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FSFW Women's Day Event has finally arrived

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New Look, New Line Up for Siwelele



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TOMBSTONE “SCAMMER”

EXPOSED

*Families left with bare graves and no money
speak out after years of deception as they
continue to scramble for answers and
ultimately justice*

By: Abigail Visagie

Dozens of grieving families in Mangaung have been left heartbroken and financially drained after a local tombstone supplier allegedly vanished with their money – leaving them not only out of pocket but emotionally shattered.

Michelle Jacobs, accused of posing as a legitimate business owner of Tombstone Retailers in Bloemfontein, has allegedly vanished with over R111 500 paid by various bereaved families – something she denies after being tracked down by this publication. She instead shifted the blame to the new tenant.

It is alleged that Jacobs accepted payments for tombstones that were never delivered, while others received the wrong orders. Her disappearance has left many families unable to properly honour their loved ones, while scrambling for answers and justice.

Moretimang Malope fell in love with the tombstone design she saw in the catalogue Jacobs' company posted online. She claims Tombstone Retailers – which was still owned by Jacobs at the time – scammed her out of R37 500.

Malope's husband passed away in 2010 and she says she had set that amount aside to honour her late husband's memory. According to her, communication with Tombstone retailers gradually began to fade after making full payment in May last year.

When she followed the matter up, she was assured that the business was operating as usual and that her late husband's tombstone would be erected soon.

“A month later, the company visited my husband's grave and began the work, but they left without completing it. They promised to return and finish the job, but never did,” a distressed Malope told Journal News.

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Suspected tombstone scammer Michelle Jacobs Picture: Instagram

Five FS Mayors Face the Chop

*...As ANC wields the axe in
crackdown on underperforming
municipalities*



Free State Premier, MaQueen Letsoha-Mathae. Picture: Supplied

By: Abigail Visagie and JN Reporter

In a sweeping move to restore public confidence and tighten its grip ahead of the 2026 elections, the African National Congress (ANC) is reportedly preparing to remove underperforming mayors across several municipalities in the Free State.

This follows a recent oversight visit by Parliament's Portfolio Committee on Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (COGTA), which uncovered widespread dysfunction, including missing billions in funds, sewage spills, illegal tenders, and critical vacancies in local government.

While the ANC has officially denied any imminent mayoral dismissals, insiders reveal that an announcement is expected shortly after the party's provincial executive commit-

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QwaQwa Mall Empowers Small Businesses



Small businesses got to engage and market their services. Picture: Maluti Crescent

By: Mpho Sekharume

Local small businesses in QwaQwa were given the platform and opportunity to market themselves and engage on a variety of business matters at a Business Summit hosted by Maluti Crescent Mall on 26 July 2025.

A collaborative initiative between the mall and the Thabo Mofutsanyana Arts and Culture Centre, the milestone summit was aimed at empowering aspiring entrepreneurs, job seekers, and small business owners in the community, while also serving as an informative and interactive platform that allowed small businesses to engage directly with stakeholders from both the public and private sectors

As proof of its commitment to boost local businesses, Maluti Crescent further announced the launch of the Contractor Portal database platform, where small local businesses can register as suppliers and services providers. The mall will then keep this database and prospectively call on local businesses to provide their registered service when such opportunities arise.

“Every day I see many people walking into our offices looking for job opportunities; asking for help or trying to find out how they can offer their services to the mall,” Moleboheng Mofokeng, Marketing Coordinator of Maluti Crescent, tells Journal News.

The idea for the summit was sparked by Mofokeng’s daily observations, bringing to life this landmark moment in QwaQwa’s business environment.

“The summit was therefore designed to help address these recurring questions and guide community members with accurate information and direction.

“Maluti Crescent remains committed to supporting local development and creating platforms that provide both opportunity and guidance for the community it serves,” added Mofokeng.

Maluti Crescent is a modern architectural marvel that vividly stands out in QwaQwa’s rural mountainous landscape. Apart from its creative aesthetics, the mall boasts high monthly footfall figures of around 794 000 shoppers with retail tenants comprising some of country’s top restaurants, clothing and food retailers.

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Tombstone ‘Scammer’ Exposed

Families with bare graves and no money - speak out after years of deception as they scramble for answers and justice

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She explained that despite numerous verbal and written requests to demand a refund from Jacobs, no action was taken. Eventually, Jacobs vanished without a trace. Malope claims she was shockingly turned away when she attempted to open a case at the police station.

“I was told I couldn’t open a case because I had willingly given the money to Tombstone Retailers. According to the police, Jacobs, through her company, didn’t steal the money from me,” said Malope.

Upon investigating the matter further, Journal News discovered that there are several other alleged victims with similar complaints. They all claim to have been deprived of justice when they sought police intervention.

It is further alleged that Tombstone Retailers would either deliver incorrect tombstone orders or fail to rectify defective erections. The company would allegedly cancel contracts without issuing any refunds to customers.

Another alleged victim is Pulane Dikgoele from Thaba Nchu, which is 63 km east of Bloemfontein. She claims to have paid R74 000 to Tombstone Retailers for memorial tombstones for the graves of four of her family members.

Despite completing the full payment over a set 12-month period, Dikgoele also claims was defrauded as she only received a poor-quality tombstone - with no delivery or installation as promised.

According to her, the day before the planned tombstone unveiling, Jacobs and her company’s receptionist – only known as Hilda - informed her that the contract had been astonishingly cancelled. Dikgoele told this newspaper that they subsequently accused her of threatening company staff - claims Dikgoele strongly denies.

“Tombstone Retailers gave me the run-around for the longest time. The owner disappeared with my R74 000. I’m heartbroken because I had planned to honour my family by erecting tombstones for them, but this has only brought me more pain. I want justice and my money back (sic),” said Dikgoele.

Journal News is in possession of a copy of the termination letter, allegedly sent to Dikgoele on 28 February 2025. The unsigned letter cites alleged threats made by Dikgoele towards company employees as the reason for terminating the contract.

“The customer threatened our workers, telling them they will spill fuel on them and burn them to death. Our workers doesn’t feel save leaving for Thaba Nchu to do the installations as they were threatened and are afraid of their lives (sic),” an excerpt in the letter reads.

Dikgoele vehemently refutes the claims, affirming that the company cancelled the promised free installation unilaterally, while failing to deliver the correct



Moretimang Malope alleges she was scammed R37 000 by Tombstone Retailers. Picture: Baagedi Setlhora

tombstones order. She further disclosed that the only refund she received was half of the transportation cost for the incorrect tombstones that were sent to Thaba Nchu.

“The accusations that I threatened workers are fabrications meant to cover up the fact that they failed to deliver on their promises,” she insists.

“In the letter sent to me, Jacobs clearly stated that installation and the transportation of the incorrect tombstones would be free. Yet, I had to cover the cost and pay the delivery person who assisted with the transport. Only R1 500 – half of the cost – was refunded from that expense,” she added.

Upon visiting the premises where Tombstone Retailers is supposedly located, Journal News discovered that the property had a new tenant in Keke Mabule, who also runs his tombstone business from the premises.

When asked about his connection to Jacobs, Mabule explained that Jacobs and her company had moved out of the premises, citing business-related stress.

“I am currently renting the premises, and I must say it has been difficult to run my business here, because many people assume I am in partnership with the previous owner (Jacobs).

“In our last conversation, she told me she was closing shop due to a divorce and could no longer work late nights with her children, as it had become unsafe.

“My business is suffering because of the ongoing issues involving Tombstone Retailers,” said Mabule who further revealed that the police had also pre-

viously visited the premises to specifically enquire about Jacobs and her business.

This publication managed to get hold of Michelle Jacobs contact numbers and tried to reach out to her for comment for three weeks with no success. She surprisingly responded to questions that were sent out to her by text on WhatsApp two days prior to the publication of this article.

In her response, Jacobs denied all accusations levelled against her by her former clients further stating that her Mabule had agreed that the latter would settle all outstanding matters in relation to her clients upon concluding the sale of her business.

“This is not true at all. The company was sold to the new owner, and it was agreed that he would settle matters with the clients, including paying a labour fee and using the materials that were already available,” Jacobs said in a WhatsApp message.

She claims to have sold her tombstone business to Mabule for R450 000 but declares that she only received R10 000 from him.

According to Jacobs, Mabule failed to honour the sale agreement as well as the outstanding obligations to clients.

“He agreed during our meeting that he would take responsibility for the clients. My genuine concern was ensuring that my clients were looked after and didn’t encounter any problems - I had built relationships with all of them.

“I never took anyone’s money. I had already sourced all the materials, which were at the company premises. The new owner, who was supposed to pay me and assist the clients with their tombstones,

failed to do both. Neither the clients received service, nor did I receive my money,” claimed Jacobs.

In response to this Jacobs’ narrative, Mabule questioned why Jacobs would be avoiding her clients and the police if she was truly innocent.

“I only bought machinery from Jacobs — nothing more. I never received any money from her clients,” he stated.

Mabule confirmed that he has a written contract with Jacobs outlining their business arrangement and noted that Tombstone Retailers is still officially registered under her name.

According to Mabule, Jacobs is not only evading her former clients but also her former employees who have since taken matters to the CCMA. He claims that employees have opened a case of non-payment against Jacobs and that authorities have since ordered the machinery she sold him to be sold off to compensate the workers.

“I almost lost my machines because of her, but that didn’t happen. I now officially own them. I have a clear conscience. I’m still running a reputable, reliable businesses. If Jacobs can say the same, she should face her disgruntled clients, former employees, and the police,” Mabule concluded.

While clients bemoan lack of service and poor workmanship, Jacobs and Mabule seem to be stuck in their own business dealing fracas.

Nevertheless, Jacobs has committed to resolving all outstanding matters with all aggrieved clients who are in possession of the necessary documentation. She further undertook to revert to Journal News on Tuesday morning in relation to this matter.

Tutu School of Medicine Construction Commences in NW

By: Lerato Mutlanyane

In a major step towards advancing medical education in South Africa, North West University (NWU) has officially begun the construction of the R600 million Desmond Tutu School of Medicine at its Potchefstroom campus.

This milestone follows the approval granted by former Minister of Health, Dr. Joe Phaahla, in December 2023, which allows the university to proceed with establishing its own medical school.

The Desmond Tutu School of Medicine will feature state-of-the-art facilities, including advanced medical technologies and innovative learning spaces.

The facility aims to meet the increasing demand for skilled medical professionals while promoting research and improving community health services. Its establishment arrives at a crucial time, as the North West province continues to experience a severe shortage of doctors and medical specialists.

Once operational, it will become one of only 11 accredited medical schools in South Africa, with its first cohort of students expected to enrol in 2028.

NWU has also established a strategic partnership with the North West Department of Health to pro-



Naming Ceremony, at the Capital on the Park Hotel in Sandton. Picture: NWU

vide students with hands-on clinical experience.

This alliance also supports the broader goal of strengthening healthcare delivery across the province.

“The medical school buildings are a hub of new technology—an opportunity to implement best practices in medical education through immersive technology, augmented reality, artificial intelligence, high-fidelity simulation, laparoscopy, and diagnostic tools. In this tech-enhanced context, partnerships

with the private sector become essential,” said NWU spokesperson Pietra Bester.

The school will offer comprehensive medical training at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels, ensuring a strong balance between academic theory and practical application.

“It represents the formal launch of a scholarly pursuit of the highest order: the establishment of a premier centre for medical education, research, and professional training,” NWU Vice-Chancellor, Profes-

sor Bismark Tyobeka, declared.

Provincial health department spokesperson, Tebogo Lekgethwane, also emphasised the importance of the initiative.

“Our health facilities across the province will serve as training grounds for these medical students.

“As a predominantly rural province, this school will help address rural retention challenges, improve health equity, and promote research focused on the specific health needs of our communities,” added Lekgethwane.

Construction is now underway and is expected to take between 18 and 20 months.

According to Professor Binu Luke, project lead for the medical school, the facility will ultimately accommodate over 400 students.

“This building is planned for a maximum annual intake of 150 students. As students will remain at the facility for the first three years of study, it will serve up to 450 students at a time,” Luke disclosed.

When the Desmond Tutu School of Medicine officially opens in 2028, it will mark the beginning of a new era for healthcare education in the province - one poised to close critical gaps in access to medical training and care while shaping the next generation of medical pioneers.

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Five FS Mayors to Get Fired

The axe is hanging over the heads of underperforming municipality

Continues from Page 1

tee (PEC) meeting next week.

A senior party source confirmed that the move is part of a broader strategy to enforce accountability, improve service delivery, and address long-standing governance failures at municipal level.

