

Journal NEWS

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Fired Municipal Troikas 'Defy' ANC

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WHITE PEOPLE HATE US - FARM WORKERS



**Black labourers bemoan
rampant racism and unjust
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St. Bernard's Sex Predator...



Learners expose teacher. Picture: Baagedi Sethlhora

**Learners speak out despite alleged
threats from school Principal**

By: Abigail Visagie

Tensions continue to at St. Bernard's High School in Bloemfontein, where more learners have emerged to lay complaints and sexual harassment charges against predatory educators.

One such learner is 19-year-old Lesedi Mohlakoana who was sexually harassed by an educator while at her matric camp back in 2024. The educator in question allegedly requested Mohlakoana to send him naked images of herself.

After declining the educator's requests and inappropriate advances multiple times, the educator allegedly resorted to sending naked photos of himself to the pupil. His persistence pushed Mohlakoana to take matters into her own hands and she posted about this incident on 10 August 2025, urging other girls to speak out against predacious teachers.

"I saw he was surrounded by a lot of children and seemed to be a (normal) teacher, so I decided to break this cycle before it happens to another child," she told Journal News.

Mohlakoana now fears to enrol at university as she now believes that this inappropriate behaviour by educators is probably a

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Power of Life

Busamed Hosts Breast-Health Awareness Outreach



Mrs South Africa Finalist and Busamed staff members. Picture: Supplied

By: Matshidiso Selebeleng

To close women’s month, Busamed Bram Fischer Private Hospital hosted a mother and daughter breast-health awareness outreach at Hide Inn Guest House in last week Saturday in Bloemfontein.

The main aim of the event was to promote early detection and proactive health practices among women.

This event focused on encouraging women to have regular self-exams and mammograms emphasising that early detection is a critical factor for successful treatment outcomes.

Amongst other speakers was Mrs South Africa finalist Siyasanga Mophethe who addressed the common misconceptions surrounding cancer.

Speaking to Journal News, Mophethe said there is a misconception that children don’t get breast cancer.

“There is a misconception that men do not get breast cancer. It may not occur as often as it does in women, but men are still at risk.

She said that being educated about these chronic illnesses helps people to know how to react when they get cancer scares,” Mophethe said.

A breast and cervical cancer survivor from Breast Health Foundation, Louise Turner also shared some insight on how different the breasts look like as people age.

“Younger women often have denser breast tissue, which makes it difficult to get clear imaging in young girls.

“Because of the density of their breasts, it is a bit difficult to get clear imaging in young women, but they are still encouraged to undergo scans.

She also encouraged older women to undergo regular self-exams which will help them to notice when there are changes in their breasts that you can take necessary precautions,” she said.

Turner also touched on cervical cancer and how now there’s a home swap kit, which will help women to swap from the comfort of their homes instead of going to the doctor.

Fired Municipal Troikas ‘Defy’ ANC



Nketoana LM, Mayor Mamiki Mokoena



ANC Secretary General, Fikile Mbalula (Left) and Free State Provincial Secretary Polediso Motsoeneng.



Nala LM, Mayor Nozllilo Mashiya



Letsemeng LM, Mayor Bonolo Mocwaledi



Masilonyana LM, Mayor Dimakatso Modise



Lejweleputswa District Municipality: Veronica Ntakumbana



Moqhaka LM Mayor Motlohele Mokatsane



Mafube LM Mayor, Thloare Motsoeneng

Officials have sought intervention from Luthuli House while they remain in office

By: Abigail Visagie

Seven recently dismissed municipal troikas in the Free State are defying the African National Congress (ANC) by refusing to vacate office as directed by the party provincial leadership, thus sparking a governance standoff in key municipalities in the province.

Two weeks ago, the ANC provincial leadership announced the removal of seven troikas -comprising mayors, speakers, and chief whips - citing poor performance and undermining service delivery. Journal News can confirm that disposed officials have not yet vacated the respective offices, despite their deadline to do so having lapsed at midday this past Wednesday.

Instead, the affected parties have written to ANC secretary general Fikile Mbalula appealing for intervention - a move that is believed will trigger a series of legal and political battles.

A letter allegedly penned to Mbalula by Mafube Local Municipality mayor Tlhoare Motsoeneng confirms that the disposed mayor received a communiqué from provincial secretary Polediso Motsoeneng on Tuesday, notifying him of his immediate redeployment from his mayoral position.

The letter further reveals that the provincial leadership

instructed him to submit his resignation by Wednesday, no later than 12h00.

Tlhoare has accused the provincial leadership of failing to support the municipality during well-documented challenges.

“There has never been a situation where the provincial leadership had to institute disciplinary action against me, nor have I been confronted about any incapacity.

“The only engagements arose from clashes between the Chief Whip and myself. Earlier this year, when we were summoned before the PWC, the Chief Whip claimed he had issues with me because I was allegedly orchestrating the removal of his wife from the municipality,” Tlhoare wrote in the letter.

He added that he could not understand the letter from Motsoeneng, which instructed him to resign with immediate effect, therefore questioning what had informed the decision.

“I therefore submit my appeal to the SG (Mbalula) so that the matter can be dealt with accordingly. I am available to be called and to respond in person where clarity is required,” pleaded Tlhoare.

The provincial secretary, Polediso Motsoeneng, announced in August during a post-Provincial Executive Committee (PEC) briefing that seven municipal troikas in the Free State would be reshuffled. He said

the PEC had resolved to prioritise urgent intervention in Mafube, Moqhaka, Letsemeng, Nketoana, Nala and Masilonyana local municipalities, as well as the Lejweleputswa District Municipality — areas plagued by persistent audit disclaimers, weak leadership, and corruption allegations that have crippled service delivery.

This decision followed an oversight visit by Parliament’s Portfolio Committee on Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (COGTA), which exposed widespread dysfunction in municipalities, including billions in missing funds, sewage spills, illegal tenders, and critical staff shortages.

Parliamentary committee chairperson Dr Zweli Mkhize described the state of Free State municipalities as “disastrous,” a view echoed in the Auditor-General’s latest report, which flagged rampant irregular expenditure, lack of accountability, and numerous audit disclaimers across the province.

Yet, according to sources within the ANC’s provincial leadership, the removal of municipal troikas is less about governance and more about factional battles ahead of the party’s looming national general council (NGC) in December.

“We are facing difficult times now where two factions are looking to position themselves in the province. Comrade Polediso is not going to win this fight

because his decision will be overturned by comrade Mbalula, and there is nothing he can do,” said one source.

Speaking to Journal News yesterday, Political analyst, Professor Sethulego Matebesi, stated that members instructed to resign should not be branded “defiant,” but allowed to exercise their democratic right by engaging the ANC’s national leadership.

Matebesi, however, also warned that such appeals risk further tarnishing the ruling party’s image ahead of next year’s fiercely contested election.

“I am afraid we are going to witness yet another scenario where the ANC’s internal battles play out in public, dragging the party’s name through the mud for a long time. The question is, will they take the party to court if the secretary general’s response is not in their favour? That, I fear, will damage the party even further.”

The unfolding dispute in the Mafube region underscores the deepening cracks within the ANC’s provincial structures, where governance failures and political manoeuvring increasingly collide.

As the NGC approaches, the ANC faces a critical test. The first test pertains to whether the party can restore stability and credibility in troubled municipalities or allow internal battles to further erode public trust.

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St. Bernard’s Sex Predator...

Learners speak out despite alleged threats from school Principal

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norm everywhere.

Another pupil, Kgomotso Mokobe, who was in grade 12 at the St Bernard’s received a direct message on social media from the same educator confessing his undying love and feelings for the pupil.

“He once called me to his office and asked me to close the door. When I refused to, he closed it himself and confessed his feelings directly to me, mentioning that he felt this way about me since I was grade 8. I only decided to act upon his feelings now because it was the right time,” said Mokobe.

Emotions of disgust flushed through Mokobe as she recalled this incident.

“I was very uncomfortable and just wanted to exit the room, but he forced the door close and begged to speak to me,” said Mokobe.

On 21 August 2025, Mapaseka Feldman, was also followed on social media by the very same educator who harassed Mokobe.

“I was surprised that he followed me, but I was more shocked after he sent me a video of a girl twerking,” said Feldman.

She added: “I asked my friends whether it is

inappropriate for a teacher to send learners such derogatory content, my friend said maybe he mistook the girl in the video for me, but I still believed that it did not give him the right to send such sexual content to me.”

Feldman briskly escaped a horrible experience with the educator by immediately blocking his messages and his profile.

Ntswaki Mohlakoana, the mother of Lesedi, takes pride in her daughter speaking out against such violations and being a beacon of hope to other girls who might be afraid to speak up.

“My daughter makes me so proud and for her sake, I hope that justice will prevail,” stated the mother. The girls appeared in the Bloemfontein High court after opening cases against the educator and will appear in court again in October.

