

UBUNTU NEWSFLASH



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WEEKLY ELECTRONIC NEWSLETTER OF THE DEPARTMENT OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND COOPERATION

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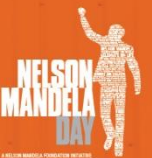
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PRESIDENT RAMAPHOSA CONGRATULATES NEW IRANIAN PRESIDENT

President Cyril Ramaphosa has congratulated President Masoud Pezeshkian on his election as the new President of the Islamic Republic of Iran.



Pezeshkian clinched some 53% of the votes following two rounds of elections in the Middle Eastern country.

“On behalf of the Government and people of South Africa, President Ramaphosa also congratulates the people of the Islamic Republic of Iran on exercising their democratic right during the two rounds of the electoral process, which took place on 28 June and 5 July 2024.

“President Ramaphosa wishes President Pezeshkian good health, fortitude, strength and success for his tenure as President of the Islamic Republic of Iran,” The Presidency said.

Formal diplomatic relations between the two countries were established in 1994 and remain cordial to date.

“President Ramaphosa affirms that South Africa will continue working with the Islamic Republic of Iran to deepen cooperation at the bilateral and multilateral levels to promote global and regional peace, security, stability and to achieve economic development for the benefit of both countries.

“President Cyril Ramaphosa emphasised the need for South Africa and Iran to continue collaborating closely in promoting the agenda of the Global South through shared membership in groupings such as the Non-Aligned Movement, BRICS, the Indian Ocean Rim Association, as well as other formations,” The Presidency said. – Source: SAnews.gov.za

PRESIDENT RAMAPHOSA AND PRIME MINISTER STARMER COMMIT TO DEEPEN TIES

President Cyril Ramaphosa and newly elected British Prime Minister Sir Keir Starmer have expressed their shared commitment to deepening relations between South Africa and the United Kingdom (UK).

This, as Prime Minister Starmer placed a call to President Ramaphosa on Sunday morning, 7 July 2024.

Prime Minister Starmer assumed the position on Friday, 5 July 2024.

According to The Presidency, the two leaders have expressed their commitment to deepen relations in areas including the just energy transition.

In the call, the Prime Minister expressed his interest in “working closely with South Africa as part of executing the strong mandate given to the Labour Party in the general election on Thursday, 4 July 2024.”



President Ramaphosa congratulated Prime Minister Starmer on his electoral victory and said that the Statement of Intent framing South Africa's Government of National Unity (GNU) incorporated many objectives shared by the two new administrations.

The two leaders viewed the discussion as a continuation of the deliberations in which they engaged in November 2022, when President Ramaphosa visited London on the first State Visit hosted by His Majesty King Charles III.

Sir Keir Starmer at that time was the leader of the opposition Labour Party.

"President Ramaphosa described the bilateral relationship as a special bond and said South Africa wished to see greater alignment with the UK at the national and multilateral level, with South Africa's Presidency of the G20 in 2025 providing one such opportunity.

"President Ramaphosa foresees closer cooperation with [the] UK in the political, social, people-to-people, diplomatic, trade and investment, and climate change domains," said The Presidency.

The Prime Minister agreed that the G20 would be a platform for advancing shared interests in climate change, economic growth and the eradication of inequality. – Source: SAnews.gov.za

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PRESIDENT RAMAPHOSA RECEIVES CONGRATULATORY CALL FROM PRESIDENT ABDEL FATTAH EL-SISI OF THE REPUBLIC OF EGYPT

President Cyril Ramaphosa was honoured on Sunday evening, 7 July 2024, with a phone call from His Excellency President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi of the Arab Republic of Egypt who warmly congratulated President Ramaphosa on his new term of office.



President El-Sisi shared with President Ramaphosa his expectation that South Africa and Egypt would continue to cooperate on issues of common interest.

President Ramaphosa expressed his appreciation for President El-Sisi's good wishes and agreed on the importance of continued partnership between our two countries on matters of bilateral, continental and multilateral interest.

Of particular significance to the two leaders is the need to work together on the Palestinian issue and the crisis in the Gaza strip.

The Presidents committed themselves to deepening the fraternal ties between Egypt and South Africa as part of advancing continental solidarity.

President Ramaphosa and President El-Sisi were also in agreement on the expansion of trade, mutual investment and other areas of economic cooperation between the two states. – Source: www.gov.za