"I can tell you that at least five mayors are likely to be recalled next week. The final number may change, but the message is clear, this bold step signals a clear warning that no mayor is safe if they fail to meet the party's performance benchmarks or deliver on their mandates," said a source.

Dr Zweli Mkhize, chair of the parliamentary committee on cooperative governance, has described the state of municipalities in the Free State as "disastrous" (see page 8).

The Auditor-General's latest report paints a similarly grim picture, highlighting rampant irregular expenditure, lack of accountability, and numerous audit disclaimers across municipalities.

ANC provincial spokesperson Thabo Meeko, while not confirming the planned mass-recall, stated on Wednesday that "The party has not made a decision to recall any mayors. However, where we find that a mayor has failed their community, we will act accordingly and remove them."

ANC provincial secretary Polediso Motsoeneng has stated that recent developments only reinforce the par-



Free State Premier, Maqueen Letsoha-Mathae and MEC for Cogta Saki Mokoena. Picture: Supplied

ty's longstanding concerns about the state of municipalities, as highlighted during their provincial roadshows.

"We need to determine the appropriate course of action, given the seriousness of the problems we are facing. COGTA's visit confirmed what we had also observed during our roadshows. It reinforces our concerns about what has gone wrong in our municipalities—and what must be done to fix it," Motsoeneng said.

Premier Maqueen Letsoha-Mathae, while acknowledging her limited authority over mayors, stressed the need for consequence management—particularly in municipalities that refuse to cooperate with the teams deployed by the Provincial Government.

To address non-compliance, the Premier revealed that an official has been appointed within municipalities to assist with monitoring and evaluation.

"We have established a Premier Coordinating Forum (PCF), which is proving to be a critical platform to engage, assist, and hold municipalities accountable," she said.

Letsoha-Mathae added that the forum is also focused on enforcing payment commitments, particularly to entities like Vaal Central Water and Eskom.

"We are pleased that, following our intervention, the Kopanong Municipality has finalised a debt repayment plan with Vaal Central Water. Additionally, we have recruited 17 graduates to provide municipalities with essential technical skills, including hydrology, resource management, and engineering support," she said.

As the ANC PEC meeting looms next week, all eyes are on whether the party will finally act decisively on its deployed comrades.

A Constitution Under Siege: The health Xenophobia conundrum



By: Matshidiso Selebeleng

South Africa, a country where diversity is celebrated and human rights enshrined in the Constitution, however a contentious debate has sparked a fire-storm.

Long queues, insufficient bed space, a long orthopedic surgery waiting lists, pregnant mothers sleeping on the floor due to insufficient bed space, and not enough medication for patients in need.

These are just some of the challenges faces by the 84% of South Africans who rely on public health care services. They say the public healthcare system is overburdened.

Section 27 (3) of the South African Constitution guarantees basic healthcare services for all, regardless of nationality or immigration status. A heated debate has emerged and locals are saying no to free health services for undocumented foreigners.

But activists have sparked controversy by advocating for the exclusion of illegal immigrants from using public health facilities.

The past few weeks have seen Anti-migrant organizations such as Operation Dudula mobilizing their members to restrict foreigners' access to public health facilities, demanding that undocumented foreigners produce identification documents before receiving care or not use the services at all.

Members of the organisation have been blocking

foreigners from accessing public health care services demanding that they pay.

Dudula has been hard at work ensuring that measures are put in place, which include requiring people to produce their South African identity documents at the entrance of public health facilities.

They say they are protecting the interests of South Africans, but the Human Rights Commission says this is a violation of human rights.

This has caused public outrage, as some people are becoming frustrated because they have to carry their IDs with them whenever they visit health facilities.

Karabo Xaba (25) a student from Bloemfontein says she fully supports Operation Dudula.

She says she feels that South Africa as a country is being taken advantage of by foreign nationals.

"It is not fair for us, as taxpayers to support everyone. "Free healthcare services are meant for South African citizens. I fully support what Operation Dudula is doing. Foreigners should pay for public health services or use private hospitals as they do not contribute to the tax system.

Another patient Mpho Mohapi (42) from Bochabela in Bloemfontein who uses public facilities says she also supports the notion.

Mohapi has been waiting to get help at the Pelenomi Tertiary hospital in Bloemfontein for over 24 hours.

She says she is waiting in the queue with foreigners and thinks it is not fair.

"I don't have a problem with foreign nationals, my problem is that now I have to wait in long lines before I get help.

I have been sitting on this chair ever since I arrived.

"I left my two children at home and they needed to go to school today, but they did not go to school because I am stuck in the hospital.

"I think foreign nationals must go to private hospitals. Most of them are in South Africa to work, so they are employed and can afford private hospitals and clinics.

Journal News went to the streets to get the views of foreign nationals about this issue and John Salimo* from Mozambique who has been in South Africa illegally for more than ten years says he is saddened by the treatment from South Africans.

"I used to think that we are all brothers and sisters and we can come to each other's rescue when we are in need, but now denying us healthcare access just shows the amount of resentment.

"I have been here for years and witnessed the hatred every day, but it just keeps getting worse, he said.

Despite how ordinary citizens feel about foreigners using public health care services for free, illegal immigrants who are in hospital say they receive the best care at facilities.

Cliff Maimble, an illegal immigrant from Zimbabwe says he is aware of the health xenophobia that has been happening in South Africa.

He says he has been in South Africa for two months and knows what is happening.

When Journal News asked what put him in Pelenomi hospital, he said he had an accident at work which landed him in casualty.

"Maimle told Journal News that he did not struggle to get assistance.

"I am happy with the service and everything was given to me for free. I did not struggle and I did not pay anything.

"I have done the tests and right now I am waiting for the doctor to see me so they can give me my test results, he said.

In a formal letter addressed to the South African President Cyril Ramaphosa, Minister of Health Dr Aron Motsoaledi, Minister of Home Affairs Dr Leon Schreiber and the South African Human Rights Commission, a Zimbabwean Activist, Duke Maplanka, accused the government of turning a blind eye to the barbaric treatment that the immigrants face.

Maplanka said if action is not taken against the individuals or groups that are behind

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SADTU NW Blasts Motsumi's Call for Poor-Performing Teachers to Quit



MEC for Education in the North West Ntsetsao Motsumi. Picture: Supplied

The South African Democratic Teachers' Union in the North West (SADTU NW) says it is concerned and disappointed by the public remarks made by MEC for Education, Ntsetsao Motsumi who called on underperforming educators to resign.

Motsumi made the statements this week during a meeting with underperforming Grade 12 schools in Dr Ruth Mompoti District. She called for educators to either resign or face suspension for underperformance.

SADTU provincial secretary in the North West George Themba condemned these remarks saying that as a union that represents the interests and rights of educators, they find such statements to be reckless, demoralising, and counterproductive to the stability and morale of the education system.

"Educators are the backbone of our public education and continue to serve under extremely challenging conditions, including overcrowded classrooms, under-resourced schools, and limited support.

"Instead of threatening educators, we call upon the MEC to engage with relevant stakeholders, including unions, in good faith and through established structures to address

concerns or grievances.

"A blanket call for resignations or suspensions undermines due process, promotes fear, and risks violating the principle of fair labour practice as enshrined in the constitution and the Labour Relations Act, he said.

He also said SADTU reaffirms its commitment to quality public education and the professional conduct of its members.

"We stand ready to work with the Department of Education in the North West to address legitimate concerns through constructive dialogue, but we will not hesitate to defend our members against intimidation and unfair treatment.

"SADTU finds it unacceptable that a public representative would resort to threats and intimidation rather than constructive engagement to resolve matters affecting educators.

"We call on the MEC to desist and refrain from such utterances when engaging with educators and we urge the department to foster a climate of respect, engagement, and accountability."

"The future of our learners and the integrity of the education system depend on it," said Themba.

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Justice on Trial:

Parliament Probes SAPS Interference Allegations



xxx. Picture: Supplied

By: Selloane Khalane

The first meeting of Parliament’s Ad Hoc Committee—tasked with probing explosive allegations made by KwaZulu-Natal Police Commissioner Lieutenant General Nhlanhla Mkhwanazi—was anything but smooth. From the onset on 5 August 2025, political spats emerged, exposing tensions among the very members entrusted with investigating alleged criminal interference in South Africa’s justice and policing systems.

Lt Gen Mkhwanazi’s now-infamous press conference on 6 July sent shockwaves across the country. His claims of political meddling, rogue intelligence contracts, and the disbandment of critical task teams within SAPS painted a disturbing picture. The fallout has already led to suspensions, arrests, and widespread scrutiny into the inner workings of the state.

Watching democracy unfold in real-time is a privilege. Parliamentary processes, once confined to textbooks and legal journals, are now livestreamed for public view. In this first sitting, viewers saw Economic Freedom Fighter (EFF) leader Julius Malema decline a nomination to chair the proceedings—a move that drew both praise and criticism online. Whether it was a strategic chess move or genuine disinterest remains a matter of public debate.

Streamed on YouTube, the committee’s first sitting was convened primarily to elect its chairperson. What should have been a routine formality quickly turned

into a performance of political theatre.

ActionSA’s representative, Dereleen James, made it clear that trust in the process was already under strain. “We need to start off on the right foot, but how do we garner public trust this morning when we have a chairperson elected from the very same party where most of the people are embroiled in?”

She went on to highlight South Africans’ fatigue with endless commissions and forums, and expressed that ActionSA did not have voting rights in electing the chairperson.

Khusela Sangoni-Diko (ANC) responded, “We cannot, on the very first day, want to collapse this process. If members are coming here with the intention of being populist and using what is a grave concern of the people for cheap political scoring, then we are going to have a problem.”

She further warned against grandstanding: “We cannot come here and have to defend statements made merely to attract attention from the cameras.” Malema came to James’ defense, asserting that every member has the right to raise concerns without being “character assassinated.”

The 11-member ad hoc committee is composed of representatives from across South Africa’s political spectrum, reflecting a multiparty approach to the investigation into Lt Gen Mkhwanazi’s allegations. The African National Congress (ANC) holds four seats, represented by Mdimiseni Ntuli (Chief Whip), Khusela Sangoni-Diko, Xola Nqola, and Molapi Soviet Lekganyane, who was elected chairperson. Glynis Breytenbach and Ian Cameron represent the Democratic Alliance (DA), while the uMkhonto weSizwe (MK) Party has Sibonelo Nomvalo and David Skosana.

Julius Malema represents the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF), and the final two seats are held by Mangaqa Albert Mncwango of the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) and Ashley Sauls of the Patriotic Alliance (PA)—both representing smaller parties.

To ensure continuity and representation, six alternate members were also appointed: Thoko Khanyile (ANC), Diane Kohler Barnard and Lisa Schicklerling (DA), Leigh Ann Mathys (EFF), Dereleen James (ActionSA), and Wouter Wessels (Freedom Front Plus). These alternates are expected to step in should primary members be unavailable during proceedings.

The biggest surprise of the day was Malema’s refusal to chair the committee, despite being nominated and seconded. His decision sparked heated debate on social media, with some questioning his patriotism while others viewed it as a strategic move.

Ultimately, Molapi Soviet Lekganyane was elected unopposed, a move that reinforced concerns about the ruling party’s dominance over the process. For many, the real question remains: can this committee genuinely investigate the very structures that appointed it?

Established under National Assembly Rule 253, the ad hoc committee has been tasked with probing the veracity and implications of the explosive allegations made by KwaZulu-Natal Police

Minister Macpherson opens criminal case in explosive IDT bribery scandal involving suspended CEO

Public Works and Infrastructure Minister Dean Macpherson has opened a criminal case at the Cape Town Police Station following shocking allegations of corruption and bribery involving senior officials at the Independent Development Trust (IDT).

This follows a video that emerged showing Tebogo Malaka, the suspended IDT CEO, and spokesperson Phasha Makgolane allegedly trying to bribe investigative journalist Pieter-Louis Myburgh with R60,000 to suppress a corruption exposé.

Addressing the media outside the police station on Wednesday, Macpherson expressed his deep disgust and disbelief at the blatant corruption, stating, “Watching the video of Ms Malaka allegedly offering Mr Myburgh a bribe of R60,000 made me sick to my stomach and left me in disbelief.

“It’s one thing to hear about corruption. It’s another thing to see it take place so blatantly and with a feeling of impunity. This stands in complete opposition to everything that I believe in and stand for as a minister.”

Macpherson emphasised the gravity of the situation, describing the alleged bribery attempt as “not just a criminal act but an assault on the institutional framework of government to provide services to the people of South Africa, especially in the social infrastructure space that the IDT is responsible for.”