Learners from the St Bernard’s high school spoke to Journal News about the injustices happening at the school and mentioned that their pleas or complaints simply falls on deaf ears.

“Our principal threatened us that if we were to speak out against our teachers no matter how uncomfortable they make us feel, our case will simply



Ntswaki Mohlakoana, mother of sexually harassed learner. Picture: Baagedi Sethloha

die,” said one learner.

Another learner mentioned that there were no longer religious activities taking place since January because the principal allegedly fought with the fathers, causing disruptions in the school. “I no longer feel safe to be at the school, I don’t even want to interact with teachers, nor do I want them to interact with me because I am afraid that I might be one of the educators’ next targets,” said a grade 11 pupil.

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‘White People Hate Us’ - Farmworkers

Black labourers bemoan rampant racism and unjust labour practises at white-owned farms

By: Abigail Visagie

The recent incident involving a white farmer who allegedly killed and buried a 25-year-old man in a shallow grave on his farm has pulled the veil off the widespread racism and ill-treatment that black farmworkers endure at farms in South Africa.

The prevalent injustices that casually take place on farms include racial abuse and unfair labour practices. On the sidelines of the ongoing case at the Kroonstad Magistrate’s court, two farmworkers who work for the alleged suspect whose grandson allegedly murdered the abovementioned victim on their farm, claim to consistently endure racial abuse on the farm, while receiving meagre financial compensation for their hard labour.

“He loosely used the K-word when he refers to us and even refers to poor white people as ‘wit K’ffirs’ (white K-word),” said one of the farm workers.

They mentioned that the suspect also refers to them as birds and once he has his gun, he uses phrases like “I’m going to hunt for some birds now,” referring to the farm workers.

The farm workers further alleged that their salary amounts to R5000.

“If we’re late by just a minute, he deducts R600 from our salaries.

“Some of our family members who are also working on the farm haven’t been paid for two months and whenever they inquire, the farmer calls them ungrateful K’ffirs,” said the other worker, as they alternated in their respective responses.

“You can see how much we are hated by the farmer simply by his actions. He does not want us there but is forced to have us there since he needs the farm maintained.”

The farm worker further mentioned that there are no payslips and that their payslips along with the deductions are written on a doctor’s note.

A reliable source who’s also a resident of Kroonstad, alleged that the suspect, a medical doctor by profession, also refuses to assist people of colour and would keep a distance between people of colour and himself if they’re in a queue together.

In a separate incident, 36-year-old Pieter Cloete (not his real name) who works on a farm in Bainsvlei, Bloemfontein, mentioned that white farmers often show superiority in the most unconventional ways.

“I’ve worked for my deceased boss for 20 years and I’m still not registered with the department of Labour.



White farmers are being exposed for racism and bad labour practices Picture: Baagedi Sethhora

When I inquire about this, my boss deducts money from my salary, which is literally R300 for two days,” said a disgruntled Cloete.

Cloete, a husband and father of four said that he stopped attending school meetings because he can no longer even afford to pay for school fees. “I am disgraced when I look at my children because I can’t even buy them birthday gifts or school shoes, nothing.

The fact that my boss’ children are well taken care of while mine suffer in agony clearly indicates that the white farmers really hate us and do not want to see us grow and contribute to the economy,” said Cloete.

The farmworker who has been desperately hanging onto this job, mentioned that one of his colleagues requested an emergency leave and was dismissed immediately on the spot.

“Whenever you mention issues of a delay in salaries, not being registered with labour or simply requesting for time off, you get dismissed and unfortunately, there is no one to hear our concerns because we are even disregarded by our own society,” said Cloete.

Another anonymous farmworker from Bloemspruit mentioned that he has no qualms with his boss but the wife who oversees their administration often uses the K-word when referring to them and multiple racial slurs.

The anonymous worker further highlighted that he too has not yet been registered with the department of labour and is afraid to mention this to his superiors as he fears to lose his job.

“I can see the hatred in Mervrou’s eyes when we speak to her and I even let it be when my salary is delayed because I am not educated and I cannot afford to lose my job,” said the anonymous worker.

According to the Consolidated Employer’s Organisation, a formal contract of employment is highly

recommended. It creates certainty on the terms and conditions of employment that will bind the employer and employee.

The employer can enter two types of contracts with a farm worker: a permanent contract for an indefinite term and a fixed-term contract for a specific period (seasonal work), which shall end on a predetermined date- something that most farm workers are struggling to obtain.

34-year-old Amos Phali* was recently dismissed on a farm in Bainsvlei after he was caught simply speaking to an official of department of labour which he claims he personally knew.

“The mind set of white farmers remain the same: Us and them and unfortunately we experience hatred firsthand as farm workers,” said Phali.

Phali further stipulated that regardless of thirty years of freedom, farm workers bear the grunt of Apartheid notions where the white employer does not even hide finding the black worker intolerable.

“The moment my employer caught me talking to a dear friend who so happens to be a labour official, he physically threw me off his farm, saying that I was disobedient and cannot follow rules.

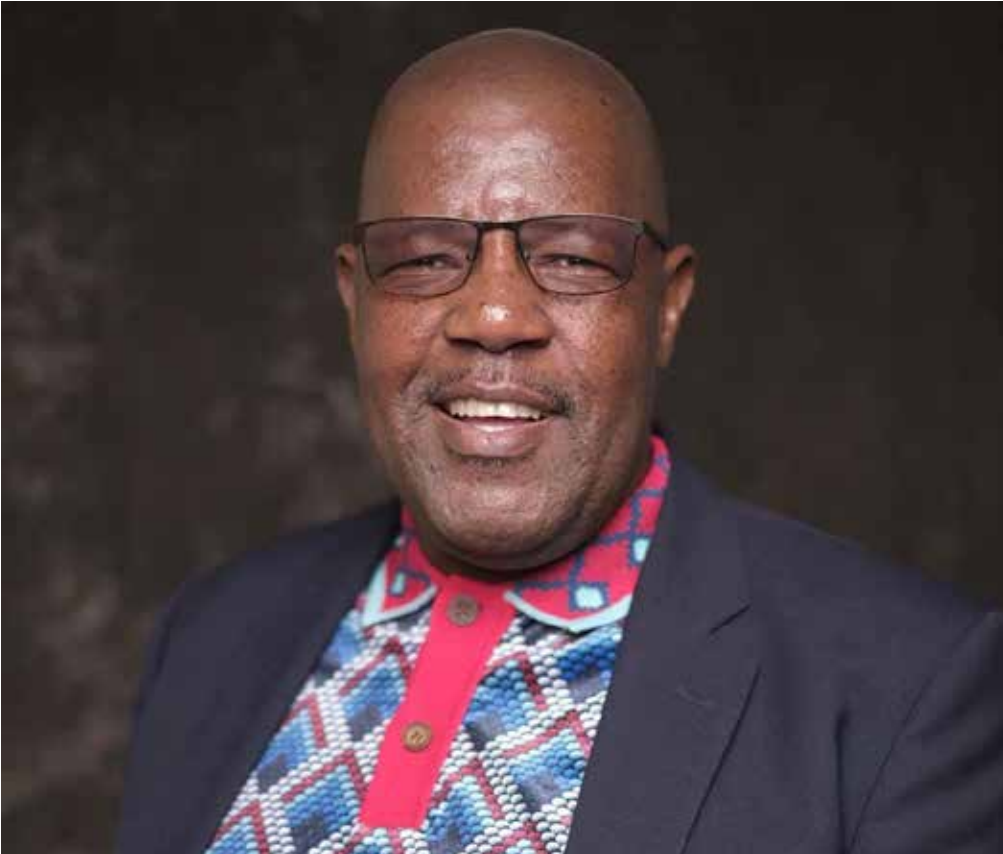
That time, he knew how badly I needed this job since I just had a baby, if this doesn’t show hatred, I don’t know what does,” said Phali.

“I thought it was normal to use the K-word since that is what Mervrou calls us all the time.”

These are the words of an anonymous Bainsvlei farmworker who seemed confused when it was highlighted that using the K-word or other racial slurs are considered a serious crime in South Africa.

The increasingly deep-rooted hatred towards black people becomes more evident as killings of black farmworkers sky rocket.

Women fund launched to empower entrepreneurs



Free State MEC for Small Business and Economic Development Toto Makume. Picture: Baagedi Sethhora

By: Abigail Visagie

MEC for Small Business and Economic Development Toto Makume was among the delegates who attended the launch of the R30 million Women Entrepreneurship Fund launched by Minister of Small Business Stella Ndabeni Abrahams last week in Mpumalanga.

Makume says the fund is aimed at formalising informal businesses and enhancing capacity building progress in small businesses.

