

Journal

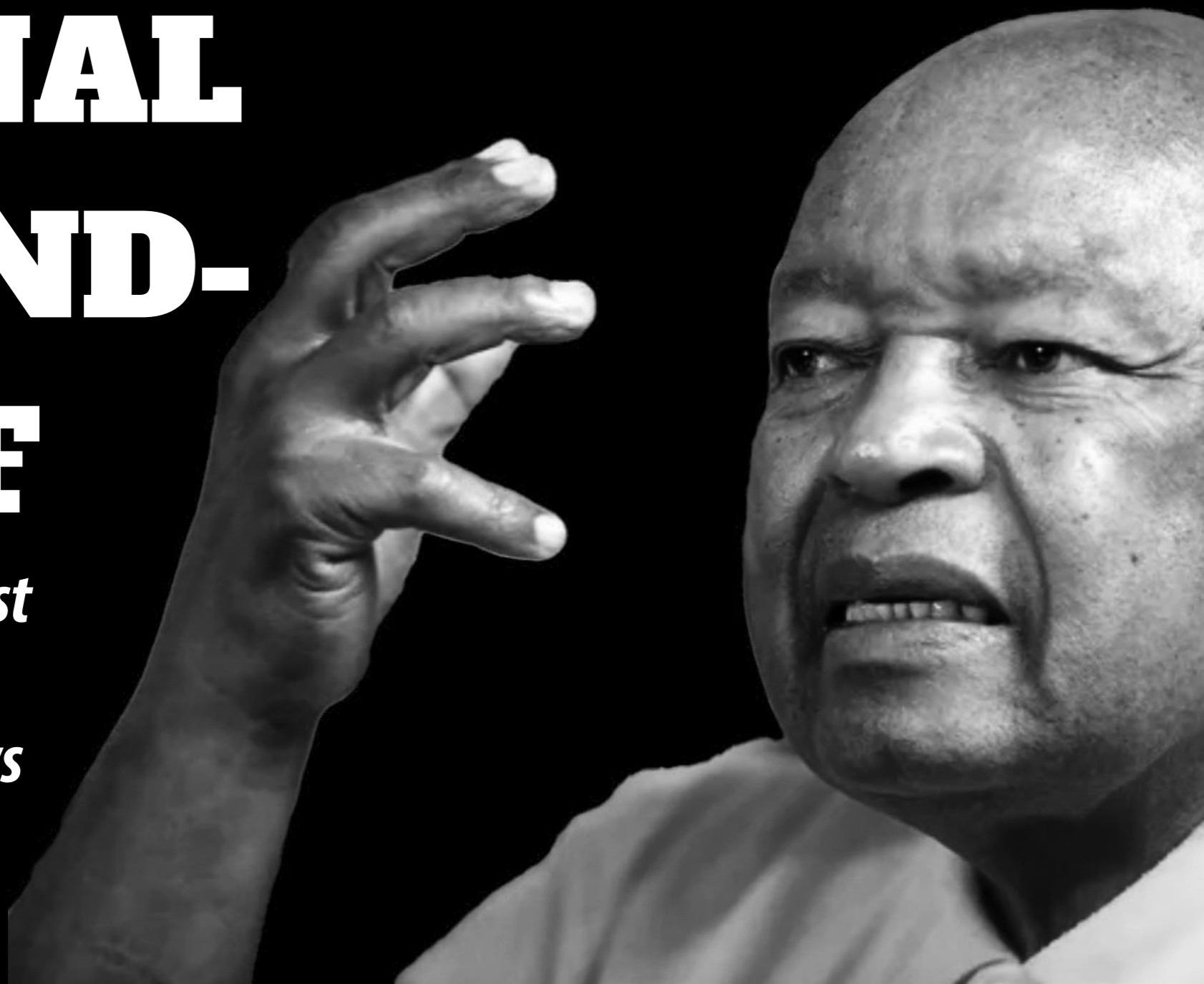
NEWS

9 Henri Van Rooijen St, New East End, Bloemfontein, 9300 / Tel: 051 430 0129 / www.journalnews.co.za

FINAL SEND- OFF

*Lekota's last
Journey as
Nation Says
Goodbye*

Page 2



MOKGOSI BRINGS SERVICE BLITZ TO RUSTENBURG

Premier leads Thuntsha Lerole programme delivering houses, a new library, farmer support and relief for vulnerable residents

By Lerato Mutlanyane

Residents of the Rustenburg Local Municipality breathed a sigh of relief as North West Premier Lazarus Mokgosi led the final segment of the Thuntsha Lerole Phase 5 Accelerated Service Delivery Programme, reinforcing the provincial government's commitment to fast-tracking service delivery and bringing government services closer

to communities.

Phase 5 of the programme, launched in August 2025, marks a strategic continuation of the province's efforts to deliver integrated services, tackle long-standing service delivery challenges and strengthen public participation in governance.

On 6 March, Mokgosi and members of the provincial leadership officially opened the Tshukudu Library in Ward 45 and handed over RDP houses to beneficiaries in the Thekwane area.

The premier also handed over two additional houses in Bokamoso, advancing government's drive to expand access to housing and restore dignity to communities through improved living conditions.

Meanwhile, the province is stepping up efforts to combat the spread of Foot-and-Mouth Disease (FMD), which has affected several parts of the country. A vaccination campaign is already underway, with vaccinations administered and information sessions conducted for farmers in the Mid-delkraal area.

The campaign forms part of broader efforts to accelerate vaccine roll-outs, strengthen coordination of funding and support farmers in protecting animal health and safeguarding the agricultural economy.

As part of initiatives supporting education and learner wellbeing, 200 sanitary towels were distributed to learners at Areaganeng Secondary School,

while school shoes were handed to learners from disadvantaged families at Marikana Primary and Kroondal Primary schools.

The provincial government also delivered food parcels to vulnerable households in Wards 32 and 33, ensuring support reaches the most disadvantaged residents.

Environmental sustainability formed part of the programme, with tree-planting activities conducted at the Masakhane Home-Based Care centre and at newly handed-over RDP houses.

The programme concluded with an interactive community feedback session at Braampie Sports Ground in Marikana, although proceedings were briefly disrupted by rainy weather. **Continues on Page 2**



**Club Rugby Revives
Local Spirits**



**KB The DJ Set to
Shake Bloemfontein
Dancefloors**



**Student Housing
Crisis Explodes in
Mangaung**

60-DAY

GENERAL AMNESTY

**ON METER TAMPERING, ILLEGAL CONNECTIONS
AND UNAUTHORISED METER SHIFTS.**

CENTLEC (SOC) Ltd commenced a 60-day General Amnesty on meter tampering, illegal connections and unauthorised meter shifts. This initiative invites consumers who have engaged in meter tampering, illegal connections, or unauthorised shifting of meter boxes to voluntarily disclose so as to normalise their status without facing the standard punitive penalties or prosecution.

THE TERMS OF THE AMNESTY INCLUDE:

Waiver of Penalties: Consumers who voluntarily disclose meter tampering or illegal connections during the amnesty period would qualify for full waiver of tampering of fines and back-dated billing penalties (or subjected to a significantly reduced flat fee).

Free Normalisation: CENTLEC teams will normalise the connection and seal the meter.

No Prosecution: Participants will be guaranteed immunity from criminal prosecution for past theft of electricity, provided they sign an acknowledgement of debt for future usage.

PARTICULARS NEEDED FROM THE CUSTOMER:

- Customer will be required to fill in the Declaration of Electricity Meter Tampering / Illegal Connection Form.
- Customer will be required to fill in the Request for Electricity Meter Normalization Form.
- Bring along Proof of Home Ownership (where applicable) or;
- An existing quotation or fine imposed.
- A Valid Identity Document.

PLEASE NOTE THAT THERE WILL BE A 5-DAYS WAITING PERIOD TO ASSESS THE APPLICATION.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION REGARDING
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PLEASE CONTACT US ON THESE NUMBERS:**

051 409 2334

FS Police Nab 1,200 Suspects in Massive Crime Crackdown

By Bernell Simons

Free State police have dealt a major blow to criminal networks, arresting more than 1,200 suspects and seizing large quantities of illegal drugs and firearms across the province in a week-long crackdown.

According to Free State police spokesperson Sergeant Mahlomola Kareli, tactical teams — including the Seloshesha Tactical Response Team (TRT), Ficksburg Crime Intelligence, and the Ladybrand K9 Unit — carried out early morning raids on five homes in Clocolan and Ficksburg suspected of operating as drug dens.

In Clocolan, a husband and wife were arrested after police discovered Mandrax tablets, while two more suspects were apprehended at nearby homes. In Ficksburg, a 37-year-old man was taken into custody after officers found additional Mandrax tablets.

Kareli said the crackdown continued in Botshabelo and Thaba Nchu, where the Provincial Anti-Gang Unit intercepted two men in Botshabelo with Crystal Meth and “Star” Mandrax worth R23,000, along with cash suspected to be the proceeds of crime.

In Thaba Nchu, two foreign nationals were arrested after police allegedly found Crystal Meth, KAT, and “Star” Mandrax with an estimated street value of R110,000.

In a separate incident, police are also investigating the fatal shooting of a 37-year-old herdsman in Welkom, believed to be linked to a dispute over communal grazing land and an earlier argument at a liquor outlet. No arrests have yet been made.

Kareli said the operations form part of Operation Shanela II, a province-wide intelligence-driven initiative targeting serious and organised crime.

Over the past week, police arrested more than 1,000 suspects for offences including murder, assault, property crimes, drug trafficking, and possession of unlicensed firearms.

Authorities also inspected more than 900 tuckshops and second-hand shops, while 1,095 illegal immigrants were detained.

Police seized significant quantities of Mandrax, Crystal Meth, Nyaope, KAT, Cocaine, and Heroin, disrupting several drug supply networks.

“These results demonstrate that our province will not tolerate drug peddlers or criminal syndicates,” said Kareli.

“Through intelligence-led policing, tactical interventions, and strong community cooperation, we continue to dismantle criminal networks and make our communities safer.”

‘Terror’ Lekota’s Last Salute

South Africa bids farewell to political icon, revolutionary giant and champion of democracy



Revolutionary Icon Mourned ... Mosiuoa Lekota's widow, Manthabiseng Cynthia Lekota, flanked by family as hundreds of mourners gathered to honour the late political heavyweight. Pictures: Facebook

By Matshidiso Selebeleng

The Bloemfontein City Hall was filled to capacity yesterday as the nation paused to honour a fallen political baobab. The atmosphere was solemn yet unifying as friends, family, freedom fighters, and politicians gathered to pay tribute to the late revolutionary, Mosiuoa “Terror” Lekota.

A revered anti-apartheid behemoth and seasoned politician who believed the strength of a nation lies in the unity of its people, Lekota passed away last week Wednesday at the age of 77 following a prolonged illness.

The former Free State Premier - the province's first Premier in post-apartheid South Africa - was hailed as a liberation stalwart and a non-racial leader. He belonged to a rare generation that resisted being victims of the apartheid regime and fought for a democratic future.

Beyond his public life, Lekota was described as a jovial family man who always prioritised his loved ones. His family remembered him as a figure of warmth who balanced his political duties with genuine affection.

“He was always a present father within the constraints of his political career, even through hardships, he played that role with so much adoration. He was committed and made sure that when he was home, there was warmth and love,” shared Lekota's niece, Alice Pula.

Pula noted that Lekota carried the struggles of the

people in the same heart that carried his family. She added that his passing is a painful loss that has left their hearts shattered. The family has vowed to preserve Lekota's teachings and walk in his footsteps to ensure his legacy is never abandoned.

Lekota was further honoured by comrades who walked the difficult path of the anti-apartheid struggle alongside him. These peers remembered how he consistently upheld the fundamental objectives of the liberation movement.

From the era of repression to the shaping of a new South Africa, Lekota remained committed to the oppressed masses.

Professor Itumeleng Mosala, a veteran of the Black Consciousness Movement (BCM) of Azania, shared memories of Lekota's youth. He noted that he could not remember a time when Lekota was away from the political arena.

“I've never known a time when Lekota was not in politics. He is a lifetime politician, I have never known him to work anywhere else except in politics,” Mosala remarked.

He recalled the period when many leaders were imprisoned on Robben Island or forced into exile in neighbouring and distant countries.

Mosala explained that they were not merely organising parties or organisations during that era. Instead, they were also focused on organising the minds and souls of black people to achieve true liberation.

Lekota is widely regarded as the father of the ‘free’ Free State who envisioned a country where everyone

co-existed peacefully. Executive Mayor of Mangaung Metropolitan Municipality, Gregory Nthatisi, noted that Lekota also suffered the family separations that were quite common under apartheid.

“We are here talking about someone who refused to be a victim of apartheid, someone who, like many others, suffered the separation of the husband from wife, children from parents, and families going in different directions,” he said.

Nthatisi reminisced about Lekota's integrity, recalling a time when he discovered corruption and consulted the community on how to proceed. This transparency showed his continued intentions to serve the people with honesty.

The Mangaung mayor also highlighted that Lekota was among those sent to Robben Island for his activism in 1974. This followed his work as an organiser for the South African Students' Organisation (SASO).

Among the notable attendees was businessman and anti-apartheid activist, Tokyo Sexwale, who also spent years on Robben Island. Sexwale shared that seeing Lekota succumb to illness was a heartbreaking experience for those who knew his strength.

“We speak with mixed emotions, it's not about merely how he lived or what he died for, but it is about us learning from the examples of his methods and the method of his example,” Sexwale told the mourners in Bloemfontein.

He warned that the poor in South Africa are descending further into grinding poverty, while corruption continues to rise, while lamenting that it is be-

coming increasingly difficult to distinguish between personal pockets and public funds.

Lekota served the African National Congress (ANC) until 2008 when he broke away to establish the Congress of the People (COPE). He served as the president of COPE from its formation in December 2008 until his death.

Speaking on behalf of the party, Member of Parliament, Pakes Dikgetsi, described Lekota as a man who sacrificed his freedom for the country. He also recalled that Lekota was still a young student when he first stood up against injustice.

“The life of Mosiuoa ‘Terror’ Lekota was not ordinary - it was a life lived in the service of something greater than himself ... the freedom, dignity, and democratic future of South Africa,” he said.