He condemned the attempt to bribe a journalist as “an attack not only on the free press but on our democracy,” warning that it was designed to “silence accountability, to undermine public confidence, and to shield corruption from exposure.”

Macpherson recounted the longstanding governance failures and corruption scandals at the IDT, an entity plagued for years by tender irregularities, incomplete projects, and audit disclaimers.

“It was an entity in crisis, a state institution meant to serve the public, but instead consumed by dysfunction,” Macpherson said.

Since assuming office, he said, efforts to restore integrity have been met with “fierce resistance” from entrenched interests, aided by political parties like ActionSA and the EFF, and even some members of the media.

Responding to misinformation and disinformation campaigns aimed at discrediting himself,

his colleague Zimbini Hill, and the IDT’s cleanup efforts, Macpherson stated, “For months, the narrative being pushed by those resisting reform was that I, as the minister, was paying journalists to attack the IDT. Not only was this false, but it turned out to be a projection of what they were doing.

“They said I was paying journalists, and it turned out that they were then paying journalists.” He highlighted the irony that those implicated in corruption were attempting to bribe journalists themselves.

Macpherson has formally opened cases against Malaka and Makgolane for the attempted bribery of investigative journalist Myburgh, and has called on other journalists who may have been approached to come forward.

He said he is also pursuing investigations into coordinated social media campaigns aimed at discrediting the department and officials, as well as the involvement of politically connected individuals in spreading false information to protect corruption.

“Corruption cannot survive without enablers,” Macpherson said. “It survives when individuals in power believe they can manipulate the media, intimidate whistleblowers, and weaponise public opinion to protect their own interests.”

Linking the bribery allegations to wider corruption uncovered in a recent PwC forensic investigation into the R800 million PSA oxygen plant tender, Macpherson detailed serious irregularities including contracts awarded without valid licenses, inflated project costs, missing documentation, and disregard for treasury policies.

The report recommended disciplinary action against Malaka and other senior officials.

Macpherson condemned the environment of impunity under her leadership, stating that “the IDC operated without the most basic governance and risk controls,” and now “we see how that environment of impunity spilled beyond tenders into attempts to manipulate the media and obstruct public accountability.”

Macpherson also called on the new IDT board to urgently investigate all contracts issued under Malaka’s tenure, trace fund flows, and take swift action against anyone found complicit.

He expressed confidence in the board and acting CEO’s ability to dismantle corruption networks and restore the IDT as a credible delivery partner for social infrastructure projects. **IOL**



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A Strong ANC Starts at the Branches – Mashatile



ANC provincial and regional leadership with Deputy President Paul Mashatile. Pictures: Supplied

By: Matshidiso Selebeleng

Deputy President Paul Mashatile has urged members of the African National Congress (ANC) to unite and strengthen the party amid growing political challenges.

Speaking at the Human Rights Unity and Renewal gathering at Grassland Community Hall in Bloemfontein on Tuesday, Mashatile emphasized the importance of internal cohesion and renewed commitment to the ANC’s founding principles, warning that complacency could further erode the party’s support base ahead of upcoming elections.

This comes against the backdrop of declining support for the party.

According to the Social Research Foundation’s latest polling results released in February this year, South African voters have swung the other way, dropping the former liberation movement (ANC)’s guaranteed support by 13 percentage points from 45% late last year to 32%.

The SRF’s head of research, Gabriel Makin said the results should send shockwaves through the ruling political party which has been gambling on populist ideas to get its vote share back above 50%.

“When we deal with these numbers, we must acknowledge that, on election day, you can’t have 15% of the votes as undecided. So, while we should be responsible and say the ANC is probably not at 32%, it would likely be in the low to mid-40% range if there were an election today, closer to where we found it in September. Those voters who are undecided now might remain neutral since there’s no immediate election. But when the election comes, they’ll likely pick a party, and it’s very likely that they will swing back to the ANC. We see no reason why they wouldn’t. But you shouldn’t think of those undecided voters as just ANC supporters—they’re free agents in the South African voting market.

They can move in any direction and will likely be a key source of political contestation. This 15% could tip the balance of power in South African politics moving forward,” said Makin.

Mashatile, however, insists that revitalizing the ANC at branch level is key to turning the party’s fortunes around.

“We want to make the ANC an instrument to lead this fight. We must begin by strengthening the branches, because if the ANC is weak, we will not win the struggle for economic emancipation,” he said. “Our goal is to win the elections and we need a stronger branch membership if we are to win.”

He further urged branches to convene their branch general meetings and elect leaders they trust to drive meaningful change.



RED FLAG: Small Parties Popping Everywhere

ANC Must Act On Collapsing Municipalities - Malatji

Analysts warn of the small insignificant political parties mushrooming trend



Political party posters. Picture: (X)

By: Matshidiso Selebeleng

Political analysts are raising red flags over the rapid increase in the number of small and largely ineffective political parties ahead of the upcoming elections.

They argue that while multiparty democracy is vital for representation, the unchecked growth of fringe parties with limited policy agendas or voter bases risks diluting the political discourse, confusing voters, and fragmenting the electoral landscape.

According to the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) of South Africa, the country had over 600 registered political parties before March this year. Of these, 383 were registered at the national level, while the remaining 226 were registered either provincially or at the municipal level.

Political analyst Professor Sethulago Matebesi from the University of the Free State (UFS) has expressed concern over this surge in political party registrations. He warned that many people form new parties not out of a desire to serve the public, but to secure leadership positions and personal gain.

"The reason we have so many political parties in South Africa is similar to the situation with our religious institutions," Matebesi said.

He continued: "Everyone wants to be a leader. People associate personal benefits with starting political parties. They do not want to be led - they want to lead. That's the main issue behind the mushrooming of political parties in South Africa."

Matebesi argued that most of these newly formed parties have little to no significant impact on the country's political discourse - whether in governance,

oversight, or economic development.

Recently, former deputy president of the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) and MK Party Secretary General, Floyd Shivambu expressed interest in launching a new political party. This move has sparked mixed reactions, with some supporting him and others questioning his motives, especially given his current hopping from one political party to the next within a short period.

Another political analyst, Kagiso Pooe, warned that the trend of forming new political parties is likely to intensify as the country heads toward the local government elections next year.

"It's not a matter of if, but when," said Pooe.

"More political parties will emerge closer to the local government elections, and even more so ahead of the national election in 2029. We're going to see politically disgruntled individuals acting like political entrepreneurs," he added.

According to Pooe, South Africa has a disproportionately high number of political parties relative to its population - 609 parties for around 65 million people - ranking second globally after India. This figure exceeds that of countries like Nigeria and Kenya.

He argues that the explosion of political parties is a symptom of a deeper issue: the lack of a unifying political identity or vision in the country.

"Opening a political party has become a form of political entrepreneurship. Many of these parties manage to secure seats in parliament and become influential players, despite lacking substance or a clear agenda for citizens," Pooe added.

"South African politics today is one where everyone wants the business of a political party, but few have anything meaningful to offer the people."

...League president intensifies calls for action against failing party employees in local government



ANCYL President Collen Malatji. Picture: Supplied

By: Abigail Visagie

African National Congress Youth League (ANCYL) President Collen Malatji has come out guns blazing, urging the ruling party to take swift and decisive action against party employees responsible for the collapse of local municipalities in the Free State.

Delivering the Nelson Mandela Memorial Lecture at Bloemfontein's City Hall last week, the ANC's young wing president emphasized that the ANC must urgently address poor municipal leadership if it hopes to avoid further backlash from voters at the polls.

This follows damning revelations uncovered during an oversight visit by Parliament's Portfolio Committee on Cooperative Governance to the province two weeks ago.

The committee reported that the Free State has some of the worst-performing municipalities in the country, plagued by systemic collapse, missing billions in funds, sewage spills, illegal tenders, and widespread staff vacancies.

Committee Chairperson Dr. Zweli Mkhize revealed

that municipalities in the province have accumulated billions in unpaid debt.

"One municipality owes over R8 billion to a water board. Others have failed to pay pension contributions deducted from employees' salaries, while some have spent millions on unauthorised overtime—despite the near-total collapse of service delivery. Roads are impassable in some areas, water systems are dysfunctional, and waste services are in shambles. In certain towns, sewage spills have become a daily struggle, and electricity is only available for a few hours each day," Mkhize said.

Weighing in on the crisis, Malatji said the revolution of young people cannot be postponed while over 80% of municipalities in the Free State are collapsing.

"The revolution cannot be postponed when there's no service delivery in our townships, villages, and towns. We vote people into office, and they arrive only to sleep in their offices, drink tea, and employ their girlfriends and friends—while our people lose hope in the ANC. It's our responsibility to remove these rotten elements and return the ANC to the people," he said, stressing that the party must act swiftly.

Malatji's comments align with the ANC Youth League's provincial leadership, which has issued a four-page media statement calling for the dissolution of dysfunctional municipalities.

"These councils no longer represent the people. They have become protection units for thieves. The executive mayors, speakers, and chief whips in these municipalities must be recalled immediately. Let us be clear: if the ANC leadership chooses to protect the corrupt, it is choosing to fight the people. If it refuses to act, it has no moral standing to ask for votes," said provincial spokesperson Thenjiwe Zapi in the statement.

Meanwhile, ANC Provincial Secretary Polediso Motsoeneng acknowledged that the leadership was already aware of the issues highlighted by the committee.

"We need to determine the appropriate course of action, considering the seriousness of the problems we are facing. Cogta's visit confirmed what we had also encountered during our provincial roadshows. It reinforces our long-standing concerns about what has gone wrong in our municipalities and what needs to be done to fix them," Motsoeneng said.

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Weather forecast for August 8: Cold front approaches Western Cape as scattered showers hit the east



South Africans can expect a partly cloudy and cold to cool day overall, with scattered showers and rain across the east. The day follows a system of severe thunderstorms experienced on Thursday, now moving out. However, all eyes turn to the west as a cold front approaches, expected to hit the Western Cape on Saturday.

National overview

Eastern provinces (including KZN, Mpumalanga, and eastern Limpopo): Cloudy at times, with a 30% chance of rain and isolated afternoon thundershowers in parts.

Interior regions: Mostly clear and cool.

Western Cape: Dry and slightly warmer, ahead of Saturday's approaching cold front.

No major wind alerts, but coastal breezes expected.

Provincial overview

Gauteng

Dry and cool with morning chills and sunny breaks.

Johannesburg: 17°C | Pretoria: 19°C

Light westerly breezes.

KwaZulu-Natal

Cloudy and humid with a chance of light showers (30%).

Durban: 21°C | Marginal rain chances inland.

Eastern Cape

Cloudy to partly cloudy, 30% chance of morning rain.

Mild and humid along the coast.

Western Cape

Mild, clear conditions, but a cold front is expected Saturday.

Cape Town: 19°C. No rain yet.

Northern Cape

Fine and dry, cool in the morning.

Upington: 21°C

Free State

Cold morning, sunny afternoon.

High of 18°C. No rain - IOL

A Constitution Under Siege: The health Xenophobia conundrum

Continues from Page 3

these acts, he intends to lay a complaint against South Africa in the international human rights bodies.

"I write this letter as both a concerned African citizen and a representative voice of thousands of foreign nationals, especially Zimbabweans, living in South Africa, many of whom are routinely subjected to inhumane treatment, open hostility, and systemic exclusion from basic services.

"It is with growing alarm that we have witnessed the escalation of xenophobic violence, the entrenchment of vigilante groups, and the active blocking of foreign nationals from accessing life-saving healthcare in South Africa, he said.

Maplanka further said South Africa has taken moral and legal action to speak out against injustice in Gaza, while they are not innocent themselves.

"How can South Africa claim the mantle of human rights defender abroad, when at home it presides over de facto ethnic cleansing through economic and medical exclusion?"

Last month the SHRC expressed concerns over the individuals who are denied access to health-care facilities.

The commission says these events are unethical, unlawful, and inconsistent with South Africa's obligations under both domestic and international human rights law.

"The SAHRC is concerned that people are taking the law into their own hands and making it difficult for people to access medical care due to their nationality.

"It is important to note that no civic group or individual has the legal authority to control access to public health facilities or to enforce immigration laws.

"The power to inspect, arrest, or detain undocumented persons lies solely with the Department of Home Affairs supported by the South African Police Service (SAPS) when lawfully required.

The commission urged both the Department of Home Affairs and SAPS to diligently perform their duties, to avoid citizens from taking the law into their hands."