In a one-on-one interview with Journal News, Makume said the fund aims to close the gender gap in access to finance and elevate women-led enterprises across South Africa’s business landscape.

“We need to deal with the inequalities of the past by empowering women as they should also fill skilled and leadership roles,” said Makume.

Makume further said that such funds are crucial to reverse stigmatised roles, as traditions have damaged and tainted the roles of men and women over the years.

“Women were always subjected to the kitchen and men placed in the frontline, but it is important to also equip women with the necessary skills that men have because once you educate a woman, you educate the nation,” he said.

Makume also stipulated that the red tape in government entities using private sector modes to capacitate the small business community, should not be enabled.

“There should not be a strict policy for women-led small businesses to formalise their businesses.

Makume stated that his office will be engaging with the Small Enterprise Development and Finance Agency to ensure that once it is officially accessible to members of the public, officials will be sent to offer training on how to register a small business.

He also confirmed that certain portions of capital will be given to rural and informal businesses and confirmed that the Free State should be ready by October for the Women Entrepreneurship Fund.

Kroonstad ‘Killer’ Farmer’s Lies Exposed

Kroonstad farmer falsely claims grandson killed labourer thinking he was a warthog or cable thief

By: Abigail Visagie

Two farmworkers who work on the alleged perpetrators farm fear that their lives will be at risk if they were to speak out against the countless injustices that have transpired on the farm over the years but have gone unchecked.

The duo, who requested to be kept anonymous for fear of reprisal, claim to have witnessed what happened on 11 July 2025 – leading to the discovery of the shallow grave burying the victim.

“It was a normal day as usual; the suspect’s grandson had called us closer to be on the lookout for him as he went hunting for a ‘warthog’.

“After he left with his rifle slung around his

shoulder, we continued as usual up until we heard two shots first and another two shots minutes after the first shot. He called out our names and we came running,” one of the labourers said.

Upon arrival the grandson allegedly told the labourers that he saw six men, whom he believes were cable thieves.

“He said he had shot and killed one of them,” narrated one of the workers.

He added: “This sent shivers down my spine, and I immediately urged him to call the police. He (the grandson) then hushed me and said he is trying to think. What happened next was unspeakable,” said the witnesses.

They further mentioned that the grandfather, a

reputable medical doctor in Kroonstad, rushed to the farm an hour later, grabbed his grandson and went in the way where they heard the shots.

“A few hours later, the grandfather checked up on us with the torchlight to ensure that we were all asleep, this raised alarms in our minds, but we went back to work as our shifts starts early in the morning,” said the farm workers.

One of the farm workers were called to the spot where the alleged gunshots were heard and noticed that there was a shallow grave containing an iron sheet and dog defecations.

“As soon as the grandfather swiftly left us alone, I asked the grandson what happened to the ‘issue’ of the day before and he just nodded his head in the

direction of the shallow grave, I then spotted what looked like a human body,” said the farm worker.

Days would go past and life on the farm would continue as usual except the incident was haunting the farmworkers and they feared for their lives.

“We were threatened that if any of us spoke about what we heard or saw, we would be killed,” said the worker.

In contrast, another farm worker spoke to various media outlets and stipulated that the unidentified man was a foreign national who worked on the farm for 17 years and that after they were dismissed, they just inquired about their pay-outs at the 80-year-old farmer who threatened to kill them.

The unidentified man would then go missing and exhumed almost two months after he went missing.

When confronted by an Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) provincial deputy chairperson, Thomas Macingwane about allegations that his grandson shot and killed a black unidentified man and that he was an accomplice in burying the corpse in an unmarked grave, the 80-year-old white farmer confessed on camera that indeed his grandson shot the black man and that he only regretted not calling the police.

He further implicated himself claiming that this was not his first time he had murdered a black man and that ten years ago he shot and killed another black man in a farm attack rendezvous.

“We wanted to seek justice for the late man who was brutally murdered on the farm, so we were very pleased that he was arrested,” Macingwane told Journal News.

He further mentioned that it was to be noted that the doctor was a very delusional, typical white man who would want to reduce everything to a string of white farm killings.

“Here we are dealing with a clear case of a white man who could not stand black people standing up against him, demanding what was rightfully theirs as it was alleged by the farmworkers,” Macingwane added.

The white farmer faces five counts of Murder, obstruction of justice, attempted murder, offense of contravention and discharging a firearm in a public place.

He has been appearing in the Kroonstad Magistrate’s court daily from 3 September 2025 and the court proceedings are set to continue today.



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‘Let’s Guard ANC Mission’ – Mkhize Tells Comrades



ANC National Executive Committee (NEC) member Dr Zweli Mkhize addressing party members in Thabo Mofutsanyana. Picture: Supplied

By: JN Reporter

African National Congress (ANC) national executive (NEC) member Dr Zweli Mkhize has cautioned that the upcoming national general council (NGC) should not be used to advance personal ambitions, but to safeguard the organisation’s mission. Speaking at the party’s Thabo Mofutsanyana regional general council (RGC) in Bethlehem last Sunday, where he had been deployed to lead the session, the party stalwart said the NGC must be a platform to confront the ANC’s pressing challenges, including organisational renewal, policy direction and restoring public trust, rather than elevating individuals for personal power. “The NGC is a reminder of why we are here - the people. We must go there with that focus. If the NGC does not help us address the challenges facing the party, guide our organisational renewal, set policy direction, and restore public trust, nothing will help us win the elections next year.” Mkhize stressed that branch members elected to attend the meetings should not view their nominations as a stepping stone for personal ambition, but as an opportunity to ensure the party remains true to its role as a servant of the people. He further advised members attending the December

meeting must ensure the NGC strengthens the party ahead of the upcoming local government elections. “The revolution is about our people, not about you - your power, your car, your house, your salary, or the faction you belong to. It must not be about which office you want to be elevated to, but about how we remain true servants of the people.” The ANC has concluded its five RGC meetings in the Free State - led by NEC deployees - in preparation for the NGC. Apart from Thabo Mofutsanyana region, which is the ANC’s largest region in the Free State, the Xhariep region also met at the district municipality’s auditorium under the guidance of former Eastern Cape Premier Noxolo Kiviet. The Mangaung region convened at the Mangaung Metropolitan Municipality’s Bram Fischer Building, led by Thandi Moraka, while Lejweleputswa and Fezile Dabi held their meetings at and the Harry Gwala Multi-purpose Centre in Sasolburg, respectively, under the leadership of Cassel Mathale and David Makhura. ANC provincial secretary Polediso Motsoeneng says he is encouraged by the discipline and engagement shown by members in all five regions ahead of the NGC - the ruling party’s second-highest decision-making body between national conferences – this December at

the Johannesburg Expo Centre in Nasrec. Motsoeneng noted that all RGC’s were convened without incident and that delegates will report back to their branches to shape contributions to the party’s discussion documents. “This has revived the intellectual capacity the organisation has often been accused of lacking,” he said. Earlier last month, the NEC adopted discussion documents for the NGC, which is a mid-term review process scheduled for 8 - 12 December 2025. This mid-term review will assess the implementation of resolutions from the 55th National Congress held in 2022, covering leadership, organisational performance, and election strategy, among other areas. In a post-meeting statement, the party’s national spokesperson, Mahlengi Bhengu-Motsiri, said that in preparation for the NGC, the NEC also approved the Credentials Framework, confirming that the membership cut-off date will be 30 September 2025. “Furthermore, all delegates attending the NGC will be required to have completed the ANC Political Education Foundation Course by November 2025, ensuring politically literate and ideologically grounded participation,” she said. The NGC, as mandated by the party constitution, is not merely a conference - it is the ANC’s largest political school.

CoGTA MEC Empowers Masilonyana with Cleaning Tools



MEC for Cooperative Governance, Traditional Affairs and Human Settlements, Saki Mokoena. Picture: Matshidiso Selebeleng

By: Matshidiso Selebeleng

The MEC for Cooperative Governance, Traditional Affairs and Human Settlements, Saki Mokoena, has handed over a range of environmental tools to the Masilonyana Local Municipality to help empower communities in maintaining cleaner, healthier environments and strengthening local service delivery. As part of a departmental outreach programme held at Majwemasweu in Slovo Park Extension 5, Brandfort, earlier this week, the municipality received 25 wheelbarrows, 20 chainsaws, 20 petrol bush cutters, and other tools. Mokoena said the handover would support Community Work Programme (CWP) workers who had long requested the equipment. He urged both workers and residents to safeguard the tools as a shared community resource. “These tools are meant for the improvement of the community; they are not given to individuals for personal use. It is very important to report anyone who misuses or attempts to sell them,” Mokoena stressed. He added that government’s efforts were

aimed at restoring dignity to the people and ensuring they live in an environment they can be proud of. Community member Lucky Klass welcomed the initiative but called for greater focus on the youth. “I came here because I wanted to know how this would benefit the young people sitting around without jobs. I did not come to hear only about CWP,” he said. Alongside the handover, the department partnered with Gap Infrastructure Corporation (GIC) to install 1,943 water meters, a sewer network with 20.57 km of pipes, a fibre duct, and other infrastructure. The R167-million project, initially scheduled for completion at the end of September, was finalised three months early, creating temporary jobs for local residents during construction. “This reflects not only the technical success of the project but also its significant socio-economic impact, particularly in terms of job creation and skills development,” Mokoena said. The informal settlement upgrading project will be extended to other municipalities.