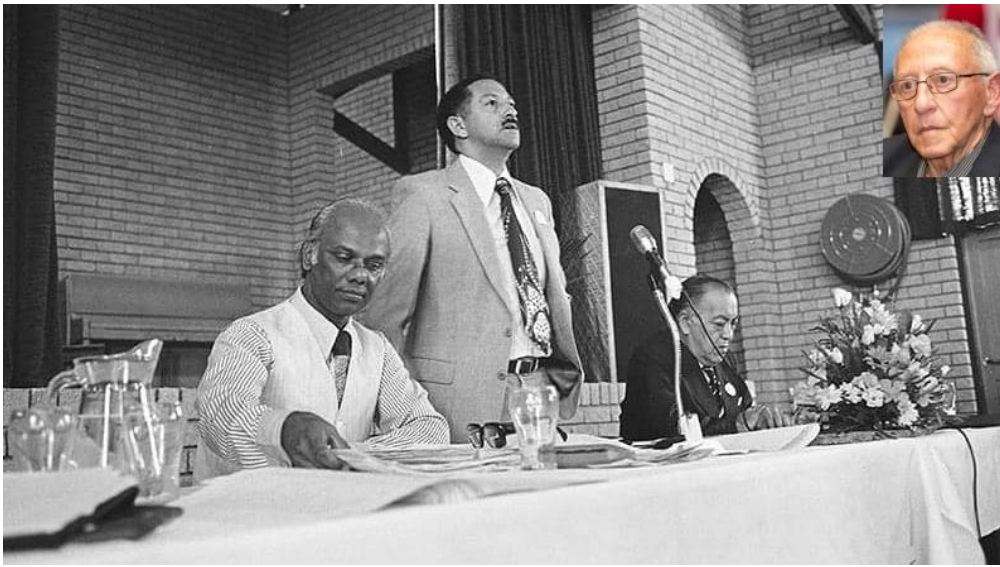
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CONDOLENCES FOR FORMER ANTI-APARTHEID ACTIVIST FRANK VAN DER HORST

President Cyril Ramaphosa has offered condolences to the family of anti-apartheid activist and former President of the South African Council on Sport (SACOS) Frank van der Horst.

Van der Horst passed away at the age of 86.

"The passing of Frank van der Horst makes us recall an era of grassroots, non-racial and inter-sectoral resistance to apartheid, and international support for our struggle. As part of the generational leadership of Norman Naidoo, Hassan Howa, Morgan Naidoo and Joe Ebrahim, Frank van der Horst made a crucial contribution as SACOS President to the sustained political pressure faced by the apartheid system in its closing decade," President Ramaphosa said.



In a statement on Wednesday, 10 July 2024, the President said South African sports is now richer because of the legacy left behind by Van der Horst and SACOS.

“Today, South African sport continues to benefit from Frank van der Horst’s and SACOS’ legacy in the form of administrators who played their sport under the SACOS banner and now lead sports development in our country, as well as federations and teams who are welcome throughout the world.

“As a nation, we are grateful for a struggle Frank waged with courage, principle and clarity. His values and the example he set will sustain us while he rests in peace,” President Ramaphosa said.

According to The Presidency, SACOS, which was established in 1973, “fought against racial segregation in South African sport and campaigned for equal access to facilities”.

“SACOS worked closely with civic organisations, youth movements, trade unions and underground liberation structures on numerous campaigns and protests. SACOS resisted South Africa’s participation in international sport with only white athletes.

“Through its recognition by the Supreme Council for Sport in Africa, the United Nations Committee Against Apartheid Sport and the global anti-apartheid movement, SACOS exercised sport as a platform through which to highlight the impact of apartheid on all areas of the lives of oppressed communities.

“The President extends his condolences to the friends and associates nationally and globally of Mr Van der Horst, as well as the generation of athletes who practised their sport while Mr Van der Horst led the non-racial sports movement,” The Presidency said. – Source: SAnews.gov.za

PRESIDENT RAMAPHOSA SENDS CONDOLENCES TO DECEASED SANDF MEMBERS

President Cyril Ramaphosa has sent his condolences to the families of four South African National Defence Force (SANDF) members who passed away while on duty overnight on Friday, 5 July 2024.

The four members were deployed to a mine in the North West and their lifeless bodies were found inside a container structure they had used as a guard house.

“As Commander-in-Chief of the SANDF, President Ramaphosa offers his condolences to the families of the victims as well as to their commanders and colleagues.



“The President’s thoughts are with the team of soldiers who discovered their deceased colleagues in a container at a disused mine shaft at Orkney in the North West province,” The Presidency said in a statement.

An inquest into the deaths has been opened by the South African Police Service.

“While police are investigating the matter, the deceased troops, who showed no injuries and were fully kitted and armed, are believed by the police and the SANDF to have died from carbon monoxide poisoning resulting from a fire they made to keep warm.

“The troops were part of Operation Vala Umgodi which is directed at combating illegal mining,” the statement read.

In a statement over the weekend, the SANDF said the members were stationed on a 24-hour shift at Shaft 3, a dormant mining shaft in Orkney, North West, next to the abandoned Harry Oppenheimer stadium, which has been a hotspot for illegal mining. – Source: SAnews.gov.za

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BILATERAL RELATIONS WITH THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA



The Minister of International Relations and Cooperation, Ronald Lamola and his counterpart, United States (US) Secretary of State, Anthony Blinken, recommitted to expanding and deepening the special relationship enjoyed by both South Africa and the US.

This happened during the courtesy call Minister Lamola received from Secretary of State Blinken congratulating him on his appointment. The call follows President Biden’s congratulatory call to President Ramaphosa on 2 July 2024.

