



# ANC MAYORS IN MASS EXODUS



- *Controversial Madibeng Mayor fired for colluding with opposition*
- *Multiple FS mayors resign in a push-out move by PEC over poor performance*

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## Soweto Derby Raises Title Race Tension

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## Kat Sinivasan Launches Fragrance

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# TAXPAYERS FUNDING DECAYING STATE ASSETS

*Zikalala leads campaign to stop the systematic drain on taxpayer resources in Potchefstroom*

By Bernell Simons

Authorities have uncovered a fully operational informal economy functioning inside a state-owned property on Grobler Street in Potchefstroom.

During an operation on 17 April 2026, Public Works and Infrastructure Deputy Minister, Sihle Zikalala, and North West MEC for Public Works and Roads, Elizabeth Mokuu, found recycling business-

es and residential units on-site.

Occupants reported paying rent to 'ghost landlords' without official contracts, indicating that the state has lost control of the facility.

The property continues to use taxpayer-funded water, electricity, and sewerage systems despite being functionally abandoned by the government.

Investigators describe the site as a low-risk occupation environment where informal businesses expand because there is no official resistance, therefore rendering them as unregulated economic zones operating within a government shell.

While initiatives like Operation Bring Back attempt to reclaim these buildings, they often fail to address why assets are left unsecured.

Government departments frequently vacate premises without formal closure, thus allowing oversight to weaken until informal systems move in.

The Grobler Street property, in particular, was part of a 20th-century infrastructure network designed to house regional administration and civic functions.

Many similar buildings in the North West were left standing after departments relocated and left a landscape of unused state infrastructure behind.

Historical records suggest the site previously housed the Department of Labour which provided employment assistance and industrial compliance units.

However, the facility was quietly vacated between the mid-2000s and early 2010s as operations were centralised or moved to newer premises. Instead of being decommissioned, the site was left behind without redevelopment, which allowed it to be repurposed by unauthorised occupants.

Property economist, Dr Andrew Okem, identified a four-stage lifecycle that leads to the decay and loss of these public assets.

"First, the building operates as an active government facility. Then comes relocation, where departments move out without formally closing or repurposing the site," he said.

According to Okem, this is followed by an administrative vacuum - a period **Continues on Page 2**



## Rockman in Green Economy Push

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# Freedom Day 2026

Freedom and The Rule of Law-Thirty Years of Democratic Citizenship

PRESIDENT CYRIL RAMAPHOSA

KEYNOTE ADDRESS

MONDAY 27 APRIL 2026

09:00

Dr Rantlai Molemela Stadium Bloemfontein, Free State



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#FreedomDay2026

**Accident Scare Fails to Derail Makume's Budget**



MEC Ketso Makume was travelling from Bethlehem to Bloemfontein when his official car collided with an antelope. Pictures: FSL/Facebook

By Matshidiso Selebeleng

The MEC for Finance, Economic Development, and Tourism, Ketso Makume, delivered his department's budget vote successfully on Tuesday, despite surviving a near fatal car accident two days prior.

The department confirmed in a statement that Makume and his protectors hit a kudu on the N5 road between Paul Roux and Senekal on their way back from the ANC Thabo Mofutsanyane Regional Conference in Bethlehem on Sunday night.

The spiral-horned antelope was hit unexpectedly when it attempted to cross the road under the dark skies, leaving the driver with little to no chance of avoiding the imminent collision.

Despite this near-fatal collision, Makume ascended the podium at Harry Gwala Sports Complex, in Sasolburg, and presented the 2026/2027 Departmental Budget Vote - although with a neck-brace for neck support.

While questions of where the kudu actually comes from remain unanswered, it is largely believed that it probably escaped from one of the game farms in the area.

It would also be safe to assume that the kudu was one of the resident wildlife population found at the nearby Holhoek Hiking Trail which is located just 18km from Paul Roux.

Meanwhile, road safety in the province remains a growing concern, with fatal animal-related accidents estimated to be roughly around 10 000 in South Africa each year.

While costs around Makume's accident will be covered by the taxpayer, it is estimated that around R83 million is paid out annually in insurance claims, specifically for vehicle collisions with wild animals.

# ANC Mayors in Mass Exodus



Fired Madibeng Local Municipality Mayor, Douglas Maimane. Pictures: Supplied

By JN Reporter

A wave of leadership changes across ANC-led municipalities has triggered fresh concern, with several mayors either axed or forced to step down amid growing pressure over performance and political conduct.

The latest developments include the dismissal of Madibeng Local Municipality Mayor, Douglas Maimane, in the North West, over allegations that he colluded with opposition parties in a bid to undermine the ANC ahead of the upcoming local government elections.

His removal comes alongside a string of resignations in the Free State, reportedly driven by a push from the party's Provincial Executive Committee (PEC) targeting underperforming leaders.

Maimane's dismissal follows the resurfacing of a 30-minute audio recording in which he is allegedly

heard promising R200 000 to opposition councillors - African Independent Congress (AIC) member, Peter Tsheola, as well as Forum for Service Delivery's Sechaba Sekgotho - to organise a campaign against the ANC. The meeting is believed to have taken place on 10 March 2026 at Amigos Guesthouse in Brits, with municipal manager, Quiet Kgatla, reportedly joining through a phone call that was put on loudspeaker.

Following the exposure of the recording and subsequent media reports over the weekend, ANC Secretary-General, Fikile Mbalula, confirmed that the party had resolved to recall Maimane.

The decision was taken after consultations with provincial leadership on Tuesday, where his future was deliberated.

ANC North West spokesperson, Tumelo Maruping, said the decision followed engagements with Mbalula, adding that further action had been taken within the municipality.

"Over and above, the ANC has also taken a decision to remove and demote the Single Whip of Madibeng Local Municipality, Peter Padi, to an ordinary councillor. The replacement of these two individuals will be communicated within 48 hours," said Maruping.

Meanwhile, in the Free State, three mayors have recently resigned under pressure from the ruling party, signalling a widening shake-up in local government leadership.

Moqhaka Mayor, Motloheloa Mokatsane, Nketoana Executive Mayor, Maditswako Teresia Mokoena, and Masilonyana Local Municipality Mayor Dimakatso Modise have all submitted resignation letters to their respective councils without providing reasons for their departure.

The trio's respective exits were subsequently followed by the subsequent resignations of the respective Speakers in those municipalities - further deepening the leadership vacuum.

These sudden departures stem from a Free State PEC resolution taken in August 2025 to dissolve municipal troikas in seven municipalities, citing poor performance and the alleged undermining of service delivery. The decision was later endorsed by Mbalula, who said the intervention was aimed at strengthening local governance, improving service delivery, and enforcing accountability.

Efforts to stabilise leadership in Moqhaka have already hit a snag. An emergency council meeting - convened on Wednesday to elect a new Mayor and the Speaker - collapsed after ANC councillors failed to attend. According to municipal spokesperson, Dika Kheswa, the council did not reach a quorum and the meeting will have to be rescheduled within 30 days.

The unfolding developments point to ongoing instability in the province's municipalities, raising concerns about governance continuity and the impact on already strained service delivery systems.

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**Ramaphosa Suspends Fannie Masemola as SA Police Commissioner**

President Cyril Ramaphosa has appointed Major General Puleng Dimphe as the acting National Police Commissioner following the precautionary suspension of General Fannie Masemola.

This comes after Masemola appeared in court earlier this week on four counts linked to alleged violations of the Public Finance Management Act.

Addressing the nation from the Union Buildings in Pretoria on Thursday,



Ramaphosa said it was vital that the public has trust in the people that the government has appointed.

"I have agreed with General Fannie Masemola that he should be placed on precautionary suspension," said Ramaphosa.

The charges have raised serious concerns about accountability at the South African Police Service (SAPS).

He is expected to appear again before the Pretoria Magistrate's Court in May. lol

**Taxpayers Funding Decaying State Assets**



Continues from Page 1

in which the infrastructure remains active, with water, electricity, and sewer systems still running and funded through public resources, but without effective oversight or enforcement. After this, informal occupation begins.

Okem continued: "What may start as opportunistic use gradually evolves into structured systems - informal rental arrangements, storage operations, and in some cases, organised or criminal activity and by this stage, the state is no longer present - only its infrastructure is."

This financial burden falls on the public, who continue to pay for the maintenance of services that no longer serve a civic purpose.

Zikalala has, as a result, called for an immediate investigation into a 'ghost landlord' syndicate operating within government-owned properties in the entire North West.

"The illegal residents at the property claim to be paying monthly rent to unnamed and faceless individuals.

"I am calling for an investigation into the identity of the rent collector and government officials in all spheres of government assisting criminals to hijack government properties," added Zikalala.

The department is also working alongside local municipalities to process the individuals found living and working on the site illegally.

