people, closed down a few years ago since milk buyers refused to drive the road to the farm to collect the milk.

"The Beefmaster Feedlot close to Christiana has to source its grain from Bloemfontein, rather than the closest silo in Hertzogville, because the 40km road is not drivable. It is cheaper for them to drive more than

double the distance on a national road rather than risk damage to trucks," Wilken said.

### Persistent non-compliance

Armour added that one of the systemic issues was that the DCSRT was incapable of maintaining the 'yellow fleet'.

"The roadworks machines are routinely vandalised and have parts stolen because they are kept in areas that are not fenced off or secure.

"Earlier this year, the DCSRT confirmed that the machines had trackers. But later, when the question was asked in Parliament, they admitted that the trackers had been removed, ostensibly because they drained the machines' batteries.

"We don't believe that this is true. Rather, the trackers were removed so that the machines could be subtle to generate extra income. This is not allowed since it makes the equipment unavailable to do the work they are supposed to do," he explained.

Jafta Mokoena, DA spokesperson for roads and transport in the Free State Legislature, said in a statement that the DCSRT's ongoing financial and governance failures posed a direct threat to residents, road users, and the provincial economy.

This came as the Auditor-General released a report detailing persistent non-compliance with legislation, weak financial management, and the deterioration in the DCSRT's financial health.

"The DCSRT is now in a near-insolvent position, unable to meet even its most basic financial obligations," Mokoena added.

Meanwhile, Wilken said farmers were forced to use their own funds to maintain critical roads.

"This is not sustainable and decimates funds that could have been used to reinvest and grow their businesses.

"As the main driver of economic growth in the Free State, our farmers feed the nation and provide more than 70 000 real farming jobs in the province," he concluded. **Farmersweekly**

## Court orders Matlala's company eviction over unpaid rent of nearly R260,000



Vusimuzi 'Cat' Matlala testifies at the parliamentary ad hoc committee inquiry at Kgosi Mampuru Correctional Facility on November 26 2025, Pretoria. Picture: BusinessDay

The Gauteng High Court in Pretoria has ordered Vusimuzi "Cat" Matlala's company, Medicare24 Tshwane District, which was awarded a R360m police tender, to be evicted from upmarket Pretoria offices over unpaid rent.

Matlala, accused of bankrolling politicians and top cops after winning the R360m tender in 2024, was taken to court by Menlyn Maine Towers in the east of Pretoria for unpaid rent. The police tender was cancelled in May.

Menlyn Maine Towers argued Matlala owed R258,890 in rental charges after he started having payment flow troubles in June 2024.

The case was before judge Colleen Collis on Monday, and the court ordered that Matlala's company be evicted from the offices.

The court ordered, "The immediate ejection of the respondent [Medicare24] and all persons claiming occupation under it; the sheriff of the honourable court be authorised to enforce eviction and be accompanied by South African Police Service if necessary."

The court also granted Menlyn Maine Towers the prayer for legal claim to Medicare24 moveable property and payment of R258,890 in rental arrears with interest.

Matlala, who is central figure in the state's investigation into allegations of criminal infiltration in the SAPS, had a five-year lease with the company for Medicare24, from September 2021 to August 2026.

The company accused Matlala of housing his other company, Cat VIP Protection, in Medicare24's offices without consent, breaching the lease agreement. The security company also kept guns at the upmarket offices.

Menlyn Maine Towers cancelled the lease in July, two months after Matlala was arrested for attempted murder.

"In an attempt to mitigate its losses, the applicant [Menlyn Maine Towers] cancelled the lease agreement by sending a cancellation letter/notice to vacate to the respondent [Medicare24] in July 2025," the company's court papers read.

The property company's attorneys, Maree Attorneys Inc, indicated that by November 21 the premises were still not vacated by Medicare24.

Matlala, testifying before parliament's ad hoc committee, told MPs he spent about R2m monthly towards salaries of his employees and other expenses for his companies.