Both Minister Lamola and Secretary of State Blinken reiterated their commitment to expanding bilateral relations between our nations as well as global peace and security. – Source: www.dirco.gov.za

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MINISTER CREECY SETS SOUTH AFRICAN TRANSPORT REFORM AGENDA AT SATC

Barbara Creecy, in her debut as South Africa's Minister of Transport, addressed the 42nd Southern African Transport Conference (SATC) in Pretoria on 8 July 2024, emphasising the government's commitment to tackling sector challenges. The conference theme, “Upskilling and Reskilling the Transport Industry”, underscored efforts to enhance skills amid evolving demands.

“This sector is not operating as either an effective economic facilitator or as a proper social service,” said Minister Creecy. “The condition of our roads, logistical and capacity issues affecting our freight network, and road safety are just a few of the problems that have plagued the sector in recent times.”

Minister Creecy noted that when the country’s transport systems suffer, its economy faces depressed economic growth and declining investment, which makes it hard for working people to get to their jobs affordably or on time.

“Our roads and rail networks are the arteries of our nation, and should move people and goods safely, speedily and affordably across the length and breadth of our country and facilitate our connectivity with Africa and the broader world,” said Minister Creecy.

Progress on national transport initiatives

Minister Creecy said there had already been progress towards addressing national transport challenges. A major development was the establishment last year of the National Logistics Crisis Committee (NLCC), chaired by President Cyril Ramaphosa, and the adoption by cabinet of the Freight Logistics Roadmap.

Minister Creecy said the NLCC was continuing reforms at Transnet to return the entity to pre-pandemic performance levels. She said the Passenger Rail Agency of South Africa (PRASA) would continue to reopen passenger rail lines affected by infrastructure damage and cable theft, with 28 out of 40 priority lines now fully functional.



Minister Creecy reported that, as of March this year, 256 stations were functional in cities across the country and that continuous work was being done to open up more strategic commuter and rail corridors, as part of the rail policy approved by cabinet in 2023.

Another transport priority identified by Minister Creecy was road safety.

“We cannot normalise a situation in which more than 12 000 people are killed on our roads every year,” she said. “Nor can our country continue to sustain the cost of more than 10 000 fatal crashes, which the Road Traffic Management Corporation estimates cost R186 billion or 3% of the South African gross domestic product every year. We must ensure the country’s roads are safer for those who use them.”

Enhancing public transport

She also undertook to work with the taxi sector, which carries an estimated 80% of all South Africans using public transport.

“I pledge to ensure it takes its place in a safer, greener transport ecosystem,” she said. “We must work together to decrease levels of conflict and violence, which pose a significant risk to the sector and commuters.”

Acknowledging the skills-development theme of the conference, Minister Creecy noted that transport was in the midst of one of the greatest changes since the introduction of the automobile, thanks to evolutions in digital technology and renewable energy.

“The Department of Transport’s Green Transport Strategy can ensure that our development objectives are not at odds with our climate change mitigation laws,” she said. “Implementation of this strategy will be a priority for this next term of government in an era of hyper globalisation.” Another priority is the finalisation of the long-outstanding strategy for devolution of urban commuter rail services.

Minister Creecy also shared a vision for the country to make the most of its location as a gateway to Africa, as well as its geopolitical relationships through BRICS and the African Continental Free Trade Agreement.

“New technologies and new global imperatives will fundamentally alter the skills required in the transport sector,” concluded Minister Creecy. “But equally importantly, they will open up new industries, new opportunities and new forms of economic access, ownership and employment.” – Source: www.bizcommunity.com

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ASTRONOMICAL UNION GENERAL ASSEMBLY 2024 TO BE HELD IN SOUTH AFRICA

With just more than a month to go, South Africa is set to become the centre of international astronomy as scientists from across the world gather for the XXXII (32nd) General Assembly of the International Astronomical Union (IAU) in Cape Town.

The event is scheduled to take place from 6 to 15 August 2024.



XXXII IAU GENERAL ASSEMBLY

CAPE TOWN, SOUTH AFRICA, 2024

According to the Department of Science and Innovation (DSI), this will be the first time that an assembly of its kind will be held on African soil.

The gathering is expected to bring together over 2 000 international astronomers to address key topics in contemporary astronomy and assess the latest scientific progress in several specialised areas.

Led by the African Astronomical Society (AfAS), the IAU General Assembly is held every three years, with each event advancing the astronomical sciences through international collaboration.

“It also celebrates the continent’s rich astronomical heritage and commitment to advancing the field,” the department explained.

The hybrid event is being hosted by the National Research Foundation (NRF), supported by the DSI. The academic programme will include over 2 000 presentations scheduled across more than 300 sessions.

The General Assembly will include six symposia and 12 multi-session focus meetings.

There will also be poster sessions and prize lectures given by recipients of prestigious awards in astronomy.

