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WEEKLY ELECTRONIC NEWSLETTER OF THE DEPARTMENT OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND COOPERATION

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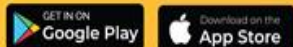
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PRESIDENT RAMAPHOSA, EU COUNCIL PRESIDENT HOLD BILATERAL CALL

President Cyril Ramaphosa has held a bilateral telephone conversation with the President of the European Union (EU) Council, Charles Michel.



According to a statement by The Presidency, the conversation was a positive and constructive discussion on bilateral, regional and global issues.

The statement said the two leaders also discussed the need for more engagement to address global peace and reaffirmed shared respect for international law.

“They both welcomed the recent bilateral South Africa-European Union Political and Security Dialogue Forum and the Human Rights Dialogue held in Pretoria on 26 and 27 February 2024, and they agreed to continue stepping up cooperation to support stability and prosperity.

“In this regard, both presidents discussed the importance of upholding the United Nations (UN) Charter and the principles of sovereignty and territorial integrity, notably in Ukraine. Furthermore, both presidents stressed the importance of urgently addressing the situation in the Middle East, notably reaching a ceasefire in Gaza, the release of hostages, as well as the provision of humanitarian assistance, recalling the orders of the International Court of Justice in this respect,” The Presidency said.

On matters relating to tensions in the East of the Democratic Republic of Congo, “both underlined the importance of a political solution” in that country and also called for an “immediate and durable ceasefire” in Sudan.

Globally, the two leaders agreed to closer working relations in the run-up to and during South Africa’s upcoming Presidency of the G20 in 2025 “including on the protection and advancement of multilateral cooperation and the international rules-based order”.

The strategic partnership between South Africa and the EU, which has brought economic and social dividends for both parties, also came under discussion.

“They welcomed recent engagements in Brussels and Pretoria to deepen and expand the partnership to new areas of mutual interest, such as strategic value chains in the sectors of green hydrogen, critical minerals and vaccines, which will also support progress in regional integration and the implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Agreement.

“Against this framework of close and regular cooperation, both presidents agreed to hold a bilateral summit at earliest convenience,” the statement concluded. – Source: SAnews.gov.za

CONDOLENCES FOR THE PEOPLE OF IRAN FOLLOWING AIR DISASTER

President Cyril Ramaphosa has, on behalf of the South African people and government, extended his condolences to the people of Iran following the death of President Ayatollah Ebrahim Raisi, as well as Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian.

President Raisi and Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian, as well as other personnel, died when the helicopter they were travelling in, crashed in East



Azerbaijan on their way back to Iran on 19 May 2024.

President Ramaphosa said our government joins Iran “in this moment of mourning”.

“This is an extraordinary, unthinkable tragedy that has claimed a remarkable leader of a nation with whom South Africa enjoys strong bilateral relations and whom we were honoured to welcome to the Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa (BRICS) fold in Johannesburg in 2023.

“Our hearts go out to the affected families and the administration of the Islamic Republic of Iran,” he said.

In a statement, The Presidency said: “On behalf of the Government and people of South Africa, President Ramaphosa offers his deep condolences to the Supreme Leader of Iran, The Grand Ayatollah Sayyid Ali Khamenei, and the government and people of the Islamic Republic. President Ramaphosa’s thoughts are with the families of the late President and Foreign Minister, as well as the relatives of the personnel and air crew who perished”. – Source: SAnews.gov.za

GOVERNMENT WELCOMES ICC ARREST WARRANTS APPLICATION

Government has welcomed the decision by the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court (ICC), Karim Kahn KC, on the application for arrest warrants that include Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and others for alleged war crimes and crimes against humanity.

The application for arrest warrants is for the Prime Minister, Israeli Defence Minister Yoav Gallant and three leaders of Hamas: Yahya Sinwar, Mohammed Diab Ibrahim Al-Masri and Ismail Haniyeh.



This is within the context of the present conflict raging in Gaza.

In a statement, President Cyril Ramaphosa said South Africa, which has been a leading proponent for a ceasefire in that conflict, remains committed to “the international rule of law”.

“South Africa is committed to the international rule of law, universal respect for human rights and the settlement of all international disputes by negotiation and not war, and the self-determination of all peoples, including the Palestinians.

“We have also consistently held that all participants to the conflict must ensure that fighting and hostilities come to an immediate end, that all hostages must be released immediately, and that Israel immediately withdraws its military forces from Gaza. This is the only way in which the rights of the Palestinian civilian population can be protected and the basis for sustainable peace can be achieved,” President Ramaphosa said.

In a statement on Monday, 20 May 2024, ICC prosecutor Karim Kahn KC said based on evidence, his office has reasonable grounds to believe that Netanyahu and Gallant “bear criminal responsibility for the following war crimes and crimes against humanity”:

- starvation of civilians as a method of warfare as a war crime contrary to article 8(2)(b)(xxv) of the Statute
- wilfully causing great suffering or serious injury to body or health contrary to article 8(2)(a)(iii), or cruel treatment as a war crime contrary to article 8(2)(c)(i)
- wilful killing contrary to article 8(2)(a)(i), or Murder as a war crime contrary to article 8(2)(c)(i)
- intentionally directing attacks against a civilian population as a war crime contrary to articles 8(2)(b)(i), or 8(2)(e)(i)
- extermination and/or murder contrary to articles 7(1)(b) and 7(1)(a), including in the context of deaths caused by starvation, as a crime against humanity
- persecution as a crime against humanity contrary to article 7(1)(h)
- other inhumane acts as crimes against humanity contrary to article 7(1)(k).

On the other hand, Kahn said his office has reasonable grounds to believe that Hamas leaders, Sinwar, Al-Masri and Haniyeh “bear criminal responsibility for the following war crimes and crimes against humanity”:

- extermination as a crime against humanity, contrary to article 7(1)(b) of the Rome Statute

- murder as a crime against humanity, contrary to article 7(1)(a), and as a war crime, contrary to article 8(2)(c)(i)
- taking hostages as a war crime, contrary to article 8(2)(c)(iii)
- rape and other acts of sexual violence as crimes against humanity, contrary to article 7(1)(g), and also as war crimes pursuant to article 8(2)(e)(vi) in the context of captivity
- torture as a crime against humanity, contrary to article 7(1)(f), and also as a war crime, contrary to article 8(2)(c)(i), in the context of captivity
- other inhumane acts as a crime against humanity, contrary to article 7(1)(k), in the context of captivity
- cruel treatment as a war crime contrary to article 8(2)(c)(i), in the context of captivity; and
- outrages upon personal dignity as a war crime, contrary to article 8(2)(c)(ii), in the context of captivity.

The Israeli-Hamas conflict has claimed the lives of more than 34 000 Palestinians including women and children.

Conflict in the region escalated on October 7 last year when a Hamas led attack killed more than 1000 people in Israel.