Spokesperson for the Department of Health Foster Mohale, said,

"While we understand the genuine concerns raised by the organised groups and individuals on the issue of undocumented migration or foreign nationals, and its burden to public health system, we do not condone the manner in which they raise them, which is through illegal means which go against the laws of the country".

He says no one has got the right to demand proof of identity document except for the relevant authorities such as the law enforcement agencies.

"Thus we call for law enforcement agencies to enforce the law into their hands.

"We call upon concerned organizations and individuals suggest long term solutions to this issue which is a societal one in nature," said



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Setsoto Local Municipality Mayor, Seipati Mbiwe speaks on issues affecting the municipality. Picture: Supplied

Election Talks with Setsoto Mayor Seipati Mbiwe

As the 2026 municipal elections loom, Journal News caught up with Setsoto Local Municipality, Mayor Seipati Mbiwe, on issues affecting the municipality and its residents, as well as his plans to retain the office.

By: Abigail Visagie

Thank you for making time to speak to us, Executive Mayor. How are you doing and, more importantly, how is the municipality doing overall?

I'm doing well, thank you. The municipality is also doing well, I must say, despite the various challenges that come with being a local government entity. We are tasked with implementing Section 72 of the Constitution and delivering essential services to our communities. But the role of a municipality goes beyond just service delivery.

We must also create an environment that fosters holistic development - this includes supporting community initiatives, youth development, sport, arts and culture, addressing Gender-Based Violence and Femicide (GBVF), and tackling the ongoing challenges of HIV/AIDS.

I thought you'd start with the challenges of being located so close to the Lesotho border. Is that something your municipality struggles with as well?

Indeed, illegal immigration is a daily challenge for us. Our main town, Ficksburg, is just five minutes

from the Lesotho border. This means we often experience a steady influx of Basotho nationals crossing over. This results in issues such as livestock theft and the presence of undocumented foreign nationals - challenges that are not unique to us but are felt across many South African border towns.

Surely not everyone crossing over contributes to crime - some might even boost the local economy. So, how do you manage that?

Absolutely, and we recognise that. That's why we've rolled out a programme to verify and accredit spaza shop owners, ensuring they have the correct documentation. This initiative ensures that foreign nationals operating businesses are legally recognised and comply with regulatory standards. The programme will eventually extend beyond the spaza shop sector to include other industries.

It's important for us to know whether individuals are asylum seekers or have legal standing - especially when they are actively participating in our local economy. I see. Earlier, you mentioned the importance of not forgetting the grassroots level. Do you believe your administration has done enough for communities to feel compelled to vote for your party in next year's Local Government Elections?

To be honest, preparing for elections shouldn't be a once-off event. Local government is a full-time responsibility. While not all councillors are full-time,

the mayor, executive council members, and much of the municipal administration are. Our focus remains on consistent, daily service delivery.

Our communities shouldn't only see improvements during election season. The municipality must always be ready - whether elections are tomorrow or a year away. Our goal is to maintain this level of readiness and continuously work to improve the lives of the people of Setsoto.

What would you say are the most pressing challenges currently facing the municipality in terms of service delivery?

Potholes have become a major headache. Water supply has been unreliable in some areas, forcing us to rely on water tankers. In addition, we're also struggling with sewage spillages, which are becoming a serious concern.

Why are these issues so persistent? And what steps are you and your team taking to address them?

We are actively working on putting systems in place to show our capability and commitment to improving lives. One of our biggest challenges is the culture of non-payment for services. Many residents have grown used to receiving services - such as water and waste collection - without paying for them. But these services require funding, manpower, and resources to be sustained.

We've launched a campaign to educate residents about the importance of paying for municipal services. Reliable waste collection, for example, depends on consistent financial contributions from households. Changing this mindset is not something we can leave for election season - it must be a constant conversation.

We are also encouraging active community participation in the Integrated Development Plan (IDP) processes and budget votes. This allows residents to understand both what they can expect from us and what their responsibilities are.

You are currently serving your first term as mayor. Based on your experience so far, would you like to return for a second term?

Yes, this is my first term as mayor. In the previous term, I served as the council whip at the district level. While I would be honoured to continue in this role and build on the work we've started, my redeployment ultimately depends on my organisation - the same organisation that entrusted me with this responsibility.

It will also depend on the community - whether they believe I've delivered on my mandate and made a meaningful impact. I do believe we've built momentum, and my focus right now is to ensure that this momentum continues and that we keep moving Setsoto forward.

Tackling the pressing challenges faced by KwaZulu-Natal farmers



In welcoming the tabling of the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Agriculture and Rural Development's budget policy statement, agricultural industry experts shared the challenges they are facing and solutions with MEC Thembeni kaMadlopha-Mthethwa in a consultative forum held in Durban on Thursday.

South African Farmers Development Association chairman Dr Siyabonga Madlala applauded the department for the R30 million support for small-scale farmers. However, he said the sugar industry is facing many challenges.

Kwanalu's chief executive officer, Sandy La Marque, said they are dealing with serious challenges.

"I think more than anything else is the economic viability of farmers, whether you're a small farmer, whether you're a large farmer. If you're unable to produce your crop viably, sustainably, profitably, it means that farmers won't exist," La Marque said.

Provincial Livestock Board chairperson Nontobeko Mthethwa said there is a shortage of dip tanks. "Many affected by the disease do not use the dips daily, which causes conflict with those who use the dips daily and those who do not use them," Mthethwa said. "We hope the department intervenes and urges the importance of taking livestock to the dip tanks."

Milk Producers Organisation chairperson, Luke Gibbs, said that training, the land care programme, and foot-and-mouth disease (FMD) stood out for the dairy sector in the MEC's budget.

"When it comes to training, I would like to encourage that it goes hand in hand with the land care program. We use commercial dairy farmers to upskill our young people. So that when they leave our commercial dairy farmers, they can go into rehabilitated land and start dairy farming," Gibbs said.

"I think it's important that if we look at foot-

and-mouth, it's been a disaster. And it's even more of a disaster for the dairy industry, because when it comes to animal welfare, dairy cows are at risk of lesions on their udders and then actually suffer if they get foot and mouth. If we can look at proactively protecting the national dairy herd before it gets the virus."

Gibbs added that KZN could look at securing its vaccine and all production thereafter

Addressing some issues, kaMadlopha-Mthethwa said the water licence issue has disturbed many farmers.

She also said the department was aware of the issue of economic non-viability.

"We need to have a farmers' indaba, where I think I need to invite the national minister, national DG, so that we come and say these are our problems, especially with the FMD and with the issue of the tax that is imposed by the US," kaMadlopha-Mthethwa said.

The MEC said she understood the money given to farmers was insufficient. She has spoken to Premier Thamsanqa Ntuli, alerting him to the high demand because of FMD.

On the matter of dipping tanks, kaMadlopha-Mthethwa said there are 77 dipping tanks within the FMD area. She said that since becoming MEC, she has built over 45 water tanks. However, they will build more.

"Because they (national) were ordering medication from Botswana, they have stated that we are now going to have one factory within the country, and it will take some time due to the necessary research and processes involved," kaMadlopha-Mthethwa said about vaccines..

"Commercial farmers have said that if we can get medication, they are willing to vaccinate so they can protect before it starts."

kaMadlopha-Mthethwa also pleaded that agriculture must be taken as a business. She urged farmers to register their businesses because the department is a business. - IOL

South African Heroines Awards Honour Women



From left: Puleng Pelembe Chairperson of South African Heroines Awards Board, Maria Moroka Heroine in Entertainment Award 2024 recipient, Carol M Mosiamo Founder and President of South African Heroines Awards. Picture: Supplied

By: Matshidiso Selebeleng

The South African Heroines Awards will host its 14th annual business awards. The event will take place at Mittah Sperepere Convention Centre, Kimberly tomorrow.

These awards are to honor and celebrate women from all walks of life and professional spheres in the country. They include categories such as politics, security, tourism, and many more. The South African Heroines Awards were established in 2012 by Carol Mosiamo.

This year's ceremony is hosted in partnership with the Mme Re Ka Thusa Trust which is a sign of a powerful celebration of trailblazers who continue to make significant strides within their communities and across the nation.

This year's nomination list includes influential individuals like the Deputy Secretary-General of the ANC, Nomvula Mokonyane, and renowned entrepreneur and philanthropist Shawn "MaMkhize" Mkhize among others.

"This is a celebration of unsung heroes who are shaping South Africa through their dedication and impact. Even though it was initially to celebrate women, the platform has evolved to also recognize men who

actively contribute to the advancement of women and champion gender equity in meaningful ways," said Nkosazana Mazibuko, the newly appointed Chief Operating Officer of South African Heroines Awards.

She further added that the foundation remains a beacon of empowerment, legacy, and recognition, ensuring that those who give so much to others are finally given their moment to shine.

32-year-old Keotshepile Jonathan who is the founder of a transportation company called Jonoago Group in Kuruman Northern Cape. She's been in this male-dominated industry for 6 years now. She started with a Polo Vivo and now has a fleet of taxis and 17 employees. She is a nominee for the 2025 Heroine in Transport and Logistics Award.

"It takes a lot of courage and boldness to make things happen in this industry, but being consistent and knowing what you want is the cherry on top. Women are winning in any field of business. I mean we birthed men, what is there to be difficult to handle? You just have to be a go-getter and never undermine opportunities of the development programs that are there for entrepreneurs," said Keotshepile.

She added that winning this award would be a great mark for her business and the goals they still want to achieve as a business.

Public Pressure Stirs up the Courts



By: Abigail Visagie

In today’s hyper-connected world, where news spreads at lightning speed and social media fuels instant reactions and public outcry, activists flood courtrooms with pamphlets demanding justice, blurring the line between fairness for victims and the accused.

As rallies turn into courtroom demonstrations, while social media hashtags evolve into public verdicts, the judicial process faces unprecedented scrutiny. Judges and juries must now navigate not only legal arguments but also the weight of public opinion amplified online.

While many see this activism as a vital force for accountability, others warn that it risks undermining the impartiality of the courts and the presumption of innocence until proven guilty.

In 2023, it was nearly impossible not to know the names of Lerato Masiu, Lesego Mamello Motaung, and Machaka Radebe. They stirred national outrage and filled timelines and news headlines alike.

Marked by mystery, fear, and untimely tragedy, their cases gripped the nation, striking deep at the heart of communities and fuelling a wave of public pressure that may have complicated judicial proceedings.

Though they once dominated public discourse, these cases now sit in uneasy silence, unresolved and haunting. They remain lodged in the public memory, raising troubling questions about accountability, transparency, and whether the justice system is capable of delivering closure to families, friends, and a nation still watching.

Motaung, who was 22 years old at the time, left her home in Uitsig on 30 October 2023 to go to work - but never made it. Her aunt reported her missing, and to this day, both Motaung and her alleged abductors remain unaccounted for.

Similarly, Masiu’s whereabouts remain unknown after she was reported missing in November 2023. It is alleged that she was abducted by an unidentified man disguised as a police officer, who claimed to be investigating a Facebook-related matter involving her. In a chilling turn of events, he took Masiu from her home—right in front of her mother—and vanished.

The case of 16-year-old Radebe further fuelled public outrage. She was allegedly kidnapped from her home in Bloemfontein in December of the same year. Just two days later, her body was discovered in Phase 9 with multiple stab wounds.

In a blog post published in June 2025 under the headline Inside South Africa’s Criminal Justice System: Who Gets Bail and Why?, Northern Cape-based law firm Engelsman Magabane noted that public outcry often erupts when individuals charged with serious crimes are granted bail.

The firm stressed, however, that courts are guided by legal principles, not public sentiment. As Judge Dennis Davis once remarked: “Justice cannot be served by sacrificing constitutional rights on the altar of public outrage.” It further said that the constitution demands fairness for both the accused and the victims.

The legal system must remain objective, ensuring that each case is judged on its merits, not emotions.

Yet, gender-based violence (GBV) activists argue that public pressure and demonstrations are crucial tools for drawing attention to stalled investigations and pushing authorities to act with urgency.

Frustrated by recurring delays and what many see as systemic failure, Buang Basadi founder and former Free State Premier, Sefora Ntombela, has called for a national conversation on reinstating the death penalty. “When you brutally kill our daughters, we die with them,” Ntombela told Journal News this week.

“The solution is to open up the discussion about the death penalty. Families have faced delayed investigations, poor communication, lost evidence, and in some cases, complete indifference. Our presence in courtrooms sends a clear message that communities are watching. It may not always guarantee justice, but it ensures these cases don’t disappear into silence,” she added.