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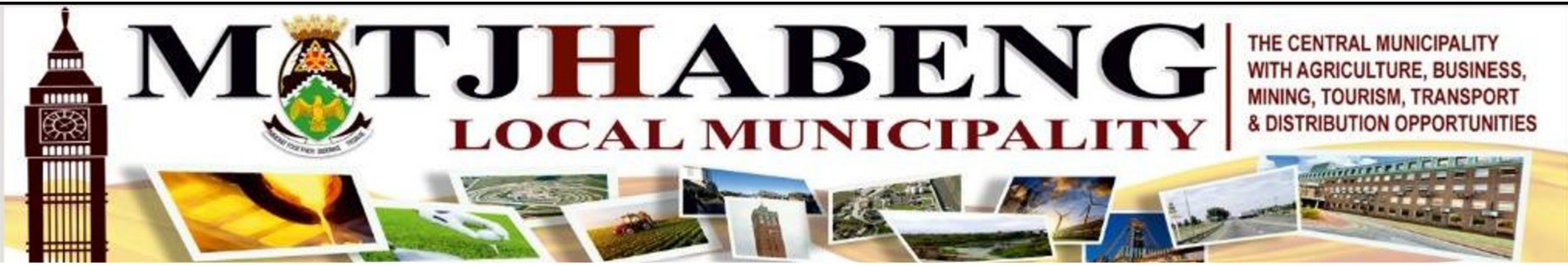
Free State Provincial Secretary Polediso Motsoeneng. Picture: Baagedi Sethlora

By: JN Reporter

The African National Congress (ANC) in the Free State has issued a warning after a WhatsApp message went viral, describing it as false and misleading. The party urged members of the public to exercise caution and verify information before sharing it, emphasizing its commitment to combating the spread of misinformation. This comes after a conversation alleged to have taken place between Provincial Secretary Polediso Motsoeneng and an unidentified individual believed to be linked to the Masilonyana Local Municipality. In the exchange, which spread rapidly across platforms such as Facebook, X, and TikTok this week, Motsoeneng reportedly labelled Premier MaQueen Letsoha-Mathae and the party’s Secretary-General Fikile Mbalula as “clueless” and claimed they don’t know what they are doing. In the back-and-forth messages, Motsoeneng is said to have asserted that he could recall the premier himself if he wished, insisting she “is clueless and doesn’t know what she is doing.”

When asked whether Mbalula could approve such a move, he allegedly replied: “The SG doesn’t have a clue what he is doing (sic). I am going to collapse all these municipalities and re-configure them the way I want. The ANC comes first, and as the PS, that’s my area not some clown from national. I am in charge of this province and no one can tell me anything. I don’t want this nonsense where people defy me.” In a message posted by the provincial governing party’s Facebook account, a bright red “fake news” alert was pasted on the alleged false WhatsApp posts. According to the party, the Office of the Provincial Secretary in the Free State has noted the fake conversation—impersonating Motsoeneng—with disgust. “We urge ANC members and the public to remain vigilant, as artificial intelligence was used to tarnish the name and integrity of Comrade Polediso Motsoeneng,” the post read. “Comrade Motsoeneng has distanced himself from this persistent, desperate bloviation and has taken steps to request an investigation by law enforcement agencies,” concluded the post.





Transparency. Accountability. An Informed Public.



Matjhabeng Reaffirms Commitment to Clean Governance

The Matjhabeng Local Municipality has reaffirmed its unwavering commitment to clean governance, transparency, and accountability, with leadership emphasising that ethical administration remains central to building public trust and driving sustainable service delivery.

Determined to entrench a culture of clean governance—restoring both public confidence and residents’ dignity—executive mayor Thanduxolo Khalipa has launched key interventions to fast-track service delivery. Set on ensuring that there is a pattern of clean governance, not only to restore public confidence but also the dignity of the residents, the executive mayor, Thanduxolo Khalipa has launched key interventions to deliver fast-track service delivery.

“We have a budget of R4.6 billion set aside for refurbishment, with 20%—approximately R600 million—allocated to infrastructure renewal. This investment is focused on key areas, including:

- Infrastructure Support: Two Combination Trucks have been procured to strengthen sewer services, complementing ministerial interventions led by Vaal Central Water.
- Traffic Enforcement: Ten new vehicles have been acquired for the Traffic Department to enhance road safety and law enforcement.
- Streetlights Restoration: A ward-based plan, supported by two newly procured Cherry Picker Trucks, is underway to improve safety and restore dignity in communities.
- War on Illegal Dumping: Clean-up campaigns have begun in Thabong and Meloding and are currently active in Wards 12, 20, and 21, with plans to expand across all towns.
- War on Leakages: Dedicated teams are repairing water leaks to curb water losses and reduce municipal debt.

- Community Halls: Refurbishment projects are planned for community halls in Nyakallong, Kutlwanong, Mmamahabe, Phomolong, Thabong, and Flamingo.
- Combating Vandalism: We strongly condemn the vandalism of sewer networks, cable theft, and the destruction of public infrastructure.

These criminal acts undermine service delivery. The Municipality is working closely with law enforcement to address them, and we urge residents to join us in protecting and reporting any criminal activity against public assets.”

Mayor Khalipa further noted that more than R30 million has already been spent on restoring a 3km road in Ward 12, Thabong, as part of efforts to restore the community’s dignity.

“We have also budgeted R30 million for prepaid meters, with 30,000 already rolled out.

In addition, we plan to strengthen our working relationship with the Vaal Central Board,” Khalipa added.

Airport to Create More Investment Opportunities

With Matjhabeng’s second investment summit just a month away, the Municipality has unveiled plans for an ambitious economic development and diversification programme aligned with its Integrated Development Plan (IDP) and Spatial Development Framework (SDF).

The initiative is aimed at creating new opportunities for investment, employment, and infrastructure development as part of efforts to offset the decline in the mining sector.

“Council, under Resolution A43/2023, approved the establishment of an Industrial Development Zone (IDZ) to leverage economic and alternative energy opportunities arising from the gas discovery in Virginia. In line with this vision, Council further resolved under Resolution SA13/2023 that the Municipal Manager should call for development proposals on strategic land parcels, including the Welkom Airport site,” said acting municipal manager Advocate Loretta Williams.

The project, however, has been overshadowed by controversy, with allegations that the airport tender was awarded to businessman Katiso “KT” Molefe, whose company was reportedly registered just two days before the award.

In response, the Matjhabeng Local Municipality moved to set the record straight.

“The Welkom Airport project has always followed a lawful, transparent, and consultative process. Allegations suggesting irregularity are misplaced and unfounded. The Municipality has complied with all legal prescriptions, ensured accountability, and acted in the best interests of the community,” Williams stressed.

She added that the airport development is intended to unlock underutilised land, create jobs, attract private investment, and position Matjhabeng as a regional hub for aviation, logistics, and industrial diversification.

The Municipality has reaffirmed its commitment to transparency, sound governance, and ensuring long-term benefits for the community.

Full Transparency on Solar Project



Amid controversy over a R15 million setback, the Matjhabeng Local Municipality has moved to reassure residents of its commitment to accountability, transparency, and clean governance.

Municipal Manager Advocate Loretta Williams addressed circulating allegations suggesting that the Member of the Mayoral Committee (MMC) for Economic Development had channelled tenders to himself through solar energy projects.

“The Municipality has noted recent allegations circulating in the public domain regarding the MMC for Economic Development. These claims suggest that he directed tenders to himself in relation to solar energy projects. We wish to clarify that the solar project is privately initiated and funded, and the Municipality is not involved in the procurement of services by private businesses. Any contracts or transactions concluded between private parties fall entirely outside the scope of the Municipality’s procurement processes and legislative framework,” said Williams.

She further appealed to residents and stakeholders to refrain from spreading unverified information that could cause reputational damage without evidence.

Executive Mayor Thanduxolo Khalipa added that the Municipality would be tightening internal controls and investigating employees suspected of leaking information to the public.

“We are not saying that people have no right to raise issues. But protocol should be followed. We have an accounting officer and a social policy medium to ensure we improve our internal systems and policies,” Khalipa said.