The Madlanga Commission and parliament committee investigating KwaZulu Natal police commissioner Nhlhla Mkhwanazi's allegations of criminal infiltration in the justice cluster also heard testimonies implicating Matlala of being part of a cartel protected by police.

Matlala has denied the allegations.

Based on testimonies at the Madlanga commission, Matlala gained a reputation for being a "money tree" and alleged payments of bribes to high-ranking police officers to win the tender.

Matlala testified that former minister Bheki Cele was an "extortionist" who wanted R1m after assisting Matlala in getting his belongings back, after a raid by the KwaZulu-Natal political killings team and Gauteng investigators at his security company offices in Menlyn in December 2024.

The police had seized guns registered under Matlala's security company name in December 2024 and later gave them back to him.

Matlala further admitted to paying about R150,000 for the ANC January 8 celebrations in Cape Town to Brown Mogotsi, who labelled himself a close associate of police minister Senzo Mchunu.

Police also allege Matlala paid businessperson and North West ANC member Suleiman Carrim, also known by Mchunu, R1.5m for assisting him with the SAPS tender.

In his testimony, Matlala suggested he was a victim of a clash mainly involving deputy national commissioner Lt-Gen Shadrack Sibiya, Mkhwanazi and police crime intelligence boss Lt-Gen Dumisani Khumalo.

Matlala remains in police custody after he was arrested in May for attempted murder. He has denied allegations against him levelled by the state. **BusinessDay**

## Court dismisses Black Rock's bid to freeze portion of Makate's payout



Nkosana Makate, 'Please Call Me' originator, speaking to SABC News. Picture: SABC News

An attempt by Black Rock Mining to temporarily freeze a portion of the 'Please Call Me' settlement paid by Vodacom to Nkosana Makate has been dismissed in the High Court in Johannesburg.

The court ruled that Black Rock, represented by businessman Errol Elsdon, failed to prove that Makate intended to hide or dissipate the funds.

Black Rock had approached the court on an urgent basis to block access to 40 percent of Makate's settlement which remains subject to a non-disclosure agreement. The UK investor claimed to be

entitled to the money under a disputed funding agreement dating back to 2011.

Attorney for Black Rock Mining Sinenhlanhla Mnguni says, "It looks like we'll have to make a decision on whether we proceed with the arbitration or find other ways of enforcing our clients' rights. It's still fresh and we're not pressed, as far as time is concerned, to make a move which will, of course, safeguard the rights and interests of our client. But we're confident that in the next few days, we will have a way forward in as far as this matter is concerned." **SABCNews**

GET TO KNOW YOUR DJ

Pilling the decks with XCLUSIVE RSA



Phumzile Bradley Lourens. Picture: Supplied

By: Lerato Mutlanyane

If you're a deep and soulful house lover, let XCLUSIVE be your energy shifter. As soon as he steps onto the decks, he gives a blend of palpable power, rhythm, and a vibe he professionally crafts from start to finish.

The young house maverick, legally known as Phumzile Bradley Lourens, from Jacobsdal in the Free State, has a career spanning four thriving years.

He expresses great love and passion for Amapiano and house. His blend is unique, it's a blast of bass-filled, melancholic house.

The beats per minute are unmatched as soon as Lourens steps on stage.

The dynamics are explicit and the beat match is incomparable.

Having headlined big shows in the Xhariep District, He shares the challenges in the industry.

"Exposure is a major factor, being situated in a small town where people in the music industry do not have enough exposure is very challenging when it comes to career growth," he said.

Catch Lourens crafting the energy and atmosphere at the Annual House Music Festival at Corner Lounge and at the Hidden Agenda All Black Soirée at Easy Corner Ritchie in Northern Cape this coming Saturday.

Shallipopi wins Artist of the Year at the 2025 TikTok Awards

Fresh off the release of his new album "Auracle", Shallipopi won Artist of the Year at the 2025 TikTok Awards Sub-Saharan Africa.

