



PARENTING WITH LOVE WORKSHOP IN JANE FURSE

PROPOSED 20% GAMBLING TAX PUSHES BOOKMAKERS TO THE BRINK



ARTS AND CULTURE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE TO CHAMPION LOCAL TALENT

Seriti Green Gets Recognition From Premier Mandla Ndlovu For Its Boldness On ESD



Peter Venn the CEO of Seriti Green flanked by his COO Chabisi Motloung, Seriti Green ESD beneficiary and the Managing Director of HMI Projects Freddy Mkhwanazi, David Mahlobo Deputy Minister of Water and Sanitation and Maggie Skosana the Director-General in the Office of the Premier in Mpumalanga. Picture Credit: LinkedIn

By Staff Reporter

Mbombela – Private sector investment in renewable energy and enterprise development was highlighted in Mpumalanga Premier Mandla Ndlovu's State of the Province Address this morning. Seriti Green was cited as an example of how energy infrastructure investment can support economic diversification, job creation and local business participation in South Africa's coal-producing heartland.

Delivering the address to the provincial legislature on Wednesday, Premier Ndlovu stressed the importance of collaboration between government, industry and civil society in addressing structural economic challenges. "Madam Speaker, solving complex socio-economic issues such as unemployment, poverty, inequality, gender-based violence, crime and infrastructure is not a sole responsibility of government. It requires a collaborative, all hands-on-deck approach by government, the private sector, labour and civil society,"

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Seriti Green recognises local contractor for exemplary safety standards

Seriti Green places safety at the centre of work at its Umbhila Emoyeni Wind Energy Facility, expecting the same commitment from all contractors. Through training, toolbox talks and strict safety plans, the company works to ensure every worker goes home safely.

At this week's safety stand-down, local contractor HMI Projects, owned by Freddy Mkhwanazi, was honoured for exemplary safety performance. Employing about 60 people on site, HMI has consistently demonstrated strong compliance, proactive safety practices and genuine care for its workforce.

Seriti Green believes local empowerment and world-class safety go hand in hand. By showcasing HMI and its 50 'Safety First' champions, the company encourages other SMMEs to view safety compliance as a pathway to long-term participation in major projects.



SOUTH AFRICA MOURNS CULTURAL ICON SOLI PHILANDER AS TRIBUTES POUR IN



Late cultural icon Soli Philander is being remembered across South Africa for his powerful storytelling, humour and lasting contribution to the country's arts and cultural landscape.

Picture Credit: Facebook

By Aisha Zardad

Cape Town –South Africa's entertainment industry is mourning the loss of celebrated performer and storyteller Soli Philander, who passed away on Wednesday, 4 March, at the age of 65.

Philander, known for his work in television, radio, theatre and community development, was widely admired for using humour and storytelling to reflect the country's social realities and bring people together.

The news of his passing was confirmed by Sport, Arts and Culture Minister Gayton McKenzie in a statement late on Wednesday night.

"On behalf of the sport, arts and culture department and as a longtime fan myself, I extend my deepest condolences to his family, friends, colleagues and the many South Africans whose lives he touched through his work."

Tributes quickly began pouring in from across the arts sector, with many describing Philander as far more than a comedian or television personality.

Actor Spaces honoured the veteran performer, highlighting the profound impact he had on South African theatre and television.

"Soli Philander, a veteran South African actor, comedian, presenter and playwright, passed away at the age of 65 on 4 March 2026. Rest in peace, Soli Philander. A legendary storyteller, comedian, actor and voice of the stage and screen. Your wit, courage and artistry leaves an indelible mark on South African theatre and television. Thank you for the laughter, the truth and the legacy you leave behind. You will never be forgotten."

Artscape in Cape Town also paid tribute, recognising Philander's ability to capture the spirit of communities through his craft. "We are deeply saddened by the passing of Soli Philander, a beloved South African comedian, storyteller, actor and cultural icon whose voice and humour brought joy to countless audiences. Soli Philander had a unique ability to reflect the heart and soul of our communities through laughter, honesty and powerful storytelling. His contribution to the performing arts, both on stage and on screen, leaves a lasting legacy that will continue to inspire generations of artists and audiences. Artscape extends its heartfelt condolences to his family, friends, colleagues

and the many fans whose lives he touched through his remarkable talent. May his memory live on through the stories he told, the laughter he shared and the indelible mark he left on South Africa's cultural landscape." Political parties also joined the wave of condolences, acknowledging Philander's influence beyond the entertainment world. ActionSA described him as a respected figure in the country's cultural landscape who used creativity to reflect the realities of South African life.

"Soli Philander was a respected voice in South Africa's artistic and cultural landscape. Through his work as a comedian, writer, producer and storyteller, he used humour and creativity to reflect the realities of South African life while celebrating the richness and diversity of our culture. Soli played an important role in uplifting and mentoring artists, contributing meaningfully to the development of the creative sector."

"His ability to connect with audiences across communities made him a beloved figure in the arts and entertainment industry. During this difficult time, our thoughts are with his family, friends, colleagues and the many people whose lives he touched through his work. May his loved ones find strength and comfort in the legacy he leaves behind." The GOOD Party also honoured Philander's legacy, noting the role his storytelling played in shaping national dialogue. "Soli was more than a comedian, actor and presenter; he was a storyteller who reminded us of our shared humanity and helped shape our democracy through art and humour. We extend our heartfelt condolences to his family, friends and all who loved him. May his memory continue to inspire joy, unity and the courage to tell our stories with honesty and heart."