Buang Basadi has long supported families affected by violence, including the widely publicised case of 19-year-old Kamogelo Baukudi, whom Ntombela described as “particularly tragic and complex.”

Baukudi became the latest victim in a series of abductions in the Free State. He was allegedly kidnapped by two men impersonating police officers in Fichardt Park, Bloemfontein, and held captive for more than 20 days. He was eventually found alive in Wepener, roughly 110 km outside Bloemfontein, and reunited with his family.

National Prosecuting Authority (NPA) spokesperson Mojalefa Senokoatsone confirmed that the Baukudi case is active and ongoing, and has not been influenced by public opinion.

“The NPA opposed bail during court proceedings; however, the court exercised its discretion and granted it. The matter continues unhindered in court. The NPA remains committed to prosecuting based on available evidence, in line with the principle of acting without fear, favour, or prejudice.”

Commenting on public perceptions of justice, Nthabiseng Dubazana, attorney and director of Dubazana Attorneys Incorporated, said many suspects are “convicted in the court of public opinion” before receiving a fair trial.

“The public doesn’t control how cases are handled,” she explained. “But many suspects are judged guilty long before their day in court. Complicating matters, our SAPS personnel often lack the training and tools needed to uncover new evidence. Some cases grow cold, leaving detectives demotivated. That leads communities to believe public attention is compromising justice, when in fact, it is systemic challenges within law enforcement,” added Dubazana.

Meanwhile, SAPS spokesperson Captain Loraine Earle confirmed to Journal News that there are no significant new developments in the investigations into the disappearances of Masiu and Motaung. However, she said that all efforts to trace them are ongoing.

Captain Earle also urged the public to refrain from spreading conspiracy theories and unverified claims, warning that such actions complicate investigations and delay progress. “Our investigations are guided by facts, evidence, and due process,” she said.

NPA Weaponized to Attack Black Politicians

By: Refilwe Mochaoiri

In the shadow of South Africa’s justice system, a narrative has unfolded leaving many to question the true intentions of the National Prosecuting Authority (NPA).

For some, the NPA’s string of failed high-profile cases which seemingly target particular individuals but ultimately get bungled by the institution itself tell a tale of politicized persecution. Black politicians are openly targeted and become subjects of litigatory abuse, humiliation and also lose their jobs - only to be acquitted later or have their cases thrown out due to a questionable lack of evidence.

Political analyst Professor Siphso Seepo, in an interview with Journal News, said these alleged orchestrated campaigns by the NPA often results in humiliation and damaged reputations.

‘A WITCH HUNT’

Some of the affected politicians amongst many others who find themselves under fire with the NPA include former Minister of Sports Arts and Culture, Zizi Kodwa, whose case was thrown out by Advocate Andrew Chauke, a director of prosecuting authority in Johannesburg.

Kodwa was accused of receiving direct payments and luxury accommodation worth R1.7 million during his time as the ANC spokesperson between 2015 and 2016.

Kodwa’s lawyer Zola Majavu called this action against Kodwa a ‘Witch Hunt’ saying that the State has a ‘palpably weak’ case.

Former Deputy Chairperson of ANC in KwaZulu-Natal Mike Mabuyakhu-lu’s case was acquitted after a long trial where he was accused of money laundering, theft, and corruption in connection with a R28 million payment to suppliers for a music festival that did not take place.

According to Mabuyakhu, the State failed to provide sufficient evidence against him and the other accused, he too believes that there is a ‘witch hunt’ against him.

Another politician who has been in the dock is former speaker of parliament, Nosiviwe Maphisa-Ngcakula. She has been on trial for over a year now.

Maphisa-Ngcakula is charged with corruption and money laundering. She is accused of receiving R2.5 million in bribes during her tenure as the Defence Minister from a defence contractor.

Her home was raided amid these corruption charges and the case has been in court for more than a year now.

Leader of the Economic Freedom Fighters Julius Malema also finds himself in a similar position, and has this week written a letter to President Cyril Ramaphosa to establish a Commission of Inquiry into the NPA in terms of Section 84 (2)f of the Constitution which grants the president the power to appoint commissions of inquiry.



Malema is also in the NPA’s shadow as he was prosecuted for assault and unlawful possession of a firearm in the Eastern Cape in 2019.

AGENDA TO HUMILIATE BLACK PROFESSIONALS

Seepo says this tells a tale that the NPA might have a hidden agenda.

He asserts that the NPA needs to properly investigate their cases,

“Careers are destroyed and reputations are tarnished.

“After reading a significant part of the State Capture Commission Part IV, I have concluded that Chief Justice Raymond Zondo has set up the NPA to fail.

“The NPA is doing South Africans a big disservice.

“You cannot make such allegations, humiliate them in public, raid their homes, put them in the media for the world to see, bring them to court, make them lose their jobs and their integrity, investigate them for more than five years only for the case to be thrown out because of lack of evidence.

“What we see here, is a hate crime”, said Seepo.

THE FACE OF FAILURE

NPA head Advocate Shamila Batohi has been in the spotlight and under fire since she took office in 2018. She disagrees with the sentiment that the NPA is bungling cases.

When Batohi took office, she pledged to restore integrity and effectiveness to the institution. The public perception of the NPA “pains” her, she claims.

Speaking to Journal News, NPA spokesperson in the Free State Mojalefa Senokotsoane said the NPA operates in line with the Constitution, the Criminal Procedure Act, and most importantly the National Prosecuting Act which mandates the institution to institute and conduct criminal prosecutions on behalf of the State.

“It is important to clarify that the NPA is not an investigative body and does not conduct investigations, rather it guides investigations that are carried out by designated law enforcement agencies such as the South African Police Services, Hawks, and other relevant authorities, he said.

Senokotsoane added that the primary responsibility is to assess and to prosecute cases based on the evidence contained in an official police docket and that a prosecution will proceed only when the available evidence establishes a prima facie case and the state is confident that the matter can be proven beyond reasonable doubt in a court of law.

Underworld Runs Government Procurement

By: Matshidiso Selebeleng

Vusumuzi “Cat” Matlala, the flamboyant Pretoria-based businessman known as the city’s “tender king,” has emerged as the central figure in a sprawling procurement scandal that has exposed deep-rooted collusion between criminal syndicates and the state.

Recent revelations about his dealings with government officials have sparked allegations that a powerful underworld cartel has captured parts of the state and key political figures.

Matlala is currently being held at Kgosi Mampuru Maximum Security Prison on serious charges, including attempted murder, conspiracy to commit murder, and money laundering.

Once celebrated for securing multimillion-rand government tenders through his health and security companies, his empire began to unravel in 2024 when his firm, Medicare24, was controversially awarded a R360 million contract by the South African Police Service.

The tender was later revoked by National Commissioner Fannie Masemola following allegations of fraud and irregularities.

His name has since been linked to a broader criminal syndicate reportedly involving politicians, police officers, and prosecutors—allegedly operating under the influence of a transnational drug



cartel. Matlala is also tied to a string of high-profile assassinations, including that of DJ Sumboddy (Oupa Sefoka), whistleblower Babita Deokaran, and the attempted murder of his ex-girlfriend, actress Tebogo Thobejane, and her friend.

Investigators allege that Matlala orchestrated Deokaran’s murder after she flagged irregularities

linked to his companies in the Tembisa Hospital tender files. It is further claimed that the hospital was later set on fire to destroy key evidence of procurement fraud. In a recent breakthrough, police arrested suspects in the 2022 killings of DJ Sumboddy and his bodyguard, including prominent businessman Katiso Molefe, a figure reportedly tied to several other underworld assassinations.

The firearm used in DJ Sumboddy’s murder was also linked to the killing of Armand Swart—an alleged case of mistaken identity involving a whistleblower who had exposed a 4,500% procurement fraud at Transnet.

Security strategist and former Interpol Ambassador Mahlomola Mashaile explained how these criminal networks operate: “They use either money or fear to control access to tenders. Often, they’ll approach an unsuspecting insider for information and then offer a large payout to ensure continued cooperation.”

Mashaile warned that individuals who resist the syndicates or have no affiliation with their operations often become targets. While investigations continue, it is unlikely that the R50 million already paid to Matlala from the SAPS contract will be recovered.

His case underscores how entrenched corruption has allowed the underworld to turn public procurement into a thriving criminal enterprise.

Society Suffers as Fake Booze Trade Thrives

By: Lerato Mutlanyana

Ever since the huge fake alcohol crime bust carried out by the Free State South African Police Service (SAPS) and the Department of Economic, Small Business, tourism and Environmental Affairs (DESTE) in East End Business Park in Bloemfontein in March 2023, many thought this progressive development would reduce or slow down the illegal alcohol trade market.

Two years down the line, this market continues to thrive relentlessly, leaving communities still widely exposed to the extreme dangers of consuming poisonous, and possibly deadly, alcoholic beverages.

The Bloemfontein bust saw large volumes of fake alcohol - estimated to be worth a around R1 million - being confiscated, with a Chinese national being apprehended and charged with contravening the Con-

sumer Protection Act, Counterfeit Goods Act as well as non-compliance with the Business Act.

Despite making major headlines all over and with erstwhile DESTE MEC, Thabo Meeko, warning perpetrators that their continued production and sale of illegal alcoholic would lead to dire consequences, the trade persists regardless.

The consumption of counterfeit alcoholic beverages affects society on a very large scale.

New research by the Drinks Federation of South Africa (DF-SA) on the illicit alcohol market shows that the industry has grown by 55% since 2017, with the fake alcohol market said to be valued at R25.1 billion in 2024. These figures continue to rise, according to DF-SA.

A national consumer survey with a total of 707 respondents countrywide was also conducted, highlighting rapidly growing public concern in this regard. Ac-



According to the survey 80% of respondents are worried about the health risks of drinking unregulated fake alcohol; 49% of them claim to personally know someone who has been harmed by it, while 29% reported that

they knew someone who has died from consuming fake beverages.

This has prompted law enforcement authorities to upscale their effort in trying to clamp down on this trade.

“We have observed a steady increase in public awareness and reporting of counterfeit and illicit goods, including alcohol. Through intensified operations such as Operation SHANELA II, we’ve seen improved community cooperation and more targeted interventions, leading to successful confiscations,” said Free State SAPS Captain Loraine Earle.

“SAPS has a dedicated National Counterfeit Goods Unit, which leads efforts to combat the illicit trade in counterfeit and contraband items. At Provincial level, police officers collaborate regularly with stakeholders during daily operations to tackle these crimes,” she added.

According to Earle, the SAPS noted that these operations are a joint effort with other regulatory boards, such as the Liquor Board.

“We maintain a strong working relationship with the Free State Liquor Authority. Joint operations are conducted regularly to inspect licensed premises and identify non-compliant outlets, particularly those dealing in unregulated or counterfeit alcohol.

A dedicated priority committee also monitors such activities.

These collaborative efforts are vital in disrupting illegal supply networks.

“We continue to encourage consumers to purchase alcohol only from licensed vendors and remain alert to unlabeled or unusually cheap products. The fight against illicit trade remains a shared responsibility, and public support is essential to its success,” she concluded.

Opinion

Dr Zweli Mkhize

Chairperson of the Portfolio Committee on Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs



FS Municipal Failures Demand a New Era of Accountability

From deep-rooted systemic collapse to missing billions, sewage spills, illegal tenders and vacant posts in Free State municipalities. Twenty-three municipalities came under scrutiny during a joint oversight visit last week to account for these failings, marking the beginning of a new era of intergovernmental accountability. In this article, Dr Zweli Mkhize outlines the joint oversight delegation’s observations during the oversight visit and lists some urgent reforms that could turn the crisis into a course correction.

South Africa’s municipalities are intended to be the frontlines of public service delivery – the engine rooms of local development and daily wellbeing. Yet, in many parts of the country, they have become sites of dysfunction, decay and despair. Nowhere has this been more evident than in the Free State, where systemic collapse has made basic services a privilege rather than a right. But this month, Parliament and the Free State Provincial Legislature took a bold step to draw a line in the sand.

In an unprecedented show of intergovernmental resolve, three parliamentary committees: the Portfolio Committee on Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (COGTA), the Standing Committee on Public Accounts (SCOPA) and the Standing Committee on the Auditor-General, led by me as Chairperson of the COGTA committee, embarked on a joint oversight mission to the province where our counterparts in the Free State Legislature joined us. Twenty-three municipalities were called to account. The scale of failure they revealed was staggering, but so too was the clarity with which the delegation demanded reform and consequences.