2025 was the year of "Plutomania". Nigerian rapper and songwriter Shallipopi, popularly referred to as "Pluto Presido" by his fans, "plutomanians", dominated the soundwaves and the platform, with tracks that sparked viral challenges and became the soundtrack of the year across the continent.

His song "Laho" has dominated TikTok since its release, with millions using the audio and knowing the lyrics. "Minister of enjoyment, intercontinental (no go dey)

"Monumental (ehh?) Ah, we go live forever (ever, ever), ah."

TikTok has also played a significant role in spreading culture through music in 2025.

"Thank you, TikTok, for supporting all upcoming artists and giving them a spotlight to shine," said Shallipopi, the 2025 Artist of the Year and hit-maker of "Laho."

Creator Raja'atu Muhammed Ibrahim @diaryofanortherncook (Nigeria) took home the night's most prestigious title. @diaryofanortherncook was recognised for her mastery of visual storytelling through food with the rich sounds of northern music.

Based in Sokoto, the creator has captivated a global audience by documenting Northern Nigerian cuisine with that kind of cinematic flair that draws global attention to Nigerian food.

Pretoria's self-taught cook, @malumfoodie,



Nigerian rapper and songwriter Shallipopi. Picture: Supplied

took home the trophy for Food Creator of the Year thanks to the flavour and fun his videos bring to

the kitchen.

His approachable recipes and charismatic delivery using South African street language called Sitori and native South African languages bring a fresh, entertaining twist to his recipes and meals.

"From my humble beginnings of Haamanskraal, to Soshanguve and to all of South Africa, now we are in Africa!", says Malume Foodie, reflecting on the significance of the award.

Tanzanian sports creator Video of the Year John Masamaki @zerobrainer0 made a triumphant return, winning Video of the Year after securing Sports Creator of the Year in 2024. He has become a continent-wide fan favourite thanks to his signature beige blazer and his unique, silent comedy spin on football moments.

"I am truly grateful to my fans and the love I have received from Tanzanians. Thank you so much. This win was for all of us," said Masamaki while receiving his award.

Popular creator and entertainer Bontle Modiselle-Moloi hosted the 2025 TikTok Awards Sub-Saharan Africa held in Johannesburg on December 6.

Guests were treated to an electrifying night of glitz, glamour, and unforgettable performances from top African talents, including Ciza, Lord Kez, Thuli P, DJ Fif\_Laa and Thabsie. South African favourite Mhlabi Ndamase made a surprise appearance to present the Video of the Year Award, while famous sports athlete Akani Simbine presented the Sport Creator of the Year Award. IOL NEWS

Big Zulu launches soccer tournament in Bergville to combat youth alcohol and drug abuse



Big Zulu has launched his own soccer tournament in an effort to address the growing problem of alcohol and drug abuse among young people in his community.

The artist explained that the idea took shape after a recent visit to his hometown of Bergville in KwaZulu-Natal, where he noticed groups of children playing football, while others nearby were smoking and drinking alcohol.

What struck him most was how young some of them appeared to be.

"You know, I was back home in Bergville last week, and I saw young kids playing football, while some were smoking and drinking alcohol. Very young kids. It made me feel really bad because even back home, drug use is increasing," he said.

He believes one of the major reasons for this rise in substance use is the disappearance of organised sport in many rural areas.

"You may ask why. It's because there is no longer a sport, no more football. In our time, we used to play football while herding cattle, running around in the mountains. We didn't have time to sit around being bored and thinking about doing the wrong things."

This reflection led him to create the Big Zulu Soccer Tournament, a community-based initiative designed to provide young people with a healthy space to spend their time, learn discipline, and reconnect with the joy of sports.

Zulu said that he approached local chiefs and the Kaizer Chiefs Football Club to share the idea and request support.

"I then went to the chiefs and to @kfcofficial, presented the idea, and asked for support with things that could help. We are very grateful. They gave us a lot: balls, bibs, and many other things. Thank you very much, Chiefs."