Philander's career spanned decades across theatre, television and radio, earning him widespread respect within the creative sector and among audiences across the country. Colleagues and fans remember him not only for his sharp wit and humour, but for his ability to connect with people from all walks of life and use storytelling as a powerful tool for reflection and unity.

His legacy, many say, will live on through the stories he told and the generations of artists he inspired.

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RAMAPHOSA UNVEILS MANDELA AND TAMBO STATUES, CALLS ON SOUTH AFRICANS TO UPHOLD THEIR LEGACY THROUGH ACTION

By Aisha Zardad

eThekweni – President Cyril Ramaphosa on Tuesday unveiled statues of Nelson Mandela and Oliver Tambo in eThekweni, describing the occasion as a powerful testament to South Africa's democratic journey and a reminder of the responsibility citizens have to honour the legacy of these iconic leaders through active participation and ethical leadership. Addressing attendees at the ceremony, the president called the event historic, rooted in national gratitude, and reflective of the nation's enduring commitment to freedom, justice, and equality. "It is an honour to

address you today on the historic occasion of the unveiling of these statues of Presidents Nelson Mandela and Oliver Tambo,"

Ramaphosa said. Commissioned by the eThekweni Municipality, the bronze statues commemorate Mandela and Tambo's role in the struggle for liberation, social justice, and the empowerment of South Africans. Ramaphosa emphasised that monuments such as these act as anchors for collective memory, ensuring future generations remain connected to the country's past. "They stand as a reminder to future generations of the road our nation has travelled and the aspirations we have for our future," he said. The unveiling comes as South Africa marks 30 years since the adoption of its democratic Constitution. Ramaphosa highlighted Oliver Tambo's role in shaping the African National Congress' constitutional principles during the period when the liberation movement was banned, and Nelson Mandela's pivotal role in signing the Constitution into law ten years later. The president reflected on the partnership between Mandela and Tambo at their law firm, built on a shared commitment to justice. Together, they

defended the poor and marginalised, later leading the ANC and founding Umkhonto we Sizwe in the fight against apartheid. "Their example remains relevant today as South Africa confronts inequality and social division," Ramaphosa said.

He urged citizens to continue their vision by embracing public service and ethical leadership, stressing that the greatest tribute to Mandela and Tambo would not be in bronze or stone, but through actions that uphold the values they lived for. "These statues are promises – promises made by a free people to themselves that they will not forget what it cost to be free," he said. Turning to global affairs, Ramaphosa noted that Mandela and Tambo, as men of peace, would have been deeply concerned by the ongoing conflict in the Middle East. He urged a ceasefire and resolution through meaningful negotiations, emphasising the importance of ethical and principled leadership both locally and globally.

He also announced that eThekweni will host the 46th Ordinary Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) in



August 2026, highlighting the city's growing role in regional development. He added that the statues are expected to contribute to tourism growth, building on the millions who visited the city's beaches and promenades over the festive season. Reflecting on KwaZulu-Natal's history of political violence, Ramaphosa recalled Mandela's 1990 appeal in Durban to end internecine conflict: "Take your guns, your knives, and your pangas, and throw them into the sea... End this war now!" He concluded by emphasising the importance of heritage preservation and remembrance. "In stone and bronze, we continue to write our history – not the history of those who held power unjustly, but the history of those who refused to let injustice have the final word," he said, urging South Africans to draw strength from the example of Mandela and Tambo as the nation faces present and future challenges.

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he said. In this context, the Premier highlighted Seriti Green's social and economic development initiatives, noting their alignment with provincial priorities. "Seriti Green's social and economic development portfolio has committed to align its programmes with the Mpumalanga government priorities," he said. "Central to this commitment is enterprise development, focused on supporting SMMEs alongside structured entrepreneur programmes designed to catalyse sustainable job creation and broaden economic participation."

Among the programmes referenced was Agri for Change, which supports emerging agricultural entrepreneurs with training, business development support and improved market access. "Through their Agri for Change programme, Seriti supports emerging agricultural entrepreneurs with technical expertise, business development skills and improved market access," the Premier said.

According to the address, the programme has already produced measurable outcomes. "The programme has contributed to 41 permanent agricultural jobs and enabled measurable entrepreneurial growth."

The initiative has also helped unlock new capital for participating businesses. Premier Ndlovu said the results illustrate the potential of coordinated enterprise development initiatives. "This reflects the transformative potential of structured enterprise development when supported by financiers, mentors and government partners."

The Premier also referred to Seriti Green's broader role in South Africa's energy transition, particularly within Mpumalanga, where coal remains central to the provincial economy. "Seriti and Seriti Green are advancing South



Seriti Green CEO in conversation with Thulane Madalane from Timeless News on the sidelines Mpumalanga State of the Province Address. Picture Credit: Timeless News

Africa's Just Energy Transition through a delivery-focused model rooted in South African ownership, capital and operational capability," he said.

"To safeguard energy security, coal and renewable energy sources are being developed in parallel. This approach enables decarbonisation, creates new economic opportunities and jobs, and ensures continuity for communities historically dependent on coal."

A key project cited in the address is the Umbila Emoyeni renewable power development, currently under construction in the Gert Sibande district. "Seriti Green, the renewable energy arm of the Seriti Group, has been in operation for three years and is currently constructing the 900 MW Umbila Emoyeni wind and solar farm, with the first 155MW phase scheduled for completion in mid-2026," the

Premier said. "Investment to date totals approximately R15 billion, with a further R25 billion planned over the next two years."