“Alongside international scientific impact, this meeting will have a societal impact that goes beyond national barriers in a continent-wide celebration of astronomy – *Africa Astro Month*.”

Meanwhile, learners, scientists, students and members of the public will be brought together for knowledge exchange and inspiration.

There will also be limited opportunities for media to visit key astronomy sites, including the South African Astronomical Observatory (SAAO) and Southern African Large Telescope (SALT) in Sutherland, Northern Cape, and the South African Radio Astronomy Observatory (SARAO), MeerKAT Radio Telescope and SKA-Mid Site in Carnarvon, Northern Cape. – Source: SAnews.gov.za

SOUTH AFRICAN INITIATIVE TURNS PAPER WASTE INTO ETHANOL

A pioneering solution has been developed to convert cellulose fibre-rich waste from pulp and paper mills into ethanol using a specialised fermentation process.

The initiative, led by the Paper Manufacturers Association of South Africa (PAMSA) in collaboration with Stellenbosch University (SU), Sappi Southern Africa, and Mpact, aims to transform paper sludge—a by-product with high moisture content from paper production—into ethanol. This versatile material is used in making industrial chemicals, bio-based plastics and sustainable aviation fuel.

The demonstration of this technology took place at Sappi Tugela mill in Mandini, KwaZulu-Natal, supported by co-funding from the Department of Science and Innovation (DSI) and PAMSA. This project reflects a significant advancement from an academic research thesis to a commercial application, showcasing a South African first in bioethanol production.

The research by SU has shown that paper sludge, along with food and textile waste, does not require pre-treatment before undergoing hydrolysis-fermentation. This process contributes to environmental sustainability by reducing landfill waste, greenhouse gas emissions and improving water reclamation. Additionally, it supports the circular economy and industrial decarbonisation.

Economically, the project is promising, as waste-derived bioethanol commands premium prices in global markets. It also offers potential for sustainable employment, upskilling opportunities and regional economic development. The current demonstration plant, a mobile, containerised unit with a 1 000-litre bioreactor, is set up to process approximately 100kg of paper sludge daily. It is part of a nine-month trial at Sappi's mill, with plans for a subsequent project at Mpact's mill in Springs, Gauteng.

This initiative not only tackles waste management issues, but also aligns with the principles of a circular economy, enhancing sustainability and promoting responsible consumption and production. It underscores South Africa's commitment to innovation and sustainability, through collaborations that strengthen the role of science and technology in modernising manufacturing and advancing the economy. The project has gained global recognition for its environmental benefits, notably in GHG reduction and fossil-fuel substitution. – Source: thenewspaper.co.za



JAPAN LOOKS TO SOUTH AFRICA TO CULTIVATE ITS LATE-RIPENING YELLOW APPLE

A major food distributor has sought a South African partner to trial the Southern Hemisphere-production of a special Japanese-bred apple.



The Kimito apple, a new yellow-apple variety developed by Japan's Hirosaki University, will soon be grown in South Africa thanks to a partnership with Wismettac Foods.

First registered in 2016, this late-ripening apple is known for its excellent storage properties as well as being light on labour.

According to the university, Kimito apples have a white flesh and a refreshing sweetness and its core is waterier than the more typical, yellow-skinned apple varieties.

Wismettac Foods is a major distributor of Japanese fresh and packaged foods with a global presence. According to *The Asahi Shimbun*, Wismettac will now partner with a South Africa-based business to register and trademark the fruit in South Africa.

Currently, the seedlings, which have passed local quarantine inspections, are being test-cultivated in a partner's orchard in South Africa.

Due to the contrasting seasons, the partnership will mean Kimito apples will be available year-round as officials aim to create a strong market for exports to Asia and elsewhere.

Under the agreement, Hirosaki University will receive a licensing fee for the intellectual property rights associated with the apple variety in South Africa.

According to *The Asahi Shimbun*, numerous Japanese-developed farm product varieties have been cultivated abroad without permission, badly grown and deprived Japan of potential export revenue.

To combat this, Wismettac Foods is implementing the “club variety” system. This approach ensures that intellectual property rights over a plant variety are protected, with only club members granted licenses to produce and market the variety.

Takahiro Masuda of Wismettac Foods explained that cultivating apples in South Africa provides strategic advantages, including its proximity to European and Middle Eastern markets.

“With the seasons being the opposite to what they are in Japan, apples from South Africa could be marketed in the off-crop season, when shipments from Japan drop,” Masuda explained.

“The opportunity to offer Kimito apples, which are as good in quality as those produced in Japan, at prices that befit the market, will also help us develop new sales channels.”

Wismettac is also looking into the option of exporting the Kimito apples from South Africa to Asia to cater to the vast and growing mid-income class. – Source: www.thesouthafrican.com

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STELLENBOSCH UNIVERSITY IMMUNOLOGIST GETS HARRY OPPENHEIMER FELLOWSHIP AWARD

Stellenbosch University immunologist Professor Clive Gray received the prestigious Harry Oppenheimer Fellowship Award, which recognises world-class research that has a far-reaching impact.