Mmoho - Together - Sisonke - Tesame



BUILDING THE FREE STATE



Elderly residents listen closely during the EXCO activation in Kgubetswana, Clarens. Picture: Baagedi Sethlora

Premier slams renting of RDP homes to foreigners

By: Abigail Visagie

Free State Premier MaQueen Letsoha-Mathae has lashed out at beneficiaries who rent out their government-subsidised RDP houses to foreign nationals, warning that the practice undermines the purpose of the state's housing programme and deprives rightful citizens of shelter.

During a community meeting that transpired amid the provincial government's EXCO Meets the People outreach programme in Kgubetswana, Clarens, Letsoha-Mathae revealed that existing housing backlogs and allegations of beneficiaries leasing out their subsidised homes to foreign nationals dominated community concerns. She further raised alarm over the fabrication of identity documents and affidavits, which are often used to help foreign nationals fraudulently access housing. "People complain about long government queues, but this problem is worsened by fake IDs and affidavits. RDP houses are not for sale - they are meant for citizens who cannot afford to rent or buy. Beneficiaries must keep these as family homes. "The tragedy is that some sell them, and even worse, to foreign nationals," stated Letsoha-Mathae at the Kgubetswana Stadium.

Letsoha-Mathae urged residents to report any illegal sales or rentals of RDP houses and reaffirmed the government's commitment to ensuring that housing reaches the citizens it is intended for, promising stricter monitoring and enforcement in the months ahead. Community members also got the platform to voice their concerns with one 59-year-old Clementine Mokoena, who initially had nine children, complaining about her poor living conditions and the slow allocation of decent housing in the community.

"I lost seven of my children to poverty, and now I can't even provide shelter for the two I have left. "I was allocated a stand in 2009 by the former premier but never received a house. More than a decade later, I am here to plead for a home with electricity, clean water and proper sanitation for my children," added Mokoena. In her response, Letsoha-Mathae stressed that allocation would prioritise those who applied years ago. "People living in informal settlements will eventually be removed after elections, because many were placed there by opposition parties under false promises."

TAKING SERVICE TO THE PEOPLE OF KGUBETSWANA



Kgubetswana residents delighted to interact with Premier MaQueen Letsoha-Mathae. Picture: Baagedi Sethlora

By: Abigail Visagie

In a bid to bridge the gap between government and communities, the Free State Provincial Executive Committee (EXCO), led by Premier MaQueen Letsoha-Mathae, rolled out the 'EXCO Meets the People' programme in Kgubetswana Township in Clarens last week.

The outreach formed part of the broader integrated service delivery initiative aimed at bridging the gap between government and communities, bringing essential services directly to their doorsteps while ensuring that even the most remote areas are not left behind.

The key objective is to bring services closer to the people in line with the three government priority areas, including the fight against unemployment and reducing the cost of living.

To launch the programme, the Premier led EXCO in visiting the Buyers Naude Halfway House, an alcohol and drug abuse rehabilitation centre. The institution plays a vital role in rehabilitation, particularly among young people, at a time when communities face rising levels of substance abuse.

The delegation then proceeded to Itumeleng Public Clinic to assess infrastructure, service delivery standards, and identify areas for intervention. Despite existing challenges, the clinic remains commendable for its cleanliness and high level of service excellence.

During the visit, the Premier engaged directly with patients to hear their views on the quality of healthcare they receive.

The day concluded with a community engagement session at the Kgubetswana Stadium, where a large-

Hope Restored: EXCO Meets Recovering Addicts



Dr Beyers Naude Halfway House Centre Manager, Lydia Masangane, addressing EXCO. Picture: Baagedi Sethlora

By: Abigail Visagie

In a powerful show of support for addiction recovery efforts, members of the executive council (EXCO) paid a meaningful visit to the Dr Beyers Naude Halfway House Rehabilitation Centre in Clarens, where they met face-to-face with individuals courageously rebuilding their lives after addiction.

The visit, part of the ongoing 'EXCO Meets the People' programme led by Premier MaQueen Letsoha-Mathae, underscored the government's commitment to community-based recovery initiatives and brought renewed hope to those on the path to healing.

The outreach programme, which took place in the Kgubetswana township, forms part of the broader integrated service delivery initiative aimed at bridging the gap between government and communities, while reaffirming government's commitment to serve.

On Tuesday, the rehabilitation sanctuary welcomed the premier and the EXCO with lively music - a gesture aimed at softening the harsh reality of the ongoing fight against substance abuse.

It is a struggle faced by many, including 30-year-old Fezekile Ngejane, who completed his rehabilitation treatment at Charlotte Maxeke Treatment Centre in Botshabelo. Ngejane was later referred to the halfway house out of fear of relapsing.

"I received help from both centres after becoming addicted to Mandrax and Crystal at the age of 11. I have learned to manage the stigma, and I am eager to return to my community with a positive outlook on life," he said.

Officially opened in 2018, the Dr Beyers Naude Halfway House accommodates up to 40 people, who are assessed by trained professionals before being re-integrated into the care of their families.

According to centre manager Lydia Masangane, the support received from the provincial government has

played a crucial role in restoring and rehabilitating many drug users.

"I feel truly honoured that EXCO visited the Dr Beyers Naude Halfway House and that I had the opportunity to interact with the premier, who seems optimistic about the work we are doing."

Masangane added that through individual counselling sessions, life skills training, reintegration, and aftercare services offered at the house, several rehabilitated substance users have been able to secure employment after completing the programme.

The visit by the premier and the EXCO not only highlighted government's commitment to supporting rehabilitation initiatives, but also brought hope to recovering substance users like Ngejane.

With continued counselling, skills development, and aftercare services, the halfway house remains a vital stepping stone for many on their journey towards healing, reintegration, and a renewed sense of purpose.

Mance Pledges Equipment Support for CWP Workers

By: Abigail Visagie

Free State MEC for Public Works and Infrastructure, Dibolelo Mance, has applauded hard-working Community Work Programme (CWP) workers and promised to boost them with the necessary working equipment.

During an oversight visit to the Thabo Mofutsanyana District, Mance highlighted the crucial role CWP workers play in maintaining public spaces and delivering basic services in under-resourced communities.

She reaffirmed her department's commitment to improving working conditions by providing essential tools, protective gear, and other equipment to support their daily tasks.

The CWP is an innovative offering from government to provide a job safety net for unemployed people of working age.

"Our people are willing to work - the least we can do is provide them with the basic necessities, such as tools and proper workwear," said Mance.

This follows concerns raised by workers during the Executive Council (EXCO)'s outreach visit to the Kgubetswana Sports Ground in Clarens on Tuesday. Workers said the lack of equipment hampers their ability to carry out their duties effectively.

The outreach programme, led by Premier MaQueen Letsoha-Mathae, formed part of a broader integrated service delivery initiative aimed at strengthening ties between government and communities, while reaffirming the state's commitment to service delivery.

CWP worker, Malefu Mosia, voiced fears that the persistent shortage of tools could cost her a job.

"We live in fear every day because we're not properly equipped to do our work. That puts us at risk of being



Public Works MEC Dibolelo Mance pledges equipment support for CWP workers. Picture: Baagedi Sethlora



ITE THAT WORKS FOR ALL

ICES TO THE KUBETSWANA



scale rollout of integrated government services had been taking place since the morning. These services are crucial in alleviating transport costs for residents, particularly those in impoverished areas, by ensuring that essential government services are brought directly to them.

On-site services included those from the Department of Home Affairs, Department of Social Development, South African Police Service (SAPS), South African Social Security Agency (SASSA), mobile health units, the Department of Economic Development, and key partners such as Shot Left and Old Mutual, among others.

Addressing the community gathering, Premier Letsoha-Mathae emphasised the priorities of the current administration.

“The 7th administration has placed strong emphasis on ensuring that the Free State reclaims control of its local economy, beginning with spaza shops, which are currently dominated by foreign nationals. Government has made funding available to support the revival and strengthening of local businesses, ensuring that communities benefit directly from economic activity.”

The Premier further encouraged residents to make full use of the opportunities created through government interventions, cautioning against the misuse of these initiatives:

“Our people must take advantage of the opportunities presented by government, but we must also guard against abusing them. These interventions are designed to uplift and empower communities, not to be wasted.”

quipment Workforce



ngside Premier MaQueen Letsoha-Mathae. Picture:

livered swiftly.

As government continues its outreach efforts, CWP participants say meaningful investment in resources is key to restoring dignity and improving service delivery in their communities.



Dr Beyers Naude Halfway House Centre recovering addicts welcoming Premier MaQueen Letsoha-Mathae with lively music. Picture: Baagedi Sethlora

EXCO Explores New Dinosaur Centre

Major boost for Eastern Free State’s tourism sector and economic growth



EXCO tours the Kgodumodumo Dinosaur Interpretation Centre at Golden Gate Highlands National Park. Picture: OTP

By: Abigail Visagie

Following its ordinary meeting in Clarens on Wednesday the Free State Executive Council (EXCO), led by Premier MaQueen Letsoha-Mathae, visited the newly opened Kgodumodumo Dinosaur Interpretation Centre at the Golden Gate Highlands National Park.