Employment creation linked to the development was also highlighted. "Job creation remains central to the company's work. More than 1,700 jobs have been created, with 53% allocated to local residents within a 15 km radius." Construction activity associated with the development has also created opportunities for local contractors. Among them is HMI Projects, an electrical and civil engineering firm led by Mpumalanga entrepreneur Freddy Mkhwanazi. Mkhwanazi founded the company 15 years ago after gaining operational experience

at Columbus Stainless Steel, where he spent seven years as a production flow coordinator focusing on production efficiency and quality assurance. He holds a Diploma in Electrical and Civil Engineering.

Under his leadership, HMI Projects has developed into an established contractor delivering electrical and civil engineering services, with strong safety compliance and disciplined site management. The company currently employs 82 workers on the Umbila Emoyeni site, with 25 more expected shortly, many of whom are drawn from surrounding communities, illustrating the growing participation of local enterprises in large-scale infrastructure developments in the province.

Commenting on the recognition in the Premier's address, Seriti Green CEO Peter Venn said the development of projects such as Umbila Emoyeni depend on collaboration between communities, local contractors and infrastructure investors. "Projects like Umbila Emoyeni are not only about generating renewable energy. They are about building capability in the places where we work. Companies like Freddy Mkhwanazi's demonstrate what is possible when local entrepreneurs are able to participate in the construction of world-class infrastructure." For Mpumalanga, where the Just Energy Transition (JET) is unfolding alongside the continued importance of coal mining and power generation, developments of this scale are increasingly viewed as mechanisms to support economic diversification while maintaining regional stability.

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Chabisi Motloung the newly appointed COO of Seriti Green was amongst the dignitaries at Mpumalanga State of the Province Address. Picture Credit: Timeless News



Freddy Mkhwanazi Seriti Green ESD beneficiary and Managing Director of HMI Projects. Picture Credit: Timeless News

ELIAS MOTSOLEDI MUNICIPALITY ELECTS ARTS AND CULTURE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE TO CHAMPION LOCAL TALENT

By Aisha Zardad

Groblersdal – Local artists and cultural practitioners from across the Elias Motsoaledi Local Municipality gathered on Friday, in Groblersdal after many years of isolation without formal representation, limiting their participation in cultural events at both Local, District, Provincial and National level. The establishment of this committee now provides a unified voice and structured platform for artists at the municipal level. The election meeting was chaired by Ms Mponi Makua, Secretary of the Sekhukhune District Arts Council, alongside Ms Lerato Skhosana, a member of the Limpopo Arts and Culture Council. Both officials emphasised the important role of the local Arts and Culture Committee in supporting and coordinating artistic initiatives.

The following individuals were elected to serve on the committee:
 Chairperson: Mr Solly Masemola (founder of Aganang Art Creative)
 Deputy Chairperson: Ms Tlaka Selinah (founder of Ipopeng Cultural Group)
 Secretary: Mr Thabiso Sebesho, also known as Dr T Tsa Manyalo (Director of Bapedi Events Group)
 Deputy Secretary: Mr William Mmekwa (DJ Orchestra)

Treasurer: Ms Phindile Nomsa Msiza (SADAC)
 Public Relations Officer: Mr Abicky Kgolane (gospel artist)
 Speaking after the election, Chairperson Solly Masemola stated "Our main objective is to empower local artists, foster high-quality artistic performance, and coordinate participation across municipal, district, and provincial events. This includes disability dance programmes, arts and culture exhibitions, and indigenous games. Collaboration with both government and private sector stakeholders is essential to strengthen and sustain arts and cultural initiatives in our region." Public Relations Officer Abicky Kgolane reinforced the committee's mission, explaining that it will support, develop, and promote art and culture through funding advocacy, strategic planning, workshops, and community events such as art expos, heritage celebrations, and music and theatre festivals. "We are the mouthpiece of our disadvantaged artists," Kgolane concluded. The election of the Arts and Culture Executive Committee marks a significant step toward creating a structured platform for the growth, recognition, and sustainability of arts and culture in the Elias Motsoaledi Municipality.

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MATIBE CALLS FOR STRICTER COMPLIANCE AS LIMPOPO LIQUOR INDUSTRY GATHERS FOR SECOND INDABA

By Aisha Zardad

Limpopo – The Limpopo Department of Economic Development, Environment and Tourism (LEDET) has called for tougher regulatory compliance and stronger collaboration to address alcohol-related harm, as government and industry leaders gathered at Nandoni Dam in Thohoyandou for the second Limpopo Liquor Indaba.

Addressing stakeholders on Monday, MEC Tshitereke Baldwin Matibe said while the liquor industry remains an important contributor to economic growth, job creation and tourism, its sustainability depends on responsible trading and strict adherence to the law.

Held under the theme “Compliance Today for Safer Communities Tomorrow”, the engagement brought together municipal leaders, law enforcement agencies, traditional authorities, liquor traders and representatives from national and provincial departments.

Matibe said South Africa continues to face worrying levels of alcohol consumption and alcohol-related harm. Among those who drink, average consumption is estimated at about 30 litres per person per year, with a significant number engaging in binge drinking.

He warned that alcohol abuse remains closely linked to road fatalities, violence and social instability, placing immense pressure on communities and public services.

“Regulatory compliance is not optional,” Matibe stressed. “It is essential.” He emphasised that lawful trading,

adherence to licence conditions, municipal by-laws, tax compliance and public safety measures are fundamental to protecting both legitimate businesses and communities.

In the build-up to the Indaba, authorities conducted a series of enforcement and awareness initiatives in the Thohoyandou area.