Recently, South Africa returned to the International Court of Justice (ICJ) to seek an urgent order from the court for the protection of Palestinian people in Gaza amid Israel's ongoing military assault on Rafah.

The urgent application filed earlier this month follows the escalation of Israel's assault on Rafah, which poses an extreme risk to humanitarian supplies, basic services into Gaza, the survival of the Palestinian medical system, and the survival of Palestinians in Gaza as a group. – Source: SAnews.gov.za

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GOVERNMENT COMMITS TO SUPPORT FAMILIES OF COLLAPSED GEORGE BUILDING

President Cyril Ramaphosa has assured the families of the deceased and injured workers who were trapped inside the collapsed building in George that government will do everything possible to assist.



“We do not want to increase the burden, the suffering and the grief that you are going through. We want to be there as government at all levels to demonstrate our compassion,” President Ramaphosa said.

President Ramaphosa visited the George disaster site on 16 May 2024, following the fatal collapse of the partially-built building, where a total of 81 people were reported to be onsite when the incident happened.

According to an update report issued by George Municipality in the Western Cape at 12pm on Thursday, of the 81 people who were inside the building during the incident, 62 have been recovered. Thirty-two people have passed away, while 12 have been admitted to hospital. Nineteen are still unaccounted for.

During the site visit, President Ramaphosa held a briefing with various people involved in the rescue and dealing with all aspects of the disaster, including a number of ministers and Western Cape Premier, Allan Winde, where he received an update on the extent of the work done and support that has been provided for the families since the disaster struck.

President Ramaphosa commended the effort that was going into dealing with the incident, including the professionalism, capability and knowledge displayed by those involved.

The President said he was satisfied that South Africa is able to deal with disasters, particularly this one, until it reaches finality. He assured the bereaved families that government will leave no stone unturned and will ensure accountability.

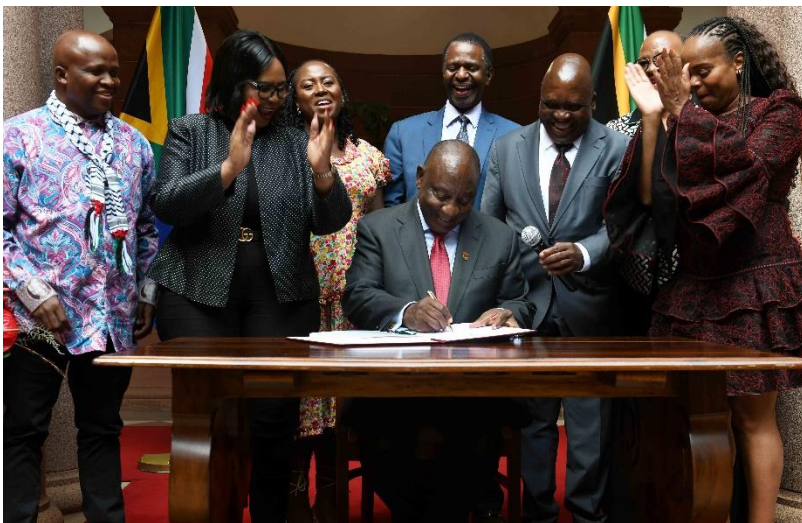
“It will take some time for all aspects of this disaster to be properly tied together. I can assure you that the seriousness with which this matter is being [dealt with] will lead to the truth coming out,” the President said, urging for patience while the investigation continues. While acknowledging that the families are grieving and need immediate solutions and answers to their questions, the President assured that all officials dealing with the matter were going to remain transparent.

“We are a transparent government. We are able to reveal everything as it should be revealed. Let us have a level of patience. I know it is very difficult for those who have lost their loved ones to have that level of patience,” the President said.

The President also offered his condolences to the bereaved families and wished those who are in hospital a speedy recovery. “We are currently focussing on saving lives, caring for the injured and making sure that the remains of those who have lost their lives are well put together so that those who need to be repatriated can be repatriated, and those who need to be buried here can also be buried,” President Ramaphosa said. – Source: SAnews.gov.za

PRESIDENT RAMAPHOSA SIGNS NHI BILL INTO LAW

President Cyril Ramaphosa has emphasised the importance of the National Health Insurance (NHI) in providing equal access to healthcare services and addressing inequalities.



This, as he signed the NHI Bill into law on 15 May 2024.

“[The Bill] is also about efficiency and quality. The provision of healthcare in this country is currently fragmented, unsustainable and unacceptable,” President Ramaphosa said, adding that he finally “found his pen” to sign the long-awaited Bill.

At its core, the President stated that health insurance is a commitment to eliminating the longstanding, severe disparities in healthcare access.

“The NHI is an important instrument to tackle poverty. The rising cost of health care makes families poorer. By contrast, healthcare provided through the NHI frees up resources in poor families for other essential needs.”

He believes that the NHI will make healthcare in the country more affordable.

“The way healthcare services will be paid for is meant to contain comprehensive healthcare costs and to ensure the available resources are more efficiently used.”

President Ramaphosa described the public signing of the NHI Bill into law as a pivotal moment and a milestone in South Africa’s ongoing quest for a more just society.

The President said the public sector serves most of the population but faces budget constraints. In contrast, he said the private sector serves a fraction of society at a far higher cost without a proportional improvement in health outcomes.

He believes that tackling the imbalance requires a radical “reimagining” of resource allocation.

Meanwhile, he said the challenge in implementing the NHI lies not in the lack of funds but in the misallocation of resources that currently favours the private health sector at the expense of public health needs.

He is of the view that the NHI Bill presents an innovative approach to funding universal healthcare based on social solidarity.

This, he said, proposes a comprehensive strategy that combines various financial resources, including both additional funding and reallocating funds already in the health system.

The Head of State strongly believes that financial hurdles facing the NHI can be navigated with careful planning, strategic resource allocation and a steadfast commitment to achieving equity.

He also explained that the NHI Fund will procure services from public and private service providers to ensure all South Africans have access to quality healthcare.

In addition, he said that health insurance ensured that both the public and private sectors complement and reinforce each other.

“The effective implementation of the NHI depends on the collective will of the South African people. We all need to embrace a future where healthcare is a shared national treasure, reflective of the dignity and value we accord to every South African life.”

According to President Ramaphosa, government has already begun implementing a national quality improvement plan in public and private healthcare facilities and is now seeing improvement.

“Even in areas where we never thought [we would] see improvement, we see improvement of health facilities, even in our townships, where old people go to get critical medication.”

In addition, he said government would now establish the systems and put in place the necessary governance structures to implement the NHI, based on the primary healthcare approach.

The President has urged people not to fear, as the NHI will be implemented gradually rather than as "an overnight event".

“The NHI is an opportunity to make a break with the inequality and inefficiency that have long characterised our approach to the health of the South African people. Let us work together, in a spirit of cooperation and solidarity, to make the NHI work.” – Source: SAnews.gov.za

DEPUTY PRESIDENT MASHATILE THANKS SOUTH AFRICANS LIVING ABROAD FOR CASTING THEIR VOTES

Deputy President Paul Mashatile has expressed gratitude to all South Africans living abroad who turned out at voting stations to cast their ballots over the weekend.