The visit, held a day after the successful EXCO Meets the People service delivery outreach programme, allowed the council to experience first-hand the heritage, beauty, and scientific value preserved at the centre.

The dinosaur centre EXCO stopover also reaffirmed the Premier’s commitment to Tourism Minister Patricia de Lille, made during the facility’s official opening earlier this year.

The Kgodumodumo Dinosaur Museum is set to play a dual role: celebrating cultural and natural heritage while serving as a catalyst for tourism in the province. Nestled in the scenic Golden Gate Highlands National Park near Clarens, the centre is expected to draw local and international visitors, boost economic activity, and unlock new opportunities in the tourism sector.

Unveiled in June under the theme “A Nation That Works for All – Unearthing Our Past, Building Our Future”, the centre offers an immersive experience through interactive exhibitions designed to spark curiosity and wonder in visitors of all ages.

This milestone supports the provincial government’s vision of positioning the Free State as “a place to go, not to go through.”

EXCO Meet the People Outreach



Members of EXCO engaging with Premier MaQueen Letsoha Mathae in Clarens. Picture: Baagedi Sethlora



Premier, MaQueen Letsoha-Mathae handover food parcels to elderly people during her engagement. Picture: Baagedi Sethlora



Residents raise concerns directly with the Free State Premier, MaQueen Letsoha-Mathae and EXCO during a community meeting held at the Kgubetswana Stadium. Picture: Baagedi Sethlora



Residents raise concerns directly with the Free State Premier, MaQueen Letsoha-Mathae and EXCO during a community meeting held at the Kgubetswana Stadium. Picture: Baagedi Sethlora



MEC for Community Safety, Roads and Transport, Jabu Mbalula and Premier MaQueen Letsoha-Mathae inspecting the primary healthcare mobile clinic in Kgubetswana, Clarens. Picture: Baagedi Sethlora



Lilly Moabi
Deputy President of the Black Management Forum (BMF)



The Gender Gap is Narrowing but Numbers Must Translate to Power

As we reflect on the month of August, we are reminded of the progress of women in leadership and management while envisioning a future powered by women’s leadership and equality.

On 9 August 1956, over 20 000 women showed leadership by marching to Pretoria’s Union Buildings against apartheid pass laws.

Today, women continue to march against inequality, Gender Based Violence, and opportunities in Leadership and Management.

The strides and the struggles of Women in South Africa continue daily, demanding voice and impact. There has been a huge improvement in women in leadership roles with about 47.2% of senior roles in South Africa, making us ahead on the global curve.

Women occupy 36% of board seats in JSE Top 40 companies which shows an improvement from the 29% of the year before. In the Government sector we have 26.5% of women at top management positions with 37.2% at senior management roles. Our public sector also shows an improvement with



46.4% in middle management and 45.2% in Senior Management roles.

Women hold 42.8% of National Assembly seats and 44.4% in the National Council of Provinces. We must indeed acknowledge this progress!

However, as we celebrate these numbers, we must also reflect on the “power gap” that exists. This symbolises a “glass ceiling” where women rise

to visibility but not power. Only 25% of executive roles in JSE Top 40 are women, with only 11% of CEO’s and 19% of Board Chairs.

On the Top Management in the workforce, only 45% are in middle and senior level roles. In Academia, 54% of academic staff are women but only 30% are professors and 27% are at Dean Level.

The above statistics reveal division and that the

journey towards equity is an unfinished one.

Real empowerment is not just making the Statistical Targets for women in leadership and management positions but it is also ensuring that women are in positions where decisions are made.

To close the power gap, we will need to:

1. Encourage and promote mentorship and Leadership pathways in CEO and Board Chairs.
2. We must continue to strengthen the targets enforcing DEI especially in Private Sector.
3. The Academia world must purposefully boost representation of women by promoting support prioritise women in research funding.
4. We need to enforce pay equity.

Yes, August may have ended, but lets now move to structural change by a collective effort to remove barriers, driving equality through transparent reporting, policy enforcement that creates cultures that encourage women at top positions of power!

Empower Her... Fund Her... Mentor Her... Promote Her... Listen to Her.

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

Cope Calls For Immediate Disbandment Of Ramotshere-Moiloa Municipality

As the Chairperson of COPE in the North West, I strongly condemn the lawlessness and chaos taking place in the Ramotshere-Moiloa Local Municipality. The brazen takeover of the municipal offices by 40 armed men, acting as “security” for a mayor who was elected in a bogus council meeting, is a disgraceful display of anarchy that has no place in a democratic South Africa.

This is not governance. It is a power grab by self-serving ANC thugs who care more about their

own pockets than the people they are meant to serve.

These individuals, driven by selfish ambition, have turned a public institution into a battleground for their thuggish antics, demanding payments from the municipal manager and intimidating officials. This is a betrayal of the trust placed in them by the people of the North West.

The situation has deteriorated to the point where urgent action is imperative. I call for the immediate disbandment of the Ramotshere-Moiloa

Local Municipality.

We need to clean up this mess and start fresh with honest and capable leadership.

I call on the people of the North West to support COPE in the upcoming elections and bring about the change we desperately need. Unlike the ANC, COPE is committed to a local government focused on the interests of the people, delivering clean water, reliable sanitation, and economic opportunities. We will root out corruption and make

sure the local government works for the people, not for corrupt politicians.

The time has come to reject the ANC’s failed legacy and embrace a future where governance serves the community, not the greedy few. Join us in building a better North West, vote COPE in the upcoming elections!

Written by: COPE Provincial Convenor in North West Province Tsholafelo Sevenster.

Pastor Motsamai Kareli Empowerment Ministries International The Historical You and The Possible You

As you live your life today, there are two versions of “you” that influence your beliefs and decisions. All of us have the choice as to which version we will fixate on more, and which version has the most sway over our life.

The first version of you that influences your life is the Historical You. This you is comprised of your past—your past decisions, your past relationships, your past callings, jobs, hobbies, attitudes, beliefs, and so on. The Historical You is who you have been, and where you’ve been. It’s why you’re here today. There’s value and merit to the Historical You. Without that past, you wouldn’t be who you are.

Consider a newborn baby. On Day One of the baby’s life, he or she can potentially speak any language in the world. However, where in the world the baby is born—to what parents, in what culture, in what nation—will determine what language he or she learns to speak first. A German baby will speak German. An Italian baby will speak Italian. A Chinese baby will speak Chinese.

However, the potential to speak any language doesn’t ever fully go away. As an adult, this person can study other languages and learn them, as well. Here we see the shift—while the Historical You does much to inform your identity in the present moment, it only does so much to serve you as you move forward. That’s where the Possible You comes in.

The Possible You is comprised of all the dormant possibilities God has placed inside of you. Example of these possibilities include learning a new language; finding a new career; making new friendships; learning more about God and your faith; and so many more! The Possible You is made up of so many exciting, unexplored realms.

The struggle comes when the Historical You hinders us from seeing and chasing the Possi-

ble You. We think our Historic Self is where life is, when really, there is so much more God has for us. Our possibilities are greater than our histories! Once we realize that, we’ll stop being held back by our yesterdays.

Think of some of the greatest leaders in the Bible: David. Esther. Peter. These were people who were shepherds, fishermen, and beauty queens before God’s plan came to fruition in their lives. They could have stayed stuck in their previous, historical identity. Instead, they realized that God saw more in them—He had possibilities wired into them—and they embraced those opportunities with God by their side.

So...which version of you will influence your life today? I pray you’ll allow the Possible You to be at the forefront of your mind and heart.

It is a fact that people who know your past will always refer to you based on your past but you must not be the victim of their small mind instead dig deep and work on the possible You. Many of you reading this article are going through difficulties eg. Repossession of your car, house etc possibly as a result of your past wrong decisions, I want to assure you that you can rise up from any set back if you are willing to work hard on the possible You. The Possible You is full of potential, ideas, resilience, ambition etc so please stop being a victim of your past and start pioneering your future.

It all starts with a change of mindset, tell yourself that you have one life and youre going to live it to the best of your ability. We all fail but we handle it differently and I want to challenge you to learn from your failures and unleashe the possible You.

Those who have concluded that you have no future are about to encounter the new you that is full of grace, strength, potential and power. I look forward to meeting the possible You.

DA raises concern over illegal spaza shops near schools in Sasolburg

The Democratic Alliance (DA) in Metsimaholo will take action to stop illegal spaza shops operating near schools in Sasolburg, following concerns from educators and parents that were previously ignored by the municipality. These shops, left unregulated, pose a direct threat to learners’ safety, well-being, and academic performance.