On 28 February, a multi-agency law enforcement operation inspected liquor outlets and spaza shops, issuing non-compliance notices, fines and making arrests where necessary. A coordinated roadblock on the R524 targeted traffic violations and drink-driving offences.

The following day, more than 250 community members were reached through an education and awareness campaign focused on liquor regulations, consumer protection and responsible trading practices.

Matibe said these actions demonstrated the province’s commitment to strengthening enforcement while also educating communities and traders.

The concept document guiding the Indaba identified several ongoing challenges in the sector, including inconsistent enforcement of licence conditions, weak implementation of municipal by-laws, underage drinking, illicit liquor trading and delays in confirming fines.

Illicit alcohol trading, in particular, was flagged as a major national concern, posing risks to consumer safety and reducing government revenue.

“These systemic weaknesses undermine regulatory integrity and embolden repeat offenders,” Matibe said, calling for decisive corrective measures to enhance



Limpopo MEC for Economic Development, Environment and Tourism, Tshitereke Baldwin Matibe, has called for stricter compliance in the province’s liquor industry to promote safer communities. Picture Credit: Facebook

accountability and deterrence. Matibe acknowledged collaboration between LEDET, the University of Venda and national stakeholders, including the South African Police Service, the Department of Trade, Industry and Competition and the Limpopo Gambling Board.

He said effective regulation requires coordinated action across institutions, describing compliance as a “whole-of-government and whole-of-society responsibility”.

The MEC reiterated that government’s intention is not to stifle legitimate

businesses, but to create an environment where compliant operators can thrive without unfair competition from illegal traders.

“A compliant liquor industry is a competitive liquor industry,” he said.

The Indaba is expected to conclude with practical resolutions and commitments aimed at strengthening oversight, improving inter-agency coordination and promoting safer communities across Limpopo.

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PARENTING WITH LOVE WORKSHOP EMPOWERS TEACHERS AND PARENTS IN JANE FURSE

By Thulane Madalane

Jane Furse – In a heartening initiative aimed at strengthening the educational ecosystem, the Global Teacher Institute (GTI), in partnership with Squaring the Education Pyramid Institute (STePi), recently held a transformative workshop at the Jane Furse Leap Science & Maths School in Limpopo. The session was specifically designed to empower teachers and parents, equipping them with strategies to work together more effectively in nurturing and developing children with “warm love.” Education is often viewed through the lens of curriculum, assessments, and results. However, behind every successful learner is a network of support—one that ideally includes both dedicated educators and engaged families. Recognizing this, GTI’s workshop focused on building bridges between these two critical pillars of a child’s development. Thabelo Nematangari, the Limpopo coordinator of GTI, highlighted a poignant reality faced by many educators. “Teaching is a lonely career,” Nematangari noted, “and our teachers are expected to produce results sometimes under adverse conditions without any form of coordinated support. As GTI, we are here to support teachers and encourage teacher-parent relationships, which are meant to empower the learner in the main.” This statement underscores a widespread challenge in the education sector. Teachers frequently operate in isolation, grappling with immense pressure to deliver academic outcomes, often without adequate systemic or community backing.

The adverse conditions—whether limited resources, overcrowded classrooms, or socio-economic hurdles—can make their roles even more daunting. The workshop in Jane Furse sought to change that narrative by fostering collaboration. By bringing teachers and parents into the same room, the program facilitated open dialogue, shared goals, and mutual understanding. Participants explored practical ways to communicate consistently, align efforts at home and in the classroom, and create a consistent environment of encouragement and warmth for children.

The partnership with STePi added further depth to the initiative, leveraging organizational expertise to create a structured, impactful experience. Together, GTI and STePi are championing a model where education is seen not as a solitary effort but as a community endeavor. For the parents and teachers of Jane Furse, the workshop was more than just a training session—it was a step toward a more united, compassionate approach to raising and teaching the next generation. As one attendee remarked, “When teachers and parents work as a team, the child doesn’t just learn—they thrive.” In a time when educational challenges are complex and multifaceted, the Jane Furse workshop stands as a beacon of hope. It reminds us that by nurturing teacher-parent partnerships, we don’t just improve results—we build stronger, more supportive communities where every child can feel valued and empowered to succeed. r current level instead of fighting it.



Global Teachers Institute (GTI) and in collaboration with Squaring the Education Pyramid Institute (STePi) hosted a successful workshop designed to empower teachers and parents. Picture Credit: Supplied

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SANDF TO SUPPORT SAPS IN TARGETED OPERATIONS AGAINST GANGS AND ILLEGAL MINING

By Aisha Zardad

South Africa – The Acting Minister of Police, Firoz Cachalia, has outlined plans for the South African National Defence Force (SANDF) to assist the South African Police Service (SAPS) in combating gang activity and illegal mining in key hotspots across the country. The deployment is scheduled to start on 1 March 2026 and continue until 31 March 2027, following completion of specialised training for personnel. Cachalia, together with National Police Commissioner General Fannie Masemola, briefed a joint meeting of the Portfolio Committees on Police and Mineral and Petroleum Resources on the operational plans. The deployment is authorised under Section 201(2)(a) of the Constitution and Section 19(3)(c)(ii) of the Defence Act, and will focus on selected provinces rather than a nationwide rollout. Hotspots have been identified in the Western Cape, Eastern Cape, Gauteng, North West, and Free State. Each agency will maintain its own command structure, with operations coordinated through Joint Operational and Intelligence Structures (JOINTS) at national, provincial, and local levels. Designated commanders from both SAPS and SANDF will work together to ensure aligned strategy and effective collaboration, with progress tracked under Project Management processes as part of the National Organised Crime Combating Operation, “Ukubuzza.” Masemola explained that deployment is