Community members praised the initiative. Lesedi3879 commented: "Don't change the kindness you have. God shall bless you, my brother. Remember that what happens on the left shall happen on the right as well. Always show your kindness, love, and support, and you'll see what God will do for you."

Mthobisi Phuthini wrote: "Thank you, Big Zulu. We need more people like you, big brother. Please don't stop. We will also help where we can."

Nompumelelo Zamisile Hadebe added: "This is beautiful. May God keep on blessing you." IOL NEWS

Kenny Kunene Drops Explosive GBV Anthem "Hamba"!

Deputy President of the Patriotic Alliance Kenny Kunene has swapped a stump speech for a studio session, releasing "Hamba," a call for healing and empowerment, a heartfelt track that stands with women against gender-based violence (GBV).

The politician, businessman, entertainer, DJ, and music producer has returned to the music scene with a fresh single, "Hamba," featuring Soulful G opening with her melodic vocals and TheologyHD reinforcing a powerful message for women in South Africa.

The soulful amapiano track centres on the message that women should leave relationships that no longer serve them.

"The song itself, when you listen to the lyrics, is a love song that speaks about GBV because it's about this woman who says, I loved you, I did this, I was there for you when you needed me, but you are not coming to the party—so hamba. I tried everything, so even if you go now, I don't care," Kunene explained.

"Hamba" was released during the 16 Days of Activism for No Violence Against Women and Children, commemorated every year in South Africa and globally from 10 November to 16 December.

Kunene says women will connect with the song whether they are in love or not.

"I think it speaks to them—a voice to be able to say, I can walk away and I don't have to be here. I think even in rocky relationships, when a man walks into the room or the house, he will hear his lady repeating the song, and the message will be received."

Kunene says he has been behind the decks since the 80s, and music remains his passion. His comeback, he says, was inspired by his fans.

He wants to empower artists through financial and lifestyle coaching under his RMK Music Agency. "My view is you cannot expect people who have

nothing, and when they blow up, they blow up unexpectedly. Then money starts coming in. It's more about artist development and training them differently."

"If the talent is there and the production is there, then we will be able to help develop those artists," he said.

"We'll be choosing those who have studied and those with natural talent, bringing them together and creating music," he shared.

Kunene reflected on the year 2025 and said it was a good year.

"I saw myself thriving in 2025. We must fix things in our country, in our personal lives. We must encourage people. We must fix this issue of GBV, and that's why this song is so close to my heart. It speaks about something that is happening in our country right now."

"Hamba" is available on all digital streaming platforms.

**Patriotic Alliance  
Deputy President  
Kenny Kunene.**  
Picture:  
Supplied



CottonFest music festival ends: organisers announce closure amid disagreements



The festival was created as a platform to unite youth culture, heavily influenced by Ricky Rick's 2016 hit single "Sidukotini", which translates to "we are eating cotton" (slang for wearing high-end fashion).

CottonFest, the popular music festival that brought together some of South Africa's best creatives has announced that it will no longer continue.

The festival, which started as a dream of the iconic rapper Ricky Rick, was created to celebrate music, street culture and the talented artists in the industry.

Throughout its 7-year run, CottonFest attracted many fans and artists, becoming a firm favourite on the South African calendar.

According to a statement, the decision comes after a series of disagree-

ments among the current shareholders about the festival's direction.

Bianca Naidoo, who is both Ricky's widow and a key organiser of CottonFest, shared that these differences have made it difficult to maintain the festival's original spirit and purpose, which was to create a platform for young talent.

"CottonFest has always been rooted in creativity, community and cultural celebration focused on creating a platform for the youth to shine," said Naidoo.

She added: "While we remain extremely proud of what the festival has achieved and are deeply grateful for the support it has received from our fans, partners and the artists over the years, the differences in festival's vision and purpose among the two parties has made it clear to our family and the team, that concluding this chapter is the most realistic path forward."

CottonFest brought together musicians and fans to enjoy the best of South African music genres like hip hop, house and amapiano, while also celebrating fashion, food and art.