Dikgetsi stated that when a towering baobab falls, the earth trembles, and when a leader like Lekota falls, the nation must pause. He believes that through leaders of Lekota's calibre and stature, the public is instinctively aware that they are reflecting on a generation that gave its youth and life for others.

The people who served and fought side by side with him encouraged South Africans to act on the values he stood for.

They reminded the crowd that he was a national leader who did not merely serve for political branding.

Lekota will be honoured with a Special Official Category 2 funeral tomorrow, 14 March 2026, in Bloemfontein.

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Msibi Reinstated as Suspension Overturned

Court reinstates RTMC CEO, ruling Board lacked authority to suspend him



Judge J Swanepoel on Monday delivered his judgement in favour of the suspended RTMC CEO, Makhosini Msibi (pictured). Pictures: Facebook

By Mpho Sekharume

Makhosini Msibi has emerged triumphant in a high-stakes legal battle against the Board of the Road Traffic Management Corporation (RTMC), with the Pretoria High Court ordering his immediate reinstatement.

The judgment, delivered by Judge J Swanepoel on Monday, serves as a resounding vindication for the CEO, who was sidelined for eight months under a ‘precautionary suspension’ that the court has now declared fundamentally unlawful.

By setting aside the suspension, the court effectively dismantled the Board's attempt to strip Msibi of his duties, ruling that it had bypassed the very laws meant to govern executive discipline.

The court found that the power to act against the

Msibi is legally reserved for the Shareholders Committee and the Minister of Transport. This means the Board had staged a unlawful power grab without the necessary written delegation.

This ruling serves as a double victory for Msibi, as it also invalidated the Board Charter the respondents had misused to justify their overreach.

Meanwhile, the path is now clear for Msibi to resume his leadership at the state entity, after his authority was reinforced by a judicial confirmation that the Board cannot act as judge and jury outside of its statutory mandate.

As ordered by the court, the Board now has a narrow 90-day window to attempt to regularise its internal policies. The court further ordered that the Board pay Msibi's legal costs underscoring a resounding victory for the RTMC CEO.

Mokgosi Brings Service Blitz to Rustenburg



North West Premier Lazarus Mokgosi during the final segment of the Thuntsha Lerole Phase 5 Accelerated Service Delivery Programme in Rustenburg. Pictures: Facebook

Continues from Page 1

weather. With the completion of Phase 5 of the Thuntsha Lerole Accelerated Service Delivery Programme, attention now turns to whether the North West provincial government will soon roll out Phase 6. With Phase 5 of the Thuntsha Lerole Accelerated Service Delivery Programme now concluded, the North West provincial government says the

initiative continues to play a critical role in taking services directly to communities. Residents welcomed the delivery of housing, social support and agricultural assistance, while attention now turns to whether the province will soon roll out Phase 6 to sustain the momentum of bringing government closer to the people.

Opposition parties slam JB Marks adjustment budget

The Democratic Alliance and the Freedom Front Plus in the JB Marks Local Municipality have strongly criticised the adoption of the municipality's 2025/26 Adjustment Budget, claiming it was forced through council despite serious financial concerns.

The budget was eventually adopted with the support of the African National Congress (ANC), Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) and the Patriotic Alliance (PA).

According to DA councillor Madra de Bruin, the budget was adopted during a council meeting on Friday March 6, after the Executive Mayor, Gaba Thithiba Ka Qhele and the Speaker, Rosy Dassie, reconvened council to pass the same budget that had previously been blocked.

"Instead of addressing the legitimate concerns raised by councillors, the Executive Mayor and Speaker reconvened Council and pushed through the same unfunded Adjustment Budget," said de Bruin.

VF Plus councillor Thys Rossouw stated the budget was tabled for approval without any consultation with opposition parties, prompting the VF Plus to object. The VF Plus had already voted against the adoption of the adjustment budget on Friday, February 27.

"We also pointed out that millions of rand in this budget were suddenly allocated to vanity projects such as the construction of sports stadiums, while basic services and infrastructure in Potchefstroom and Ventersdorp continue to deteriorate," said Rossouw in a press statement last week.

"It is disgraceful that the ANC in JB Marks is attempting to divert essential funds earmarked to repair water and electricity infrastructure in Ventersdorp to populist projects in an effort to regain lost credibility."

Rossouw added that the VF Plus will continue to fight for a responsible and corruption-free municipality that places the interests of residents in Potchefstroom and Ventersdorp first.

De Bruin said the DA believes the adjustment budget is "deeply flawed and financially irresponsible", pointing to an operating deficit, increasing creditor balances and growing pressure on the municipality's cash flow.

She added that weak revenue collection and rising municipal debt continue to threaten the long-term financial sustainability of the municipality.

At the same time, residents across the municipality are facing ongoing service delivery failures, including recurring pipe bursts, sewer spillages and persistent water supply problems.

"Communities across JB Marks are dealing with recurring pipe bursts, ongoing sewer spillages, low or no water pressure and infrastructure that fails shortly after repairs. In some areas, raw sewage continues to flow into residential yards, yet Council has now adopted a budget that claims investment in water and sanitation while residents continue to live with the daily consequences of failing infrastructure," de Bruin said.

By the time of publication, the JB Marks Local Municipality had not yet responded to a request for comment. — *The Citizen*

MPAC meeting rescheduled to allow for greater public participation



The chairperson of MPAC, Clr. Rufane Makousa. Pictures: Facebook

The Municipal Public Accounts Committee (MPAC) Public Participation Meeting has been postponed to Thursday, March 19, due to the fact that information regarding the original meeting, scheduled to take place today (Thursday, March 12), had not been sufficiently disseminated.

The purpose of the MPAC meeting is to allow public participation on the 2024/25 Annual Report. The Municipal Finance Management Act of 2003 in terms of section 129(3) requires Municipal Council to consider the Annual Report and provide an opportunity for public participation regarding comment and feedback.

The chairperson realised that some community members were not aware of the scheduled meeting. It was therefore considered necessary to postpone the meeting in order to allow for proper communication and marketing so that residents from various areas are adequately informed and have the opportunity to attend," stated JB Marks Municipality spokesperson, Jeanette Tshite.

"It would be counterproductive to proceed with a public participation meeting if the invitation did not reach a significant portion of the community."

The Municipality apologises for any inconvenience caused by this change. All Members of Community and Stakeholders are encouraged to attend the meeting on the rescheduled date," added Tshite.

Student Housing Crisis Explodes in Mangaung

By Bernell Simons

Frustration is boiling over in Mangaung's student neighbourhoods as a growing housing crisis pits students, residents, landlords and the municipality against each other.

Students accuse landlords of charging premium rents for unsafe and overcrowded rooms. Residents blame the spread of informal student housing for rising crime and failing services. Landlords, meanwhile, point to weak municipal oversight, while the municipality itself now faces claims it allowed the situation to spiral out of control.

What began as a shortage of student accommodation has evolved into a full-blown urban conflict — brought sharply into focus during the recent Safer City Indaba in Bloemfontein, where safety, infrastructure failures and law enforcement challenges dominated discussions.

At the centre of the debate is Mangaung Executive Mayor Gregory Nthatsi, who on Thursday (12 March) convened landlords, officials and other stakeholders in an effort to restore order to the city's rapidly expanding student accommodation sector.

His message was clear: the era of unregulated student housing is coming to an end.

"We cannot allow profit to come before safety. Compliance is not optional," Nthatsi told accommodation providers during the engagement, which followed mounting complaints about overcrowding, crime and deteriorating living conditions in student-dense neighbourhoods.

Students Paying More for Less
Bloemfontein — home to the University of the Free State, Central University of Technology, Motheo TVET College and several private colleges — has seen a steady increase in privately owned student accommodation as institutions struggle to provide sufficient on-campus residence space.

While the shortage has created a booming rental market, students say it has also opened the door to exploitation.

Tenants report paying high rents for rooms in converted houses plagued by poor sanitation, unreliable electricity and blocked sewer systems. Others de-



Executive Mayor of Mangaung Metropolitan Municipality Gregory Nthatsi addressed student accommodation landlords at the Braam Fisher auditorium yesterday. Picture: Facebook

scribe overcrowded buildings, a lack of security and slow responses to maintenance problems.

"We are paying as if this is luxury housing, but we live with broken toilets, leaking pipes and no safety," said one student living in privately run accommodation near campus.

Some students also claim that when incidents occur, police response times are slow, forcing residents to rely on private security companies or neighbours for help.

Residents Say Neighbourhoods Are Under Pressure

Long-time residents in suburbs with high student populations — including Universitas, Brandwag, Bloemanda and Hillside View — say the rapid growth of student accommodation has transformed once-quiet streets into overcrowded areas marked by increased

traffic, noise and safety concerns.

Illegal building conversions, backyard structures and poorly maintained properties are among the most common complaints. Residents accuse both landlords and the municipality of failing to enforce bylaws.

Some community members argue that parts of the city now resemble informal settlements operating under the label of student accommodation.

"These places are not proper residences anymore," one resident said during the meeting. "They are overcrowded buildings with no control, and nobody takes responsibility."

Landlords Defend Their Role

Accommodation providers reject claims that they are solely responsible for the problem. Many argue that they stepped in to fill a gap left by universities and government, investing in properties to house students

who would otherwise have nowhere to live.

They also point to rising operating costs, delayed payments from student funding schemes and complex municipal processes as obstacles to full compliance.

"Landlords are expected to provide housing, but the rules keep changing and the municipality does not always offer support," said Universitas-based student housing provider Bongani Mazwi.

Mazwi said landlords are willing to comply with regulations but require clearer guidelines, faster approvals and consistent enforcement.

Several landlords also questioned whether weak municipal oversight allowed unsafe accommodation to operate for years without intervention, accusing the municipality of "looking the other way".

Municipality Promises Crackdown

Concerns raised during discussions linked to the Safer City Indaba highlighted deeper problems in the city's regulatory system.

Broken streetlights, damaged roads, sewer spillages and unreliable municipal services in student areas have raised doubts about the municipality's ability to monitor the rapidly growing accommodation market.

Critics argue that poor enforcement allowed unlawful building conversions, overcrowding and non-compliant properties to flourish.

Nthatsi acknowledged the concerns but rejected claims that the municipality deliberately ignored the problem. "We accept that enforcement has not always been strong enough, but that is exactly why we are acting now," he said.

The mayor confirmed that the city will intensify inspections, require proper registration of student accommodation and strictly enforce health, fire and zoning regulations.

Properties that fail to meet required standards could face penalties or closure.

Nthatsi said the municipality also plans to work closely with the University of the Free State, law enforcement and community organisations to monitor conditions in student-heavy areas.

"This is not about shutting people down," he said. "It is about making sure students live in safe conditions and residents feel secure in their neighbourhoods."

Journal NEWS

HAPPY INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

THE FUTURE OF OUR WORLD IS ONLY AS BRIGHT AS THE FUTURE OF OUR GIRLS.

METRO MUNICIPALITY **METRO MUNISIPALITEIT** **LEKGOTLA LA MOTSE**

PUBLIC NOTICE

BIDS BULLETIN NO: 206 (13 MARCH 2026) – BIDS TO BE DEPOSITED IN BID BOX A

BID NUMBER	DESCRIPTION	SPECIAL CONDITION AS PER SUPPLY CHAIN MANAGEMENT POLICY SECTION 23.13.7	EVALUATION CRITERIA	CIDB GRADING	COMPULSORY BRIEFING SESSION	PRICE (Non-refundable)	CONTACT PERSON (TECHNICAL)	SCM CONTACT PERSON	CLOSING DATE AND TIME
MMM/BID 703(AA): 2025/2026	COMMUNICATIONS AND MARKETING SERVICES FOR MANGAUNG METRO MUNICIPALITY. (RE-ADVERTISEMENT)	Not Applicable.	80-Price 20-Specific Goals Specific goals and Functionality Details in the document.	None	Date: 24 March 2026 Venue: Floreat Hall, Bram Fischer Building Cnr. Maakraf & Nelson Mandela. Time: 10:00am	R 421.00	Nicolette Maysiels @ 051 405 8976 Email: nicolette.maysiels@mangaung.co.za Cleevus Francis @ 051 405 8088. Email: cleevus.francis@mangaung.co.za	Thabo Mkuzangwe @ 051 411 3219. Email: thabo.mkuzangwe@mangaung.co.za Thapelo Mothibi @ 051 411 3234. Email: thapelo.mothibi@mangaung.co.za	Date: 14 April 2026 Time: 11:30am
MMM/BID 740(AA): 2025/2026	PURCHASING, INSTALLATION, MAINTENANCE AND REPLACEMENT OF CLOSE CIRCUIT TELEVISION CAMERAS, ACCESS CONTROL SYSTEM (ACS), BOOM-BARRIER AND TURNSTILE. (RE-ADVERTISEMENT)	Not Applicable	80-Price 20-Specific Goals Specific goals and Functionality Details in the document.	None	Date: 25 March 2026 Venue: Floreat Hall, Bram Fischer Building Cnr. Maakraf & Nelson Mandela Time: 10H00am	R 421.00	Motlatsi Koekoe @ 051 406 6303 Email: motlatsi.koekoe@mangaung.co.za Frans Wilson @ 051 406 6378 Email: frans.wilson@mangaung.co.za	Portia Mollo @ 051 411 3219. Email: portia.mollo@mangaung.co.za Karabo Pilusa @ 051 411 3234 Email: karabo.pilusa@mangaung.co.za	Date: 15 April 2026 Time: 11:30am
MMM/BID 791(A): 2025/2026	APPOINTMENT A SERVICE PROVIDER TO COMMISSION, MAINTAIN AND EXPAND AN INTERIM AUTOMATIC FARE COLLECTION (AFC) AND ADVANCED PUBLIC TRANSPORT MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (APTMS-LITE). (RE-ADVERTISEMENT)	Not Applicable	80-Price 20-Specific Goals Specific goals and Functionality Details in the document.	None	Date: 26 March 2026 Venue: Supply Chain Management Offices Tender Room; No.6 Mannion Road, Orangesig; Bloemfontein; 9300 Time: 10H00am	R 844.00	Moleboheng Motsumi @ 051 405 8793 Email: moleboheng.motsumi@mangaung.co.za Prem Sooknanan @ 051 405 8101. Email: prem.sooknanan@mangaung.co.za	Portia Mollo @ 051 411 3219. Email: portia.mollo@mangaung.co.za Ntombikayise Makhina @ 051 411 3234. Email: ntombikayise.makhina@mangaung.co.za	Date: 16 April 2026 Time: 11:30am
MMM/BID 805: 2025/2026	SUPPLY, INSTALLATION AND MAINTENANCE OF ELECTRONIC OIL MANAGEMENT SYSTEM AT MANGAUNG METROPOLITAN MUNICIPALITY.	Not Applicable	80-Price 20-Specific Goals Specific goals and Functionality Details in the document.	None	Date: 27 March 2026 Venue: Mechanical boardroom, 09 Rhodes Avenue, Orangesig, Bloemfontein, 9300. Time: 10H00am	R 421.00	Mompoti Thihale @ 051 405 8791. Email: mompoti.thihale@mangaung.co.za	Thabo Mkuzangwe @ 051 411 3219. Email: thabo.mkuzangwe@mangaung.co.za Lindiwe Ndebele @ 051 411 3234. Email: lindiwe.ndebele@mangaung.co.za	Date: 17 April 2026 Time: 11:30am

NO PAYMENTS WILL BE ACCEPTED AT SUPPLY CHAIN MANAGEMENT OFFICES. PAYMENTS ARE PERMISSIBLE AT THE FOLLOWING MUNICIPAL PAY POINTS:
 • BRAM FISCHER BUILDING BLOEMFONTEIN,
 • RE -A-HOLA SHOPPING COMPLEX - BOTSHABELO,
 • THABA - NCHU CIVIC CENTRE, HOSTEL ONE - BLOEMFONTEIN (DR. BELCHER ROAD),
 • MANGAUNG REGIONAL OFFICES - CNR. MOSHOESHOE & GEORGE LUBBE ROADS BLOEMFONTEIN.