“Professor Gray’s research has the potential to revolutionise our understanding of how the human placenta functions and, from that, uncover new pathways to improving mother-child health.

“We are excited to watch this story unfold, as we have witnessed the stories of previous Harry Oppenheimer Fellows change the game in fields from biochemistry and biology to engineering, history and zoology to mention a few,” said Oppenheimer Memorial Trust (OMT) Chairperson, Rebecca Oppenheimer.



The fellowship and its accompanying R2.5 million grant are awarded to scholars of the highest calibre who are engaged in cutting-edge and internationally significant research that has particular application to the advancement of knowledge, teaching, research and development in South Africa and beyond.

“Receiving this award is very meaningful,” said Gray. “It’s recognition of the work that I and my research group have been doing over many years. That the OMT acknowledges the importance of what we do is very gratifying and rewarding.”

Professor Gray’s work is aimed at revealing new knowledge about how to manage the risks of premature birth, low birth weight and learning difficulties by uncovering a predictive marker of adverse birth events.

“Our work is niche, laboratory-based research using sophisticated techniques and tools. We need to know how diseases, such as HIV in pregnant women interfere with the growth of the placenta and how this, in turn, impacts adverse birth outcomes and disrupts maternal health.

“These adverse outcomes have a devastating effect on South African society, where impaired child and maternal health is linked with deprived early childhood development,” said Gray.

While antiretroviral (ARV) treatment given to mothers living with HIV has been a huge success in preventing viral transmission from mother to child, there are many challenges remaining. Many babies born to these women are not as healthy as their counterparts born to HIV- uninfected mothers.

They often suffer from stunted growth, are more susceptible to viral and bacterial infections, and some are born prematurely. These children also have long-term learning difficulties.

“It is not known whether the ARV drugs play a role in these outcomes, or whether these conditions are related to a combination of their mother’s HIV status and the effects of the drugs.”

Gray and his team have shown that women living with HIV who initiate ARV drug treatment before they become pregnant have a condition known as maternal vascular malperfusion – poor placental blood vessel development.

This condition elevates these mothers’ risk of a premature birth and of their infants being of low birth weight. Generally, the mothers also suffer from high blood pressure that can lead to increased risks of cardiovascular difficulties leading to major heart problems. – Source: www.iol.co.za

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SOUTH AFRICA RANKED AS THE FRIENDLIEST COUNTRY IN THE WORLD

South Africa is the friendliest country in the world, according to a new survey from American-based payments group Remitly.



The survey had 3 000 participants from around the globe who answered a series of questions from the “agreeableness” section of the Big 5 personality test.

The Big 5 personality test looks at five key personality traits: openness, conscientiousness, agreeableness, extraversion and neuroticism.

This study only looked at agreeableness as it is deemed the most effective way to gauge social harmony.

Respondents were asked questions to determine how concerned they feel for others, whether they take time for other people and whether they like to make people feel at ease.

Higher scores showed that people were friendly, generous, helpful and willing to compromise their interests with others.

“People who score highly in this section of the test value getting along with others and have an optimistic view of human nature, meaning they’re likely to be warm and friendly to those they meet,” said Remitly.

“Potentially, a friend is waiting for those moving to a new country and looking to strike up a social group for themselves.”

South Africa topped the list in the agreeableness test with an “impressive” score of 34.63 out of 40.

Foreigners rank South Africa’s friendliness highly, as well as its natural beauty.

Apart from South Africa’s natural beauty, Remitly said there are several compelling reasons to move to South Africa.

“One of the major advantages of living in the country is the affordable cost of living, where the South African rand stretches far, with housing and everyday expenses allowing for a higher standard of living.”

“It also has an incredible array of wildlife to see and a warm climate helping residents to enjoy and explore the long stretches of beautiful coastline.”

“Residents are known for being warm and welcoming, making it easy for travellers and visitors alike to feel at ease around them.”

Remitly said that it is not uncommon to be greeted by polite strangers while walking down the street, with South Africans happy to socialise and show off their good sense of humour.

With 12 official languages now in place, there are also numerous ways to communicate with locals and make new friends.

Following South Africa, Greece, Croatia, Mexico and Sweden made the top five. – Source: www.businessstech.co.za

CAPE TOWN GEM NAMED ONE OF WORLD’S BEST GARDENS

One of Cape Town’s famous gardens, Kirstenbosch National Botanical Garden, has recently been ranked as one of the world’s most highly rated gardens.

This is according to a recent study that also placed South Africa as number 12 on the top 20 best countries for plant lovers to visit.

The study was done to find out which countries plant lovers should add to their botanical bucket lists, and analysed several factors in each country, including the number of recorded plant species, the number of botanical gardens per square mile, how many photos of flowers and plants had been posted on Instagram, and Google search demand for gardens across the country, before combining them to give each country a “botanical bliss” score.