Through the festival, the late rapper aimed to uplift local talent and create a space where young people could express themselves and thrive.

Although the festival will not continue under its existing structure, the Creative Programme, launched in 2025, will continue to build on the initiatives it has already achieved in creating different opportunities for young talent throughout the year.

"The team remains optimistic about future plans with a deeper support for creative expression in new and meaningful ways for the youth to be celebrated," said Naidoo.

Current ticket holders for the 2026 edition can request a full refund from Webtickets (under their self-help process) from December 9. IOL NEWS



NOTICE IN TERMS OF REGULATION 68 OF THE DEEDS REGISTRIES ACT, 1937, IN RESPECT OF A LOST 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 Title Deed number T23399/2000 passed by Estate Late PHILEMON LETSELEHA SEBOTSA, Identity Number 3702015230087 (Estate Number 2588/2024) and MOT-SILISI DINAH SEBOTSA, Identity number 4612160635080 to whom there married in community of property, in favour of MOT-SILISI DINAH SEBOTSA, Identity number 4612160635080, in respect of Plot 32 Roodewal District BLOEMFONTEIN Province Free State In extent: 8.0711 (Eight Comma Zero Seven One One) Hectares

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

Dated at Bloemfontein this 02 day of December 2025.

CONVEYANCER  
NICOLAAS ALBERTUS STRAMPE (LPCM 57743)  
STRAMPE DU PLESSIS ATTORNEYS  
58C KELLNER STREET  
WESTDENE  
BLOEMFONTEIN  
Email: admin@sdatt.co.za  
Telephone no: 051 430 0841

GIG Guide

Saturday 13 December 2025

Lemo Fest Hangout  
Lemo Green Park  
Bloemfontein

Sunday 21 December 2025

The backyard experience  
Botanical Gardens  
Bloemfontein

Friday 26 December 2025

We back home  
Mmabana Stadium  
Thaba Nchu

Saturday 27 December 2025

Soul session picnic & other experiences  
Moeng Stadium  
Marquard

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PRESENTS

# TOAST BOTTLES

28 SATURDAY  
FEB 2026

ARTISTS LINEUP WILL BE ANNOUNCED FROM 10 JANUARY 2025

GENERAL TICKET **R250** | VIP **R3000**

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# Sport



## Proteas crush India to level series

Quinton de Kock blazed a stunning 90 from just 46 balls to lead South Africa to a daunting total of 213-4 on a perfect batting pitch before the bowlers completed a fine comeback for the tourists dismissing India for 162 to complete a 51-run victory in the second of five T20 Internationals at the Yadavindra Singh Cricket Stadium in Chandigarh on Thursday.

It was a remarkable turnaround for the tourists who were humiliated by 101 runs in the first game just two days earlier after being bowled out for 74, their lowest total in the format.

Ottnel Baartman led the bowling counter-attack with a well-deserved return of 4-24 from his four overs.

De Kock made a flying start with a pair of early, legside sixes against new-ball bowler Arshdeep Singh and even included a slog-swept maximum against fellow new ball bowler, Jasprit Bumrah and never looked back.

India's run chase stumbled immediately when Shubman Gill edged his first ball from Lungi Ngi-

di (2-26) to Reeza Hendricks at slip – a classic test match dismissal – and captain Suryakumar Yadav (5) edged a perfect away swinger from Marco Jansen (2-25) to De Kock.

Opener Abhishek Sharma (17) chased a wide Jansen delivery to give De Kock another catch and when Axar Patel, promoted to number three, was caught low down at extra cover by Hendricks of Ottnel Baartman, India were reeling at 67-4 in the eighth over.

Tilak Varma blasted 62 from 34 deliveries to try and keep India in the game but Hardik Pandya produced one of his notoriously curious 'go-slow' innings with 20 from 23 balls – with 15+ runs per over required – before slapping Lutho Sipamla (2-46) to Dewald Brevis at long on.