ALTERNATIVELY, DIRECT OR ELECTRONIC DEPOSITS CAN BE MADE TO THE MMM BANK ACCOUNT:
FIRST NATIONAL BANK(FNB), ACCOUNT NO:63162512694, BRANCH CODE:230134, REF NO: 4302142551029ZZZZI1:
PROOF OF PAYMENT MAY BE SENT TO: tshwanelo.theletsane@mangaung.co.za : 051 411 3200

THE AVAILABILITY OF DOCUMENTS: 13 March 2026

- ALL BID DOCUMENTS ARE AVAILABLE AS HARD COPIES ONLY FROM MONDAY TO FRIDAY, DURING BUSINESS HOURS, 07H45-16H15
- ALL BID DOCUMENTS ARE TO BE COLLECTED AND SUBMITTED AT: SUPPLY CHAIN MANAGEMENT OFFICES, NO.6 MANNION ROAD, ORANGESIG, BLOEMFONTEIN, 9301

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MATJHABENG LOCAL MUNICIPALITY



Public Notice

INTERNAL/ EXTERNAL ADVERTISEMENT

PROJECT MANAGEMENT UNIT MANAGER PMU (FIVE YEAR FIXED TERM CONTRACT POSITION)

SALARY: : R1 294 380 p.a. (All inclusive package)
POST LEVEL: 3
MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS:

Bachelor's Degree in the Built Environment Coupled with 5 Years' experience in managing fast-paced projects in public sector preferably in Local Government. Computer literacy and a Valid Driver's license. Sound knowledge of Local Government Administration, rich understanding of Project Management processes, contracts management and well knowledgeable with construction contracts. Registration as a Professional with recognized South African professional council will be an added advantage.

KEY PERFORMANCE AREAS:

- Manage all applicable grants funding within the Municipal accounting system.
- Responsible for the management of the PMU staff and their respective outputs.
- Primarily responsible to integrate, co-ordinate, manage and financially administer grants funded and internal funded Projects in the Municipality's area of jurisdiction.
- Ensure compliance with all applicable legislation, policies and conditions applicable to all conditional grants.
- Submission of monthly, quarterly, bi-annual, annual and ad hoc reports to Sector departments (Provincial and National) within applicable or as required by the conditions of the grants.
- Co-ordinate the project identification process in terms of relevant IDPs.
- Co-ordinate the project feasibility process with the involvement of other Municipal Departments.
- Responsible to play oversight to PMU Engineer to Develop detailed design, review project drawings, bill of quantities, tender and contract documentation.
- Assess the potential risks of specific projects, as well as undertake risk management on specialist rolls.
- Liaise effectively with all Project Stakeholders.
- Think both creatively and logically to resolve design, tender and contract documentation and resolve problems.
- Manage budget and other project resources.
- Correct any project deficiencies that affect production, quality and safety requirements prior to final evaluation and project reviews.

SENIOR TECHNICIANS: CIVIL (2 POSITIONS) FIVE YEAR FIXED TERM CONTRACT POSITION

SALARY: R869 112 p.a (All-inclusive package)
POST LEVEL 5/4
MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS

National Diploma/ BTech/ BEng Tech/ Bachelor's Degree in Civil Engineering coupled with 3 years in managing fast paced projects in public sector, preferably Local Government. Computer Literacy and Drivers License. Rich understanding of project management processes and stages from ECSA and SACPCMP perspective. Knowledgeable in construction contracts and applying them in practice. Registration with the Engineering Council of South Africa will be an added advantage.

KEY PERFORMANCE AREAS:

- Project Manager: Budget control, preparation of reports, correspondence, cost estimates, quality assurance, quality control.
- Report on each project and on the Municipal conditional grants (MIG, INEP, WSIG, EPWP etc.) programme collectively.
- Maintain project performance data on national database. Compile all financial DORA report.
- Verify and reconcile monthly transfers by project vote from funders.
- Participate in the Municipal budget process /Conditional grants formula compliance.
- Participate in the PMU Operational budget process.
- Technical support and evaluation of proposed projects in alignment with the respective Municipal's IDP and the Regional and Provincial Growth and Development Plans.
- Manage labour-intensive projects in line with the EPWP framework and the related reporting requirements.
- Arrange regular project progress and

technical meetings.

- Ensure compliance of all legal aspects and conditions, required from the different spheres of government.
- Conduct site visits to ensure compliance to contract conditions and quality control.
- Manage cash flows and committed project expenditure.
- Verify payments certificates and preparation of monthly payment schedule documentation.

SENIOR TECHNICIAN: ELECTRICAL FIVE YEAR FIXED TERM CONTRACT POSITION

SALARY: R869 112 p.a (All-inclusive package)
POST LEVEL 5/4
MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS

National Diploma/ BTech/ BEng Tech/ Bachelor's Degree in Electrical Engineering coupled with 3 years in managing fast paced projects in public sector, preferably Local Government. Computer Literacy and Drivers License. Rich understanding of project management processes and stages from ECSA and SACPCMP perspective. Knowledgeable in construction contracts and applying them in practice. Registration with the Engineering Council of South Africa will be an added advantage.

KEY PERFORMANCE AREAS:

- Project Manager: Budget control, preparation of reports, correspondence, cost estimates, quality assurance, quality control.
- Report on each project and on the Municipal conditional grants (MIG, INEP, WSIG, EPWP etc.) programme collectively.
- Maintain project performance data on national database. Compile all financial DORA report.
- Verify and reconcile monthly transfers by project vote from funders.
- Participate in the Municipal budget process /Conditional grants formula compliance.
- Participate in the PMU Operational budget process.
- Technical support and evaluation of proposed projects in alignment with the respective Municipal's IDP and the Regional and Provincial Growth and Development Plans.
- Manage labour-intensive projects in line with the EPWP framework and the related reporting requirements.
- Arrange regular project progress and technical meetings.
- Ensure compliance of all legal aspects and conditions, required from the different spheres of government.
- Conduct site visits to ensure compliance to contract conditions and quality control.
- Manage cash flows and committed project expenditure.
- Verify payments certificates and preparation of monthly payment schedule documentation.

PURIFICATION WORKS AND PUMP STATIONS MILLWRIGHTS (5 POSITIONS)

SALARY: R320 676 – R364 284 p.a (Excluding Benefits i.e bonus, housing subsidy, pension fund and medical aid)
POST LEVEL: 9
MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS

- Grade 11 OR N2
- Qualified and Registered Trade Tested Artisan with 2 years' experience as Millwright.
- Valid driver's license
- Experience in the operation and maintenance of sewer pump stations and Waste – Water Treatment Works would be an added recommendation.

KEY PERFORMANCE AREAS:

- Responsible for electrical, electronic and mechanical maintenance at all Wastewater Purification Plants and Pump stations in Matjhabeng
- Keeping of overtime, timesheets, registers and equipment log sheets
- Ensure safety measures are kept and implemented as legally required
- Ensure electrical and electronic work is done according to appropriate legislation
- Inspect and monitor performance of equipment at various plants and pump stations
- Responsible for roadworthiness of vehicles used for inspection of plants and pump stations
- Required to work outside normal work-

ing hours during emergencies and planned overtime.

COMMUNITY SERVICES TRACTOR MECHANIC (1 POSITION)

SALARY: R320 676 – R364 284 p.a (Excluding Benefits i.e bonus, housing subsidy, pension fund and medical aid)
POST LEVEL: 9
MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS:

- Grade 11 OR N2 Diesel: Tractor Mechanic. Occupational Certificate will be an added advantage
- Tractor Mechanic; Trade Certificate (Section 13 Red Seal) Diesel Mechanic or Tractor Mechanic; OR Trade Certificate (Section 26D Red Seal) Diesel Mechanic or Tractor Mechanic
- Completed Apprenticeship (under the old Manpower Training Act) with 2 years on-the-job experience relating to tractors; OR 5 years on-the-job experience relating to tractors
- Code B driver license (C1 driver license will be an added advantage)

KEY PERFORMANCE AREAS

- Diagnose, repair and maintain tractors and related equipment.
- Perform preventative and scheduled maintenance on tractors and related equipment.
- Troubleshoot engine/hydraulic failures and replace worn parts.
- Ensure safety and compliance of tractors and related equipment
- Travel to job sites to repair tractors and related equipment.
- Develop and maintain records of repairs, inspections and service history.
- Develop specifications for parts that must be ordered.
- Prepare estimates for cost and labour hours.
- Maintain safety standards in the workshop.
- Adhere to safety regulations, including OHS standards.
- Conduct regular safety inspections on tractors and related equipment.

KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS REQUIRED

- Able to determine effective and efficient solutions to mechanical problems.
- Meticulous approach to repairs to ensure safety and quality.
- Ability to communicate technical issues clearly.
- Manage tasks efficiently in a fast-paced environment
- Able to learn new technologies.
- Proficient with diagnostic software and hand tools.
- Able to read blueprints and technical manuals.
- Ability to work and be productive without supervision.
- Physically fit to lift heavy parts and stand for long periods.
- Able to work effectively in a team.
- Maintain professionalism and able to work under pressure.
- Keep a clean and safe workspace.

DIESEL MECHANIC (2 POSITIONS)

SALARY: R320 676 – R364 284 p.a (Excluding Benefits i.e bonus, housing subsidy, pension fund and medical aid)
POST LEVEL: 9
MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS

- Grade 11 OR N2 Diesel Mechanic. Occupational Certificate: Diesel Mechanic will be an added advantage
- Trade Certificate (Section 13 Red Seal): Diesel Mechanic; OR Trade Certificate (Section 26D Red Seal): Diesel Mechanic
- Completed Apprenticeship (under the old Manpower Training Act) with 2 years on-the-job experience relating to light, medium and heavy-duty vehicles and trailers; OR 5 years on-the-job experience relating to light, medium and heavy-duty vehicles and trailers
- Code C driver license with a valid PDP (EC with a valid PDP will be an added advantage).

KEY PERFORMANCE AREAS

- Diagnose, repair and maintain light, medium and heavy-duty vehicles and trailers.
- Perform preventative and scheduled maintenance on light, medium and heavy-duty vehicles and trailers.
- Troubleshoot engine/hydraulic failures and replace worn parts.
- Ensure safety and compliance of light,

medium and heavy-duty vehicles and trailers.

- Travel to job sites to repair light, medium and heavy-duty vehicles and trailers.
- Develop and maintain records of repairs, inspections and service history.
- Develop specifications for parts that must be ordered.
- Prepare estimates for cost and labour hours.
- Maintain safety standards in the workshop.
- Adhere to safety regulations, including OHS standards.
- Conduct regular safety inspections on light, medium and heavy-duty vehicles and trailers

KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS REQUIRED

- Able to determine effective and efficient solutions to mechanical problems.
- Meticulous approach to repairs to ensure safety and quality.
- Ability to communicate technical issues clearly.
- Manage tasks efficiently in a fast-paced environment
- Able to learn new technologies.
- Proficient with diagnostic software and hand tools.
- Able to read blueprints and technical manuals.
- Ability to work and be productive without supervision.
- Physically fit to lift heavy parts and stand for long periods.
- Able to work effectively in a team.
- Maintain professionalism and able to work under pressure.
- Keep a clean and safe workspace.

EARTHMOVING / HEAVY EQUIPMENT (YELLOW FLEET) MECHANIC (3 POSITIONS)

SALARY: R320 676 – R364 284 p.a (Excluding Benefits i.e bonus, housing subsidy, pension fund and medical aid)
POST LEVEL: 9
MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS:

- Grade 11 OR N2 Diesel Mechanic. Occupational Certificate: Diesel Mechanic will be an added advantage
- Trade Certificate (Section 13 Red Seal): Earthmoving Equipment Mechanic / Heavy Equipment Mechanic; OR (Section 26D Red Seal): Earthmoving Equipment Mechanic / Heavy Equipment Mechanic
- Completed Apprenticeship (under the old Manpower Training Act) with 2 years on-the-job experience relating to heavy equipment / heavy equipment; OR 5 years on-the-job experience relating to earthmoving / heavy equipment
- Code EC driver-licence with a valid PDP

KEY PERFORMANCE AREAS

- Diagnose, repair and maintain TLBs, graders, excavators, front-end loaders and other yellow fleet.
- Perform preventative and scheduled maintenance on yellow fleet.
- Troubleshoot engine/hydraulic failures and replace worn parts.
- Ensure safety and compliance of yellow fleet.
- Travel to job sites to repair yellow fleet.
- Develop and maintain records of repairs, inspections and service history.
- Develop specifications for parts that must be ordered.
- Prepare estimates for cost and labour hours.
- Maintain safety standards in the workshop.
- Adhere to safety regulations, including OHS standards.
- Conduct regular safety inspections on yellow fleet.

KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS REQUIRED

- Able to determine effective and efficient solutions to mechanical problems.
- Meticulous approach to repairs to ensure safety and quality.
- Ability to communicate technical issues clearly.
- Manage tasks efficiently in a fast-paced environment
- Able to learn new technologies.
- Proficient with diagnostic software and hand tools.
- Able to read blueprints and technical manuals.
- Ability to work and be productive without supervision.
- Physically fit to lift heavy parts and stand for long periods.

- Able to work effectively in a team.
- Maintain professionalism and able to work under pressure.

AUTO ELECTRICIAN (1 POSITION)

SALARY: R320 676 – R364 284 p.a (Excluding Benefits i.e bonus, housing subsidy, pension fund and medical aid)
POST LEVEL: 9
MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS:

- Grade 11 OR N2 Transportation Electrician (Automotive Electrician). Occupational Certificate: Transportation Electrician (Automotive Electrician) will be an added advantage
- Trade Certificate (Section 13 Red Seal) Auto Electrician; OR Trade Certificate (Section 26D Red Seal) Auto Electrician
- Completed Apprenticeship (under the old Manpower Training Act) with 2 years on-the-job experience as an Auto Electrician; OR 5 years on-the-job experience as an Auto Electrician
- Code C driver license (EC driver license will be an added advantage).

KEY PERFORMANC AREAS

- Identify and diagnose issues with vehicle electrical systems using computerised test equipment.
- Repair/replace faulty vehicle electrical components.
- Install and repair electrical wiring in vehicles and trailers.
- Interpret technical wiring diagrams.
- Test vehicle lighting systems, batteries and other electrical components on vehicles and trailers.
- Develop specifications for parts that must be ordered.
- Prepare estimates for cost and labour hours.
- Maintain safety standards in the workshop.
- Adhere to safety regulations, including OHS standards.
- Conduct regular safety inspections on vehicles.

KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS REQUIRED

- Able to determine effective and efficient solutions to electrical problems.
- Meticulous approach to repairs to ensure safety and quality.
- Ability to communicate technical issues clearly.
- Manage tasks efficiently in a fast-paced environment
- Able to learn new technologies.
- Proficient with diagnostic software and hand tools.
- Able to read blueprints and technical manuals.
- Ability to work and be productive without supervision.
- Physically fit to lift heavy parts and stand for long periods.
- Able to work effectively in a team.
- Maintain professionalism and able to work under pressure.
- Keep a clean and safe workspace.

Enquiries regarding the above positions: Recruitment office @ (057) 391 3181

- Candidates are requested to forward the complete application form and a comprehensive Curriculum Vitae, including the necessary documentation (i.e. original certified copies of qualifications) to The Senior Manager Human Resources, P.O Box 708 Welkom 9460 or may hand it to the Municipal Building the Municipal Main Building, Room 5, 3rd Floor, Welkom.
- Applicants are also encouraged to submit their applications online via the municipality's official website: <https://mlmjp.matjhabeng.co.za>.
- Fraudulent qualifications or documentation will immediately disqualify any applicant.
- A candidate who canvasses any Councilor and / or Senior Official for preference will be disqualified immediately from the selection process or from appointment.
- Matjhabeng Municipality complies with affirmative action in terms of the Employment Equity Act (Act 55 of 1998)

CLOSING DATE: 27 MARCH 2026

Please note: If applicants are not contacted for an interview within six weeks after the closing date, they must accept that their applications were unsuccessful. The Matjhabeng Municipality reserves the right not to fill any advertised position(s).

**ORIGINAL COPY SIGNED
ACTING MUNICIPAL MANAGER
THABO PANYANI**

Hlabisa's Race to Save Municipalities

COGTA Minister's bold White Paper seeks to overhaul failing municipalities as water and power crises paralyse the Free State and Northern Cape

By Bernell Simons

South Africa's municipalities are crumbling under the weight of mismanagement, corruption, and mounting debt. In the Free State, Northern Cape, and North West, water runs dry and electricity flickers while waste piles up in the streets.

Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (COGTA) Minister, Velenkosini Hlabisa, issued a blunt warning at a high-level executive dialogue in Centurion, Gauteng, on Tuesday.

Hlabisa insisted that the country can no longer tolerate the persistent reality of broken municipalities. "South Africa requires a stable, capable, and predictable local governance system that works consistently," the Minister told delegates.

He emphasised that a functional system cannot be

rebuilt through short-term fixes or temporary patches. The Free State serves as a grim example of the high stakes involved in this governance collapse. Residents in Bloemfontein and surrounding towns face chronic water shortages and delayed refuse collection as oversight fails.

Recent bulk water cut-offs were imposed across the province due to unpaid municipal debts, leaving households scrambling for basic supply. Rolling electricity outages have intensified public frustration as municipalities fail to pay Eskom for their power supply.

In the Northern Cape, Kimberley struggles with littered streets and repeated power interruptions that threaten small businesses. Maintenance backlogs have left public infrastructure vulnerable, leaving communities exasperated by the slow pace of essential repairs.

The North West province faces a different set of challenges, where deteriorating roads and water outages coincide with surging rural crime.

Farmers allege that organised criminal syndicates are exploiting municipal weaknesses to facilitate illegal mining and stock theft.

"South Africa requires a stable, capable, and pre-

dictable local governance system that works consistently," Hlabisa noted.

The Auditor-General's latest reports confirm this national crisis, with only 41 of 257 municipalities achieving clean audits in 2023/2024.

Hlabisa's draft White Paper on Local Government proposes a fully integrated system linking all spheres of government.

The plan introduces data-driven early-warning systems and enforces merit-based appointments for all senior municipal officials.

"This is about moving local government reform from paper to practice, from discussion to disciplined execution," Hlabisa said.

Digital governance will integrate financial management and procurement into one platform to curb corruption and improve accountability. Organised business leaders have been urged to offer practical proposals to ensure infrastructure maintenance and investment readiness.

For residents in Bloemfontein and Kimberley, these governance failures are no longer theoretical - they are a daily lived reality.



Amidst water cut-offs, blackouts, and rising crime, South Africa's municipal meltdown reaches a breaking point. Picture: Facebook

"Every day that taps run dry and roads break apart, trust in local government erodes further," said a Kimberley business owner.

Hlabisa acknowledged the scale of the challenge but insisted that bold reform is no longer optional for the state.

"We have the analysis. We have the architecture. What we need now is joint execution discipline," he added. The final draft of the White Paper is expected to reach Cabinet in the coming weeks.

Banks Launch Rural ID Services

A landmark partnership between Home Affairs and major banks is dismantling the logistical barriers that have long isolated rural Free State communities



By Bernell Simons

For decades, applying for an ID card in rural Free State has been a gruelling test of patience and financial resilience. Residents in towns like Thaba Nchu and Zastron often travelled long distances to Bloemfontein, incurring transport costs that low-income families could ill afford.

Without a valid identity document, citizens remain locked out of essential services, including healthcare, social grants, and the right to vote.

A new partnership under the Home Affairs @ Home programme now allows South Africans to apply for Smart IDs directly at bank branches. This digital initiative eliminates the need for exhausting trips to distant government offices by bringing essential services into the heart of the community.

The process is fast and secure, with biometric data captured at the branch in a session lasting only five to ten minutes.

"It is a massive relief," said Nomsa Mokoena, a resident of Thaba Nchu who previously waited days to process family applications.

She added: "Now, I can walk into my local bank and get it done in the morning; it saves us time and money."

The programme is vital in the Free State, where communities are dispersed across vast landscapes and government offices are few and far between. While the initiative has gained recent momentum, it began in 2015 as part of a long-term strategy to modernise national identification.

Current participants include Capitec, Standard Bank, and others, with the ambitious goal of expanding to 1 000 branches by 2029.

"The Smart ID digitisation programme is about restoring dignity and convenience to public service delivery," said Department of Home Affairs (DHA) Minister, Leon Schreiber.

"This system represents a tangible step toward modernised public services," he added.

Schreiber emphasised that instead of forcing people to travel, the government is finally bringing services closer to the people.

The project also accelerates the replacement of the green barcoded ID book, which is currently held by an estimated 16 million people.

All applications are biometrically verified through the Automated Biometric Identification System to prevent identity fraud.

In small towns, the impact is tangible for families who previously paid hundreds of rands in taxi fares for a single application.

"It's not just about convenience. It's about access," said Lerato Moloi, a social worker in Wesselsbron.

Moloi highlighted that these IDs serve as a lifeline, unlocking school enrolments and social support for the most vulnerable citizens.

While training and high volumes are expected to pose challenges, officials remain optimistic that this marks a new phase of community-focused service by the DHA.

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A FREE STATE THAT WORKS ALL DAY

Madlanga Commission reveals Shibiri's luxury purchases after securing loan from Matlala

Top cop Richard Shibiri has maintained the R70, 000 payment was a loan to fix his son's damaged cars



Suspended head of SAPS' organised crime unit, Richard Shibiri testifying at the Madlanga Commission of Inquiry. Picture: Screenshot

The Madlanga Commission has revealed that top cop Richard Shibiri purchased Gucci and Louis Vuitton shoes, a few months after receiving a payment from alleged crime boss, Vusumuzi "Cat" Matlala.

Shibiri has maintained that the R70,000 payment was a loan to fix his son's damaged cars.

He said he didn't have enough money to pay for the repairs despite his bank records showing he and his son had over R100,000 at the time.

The suspended head of organised crime at the South African Police Service (SAPS) continued to face grilling over the supposed "loan" he received from Matlala.

Shibiri told the commission he was in financial difficulty at the time and was forced to sell his cattle to reimburse Matlala.

However, bank records show a few months after receiving the money, Shibiri bought R19, 000 sneakers at Gucci and R3,000 sandals at Louis Vuitton in Sandton.

Shibiri said: "I decided I wanted to use the money to build something (a wall at his house), I thought I must not use the money, which will be loaned to me. I'll use it and pay it in December."

Co-commissioner Sandile Khumalo said: "But that (still) doesn't explain the Gucci and LV purchases because it shows you had money for those things."

Shibiri said the Gucci sneakers were a gift for a friend who bought him a Zegna suit the previous year. He said he got the Louis Vuitton sandals after exchanging a wallet he got as a birthday gift and paid the R3,000 difference. **EWN**

DA MPs walk out of ad hoc committee over 'incriminating' witness testimony



Top cop Richard Shibiri has maintained the R70, 000 payment was a loan to fix his son's damaged cars.

DA MP Glynnis Breytenbach: 'fair, principled leadership on crucial matters'. Picture: TimesLive

In a dramatic start to Thursday's proceedings of parliament's ad hoc committee, DA MPs abruptly exited the committee, citing "deep discomfort" about the testimony of businessman Kishene Chetty.

The committee is investigating allegations of corruption in the criminal justice system — claims supported by Chetty.

The businessman, who faces multiple criminal charges, submitted an affidavit alleging widespread misconduct, unethical interference, and abuse of power by the police, the National Prosecuting Authority (NPA), the Independent Police Investigative Directorate (Ipid) and the Investigative Directorate Against Corruption (Idac).

During his first attempt to testify, he was turned away after MPs ruled his statement lacked sufficient substantiating documentation.

While he returned on Thursday with a revised statement, proceedings stalled almost immediately.

As the evidence leader began the examination, MPs raised concern about the nature of Chetty's testimony.

Specifically, members warned that the witness risked incriminating himself in several pending criminal matters and noted the legal sensitivity of his allegations against the judiciary.

The debate quickly turned internal, with some MPs criticising the committee's legal team for failing to flag these issues before the hearing. Others pointed to a lack of investigative resources in parliament as the root cause of the oversight.

The primary point of contention involved the legal risks facing Chetty, who appeared without legal counsel. While some members argued that Chetty could simply choose which questions to answer, others noted that nearly his entire statement pertained to active, pending court cases.

DA MP Glynnis Breytenbach questioned why Chetty was being allowed to testify under such circumstances. "I have gone through this affidavit, and I am concerned about the contents and why Mr Chetty is here today," she said.

"I am even more concerned that he is here without any legal representation."

Breytenbach highlighted the risk of the businessman jeopardising his own defence in ongoing criminal trials.

"Chetty is accused in a number of very serious matters that are on the roll or to be placed on the roll. They are currently in court, and I don't know if his legal representatives know he's here."

"My major concern is that we operate on a principle of innocence until proven guilty, but he stands an excellent chance of enduring himself a lot of damage on matters that are on the roll."

"We are about to do serious damage to whatever case he has. I would urge him not to proceed," she added, before requesting that she and fellow MP Dianne Kohler Barnard be excused from the session.

ActionSA also expressed concern about the continuation of the hearing but remained seated.

Despite the walkout and the objections raised, committee chairperson Soviet Legganyane ruled that the proceedings would continue.

He maintained that the witness is protected by parliamentary privilege.

"We administer an oath here every day. It dictates that any evidence a witness presents to the committee cannot be used against them outside parliament, except in proceedings involving perjury. While he is here, he is protected by the provisions of the Act."

"Let him present what he wishes to present. After he has finished, if you decide to remain quiet, you may do so, and I will release him to go home."

Chetty said he was comfortable continuing giving his evidence. Proceedings continue. **TimesLIVE**



MEDIA ADVISORY

Please be advised that the Tabling of the Free State Provincial Budget, initially scheduled for tabling on 13 March 2026, has been postponed to **17 March 2026, 10:00 am** at the Bloemfontein City Hall.

All other arrangements remain the same

Issued by the
Free State Legislature
Communication & Marketing



For further information please contact
Mr. Jongi Ndakana: Spokesperson
Contact: 062 484 5682

41 Charlotte Maxeke Street, Bloemfontein








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Opinion

Dr Sello Sele
Lecturer in the Department of Sociology,
University of the Free State



Human Rights Day: The unfinished struggle for human rights



On 21 March South Africa celebrates Human Rights Day, marking a day in 1960 when 69 people were killed, and 180 were wounded protesting against the pass laws. This is a reminder of the struggles of our apartheid past, particularly the Sharpeville massacre. This day marked ordinary people rising in unison to proclaim their rights. It became an iconic date in our country's history, a reminder of both our treasured human rights and the immense cost paid to secure them.