**Ramaphosa Warns of Local Government Collapse**

By Bernell Simons

South Africa's local government system is in a deepening crisis as financial mismanagement and infrastructure failure reach critical levels.

This is according to President Cyril Ramaphosa who has warned that the current state of affairs cannot continue, with billions lost to wasteful and irregular expenditure.

According to the Auditor-General (AG), fewer than 10% of the country's municipalities are achieving clean audits.

The breakdown is particularly acute in the Free State and North West, where several local governments have become symbols of systemic distress.

Maluti-a-Phofung Local Municipality in the eastern Free State, for instance, has accumulated over R7 billion in irregular expenditure while receiving repeated disclaimer audit opinions. Residents in that municipality are faced with incessant service delivery failures, including water shortages and erratic electricity supply, which have resulted in frequent community protests.

Mangaung Metropolitan Municipality is also struggling with R4 billion reportedly owed to bulk suppliers like Eskom and various water boards. Aging infrastructure in the metro has resulted in frequent sewage spillages and deteriorating water systems that compromise basic service delivery.

Smaller municipalities like Masilonyana Local Municipality also reflect this same pattern of weak governance and limited capacity to provide services.

Meanwhile, in the North West, Ditsobotla Local Municipality has been crippled by violent council disputes and administrative paralysis. This rife political instability in that municipality has left communities exposed to prolonged disruptions in both water and electricity supply.

In Mahikeng, the province's capital, infrastructure collapse is visible through the widespread broken roads network as well as raw sewage spills in various areas.

Lekwa-Teemane Local Municipality, on the other hand, continues to grapple with financial instability and weak controls as highlighted in recent audit findings.

According to leading political analyst, Professor Sethulego Matebesi, from the University of the Free State, the President's warning reflects a crisis that has long been ignored.

"This is not new. The Auditor-General has consistently highlighted the dire state of municipalities, particularly in the Free State and North West. The problem is that there are no tangible consequences."



Several municipalities in the Free State and the North West could face imminent collapse due to service delivery failures Pictures: Supplied

Matebesi argues that entrenched patronage networks and cadre deployment have steadily eroded the administrative capacity of these institutions.

"What we are seeing is business as usual. Officials appoint people close to them - friends, family - and that undermines governance completely."

The result is a national pattern where financial mismanagement goes unchecked and towns continue to decline.

Matebesi stressed that without consequence management, national pronouncements and interventions will fail to translate into actual change.

"Pronouncements are made, but they do not translate into action. Without consequence management, nothing changes."

"These leaders are elected to serve communities, but that responsibility is often neglected," Matebesi added.

Short political cycles and frequent leadership changes, Matebesi asserts, further disrupt long-term planning and the implementation of sustained reforms. "There is often a mindset of short-term gain. By the time systems are understood, leadership changes again."

"You cannot expect investment if you cannot manage your municipalities," he concluded.



# Freedom Day 2026

Freedom and The Rule of Law—Thirty Years of Democratic Citizenship



27 April not only marks the birth of a democratic nation but stands as a testament to the unwavering commitment of South Africans to justice, equality and human dignity.

KEYNOTE ADDRESS

**PREMIER DR. ZAMANI SAUL**



**MONDAY. 27 APRIL 2026**



**GARIEP HIGH SCHOOL | PRIESKA**



**08H00AM**

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## Basotho King, Ramaphosa Open Landmark Lesotho Bridge

The historic structure is part of the Lesotho Highlands Water Project that has already created thousands of jobs



King Letsie III and President Cyril Ramaphosa cutting the Senqu Bridge ribbon. Picture: GCIS

By Matshidiso Selebeleng

President Cyril Ramaphosa travelled to Lesotho to join His Majesty, King Letsie III, and Lesotho Prime Minister, Samuel Matekane, for the official opening of the Senqu Bridge in Mokhotlong.

The ceremony, which took place on Wednesday, marked a significant milestone under Phase II of the Lesotho Highlands Water Project.

According to the Presidency, the Senqu Bridge project has created employment for over 1 200 people - most of them Basotho - and prioritised local expertise to ensure regional development.

"The project has employed local engineers, technicians, and professionals from both our countries," The Presidency said in a statement.

The landmark bridge was built to endure extreme conditions considering that it is located more than 2 500 metres above sea level.

Officials also emphasised that the bridge tells a story of determination in the face of technical complexity.

"It will serve many generations to come. Together with the two other bridges being constructed to span the Polihali reservoir, this bridge will improve travel across this part of the country, making transport easier and cheaper for communities, businesses, and visitors.

Ramaphosa thanked the Basotho nation for making water resources available to South Africa, whilst

conceding that South Africa is a water-scarce country that relies on such partnerships.

He also announced South Africa's intention to provide Lesotho with humanitarian assistance worth R30 million.

The funding will be facilitated through the African Renaissance Fund.

"As a reaffirmation of our desire to further deepen cooperation, I am pleased to announce that South Africa will provide humanitarian assistance to the Kingdom of Lesotho to the value of R30 million from our African Renaissance Fund," Ramaphosa stated.

This contribution will help Lesotho strengthen its national response to HIV and tuberculosis. These efforts come at a time when international humanitarian assistance levels are dwindling globally.

"As the current interim Chair of SADC and Chair later this year, South Africa will continue to promote and champion regional initiatives to accelerate trade, investment, and integration and to deepen people-to-people links," said Ramaphosa.

This collaboration between Lesotho and South Africa helps both countries realise the vision of an economically integrated Africa as espoused by the African Union's Agenda 2063.

The project is also one of the most ambitious and successful transboundary water initiatives in the world and is currently the largest investment South Africa has ever made outside its borders.

## Strategic Toolkit for Assessing Risk implemented in SA



By Bernell Simons

The emergency units at public health facilities are set to improve with new technology, which is expected to enhance services by detecting risks before they become a crisis.

The Strategic Toolkit for Assessing Risk (STAR), developed three decades ago with the support of the World Health Organisation, is said to be one of the most innovative layered surveillance and early warning architectures on the African continent and is finally being implemented in South Africa.

STAR demonstrates the ability to detect threats from Malaria, Measles, foodborne diseases, and Covid 19 variants.

This month the Free State Department of Health hosted a weeklong STAR training on Public Health emergency surveillance response and management at the Protea Hotel in Bloemfontein from 12 to 17 April.

The main aim of the training was to strengthen

emergency preparedness, enhance rapid and coordinated response capacity, build sustainable public health systems, and promote evidence-based decision-making during public health emergencies.

According to the health spokesperson Mondli Mvambi, through this training, participants gained knowledge and skills to improve planning, response operations, and overall emergency management effectiveness.

Key stakeholders that attended the workshop include the National Institute for Communicable Diseases, the Free State Department of Health, the South African National Defence Force (SANDF), the South African Police Service (SAPS), the Border Management Authority (BMA), and the Department of Water Affairs and Sanitation.

During an interview with Journal News, Deputy Director for Emergency Medical Services at the National Department of Health Zina Bum explained that STAR will only succeed if all actors are aligned and ensure

that identified risks trigger prevention preparedness and coordinated response before escalation occurs.

"We assess risk before it becomes a crisis. This tool is developed to assess specific risks at the national or provincial level, Bum said.

WHO's Dr Joseph Francis Wamala described STAR as a "paradigm shift" in emergency management.

"Rather than waiting for the outbreaks to spread, the system identifies likely hazards and builds contingency plans around them.

"We focus our resources on strengthening preparedness and readiness as well as mitigation and preventative interventions that could actually stop those hazards from occurring.

South Africa has already completed two national STAR assessments, including an updated review in March this year, and provinces are not refining their preparedness plans.

"We don't just develop plans and leave them on paper, we test and implement," said Bum.

## Workshop Empowers NC Farmers to Boost Livestock Quality



Beef and mutton farmers fostering Livestock Value Chain through training. Picture: Phemello Manankong

By Phemello Manankong

The Saamtrek Saamwerk Beef and Mutton commodity, in partnership with the Northern Cape Department of Agriculture, Environmental Affairs, Rural Development and Land Reform, hosted a successful farmer workshop at Kubu Kwena Farm outside Barkly West in the Dikgatlong Local Municipality.

Chairperson Sehularo Sehularo said the workshop aimed to equip farmers with practical knowledge on maintaining optimal livestock health and improving cattle body condition.

"We want to specialise across the food value chain—from livestock and poultry to crops and vegetables," he said. "Our focus as the beef and mutton commodity is to strengthen our role in the production value chain and deliver quality products to the market."

He added that the group has secured a contract with BeefMaster, enabling farmers to sell cattle directly to the company—unlocking new market access and opportunities for local producers.

Farmers received training on key topics including determining Body Condition Score in cattle, livestock auctioneering, and biosecurity measures, with a strong focus on Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) and brucellosis.