**DE KOCK ASSAULT**  
Earlier de Kock reached 50 from a mere 26 balls with four sixes and fours applying unrelenting pressure on all of the bowlers who had no answer to his array of shots on both sides of the wicket.

Left-arm Arshdeep suffered a cruel meltdown

in his third over, the 11th of the innings, when De Kock's assault caused him to bowl an astonishing seven wides in a 13-ball over which cost 18 runs and proved that even the best, most experienced bowlers can wilt under pressure.

Captain Aiden Markram was a happy spectator at the non-striker's end reaching a pedestrian 17 from 21 balls before bursting into life with two straight sixes against leg-spinner Varun Chakravarthy in the 12th over before slogging him to deep midwicket to depart for 29 from 26 balls.

Brevis, too, struggled to get going with eight from seven balls until he hoisted medium pacer Shivam Dube for six over long on, but there was no stopping De Kock who took 17 from Hardik Pandya's third over to keep the scoreboard rattling along at over 10 runs per over.

De Kock seemed certain to post his second century in the format until a freak dismissal saw him run out by 'keeper Jitesh Sharma when he pushed the ball into the offside seeking a single only to see it spin back towards the gloveman who gathered

it brilliantly to remove the bails with the batsman centimetres short of his crease.

His 90 included five fours and seven sixes.

Brevis (14) was well caught at deep midwicket off left-arm spinner Axar and Chakravarthy (4-0-29-2) brought the momentum to a shuddering halt with just four runs coming from the 16th over as Donovan Ferreira became the fourth player in the top six to struggle for timing – initially.

But veteran David Miller crunched a couple of early fours and flicked a low full toss from Arshdeep for six in the penultimate over to complete the bowler's horror outing.

There have been many more expensive analyses than Arshdeep's 4-0-54-0, including nine wides, but few have seen the leader of an attack collapse quite so dramatically. Miller finished unbeaten on 20 from 12 balls while Ferreira located the middle of his bat just in time to smite three sixes and a four in a whirlwind 30\* from 16 deliveries.

The third match of the series, now level at 1-1, takes place on Sunday. *SuperSport*

## Pirates, All Stars to battle for Carling Cup glory



Newly-crowned Knockout champions Orlando Pirates will go head-to-head with the All-Stars team in the 2025 Carling Black Label Cup match at the Moses Mabhida Stadium on Saturday.

The Buccaneers stretched their unbeaten run to nine matches across all competitions when they claimed a 1-0 victory over Marumo Gallants after extra-time in the Carling Knockout final last weekend.

The victory earned Pirates a place in this year's Carling Black Label Cup and they are hoping to become the first PSL side to defeat the All-Stars team since the inception of the current format in 2023.

All-Stars, on the other hand, are coming into this match as the reigning Carling Black Label Cup champions, having won back-to-back trophies in 2023 and 2024.

A narrow 2-1 victory over Stellenbosch FC in January 2024 was followed by a comprehensive 3-0 win against Magesi in December 2024, as All-Stars maintained their unbeaten record in the Carling Black Label Cup.

Orlando Pirates will be without the nine players who are part of Bafana Bafana's 2025 AFCON squad, including Mbekezeli Mbokazi, who has sealed a transfer to Major League Soccer side Chicago Fire.

Meanwhile, Thabiso Sesane and Tapelo Xoli remain sidelined by respective injuries, but the Soweto giants will be boosted by the availability of Patrick Maswan-ganyi, who missed the game against Gallants due to suspension.

All-Stars, on the other hand, will be under the guidance of experienced Golden Arrows head coach Manqoba Mngqithi, who will be assisted by Kaizer Chiefs reserve team coach Vela Khumalo and Stellenbosch FC reserve team coach Evangelos Vellios, with Bonginkosi Chonco as the Champion Coach.

The All-Stars team starting line-up set to face Pirates: Brandon Petersen, Thulani Mabaso, Mfundo Vilakazi and Naledi Hlongwane (all Kaizer Chiefs), Marcelo Allende, Vincent Sithole, Thabo Nkabinde and Arthur Sales (all Mamelodi Sundowns), Keabetswe Khonyane (Siwelole FC), Sikhosonke Langa (Sekhukhune United), and Ndayibithethwa Ndondlo (Marumo Gallants).