According to the top 20 highest-rated gardens in the world, as per traveller reviews, Kirstenbosch National Botanical Garden ranked at number 15, with Boyce Thompson Arboretum in Arizona, United States (US), Plas Cadnant Hidden Gardens in Anglesey, Wales, and Missouri Botanical Garden in Missouri, US, taking the first, second and third spots, respectively.

While South Africa placed number 12, the United Kingdom (UK) ranked as the number one country worldwide for tourists that love their plants, with a score of 79/100.

The UK ranked so highly thanks to an impressive score for the number of botanical gardens per square mile, as well as a substantial number of photos posted under the hashtag #ukflowers, highlighting just how much travellers love Britain in bloom.



Following just one point behind in a tie for second place were Japan and the US, both of which had scores of 78/100. Japan is well known for its rich horticultural heritage, with many Zen gardens and traditions like ikebana deeply ingrained in its culture.

The US is also widely renowned for its numerous national parks, home to a bounty of diverse flora and landscapes, from California’s towering Sequoia trees to Arizona’s huge, iconic cactus plants.

Completing the top five were India and Malaysia, both of whom boast “botanical bliss” scores of 77/100. India is home to one of the world’s most biodiverse ecosystems, with a long history of traditional medicine (Ayurveda) which centres around using plants for medicinal purposes, while Malaysia, home to some of the world’s oldest rainforests, is world-renowned for its tropical fruits and orchids.

Other notable countries that feature in the top 10 include Australia, where travellers can find unique plant species found nowhere else in the world, and Costa Rica, another of the world’s most biodiverse nations, home to rainforests, cloud forests, mangroves and highland forests, to name just a few. – Source: www.sapeople.com

WINE TOURISM CONFERENCE 2024 HIGHLIGHTS GROWTH AND INCLUSIVITY

The prestigious Lanzerac Wine Estate in Stellenbosch recently played host to the Wine Tourism Conference which took place in May 2024. This significant event brought together key stakeholders from South Africa's wine industry.



The conference focussed on the transformative power of wine tourism and its potential to drive growth and profitability in the wine sector. The event featured an impressive lineup of speakers, including Mike Ratcliffe from Stellenbosch Wine Routes, Eric Matkovich, Founder and Director of CellarX, Mark Wilkinson from Cape Winelands Airport, and Paul Wagner from Napa Valley College's Viticulture and Enology programme.

Despite being a prominent wine-producing country, South Africa lacks a pervasive wine culture, which poses a challenge for market penetration. However, an impressive 94% of wine estates in the country offer some form of wine tourism, underscoring the sector's importance in generating revenue. Wine tourism in South Africa is not just about wine tasting; it encompasses a wide range of experiences, including culinary events, festivals and lifestyle activities, which help to attract a broader audience.

Inclusivity, segmentation and targeted marketing were highlighted as crucial components for success at the conference. Understanding and leveraging consumer data were underscored as essential for growing a brand. This includes analysing visitor demographics, interests and visit motivations. Emotional connections with brands can significantly increase consumers' willingness to pay a premium, making personalised and engaging experiences vital for wineries.

The conference stressed the importance of understanding the customer journey, from initial contact to post-visit engagement. Tools like Google Analytics, social media insights and customer feedback mechanisms were recommended to enhance service delivery. Inclusivity in marketing, such as using vernacular languages, can broaden the appeal and accessibility of wine tourism. Millennials were identified as a key demographic to target, with tailored marketing strategies required to engage this segment effectively.

The Wine Tourism Conference 2024 served as a vital platform for industry professionals to share knowledge, discuss challenges and explore opportunities within the wine tourism sector. The event's emphasis on data-driven strategies and customer-centric approaches provided a roadmap for wineries to enhance their tourism offerings, ensuring sustainable growth and increased profitability. By fostering collaboration and innovation, the conference aimed to transform the landscape of wine tourism, making it more inclusive, engaging and economically beneficial for all stakeholders involved.

The Wine Tourism Conference 2024 at Lanzerac Wine Estate highlighted the crucial role of wine tourism in the South African wine industry's future. The principles and strategies discussed at the conference are set to shape the industry's approach to tourism, driving it towards greater success and sustainability. – Source: www.thenewspaper.co.za

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CAPE TOWN CONFIRMED AS TOP FILMING DESTINATION

The City of Cape Town revealed a rise in filming permit applications for 2023-24, only confirming that Cape Town is a prime filming location.

Between 1 July 2023 and 30 June 2024, the City of Cape Town's Film Permit Office issued 4 757 film permits, a massive 22% increase from the 3 910 permits issued the previous year.

This is per the City of Cape Town, who revealed that the permits were lodged for feature films, commercials, TV series, still photography, documentary films, short films, student projects and music videos.

The permit office also received bookings for more than 9 317 film locations in the same period.



Commercials made up the bulk of the film shoots over the last financial year, with 1 604 permits issued. This was followed by micro shoots at 962 permits.

There were also 168 large feature films shot in Cape Town between 1 July 2023 and 30 June 2024, almost double the amount from the previous year.