The Deputy President was speaking at the launch of the National Youth Service (NYS) initiative, South African National Service Institution (SANSI), aimed at tackling youth unemployment in South Africa in Pretoria on Tuesday, 21 May 2024.

According to the Electoral Commission of South Africa (IEC), 78 000 citizens were registered to vote in 111 South African missions across the world between 17 and 19 May 2024.

The mission in London in the United Kingdom, was the only voting station that remained open on Sunday, 19 May, to cater for the more than 24 000 voters who were registered and approved.

The Commission confirmed that the special voting abroad proceeded smoothly with no major incidents.

The IEC is now preparing for the in-country special voting, which will take place on 27 and 28 May.



There are 1.7 million approved special votes, with 653 000 of these being home visit special votes, while just over one million are voting station special votes.

The Deputy President used his platform to encourage all South Africans to go out in their numbers and vote on 29 May.

“Remember, placing your crosses on the ballot papers will fulfil a task that history has put on your shoulders. “Most importantly, you will be deciding for yourselves the direction of our country and the path that we should take to get t here,” said Deputy President Mashatile.

– Source: SAnews.gov.za

SOUTH AFRICAN STATEMENT ON THE ATTEMPTED COUP D’ETAT IN THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

South Africa condemns the attempted coup d’etat that took place on Sunday, 19 May 2024, in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

The attempted coup’ in the DRC constitutes an erosion of the normative framework that underpins constitutionalism and good governance on the continent, which are the central tenets of building peace, stability and security.

In this context, South Africa welcomes the statement by the Chairperson of the African Union Commission condemning the coup and any use of force to change the constitutional order in any African state”.

South Africa further welcomes the *Communiqué* of the Extra-Ordinary Virtual Summit of the SADC Heads of State and Government of 20 March 2024 on El Nino-induced drought, which strongly condemned this attempt aimed at destabilizing the democratic institutions of the DRC through unconstitutional means.

The attempted takeover is a violation of the African Union common position, which rejects unconstitutional changes of government as enshrined in the Lomé Declaration of 2000 and also undermines the Constitutive Act of the African Union.

South Africa calls for calm and urges the Government of the DRC to investigate this regrettable incident. – Source: www.dirco.gov.za

PRESIDENT LULA DA SILVA BESTOWS ON MINISTER PANDOR AN HONORIFIC AWARD OF THE “GRAND CROSS OF THE ORDER OF RIO BRANCO”



The President of the Federal Republic of Brazil, H.E. President Lula Da Silva has bestowed on Minister Naledi Pandor, the Minister of International Relations and Cooperation of the Republic of South Africa, an honorific award of the “Grand Cross of the Order of Rio Branco”.

Ambassador Benedicto Fonseca Filho, the Brazilian Ambassador to South Africa, presented the Order to Minister Pandor on behalf of President Lula da Silva on 17 May 2024, at the Brazilian Official Residence in Waterkloof, Pretoria.

According to the Brazilian Government, the motivation to bestow on Minister Pandor this award stems from their wish to “recognise Minister Pandor for her continued good disposition towards Brazil as the Minister of International Relations and Cooperation, a country with which she has shown to believe that South Africa can entertain an equitable and fruitful relationship, on bilateral and multilateral levels.”

The Order of Rio Branco is a Brazilian honorific award started in 1963. It is named after Jose Maria da Silva Paranhos Junior, the Baron of Rio Branca and the Patron of the Brazilian Diplomacy. It is intended to honour nationals or foreign individuals, legal entities, military corporations or civil institutions for their services or exceptional merit. The Grand Cross is the highest grade of the Order of Rio Branca. – Source: www.dirco.gov.za

MINISTER PANDOR MOURNS IRAN'S FOREIGN MINISTER AFTER HELICOPTER CRASH

International Relations and Cooperation Minister, Dr Naledi Pandor, has offered her condolences to the government and people of Iran following the passing of Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian.

Amir-Abdollahian died in a helicopter crash alongside Iran's President Ebrahim Raisi and several other officials while travelling in the East Azerbaijan province.

Their bodies were recovered in a mountainous region on 20 May 2024.

“The Minister of International Relations and Cooperation, Dr Naledi Pandor, has expressed her deepest sympathy and condolences to the government and the people of the Islamic Republic of Iran following the shocking and sad news of the passing of her counterpart, Dr Hossein Amir-Abdollahian,” a statement by the department said.

The Minister also conveyed her sympathies to the colleagues and family of Amir-Abdollahian and wished them comfort and solace. According to the department, last year in Pretoria, Minister Pandor co-hosted the 15th Session of the Joint Commission of Cooperation with the late Amir-Abdollahian.

On that occasion, the late Foreign Minister also paid a courtesy call to President Ramaphosa.

“The ministers also met several times on the margins of multilateral forums, including during the BRICS Foreign Ministers' meetings in 2023. Minister Pandor remembers the late Dr Amir-Abdollahian as a brilliant and astute counterpart whose presence will be deeply missed,” the department added.

Amir-Abdollahian became Foreign Minister under President Raisi with his election in 2021.

Meanwhile, President Ramaphosa has also offered condolences to the Supreme Leader of Iran, The Grand Ayatollah Sayyid Ali Kha menei, and the government and people of Iran.

President Ramaphosa said his thoughts are with the families of the late President and Foreign Minister as well as the relatives of the personnel and aircrew who perished.

President Ramaphosa, who as Deputy President paid a working visit to Iran in November 2015, said: “This is an extraordinary, unthinkable tragedy that has claimed a remarkable leader of a nation with whom South Africa enjoys strong bilateral relations and with whom we were honoured to welcome to the BRICS fold in Johannesburg in 2023.

“Our hearts go out to the affected families and the administration of the Islamic Republic of Iran. We join Iran in this moment of mourning” – Source: SAnews.gov.za



OVERSEAS SPECIAL VOTES CONCLUDE

The Electoral Commission (IEC) has confirmed that overall, special voting abroad proceeded smoothly with no major incidents.



“This is a testament to the meticulous logistics, planning, and execution of those plans across all missions. The Commission expresses gratitude to South Africans who cast special votes in missions around the world,” the IEC said on 19 May 2024.

Special votes are designed to ensure that special measures are put in place to make certain that citizens who would otherwise not be able to vote have opportunities to do so.

Such special measures were implemented between 17 and 18 May 2024 in 111 South African missions across the world to facilitate voting by around 78 000 citizens.

“Appreciations are also due to voters who, in some instances, had to endure intemperate weather, wait in queues for extended periods and travel significant distances. In many stations, a steady flow of voters was reported throughout the day, with some missions only closing some two hours beyond their scheduled operating hours.

“Notwithstanding, voters still expressed gratitude on social media and other platforms for the seamless voting experience and level of service they received at stations,” the IEC said.