Bench: Naphtali Mokoena, Aden McCarthy, Paseka Mako, Manqoba Ozoemena, Pheko Phago, Nkosingiphile Ngcobo, Pule Mmodi - Kaizer Chiefs and Mduzuzi Shabalala (all Kaizer Chiefs), Nuno Santos and Bennet Mokoena (both Mamelodi Sundowns) and Bande Gumede and Adrian Dippenaar (both AmaZulu FC). *SuperSport*

## Broos Not Happy With FIFA's Treatment Of AFCON Tournament

Bafana Bafana coach Hugo Broos is not happy with the way football's world governing body, FIFA, is treating the Africa Cup of Nations (AFCON) tournament.

He says it's unacceptable and a show of disrespect that overseas-based clubs are only forced to release their AFCON bound players on the 15th of this month.

There's a mere six days before the start of the tournament in Morocco.

Only 21 players have reported for Bafana Bafana's final training at the High-Performance Centre in Pretoria.

The team assembled on Monday with four overseas based players; Lyle Foster, Sphephelo Sithole, Shandre Campbell, and Siyabonga Ngezana, not in attendance.

They are only expected to join their teammates next week, and Broos did not mince his words.

"Saying players who are playing abroad cannot join their national teams until the 15th, I wonder what the situation with teams like Morocco, Senegal and Nigeria who only have overseas based players in their set up. I don't know what FIFA thinks about this competition."

The camp at the HPC started with only 12 players. Orlando Pirates players were given extra time off to recharge their batteries after playing in the Carling Knockout final in Polokwane on Saturday.



Pirates defender Mbekezeli Mbokazi was the last to arrive after he missed his flight from Durban.

And he can expect a tongue lashing from the Belgian.

Broos says, "Mbokazi will arrive in fifteen minutes I still want to talk to him I'm not pleased with what he did, he missed his flight in Durban. The Pirates coach is angry that he missed his flight. That is very unprofessional, and, in the past, I have told you about the behaviour of South African players. This is very bad for a 19-year-old player who is going to the AFCON and the World Cup to miss his flight. That I can't accept, I know why he thinks he's a star. I'm very angry,

and angry with his attitude."

One overseas-based player who's already in camp and making the most of it, is 20-year-old Amajita defender Tylon Smith.

His English club, Queens Park Rangers, released him early.

One development that put a smile on Broos' face was the confirmation of the warm-up match against Ghana next Tuesday.

The match will be played at an unconfirmed venue in Gauteng.

Bafana Bafana will depart for Morocco the following day. *SABC News*

## Cheetahs suffer triple injury blow

The Cheetahs will be without three key players for Saturday's EPCR Challenge Cup clash against Stade Français in Amsterdam.

Coach Frans Steyn confirmed that lock and captain Victor Sekeketi suffered a fractured cheekbone during the 42-12 defeat to the Exeter Chiefs at Sandy Park last weekend, while flyhalf Jaco van der Walt and centre Zander du Plessis both have hamstring niggles and are rested as a precaution.

"It's a big loss for us, but it also gives other guys a chance to show what they're worth," Steyn said.

Lock Curtly Thomas and flyhalf George Lourens have been flown in as cover, while scrumhalf Marco Jansen van Vuren may be asked to slot into the midfield if required.

The Cheetahs produced a spirited second-half display against Exeter and Steyn wants to carry that fight into Amsterdam.

"We were physical, we were dominant in some collisions, and there were good individual performances," he said. "We made a few small errors, and against quality opposition you get punished every time."

Steyn expects a bruising battle against Stade Français. "They've got a big pack. It's going to be tough for us," he said. "But I'm happy with what I saw from our guys in that second half, and we want to build on that this weekend."

Saturday's match kicks off at 3pm (SA time). *sarugbymag*