Mayoral Committee Member for Safety and Security, Alderman JP Smith, said that filming in the city was increasingly becoming an all-year business, which was good for both the industry and Cape Town.

“We are seeing more and more productions taking place in the winter months and this was the case for the concluding financial year. This is critical for an industry that contributes billions to the economy and employs over 30 000 people. Our Film Permit Office is geared to help the industry work effectively, by ensuring permits are processed timeously and providing efficient support where required,” Smith said.

The City also froze tariffs for filming for the fourth year in a row, in a bid to boost the film industry. This effort includes zero-rated fees for the deployment of metro police and traffic services to assist where road closures are required.

This freeze has saved the local film industry nearly R700 000 in production costs. – Source: www.sapeople.com

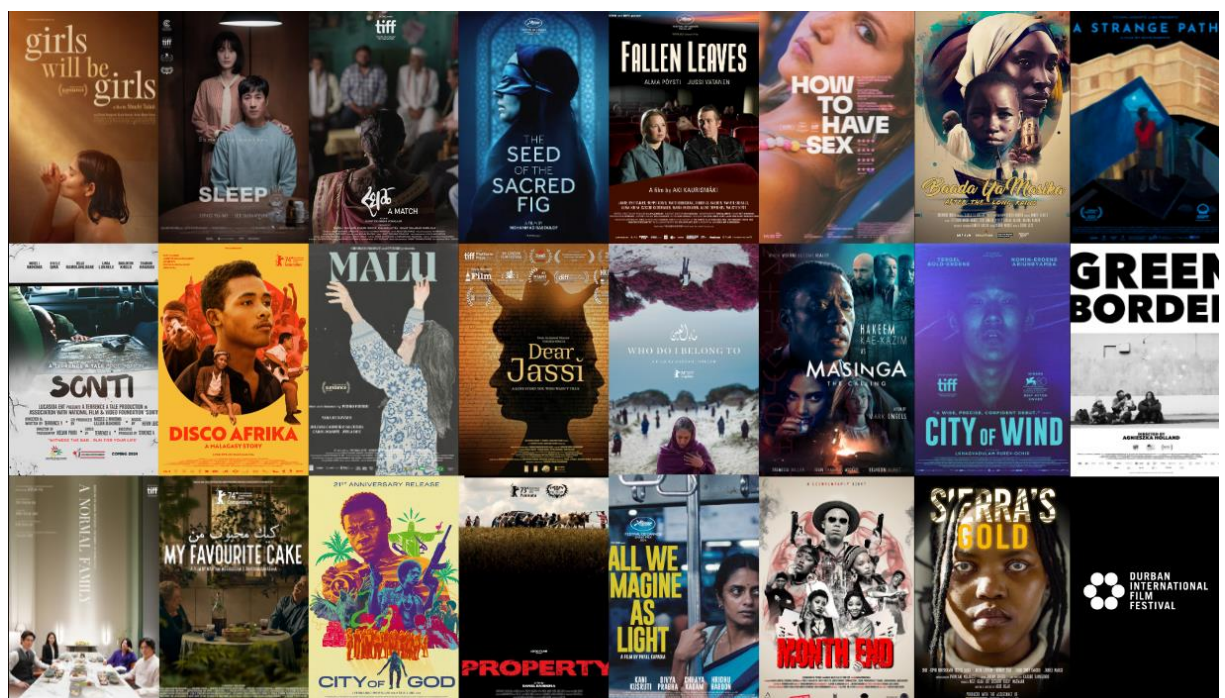
FIVE BRAZILIAN FILMS PREMIÈRING AT THE 45TH DURBAN INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL

Movie fanatics can embark on a cinematic journey of Brazil’s rich culture through a variety of films set to showcase at the 2024 Durban International Film Festival (Diff).

The festival, which runs from 18 to 28 July, is an opportunity for film-makers to expand their networks, by attracting local and international stakeholders. It is also a gateway to global cinematic gems that enrich South African audiences.

This year’s line-up includes five culturally-rich Brazilian films.

Diff will be premièring the critically-acclaimed and multi-award-winning film, *City of God*, which premiered in 2002 at the Cannes Film Festival and was nominated for the 2003 Oscars.



The film has recently been restored and is being re-released worldwide.

According to a statement, *City of God* is groundbreaking in its realistic and unflinching portrayal of the stranglehold that gangs had over life in the *favelas* of Brazil.“

It is a powerful and unfiltered story about a world of contrasts, where hope and despair coexist.

The South African premiere at Diff is part of a two-year collaboration between the Durban International Film Festival and the Mostra de Cinemas Africanos (Brazil-African Film Festival).

Ana Camila Esteves, the Director of Mostra de Cinemas Africanos, said the screening of *City of God* at Diff would be a significant moment.

“It is an ideal time to reflect on *City of God* and the contemporary Brazilian cinema selections at Diff, enabling audiences to understand the evolution of Brazilian audiovisual storytelling,” she said.