The mission in London in the United Kingdom, is the only voting station that remained open on Sunday, 19 May 2024 until 21h00 in order to cater for the more than 24 000 voters who are registered and approved to vote at that mission.

“At this stage, any reports on voter turnout should be treated as unconfirmed. Analysis of the reports would be speculative. The ballots may only be counted after the close of voting stations in the country on 29 May. Only then may the Commission communicate definitively on turnout for the election.

“All ballots cast, as well as unused ballot papers from all 111 missions, will now be transported via a secure channel back to the country. The necessary verifications and counting of the ballots will take place in the presence of representatives of contestants and observers,” the Commission said.

The arrangements for special votes would not be possible without the support of the Department of International Relations and Cooperation (DIRCO) and the dedication of the staff of the department and heads of missions around the world.

“With overseas voting completed, the Electoral Commission turns its attention to preparations for the in-country special voting, which will take place two days before election day on 27 and 28 May. There are 1.7 million approved special votes.

“About 653 000 of these are home visit special votes, while just over one million are voting station special votes. In all, there is at least a single approved special vote in 22 626 of the total 23 292 network of voting stations,” the IEC said.

The IEC has re-emphasised the general principle that voters may only vote at a voting station at which they are not registered if they have pre-notified the Commission.

The period of pre-notification closed on 17 May 2024.

“With capturing yet to be completed, indications are that at least 387 000 voters have pre-notified the Commission of their intention to vote at another identified voting station. These voters will cast their ballots on 29 May 2024,” the IEC said.

- Source: SAnews.gov.za

TRADE, INDUSTRY AND COMPETITION ON R1.32 BILLION INVESTMENT BY MICROSOFT



Microsoft and the Department of Trade, Industry and Competition (the dtic) has agreed to a R1.32 billion investment to be deployed over the next ten years in the development of black-owned SMMEs in both tech and non-tech sectors. The agreement makes provision for skills development of young black South Africans in emerging technologies and includes a commitment to research and development to prepare South African industries for the fourth industrial revolution (4IR).

The investment, facilitated under the Equity Equivalent Investment Programme (EEIP) provisions of the Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment Act (B-BBEE Act) is

designed to provide multinationals like Microsoft, which are not able to facilitate local ownership in their companies, with an avenue to accrue BEE points through the pursuit of objectives like enterprise and supplier development; skills development; and research and development for black South Africans.

At an event at the Microsoft offices in Sandton, the Minister of Trade, Industry and Competition, Ebrahim Patel, formally signed the certificate that was issued to Microsoft under the relevant legislation, sealing the deal.

The financial value of the commitment is calculated based on the estimated turnover of the company over the next ten years. In terms of the agreement, the Microsoft R1.3 billion commitment will be allocated as follows:

- An enterprise development initiative, estimated to be R663 million, with a portion focussed on technology start-ups owned and operated by black South African entrepreneurs and the development of new solutions in disruptive technologies; and a portion focused on companies not in the technology sector, encouraging greater use of technologies like machine learning and other forms of artificial intelligence (AI) by black-owned SMEs.
- A skills development initiative, estimated to cost R347 million, will focus on providing intensive training to young black South Africans through eight to 12 month certification courses and learnerships which will see about 1 000 beneficiaries accredited with certifications in emerging technologies, like AI and data analytics.
- An R&D initiative, estimated to be R160 million will invest in research programmes. This includes a R50 million investment, which will be spent in consultation with the Localisation Support Fund to introduce emerging technologies into industrialisation and localisation initiatives.

Provision is also made for funding for marketing and administrative support that Microsoft will put in place to ensure a well-administered programme with significant impact.

The investment by Microsoft adds to the growing number of agreements concluded during the past five years of the Sixth Administration in terms of the EEIP provisions of the B-BBEE Act, which includes the R6 billion Automotive Industry Transformation Fund, committed to

by seven large car assemblers, BMW, Ford, Isuzu, Mercedes-Benz, Nissan, Toyota and Volkswagen; a R384 million investment by Amazon Web Services; a R340 million fund established by JPMorgan; and a R200 million grant by Citibank for black-industrialists in the Vaal Special Economic Zone.

“South African law permits, in specific circumstances, that foreign investors who are unable to include black South Africans in their ownership structures, nonetheless gain points on the BEE scorecard by developing what is called an ‘equity equivalent’ investment plan that is then considered by Government. Such a plan typically deals with pursuit of transformation objectives like enterprise and supplier development; skills development; and research and development that brings black South Africans into the mainstream economy. It is part of the flexibility that was introduced to enable foreign-owned businesses to operate in the domestic environment,” Minister Patel said.

“The R1.3 billion Microsoft deal, the largest by a single company under the equity equivalent provisions of the legislation, brings the total value of agreements concluded during this administration to more than R8.2 billion. Since we started the Black Industrialist Programme eight years ago, we have built a network of more than 1 700 black-owned and controlled industrial champions which have been backed by the dtic and its agencies. These firms employ more than 160 000 South Africans directly. The Microsoft Fund will assist in accelerating the development of black industrialists, equipping them with the technology needed to thrive in the Fourth Industrial Revolution,” he said.

“The Fund will assist black South Africans in non-tech sectors to harness the power of technology and improve their competitiveness and ability to innovate and expand their operations. It will also act as a bridge to enable young people to get training, certification and job placement, so that talented South Africans gain access to the opportunities that arise from an increasingly digitalised world,” Minister Patel said.

According to Lilian Barnard, President for Microsoft Africa, “This investment represents our commitment to empowering individuals and small businesses to be part of Africa’s digital economy, and to drive job creation and growth that will benefit the entire region.” – Source: www.gov.za

MINISTER GUNGUBELE CALLS FOR CONNECTIVITY AND INCLUSION

Minister of Communications and Digital Technologies Mondli Gungubele used his keynote address on the opening day of Africa Tech Week to highlight government’s commitment to digital transformation and the significant strides made towards achieving digital inclusion and digitisation. With a focus on economic growth and societal development, the South African government is enhancing public access to connectivity through various initiatives.

Government’s efforts include the expansion of Wi-Fi networks, reduction of data costs and training to leverage evolving technology and the Internet of Things. Last year, government welcomed the launch of a project that has connected 16 000 households and enabled at least 60 000 community members to access broadband services in KwaZulu-Natal.

“If you look at the informal settlements, you go and ask those people ‘why would you come from beautiful land in Nkandla and put a shack up in a city?’ Minister Gungubele said. “People are not setting up shacks out of excitement; they want to be close to opportunities.”

He emphasised expanding digital access as a critical element for solving many of the socioeconomic challenges the country faces.

“Internet penetration improved from 21.1% in 2011 to 79% in 2022. We are ahead of the National Development Plan (NDP) because it has given us a target of 80% by 2030,” he explained.

Skills gap

Minister Gungubele, who is a former teacher, also touched on the challenges created by this expansion and the digital skills shortage on the side of workers for the new jobs as well as teachers to impart the knowledge.