A Sobering Reality

The facts are damning. Municipalities have racked up billions in unpaid debt. One municipality owes over R8 billion to a water board. Others have failed to pay pension contributions deducted from workers’ salaries, and some paid millions in often unauthorised overtime, while service delivery has all but collapsed. Roads are impassable in some areas, water systems are dysfunctional and waste services are in disarray. In some instances, entire towns are grappling with sewage spills, and electricity is available for only a few hours each day.

One by one, the municipalities came to account as committee members’ interrogation exposed the rot beneath the surface: litigation driven by unpaid service providers, unauthorised financial commitments, irregular tenders and decades-long impunity. In Maluti-a-Phofung Local Municipality, a default judgement for a R27 million debt was granted based on a fraudulent acknowledgement of debt, signed by an acting municipal manager with family



A photo depicting the poor service delivery in Free State municipalities Picture: Baagedi Sethora

ties to the service provider. That manager remains employed. In the same municipality, despite a R2.2 billion allocation from the Department of Water and Sanitation, no infrastructure had been laid. Chronic outages, unpaid Eskom bills and a water distribution system so broken that consumers had turned to boreholes painted a picture of systemic collapse.

In Mangaung, the dysfunction is so entrenched that, despite national intervention since 2022, it has failed to implement more than a quarter of its financial recovery plan. We found a 61 per cent vacancy rate coupled with R2.5 billion in personnel costs, and an inability to link overtime to actual work done. Pit latrines, decaying roads and non-functional water meters added to the grim picture. Meanwhile, the Auditor-General has flagged its inability to account for billions in conditional grant funding.

These are not isolated crises. They are a culmination of years of neglect, political interference and administrative erosion.

Collapse from Within

Two narratives emerged from the oversight – the first, of municipalities hamstrung by structural disadvantage – rural towns with low revenue bases, high unemployment and little capacity to attract skilled staff. These municipalities are caught in a vicious cycle of underdevelopment, reliant almost entirely on national transfers.

The second, more damning narrative is that of municipalities with viable revenue streams – those capable of sustainable governance – that are instead hamstrung by internal sabotage. Bloated staff complements, politically connected appointments, non-functional audit committees, and a lack of consequence management have eroded public trust

and institutional stability. As I summarised during the visit, “It is a kind of self-inflicted injury.” Indeed, this is not failure due to resource scarcity alone, but also due to compromised leadership, administrative negligence and a culture of impunity.

EPWP Abuse: A Litmus Test for Ethical Governance

The case of Matjhabeng Local Municipality provides a powerful case study of what is broken – and what is required to fix it. Following allegations that councillors were unlawfully drawing stipends under the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP), the Minister of Public Works and Infrastructure, Mr Dean MacPherson, suspended the municipality’s EPWP funding. While we welcome decisive intervention, this move risks punishing the innocent along with the guilty. Hundreds of impoverished EPWP workers, many earning just R2 600 a month, will be left in limbo.

The committee supports a thorough investigation, but accountability must not come at the expense of the vulnerable. “We cannot allow the poor to suffer for the misdeeds of a few.” Investigations must be targeted, transparent and evidence-based. This case highlights the need for rigorous oversight, as mandated by the Constitution, which protects both institutional integrity and the rights of citizens.

A New Model: Collaborative Oversight

Many have asked what makes this oversight visit different from previous attempts to address municipal dysfunction. This time around, it is a coordinated, multi-sphere approach. By bringing together MPs, MECs, the Office of the Premier, the Speaker and relevant committees of the provincial legislatures, it breaks down the siloed approach that has

allowed accountability to slip through the cracks of intergovernmental relations. It sends a strong message: the separation of powers is not an excuse for the separation of responsibility.

In addition, municipalities will now be required to submit quarterly progress reports, aligned explicitly with the Auditor-General’s recommendations. Failure to act will trigger disciplinary or even criminal proceedings. Moreover, a consolidated oversight report will be tabled in Parliament to ensure transparency, follow-through and public scrutiny.

This visit is not the end – it is the beginning of a new cycle of monitoring with North West as our next stop. Within six months, municipalities will be re-evaluated to check progress. We hope that when the Auditor-General next visits the province, there will be measurable progress.

The Way Forward

In addressing these failures, we have proposed 10 interlinked interventions. First, audit oversight structures must be rebuilt. Every municipality must have a functioning municipal public accounts committee (MPAC), an audit committee and a disciplinary board. MECs must ensure that all disclaimers, unfunded budgets and missed deadlines for submitting financial reports to the AG are eliminated.

Second, all cases of unauthorised, irregular, fruitless and wasteful expenditure must be investigated and acted upon, as this was one of the failings across municipalities. Third, consequence management must be institutionalised, and wrongdoing must carry penalties. Fourth, municipalities need robust financial systems and timely reporting mechanisms. Fifth, acting appointments must cease, with timelines for filling permanent posts. Sixth, critical vacancies in finance, audit and infrastructure must be filled. Seventh, political interference must be stopped, while stability and professionalism must be enforced. Eighth, financially distressed municipalities need tailored, intensive support. Ninth, corruption must be tackled decisively through internal and criminal processes. Finally, audit readiness must be embedded in daily governance, not as an emergency measure but as standard practice.

These 10 pillars are not suggestions – they are imperatives. Oversight must be followed by enforcement. We must institutionalise quarterly reporting, track progress and keep Parliament and the public informed.

Oversight, in its truest form, is a commitment to the Constitution. We do not perform it to find fault, but to restore trust. The people of the Free State, and South Africa as a whole, deserve municipalities that are ethical, capable and people-centred. As public representatives, we must take collective responsibility and ensure nothing less.

A culture of corruption: Edwin Sodi vs Tebogo Malaka scandals



Refilwe Mochoari
Editor In Chief

Hi everyone my name is Refilwe Mochoari, lets talk about the Edwin Sodi luxury party and Tebogo Malakas R60 000 bribery scandal.

Recent developments of high profile people in our country have left many of us shocked and outraged, and as investigations unfold, questions arise.

A photo from Sodi’s lavish 50th birthday soiree that took place on 24 September 2023 in his R85 million Braynton mansion has added complexity to an already existing web of shocking discoveries.

This party that many people envied when its content was making rounds on social media, was actually a gathering of criminals and elite politicians who are allegedly running an underworld business.

Sodi’s lavish lifestyle and associations with individuals involved in criminal activities is a stark reminder of the rot that has set in among some of our country’s elite.

Sodi is currently on trial for corruption linked to a R255 million asbestos tender in the Free State...

His guests, Vusimusi “Cat” Matlala is currently in prison for the attempted murder of his influencer ex-girlfriend Tebogo Thobejane. Matlala also secured a R360 million police health tender in June last year.

Matlala’s wife Tsakani who also attended the lavish birthday bash alongside his husband is also in prison.

Another guest attending Sodi’s party is Katiso “KT” Molefe, a businessman and murder accused who is also currently in jail for the assassination of Oupa Sefoka famously known as DJ Sumbody.

Sodi when talking about his lavish celebration said the party was attended by his close friends.

These amongst others include political advisor, Keith Khoza, MEC for Finance and Economic Development in Gauteng, Pule Mabe the former spokesperson of ANC and former ANC Provincial secretary in Gauteng, TK Nciza.

Sodi also said that one of the guests who was supposed to be at his party is Deputy President of South Africa Paul Mashatile.

Sodi’s controversy raise questions about accountability among those in positions of power.

As If crime and murder is not enough in South Africa, this week we now have to deal with the Independent Development Trust CEO Tebogo Malaka who made one of the most foolish moves anyone can ever do.

Malaka’s attempted bribe of R60 000 to suppress a story highlights the desperation and entitlement that can come with positions of power.

First of all, what was she thinking? Second of all, why would she bribe a journalist? Thirdly why was she so desperate for the story to disappear?

Why would she risk her career like that?

How desperate was she, not to be exposed like that?

In the video that has now gone viral, she talks about her parents, and she talks about her children.

You see, we cannot condone corruption, and anybody who is found to be corrupt must be held accountable.

Here is my observation.
What if she was lured into the bribery direction?
What if bribery was not her intention?

She was worried about her parents and her children. And as a daughter and a mother myself, I understand the lengths we go through to protect the feelings of our loved ones, so in my view she was vulnerable too.

And I stand by my point to say, we do not know what happened behind the scenes and what the conversations were like prior to the R60 000 restaurant scene.

What if, the journalist initiated the bribe just to get her caught on camera? He was prepared to take footage. His plan was well orchestrated. She was actually the story.

I am interested to know what the law says about this should she sue.

So much of the law has been violated, in order for this explosive story to be published.

Recording a person without their consent is against the law according to the Protection of Personal Information Act.

Secretly recording a private conversation, using devices to intercept communication, sharing or distributing.

I think that the journalist really acted unethically to get the story and Malaka actually has a case.

But lets see how this is going to unfold.

By examining these two scenarios through the lens of corruption and accountability, we can gain a deeper understanding of the challenges we face as a society and the steps we need to take to address them.

We need to create an environment where those in positions of power are held to account for their actions, and where corruption is not tolerated or enabled. Only then can we build a society that is truly just and equitable for all.

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. Writte to: editor@journalnews.co.za

The Art Of Unlearning



Many of us strive for growth. This comes through pushing yourself, learning, and experience. But, many aren’t as intentional with the process of unlearning out-of-date and ineffective things. If we aren’t unlearning, we’re not adapting effectively. The only question is, how do we unlearn?

We can’t just start unlearning things. First, we need to identify what is out of date and no longer a useful or effective method, process, position, etc. The only way we can do this is if we take a step back and look at what’s working and what’s not working in our organization and our leadership. We have to look closely at what processes are no longer aiding our organization and its mission. Once we know what doesn’t work, then we can unlearn.

This shouldn’t be a mission you undergo alone. Get your team to sit down together and voice their experiences – they most likely have a unique insight into the processes and

programs you’re discussing and can help you and your team come to a conclusion. Involve your team and make sure they are heard. This is key to an effective analysis and successfully unlearning the useless information your organization is still holding onto.

In conclusion, while it is paramount each of us pursues learning over each of our lifetimes, we also must be intentional to unlearn what is no longer necessary. Take time to analyze your systems, structures, and processes. Change what needs to be changed – eliminate what is no longer of use to your organization’s mission and goal. We must be deliberate to unlearn!

Change what needs to be changed

Not Yet Uhuru A Concerned Journalist and Parent in the NW

I am deeply triggered by a recent post from the MEC for Education in our province. As journalist based in the North West, and more importantly as a parent, I feel compelled to raise a difficult but necessary issue: the state of transformation in our education system or rather, the lack of it. It is deeply concerning that, even after 31 years of democracy, we still have public schools that insist on using Afrikaans as a medium of instruction not for inclusion, but seemingly as a tool to exclude black learners from accessing quality education.

These are often the very schools that perform well academically, yet their success is built on historical privilege, exclusionary policies, and infrastructure designed to favour a select few.

In many areas of our province, if you want your child to receive a good education, you are left with two painful choices: pay for expensive private schooling, or try to squeeze into Afrikaans-medium schools that do not reflect the demographics of our communities. Why is this still acceptable?

This is not transformation. This is inequality with a new name. What is even more troubling is that in many of these schools, School Governing Bodies

(SGBs) remain untransformed, often represented entirely by white members, with little to no voice for black parents and communities.

How is this possible in a democratic South Africa? As journalists and citizens, we cannot stay silent while such systems continue to disadvantage the black child.

Who is holding SGBs accountable?

We cannot normalize the idea that “good education” comes with a high price tag, or that it’s reserved for certain language or race groups. I would like to ask: What is the North West Provincial Government doing to confront this long-standing, deep-rooted issue? What are the active, measurable programs in place to dismantle this systemic inequality?

Who is holding SGBs accountable to reflect the diversity of their communities?

And most importantly, who enforces the policies that were meant to protect and empower the black child?

This is not an attack. This is a call for leadership, policy enforcement, and true transformation.

Because right now, as a concerned citizen and a parent to teenagers in this province, I don’t see meaningful change. Not Yet Uhuru. **Written By: Boikanyo Malepe**

Business

Markets and Indicators			
Rand/Dollar	17.70	0.15%	▲
Rand/Pound	23.78	0.04%	▲
Rand/Euro	20.65	0.13%	▲
Platinum	1 156.00	0.13%	▲
Brent Crude	66.34	0.06%	▲
Gold	3 392.00	-0.06%	▼
Etherium	69 339,34	0,06%	▲
Bitcoin	2 081 489,47	0,02%	▲

Businesses are sick of Eskom

Business Leadership South Africa (BLSA) and Business Unity South Africa (BUSA) have urged the government to step in and stop Eskom from trying to entrench its monopoly in the country.