Representing the Department's Veterinary Services Unit, Dr McDonald Gayakaya stressed the importance of strict biosecurity protocols in preventing disease outbreaks. He highlighted practical measures such as regular dipping, proper vaccination, and ongoing farmer education as critical tools in safeguarding herd health.

Gayakaya noted that initiatives like these play a vital role in strengthening disease prevention and improving overall farm management.

The workshop also forms part of preparations for the upcoming Sernick/Bonsmara SA information day set for 1 May in Kroonstad. The beef and mutton commodity will attend the event as part of broader efforts to build industry partnerships and expand development opportunities for farmers.

**PUBLIC NOTICE**

**PUBLIC PARTICIPATION ON THE REVIEW OF THE INTEGRATED DEVELOPMENT PLAN (IDP) 2026/2027, SECTORAL PLANS, THE MTREF BUDGET 2026/2027 - 2028/29 AND BUDGET RELATED POLICIES**

Municipal Systems Act, Section 34 requires that: A municipal council —

- (a) must review its integrated development plan —
  - (i) annually in accordance with an assessment of its performance measurements in terms of section 4 i; and
  - (ii) to the extent that changing circumstances so demand; and
- (b) may amend its integrated development plan in accordance with a prescribed process.

Notice is hereby given to Communities, Stakeholders and interested parties that the Draft Integrated Development Plan 2026/2027, Sectoral Plans, Draft MTREF Budget 2026/2027 - 2028/2029 and Draft Budget Related Policies for the Mangaung Metropolitan Municipality were noted by the Council on Monday, March 30, 2026 and documents are available at [www.mangaung.co.za](http://www.mangaung.co.za) for comments or inputs to influence the above mentioned draft documents and the draft documents will be available from Thursday, 09 April 2026 at the places below:

- **Bloemfontein:** Bainsvlei Library (Langenhovenpark), Fichardt Park Library, BP Leinaeng Library (Phahameng) Mangaung Library (Rocklands), Trevor Barlow Library (Heidedal) and Lourierpark Library
- **Botshabelo:** Botshabelo Library
- **Botshabelo:** Sechaba Mahobe Library
- **Thaba Nchu:** Seloshe Library
- **Soutpan:** Municipal offices
- **Dewetsdorp:** Municipal offices/Library
- **Wepener:** Municipal offices/Library
- **Van Standenrus:** Municipal offices/Library

Community and all stakeholders are encouraged to submit written comments and inputs regarding the draft documents via email to the following persons:

- **IDP and Sectoral Plans enquiries:** [IDPcomments@mangaung.co.za](mailto:IDPcomments@mangaung.co.za)
- **MTREF Budget and Budget Related Policies enquiries:** [Hansie.VanZyl@mangaung.co.za](mailto:Hansie.VanZyl@mangaung.co.za), [Arrie.Bartnis@mangaung.co.za](mailto:Arrie.Bartnis@mangaung.co.za) and [lehula.reid@mangaung.co.za](mailto:lehula.reid@mangaung.co.za)

Alternatively, submissions may still be hand delivered at the nearest municipal offices for the attention of IDP office, Bram Fischer Building, Second Floor, Room 212b and 213b. The closing date for the above is Monday, 04 May 2026.

**Below is the schedule for IDP sessions:**

Dates	Days	Region	Venue	Time
15 - 17 April 2026	Wednesday - Friday	All Wards	Radio Interviews	To be confirmed on social MMM media platforms
21 April 2026	Tuesday	Thaba-Nchu	Maria Moroka (Wards for Trust Areas only)	11:00 - 14:00
			Barolong Hall	15:30 - 18:00
22 April 2026	Wednesday	Botshabelo	Simson Sefuthi Hall	15:00 - 17:00
			H Hall	17:30 - 19:30
23 April 2026	Thursday	Bloemfontein	Kopanong Hall	15:00 - 17:00
			Kagisanong Hall	17:30 - 19:30
28 April 2026	Tuesday	Bloemfontein	Clive Solomon	15:00 - 17:00
			Paradise Hall	17:30 - 19:30
29 April 2026	Wednesday	Dewetsdorp, Wepener and Van standenrus	Wepener Qibing Hall	15:00 - 17:00
30 April 2026	Thursday	Soutpan/Ikgomotseng	Soutpan/Ikgomotseng Community Hall	16:00 - 18:00
04 May 2026	Monday	Bloemfontein	Bram Fischer Building Indaba Auditorium	16:00 - 18:00

**CLLR. LAWRENCE MATHAE, COUNCIL SPEAKER**

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# Name Your Price - NC Town for Sale



Middelpos Town goes on auction on 21 May 2026 Picture: Home and Hector

By Matshidiso Selebeleng

On Friday, 22 May, the highest bidder will become the new owner of Middelpos, a quiet Karoo village in the Namakwa District of the Northern Cape that is home to around 300 residents. Real estate agency Home and Hector has invited interested buyers to bid on the 103,260-hectare town, which will be sold as a single property through an online auction. The auction window opens on 21 May. According to the agency, Middelpos is one of the few remaining authentic Karoo towns in South Africa, retaining its original character and charm, largely untouched by modern mass tourism.

Home and Hector further highlights Middelpos's rich history, which dates back to 1860 when Daniel Tomlinson established a trading store after acquiring part of the farm Stinkkuil. Following his death, the Sher family purchased the town and developed it into a thriving centre serving the surrounding farming community. Among the family's most prominent members is Sir Anthony Sher, a Cape Town-born, internationally acclaimed Shakespearean actor and member of the Royal Shakespeare Company, who also authored a book inspired by Middelpos. Behind the Middelpos Hotel stands a well-maintained memorial honouring 11 officers and men of the 11th Imperial Yeomanry who lost their lives during the Anglo-Boer War on 5 and 6 February 1902.

cluding a hotel, post office, factory building, hall, three dwellings, a borehole, and a supermarket. Situated between Sutherland and Calvinia along the R354 within the Northern Cape's Hantam Municipality, Middelpos is also located near the Tankwa Karoo National Park, a factor that enhances its tourism appeal. The agency says the property presents strong development potential across several sectors, including business, residential, manufacturing, tourism, and mixed-use projects. Its proximity to the national park has already made it a popular stop for day visitors and overnight tourists, with the town offering the necessary facilities to accommodate them. A notable feature of the town is "Die Winkel," also known as The Shop, described as a hub for retail and community activity, encircled by a wide gravel road.

# ANC-EFF Marriage Sparks Power Storm in Sol Plaatje



ANC provincial secretary Deshi Ngxanga and EFF provincial secretary Zet Kwinana. Picture: DFA

By JN Reporter

A dramatic ANC-EFF power pact has plunged the Sol Plaatje Local Municipality into political turmoil, triggering a sweeping mayoral committee reshuffle that is shaking the foundations of local governance.

The deal, announced on Tuesday, has fast-tracked Economic Freedom Fighters councillors into influential positions, redrawing the balance of power and igniting fierce backlash from opposition parties who warn of instability and backroom politics.

At the centre of the storm, Executive Mayor Martha Bartlett has defended the overhaul as a bold intervention to steady a struggling administration and accelerate service delivery.

But critics argue the move exposes deep fractures within the ANC itself, with suspensions, internal dissent and claims of sidelined councillors fuelling concerns that the high-stakes alliance could deepen divisions rather than restore order.

The newly reconfigured mayoral committee reflects a significant redistribution of power across key portfolios. Thapelo Nkukane now heads Utility Services, Pontsho Mowane takes over Safety and Security, and Simphiwe Landella assumes responsibility for Intergovernmental Relations. Jahn Pieterse will oversee Stormwater and Roads, while Isaac Ruiters leads Corporate Services.

Community Services has been assigned to Elizabeth Johnson, with Nomazizi Shwababa taking charge of Human Settlements. Sebrina Engelbrecht now oversees Finance, Diteko Dioka is responsible for Integrated Development Planning (IDP) and Budget, and Sonja Bosman-Mogorosi leads Local Economic Development.

The reshuffle follows a controversial agreement that has elevated EFF councillors into key positions in both Sol Plaatje and the Frances Baard District Municipality — a move widely seen as a turning point in the region's political landscape.

Opposition parties have reacted sharply. Sol Plaatje Service Delivery Forum councillor Dennis Pienaar described the deal as a calculated attempt to rescue a weakened administration, warning it could erode accountability within council structures. FF Plus councillor Johan Smit slammed the agreement as a power-driven pact, arguing that political positions are being traded at the expense of governance.

Democratic Alliance MP Lisa Schickerling labelled the coalition a "doomsday alliance", cautioning that similar arrangements elsewhere have led to instability and governance failures.

The backlash comes amid growing tensions within the ANC itself. Five councillors have been temporarily suspended for allegedly defying party directives, while others claim they were blindsided by the reshuffle — raising serious concerns about transparency and internal consultation processes.