He used the natural proficiency of the younger generation with technology to frame the need for policies that keep pace with their understanding.

The risk, he noted, is that without adapting to the rapid technological advancements, the older generation risks becoming irrelevant to the youth.

Minister Gungubele stressed the importance of sustainable development through digital transformation, which is transforming interactions between citizens, governments, businesses and offering more opportunities for the economy.

“South Africa’s digital transformation journey is well underway, with a clear vision for a connected and inclusive future,” said Minister Gungubele.

“The government’s dedication to digital skills development and infrastructure expansion is paving the way for a more prosperous and digitally empowered society.” – Source: www.bizcommunity.com

WORLD’S THIRD-BIGGEST AUTOMAKER TO ESTABLISH NEW FACTORY IN SOUTH AFRICA



Stellantis has announced that the final building blocks for its automotive manufacturing site in South Africa have been laid, paving the way for construction to begin shortly at the Coega Special Economic Zone (SEZ) in Gqeberha, Nelson Mandela Bay in the Eastern Cape.

Stellantis, the world’s third-biggest automotive manufacturer by volume, and South Africa’s largest development funder, the Industrial Development Corporation (IDC) have concluded key milestones that will lead to a joint venture (JV).

The investment, estimated at R3 billion, is expected to facilitate the creation of massive employment opportunities in the Eastern Cape.

The Coega Development Corporation (CDC), which is supplying the ground on which the factory will be built, has begun preparing the site for the start of construction. “I welcome the progress made with concluding all modalities with Stellantis that will enable construction to commence this year and the start of production of a new auto model to roll off the assembly line by the end of 2025.

The South African auto industry is Africa’s largest producer of cars, bakkies and trucks and this new investment by Stellantis will consolidate the country’s position, helping us to achieve the goal of producing 1.4 million vehicles by 2035.

The biggest attractions for new investors are the size of the domestic market together with the auto industry masterplan, which supports local production for both South Africa and export markets.

Stellantis has a strong growth vision with an excellent range of vehicles in its global stable and through this investment, we look forward to increasing the range of locally manufactured cars available to motorists,” said Ebrahim Patel, Minister of Trade, Industry and Competition. All fauna and flora have been successfully removed from the site and rehomed as per the environmental impact study conducted by Coega.

“Coega is focused on delivering the finest plant for Stellantis, reinforcing the Coega SEZ as an automotive hub in the country, in line with its vision to be the leading catalyst for the championing of socio-economic development,” said Coega acting CEO Themba Koza.

“The impending construction of the Stellantis factory has acted as a catalyst for other investors, he said. “We have had numerous requests to support the automotive sector in Coega and to rapidly grow our planned supplier park.”

The Stellantis Greenfield project in brief:

- it will be built in a South African Special Economic Zone (SEZ) in Coega, situated near Gqeberha in the Eastern Cape province of South Africa

- construction will be completed by the end of 2025
- a high level of localization is targeted at launch (35%)
- ultimate production volume of 50 000 units a year, with the majority destined for export
- one thousand new jobs to be created directly
- thousands of hours to be invested in training to develop local teams to global standards.

– Source: www.bizcommunity.com

NELSON MANDELA UNIVERSITY PROFESSOR HONOURED AS TOP SCHOLAR IN INFORMATION SECURITY

Professor Rossouw von Solms of the Nelson Mandela University has been honoured as the number one Top Scholar in Information Security thanks to a prestigious ranking that assessed scholars from around the world.

Prof. von Solms achieved the top spot ranking determined by ScholarGPS for a lifetime of work in the specialised field.

According to the data, the computer science professor beat out over 36 000 scholars for the coveted spot in Information Security.

“Highly-ranked scholars, the top 0.05% in particular fields, disciplines and specialities, are the most productive (number of publications) authors, whose works are of profound impact (citations) and of utmost quality (h-index),” said Nelson Mandela University.

The University adds that the professor has authored or co-authored 149 publications in Information Security over his career and has attracted 5 988 with an h-index of 38.

Not only is this a remarkable achievement for the academic Prof. Rossouw, but it has also helped position Nelson Mandela University to be ranked as the “third most prolific institution internationally” for Information Security.

The professor’s achievement has undoubtedly inspired many young scholars and is a shining example of the gems South Africa has when it comes to our leaders in education. – Source: www.goodthingsguy.com



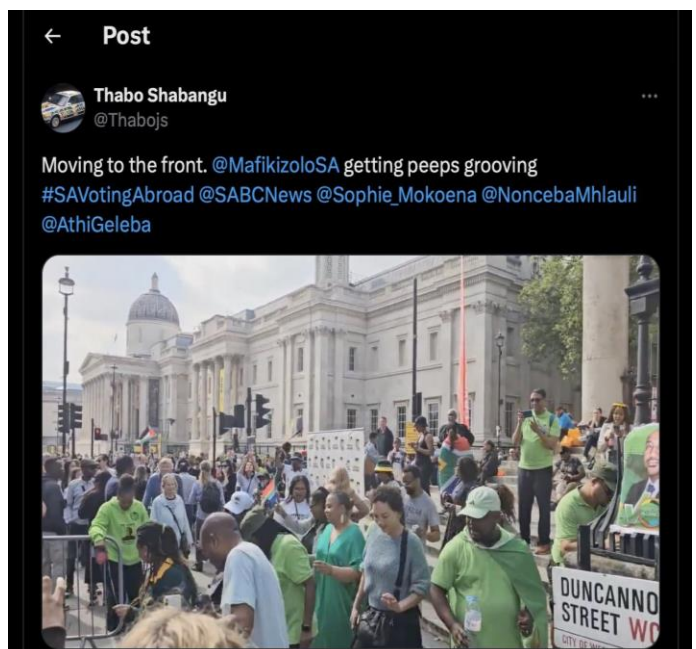
SOUTH AFRICANS ABROAD UNITE IN HEARTFELT 2024 ELECTION VOTES

South Africans abroad proudly casted their votes in the 2024 elections, sharing heartwarming moments online that highlight their enduring connection to home.

From London to Seoul, Berlin and New York, fellow South Africans showed their dedication to democracy and it’s truly heartwarming.

“South African citizens living in other countries cast their first ballots on 17 May 2024. Nine countries cast ballots on Friday, while the rest of the 102 cast ballots on Saturday, 18 May 2024,” said Electoral Commission (IEC) Chief Electoral Officer Sy Mamabolo.

With a high turnout expected, especially in London where 24 194 voters are registered, the voting station operated over two days, 18 and 19 May 2024. The international segment of the voter’s roll



included 56 698 voters but the total number of people expected to vote was an impressive 76 580.

“This comes after the approval of 20,886 VEC10 notifications from voters who informed the Chief Electoral Officer of their intention to vote outside of the country due to temporary absence,” Mamabolo explained.