With the advent of democracy in 1994, South Africa adopted a progressive Constitution that enshrines human rights at its core. The Bill of Rights guarantees fundamental freedoms to all individuals, emphasising the right to life, human dignity, equality, and freedom. These rights apply to everyone in South Africa, regardless of nationality, race, or legal status.

The promise betrayed
Despite our Constitution being regarded as one of the most progressive in the world, we witness gross human rights violations at various levels, of-

ten by the very institutions entrusted with upholding these rights. Law enforcement agencies, government structures, and businesses that should serve the public increasingly feature as perpetrators of human rights violations. The Madlanga Commission of Inquiry, established in July 2025, has laid bare a disturbing nexus between politics, business, and law enforcement. The commission arose after KwaZulu-Natal's police commissioner, Lieutenant-General Nhlahlhla Mkhwanazi, made serious allegations against suspended Police Minister Senzo Mchunu and suspended Deputy National Commissioner Shadrack Sibiyi. Mkhwanazi accused them of meddling in police investigations linked to the Political Killings Task Team (PKTT) and potentially protecting criminal syndicates. What has since emerged is a web of infiltration and influence involving controversial businessmen like Brown Mogotsi and Vusi "Cat" Matlala, who allegedly infiltrated politics and the police force for personal gains.

The anatomy of state capture: The Tembisa Hospital scandal

Perhaps nowhere is the human cost of this criminal nexus more visible than in the R2 billion Tembisa Hospital tender fraud. At the centre of this scandal stands businessman Hangwani Morgan Maumela. The Special Investigating Unit (SIU) has uncovered significant irregularities across 1 728 bundles worth over R816 million, tracing 41 suppliers linked to Maumela's operations. The diversion of hospital funds has constitutional consequences. Section 27 of the Constitution guarantees access to healthcare services. When funds allocated to public hospitals are siphoned into private bank accounts, patients are subjected to longer waiting times, medicine shortages and malfunctioning of medical equipment. This undermines the right to healthcare services for patients and entrenches already existing inequalities, as well-off citizens can seek private

care while the poor remain trapped in under-resourced healthcare institutions. Corruption in this regard is therefore not simply an economic crime; it is a structural violation of equality and human dignity.

The silencing of whistleblowers

This human rights violation extends further to those who dared to expose the truth about crime and corruption. In August 2021, Babita Deokaran, a Gauteng Department of Health official, halted R850 million in suspicious payments to companies linked to Tembisa Hospital. She had uncovered a sophisticated extraction network draining public health funds intended for the poorest communities and called for a forensic investigation. Eleven days later, she was shot dead outside her Johannesburg home. Her murder represents not only the violation of the right to life, but also an assault on freedom of expression and democratic accountability. Whistleblowers are citizens exercising their constitutional freedom to expose wrongdoing in the public interest.

Another witness who was 'silenced' was Marius van der Merwe, a former Ekurhuleni Metropolitan Police Department official who testified before the Madlanga Commission as witness D. His testimony implicated suspended EMPD deputy police chief Julius Mkhwanazi. Soon after, he too was murdered. Another witness, who happens to be with the Independent Police Investigative Directorate (Ipid), broke down during her testimony after revealing that her son was shot while she investigated EMPD officers. Collectively, these incidents exemplify how exposing corruption invites unwarranted death, undermining the very principles of human rights.

Power elite nexus at play

To comprehend these events, we must turn to the work of sociologist C Wright Mills, who analysed the relationship between what he termed the "power elite". Mills argued that American society was dom-

inated by an interlocking triumvirate of corporate, military, and political leaders whose interests fused into a self-serving ruling class. This framework, particularly his insights on the military-industrial complex offers a powerful lens for understanding the aforementioned web of corruption in South Africa.

In South Africa today, we see a variation of this phenomenon in which law enforcement, politicians, and criminal enterprises intersect. The Madlanga Commission revelations show how businessmen like Maumela, Matlala, and Brown infiltrated state institutions for personal enrichment at the expense of the poor. When law enforcement agencies, political figures and criminal syndicates are in cahoots and whistleblowers are assassinated, we witness the South African manifestation of Mills's power elite operation. When those entrusted with protecting citizens become entangled with those exploiting public funds, the right to equality before the law collapses. The law ceases to function as a neutral arbiter and instead becomes a shield for the powerful.

Conclusion: The unfinished struggle for human rights

Human Rights Day should not only commemorate past sacrifices; it should confront present social crises. The killings of whistleblowers, the plunder of public hospitals and allegations of political interference in policing reveal that human rights violations today are often systemic rather than spectacular. They occur not only through overt repression but through corruption networks that erode the state from within. The Sharpeville generation fought a state that openly denied rights. Contemporary South Africans face a subtler danger: a state that constitutionally affirms rights yet struggles to protect those who defend them. Until the Madlanga Commission and the Ad Hoc Committee result in tangible findings Human Rights Day will remain a symbolic observance rather than a living reality.

Love him or hate him, Lekota's impact on SA democracy is undeniable

He was not under anybody's shadow



Refilwe Mochoari
Editor-in-Chief

This time last year I received a hoax that Mosiuoa "Terror" Lekota had passed away. I found myself frantic, making midnight phone calls trying to verify the information that had just landed in my DM.

The person who sent me this text went mum when I asked why no one is talking about this, why am I not seeing anything in the news, and to this day, I am still wondering what their motive was for spreading such a big lie. The journalist in me wanted to break the news, but I could not because something about this text was dubious. This was a cruel reminder of how misinformation can spread and cause unnecessary misery.

Hi everyone my name is Refilwe Mochoari, tomorrow marks the real funeral of Mr Mosiuoa Patrick "Terror" Lekota, a man whose name is engraved into South Africa's political history.

He passed away last week in a Johannesburg hospital at the age of 77. Lekota will be laid to rest at his home in Bloemfontein.

His nickname "Terror" was earned not in politics, but on the soccer field. He was fierce in every role that he occupied. His political history was extremely complex and came with a lot of controversy. Some loved him, some hated him. Some described him as a traitor, some called him a bully but many respected him.

The people of the great Basotho homeland in the Eastern Free State Qwaqwa downright hated him.

But regardless of all the opinions that come from different people, his presence could not be ignored.

I would like to reflect on his legacy and his leadership style.

Let's talk about how Mr Lekota was able to write his own terms and conditions throughout his political career. A freedom fighter, an apartheid activist, and the first Premier of the Free State province between 1994 and 1996.

Lekota's leadership style was complex, he was a bold, unapologetic leader who fought for what he believed in. For me, Lekota's leadership style is a lesson in conviction and resilience.

He was not afraid to take tough stances. He was not afraid to challenge the status quo even if it meant ruffling feathers.

What do we, as individuals, take away from Terror Lekota's leadership style?

For me, the lesson lies in the duality of leadership, it is both admired and criticized.

Leaders are human, and their legacies are often contested.

Mr Lekota's story reminds me that leadership is not about perfection, but it is about impact and the ability to stand firm in one's convictions, even when it is unpopular. He played leadership roles in the United Democratic Front.

After democracy he became the first premier of the Free State province, he was the chairperson of the National Council of Provinces (NCOP), he was the ANC national chairperson between 1999 and 2008 and he was the Minister of Defense under the leadership of President Thabo Mbeki.

In 2008 when President Jacob Zuma came into power, he alongside his comrade Mbazima Shilowa launched the Congress of the People (COPE), a party which he led until he died.

His involvement and role in all these organisations show his ability to adapt and lead in different contexts.

What I take away from Lekota's legacy is the importance of staying true to one's values, ethos, and being willing to take risks.

For me, Lekota's legacy serves as a reminder that leadership is about making tough decisions and standing by them even in the face of criticism.

As we bid farewell to Terror Lekota this week, I think we should reflect not only on his political journey but also on the broader lessons of the type of leadership role he possessed.

I look at Lekota's journey and it forces me to think critically about the kind of leaders we want to follow and the kind of leaders we aspire to be.

Leadership offers a path that balances conviction with compassion and vision with inclusivity.

Leadership should help us build a future. Leaders should not be feared, but they must be respected and most importantly they must be trusted.

The hundreds of people from different political parties including his original political home the ANC over the past two weeks who have paid tribute to Lekota through messages of condolences, through the attendance of his memorial services, the attendance of his funeral tomorrow as well as the South African President Cyril Ramaphosa is a clear indication that one must always stick to their values even if it is not popular.

May the soul of Mr Mosiuoa "Terror" Lekota rest in eternal peace and power.

Letter to the Editor

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



Pastor Motsamai Kareli
Empowerment Ministries International

How To Get Things Done



Leaders in every country and industry struggle to get things done. Leading a team to execute initiatives is challenging at best. Here are three words that will change how you get things done, and radically improve your team's efficiency:

Who?
What?
When?

Let's put those together into a transformative sentence: "Who does what by when?"

This may seem obvious, but it's actually a profound tool that can change the productivity and output of your meetings.

Firstly, you must assign an individual "who" to every task. Otherwise, it's everyone's task, and it will never get done. This point person you designate has to be your contact—a reliable individual who can follow through on initiatives. Make sure

you choose the right "who."

You must also designate a "what." These are the critical elements of that project you're working on. These must be clearly explained at the outset to your "who," or else you'll end up cleaning up the miscommunication at the other end of the project. Be sure to clearly identify what you want.

Lastly, you must put in place a "when." This is the deadline. Without a deadline, that "what" will not happen. Rather than defaulting to "as soon as possible"—a vague requirement that means different things to different people—lay down a concrete time and date. Once you hold people accountable to the "when," you'll see things get done faster than ever before.

"Who does what by when?" This sentence holds the potential to shift the way your team executes initiatives. Give it a try this week!

International Women's Day must move beyond recognition toward the deliberate redistribution of economic power, opportunity and leadership

International Women's Day (IWD), observed annually on 8 March, is more than a symbolic moment of recognition. It is an opportunity to confront a fundamental question: how far have institutions truly moved from acknowledging women's contributions to sharing economic power and leadership? While the day celebrates the progress made toward gender equality, it also exposes the persistent structural barriers that continue to shape the lives of women and girls across the world.

The 2026 theme, "Give to Gain," brings this challenge into sharp focus. It moves the conversation beyond celebration and asks whether those who hold influence in government, business and public institutions are prepared to open pathways to ownership, capital and decision-making. At its core, the theme reframes gender equality not as an act of goodwill, but as a deliberate leadership choice about who is given access to opportunity, power and economic participation.

In a South Africa still marked by deep inequality, unemployment and gender-based violence, recognition without access is not enough. Equality cannot be advanced by symbolism alone. It accelerates when economic power, leadership pathways and decision-making opportunities are intentionally opened. When women gain economic agency, the benefits extend beyond individuals; they strengthen families, communities and the broader economy.

Inequality Is Structural, Not Accidental

International Women's Day is rooted in the long struggle for gender equality and the recognition that women's rights are human rights. These rights include the right to live free from violence, to access education and healthcare, to participate meaningfully in economic life, and to be represented in leadership and governance structures. Despite important gains in policy and legislation, these rights remain unevenly realised.

Across the world, women continue to be underrepresented in senior leadership and decision-making roles, while gender pay gaps and occupational segregation persist. These outcomes are not the result of individual failure or lack of ambition. They are the product of systems that concentrate capital, networks and influence while excluding women, particularly Black women, from economic power.

The consequences of this exclusion are visible not only in economic disparities but also in social vulnerability.

According to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, approximately 50 000 women and girls worldwide were killed between 2023 and 2024 by intimate partners or family members.

These figures point to more than criminal acts; they reveal deep-rooted inequality, economic dependence and power imbalances.



South Africa's reality is especially stark. South African Police Service statistics show that between April 2023 and March 2024, 5 578 murders were recorded, including 1 656 children. More recent data indicate that between January and March 2025, 966 women and 314 children were murdered. Opinion IN

While these statistics establish urgency, they cannot be the centre of our response.

Economic Power, Leadership and the Responsibility to Act

Gender inequality cannot be solved through law enforcement alone. Safety without economic agency is fragile, and rights without ownership remain incomplete.

Corporate South Africa plays a decisive role in shaping economic outcomes, leadership pipelines and access to opportunity. With this influence comes responsibility. Giving, in this context, is not charity. It is structural generosity — the intentional redistribution of access, influence and opportunity.

This includes active sponsorship of Black women into executive and board roles beyond informal encouragement; deliberate procurement and supply-chain access for women-owned enterprises; opening capital, networks and decision-making spaces historically closed to women; and intentional leadership pipeline development linked to succession planning and governance.

International Women's Day remains a powerful moment of reflection and collective accountability. It calls on governments, institutions, civil society and corporate leaders to assess not only the progress achieved but the structural gaps that remain.

Karabo Ceke is a Bachelor of Social Sciences graduate with majors in Sociology and Psychology

Business

Markets and Indicators

Rand/Dollar	15.92	-0.44%	▣
Rand/Pound	21.56	-0.33%	▣
Rand/Euro	18.80	-0.46%	▣
Platinum	2 250.50	-1.47%	▣
Brent Crude	70.49	-0.45%	▣
Gold	5 163.08	-0.04%	▣
Ethereum	2 049.32	-2.36%	▣
Bitcoin	67 658.11	-1.89%	▣

All Eyes on Makume as Free State Budget Looms

By Bernell Simons

The Free State MEC for Finance, Economic Development and Tourism, Ketso Makume, is set to deliver the 2026 Provincial Budget Speech on 17 March at City Hall in Bloemfontein.

The address is expected to outline the province's revenue and spending plans, economic priorities, and service-delivery strategy for the upcoming financial year, setting the tone for how government intends to balance economic growth with tight financial resources. According to the Free State Provincial Treasury, the budget will focus on accelerating progress toward the key priorities of the 7th Administration, including economic growth, job creation, and improved service delivery.

Makume is expected to explain how limited funds will be allocated to key sectors such as agriculture, infrastructure, education, and healthcare. Officials say the budget comes at a time of slow economic growth and rising costs, and will aim to stimulate the economy while strengthening development in rural areas and townships.

Opposition voices concerns

David Edward Janse van Vuuren of the Democratic Alliance (DA) has called for stronger oversight and transparency in how public funds are spent.

"Past budgets have often failed to turn allocations into real improvements in service delivery," he said.

He added that the DA has repeatedly questioned supplementary allocations to the Premier's Office and raised concerns about fiscal mismanagement and weak oversight.