Despite the mounting criticism, municipal spokesperson Thabo Mthibane defended the changes, insisting the reshuffle is aimed at improving efficiency and restoring public trust.

"The reconfiguration of the mayoral committee is aimed at enhancing efficiency, accountability, and accelerating service delivery to our communities," he said. "The municipality remains committed to stability and ensuring that residents receive the services they deserve."

The EFF has also stood firm, defending its decision to enter the agreement as a pragmatic step toward governance stability.

ANC provincial secretary Deshi Ngxanga backed the partnership, pointing to similar ANC-EFF collaborations in municipalities such as Kheis, Phokwane, Siyancuma and Gamagara, which he claims have delivered improved stability.

As political tensions intensify, all eyes are now on whether the fragile alliance can hold — or whether it will deepen the crisis in one of the Northern Cape's most embattled municipalities.

# Construction Mafias Stall North West School Projects

By Lerato Mutlanyane

While thousands of children in the North West province wait for safe, technology-ready classrooms, intimidation and violence have derailed school construction projects, with so-called construction mafias blamed for widespread disruptions. The interference has led to abandoned sites, financial losses for contractors, and job cuts for local labourers. The Select Committee on Education, Science and the Creative Industries has raised alarm over the escalating crisis, warning that these criminal networks are undermining efforts to deliver quality education. Committee chairperson Makhi Feni said the situation was unacceptable. "We are concerned that people driven by greed and with the sole intention of disrupting government



services can operate so freely around our schools," he said. "The national focus is on improving service de-

livery where impact is visible, and we will not remain silent. Law enforcement must act decisively—these individuals are known and increasingly brazen." North West Education MEC Viola Motsumi echoed the sentiment, insisting the department would not yield to intimidation. "Education is not their territory. We do not want them anywhere near our schools or school projects," she said. Motsumi added that reports indicate rival groups have begun targeting each other and workers on-site, further stalling progress. Meanwhile, oversight visits are underway in the Klerksdorp area, where several public schools continue to struggle with maintenance backlogs and inadequate ICT infrastructure. Feni stressed that the department remains accountable to Parliament—not criminal elements—when it comes to its work and the use of public funds.

# Matlosana Slammed for Klerksdorp Killer Road

By Matshidiso Selebeleng

AfriForum has challenged the Matlosana Local Municipality to prioritise life-threatening road conditions at a major Klerksdorp intersection. The civil rights group formally notified the Acting Municipal Manager regarding the intersection of Jan van Riebeeck Road (R30), Leemhuis Street, and Ian Street. Residents frequently pass the site and report unsafe conditions caused by non-functional traffic lights and missing road signs. AfriForum District Coordinator for the Mooi River, Alta Pretorius, described the current state of the R30 as an unacceptable risk to road users. "This situation exposes road users to unacceptable risks on a daily basis. The R30 is an important route with heavy traffic; without proper traffic control, collisions and injuries are inevitable." The organisation stated that the municipality's failure to maintain the site is a sign of gross negligence, while further arguing that authorities have a legal ob-



AfriForum has called on Matlosana's Acting MM to look into deteriorating road conditions. Picture: AfriForum

ligation to manage traffic control measures in terms of the National Road Traffic Act. While the formal complaint focused on one intersection, many other parts of the town are reportedly riddled with deteriorating markings. Pretorius pointed to a systemic failure in infrastructure maintenance that forces residents to navigate dangerous streets alone. "It is clear that there is a systemic failure in the

maintenance of infrastructure. Residents are being left to their own devices while their safety is compromised." AfriForum has urged the municipality to urgently repair the traffic lights and install correct signage to alert motorists of upcoming hazards. The organisation further warned that the local government could be held liable for any future damage, injuries, or loss of life.

# Political divorce looms as the ANC threatens to purge dual members who campaign for SACP

The battle lines between the African National Congress (ANC) and its alliance partner, the South African Communist Party (SACP), have been drawn.

While the ANC on Thursday issued letters to dual members requiring them to declare their allegiance ahead of the local government polls, the SACP says it won't be acceding to the demand.

Both parties have held separate briefings to clarify their positions following the SACP's decision to contest elections independently.

The ANC is warning that those in leadership positions who fail to respond to its letter can face being stripped of their jobs.

ANC Secretary General Fikile Mbalula on Thursday read dual members the riot act if they don't respond to his missive within the next ten days.

"Should you decide to ignore this communication, and you are found to be campaigning for any other political party outside the ANC, we will take steps."

The directive puts the SACP in a difficult position, given it also has two ministers in government - Mineral Resources and Petroleum minister Gwede Mantashe and Higher Education minister Buti Manamela.

"If you are in the executive, at local government or service in any position of influence, including deployment, we will take steps, including removal from those positions with immediate effect."

While the ANC insists the stance it's adopted towards the SACP is not antagonistic, it's not being received that way.

SACP General Secretary Solly Mapaila says the ANC's directive is akin to demanding subordination from the SACP. - EWN

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# Public Notice

## **FINAL DECISION: INTENTION TO INTERRUPT/ REDUCE THE BULK ELECTRICITY SUPPLY TO NALA LOCAL MUNICIPALITY**

As indicated in a notice published on 06 March 2026, Eskom has carefully considered all written representations, comments and/or requests for further information and/or submissions received on or before the closing date regarding the contemplated interruption/reduction of bulk electricity supply to Nala Local Municipality (the Municipality).

On 27 March 2026, the Municipality passed a resolution to enter into a Distribution Agency Agreement (DAA) with Eskom. As a transitional arrangement and while the process to finalise the DAA is underway, it remains the Municipality's responsibility to pay its current accounts.

To this extent, the interruption/reduction of the bulk electricity supply remains suspended, subject to the Municipality paying the current account while parties finalise the DAA.

All stakeholders who were likely to be materially and adversely affected by Eskom's decision are hereby notified that the interruption/reduction of the bulk electricity supply will **not** commence on 08 May 2026.

Reference Number: **NLM 03/2026**

Issued in terms of the Promotion of Administrative Justice Act 3 of 2000.



# Public Notice

## **QETO YA HO QETELA: MAIKEMISETSO A HO SITISA/FOKOTSA PHEPELO YA MOTLAKASE HO MASEPALA WA LEHAE WA NALA**

Jwalo ka ha ho boletswe tsebising e phatlaladitsweng ka la 6 Hlakubele 2026, Eskom e nahanne ka hloko ka ditlhahiso tsohle tse ngotsweng, ditshwaelo le/kapa dikopo tsa tlhahisoleseding e eketsehileng tse amohetsweng ka kapa pele ho letsatsi la ho kwala mabapi le tshitiso/phokotso e rerilweng ya phepele e kgolo ya motlakase ho Masepala wa Lehae wa Nala (Masepala).

Ka la 27 Hlakubele 2026, Masepala o fetisitse leano la ho kena ho tumellano le Eskom ya Distribution Agency Agreement (DAA). Tlhophiso ya nakwana ha tshebetso ya ho phethela DAA e ntse e tswella, ke hore ke boikarabello ba Masepala ho lefa diakhaonte tsa yona tsa hajwale.

Kahoo, tshitiso/phokotso ya phepele e kgolo ya motlakase e tla dula e fanyehilwe, hafeela Masepala a lefa akhaonte ya yona ya hajwale ha baamehi ba ntse ba phethela DAA.

Baamehi bohle ba ka amehang ke qeto ya Eskom ba tsebiswa hore tshitiso/phokotso ya phepele e kgolo ya motlakase e **ke ke** ya qala ka la 8 Motsheanong 2026.

Nomoro ya Reference: **NLM 03/2026**

E rometswe ho latela Molao wa Phahamiso ya Toka ya Tsamaiso wa 3 wa 2000.



# Public Notice

## FINAL DECISION: INTENTION TO INTERRUPT/REDUCE THE BULK ELECTRICITY SUPPLY TO NKETOANA LOCAL MUNICIPALITY

As indicated in a notice published on 06 March 2026, Eskom has carefully considered all written representations, comments and/or requests for further information and/or submissions received on or before the closing date regarding the contemplated interruption/reduction of bulk electricity supply to Nketoana Local Municipality.

By 13 April 2026, the representations/submissions received did not provide a solution for Eskom to continue supplying the bulk electricity to the Municipality in a sustainable manner. Furthermore, the Municipality has failed to either pass a council resolution to enter into a Delivery Agency Agreement (DAA) with Eskom, enter into a prepayment agreement where Eskom supplies only the bulk supply which the Municipality can afford to pay, or enter into an agreement where the Municipality's customers pay Eskom directly for the consumption of electricity.

Unfortunately, Eskom is unable to withdraw its intention to interrupt/reduce the bulk supply to the Municipality.