scheduled to begin on 1 March 2026 and continue until 31 March 2027, but the full rollout will only proceed once training is complete and the SANDF personnel are deemed ready, with operations expected to reach full capacity from April onwards. “The deployment of the SANDF is there to stabilise the areas, while the rest of the SAPS teams will be dealing with organised crime, with a view to dismantling those organised crime syndicates,” he explained. Specialised units, including the NIU Special Task Force, will be involved to ensure that local police stations are not left short-staffed. On the ground, SAPS will retain overall authority, while the SANDF provides support and stabilisation. The cost of the SANDF deployment has not yet been determined, but Finance Minister Enoch Godongwana noted that funding will be managed under Section 16 of the Public Finance Management Act, which allows for emergency expenditure. SAPS will continue to use part of the R1 billion allocated to combat organised crime, while SANDF operations will draw from their own budget. Cachalia emphasised that the army’s involvement is not a cure-all. “The deployment of the army is a stabilisation strategy to create space for the implementation of an organised crime strategy that was adopted by the Cabinet about a month ago. It’s in the process of being implemented,” he said. Operational security limits the level of detail that can be shared publicly, as revealing sensitive information could be exploited by criminals. Reflecting on previous SANDF-SAPS operations, Cachalia said the goal is to



SANDF stands ready to support SAPS in targeted operations against gangs and illegal mining. Deployment begins March 2026 to stabilise hotspots and assist in dismantling organised crime syndicates. Picture Credit: Defenceweb

enhance police capabilities rather than replace them. “It is not so much just a boots-on-the-ground approach by flooding communities with soldiers and so forth, because those will increase the risks of unintended consequences,” he said. Cachalia concluded with a firm warning to criminals operating in gang and illegal mining areas. “They have to assume the

consequences of confronting the police and the army because they are causing untold misery. They are not simply making money; they are harming our people, they are killing young children. They are making it impossible for communities to live,” he said.

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LIMPOPO PREMIER ANNOUNCES MAJOR OVERHAUL OF FLOOD-DAMAGED INFRASTRUCTURE IN VHEMBE AND MOPANI

By Ndivhuwo Mukwevho

Polokwane – Flood-damaged roads and bridges in Vhembe and Mopani took centre stage when Limpopo Premier Dr. Phophi Ramathuba delivered her State of the Province Address (SOPA) on Thursday. In January this year, many parts of Vhembe and Mopani were severely affected by floods, resulting in loss of life and widespread destruction. “Today we count loss measured not only in infrastructure damages, but also in human pain. Twenty-seven lives were lost; others are still missing or unaccounted for. The damage amounts to billions of rand. Over 450 roads have been damaged,” said Ramathuba. She described the recent floods as the most devastating Limpopo has faced in more than 25 years, with over 3,500 homes damaged. Ramathuba stated that her government’s main task now is to use limited resources to begin rebuilding. “In accordance with applicable legislation, 1.2% of the provincial budget was made available for that purpose. We did this knowing that the response from the National Disaster Management Committee takes time before funds are disbursed. For example, the province and municipalities only received R500 million in February 2026 to cover the 2024/2025 floods,” she explained. The premier assured the people of Limpopo that every rand earmarked for reconstruction will be used to rebuild the province. She also announced that the South African National Defence Force (SANDF) will be deployed to speed up the construction of critical low bridges.

“We have put in place a reporting framework as well as a work schedule that we shall monitor on a 30-60-90 day basis. In addition, the office of the premier will be receiving progress reports fortnightly,” said Ramathuba. On unemployment, Ramathuba emphasised the urgent need for agricultural schools, vocational schools, and schools of technology—robotics and coding. “Not every learner will be a lawyer, a doctor, a teacher, nurse or engineer. We require more artisans, and learners with vocational skills to match the demand of our growing economy,” she said. Regarding health, Ramathuba noted that as the population grows, the burden of diseases is increasing, and the number of facilities is failing to cope. “The MEC of health is directed to develop a plan on how clinics will be built in this province. We are also monitoring progress for the construction of the Siloam District Hospital, which is 76% complete and earmarked for completion in June 2026,” she added. However, Democratic Alliance (DA) spokesperson in Limpopo, Lindy Wilson, described Ramathuba’s SOPA speech as a “shotgun” approach. “Fixing local government, ensuring reliable water supply, rebuilding provincial capacity, and maintaining infrastructure must come first. We must get the basics right. We are concerned that in the ‘shotgun’ approach adopted by Ramathuba, the need to get the basics that underpin development right will be lost. More than 60 new lofty initiatives were announced,” said Wilson. The DA also expressed concern that nearly half of Limpopo’s working-age population is excluded from meaningful



Limpopo Premier Phophi Ramathuba delivering the State of the Province Address in Polokwane, outlining plans to rebuild flood-damaged roads and bridges in Vhembe and Mopani following devastating floods earlier this year. Picture Credit: Supplied

economic participation. “This crisis is not accidental. It is the result of decades of failed ANC governance. Collapsing infrastructure, failing service delivery, and the poor performance of the Limpopo Department of Economic Development, Environmental and

Tourism (LEDET) and its agency LEDA have steadily eroded the province’s ability to attract investment and create jobs.”