Ensuring a smooth voting process in 111 foreign missions around the world is no small feat, but the IEC has been well-prepared for the task. The sense of unity and patriotism among South Africans abroad has been palpable, as evidenced by the numerous heart felt posts on social media.

From families dressing up in traditional attire to make their way to voting stations to friends sharing selfies with their inked thumbs and even one guy in a “Faf” speedo, the images and stories are a beautiful reminder of our shared commitment to our country’s future.

The overwhelming support and enthusiasm seen in these posts remind us of the strength of our nation, even when we’re miles away from home. It’s moments like these that make us proud to be South Africans. Our diaspora has shown up in numbers, proving that no matter where we are in the world, our hearts remain firmly rooted in South Africa.

– Source: www.goodthingsguy.com

SOUTH AFRICA SCOOPS TOP AWARDS AT CHELSEA FLOWER SHOW

South Africa stole the show at the 2024 Royal Horticultural Society (RHS) Flower Show when it scooped the “Best Exhibit in the Pavilion” and “Best New Design” awards.



South Africa stole the show at this year’s RHS Chelsea Flower Show when it not only won a gold medal with perfect scores from the judges but was also awarded “Best Exhibit in the Pavilion” as well as the “Best New Design” award on Tuesday, 22 May 2024.

This is unprecedented for South Africa at the Chelsea Flower Show.

This year’s Chelsea Flower Show was sponsored by The Newt in Somerset, a working estate owned by South African billionaire Koos Bekker and his wife Karen Roos.

RHS president Keith Weed CBE presented the awards to head designer Leon Kluge and his team on the opening day of the show. The show will run until Saturday, 25 May.

Described as one of the most outstanding exhibits in the history of the Great Pavilion, this year's design was inspired by the windswept slopes of the Cape mountains.

Kluge and artist Tristan Woudberg led a group of volunteers to create this year's multi-award display, which included large clay sculptures that formed the backdrop for an eye-watering display of fynbos cut flowers.

South Africa's 38th gold medal

This is Leon Kluge's third gold medal at the Chelsea Flower Show after having won the top prize in 2018 and 2019 for South Africa. It is South Africa's 38th gold medal in its illustrious history at the Chelsea Flower Show dating back to 1976.

It's the first time in history that South Africa has won "Best New Design" and "Best Exhibition in the Great Pavillion".

A multitude of species was presented in the display, from the high-altitude fynbos to the strandveld brimming with bulbs which hug the coastlines.

The display celebrates the beauty and significance of one of the most biodiverse regions in the world.

An unprecedented 22 000 stems were used in the display to create a proudly South African explosion of fynbos.

This year, special effort was made to include rarely seen hybrids such as the fan favourite, Protea "Snow Leopard" as well as featuring seldom seen species such as the pendulous *Protea sulphurea* and the delicate blushing brides (*Serruria florida*).

Using natural clay to form the sculpture, artist Tristan Woudberg explains: "Large panels weave through the display, creating an earthy backdrop for our vibrant flora to take centre stage.

"The sculptures take on the role of mountain ranges, dividing and isolating the different biomes of the Cape which have given rise to our unique flora over time.

"The natural cracking effect provided by the clay is a reminder of the contrasting wet and dry seasons of the fynbos biome as well as the fragility of these ecosystems.

"The negative spaces in these sheets of rock act as windows, creating new vistas to explore as one moves around the exhibit."

Four-year Chelsea flower show hiatus

After a four-year hiatus and the sponsor of three decades (1989 – 2019) withdrawing their support, a private sector-led team stepped forward to ensure South Africa's flora was once again represented at the world's premier flower show.

The team which is spearheaded by Kluge, an acclaimed plantsman and landscape designer with numerous international floral expo sition awards to his name, along with Keith Kirsten, conservationist Michael Lutzeyer and Marinda Nel came together to realise South Africa's return.

A transformative contribution from the Rupert Nature Foundation as well as Grootbos Private Nature Reserve along with numerous contributions from the private sector, provided the financial support needed to create the display in London.

Contributions from Michael Lutzeyer and Grootbos Nature Reserve are centred on conservation and community upliftment, while Keith Kirsten brought his wealth of international experience and expertise to the project, not to mention his involvement in the South African exhibit for many decades at the RHS Chelsea Flower Show.

The team also spotlights the *Grootbos Florilegium*, a collection of botanical illustrations depicting rare plants in the Grootbos Nature Reserve.

Marinda Nel, with a background in business development, played a pivotal role in managing the return of South Africa's flora to Chelsea. Cape Flora SA, a non-profit established in 2005, offered their support this year and remains steadfast in its commitment to the sustainable harvesting and growth of the fynbos industry.

The display promoted the demand for high-quality fynbos cut flowers in international markets, providing livelihoods for stakeholders and communities within the South African fynbos industry. – Source: www.thesouthafrican.com



SOUTH AFRICAN CHARITY WINS PRESTIGIOUS GLOBAL AWARD



The Unlimited Child, the largest and leading Early Childhood Development (ECD) non-profit organisation in South Africa, has won the prestigious Khalifa International Award in The Early Learning Field for Best Programme, Curricula and Teaching Practice.

As a rapidly growing organisation throughout Africa and the Middle East, The Unlimited Child is one of only four outside of the United Arab Emirates and Arab Nations to receive this accolade for excellent work in early childhood education.

The Khalifa Award for Education, established in 2007 in the United Arab Emirates, aims to elevate educational standards both locally and internationally by recognising excellence across various educational fields. Under the patronage of H.H. Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, President of the UAE, and the guidance of H.H. Sheikh Mansour bin Zayed Al Nahyan, the award has become a global benchmark for educational excellence.

According to CEO, Candice Potgieter, their proven, scalable model for effective early childhood education sets them apart on the global stage.

She explains, “Our model transforms children at risk of not being school-ready into being school-ready. Additionally, it unlocks the potential of their childminders, enabling them to become fully-fledged ECD practitioners and establish viable micro-enterprises.”

In fact, an independent study, paid for by a large consortium of ECD investors, hailed The Unlimited Child’s model as the most effective ECD programme in the country.

And the international community agrees.

Potgieter adds that while she and the team are honoured by this incredible award, there is still much to be done.

“The harsh reality is that there are millions of children, not only in South Africa but worldwide, who lack access to quality early childhood education. If countries fail to act with urgency on this issue, the world will suffer the long-term consequences. Children who are not made school-ready will never be life-ready either. And no teacher can ever change that.”

To date, The Unlimited Child’s ECD programme has trained and mentored over 10 000 ECD practitioners and equipped over 5 000 ECD centres with age-appropriate educational resources and programming.