All stakeholders who are likely to be materially and adversely affected by Eskom's decision are hereby notified that the interruption/reduction of the bulk electricity supply will commence on 08 May 2026 as follows.

#	Points of supply/Area	Daily interruption schedule
1	Lindley	07:00 – 09:00 18:00 – 21:00
2	Petrus Steyn	
3	Reitz	

Reference Number: **NKLM 03/2026**

Issued in terms of the Promotion of Administrative Justice Act 3 of 2000.

# Public Notice

## QETO YA HO QETELA: MAIKEMISETSO A HO SITISA/FOKOTSA PHEPELO YA MOTLAKASE HO MASEPALA WA LEHAE WA NKETOANA

Jwalo ka ha ho boletswe tsebisong e phatlaladitsweng ka la 6 Hlakubele 2026, Eskom e nahanne ka hloko ka ditlhahiso tsohle tse ngotsweng, ditshwaelo le/kapa dikopo tsa tlhahisoleseding e eketsehileng tse amohetsweng ka kapa pele ho letsatsi la ho kwala mabapi le tshitiso/phokotso e rerilweng ya phepele e kgolo ya motlakase ho Masepala wa Lehae wa Nketoana (Masepala).

Ho fihlela ka la 13 Mmesa 2026, ditlhahiso/nehelano tse amohetsweng di ne di sa fane ka tharollo bakeng sa hore Eskom e tswele pele ho fepela Masepala ka motlakase ke mokgwa o molemo o nang le boikarabello. Ho feta moo, Masepala o hlolehile ho fetisa leano la khansele la ho kena ho tumellano ya Delivery Agency Agreement (DAA) le Eskom, ho etsa tumellano ya ho lefa pele ho phephelo (prepaid), moo Eskom e fanang ka phepele e kgolo eo Masepala a kgonang ho e lefa feela, kapa ho etsa tumellano ya hore bareki ba Masepala ba lefe Eskom ka kotloloho bakeng sa tshebediso ya motlakase.

Ka bomadimabe, Eskom ha e kgone ho hula maikemisetso a yona a ho sitisa/fokotsa phepele e kgolo ho Masepala.

Baamehi bohle ba ka amehang ke qeto ya Eskom ba tsebiswa hore tshitiso/phokotso ya phepele e kgolo ya motlakase e tla qala ka la 8 Motsheanong 2026 ka mokgwa o latelang:

#	Sebaka sa phepele	Kemiso ya tshitiso ya motlakase ya letsatsi le letsatsi
1	Lindley	07:00 – 09:00 18:00 – 21:00
2	Petrus Steyn	
3	Reitz	

Nomoro ya Referense: **NKLM 03/2026**

E rometswe ho latela Molao wa Phahamiso ya Toka ya Tsamaiso wa 3 wa 2000.

# Public Notice

## **FINAL DECISION: INTENTION TO INTERRUPT/REDUCE THE BULK ELECTRICITY SUPPLY TO MASILONYANA LOCAL MUNICIPALITY**

As indicated in a notice published on 06 March 2026, Eskom has carefully considered all written representations, comments and/or requests for further information and/or submissions received on or before the closing date regarding the contemplated interruption/reduction of bulk electricity supply to Masilonyana Local Municipality (the Municipality).

On 25 March 2026, the Municipality passed a resolution to enter into a Distribution Agency Agreement (DAA) with Eskom. As a transitional arrangement and while the process to finalise the DAA is underway, it remains the Municipality's responsibility to pay its current accounts.

To this extent, the interruption/reduction of the bulk electricity supply remains suspended, subject to the Municipality paying the current account while parties finalise the DAA.

All stakeholders who were likely to be materially and adversely affected by Eskom's decision are hereby notified that the interruption/reduction of the bulk electricity supply will **not** commence on 08 May 2026.

Reference Number: **MLM 03/2026**

Issued in terms of the Promotion of Administrative Justice Act 3 of 2000.

# Public Notice

## QETO YA HO QETELA: MAIKEMISITSO A HO SITISA/FOKOTSA PHEPELO YA MOTLAKASE HO MASEPALA WA LEHAE WA MASILONYANA

Jwalo ka ha ho boletswe tsebison e phatlaladitsweng ka la 6 Hlakubele 2026, Eskom e nahanne ka hloko ka ditlhahiso tsohle tse ngotsweng, ditshwaelo le/kapa dikopo tsa tlhahisoleseding e eketsehileng tse amohetsweng ka kapa pele ho letsatsi la ho kwala mabapi le tshitiso/phokotso e rerilweng ya phepele e kgolo ya motlakase ho Masepala wa Lehae wa Masilonyana (Masepala).

Ka la 25 Hlakubele 2026, Masepala o fetisitse leano la ho kena ho tumellano le Eskom ya Distribution Agency Agreement (DAA). Tlhophiso ya nakwana ha tshebetso ya ho phethela DAA e ntse e tswella, ke hore ke boikarabello ba Masepala ho lefa diakhaonte tsa yona tsa hajwale.

Kahoo, tshitiso/phokotso ya phepele e kgolo ya motlakase e tla dula e fanyehilwe, hafeela Masepala a lefa akhaonte ya yona ya hajwale ha baamehi ba ntse ba phethela DAA.

Baamehi bohle ba ka amehang ke qeto ya Eskom ba tsebiswa hore tshitiso/phokotso ya phepele e kgolo ya motlakase e **ke ke** ya qala ka la 8 Motsheanong 2026.

Nomoro ya Referense: **MLM 03/2026**

E rometswe ho latela Molao wa Phahamiso ya Toka ya Tsamaiso wa 3 wa 2000.

# Public Notice

## **FINAL DECISION: INTENTION TO INTERRUPT/REDUCE THE BULK ELECTRICITY SUPPLY TO NGWATHE LOCAL MUNICIPALITY**

As indicated in a notice published on 06 March 2026, Eskom has carefully considered all written representations, comments and/or requests for further information and/or submissions received on or before the closing date regarding the contemplated interruption/reduction of bulk electricity supply to Ngwathe Local Municipality (the Municipality).

On 27 March 2026, the Municipality passed a resolution to enter into a Distribution Agency Agreement (DAA) with Eskom. As a transitional arrangement and while the process to finalise the DAA is underway, it remains the Municipality's responsibility to pay its current accounts.

To this extent, the interruption/reduction of the bulk electricity supply remains suspended, subject to the Municipality paying the current account while parties finalise the DAA.

All stakeholders who were likely to be materially and adversely affected by Eskom's decision are hereby notified that the interruption/reduction of the bulk electricity supply will **not** commence on 08 May 2026.

Reference Number: **NGLM 03/2026**

Issued in terms of the Promotion of Administrative Justice Act 3 of 2000.

# Public Notice

## QETO YA HO QETELA: MAIKEMISITSO A HO SITISA/FOKOTSA PHEPELO YA MOTLAKASE HO MASEPALA WA LEHAE WA NGWATHE

Jwalo ka ha ho boletswe tsebison e phatlaladitsweng ka la 6 Hlakubele 2026, Eskom e nahanne ka hloko ka ditlhahiso tsohle tse ngotsweng, ditshwaelo le/kapa dikopo tsa tlhahisoleseding e eketsehileng tse amohetsweng ka kapa pele ho letsatsi la ho kwala mabapi le tshitiso/phokotso e rerilweng ya phepele e kgolo ya motlakase ho Masepala wa Lehae wa Ngwathe (Masepala).

Ka la 27 Hlakubele 2026, Masepala o fetisitse leano la ho kena ho tumellano le Eskom ya Distribution Agency Agreement (DAA). Tlhophiso ya nakwana ha tshebetso ya ho phethela DAA e ntse e tswella, ke hore ke boikarabello ba Masepala ho lefa diakhaonte tsa yona tsa hajwale.

Kahoo, tshitiso/phokotso ya phepele e kgolo ya motlakase e tla dula e fanyehilwe, hafeela Masepala a lefa akhaonte ya yona ya hajwale ha baamehi ba ntse ba phethela DAA.

Baamehi bohle ba ka amehang ke qeto ya Eskom ba tsebiswa hore tshitiso/phokotso ya phepele e kgolo ya motlakase e **ke ke** ya qala ka la 8 Motsheanong 2026.

Nomoro ya Referense: **NGLM 03/2026**

E rometswe ho latela Molao wa Phahamiso ya Toka ya Tsamaiso wa 3 wa 2000.