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SOUTH AFRICA MOURNS LIBERATION STALWART AND POLITICAL VETERAN MOSIUOA "TERROR" LEKOTA

By Thulane Madalane

Kroonstad – South Africa is in mourning following the passing of Mosiuoa Gerard Patrick "Terror" Lekota, a towering figure whose life was inextricably linked to the nation's struggle for freedom and its democratic evolution. Lekota, who has died at the age of 76, was a Robben Island prisoner, a key architect of the United Democratic Front, a minister in Nelson Mandela's government, and later the founder of the opposition party COPE after a dramatic split from the African National Congress. Born in Kroonstad, Free State, Lekota's path of resistance began at the University of the North, from which he was expelled in 1972 for his activism with the South African Students' Organisation (SASO), part of the Black Consciousness Movement. By 1974, as SASO's Permanent Organiser, he was imprisoned on Robben Island for conspiring against the apartheid state, remaining there until 1982. Upon release, he helped found the United Democratic Front (UDF), the internal engine of mass resistance in the 1980s. This led to his arrest and conviction in the historic Delmas Treason Trial, with his sentence only overturned on appeal in 1989. With democracy dawning, Lekota became a central figure in building the new South Africa. He served as the first Premier of the Free State, Chairperson of the National Council of Provinces, and as Minister of Defence from 1999 to 2008

under Presidents Mandela and Mbeki. His political journey took a decisive turn in 2008 when, as ANC National Chairperson, he broke away to form the Congress of the People (COPE), citing a departure from the party's constitutional principles under the leadership of Jacob Zuma. President Cyril Ramaphosa added his voice to the national condolences, paying tribute to Lekota's foundational role in shaping democratic institutions. "He was instrumental in the establishment of the National Council of Provinces which added a new dimension of democratic inclusion to our parliamentary system and ensured communities all over our country could be heard and represented in our national legislature," Ramaphosa said. Reflecting on Lekota's later political path, the President noted, "His establishment of the Congress of the People reflected his commitment to the values and principles by which he had lived, and it added to the diversity of choices presented to the electorate as our democracy matured." Ramaphosa concluded, "We will remember Mosiuoa for his patriotism, his intellect, and his personable nature, and we will continue to work for the inclusive, non-racial South Africa for which he sacrificed so much and worked so passionately." Tributes from across the political spectrum have highlighted his lifelong dedication and complex legacy. ANC Secretary General Fikile Mbalula stated, "We woke up this morning to the tragic news of the passing of our dear brother and someone

we referred to as 'Terror'. Because he struck terror at the heart of the apartheid regime... Mosiuoa Lekota will be remembered as being at the forefront of fighting for a free and democratic South Africa. As the ANC we remember our former national chairperson and extend our condolences and gratitude to his family and comrades." SAFTU General Secretary Zwelinzima Vavi offered condolences, saying, "SAFTU mourns the passing of Mosiuoa 'Terror' Lekota, a veteran liberation struggle stalwart and former political prisoner... His lifelong commitment to democracy, constitutional governance, and open political debate remains his enduring mark." The Economic Freedom Fighters also acknowledged his passing, stating, "The EFF acknowledges Mosiuoa Lekota's years as a liberation activist, political prisoner, and public servant. His political life reflected both the unity forged during the struggle against apartheid and the democratic era's challenges." Lekota's life embodies the sacrifices, triumphs, and difficult choices that have shaped modern South Africa. From the isolation of a prison cell to the halls of ministerial power, and finally to the arena of opposition politics, he remained a committed, if sometimes controversial, democrat. He is survived by his family, his comrades, and a nation reflecting on the passing of a generation that bore the full weight of history.



Mosiuoa Patrick Gerald Lekota and anti-apartheid clergy Dr Allen Boesak during their days with the United Democratic Front (UDF), actively engaging in the Million Signature Campaign. Picture Credit: Facebook

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PROPOSED 20% GAMBLING TAX COULD PUSH SOUTH AFRICAN BOOKMAKERS TO THE BRINK

By Aisha Zardad

South Africa – The South African Bookmakers Association (SABA) has warned that a proposed 20% gambling tax could threaten the survival of many licensed operators already running on very tight margins. Sean Coleman, CEO of SABA, said the industry believes the new levy is counterproductive, likely to encourage illegal online gambling rather than increase government revenue. "This proposal will not deter vulnerable consumers from gambling — it will push them to unregulated platforms," Coleman said. He also warned that the advertised 20% tax is misleading, as when combined with existing levies, licensed bookmakers could face a total tax burden of nearly 39%. "15% of every R100 bet is deemed to include VAT, which is paid over to the government," Coleman explained. Licensed operators also pay a provincial gambling tax, currently set at 6.5%. After factoring in effective VAT, the total tax currently sits around 18%. The addition of the proposed 20% levy would push this closer to 39%. Illegal Gambling Could Accelerate: Coleman warned that the new tax could worsen the very problem it seeks to address. "Many operators are already working on narrow margins. This additional tax could be the final nail in the coffin for some businesses," he said. He highlighted the risk of driving gamblers toward illegal offshore operators. According to Coleman, around 2,884 illegal platforms are actively targeting South African consumers, many licensed in jurisdictions such as the Philippines, Malta, and Curaçao. A 2024 study estimated that illegal operators now account for roughly 62% of South Africa's online gambling market, with more than R50 billion flowing offshore. Focus on Enforcement, Not Higher Taxes: Instead of taxing compliant



Proposed 20% gambling tax could push South Africa's licensed bookmakers to the brink, warns SABA. CEO Sean Coleman says the move may fuel illegal online gambling rather than increase revenue. Picture Credit: YogoNet

businesses further, Coleman urged government to strengthen enforcement against illegal gambling. "Let's close that border as much as we're looking at our physical border. Let's get that money rechannelled back into our existing economy," he said. The association is calling for a dedicated task team, bringing together regulators, industry stakeholders, and bodies such as the communications regulator and National Gambling Board. Public education is also part of the plan, helping consumers identify legal platforms by checking for South African gambling board licences on websites. Coleman also noted that winnings from illegal sites can be confiscated under existing law, and the industry is working with banks to block payments to illegal operators. "Shutting down the illegal market should come first, before imposing additional taxes on businesses that are already compliant," he said.