“While we have already reached over two million children in impoverished communities across South Africa, Lesotho, Zimbabwe, Malawi and through humanitarian aid efforts in Yemen. For us, this is merely the tip of the iceberg. Our goal is to ensure that every single child has the opportunity to reach their full potential and the Khalifa International Award for Education is just confirmation that we’re headed in the right direction,” Potgieter concludes. – Source: www.goodthingsguy.com

MISS WORLD 2023 VISITS SOUTH AFRICAN CHILDREN WITH THE SMILE FOUNDATION

Miss World 2023 Krystyna Pyszkova visited South Africa and joined the Smile Foundation to meet children recovering from burns at the Nelson Mandela Children’s Hospital.

Recently crowned in India, Miss World 2023, Krystyna Pyszkova and her six continental queens visited the Nelson Mandela Children’s Hospital to raise awareness about the causes, prevention and treatment of burn injuries and the importance of first aid and proper wound care.

The continental queens are Miss World Asia, Yasmina Zaytoun from Lebanon; Miss World Africa, Lesego Chombo (Botswana); Miss World Oceania, Kristen Wright (Australia); Miss World Caribbean, Aché Abrahams (Trinidad & Tobago); Miss World Europe, Jessica Ashley Gagen (United Kingdom); and Miss World Americas, Leticia Frota from Brazil.

During the visit by Miss World and the continental queens, they joined the children who will receive specialised laser treatment for their burns. This medical device has had a profound impact on children with severe burns. Its laser treatment not only improves the appearance of scarring, but it also reduces the pain associated with burn scars.

Through advanced laser technology, it is also able to stimulate new skin growth, giving these children renewed hope for rehabilitation and a better quality of life.

Boitumelo, a six-year-old girl, is among the children receiving laser treatment. She endured severe burn injuries during a devastating shack fire, which tragically claimed some of her siblings. Fortunately, one of her older siblings rescued her, pulling her to safety through a window. Boitumelo spent a prolonged period in the ICU due to a lung injury from inhaling smoke.

“We are thrilled to join forces with Miss World South Africa and the Miss World organisation on to support the Beauty with a Purpose (BWAP) work, a social responsibility project that motivates reigning queens to create or support important charity causes around the world,” said Marc Lubner, Smile Foundation’s Co-Founder and Executive Chairman.



A Netflix crew filmed the visit to the Nelson Mandela Children’s Hospital and Alexandra for a documentary on Miss World’s BWAP worldwide. “We at Smile Foundation and Afrika Tikkun believe BWAP is an inspiring path to leadership and we are proud to be associated with this effort to nurture future leaders,” said Lubner, whose Lubner Foundation founded Afrika Tikkun and Smile Foundation.

Humanitarian work is at the forefront of the pageant industry’s work and both the Miss World Organisation and Miss World South Africa shared their pride in the awareness raised by Krystyna Pyszkova and her continental queens.

“The humanitarian work we have done in communities around the world is our truest pride and we are always honoured to serve. We are delighted to visit this centre in Alexandra which ensures that where you come from does not impede your ability to access quality education and opportunity,” said Julia Morley CBE, President of the Miss World Organisation.

“In this first-of-its kind visit of Miss World and continental queens, the Miss World Organisation is determined to support the efforts of our local BWAP projects. This will ensure that as we mark thirty years of democracy, we recognise the many non-governmental institutions that work with us for the betterment of society”, said Carol Boucher, license holder and President of Miss World South Africa. – Source: www.goodthingsguy.com

THE WORLD'S MOST BELOVED TENOR

ANDREA 30TH BOCELLI



12, 13 APRIL '25
SUNBET ARENA | TIME SQUARE | PRETORIA

16 APRIL '25
DHL STADIUM | CAPE TOWN

TICKETS FROM TICKETMASTER

SYMPHONY CHOIR OF JOHANNESBURG | JOHANNESBURG FESTIVAL ORCHESTRA
THE PHILHARMONIA CHOIR OF CAPE TOWN | CAPE TOWN PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA

BIG kfm CAPETALK 702. KMM

ANDREA BOCELLI CELEBRATES 30 YEARS IN MUSIC WITH SOUTH AFRICAN TOUR

World-renowned opera singer Andrea Bocelli is set to enchant South Africa in 2025 with three exhilarating performances as part of his 30th music anniversary celebrations. Bocelli, a multi-Grammy Award winner, will grace the stages in Pretoria and Cape Town, promising an unforgettable experience for classical music enthusiasts.

On 12 and 13 April 2025, Bocelli will perform at the SunBet Arena in Pretoria, followed by a historic outdoor concert at Cape Town’s DHL Stadium on 16 April 2025. This Cape Town event is anticipated to be the largest outdoor classical concert ever staged in the Mother City.

The concerts are a collaboration with Big Concerts Experience and are supported by popular local radio stations including *KFM 94.5*, *CapeTalk*, *702*, and *947*. Adding a unique local flavour, Bocelli will be joined by some of South Africa's finest musical talents.

In Pretoria, his performance will be enriched by the Symphony Choir of Johannesburg and the Johannesburg Festival Orchestra. Meanwhile, the Cape Town performance will feature The Philharmonia Choir of Cape Town and the Cape Town Philharmonic Orchestra, creating a symphonic blend that perfectly complements Bocelli's legendary voice.

Bocelli's last visit to South Africa was in 2019, where he captivated audiences in Johannesburg and Cape Town. Since then, his global appeal has only grown. Known as one of the most iconic opera singers of all time, Bocelli has sold over 90 million records worldwide. His career is decorated with numerous accolades, including a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame, awarded in 2010.

His influence extends beyond music, having performed for an array of high-profile figures including, four United States presidents, three popes, the British royal family, and numerous prime ministers. Bocelli's voice has also graced significant private events, like the weddings of Kim Kardashian and Kanye West in 2014, and Kourtney Kardashian and Travis Barker in 2022.

As Andrea Bocelli prepares to bring his musical genius back to South African shores, fans are encouraged to secure their tickets early for what promises to be a monumental celebration of classical music and vocal artistry.

The 2025 tour not only marks a significant milestone in Bocelli's illustrious career but also offers a unique opportunity to experience the convergence of international and local musical excellence in some of the most iconic venues in South Africa. – Source: www.thenewspaper.co.za

LIPSTICK ARTIST TURNS TYLA'S MET LOOK INTO ARTWORK

Young lipstick artist Ricollin Moodley has a knack for creating incredible portraits by using only lipstick to bring them to life. But for Tyla, he made an exception with the addition of sand in what is a fabulously creative nod to the South African icon.

His latest portrait was made in honour of South African icon Tyla, who recently made her debut at the Met Gala with a look that earned her a spot on many people's best-dressed lists.



The Cut hailed Tyla as the ultimate victor of the Met Gala, while *Bazaar* applauded her for making a major beauty statement. *E! News* couldn't help but gush over her dress, describing her as a vision of goddess-like beauty, as *GTG* previously reported.

Tyla adorned Balmain in a dress moulded to her body's fit and made from sand, taking a spin on the event's theme *Garden of Time*, to embody the sands-of-time symbolism in relation to the environment.

Sand and lipstick might have traditionally been two foreign materials used in fashion and art respectively, but Moodley was determined to bring the best of both unconventional worlds together for his piece.