Following an oversight with the school’s management and Deputy Principal, Joel de Lange, it came to our attention that the school has been seeking intervention from the municipality with no success. The DA will therefore step in.

These unregulated businesses not only undermine compliance with municipal by-laws, but they also pose a serious risk to learners. The DA has received reports and strong suspicions that some of these shops are supplying harmful substances to learners, directly threatening their safety, well-being, and academic performance.

As part of our oversight duties, the DA has engaged with school stakeholders and community members who have raised alarms about the negative impact these spaza shops are having on the discipline and prospects of learners.

The DA will continue to take action to curb the

spread of illegal spaza shops by:

- Reporting these concerns to law enforcement agencies and municipal officials for urgent intervention.
- Holding the Metsimaholo Municipality accountable for enforcing by-laws and shutting down non-compliant businesses.
- Advocating for stronger partnerships between schools, community policing forums, and the police to safeguard learners.
- Monitoring progress and reporting back to the community to ensure transparency and accountability.

We firmly believe that illegal and harmful business practices must never compromise the future of our learners.

I have already notified the MMC, Lefa Nhlapho, about the situation, and action will be taken in due time.

We urge the municipality and law enforcement to act promptly to ensure that the environment around our schools remains safe and conducive to learning

Written by: DA Councillor Metsimaholo Municipality, Cllr. Phemelo Tabile

The Alabuga Start Programme: A Potential Human Trafficking Scandal?



Refilwe Mochoari
Editor In Chief

As we navigate the complexities of modern-day society, human trafficking remains a devastating issue worldwide.

Hi everyone, my name is Refilwe Mochoari, let’s talk about the Russian Alabuga Start Programme that is used to recruit girls to go and work at the Alabuga Special Economic Zone.

In the wake of it all, influencers whose livelihoods depend on social media views, clicks, likes, shares and numbers have been taken away.

Their trade tool “TikTok” have been banned and because South Africa is a country infested with unemployment, this is tragic.

These influencers are being accused of being reckless and naïve by promoting a programme that attracts young women to be human trafficked.

Human trafficking is a global crime that trades in people and exploits them for profits, and anyone can be a victim.

South Africa, unfortunately, has become a hotspot for various crimes, including those targeting young girls. The recent Alabuga Start Programme, promoted by these influencers on social media, has raised serious concerns.

The programme, offers opportunities for young African women between the ages of 18 and 22 to work in Russia’s manufacturing, hospitality, and catering industries, has been flagged as a potential human trafficking syndicate.

Some of the opportunities include working at a factory that produces drones, allegedly for use in the Russia-Ukraine war.

To some large extent I agree with South Africans, why is this programme only targeting young African women?

We also know that Human Trafficking is rife across the world and South Africa is a hotspot.

The requirements and circumstances surrounding the programme have sparked red flags, and some of the questions I ask myself are:

- Why only females?
- Why this specific age group?
- Why Russia, a country at war?
- Why only African girls?

Despite the Russian Embassy’s denial of human trafficking allegations, concerns persist about the working conditions and treatment of participants. Reports of shared accommodation, long working hours, and hard labor raise suspicions about potential exploitation.

The fact that hundreds of girls have applied for this programme highlights the desperation for opportunities in a country plagued by high unemployment and young people are often forced to take risks in pursuit of a better life. The influencers who promoted the programme, allegedly received R100 000 each have faced criticism for their role in potentially luring vulnerable individuals into a precarious situation.

As we move forward, it is essential to exercise caution when meeting opportunities that seem too good to be true, because if its too good to be true, it probably is a scam. Now as it stands, it is not clear whether this is a human trafficking syndicate or not, but for now I would like to encourage each and every man and woman to look out for anything that may present risk, especially if it is too good to be true, because it most probably is too good to be true which is often a strategy for human traffickers to lure their victims.

Human trafficking can take many forms, including:

- Sex trafficking: Unusual or excessive sexual activity, advertisement for escort services or signs of prostitution.
- Labor trafficking: long working hours, low salaries, and poor working conditions.
- Child trafficking: Children working in hazardous conditions, begging, or being forced into marriage.

I would like to encourage us be aware of the warning signs and prioritise our safety and well-being. According to the Human Rights Commission,

Trafficking in persons is a criminal offence in terms of the Prevention and Combating of Trafficking in Persons Act, 7 of 2013. The offence involves the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring, selling, exchange, lease or receipt of another person within or across the borders of the Republic under false pretences and for exploitation purposes.

Victims of trafficking are mainly women and children.

A FEW KNOWN METHODS AND MOTIVATIONS FOR TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS

ACTIONS: Recruitment Transport Transfer Harbour Selling Exchanging Leasing Receipt

HOW IS IT DONE: Threat or use of force or other forms of coercion Abuse of vulnerability Fraud Deception Abduction Kidnapping Abuse of power.

Threat of Harm: force or other forms of coercion, abuse of vulnerability, fraud, deception, abduction, kidnapping and abuse of power.

WHY IS IT DONE: Sexual exploitation Servitude Forced labour Child labour Removal of body parts which are sold and used by unscrupulous practitioners, ostensibly to increase wealth, influence, health or fertility Impregnating women for purposes of selling babies.

BACK TO OUR AFRICAN
HEART AND SOUL



macufe
mangaung african cultural festival
when your heart and soul is african

3-7 Sept 2025



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HEART AND SOUL

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G20
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2030
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A FREE STATE
THAT WORKS ALL

MUSICAL THEATRE PRODUCTION DIRECTED BY DR JERRY WA MAKHETHA



MANTSOPA
Women of Power beyond herself



BACK TO OUR AFRICAN
HEART AND SOUL

4 & 5 SEP
ANDRE HUGUENOT
THEATRE (PACOFF)
14H00 & 20H00

R50

TICKETS AVAILABLE @  **COMPUTICKET**  **SHOPRITE Checkers**



sport, arts, culture & recreation
Department of
Sport, Arts, Culture and Recreation
FREE STATE PROVINCE



G20
SOUTH AFRICA 2025



2030
NDP

A FREE STATE
THAT WORKS ALL

Coal Yard



BACK TO OUR AFRICAN
HEART AND SOUL

4 SEP @ 16H00
BFN CIVIC THEATRE
5 SEP @ 17H00

FREE
ENTRANCE
FIRST COME
FIRST SERVE



sport, arts, culture & recreation
Department of
Sport, Arts, Culture and Recreation
FREE STATE PROVINCE



G20
SOUTH AFRICA 2025



2030
NDP

A FREE STATE
THAT WORKS ALL



BACK TO OUR AFRICAN
HEART AND SOUL

5 SEP
BFN CIVIC THEATRE
15H00

COMEDY & POETRY

FREE
ENTRANCE
FIRST COME
FIRST SERVE

Tieho Khakhau; ColdFire; Khohliwe's
Poetry in Song; LadyBird; GoodEnough;
Rasta Eye & Eye; BlackRose;
Sputnik; Bonfaya Mphulanyane; Thope



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G20
SOUTH AFRICA 2025



2030
NDP

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THAT WORKS ALL



Bloemfontein



BACK TO OUR AFRICAN HEART AND SOUL

macufe
mangaung african cultural festival
when your heart and soul is african

3-7 Sept 2025



macufe
mangaung african cultural festival
when your heart and soul is african

BACK TO OUR AFRICAN HEART AND SOUL

05 Sep
ROSE GARDEN

Hip Hop vs Amapiano

R100

TICKETS AVAILABLE @  

 sport, arts, culture & recreation
Department of Sport, Arts, Culture and Recreation
FREE STATE PROVINCE

  **A FREE STATE THAT WORKS ALL**

Kwesta; Ntate Stunna; Scotts Maphuma; Mawhoo; DJ Tobetsa; DJ Beast; Sir Juice SA; DJ Legood; DJ Tshegu; Fantas the DJ; Stino le Thweny; Gashlido; Taylor K; DJ Amo Africa; Farm Boy; Dr Phil RSA; Ms Lula; 2 Point 1; Nayshen SA; Seneath; Caprivi Camp; DJ Fariki; Troy M; Phiwe Specific;



BACK TO OUR AFRICAN HEART AND SOUL

macufe
mangaung african cultural festival
when your heart and soul is african

06 SEP
ROSE GARDEN

MAIN FESTIVAL

R200



TICKETS AVAILABLE @  

 sport, arts, culture & recreation
Department of Sport, Arts, Culture and Recreation
FREE STATE PROVINCE

  **A FREE STATE THAT WORKS ALL**

Thandiswa Mazwai; Jaziel Brothers; Semito; Miss Noxy; Presss; StarChalale; Judith Sephuma; Andy T; Sannere; Serame Sediti; Makhadzi; Babsy Mlangeni; Vusi Nova; Malaika; Choko; Trevor Boucher; Mr SPL; Star Kruzz; Don Leggeh; Nathi; Thapelo Khumisi; DJ Lazy Eye



Bafana Bafana have their set on qualifying for the 2026 FIFA World Cup when they take on Lesotho and Nigeria in Bloemfontein Picture: Baagedi Sethora

Bafana Bank on Vibrant Bloem Support

By: Mpho Sekharume

The South African national team will be looking to draw great motivation from the vibrant football loving crowd in Bloemfontein when they face Lesotho tomorrow and Nigeria four days later at the same venue.