# Business

## Markets and Indicators

Rand/Dollar	16.64	-1.14%	▼
Rand/Pound	22.39	-0.91%	▼
Rand/Euro	19.40	-0.78%	▼
Platinum	2 009.60	-4.30%	▼
Brent Crude	105.59	5.69%	▲
Gold	4 709.40	-0.64%	▼
Ethereum	2 288.3	-4.73%	▼
Bitcoin	77 010.97	-2.24%	▼

## Green Economy Push: Rockman Bets on Land Restoration to Drive Jobs and Recovery



Free State MEC for Agriculture, Elzabe Rockman, pins economic hopes on environmental turnaround. Picture: DARD/Facebook

By Bernell Simons

A 7,500-hectare land rehabilitation programme set to create 700 green jobs is at the heart of a bold economic shift unveiled by Free State MEC for Agriculture, Rural Development and Environmental Affairs, Elzabé Rockman.

Tabled as part of the department's 2026/27 Budget Vote, the plan marks a decisive pivot from treating environmental management as a compliance exercise to positioning it as a catalyst for economic recovery and long-term sustainability.

At its core is a simple but often overlooked reality: without functioning ecosystems, economic growth cannot endure. In a province increasingly strained by land degradation, failing waste systems and water risks, the budget reframes environmental repair as the foundation for rebuilding the economy.

Rockman's approach is notably pragmatic. Rather than broad commitments, it draws a direct link between restoration, infrastructure investment and job creation. The rehabilitation project aims to restore soil health, curb erosion and boost agricultural productivity in rural areas where unemployment remains high.

The programme forms part of a broader allocation of R1.089 billion for 2026/27, rising to R1.139 billion in

2027/28 and R1.170 billion in 2028/29. Of this, R159.5 million is dedicated to Environmental Affairs, now elevated to a core programme—underscoring its growing economic role.

The timing is significant. With South Africa's economy under pressure and municipalities struggling to maintain infrastructure, environmental decline has become a direct drag on growth. In the Free State, these pressures are particularly acute.

The budget responds with an infrastructure-led recovery model. Beyond the flagship project, R54.2 million has been allocated through the Infrastructure Enhancement Allocation, while R19 million is earmarked for disaster management, Foot-and-Mouth Disease response and waste management. Conditional grants total R286.3 million, reinforcing land care and agricultural sustainability.

At municipal level, efforts are focused on stabilising basic environmental systems. Plans to audit 34 landfill sites and conduct 280 compliance inspections aim to shore up waste management—an often overlooked but critical pillar of economic stability.

The province is also tackling the long-term impact of environmental disasters. In Jagersfontein, where a tailings dam collapse left soil sodium levels up to 80% above normal, a pilot project using gypsum is under-

way to restore soil quality—signalling a shift toward science-based recovery.

International support is bolstering these efforts. In partnership with North West, the province has secured about R100 million over five years from the Global Environment Facility to advance land restoration and sustainable development.

Meanwhile, the Foot-and-Mouth Disease outbreak—now with 443 confirmed cases affecting nearly 189,000 animals—continues to strain the agricultural sector. Although R26 million has been allocated, spending has been slow due to vaccine supply constraints. To strengthen biosecurity, mobile quarantine facilities are being developed along the 485km Lesotho border.

The broader message is clear: economic recovery in the Free State will hinge as much on restoring environmental systems as on reviving traditional industries.

However, risks remain. Municipal capacity constraints and procurement delays continue to threaten implementation, and the gap between budget allocations and actual spending raises concerns.

Even so, the strategy signals a meaningful shift. In a province battling deep environmental degradation and high unemployment, Rockman's plan offers a practical, measurable path forward—one that ties ecological repair directly to economic renewal.

## Mokoena Unveils R1.18bn Plan to Fix Housing Delays



Human Settlements MEC Saki Mokoena Picture: HS/Facebook

By Bernell Simons

Free State Human Settlements MEC Saki Mokoena has unveiled a R1.18 billion plan to fix chronic housing delays, placing a strict "Beke le Beke" week-by-week monitoring system at the centre of efforts to fast-track delivery, tighten accountability, and restore dignity in struggling communities.

Tabletting the department's 2026/27 budget, Mokoena framed the approach as a decisive shift from years of inefficiencies, stalled projects, and weak oversight. The department, he said, is now focused on rebuilding state capacity and ensuring that both officials and contractors deliver consistently and on time.

At the core of this shift is the "Beke le Beke" model—meaning "week by week"—which introduces continuous monitoring of housing projects, informal settlement upgrades, and municipal performance, replacing slow and often ineffective reporting cycles.

The department's R1.189 billion allocation reflects a 7.1% decrease from the previous financial year, largely due to national fiscal pressures and reduced conditional grants. The Human Settlements Development Grant has been cut to R777.1 million, while the Informal Settlements Upgrading Partnership Grant drops to R112.8 million. Despite these reductions, Mokoena insists delivery will be accelerated through tighter coordination and improved implementation.

A key priority is the replacement of ageing two-roomed houses with Breaking New Ground (BNG) units. R30 million has been allocated for projects in Ipopeng (Fauriesmith), Dark City (Mangaung), Bronville (Matjhabeng), and Extension 2 (Dihlabeng). An additional R2.567 million has been set aside under the Expanded Public Works Programme to support skills development in trades such as plumbing and plastering, aimed at boosting employment while improving construction quality.

Performance in the past financial year has been mixed. The department delivered 1,816 serviced sites in greenfield developments and exceeded informal settlement upgrading targets, completing 2,873 sites against a target of 1,062.

However, BNG housing construction lagged, with only 41.5% of the 1,663-unit target achieved. In response, contractor panels have been reopened to expand capacity and improve delivery.

Infrastructure upgrades remain central to the strategy. In Hani Park, 261 houses have been con-

nected to water and sewer systems, with full completion expected once pump station upgrades are finalised. In Nala Municipality, 97% of a 429-site bulk services project has been completed. In Matjhabeng, additional sites have been allocated in Nyakallong to relocate households affected by mine water risks.

Progress is also being made in Community Residential Units, with 270 units completed at G-Hostel and 130 units ready for occupation in Mangaung's Dark and Silver City, pending bulk service connections.

Large-scale catalytic projects are driving spatial transformation across the province. In Bethlehem, the Bakenpark Integrated Development is back on track with new contractors and 90 BNG houses already under construction. In Sasolburg, the Vaal River City project is advancing, with thousands of serviced sites nearing completion. In Moqhaka, most of the planned 5,300 residential sites already have water and sewer connections, with alternative bulk infrastructure solutions being explored to accelerate the remaining work.

The province continues to face a significant informal settlement challenge, with 189 settlements housing more than 84,000 households. Mokoena said the department is prioritising in-situ upgrading while identifying relocation sites where necessary. He cautioned against objections that delay development, warning that housing delivery must not be stalled by administrative or politically driven resistance.

Restoring ownership and dignity remains a key focus. The department has already registered 1,319 title deeds and is working to ensure every completed house is transferred with full ownership documentation.

This includes converting old permits and deed grants into formal title deeds, particularly for historically disadvantaged groups.

Mokoena also outlined institutional reforms aimed at decentralising decision-making to district level while strengthening oversight and accountability. He acknowledged ongoing challenges, including corruption, procurement irregularities, and capacity constraints, but said corrective measures are being implemented.

Closing his address, Mokoena made it clear that the department's direction is firmly set—faster delivery, stricter oversight, and a housing programme that not only builds homes but restores dignity and begins to reshape spatial inequality across the Free State.

## Sifuba Turns to Sport and Arts in R155m Youth Development Push

By Bernell Simons

In a province battling youth unemployment, rising substance abuse and deepening social frustration, the Free State government's latest investment into sport, arts, culture and recreation is being framed by sector organisations as more than a ceremonial budget allocation but as a potential economic and social intervention capable of reshaping communities.

When Free State MEC for Sport, Arts, Culture and Recreation Zanele Sifuba tabled the department's 2026/27 Budget Vote at the Harry Gwala Sports Complex this week, the figures reflected a department attempting to reposition sport and culture as both an economic driver and a crime prevention tool.

The department has been allocated R155.8 million for the new financial year an increase from the previous R137.6 million.

The South African Arts Culture Youth Forum SAACYF says the figures matter because of what is at stake if investment fails young people.



In a statement it welcomed commitments but warned implementation, transparency and access will determine impact.

SAACYF says thousands of young people have talent but remain excluded from economic participation.

In many communities unemployment has turned sport and culture into social infrastructure rather than luxury. Community leaders link crime, drug abuse and gangsterism to lack of recreation and development. SAACYF argues programmes can break this cycle.

The organisation says MACUFE, district festivals and local programmes can create jobs for performers, crews, designers, builders, organisers, caterers, transport and traders. It insists opportunities must not be concentrated

among repeat beneficiaries.

One proposal is that 80 percent of MACUFE performers should be local especially township and rural artists. SAACYF says localisation is economic inclusion.

It also calls for EPWP contract reforms limiting participation to 12 months and 24 months over five years. Young people want access not handouts said an organiser. District festivals and Homebrew programmes are seen as decentralisation tools.

SAACYF also backs Clap and Tap choral initiatives. It wants programmes in all 18 municipalities.