This is not Tyla's first lipstick portrait, and she joins other famous South African faces (from Siya Kolisi to Cheslin Kolbe) who have also been reimaged by Moodley and his medium of choice.

If it's not lipstick, Moodley knows his way around eyeshadow and other makeup staples. Needless to say, this young creative is reinventing the concept of a makeup artist and putting South Africa on the map as he does. Source: www.goodthingsguy.com

ROEDEAN SCHOOL (SA) SHOWCASES THEIR MUSICAL PROWESS IN THE USA

In a world where globalisation is at the forefront, where cultures intertwine and boundaries blur, Roedeian School (SA) stands as a beacon of national pride, proudly soaring the South African flag in international skies.

Roedeian School (SA) is a renowned all-girls' school with a rich heritage and an all-round educational excellence institution, founded in 1903 as a sister school to the esteemed Roedeian School in Brighton, England. The founder's vision for Roedeian Brighton was to provide young girls with the kind of academic education that would enable them to meet the challenges they faced during their struggle for gender equality. Theresa Lawrence and Katherine Margaret Earle set sail for South Africa and began their school with 22 pupils in a small house in Johannesburg.

And today, Roedeian School (SA) provides opportunities for young women to make their unique mark in society and follow career choices that will enable them to be competitive in the global workplace, which will be a vital asset for the young women of this country and the generations to follow.

The school not only excels in education but also ensures that students are prepared to be effective global citizens through exposure to different perspectives, experiences and identities at a young age.

With its undeniable spirit of Ubuntu, South Africa was evidently the ideal habitat for a school founded on the values of Truth, Honour, Freedom and Courtesy, as the country and school's values aligned well.

In the same harmony, Roedeian (SA) Senior school choir flew the South African flag in the United States of America East Coast from 13 to 26 April performing in Boston, New York, Princeton, Philadelphia, Maryland and Washington DC, as a testament to its dedication to fostering cultural exchange and global understanding. The school indeed embraced its role as a bridge between nations, using music as a tool for cultural and musical diplomacy.

Similarly, Brand South Africa's *Play Your Part* programme encourages and celebrates active citizenship, in an effort to inspire all South Africans to partake in positive change, social cohesion and brand ambassadorship. It's on this bedrock that Brand South Africa and Roedeian School (SA) embarked on an agreement embedded in this shared vision from 1 April 2024. The institutions made a pact of collaboration and partnership on certain events campaigns to further leverage on promoting the South African story while improving the perception of South Africa, both nationally and internationally.

Looking ahead, the journey between Brand SA and Roedeian School (SA) will be one of incredible pursuits through forging new collaborative efforts for nation brand building and content collaboration.

The sight of seeing Roedeian School (SA) flying the flag internationally is not only a display of national pride but a testament to the power of cultural diversity to transcend borders and bring people together and Brand South Africa eagerly anticipates the collaboration with enthusiasm. – Source: www.brandsouthafrica.com

AKANI SIMBINE SETS A NEW 100M WORLD LEAD

South African star athlete Akani Simbine clocked a superb 9.90 second world lead, winning the men's 100m at the Atlanta City Games held in the United States (US).

Speaking on Saturday, 18 May 2024, after his win, Simbine said he would not let this world-lead performance go to his head as this was still the beginning of the season.

"I think today (Saturday) it was just putting a good two races together. Training has been very heavy; we haven't worked towards racing here," he said in a video posted on the Citius Mag YouTube page.

When asked about the track, following complaints from other athletes, Simbine said it's all about adjusting.

"The track is always going to be bouncy; it's a different surface, it's not on the ground. It's something that you will have to get used to and just keep on running and expect bounce — just take it on in your stride and move."

The top performing athlete will now return to South Africa to train ahead of his next event, the Diamond League, which will be held in Oslo, Norway at the end of May.

“I don’t think I feel like there’s a target on my back. It’s more now just going back to training, just keeping on doing what I’ve been doing,” he said.

Simbine said he is not threatened by other athletes who might view him as a target in the upcoming competitions.

“Putting together the wins builds up confidence, and coach always says it’s very difficult to beat a confident sprinter or athlete. If I feel confident and I’m confident in what my running is and where my training is at, it’s going to be difficult to beat me.



“For me, it’s about keeping the confidence high and keeping going, and just keep on building in the season and not rushing it.”

Simbine said he doesn’t spend too much celebrating his wins because he knows he still has more work ahead.

“It’s literally feeling happy now, and then tomorrow we switch all off and we start the week again, we start the training. Now I have to get back to South Africa, continue training and get ready for Oslo —that’s the next mission. Today is for today, and Monday, when I get home, it’s back to training and work,” he said. – Source: www.iol.co.za

MHLONGO CLAIMS THE FIRST GOLD WIN FOR THE COUNTRY AT THE PARA ATHLETICS WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS

Mpumelelo Mhlongo has claimed the first gold for South Africa at the Para Athletics World Championships currently underway at the Kobe Universiade Memorial Stadium in Japan.

A remarkable feat for the acclaimed para-athlete and Paralympic Games record holder; Mpumelelo’s gold has brought South Africa’s tally to a total of three podium placements at the World Championships thus far, with bronze making up the rest of our wins.



For the superstar no stranger to glory, Mpumelelo’s 11.36-clock stunt for the men’s T44 100m was a welcomed moment of the kind of excellence South Africans know Mpumelelo for. This is not the first time Mpumelelo has bagged the first gold for South Africa at the Para Athletics biggest competition, either. Last year, the certified champion also scooped the top spot for team South Africa competing in Paris.

With five days to go until the Championships are over, hopes are high that the gold energy will carry South Africans onwards and upwards through the rest of the competitions as they vie for Paralympic qualifications and local pride.

Meanwhile, in other South African sports news, the first firing line of South Africans heading off to the Paris Olympic Games has been announced! You can catch up on all the incredible athletes who will be representing our country in their disciplines, here. – Source: www.goodthingsguy.com

STAR FENCER LEADS SOUTH AFRICA'S RETURN TO THE OLYMPICS

Star Fencer Harry Saner has given South Africans another sport to root for as the countdown to the Paris Olympics begins, thanks to his victory at the African qualifiers in Algeria.



For fencing fans, this is far from an individual achievement but rather one for the country, as it marks the first time South Africa will be represented in the Olympics for fencing since the Beijing showdown in 2008.

Saner's lone-wolf representation and determination to strike victory at the Games could mark a revival of public interest in the sport so that more young fencers might be afforded the chance to compete in competitive events.

A former St Stithians College learner, the news has naturally brought great pride to his old school and university, along with the rest of the country.

“With this achievement, Harry, a final-year Wits University mechanical engineering student has made history,” St Stithians College shared. The twenty-three-year-old joins a long list of South African athletes preparing for July, with South African fingers permanently crossed that there will be even more to come in the near future. – Source: www.goodthingsguy.com



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