"Better monitoring of expenditure could free up resources for essential frontline services like healthcare, education, and road maintenance," Janse van Vuuren said.

He also pointed to ongoing municipal crises, with many towns struggling with water supply failures, de-



Free State MEC for Finance, Economic Development and Tourism, Ketso Makume. Picture: Screenshot

teriorating roads, and financial instability.

"Stabilising municipalities must be a central focus if we want to create jobs and attract investment," he added.

EFF pushes pro-poor priorities

The Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) say the budget

must go further in tackling inequality and supporting working-class communities.

Deputy Secretary-General Leigh-Ann Mathys said slow economic growth should not be used as a reason to delay programmes that improve living conditions.

"Public funds must be properly tracked, and inefficiencies cannot be hidden behind complex financial procedures," she said.

The EFF is calling for expanded youth employment programmes, stronger early childhood development initiatives, and broader labour market interventions.

"We are pushing for redistribution-focused measures, not merely technocratic adjustments that leave conditions on the ground unchanged," Mathys added.

Government expected to defend spending plans

The ruling party is expected to highlight continued investment in agriculture, infrastructure, education, and healthcare, while also pointing to clean audit outcomes from the Auditor-General of South Africa for both the Provincial Treasury and the Free State Department of Economic, Small Business Development, Tourism and Environmental Affairs.

Officials say the clean audits reflect improved financial management and compliance.

However, critics argue that sound financial controls alone do not automatically translate into better services, particularly with ongoing municipal challenges, infrastructure backlogs, and high unemployment across the province.

As Makume prepares to take the podium in Bloemfontein, the key challenge will be convincing both lawmakers and residents that financial discipline can go hand in hand with real improvements in jobs, growth, and service delivery.

With expectations high and resources limited, the 2026 Free State Budget Speech is shaping up to be more than just a financial update — it may become a litmus test for whether government promises will finally translate into tangible change.

Oil jumps 6% as Iran escalates attacks on Gulf shipping



Oil prices rose sharply on Thursday as Iran stepped up attacks on oil and transport facilities across the Middle East, fuelling concerns of a prolonged conflict and potential disruptions to oil flows through the Strait of Hormuz.

Brent futures climbed \$5.95, or 6.47%, to \$97.93 a barrel at 0915 GMT, having hit \$100 per barrel in earlier trading, while US West Texas Intermediate crude was up \$5.25, or 6%, to \$92.50.

Brent hit \$119.50 a barrel on Monday, its highest since mid-2022, then dropped after US President Donald Trump said the Iran war could be over soon.

The war in the Middle East is causing the biggest oil-supply disruption in the history of global markets, the International Energy Agency said on Thursday, a day after approving the release of a record volume of 400 million barrels of oil from strategic stockpiles.

Middle East Gulf countries have cut total oil production by at least 10 million barrels per day — a volume equalling almost 10% of world demand — as a result of the conflict, the agency said in its latest monthly oil market report.

The market pricing is taking the IEA release with a pinch of salt, as its timeline is not established, PVM analyst John Evans said, adding that it is presumed to span 90 days, equating to approximately 4.5 million barrels per day.

Goldman Sachs forecasts Brent crude to average

\$98 per barrel in March and April before declining to \$71 by the fourth quarter, but warns that in an upside-risk scenario, where flows through the strait are disrupted for a month, the March and April average could surge to \$110.

"The only way to see oil prices trade lower on a sustained basis is by getting oil flowing through the Strait of Hormuz," ING analysts said. "Failing to do so means that the market highs are still ahead of us."

Explosives-laden Iranian boats appear to have attacked two fuel tankers in Iraqi waters, setting them ablaze and killing one crew member on Wednesday after projectiles struck four vessels in Gulf waters, port, maritime security and risk firms said.

Port officials say Iranian boats loaded with explosives attacked two vessels, setting them on fire and killing one crew member.

Lebanon's Hezbollah launched its biggest rocket salvo of the current war on Wednesday night, prompting Israeli strikes that shook Beirut. Hezbollah's attack also raised fears about Yemen's Houthi is joining the war alongside Iran to further disrupt shipping in the Middle East.

Also on the supply side, China has ordered an immediate ban on refined fuel exports in March, a further step to preempt a potential domestic fuel shortage caused by the US-Israeli war on Iran, sources said on Thursday. **SABCNews**

Big changes for debit orders in SA next month

Big changes are coming to debit orders in South Africa, giving consumers more time to dispute transactions.

From 13 April 2026, debit orders will be disputable for up to 60 days, where the relevant service rules allow it.

The change has been confirmed by the South African Reserve Bank (SARB) and the Financial Sector Conduct Authority (FSCA).

According to Pieter Brand, Head of Product at financial services firm Hypphen, the shift is part of a longer process to improve how debit orders work in the country.

Brand said the current system has evolved significantly over the past decade, particularly after a surge in fraudulent debit orders around 2015.

"The industry suddenly found itself dealing with a wave of rogue debit orders—most of them pegged at R99," he said.

The amount was often chosen because it sat just below the threshold at which many banks alerted customers to transactions. Banks responded by making it easier for people to dispute debit orders.

This resulted in new self-service options being added to ATMs, online banking platforms and mobile banking apps, allowing customers to reverse payments without contacting a call centre.

While the new tools made disputes easier, the number of disputes did not necessarily decrease.

Instead, improved consumer awareness and digital banking channels made it simpler for customers to challenge transactions.

To address the problem, the industry introduced DebiCheck.

The system was developed in response to a 2017 directive from the SARB and officially launched in May 2021.

DebiCheck requires consumers to approve a debit order mandate directly through their bank before the business can collect payments.

"A business sends an electronic copy of its collection agreement through the consumer's bank, and the consumer approves it in their preferred banking channel," Brand said.

Once the mandate is confirmed, the bank keeps a record of the agreement.

As long as the business collects payments according to the agreed terms, those transactions cannot be disputed—even within the new 60-day window.

Businesses that face higher payment risks, such as credit providers or companies selling goods on hire purchase, have already widely adopted DebiCheck.

"When you're providing a loan or goods that are repaid over time, the added cost of ensuring your collections are non-disputable is easily justified," Brand said.

However, the new 60-day dispute window could put pressure on companies that still rely on traditional debit-order systems.

Brand expects disputes to increase mainly among two types of businesses.

The first group includes companies with higher-risk customers that have not yet adopted tools like DebiCheck.

Brand stressed that these businesses may need to

start using more secure collection systems or factor higher dispute losses into their pricing.

The second group includes businesses that collect payments for ongoing services or goods and can simply stop providing those services if payments stop.

These companies will need to decide whether the cost of premium collection tools like DebiCheck is worth the potential losses from disputed payments.

"In some cases, losing two months of premiums or a high acquisition cost of getting a new customer could make that investment worthwhile," Brand said.

Brand also said businesses should review their customer agreements to ensure their payment mandates accurately reflect how payments are collected.

This can help reduce confusion and lower the risk of disputes. At the same time, new payment tools are emerging that could help businesses recover quickly in the event of disputes.

One example is PayShap Request to Pay, launched in December 2024.

The system allows businesses to send customers a payment request that can be approved directly in their banking app or through their preferred banking channel.

He added that the banking industry has spent years developing the systems and infrastructure needed for these changes.

"Yes, the extended automated window will create short-term pressure for businesses that haven't modernised their collection approach. But pressure, in this industry, tends to produce innovation," he said. **BusinessTech**

FlySafair to hike ticket prices amid oil price rise



Domestic airline FlySafair has announced that it will introduce a temporary fuel surcharge on ticket prices as oil prices rise due to the conflict in the Middle East.

The surcharge will come into effect on Wednesday and will apply only to flights departing on or before the 12 May 2026.

The airline says it has absorbed steep fuel cost

increases since the conflict erupted but with jet fuel prices at South African coastal airports now up approximately 70% in just one week, the airline has reached a point where it must pass on a portion of the costs.

It also says the surcharges will vary by route length to reflect the actual fuel consumption required per journey. **SABCNews**



GET TO KNOW YOUR DJ

**KB The DJ
Set to Shake
Bloemfontein
Dancefloors**



By Lerato Mutlanyane

House music lovers are in for a treat as KB The DJ prepares to shift the energy on Bloemfontein's dancefloors.

The talented house maverick — whose real name is Karabo Mosia — hails from the gold-mining town of Welkom in the Free State and has built a thriving career behind the decks over the past 12 years.

Known for delivering a powerful mix of rhythm and emotion, KB The DJ has carved out a unique sound characterised by bass-heavy, melancholic house music that keeps crowds moving from the first beat to the last.

When he steps onto the decks, his high-energy beats per minute, seamless beat matching, and carefully crafted sets quickly transform the atmosphere.

Having already headlined major shows across the Bloemfontein music scene, Mosia says the journey has not been without challenges.

"Like many of us, I have experienced the challenge of being part of a large community of DJs with minimal opportunities," he said.

Fans can catch KB The DJ bringing his signature sound and infectious energy to IZA Bloemfontein, Sandy's Bar, and Club House this coming Saturday.

**Heidedal's Honnehok Ready to
Make Afrikaans Hip-Hop Noise**



By Lerato Mutlanyane

There is a special kind of magic that happens when four distinct personalities come together for the first time. For D-Molish (Duane Petrus), Boffin (Dwayne Colbert), Ashtrix (Jim Martins), and Indiginaz (Vincent de Koker) — collectively known as Honnehok — that moment happened years ago in a small home studio in the heart of Heidedal, Bloemfontein.

Now, that journey is set to reach a major milestone. On 18 March, the group will release their debut album 'Drasties In Kasies', a project that already feels more like a bold statement than a first attempt.

The group's unusual name has a story of its own. "The inspiration behind the name is actually a bit funny," the members explained.

"We set up a studio in a spare room at Ashtrix's house. The same room we used for recording was also where his pit bull, Aza, slept. So we started call-

ing ourselves Honnehok because we were recording in the dog's resting place."

While Honnehok may appear at first glance to be just another rap quartet armed with slick punchlines and strong lyrical skills, the opening tracks of their debut album quickly challenge that perception.

The group has already released songs such as 'Jerzey', 'Wie Ons Is', and 'Yt Geno-site', which have collectively attracted more than 5,200 views on YouTube.

The album is produced entirely by respected local producer and rapper Kulax Nthoethatha, and after years of work, the group says the wait is finally over.

"We are extremely excited about this release, and we have been working hard to make this dream a reality," the group said.

According to D-Molish, the album title reflects the realities of township life.

"We named the album 'Drasties In Kasie' because it addresses social issues that significantly impact township residents across the country. While some

concepts focus on hardships, we also celebrate growing up in our environments and highlight the positive aspects of living in the townships through our songs."

Speaking to Journal News, the rappers said they hope the project will also help elevate Afrikaans hip-hop in the broader music industry.

"We aspire for this album to establish Honnehok, as well as Afrikaans hip-hop, as a force to be reckoned with," said D-Molish.

"We want to elevate our genre and reach new heights with this release, and encourage other talented artists to showcase their work."

The group believes their debut could mark the beginning of something much bigger.

"We are excited to release this project, and we believe it has the potential to establish us as a force that cannot be overlooked," he added.

Music fans can look out for 'Drasties In Kasies' when it drops next week.

ProVerb Bags an MBA



By Lerato Mutlanyane

For the past two years, ProVerb has been juggling his roles as a presenter, host, and rapper while polishing his academic qualifications and mastering extensive case studies.

The media personality, whose real name is Tebogo 'ProVerb' Thekiso, has traded in his microphone for the pursuit of a Master of Business Administration (MBA).

Thekiso shared the news of this significant milestone on Instagram, stating, "My last assignment tried to trip me at the end, but the final exam carried me over the finish line. My heart is full. MBA officially done. Graduation loading. Deeply thankful. On to the next chapter."

He obtained his Bachelor of Business Administration in 2024 and has expressed his intention to pursue a doctoral qualification.

"My dad is a medical doctor, and my mom was an academic doctor. She was a professor at the University of North West.

"Academia was not something I initially gravitated towards. I first wanted to be an entertainer, which I still am," he said.

He emphasized that his return to academia is driven by personal ambition.

"I always had this bug and itch that I needed to scratch. So, I revisited it, and I'm currently completing my master's, hoping to pursue my doctorate and earn the title of 'Dr'," he said.

He added that his studies are not just a tribute to his family, but they also fulfill his personal aspirations.

"On one hand, it's absolutely to pay homage and respect to my family. On the other, it's about pursuing my personal goals and seeing how far I can take it," he said.

Amapiano Dj Uncle Waffles joins Samuel L. Jackson in Adidas Superstar fashion deal

Amapiano DJ sensation Uncle Waffles steps into global fashion history as the African face of Adidas' iconic Superstar.

When Uncle Waffles, real name Lungelihle Zwane, walks into a room, she brings more than music. She brings energy, movement, and the confidence of a generation that believes African culture belongs on the global stage.

Now the internationally celebrated DJ and producer has stepped into another influential space.

The Swazi-born amapiano sensation has officially joined Adidas as the African face of the brand's "Superstar: The Original" campaign. This places her alongside a powerful group of global cultural icons.

Speaking excitedly about the fashion collab, Waffles says: "Being part of the iconic storytelling of the Superstar shoe is a surreal moment for me. From the influence of stars I looked up to, like Run DMC and Samuel L. Jackson, to the new era of icons who are moving culture forward, it shows how timeless these classics are. Also, it shows how they transcend with time."

It is a significant moment not just for Waffles, but for African representation in global streetwear and fashion history.

A sneaker that shaped culture
The campaign celebrates the legacy of the legendary Adidas Superstar sneaker. This silhouette has quietly influenced style and music culture for more than five decades.

Originally released in 1969 as a low-top basketball shoe, the Superstar was designed with a protective rubber toe cap. That feature soon became known as the famous "shell toe". The sneaker was initially created for performance on the basketball court. It of-

fered players more durability and support than earlier designs.

By the early 1970s, the shoe had become incredibly popular in the NBA. More than 75% of professional players were wearing it. Basketball legend Kareem Abdul-Jabbar was among the early athletes who helped cement its reputation.