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THRILLS RETURN: DURBAN'S WET 'N WILD WELCOMES VISITORS AGAIN



Durban's Wet 'n Wild is back! After essential repairs and safety checks, visitors can once again enjoy thrilling slides and splash-filled fun at UShaka Marine World. Picture Credit: Facebook

By Aisha Zardad

Durban – UShaka Marine World's beloved Wet 'n Wild water park is ready to welcome visitors again on Thursday, after completing crucial repairs and thorough technical inspections. The park had to close temporarily following the discovery of a technical fault in its water plant system. Management acted swiftly to protect critical infrastructure and ensure that water quality standards were fully maintained for visitors. Technical teams worked around the clock to repair the system and carry out comprehensive inspections, confirming that all water safety and quality requirements are now fully compliant.

Chief Executive Officer Ndabo Khoza emphasized that guest safety and facility integrity remain top priorities. "We are satisfied that all necessary measures have been implemented and that Wet 'n Wild is ready to safely welcome visitors once again," Khoza said. "We extend our sincere appreciation to all stakeholders for their patience and continued support." Wet 'n Wild is among the flagship attractions at Durban's UShaka Marine World, drawing thousands of visitors every year and offering a fun-filled aquatic experience for families and thrill-seekers alike.

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FAITH MATTERS

HUMBLENESS

SERMON BY GIVEN APHANE



Today Beloved, I want us to look into the life of John the Baptist. I'm drawn to his story or life of how great he was but he remained humble. He honoured what was assigned to him. John the Baptist knew that he had been called to fulfill God's will. He honored a prophecy that was made in Isaiah 40:3 that says "A voice of the one calling; In the wilderness prepare the way for the Lord; make straight in the desert a highway for our God ". He was so humble and obedient.

John the Baptist was a great prophet and people were following him but he didn't make himself to look great, we see this by what he said in the book of John 3:30 when he said " He must become great, I must become less ". Even when the people thought he was the Messiah he corrected them by telling them that he is not the Messiah, but the Messiah will come. In book of John 1:20 confirms this when it says "He confessed and did not deny but confessed, I'm not the Christ ". He made sure that he makes it to them that he was not the Messiah.

John the Baptist he even baptized Jesus but yet he remained humble and obedient. In the book Luke 7: 28 he was even called the great prophet by Jesus, he still remained humble.

Beloved, im drawn to this story because we can learn so much from this man. This days we see many people want glory to

be given to them. They preach about the gospel of God but they want to be glorified more than Jesus. We want credit for our preaching forgetting that we are not doing this for our glory but for His glory,for His name to be lifted high.we are doing this for His kingdom and to save soul. As John he was always preaching about repentance "Repent, for the kingdom of of heaven is at hand calling people to turn from sin" (Matthew 3:2).

So Beloved, let us remain humble and obedient like John the Baptist who knew his purpose and fulfilled it.

Let us not make ourselves great and the Lord lesser to us by always wanting to be praised after preachings. Praises belongs to God alone. God has given us gifts and assignments to fulfill so let be obedient at all times. We might be great preachers, prophets or lay hand on people and heal them but that doesn't make us greater or equal to Jesus, we are only his vessels that He can use so that his greatness can be glorified. We are here to preach the gospel so that the soul of His children can be saved.

So Beloved, let us remain humble and obedient. Let us give praises to the Almighty alone. Let us pray to remain faithful , obedient in His word and ways. In the mighty name of our Lord Jesus, Amen.

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I tell you, among those born of women there is no one greater than John; yet the one who is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he."

- Luke 7:28 NIV



SEKHUKHUNE VALUE-ADDITION THROUGH KNOWLEDGE ECONOMIC DIVERSITY



Mr Isaac Mahlakwana speaks about several economic growth opportunities in Sekhukhune. Picture Credit: applied

By Isaac Mahlakwane

Sekhukhune has a strong cultural and heritage economic history rooted in traditional means of production such as subsistence farming, cattle rearing, beadwork, pottery, indigenous mining knowledge, and communal labour systems. Promoting diversity through these traditional practices is important for several aspects such as preserving indigenous knowledge passed down through generations, protecting traditional skills like clay pottery, basket weaving, and herbal medicine as well as strengthening cultural pride and identity. Sekhukhune is widely known for platinum and chrome mining. However, relying only on mining creates economic vulnerability.

We cannot find ourselves in resource dependent economies like regions such as DRC, Zambia and other countries within the global south. Commodity prices are very much volatile and keep changing most frequently on the global market. As a result, governments lose revenue, people lose their jobs and national debts increase. These diverse cultural highlights and practices keep local heritage alive amid the dependence from modern industrial economic models or means of production. A diverse local economy becomes more sustainable and resilient because it provides alternative income sources in craft markets, agro-processing and cultural tourism. Small businesses development could be extensively expanded and integrated with opportunities for women and youth from rural villages. Sekhukhune District, therefore, has several growth opportunities through strong natural resources wealth foundation. However, the district has fundamental key future priorities that lie in building knowledge-intensive sectors. The comprehensive investment in education, Research and Development, entrepreneurship business operational knowledge enhancements are significant to move toward a more diversified, inclusive and sustainable economic future. The endowment for the future will need the development of local skills and expertise, encourage value-addition rather than raw exports, expand tourism with cultural and tech integration, strengthen agriculture through innovation and processing as well as leveraging a variety of digital tools to connect with larger markets.