The groups issued an open call for the government to protect the national energy reform programme and force Eskom to drop legal challenges against Nersa's issuing of electricity trading licences.

Eskom launched legal challenges against the national energy regulator after it granted five trading licences to entities that would bring much-needed competition to the market.

The national utility launched the challenges on the grounds that the licences infringe on its licence rights, and go against Nersa's conditions disallowing more than one licensee to provide electricity in the same area.

Eskom also flagged numerous other concerns with the licences, including that it would encourage companies to "cherry pick" high-value customers, and work against the national utility's pricing structures.

Importantly, the competition in the market would disadvantage Eskom, potentially turning its finances and cross-subsidy structures on its head.

However, industry experts and now business groups have called Eskom out for litigating to protect its monopoly, with the added result of undermining the national energy reform programme that is supposed to help the country achieve energy security.

"These actions create uncertainty and send a negative signal to investors, delay critical energy projects, and ultimately may prolong the devastating economic and social impact of load shedding," the business groups said.

The business lobbies said that the government's policy position is to unbundle Eskom, encourage private sector investment in generation and transmission, and to create a competitive market to solve the energy crisis.

Eskom's actions directly contradict this and undermine all these objectives, they said.

"By legally challenging Nersa's awarding of trading licenses, Eskom is actively working to protect its historical monopoly at the direct expense of a stable national power supply," they said.



"Eskom cannot be both the primary cause of our energy crisis and the gatekeeper of its solution."

Eskom has repeatedly denied that it is acting in an anti-competitive manner with its court action.

Before launching the court action against the licences in October 2024, Eskom said that is committed to accelerating the reform of the rules to enable a competitive energy market.

However, it, like all other participants in the electricity industry, operates on established rules and "subscribes to a rule-based transition".

It said that its adherence to the rules has been "misinterpreted as anti-competitive behaviour".

"Eskom will collaborate with various stakeholders to ensure that a competitive market is developed through a consultative legal framework," it said at the time.

The business lobbies said that the government urgently needs to step in and put an end to Eskom's approach.

BLSA and BUSA are urging the Minister of Electricity and Energy to engage Eskom's board and relevant government entities to secure:

- An immediate cessation of all lawsuits and legal disputes initiated by Eskom against Nersa.
- A public commitment from Eskom to work collaboratively with all stakeholders to fast-track the integration of new generation capacity onto the national grid, in parallel with expanding the grid.

Clear directives from the appropriate government authorities instructing Eskom to cease its anti-competitive and discriminatory behaviour and fully support the liberalisation of the energy sector.

BLSA chief executive Busi Mavuso, who previously served on the Eskom board, said that all South Africans are suffering due to business closures, job losses, rising costs and a stagnating economy.

Immense damage was done and continues to be done by limited power supply, and the impact of load shedding and load rotation.

Economists have repeatedly warned that South Africa's stagnant growth trajectory will only continue as long as the national power grid cannot sustain more businesses and industries.

Energy experts have also warned that, without alternatives and new capacity, the national grid will continue to operate under severe strain, threatening the return of load shedding.

"For Eskom to spend public money on litigation designed to frustrate the very reforms government is championing, and to block the investment that can help secure cheaper and more secure energy is illogical and completely untenable," Mavuso said.

"We need more power on the grid, now. The era of a single, state-run monopoly controlling our country's economic destiny is over. To power our future, we must empower progress and encourage investment and job creation, not protect the past." - BusinessTech

ANC dares the United States to sanction it



The ANC says the government will not bow to demands from Donald Trump's administration to change its policies even if that means its leaders are subjected to US sanctions.

American lawmakers are considering a bill that seeks a review of Washington's bilateral relations with Pretoria because of its foreign-policy stance.

Proposed by Texas Republican Congressman Ronny Jackson in April, the draft legislation states that South Africa has abandoned its relationship with the US while aligning itself with China, Russia, Iran and "terrorist organizations," and raises the prospect of unidentified "corrupt officials" being censured.

America is meanwhile set to impose 30% tariffs on imports from South Africa from Thursday, the highest duty charged on goods from any sub-Saharan African nation, part of a shakeup of its relationship with its trading partners.

The Trump administration has made a raft of demands, including that South Africa abandon laws that were put in place after apartheid ended in 1994 and are aimed at addressing persisting racial inequality, said Fikile Mbalula, the secretary-general of the African National Congress.

The party governed the country outright for three decades before losing its parliamentary majority in last year's elections, and it subsequently entered into an alliance with nine rivals to retain power.

"They want us to do away with certain policies. It is not going to be possible," Mbalula told reporters in Johannesburg on Wednesday.

"If it means we are going to suffer through sanctions as leaders of the ANC, let it be. We will never back imperialists to subvert our democracy, to subvert our sovereignty."

"If they want to bring sanctions on us, let them bring them," he said.

Relations between South Africa and the US have been fraught since Trump returned to the White House in January. He has falsely accused the African nation's government of presiding over a genocide of White farmers, and criticized its international allegiances.

The new tariffs will place 30,000 jobs at risk in South Africa, according to the trade department, exacerbating one of the world's worst unemployment crises. The auto and agricultural sectors will be hardest hit, with the US a major export market for both industries.

While the tariffs will negatively affect South Africa's economy, making any concessions that undermined the national interest wasn't an option, Mbalula said. "The Trump administration is asking us to abandon the essence of who we are and that is not going to be possible," he said.

"If we are punished for advancing and defending South Africa, that should be the case."

The case for MVNO growth in SA

The growth of mobile virtual network operators (MVNOs) in SA is the focus of this edition of Business Day Spotlight.

Host Mudiwa Gavaza is joined by Craig Palmer, CEO of Vas-X, a mobile virtual network enabler platform, who says MVNOs hold the key to increasing competition and bridging the connectivity gap for underserved communities.

MVNOs are usually businesses not in the telecom

sector. They include FNB, Standard Bank Mobile and Pick n Pay, who lease network infrastructure from mobile operators to sell data and voice services to their customers. Capitec, Old Mutual and FNB use Cell C's network for their services.

SA's MVNO market is expected to reach 10-million customers and has become more crowded after a requirement that mobile network operators host at least three MVNOs as part of their spectrum licence conditions from 2022.

Globally, the MVNO market was valued at more than \$78bn in 2023, and is expected to reach almost \$140bn by 2030.

To compete with traditional operators, Palmer says MVNOs need a billing and customer relationship management software to handle subscribers, invoicing, and provide a 360-degree customer view, across multiple services. BusinessDay

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GET TO KNOW YOUR DJ
Headphones On, Minds
Blown With Misty Deep



By: Lerato Mutlanyane

Drop the beat and grab a seat! Your favourite fierce female DJ, Misty Deep, is about to set the decks on fire with the freshest deep house tracks, electrifying sets, and insider tips to keep the party alive and pumping everywhere she shows up.

Mpho “Misty Deep” Mogapi, born and raised in the heart of Bloemfontein, is no stranger to the city’s dance floors. If you’ve ever partied in the city’s groove scene, chances are you’ve felt the seismic energy she brings to the decks.

Misty has been spinning the scene for over a decade, having started as a resident DJ at The Thoughts Lounge.

“My love for deep house music sparked my passion for deejaying,” she shares.

Misty Deep’s journey has been shaped by the mentorship of prominent industry veterans such as Show D and Vioken. She honed her craft playing at hotspots like Sechaba Lounge and Coobah, steadily rising through the ranks.

Her biggest inspiration is none other than DJ Zinhle – a powerhouse Misty deeply admires as a trailblazer for women in the industry. One of her proudest milestones was sharing a set with her idol, a moment she describes as unforgettable.

Misty Deep is also surrounded and inspired by local female jocks such as DJ Cindy and the late DJ Zile – powerful women who’ve paved the way in the male-dominated world of house music.

For Misty Deep, every beat is a heartbeat - and right now, Bloemfontein’s pulse is thumping to her rhythm.

Reality TV star
Wandi Ndlovu
out on bail after
uncle’s fatal
stabbing



Reality TV personality and social media influencer Wandi Ndlovu, 26, and her mother and sister Ntombifuthi have been released on bail after spending two weeks behind bars following the fatal stabbing of her uncle, Linda Ndlovu.

The incident occurred during an alleged heated altercation at the family home in Katlehong on a Friday night that stretched into the early hours on Saturday. According to an insider, the dispute began after Wandi’s mother confronted the uncle about playing loud music in his backroom. A physical fight allegedly ensued, during which she was injured.

Wandi, Ntombifuthi, and a younger sister said to be a minor reportedly went to confront the uncle, and one of them allegedly stabbed him. He was later found outside and died before emergency services personnel could treat him.

The family is being represented by attorney Dumisani Mabunda, known for his involvement in the “Dr” Matthew Lani case. Mabunda celebrated their release outside court on August 5. Police have not yet released a formal statement, and the date for the trio’s next court appearance remains unclear.

In a social media post, Wandi wrote “God is good”, adding she would share her side of the story one day.

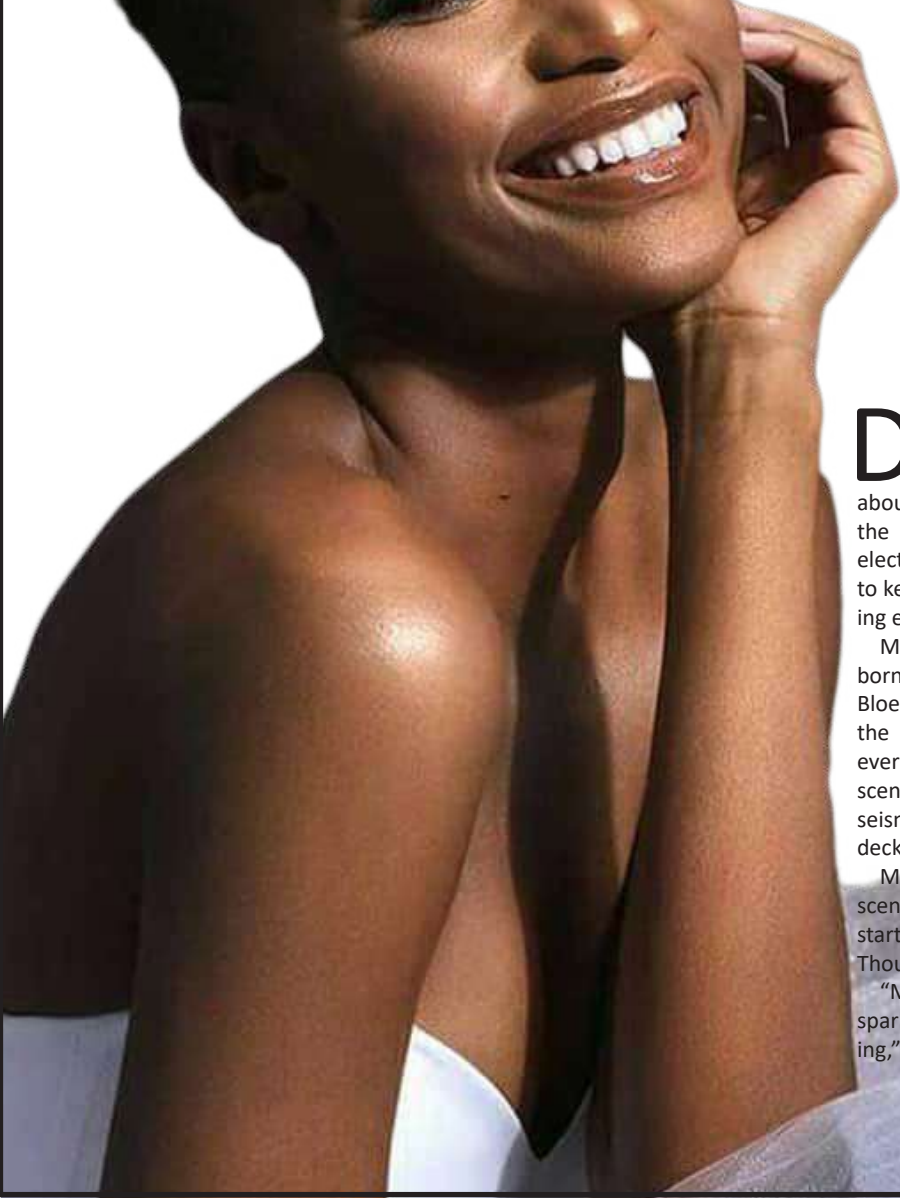
A voice note, allegedly recorded by Wandi’s aunt and circulating on social media, offers more details about the incident, claiming the uncle was stabbed three times and left outside in the cold.