The forum says arts participation improves education reduces crime and strengthens communities.

It also supports infrastructure upgrades and satellite facilities. A proposed film hub and film commission are viewed as job drivers.

SAACYF warns ambition must be matched with transparency fairness and accountability.

The debate reflects whether youth are beneficiaries or economic participants. The answer may shape whether culture becomes real recovery tool.

GET TO KNOW YOUR DJ

DJ Sabatone Spins Soul by Night, Farms by Day



By Lerato Mutlanyane

The moment the synth chords slice through the club air, stretching anticipation to its limit, Sabatone drops the beat—pulling the crowd into a shared state of euphoria. The energy shifts instantly; sound becomes sensation, and music transforms into something deeply felt—food for the soul.

Hailing from Bloemfontein, the City of Roses, Lehloholo 'SABATONE' Mfeka (31) brings over 15 years of experience behind the decks. Mentored by local music heavyweights Sir Noble and Pablo Khumalo, he has honed a signature sound that blends deep and soulful house with amapiano and beyond.

More than just a DJ, Mfeka is a curator of soundscapes—crafting sets that transcend playlists and take audiences on immersive musical journeys.

But beyond the nightlife, Mfeka's rhythm slows to the steady pace of rural life. A passionate farmer, he has spent the past three years working with livestock, tending to sheep and cattle.

"I am a lover of livestock and landscapes. Managing a farm is where my heart is when I'm not on the decks," he said.

Looking ahead, Mfeka envisions a shift. "In five years, I plan to retire from club DJing and focus on hosting more intimate events while still playing at prominent gatherings."

Despite challenges such as limited funding, he continues to shape the local scene through 'Nostalgic Sundays' by Drumkidmistic—an exclusive deep house experience that keeps his sound alive and evolving. He also provides sound systems and stage equipment for hire, expanding his footprint in the industry.

For those chasing his signature nostalgic vibe, DJ Sabatone can be found lighting up venues like 128 Lounge and Bar, Cappello Bloem, and Club Vegas—where every set is more than music; it's a journey.

# Kat Sinivasan Launches Bold Debut Fragrance 'KB Shadow'

By Lerato Mutlanyane

Television personality and lifestyle curator Katleho "Kat" Sinivasan (33) has officially stepped into the fragrance space with the launch of his debut scent, KB Shadow.

The Soweto-born singer and former VoTV presenter, best known as a finalist on SABC 2's Famous 2007 Season 2, describes the release as a defining moment in his career and a natural extension of his personal brand.

Positioned as an affordable premium scent, KB Shadow is crafted for the modern man, blending freshness, spice and depth to transition seamlessly from day to night.

The fragrance opens with notes of bergamot, black pepper and grapefruit, layered over cedarwood, lavender and incense, and settles into a rich base of vetiver, patchouli and dark amber.

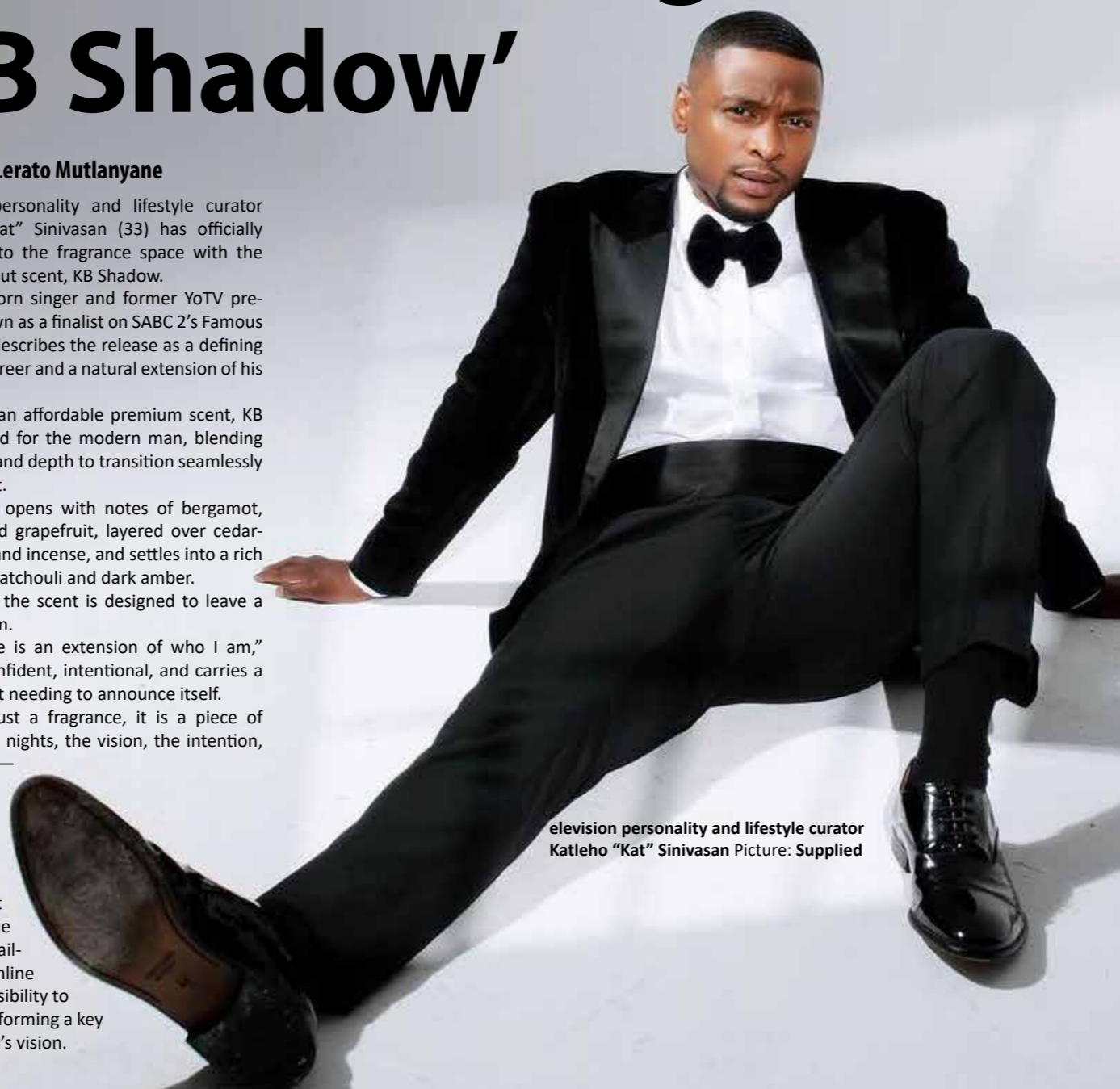
Sinivasan says the scent is designed to leave a lasting impression.

"The fragrance is an extension of who I am," he said. "It is confident, intentional, and carries a presence without needing to announce itself."

"This is not just a fragrance, it is a piece of me. It is the late nights, the vision, the intention, the evolution — everything that I have stepped into, and everything I am becoming."

He added that KB Shadow is the first product available on his online store, with accessibility to a wide audience forming a key part of the brand's vision.

He added that KB Shadow is the first product available on his online store, with accessibility to a wide audience forming a key part of the brand's vision.



Television personality and lifestyle curator Katleho "Kat" Sinivasan. Picture: Supplied

# Top Billing Reboots with a Dynamic New Host Lineup



By Lerato Mutlanyane

After a six-year hiatus, South Africa's iconic lifestyle show Top Billing is making a highly anticipated return—promising a refreshed format, new faces, and the signature luxury that made it a household name.

Fans can expect a dynamic new lineup featuring Miss Universe Zozibini Tunzi, social media influencer Sine Mpulu, Miss South Africa 2023 runner-up Bryoni Govennder, and actor Arno Greeff. The quartet is set to usher in a new era for the show, blending glamour with contemporary storytelling and a fresh on-screen energy.

According to Cardova Productions' Chief Operating Officer and Executive Producer, Bradley van den Berg, the new season will offer a bold twist while staying true to the show's roots. Viewers can look forward to unexpected design challenges, aspirational home features, and plenty of "wow" moments.

"For years, viewers have eagerly awaited word on the new presenters, and we are thrilled to introduce four talents who are no strangers to the Mzansi entertainment scene," he said.

The new hosts will join a strong lineup of legacy presenters, including Dr Michael Mol, Basetsana Kumalo, Jonathan Boynton-Lee, Dr Fx Mkhize, and Ryle De Morny—a move that producers say is intentional.

"Bringing together a mix of iconic Top Billing presenters and exciting new talent was a deliberate decision. This season honours the legacy audiences know and love, while evolving to reflect the energy, diversity, and ambition of modern South Africa," van den Berg added.