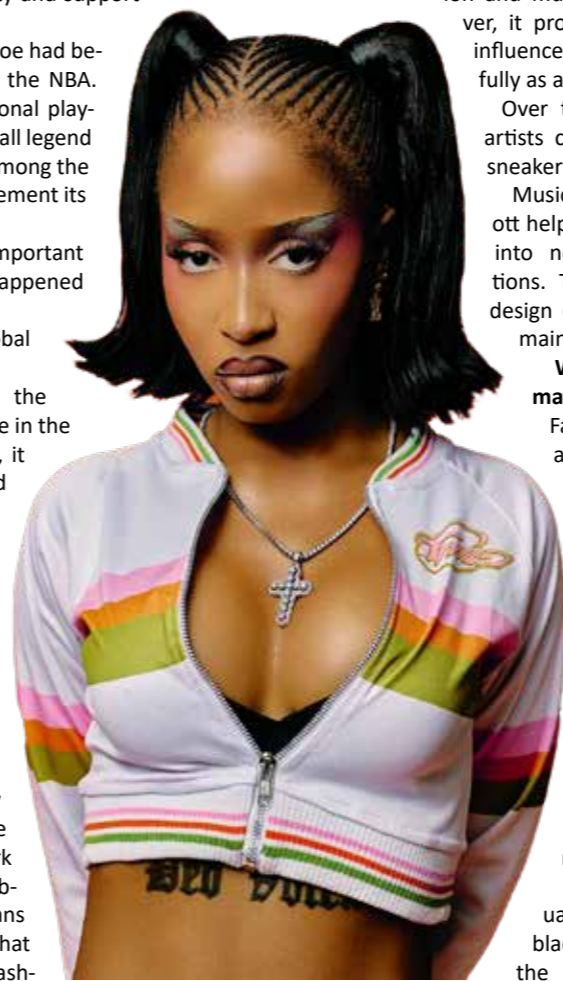
But the sneaker's most important cultural transformation happened away from sport.

From the streets to global fashion

During the early 1980s, the Superstar found a second life in the streets of New York. There, it became deeply connected to the rise of hip hop culture.

Rap pioneers Run-DMC famously wore the sneakers without laces and with the tongue pushed out. This styling choice symbolised authenticity and pride in street culture.

Their 1986 hit song 'My Adidas' celebrated the sneaker and helped spark one of the first major collaborations between musicians and a sportswear brand. That partnership reshaped how fash-



ion and music interacted. Moreover, it proved that artists could influence culture just as powerfully as athletes.

Over time, other influential artists continued to carry the sneaker's legacy.

Musicians such as Missy Elliott helped bring the Superstar into new fashion conversations. This showed how the design could evolve while remaining authentic.

Why Uncle Waffles matters now

Fast forward to today, and Uncle Waffles now finds herself standing within that same cultural lineage.

For a DJ whose rise has mirrored the global explosion of amapiano, the partnership feels symbolic. Waffles represents a generation of African creatives whose influence extends far beyond music.

The campaign visuals, shot in striking black and white, highlight the classic Superstar de-

sign. Meanwhile, Waffles appears effortlessly confident and natural.

The message of the campaign celebrates people who remain true to themselves and their creative voice.

For Waffles, the collaboration carries a deeper meaning.

"It's about more than sneakers," she shared when speaking about the partnership.

"It's about celebrating people who stay true to themselves, no matter the stage they're on."

African culture shaping global style

Her journey reflects that message perfectly. From viral DJ sets to international festival stages, Waffles has grown into one of the most recognisable ambassadors of amapiano.

She is known across the world.

Her performances often blend music, dance, and fashion.

This turns the DJ booth into a stage where personal style becomes part of the storytelling.

Fashion has quietly become a key element of her identity. Whether wearing bold streetwear or minimalist sneakers, her look reflects the confident rhythm of amapiano culture itself.

Her presence in the Superstar campaign also highlights a broader shift in global culture. **The Citizen.**

GIG Guide

Friday 13 March 2026
Bee's Birthday Celebration
Rio Cocktail Lounge
2nd Ave Bloemfontein

Friday 13 March 2026
Friday After Work
Sechaba Lounge
Bloemfontein

Friday 13 March 2026
Badass Friday
Scene
2nd Ave Bloemfontein

Mandisi Tshingana raises over R48K for the learner who was left without a pie and juice in the viral classroom video



Influencer Mandisi Tshingana has raised more than R48 000 for a pupil after a video taken at Thembaletu Primary School in George went viral on social media.

The incident occurred during a school pie and juice day as part of a fundraising initiative.

In the video, a teacher filmed a classroom where pupils were eating pies and drinking juice.

One was seen sitting without a pie or drink and appeared to hide his face while the recording continued.

Teacher suspended
The Western Cape education department confirmed that the teacher who recorded the video has been suspended pending an investigation.

Department spokesperson Bronagh Hammond

said the teacher said she shared the video in a class group to inform parents that one pupil had been left out of the fundraising initiative.

"She had apparently, and we confirmed this with other teachers at school, paid for the fundraising fare for that child because he had been left out and the learner did receive a pie and drink after the video was taken," Hammond told 94.7 on Drive With Thando.

"Firstly, it was inappropriate of the teacher to call out one parent in front of the class group, but what's more inappropriate is what happened to the child," she said.

Funds raised for learner
Following the incident, Tshingana launched a fundraising effort for the pupil.

He later shared on Facebook that donations from supporters and some public figures had reached R48 116.43. Actress Sana Mncunu was among those who contributed.

"A person who didn't have R50 will see themselves having R50 000. God is like that," Tshingana wrote. **The Citizen.**

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Snapping His Way to Success

By Matshidiso Selebeleng

Every entrepreneur starts with hopes and dreams for their business, especially when navigating the challenges of getting off the ground. While some give up when faced with obstacles.

For Aubrey Judas, these hardships only fueled his determination to work harder.

Driven by his love for capturing beautiful moments and documenting special occasions, he built his photography business from the ground up.

Aubrey Judas Enterprise PTY LTD began with a simple phone camera in a classroom back in 2007.

Nearly two decades later, it has evolved into a thriving business with advanced equipment based in Thamoyanche Village, Northern Cape.

At 36 years old, Judas explained that his passion for photography grew out of the need to provide tangible support for his family.

"I was inspired by our struggles at home.

Growing up was difficult; at times, I had to go door to door to gather enough coins to buy bread or help my mom with groceries. The difficulties faced by those around me motivated me to push even harder.

"I also wanted to follow in my mother's footsteps and have my own business because she used to sell small items like bunny chows and ice blocks in schools, he said.

After finishing high school, Judas upgraded from a simple phone to a better camera and began taking photography seriously as he started gaining customers due to the improvement in his work.

He recalled when other photographers recognized his potential and offered to mentor him, helping him maximize his camera's capabilities.

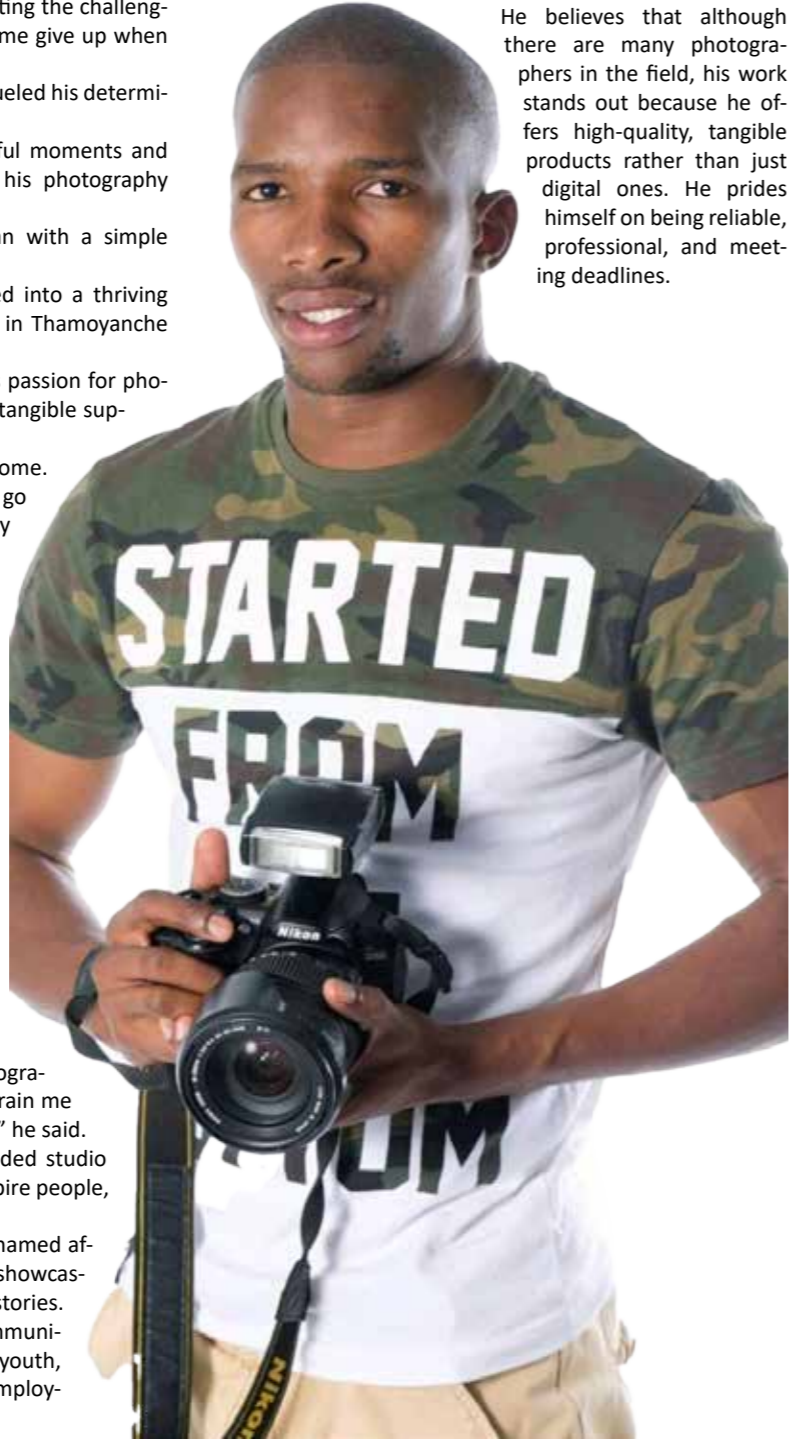
"I used to go to other photographers' booths to print my photos. One day, a photographer recognized my talent and offered to train me to take more professional-looking pictures," he said.

Judas aspires to establish his own branded studio and use his work to tell stories that will inspire people, particularly those from his village.

"My long-term goal is to have a studio named after my brand. I also want to publish a book showcasing the villagers, our culture, and untold stories. Additionally, I aim to give back to my community by creating a training program for the youth, equipping them with skills to combat unemployment," he said.

Currently, Judas is focused on mastering different types of cameras and video editing software, as well as learning new trending techniques.

He believes that although there are many photographers in the field, his work stands out because he offers high-quality, tangible products rather than just digital ones. He prides himself on being reliable, professional, and meeting deadlines.



SA Observes Endometriosis Awareness Month

By Lerato Mutlanyane

The month of March, designated as Endometriosis Awareness Month, brings together everyone affected directly or indirectly by the disease to share their stories and educate others about it. Endometriosis is a chronic condition in which tissue similar to the lining of the uterus grows outside the uterus, attaching to organs such as the fallopian tubes, ovaries, and bowel.

According to the Head of Obstetrics and Gynecology in the Faculty of Health Sciences at the University of Free State, Professor Ray Maharaj, the exact cause of endometriosis is not fully understood.

"One common theory is retrograde menstruation, where menstrual blood flows backward through the fallopian tube into the pelvic cavity, allowing endometrial cells to implant outside the uterus.

"Other possible factors may include issues with the immune system, genetic predisposition, and hormonal influences.

He says symptoms of endometriosis can vary from person to person and may include pelvic pain especially during menstruation such as severe menstrual cramps, and heavy bleeding.

He says other symptoms can include constipation, nausea, and difficulty becoming pregnant. Endometriosis is relatively common and affects 5% to 10% of women of reproductive age, which translates to approximately 190 million women globally.

While there is no permanent cure, Maharaj says it can be treated.

"Treatment mainly focuses on reducing pain, slowing the growth of endometriosis tissue, and improving fertility when possible. Doctors may prescribe pain-relieving medications, such as anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs), to manage pain and inflammation," he shared.

"Hormonal treatments, including birth control pills, progestin therapy, hormonal intrauterine devices (IUDs), and medications that lower estrogen levels can also be used to control the condition," he added.



Treatment options depend on the patient's symptoms, the severity of the disease, age, and whether she wishes to have children in the future, Maharaj said.

Despite the available treatments, endometriosis can recur.

Studies suggest that about 20% to 40% of women may experience a return of symptoms even after surgery, and some may require additional procedures later in life.

The disease also impacts fertility; it is estimated that 30% to 50% of women with endometriosis may have difficulty conceiving due to inflammation in the pelvic area, which can affect egg quality, the implantation of fertilized eggs, and leave scars that impact reproductive organs.

"Many women with endometriosis can still conceive naturally, and treatments such as surgery, fertility medications, or assisted reproductive techniques like in vitro fertilization (IVF) can help improve the chances of pregnancy," said Maharaj.

He emphasised that diagnosing endometriosis can be challenging because the symptoms often resemble those of other conditions, such as ir-

ritable bowel syndrome or pelvic inflammatory disease.

"In some cases, severe menstrual pain is mistakenly considered 'normal,' which can delay women from seeking medical help or receiving an accurate diagnosis."

"Another challenge is that laparoscopy, a surgical procedure used to view and biopsy lesions, is the most accurate way to confirm endometriosis. Since this procedure is invasive and not always readily available, especially in resource-limited healthcare settings, diagnosis can take time and may be delayed.

Maharaj called for increased awareness and improved access to diagnostic technologies as a way to facilitate early diagnosis and prompt treatment.

He stressed the need for more research on endometriosis, particularly in African populations where the condition remains under-studied.

Improving education about menstrual health, reducing stigma, and strengthening healthcare systems are crucial steps toward enhancing the quality of life for women living with endometriosis.

HEALTH

Feeling burned out?

Here are 5 ways chronic stress is actually rewiring your brain

In South Africa, a country already grappling with financial uncertainty, high crime rates, and relentless workplace pressures, stress is not just an occasional inconvenience; it's an epidemic.