Isaac Mahlakwane is a LED Practitioner and an Economist he writes in his personal capacity.

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GAUTENG POLICE DEBUNK VIRAL CORRUPTION ALLEGATIONS, WARN AGAINST MISINFORMATION ONLINE

By Aisha Zardad

Johannesburg – Management within the South African Police Service (SAPS) in Johannesburg has cautioned the public against circulating what it describes as misleading social media content accusing officers of corruption.

Gauteng provincial police spokesperson, Brigadier Brenda Muridili, said a series of outdated photographs are being reshared online and falsely presented as evidence of misconduct by members stationed at Hillbrow and Johannesburg police stations. "The Johannesburg District Management is disturbed by a series of recycled photographs being misused to falsely portray Hillbrow and Johannesburg police station members as corrupt. These outdated images are being taken out of context to tarnish the reputation of police officers," Muridili said.

One image currently circulating shows a police officer holding a firearm while several men lie on the ground. The accompanying caption alleges that an officer known as "Jovice" targets migrants in areas including Hillbrow and Braamfontein, arrests them, and demands bribes ranging from R300 to R5,000

depending on the alleged offence. Police have rejected the claims as false. "A recent photo has been circulating with a caption falsely claiming police were targeting immigrants for bribes. In reality, the photo was taken during a joint operation with various law enforcement agencies while SAPS was enforcing Covid-19 regulations during the pandemic, as it was outlined in the Disaster Management Act," Muridili said.

Gauteng police management has urged social media users to verify information before sharing content that could mislead the public or damage reputations. Authorities have encouraged members of the public to report any legitimate allegations of corruption or extortion involving SAPS officials through official channels:

Anti-Corruption Hotline: 0800 701 701
SAPS National Complaints Service Centre: 0800 333 177
Gauteng Service Complaints Standby: 082 442 2000

Police reiterated that misconduct allegations should be formally reported rather than amplified through unverified online posts.

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TIMELESS SPORTS

LIMPOPO PREMIER HOSTS GOLF DAY TO SUPPORT MOTHER OF CONJOINED TWINS



Limpopo Premier Phophi Ramathuba during the Annual Golf Day at Euphoria Golf Estate in Mokgophong, raising funds to support community initiatives, including housing assistance for the mother of conjoined twins. Picture Credit: Supplied

By Thulane Madalane

Mbombela – On Friday, Limpopo Premier Dr. Phophi Ramathuba hosted an Annual Golf Day at the Euphoria Golf Estate, teeing off the event with a call to golfers to play their best in support of vital community initiatives. Among the causes highlighted was raising funds to assist the mother of conjoined twins in securing a home. “This event is about more than golf—it’s about community, care, and coming together to support those in need,” said Premier Ramathuba. “We are here to raise crucial funds for initiatives that change lives, including helping a courageous young mother provide a

stable home for her newborns.” The mother, a 29-year-old woman from Limpopo, gave birth to male conjoined twins joined at the abdomen at Mankweng Tertiary Hospital on January 28. She had been referred from Maphutha Malatjie Hospital, according to Limpopo Department of Health spokesperson Neil Shikwambana. Shikwambana explained that the diagnosis of conjoined twins was made during labour, which prompted an urgent transfer to Mankweng Tertiary Hospital for specialised care and delivery. “The twins were successfully delivered and are currently stable, receiving care in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit,” he said.

Premier Ramathuba emphasised that the golf day forms part of her office’s broader commitment to social support and health care responsiveness in the province.

“When we heard about this mother and her twins, we knew we had to act. Beyond the medical care, she needs a safe and secure environment to raise her children. Through today’s efforts and the generosity of our partners, we are taking steps to make that possible,” Ramathuba stated.

Golfers took to the course with enthusiasm, contributing through participation fees, donations, and sponsored holes, with all proceeds directed toward selected community projects, including housing support for

families in crisis.

The Premier’s initiative has been welcomed by health advocates and community organisations, who note the importance of holistic support for families facing complex medical and social challenges. As the golf day drew to a close, Ramathuba thanked participants and sponsors, reaffirming her administration’s focus on “tangible, compassionate governance that leaves no one behind.” It will be on these two spirited sides, each carrying the hopes of a province known for its passion, pride, and perseverance.

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Seriti Green recognises local contractor for outstanding safety at Umbila Emoyeni

Seriti Green places safety at the centre of work at its Umbila Emoyeni Wind Energy Facility, expecting the same commitment from all contractors. Through training, toolbox talks and strict safety plans, the company works to ensure every worker goes home safely.

At this week’s safety stand-down, local contractor HMI Projects, owned by Freddy Mkhwanazi, was honoured for exemplary safety performance. Employing about 60 people on site, HMI has consistently demonstrated strong compliance, proactive safety practices and genuine care for its workforce.

Seriti Green believes local empowerment and world-class safety go hand in hand. By showcasing HMI and its 50 ‘Safety First’ champions, the company encourages other SMMEs to view safety compliance as a pathway to long-term participation in major projects.