Known to have to have some of the liveliest football supporters in the country, Bloemfontein football fans have for decades embodied the undying spirit of cheering their team on in synchronised fashion that is yet to be emulated elsewhere in the country.

This distinctive factor has also served as a key moral boost for their local teams namely Bloemfontein Celtic – which the supporters have since ‘abandoned’ in favour of premiership entrants Sivelele FC.

At a press briefing at the stadium yesterday, Broos said he believes the massive support the team will enjoy in the upcoming two fixtures will serve as a much-needed boost to get the job done against their African counterparts.

“The last time we played in Bloemfontein there was a big crowd...and I think it was the first time we played in front of a big crowd.”

“The atmosphere in the stadium was fantastic. After that it was the beginning because after that in every stadium we played it was a full crowd,” he noted.

Broos recalled times when his chargers used to play in front of almost empty venues elsewhere.

“Before we played in front of around 2000 people at a big stadium like FNB,” noted Broos

“It is not nice and it doesn’t make a player or a coach happy when you come out of a dressing room and you see an empty stadium.

“When there is a crowd behind you as a team you can always do more,” he added.

Skipper Ronwen Williams recollection of the last time Bafana Bafana was in the Free State was

“
The last time we played in Bloemfontein there was a big crowd.
”

also very positive. He said he hopes supporters will come out and show similar support when they face Lesotho tomorrow and Nigeria four days later at the same venue.

“We know the crowd can be an extra motivation and we have got good memories of playing last year here against Zimbabwe.

“So hopefully the fans will come out again and be that extra motivation that we need for these important games. It is two massive games in this group and we hope to get positive results in both games.

While aware of the mammoth task of qualifying for the FIFA World Cup to be hosted in North America in June and July next year, both Broos and Williams indicated that the team is ready to deliver their African counterparts.

Broos said the match against Lesotho is a must-win fixture, as it will also put pressure on their other opponents in Group C.

“For us we have to win the game tomorrow. The way we will try to do it I will tell you. But what makes me happy is that I see a very motivated group. And all the boys know that also for them it will be a highlight in their careers to go to America, Canada, Mexico next year.

“From my side we are very motivated to play the game of tomorrow and try to win it. At the other side we also know that Lesotho is always a very tough opponent. I think it’s important that we do that tomorrow and put pressure on the other opponents. I think Nigeria is only playing on Saturday, so that means we have to take this opportunity with both hands.

“So, it will be a very tough game. But again, when you are so far already as we are for the moment, you can always try to do something more and that we will try to do tomorrow and beat Lesotho,”

Broos said at the media conference.

Williams also highlighted the importance of winning against Lesotho and Nigeria, as part of their objective to go compete at the looming World Cup tournament next year.

“We know how important this game is and what it can do the qualification for the World Cup. This is the next step for our objective, which is to be at the World Cup.

“So, everything has

been going well and we are just looking forward to doing the business tomorrow,” added Williams.

Bafana Bafana’s match against Lesotho will kick off at 18:00 tomorrow evening, while the fixture against Nigeria on Tuesday will also kick-off at 18:00 at the same venue.



World Cup Qualifiers, Group C Standings

Club	MP	W	D	L	GF	GA	GD	Pts
1 South Africa	6	4	1	1	10	5	5	13
2 Rwanda	6	2	2	2	4	4	0	8
3 Benin	6	2	2	2	6	7	-1	8
4 Nigeria	6	1	4	1	7	6	1	7
5 Lesotho	6	1	3	2	4	5	-1	6
6 Zimbabwe	6	0	4	2	5	9	-4	4

Bafana Bafana Fixture

Lesotho vs Bafana Bafana
Group Stage Match 7 of 10
Today 18:00

Bafana Bafana vs Nigeria
Group Stage Match 8 of 10
Tue, 09 Sep, 10:00

Zimbabwe vs Bafana Bafana
Group Stage Match 9 of 10
06 Oct, TBD

Bafana Bafana squad:

Ronwen Williams – Mamelodi Sundowns	Luke Le Roux – Portsmouth FC
Sipho Chaine – Orlando Pirates	Bathusi Aubaas – Mamelodi Sundowns
Ricardo Goss – Sivelele FC	Thalente Mbatha – Orlando Pirates
Sydney Mobbie – Sivelele FC	Kamogelo Sebelebele – Orlando Pirates
Zuko Mdunyelwa – Mamelodi Sundowns	Oswin Appolis – Orlando Pirates
Mbekezeli Mbokazi – Orlando Pirates	Patrick Maswanganyi – Orlando Pirates
Aubrey Modiba – Mamelodi Sundowns	Iqraam Rayners – Mamelodi Sundowns
Khulumani Ndamane – TS Galaxy FC	Lyle Foster – Burnley FC
Ime Okon – Hanover 96	Mduduzi Shabalala – Kaizer Chiefs
Samukelo Kabini – Molde FK	Mohau Nkoto – Al Ettifaq FC
Siyabonga Ngezana – FCSB FC	Relebohile Mafokeng – Orlando Pirates
Teboho Mokoena – Mamelodi Sundowns	

Proteas storm past England to clinch series in style



Matthew Breetzke in action during South Africa’s second ODI against Australia. Picture: NDTV

Matthew Breetzke became the first batter in one-day international history to pass 50 in his first five innings with a brilliant score of 85 to help South Africa to a formidable total of 330-8 before a consummate bowling and fielding display earned South Africa a nail-biting win by just five-runs in the second ODI against England at Lord’s on Thursday.

The Proteas clinched the three-match series following their overwhelming seven-wicket victory against the hosts in the first match at Headingley in Leeds on Tuesday.

England required a record run-chase and it began in dramatic fashion with Nandre Burger finding Jamie Smith’s inside edge with the first ball before fellow opener Ben Duckett was bowled reverse-sweeping Keshav Maharaj for an uncharacteristically laboured 14 from 33 balls with just a single four.

But half centuries from Joe Root (61), Jacob Bethell (58) and Jos Buttler (61) kept England in the game and, with Will Jacks (39) smashing boundaries in the final five overs – including a reverse-swept six against spinner Senuran Muthusamy – England’s hopes flickered until the final over before they were restricted to 325-9.

Jofra Archer lashed an unbeaten 27 from 14 balls with a pair of fours and sixes but was unable to score the 16 required to win off the final over bowled by the nerveless Muthusamy.

Breetzke faced just 77 balls striking seven fours and three sixes and adding 147 with Tristan Stubbs who looked set for an even bigger score having reached a composed 58 from 62 balls before Dewald Brevis declined a second run leaving his partner stranded and run out.

Brevis atoned for his error reaching a withering 42 from just 20 balls with a trio of sixes and fours as England’s part-time spinners Jacks (5-0-51-0) and Bethell (5-0-61-1) came under fire. Left-arm Bethell did have the consolation of a sliced drive to backward point which ended the Brevis onslaught.

An opening partnership of 73 in 13 overs laid the perfect platform with Ryan Rickelton (35 from 33 balls) dominating before top-edging a slog-sweep against Jofra Archer (4-62) while Aiden Markram was more circumspect in compiling 49 from 64 balls before chipping a return catch to the excellent Adil Rashid who also had Temba Bavuma caught behind with a text-book legspinner to finish with 2-33 from his 10 overs.

Breetzke was trapped lbw by an Archer slower ball and was marginally embarrassed when his review showed the ball to be hitting halfway up middle stump but his place in ODI history was secured after innings of 150 and 83 in Pakistan last year followed by 57 and 88 against Australia two weeks ago.

Corbin Bosch marshalled the final overs to finish with an important, unbeaten 32 from 29 balls with nine of the last 10 ODIs at Lord’s having been won by the team batting first with an average score of 290. It was a small innings which had a large impact.

Maharaj (2-59) once again made a huge contribution having Root stumped by Rickelton while Burger effectively ended England’s hopes when Jacks (39) skewed a slower ball to cover. Bethell sliced the excellent Bosch (10-1-38-1) to cover, Brook was undone by turn and bounce from Muthusamy (8-0-61-1) and Buttler was bowled by a superbly disguised slower ball from Lungi Ngidi who bowled far better than figures of 1-72 would suggest.

The third and final match will be played at South-