According to an Ipsos survey, over half the workforce has taken time off due to stress, far surpassing the global average. Burnout is surging, and more than a quarter of South Africans face moderate to severe depression.

But the true toll of this crisis may be hidden in plain sight: chronic stress is reshaping our brains, with far-reaching implications for mental and physical health.

The brain: A living, adaptive organ
Contrary to the outdated belief that the brain is like a computer that slows with age, neuroscience reveals that our brain is a living, adaptable organ, constantly shaped by our experiences, habits, and environments.

Much like muscles or lungs, the brain can grow stronger or weaker depending on how we treat it. Chronic stress, especially from the workplace, has emerged as one of the most damaging forces to our brains, reshaping their very structure and function.

Mounting evidence shows that ongoing stress in our jobs doesn't just make us feel overwhelmed; it rewires the brain in ways that can be harmful.

Unlike heart or lung health, which many of us conscientiously prioritise, brain health is often neglected. And yet, it's the brain that governs every other system in our body. So why aren't we protecting it just as fiercely?

Shrinking the hippocampus: The memory keeper

Chronic exposure to stress hormones, particularly cortisol, can shrink the hippocampus, the part of the brain responsible for long-term memory.

This is why people under prolonged stress often experience memory lapses or difficulty recalling information. For South Africans navigating financial instability or workplace uncertainty, these cognitive impairments can feel like an invisible, insurmountable weight.

Impairing the prefrontal cortex: The decision-maker

The prefrontal cortex, the brain's executive hub responsible for problem-solving, decision-making, and self-control, also suffers under chronic stress.

High cortisol levels impair this region,

making it harder to focus, stay organised, and manage emotions. In a high-pressure work environment, this can lead to a vicious cycle of diminished performance and heightened stress.

Eroding cognitive flexibility
Stress hampers the brain's ability to adapt, problem-solve, and approach challenges with fresh perspectives, which scientists call "cognitive flexibility".

Over time, this can leave individuals feeling stuck, overwhelmed, or unable to see solutions to their problems.

Triggering anxiety and mood disorders
Chronic stress rewires the brain's emotional centres, leading to heightened rates of anxiety and depression.

When stress becomes a constant companion, the brain remains in a state of hyperarousal, amplifying feelings of fear, worry, and sadness.

Increasing the risk of dementia
Perhaps most concerning, prolonged exposure to stress hormones may increase the risk of degenerative brain conditions such as Alzheimer's disease and dementia.

Emerging research suggests that the same pathways activated by chronic stress can, over time, contribute to the development of these debilitating conditions.

The good news is that the brain is remarkably resilient. While the effects of stress can be severe, many of these changes are reversible, provided we act before the damage becomes permanent.

A commitment to mental well-being, along with stress management techniques and lifestyle changes, can protect and even heal the brain, according to Harvard Health.

Below are a few guidelines that help:
Mindfulness and meditation: Practices like meditation have been shown to reduce cortisol levels and strengthen the prefrontal cortex, improving focus and decision-making.

Exercise: Physical activity increases blood flow to the brain and promotes the growth of new neurons, counteracting the effects of chronic stress.

Sleep: Prioritising rest allows the brain to detoxify and repair itself, reducing stress-related damage. Therapy and support: Seeking professional help or joining support groups can provide tools to cope with stress and foster resilience. **!oL**



Food

Recipes

Chicken and Tomato Rice Salad

Recipe by whatsfordinne



Sometimes a recipe can be so crazy it works, and this one is all about the sauce. We put elements of oriental cooking - soy sauce, rice wine vinegar and sesame oil - and combined them with flavours closer to home - Dijon mustard, lemon juice and Hellmann's Original Mayonnaise - the result? **The Fusion Sauce Salad.**

Method

- 1 Preheat oven 180°C, 160°C fan, or Gas mark 4.
- 2 Season the chicken breast with ground black pepper, place on a baking tray and cook for 25-35 minutes or until chicken is thoroughly cooked. Take it out to cool slightly, then cut into bite size pieces.
- 3 In a bowl, mix the chicken and rice with celery, spring onions, water chestnuts, red pepper and almonds.
- 4 In a small jug, whisk together Hellmann's Original Mayonnaise, Maille Dijon Mustard, soy sauce, rice wine vinegar, sesame seed oil and lemon juice for oriental inspired sauce. This is where the magic happens!
- 5 Pour over chicken and vegetables, toss well, so that the Fusion Sauce covers the other ingredients, then serve on a bed of crisp lettuce leaves. If you want a jolt of orange on the plate, garnish with mandarin segments.

Ingredients:

- 1/4 teaspoon Robertsons ground black peppercorns
- 300 gram cooked long-grain rice
- 1 celery stick finely diced
- 225 gram tinned sliced water chestnuts
- 1 tablespoon toasted sliced almonds
- 1/2 red pepper finely ground
- 4 tablespoon Hellmann's Original mayonnaise
- 1 tablespoon Maille Dijon mustard
- 1 1/2 tablespoon reduced salt soy sauce
- 2 teaspoon white wine vinegar
- 1 teaspoon sesame oil
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice
- 2 peeled mandarin orange

FASHION

Tyla takes Paris: see the incredible 'tattoo top' everyone is talking about



Multi-award-winning singer Tyla had all eyes on her during Paris Fashion Week after stepping out in a daring look that got people on the internet talking.

The 24-year-old was seen leaving a hotel in Paris on Tuesday night wearing what appeared to be a temporary tattoo across the front of her torso instead of a top. The design mimicked the shape of a jacket across her chest, while the back remained completely bare.

The bold body art featured a snakeskin-inspired print that wrapped across her torso and arms. Tyla paired the look with a pair of unbuttoned jeans that sat low on her hips, adding to the edgy aesthetic.

She completed the outfit with strappy heels tied around the bottom of her jeans and a small handbag as she confidently stepped out during one of the busiest weeks on the fashion calendar. The striking look immediately turned heads as photographers and fans gathered outside the hotel.

The appearance was a strong close to Tyla's run at Paris Fashion Week, where the singer delivered several standout fashion moments.

On Sunday, March 8, she attended the Jean Paul Gaultier AW2026 show wearing a dramatic black corset dress inspired by one of the fashion house's most recognisable designs. The structured gown featured the label's signature cone bra silhouette. This style became widely known in the late 1980s, before gaining global pop culture status when Madonna wore it during her 1990 "Blond

Ambition" tour.

Tyla's version reworked the iconic shape into a fitted corset dress that flowed into a satin skirt falling just below the knees. She finished the look with sleek Christian Louboutin So Kate pumps and kept the styling simple with a white lace choker and delicate jewellery.

She also took a moment backstage to greet legendary designer Jean Paul Gaultier, whose work has long influenced pop culture and fashion.

Another front-row moment came at the Miu Miu Fall 2026 show, where Tyla opted for a more relaxed but equally striking outfit. She wore a grey cashmere knit vest with side openings and nothing underneath, paired with loose-fitting blue trousers that draped over her shoes.

The singer completed the look with pointed slingback pumps from Miu Miu, a design inspired by classic 1950s silhouettes.

Tyla added her own twist by letting the brand's grey underwear peek slightly above the waistband of her low-rise trousers, finishing the outfit with a brown leather belt.

The bold temporary tattoo look sparked reactions online, with fans sharing their thoughts on X. User @CamiHow wrote: "Omg I've never seen anything like this before... a temp tat as a top?????" Another user, @msnonakhisi, commented: "Is the top a tattoo? She looks so hot".

Meanwhile, @SheaButterPapii added: "She might be on to something with this tattoo top". **!oL**

Sport



Relegation Reality Stalks Struggling Orbit

Sinking back into the first division shaping into reality as tough fixture line-up looms

By Mpho Sekharume

The harsh reality of a potential exit from the Betway Premiership is beginning to cast a long shadow over Orbit College FC as the league enters its most critical phase. Following a recent 2-0 defeat to the defending champions, Mamelodi Sundowns, the Rustenburg-based side finds itself precariously perched in 15th place, occupying the dreaded relegation play-off spot.

While the performance against the Brazilians showed glimpses of defensive discipline, the lack of clinical finishing and late concentration lapses have become a recurring theme in their inaugural season. The Mswenko Boys have struggled to find the rhythm essential for them to remain in the premiership.

At this point, it is going to be very difficult for them to collect points, as everyone is either upscaling their respective efforts to reach their targets or fighting for survival to stay in the top flight.

Despite the mounting pressure and a league standing that would rattle most dressing rooms, head coach, Pogiso Makhoye, has shockingly maintained a composed facade. Speaking on potential relegation a few weeks back, Makhoye remained positive and somewhat hopeful about the club's probabilities of bouncing back regardless of the outcome.

"Why should we panic? If we have to be relegated, we can be relegated, but we know how to promote the team. We will keep on fighting until the end," he asserted in a defiant tone. This tone, however, does little to ease the reality reflected by statistics. The reality is that the newcomers have managed to secure only five league victories throughout the entire campaign.

This appalling form leaves them with very little margin for error as the season draws to a close.

It is highly unlikely that they will turn the corner in this final stretch of the season due to the very tough fixture schedule that offers no respite for the struggling squad. Orbit is set to face a gauntlet of opponents in their next three outings, starting with a high-stakes encounter against Sivelele FC.

This will be followed by a massive test against Kaizer Chiefs and a high-pressure survival showdown with Marumo Gallants. Each of these opponents enters the field with their own desperate agendas, making them dangerous hurdles for a side so low on confidence.

Sivelele, currently enjoying their inaugural league season, have set their sights firmly on a top-eight finish to cap off their milestone year.

They are expected to play with an intensity that matches their desire to cement a legacy in the top flight. Meanwhile, Amakhosi are also looking to salvage their campaign by securing a spot in the top-three. This target is essential for their aim to return to continental football and subsequently satisfy their demanding supporters - who recently marched to their headquarters in protest of the club's declining form.

Finally, Gallants also find themselves in a similar predicament to Orbit - sitting just one spot above them in 14th place. They are equally determined to move out of the relegation zone and secure their top-flight status for another year. With every team determined to turn their fortunes around after recent dismal results, Orbit must find a way to turn their 'composure' into points.

The time for tactical experimentation and putting up a composed facade has passed, because their relegation reality is slowly taking shape.

Club Rugby Revives Local Spirits

Free State Rugby Union ignites resurgence of local rugby as 12 teams target R30 000 prize pot



Bolstering Local Rugby ...The Free State Rugby challenge is aimed at re-energising club rugby in the province, whilst bringing communities back to support the sport. Pictures: Facebook

By Mpho Sekharume

The Free State Rugby Union (FSRU) is strategically eyeing the revitalisation of the local game through the successful launch of the Free State Challenge Cup.

The local rugby competition, which kicked off in late February this year and currently in its third week, marks a deliberate shift toward prioritising the amateur clubs that form the bedrock of the Free State's rugby talent.

Twelve local clubs have been integrated into this high-stakes format, organised into three distinct pools to ensure a high level of weekly competition.

These teams are currently battling through the third week of fixtures, eyeing both a R30 000 prize purse and the official title of provincial champions. The tournament forms part of the FSRU's broader vision to re-energise club rugby and bring communities back to the heart of the game. Through initiatives like the Free State Challenge Cup, the FSRU aims to restore the energy, competitiveness and community spirit that have always defined rugby in the Free State.

The long-term goal remains the creation of a pipeline that feeds talent from the grassroots level

to the highest tiers of the sport in the province and unleash new talent into the broader South African rugby spectrum.

By professionalising the administration and visibility of these matches, the union is creating a sustainable model for future growth.

Early matches have already delivered competitive and entertaining rugby, reflecting the passion and pride that exists within Free State club structures.

Fans have responded positively to the increased quality of play, filling local sidelines with renewed enthusiasm.

The final of the Free State Challenge Cup will take place on 28 March 2026, providing a massive platform for amateur athletes - promising to give them the opportunity to showcase their talent on a premier stage while celebrating the importance of club rugby in the province.

Meanwhile, playing the final at the Toyota Stadium underscores the union's commitment to elevating the status of the club game.

This logistical choice ensures that the winners receive the recognition their hard work throughout the season deserves.

FSRU President, Coenraad Klopper, recently addressed the strategic importance of this tourna-

ment for the region's sporting health.

Klopper believes the union's strength is inextricably linked to the vitality of its member clubs.

"Club rugby is the cornerstone of any rugby union. It is where the game truly lives, in our communities and local clubs,"

Klopper stated during a recent briefing on the tournament's progress.

Klopper further highlighted that the cup is more than a competition, but a mechanism for rebuilding a culture of excellence.

He therefore urged the public to recognise and support the talent currently performing on local pitches every weekend.

"The Free State Challenge Cup is an important step in reviving the passion, competitiveness and pride of club rugby in our province, and we encourage supporters to get involved and rally behind their local teams," Klopper added.

With just over two weeks remaining until the champion is crowned, the momentum behind the club game is at its highest point in years.

Supporters, communities and rugby stakeholders are urged to attend the remaining matches and particularly the final at Toyota Stadium, as the province celebrates the resurgence of club rugby.

PSL		2025/2026		
	CLUBS	P	W	PTS
1	Orlando Pirates	20	18	47
2	Mamelodi Sundowns	20	14	47
3	Sekhukhune United	20	9	33
4	Durban City	20	9	32
5	Amazulu FC	20	9	31
6	Kaizer Chiefs	18	8	30
7	Polokwane City	19	7	28
8	TS Galaxy	20	7	24
9	Stellenbosch FC	19	6	23
10	Richards Bay	20	5	23
11	Sivelele FC	19	5	22
12	Golden Arrows	19	6	21
13	Chippa United	20	4	19
14	Marumo Gallants	20	4	18
15	Orbit College FC	21	5	18
16	Magesi FC	19	2	18

Premier League		2025/2026		
	TEAMS	P	W	PTS
1	Arsenal	30	20	67
2	Man City	29	18	60
3	Man Utd	29	14	51
4	Aston Villa	29	15	51
5	Chelsea	29	13	48
6	Liverpool	29	14	48
7	Brentford	29	13	44
8	Everton	29	12	43
9	Bournemouth	29	9	40
10	Fulham	29	12	40
11	Sunderland	29	10	40
12	Newcastle	29	11	39
13	C Palace	29	10	38
14	Brighton	28	9	37
15	Leeds	29	7	31
16	Tottenham	29	7	29

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