Tunzi, widely recognised for her global advocacy work on gender-based violence, education, and women's empowerment, is expected to bring depth and perspective to the show. Mpulu will introduce a strong digital edge, offering behind-the-scenes access and driving real-time engagement across platforms.

Govennder, known for her academic focus and purpose-driven outlook, is set to resonate with young South Africans striving to make an impact, while Greeff's on-screen charisma is expected to attract a new generation of viewers.

SABC Video Marketing Manager, Dichaba Phalatshe, said selecting the new hosts was a careful and deliberate process.

"It was essential that the lineup reflects a progressive and curious South Africa—one that is open to new ideas and perspectives. We are confident this season will resonate with audiences while embracing the future," she said.

With its blend of legacy appeal and modern flair, Top Billing's return is shaping up to be more than just a comeback—it's a reinvention aimed at capturing both loyal viewers and a new, younger audience.

# Heartfelt Tributes Pour in for Cynthia Shange

By Lerato Mutlanyane



Years ago, when beauty queen and legend Cynthia Philiwwe Shange first stepped onto a stage—whether beneath glittering pageant lights or on a film set—she didn't just command attention; she captured hearts. Now, as news of her passing spreads, those hearts are breaking.

Shange died on Monday at the age of 77 in a Kwa-Zulu-Natal hospital.

On Monday morning, her daughter, media personality Nonhle Thema, confirmed the news on social media.

"With a heavy heart, I share the news of our dear mother. Please keep my family in your prayers during this difficult time," she wrote, alongside a brief tribute celebrating her mother's life.

Shange was a trailblazer in the 1970s, becoming the first woman of colour to represent South Africa at the international Miss World competition. She had already made history as the first Black woman to win the local title before the pageant was fully integrated—a groundbreaking achievement that opened doors for many who followed.

She later carved out a successful acting career,

taking on lead roles in the hit series Udeliwe, appearing in Shaka Zulu, and later featuring on Muvhango—cementing her place as a household name in South African entertainment.

Her family confirmed she passed away early Monday morning.

She is survived by her daughters Sihle and Nonhle, her sons Ayanda and Benele Thema, as well as grandchildren and great-grandchildren who will carry her legacy forward. Funeral arrangements will be announced in due course.

Following the announcement, tributes poured in across social media, turning timelines into a digital memorial.

"My deepest condolences. May His spirit grant you peace and comfort during this time," wrote singer Loyiso Bala.

"Sending sincere condolences, angel," added media mogul Carol Bouwer.

"Condolences to you and your family, sis. Modimo a nne le lona (May God be with you)," shared one supporter.

Cynthia Shange's life was one of firsts, of courage, and of breaking barriers—her legacy etched not only in history, but in the hearts of a nation.

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9323  
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**GIG Guide**

xxx  
xxx  
xxx

**Saturday 25 April 2026**  
Arabian Stylish  
Manchu Inn Cuisine  
Blotshabelo

**Saturday 25 April 2026**  
MAC FreedomDay Marathon  
City Hall  
Bloemfontein

**Sunday 26 April 2026**  
All Soul  
Gardens Private Lifestyle Lounge  
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# SPORT



## Derby Hype Heightens Title Race Tension

*The Buccaneers and Amakhosi line-up for derby fixture that could influence Betway Premiership title race*

By JN Reporter

The FNB Stadium stands ready to host the 185th Soweto Derby this Sunday, 26 April 2026, serving as a thunderous opening act for Monday's Freedom Day celebrations.

This clash between Orlando Pirates and Kaizer Chiefs has for decades prevailed as a cultural standstill that defines the soul of South African sport.

With the 32nd anniversary of democracy on the horizon, the timing of this encounter adds a profound layer of historic significance to the rivalry.

Pirates enter the pitch this Sunday as the undeniable favourites, buoyed by a dominant season and a recent clinical run of form.

They currently lead the Betway Premiership standings with 58 points from 25 matches, having secured a convincing 3-0 victory over AmaZulu in their last outing.

Despite Bucs' recent superiority, the club's head coach, Abdeslam Ouaddou, is refusing to let any complacency creep into his camp.

He remains focused on the mental discipline required to navigate a fixture where form often takes a back seat to raw emotion.

"We have to keep the same spirit and intensity in every game we are going to play because that is our target. It is only with that mentality that we can start dreaming about the league title," stated Ouaddou.

The tactical battle will be immense as Ouaddou has already signalled his respect for the tactical shifts within the opposition camp.

He noted that he is wary of a squad that appears revitalised and ready to challenge the status quo.

For the Glamour Boys, on the other hand, this match represents a chance at redemption and a vital step toward securing a respectable top-three finish.

Chiefs occupy third place on the log with 46 points - recently playing out to a 0-0 draw against Polokwane City against the backdrop of a dominant 4-1 win over Magesi FC as well.

The pressure from the Amakhosi faithful is staggering, although the coaching staff is at-

tempting to shield the players from it.

To this effect, they are treating the occasion with a pragmatic focus on the league table rather than the weight of history.

"In a few days, it's the derby - we have to start thinking of that now and continue to work towards it. It is only three points," Kaizer Chiefs coach, Khalil Ben Youssef, said in a recent press briefing.

Recent betting odds reflect a shocking gap between the two sides, with the Buccaneers heavily favoured to continue their winning streak.

However, the unpredictability of the Soweto Derby is what makes it the undisputed jewel in the crown of domestic football.

The FNB Stadium is expected to be a sold-out sea of vibrant colour.

As the whistle blows, the tactical nuances will take a back seat to the sheer willpower of 22 men on the pitch.

The streets of South Africa are already painted in the warring colours of black, white, and gold as fans prepare for a weekend that merges athletic passion with national pride.

## North West Swimmers Chase National Glory

*Province's elite squad looking to bring back gold from the SA Schools Aquatics Championships in Cape Town*



By Mpho Sekharume

The North West Department of Arts, Culture, Sports and Recreation (ACSR) has officially dispatched the provincial swimming team to the 2026 SA Schools Aquatics Championships. The squad is competing at the University of the Western Cape (UWC) in Bellville from 23 to 27 April.

The selected athletes earned their spots during the Provincial Schools Aquatics trials held in Potchefstroom from 13 to 14 February. Every swimmer in the delegation met the strict qualifying standards set by the National School Sport structures.

The North West competitors are participating in various disciplines including the 50m freestyle, backstroke, butterfly, and breaststroke. The team is also represented in the high-intensity 200m medley relay and the 50m freestyle relay events.

Departmental officials and the Provincial Sports Federation have backed the squad to perform well against the country's best swimmers.

The championship follows a 'Best of the Best' format where the top two qualifiers from each province compete head-to-head.

While Gauteng Schools claimed the highest medal count at the previous championships in Bloemfontein, the North West team arrives with high expectations. The province has prioritised athletic development and is looking to improve its standing on the national medal table.

Finals and medal ceremonies are taking place daily from 15:00 at the UWC swimming pool. These sessions are critical for swimmers looking to transition from school-level competition into the professional national structures.

The SA Schools Aquatics Championships has a long history of producing elite South African stars such as Pieter Coetzee and Karin Prinsloo.

North West coaches believe the current group of athletes has the necessary preparation to compete for podium finishes.

This tournament remains the official benchmark for measuring the progress of aquatic sports in schools across all nine provinces. It is the most premium national event for school swimmers and is a partnership between the Department of Basic Education (DBE) and Swimming SA.

It further serves as the primary talent identification platform for young athletes aiming for national and Olympic selection. The event concludes this Monday with a formal closing ceremony following four days of competitive action.

2025/2026			
CLUBS	P	W	PTS
1 Orlando Pirates	25	18	58
2 Mamelodi Sundowns	24	17	57
3 Kaizer Chiefs	24	13	45
4 AmaZulu FC	25	11	39
5 Sekhukhune United	25	10	38
6 Durban City	25	10	35
7 Polokwane City	24	8	33
8 Golden Arrows	25	10	31
9 Stellenbosch FC	25	8	28
10 Richards Bay	25	7	27
11 Siwelele FC	24	6	27
12 TS Galaxy	25	7	25
13 Chippa United	25	5	24
14 Magesi FC	25	4	20
15 Marumo Gallants	25	4	20
16 Orbit College FC	25	5	19

Premier League 2025/2026			
TEAMS	P	W	PTS
1 Man City	33	21	70
2 Arsenal	33	21	70
3 Man Utd	33	16	58
4 Aston Villa	33	17	58
5 Liverpool	33	16	55
6 Brighton	34	13	50
7 Bournemouth	34	13	49
8 Everton	34	13	48
9 Chelsea	33	13	48
10 Brentford	33	13	47
11 Sunderland	33	12	46
12 Fulham	33	13	45
13 C Palace	32	11	43
14 Newcastle	33	12	42
15 Leeds	34	9	40
16 Nottingham Forest F.C	33	9	36

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