“He wasn’t killed by the wounds, but because he was out in the cold,” she allegedly said.

The Katlehong community has since threatened action should the family return to the house Wandi reportedly built after returning from Nigeria, where she was working as an adult entertainer.

Linda Ndlovu is said to have been the household’s breadwinner.

FSFW Women’s
Day Event has
finally arrived



It will be the first time the beauty queen visits Bloem since her historic at the global helm

By: Abigail Visagie

Drop the beat and grab a seat! Your favourite fierce female DJ, Misty Deep, is about to set the decks on fire with the freshest deep house tracks, electrifying sets, and insider tips to keep the party alive and pumping everywhere she shows up.

Mpho “Misty Deep” Mogapi, born and raised in the heart of Bloemfontein, is no stranger to the city’s dance floors. If you’ve ever partied in the city’s groove scene, chances are you’ve felt the seismic energy she brings to the decks.

Misty has been spinning the scene for over a decade, having started as a resident DJ at The Thoughts Lounge.

“My love for deep house music sparked my passion for deejaying,” she shares.

Misty Deep’s journey has been shaped by the mentorship of prominent industry veterans such as Show D and Vioken. She honed her craft playing at hotspots like Sechaba Lounge and Coobah, steadily rising through the ranks.

Her biggest inspiration is none other than DJ Zinhle – a powerhouse Misty deeply admires as a trailblazer for women in the industry. One of her proudest milestones was sharing a set with her idol, a moment she describes as unforgettable.

Misty Deep is also surrounded and inspired by local female jocks such as DJ Cindy and the late DJ Zile – powerful women who’ve paved the way in the male-dominated world of house music.

For Misty Deep, every beat is a heartbeat - and right now, Bloem-

CMA 2025: Celebrating Provincial Talent

By: Rorisang Rampheteng

The Central Music Awards (CMA) return this year with fresh momentum and a deepened focus on honoring the creativity, dedication, and impact of local artists from across the Free State.

Now a key fixture in the provincial arts calendar, the CMA continues to spotlight emerging talent while building bridges to broader national recognition.

CMA chairperson Lehlohonolo Mokoena shared his vision for the awards and the future of the local music industry.

“Our mission is to build a music industry that is visible in both provincial and national markets,” he said.

He added: “We want to ensure that winning artists not only gain recognition but also access opportunities beyond the province.”

Over the years, the CMA has grown significantly, now receiving over a thousand applications annually from aspiring musicians. A notable milestone in recent editions has been the increasing diversity among entrants.

“In 2023/2024, we saw a rise in applications from the white community, which was a proud moment for us.

“Many of those winners have since experienced financial growth as a result of their awards,” Mokoena noted.

The awards’ most prestigious categories - Artist of the Year and Song of the Year - come with substantial prizes. Winners receive music equipment worth R50 000, sponsored by the National Youth Development Agency (NYDA). Since 2022, the NYDA has contributed over R300 000 in prizes toward these top categories.

Winners are chosen through a public SMS voting system, supported by a panel of anonymous judges to safeguard the process.

“We aim for a transparent and fair process; free from corruption,” said Mokoena.

One of the CMA’s standout features is its emphasis on showcasing homegrown talent. All performers at the main event are drawn from the Free State’s five districts, reinforcing the awards’ commitment to inclusivity and grassroots development. “Our lineup is mostly made up of emerging artists, because one of our core goals is to introduce new talent to the industry.



JUST NOTICE OF LOST OR DESTROYED TITLE DEED

Notice is hereby given in terms of Regulation 68 of the Deeds Registries Act 1937, of the intention to apply for the issue of a certified copy of Deed of Grant No. TG375/1990QQ passed by MALUTI-A-PHOFUNG LOCAL MUNICIPALITY in favour of KOENANE JOSIAH MAILE in respect of certain ERF 3222 PHUTHADITHABA-A, DISTRICT HARTSMITH, PROVINCE FREE STATE, which has been lost or destroyed.

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

SIGNED at BLOEMFONTEIN on this 11th DAY OF JULY 2025.

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CONTACT: (+27) 65 862 3469

Doc Ref: 2025/07/2025/0024

Saturday 26 July 2025
FS All Stars Weekend
Sandy's Bar & Restaurant
Bloemfontein

Friday 25 July 2025
Vinyl Sessions
Cappello
Bloemfontein

Friday 01 Aug 25
Sifiso Nene "Because of Success tour"
Windmill Casino
Bloemfontein

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AMI FAKU

DJ SET

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09 AUG
2025

SATURDAY

9AM TO
1PM

TIME

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BLOEMFONTEIN

GLAM WITH A
TOUCH OF PINK

THEME



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xxx. Picture: Supplied

New Look, New Line Up for Siwelele

By: Rorisang Rampheteng and Tladi Moloi

Premier Soccer League (PSL) entrants Siwelele FC officially unveiled their new kit and player acquisitions in front of their loyal supporters in Bloemfontein ahead of their opening fixture this Saturday.

For their home games, the team will don green shorts paired with a shirt featuring green vertical stripes. In contrast, for away games, the team will

wear black shorts accompanied by a shirt with green and white horizontal stripes in front.

The club further announced the signings of four new players ahead of the 2025/26 Betway Premiership season. The new signings include Buhle Mkhwanazi, a veteran centre-back and former Bafana Bafana defender, Relebogile Mokhuoane, a central midfielder joining from Sekhukhune United, Thabo Makhele, who joins from Chippa United, and Wayde Lekay, a striker returning to South

Africa after playing for Churchill Brothers in India.

Drawing from the passion Siwelele fans are renowned for Pule Mabena, Siwelele FC supporter's chairperson, humorously warned the new players to not lose a game against Kaizer Chiefs – given the Soweto giants' underwhelming league performance over the past decade.

“Players, there is one team in the PSL that you are not supposed to lose against, that is Kaizer Chiefs, if you lose against them, you won't get out of the stadium but exercise the whole night,” said Mabena at the Siwelele Homecoming launch at Hoffman Square.

The 2025/2026 season promises to be a season to be remem-



Bloem Duo Set to Shine Internationally



Martial arts fighters Bonham Kukari and Tshwaro Nyathe to represent South Africa in China. Picture: Supplied

By: Abigail Visagie

Bloemfontein is beaming with pride as two of its own martial arts fighters prepare to represent South Africa at an international competition and put the city's martial arts scene in the global spotlight.

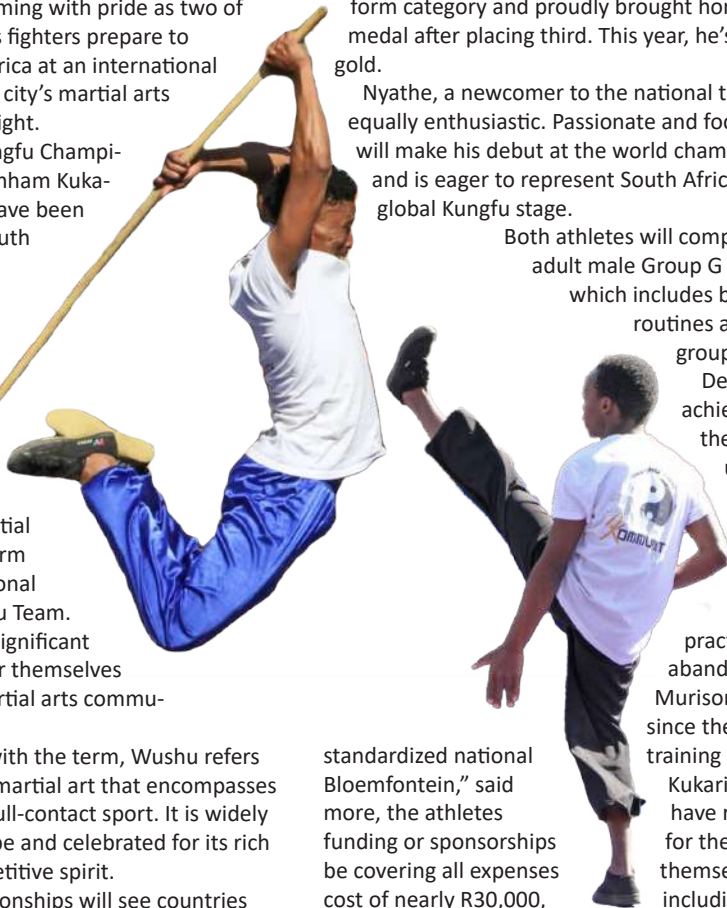
As the 10th World Kungfu Championships draw nearer, Bonham Kukari and Tshwaro Nyathe have been selected to represent South Africa at the prestigious event, set to take place in Emeishan, Sichuan, China from 14 to 20 October 2025.

Born and raised in the Free State's capital, the two artists will form part of the National Protea Traditional Wushu Team. Their selection marks a significant achievement not only for themselves but also for the local martial arts community.

For those unfamiliar with the term, Wushu refers to a traditional Chinese martial art that encompasses both performance and full-contact sport. It is widely practiced across the globe and celebrated for its rich cultural roots and competitive spirit.

The upcoming championships will see countries from around the world converge in China to showcase their finest talent in this ancient art form.

Kukari, returning to the international stage for the second time, shared his admiration for China,



recalling how he felt a deep sense of belonging upon his first visit. Last year, he competed in the weapon form category and proudly brought home a bronze medal after placing third. This year, he's aiming for gold.

Nyathe, a newcomer to the national team, is equally enthusiastic. Passionate and focused, he will make his debut at the world championships and is eager to represent South Africa on the global Kungfu stage.

Both athletes will compete in the adult male Group G category, which includes bare-hand routines as well as group forms.

Despite their achievements, the two train under challenging conditions. “We are currently practicing at the abandoned Billy Murison Stadium since there are no training facilities in Kukari. What's have received no for the trip and will themselves — a including travel, competition fees.

Those who would like to support the duo can reach them directly for donations at 075 136 0475 or jukariworks@hotmail.com.

Promotional Playoffs Showdown in Bloem



By: Tladi Moloi

Six Free State teams will do battle for promotion into the ABC Motsepe League this Sunday in the men's SAFA Hollywoodbets inter-regional league playoffs set to be played at the University of the Free State (UFS) in Bloemfontein.

Tower United FC, Pro Mates FC, Kamele FC, Moroka Sweeper FC, Welkom Real Stars FC and Brace Eleven FC all won their regional leagues in their respective regions and will now duel to see who has what it takes to advance into the next domestic football echelon.

The teams have been drawn into two groups with each group consisting of three teams each. While the group winners will ultimately gain promotion and compete in the 2025/2026 Motsepe League season, they will still have to face each other in the final to determine the provincial winner.

Getting off to a positive start will therefore be key for all the teams as they fight for provincial glory, while the club's worth or status will shoot up to half a million Rands.

All fixtures will be played at the Kovsie Fields with the final scheduled to kick-offs at 15:45.

PSL Fixtures	
	
AmaZulu FC vs Orbit College FC	09 Aug 15:00 - Princess Magofo Stadium, Durban
Chippa United vs Mamelodi Sundowns	09 Aug 15:00 - Nelson Mandela Bay Stadium, Gqeberha
Polokwane City vs Magesi FC	09 Aug 15:00 - Old Peter Mokaba Stadium, Polokwane
Richards Bay vs Marumo Gallants	09 Aug 15:00 - King Goodwill Zwelithini Stadium, Durban
Orlando Pirates vs Sekhukhune United	09 Aug 17:30 - Orlando Stadium, Soweto
Siwelele FC vs Golden Arrows	09 Aug 20:00 - Dr Molemela Stadium, Bloemfontein
TS Galaxy vs Durban City	10 Aug 15:00 - Mbombela Stadium, Nelspruit
Stellenbosch FC vs Kaizer Chiefs	10 Aug 17:30 - DHL Cape Town Stadium, Cape Town

EPL Fixtures	
	
Friday, 15 August 2025	
Liverpool vs Bournemouth	21:00
Saturday, 16 August 2025	
Aston Villa vs Newcastle	13:00
Brighton vs Fulham	16:00
Sunderland vs West Ham	16:00
Tottenham Hotspur vs Burnley	16:00
Wolves vs Manchester City	18:30
Sunday, 17 August 2025	
Nottingham Forest vs Brentford	15:00
Chelsea vs Crystal Palace	15:00
Manchester United vs Arsenal	17:30
Monday, 18 August 2025	
Leeds United vs Everton	21:00