Other films from Brazil on offer include:

- *Malu* by Pedro Freire

Set in Rio de Janeiro in 1997, the film follows Malu, a 50-year-old unemployed and bipolar actress. Dreaming of her glorious past in the theatre, she finds herself obliged to house her mother, Lili. The arrival of Joana, Malu's daughter interrupts their violent fights. The brief period of harmony ends and Malu evicts her mother. A few years later, lonely and abandoned, Malu develops severe neurological conditions and Joana finally returns to care for her.

- *A Strange Path* by Guto Parente

A familial bond is explored in this film as David returns to Brazil and begins an uncomfortable coexistence with his estranged father during the COVID-19 pandemic. Parente has created a piece of pandemic film, which explores the universal theme of strained family relationships in this tender drama of reconnection and reconciliation.

- *Property* by Daniel Bandeira. *Property* is an intense and nerve-racking survival thriller that tests the viewer's moral compass.

After surviving a hostage situation, a wealthy woman, Teresa, has lived in seclusion. On a trip with her husband, the couple is confronted by the wrath of exploited farm workers embarking upon a protest and her fears are reignited. The tense stand-off escalates, and questions of wrongdoing and legitimacy are interrogated.

- *Exotismos* by Alessandra Regina Gama. This is a colourful and vibrant explorations of Yoná, an artist who works as a hair stylist. In a vibrant and intimate setting, she challenges beauty clichés, exploring self-esteem in an engaging artistic journey.

Andrea Voges, the Head of Programming for the Durban International Film Festival said: “Each one of these films affords a glimpse into aspects of Brazilian society.

“With many contrasts, there is also a vast array of common experiences and values that our two countries share.

“Film is a powerful medium to recognise our differences, share our commonalities, and celebrate our cultural and artistic collaboration.” – Source: www.iol.co.za

CRÉATION AFRICA TOP 12 ANNOUNCED

France announces support for 12 cultural enterprises in final phase of Création Africa programme.

Création Africa supports cultural and creative entrepreneurs in South Africa, Lesotho and Malawi as part of a broader initiative dedicated to creative economies across the continent.

The Embassy of France in South Africa, Lesotho and Malawi and the French Institute of South Africa (IFAS) recently revealed the top 12 entrepreneur finalists now entering Création Africa's final incubation and immersion stage at a media breakfast event hosted in the presence of the Ambassador of France to South Africa, Lesotho and Malawi, David Martinon.



Création Africa falls within a continent-wide initiative launched in 2023 by the French Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs focussed on the cultural and creative industries in 16 African countries as part of its renewed engagement to invest in entrepreneurship and creative industries on the continent.

The R24-million Création Africa programme has been designed to reinforce cultural cooperation between France and Lesotho, Malawi and South Africa by supporting cultural and creative talents from these countries on their entrepreneurial journeys. Now, from a previous shortlist of 40 businesses selected to undergo month-long training and pitch their ideas, a dozen promising businesses have been selected to enter the incubation and immersion phase.

The 12 initiatives—one from Lesotho, two from Malawi and nine from South Africa—are led by talented entrepreneurs, one-third of whom are women, making waves in the areas of fashion, design, audio-visual, video games and music.

The 12 finalists are:

- Ananta Design Studio – Viveka and Rucita Vassen, design –Cape Town, South Africa
- GIYA – Giyani Mashimbye and Cassandra Twala, design – Johannesburg, South Africa
- Kwacha Creative Studios – Chimwemwe Mkwezalamba and Rafik Seleman, audio-visual – Blantyre, Malawi
- LSJ Clothing and Merchandising – Julian Kubel, fashion – Johannesburg, South Africa
- Moodswing – Jimmy Muteba, music and media – Johannesburg, South Africa
- Pineapple on Pizza Studios – Kushal Jeethendra Sithlu, gaming – Johannesburg, South Africa
- Renaissance Design – Glorinah Khutso Mabaso, design – Pretoria, South Africa
- SourceCode Motion Pictures – Katleho Monyako, audiovisual – Maseru, Lesotho
- SpaceSalad Studios – Thabo Tsolo, gaming – Johannesburg, South Africa
- Tendalo Trading – Xolile Mabuza, fashion – Mbombela, South Africa
- Terry Made Designs – Terrence Thobani Ngulube, fashion – Blantyre, Malawi
- THEBE MAGUGU – Thebe Magugu, fashion – Johannesburg, South Africa

During this phase, the finalists will embark on a five-month incubation journey designed to empower them and take their creative ventures to the next level. This includes not only strategic guidance and tailored training but also invaluable exposure and networking opportunities with French and international cultural and creative industry experts and investors, as well as financial grants ranging from €30 000 to €50 000.

As part of the incubation programme, each business will be supported by three dedicated mentors through weekly one-on-one tailored mentorship sessions and will attend weekly group sessions with the cohort. They will complete entrepreneurship-on-demand training online to develop their human skills and master business fundamentals. The 12 finalists will also get an opportunity to learn from French and international industry leaders as part of a series of bespoke masterclasses to build their vision and support their growth.

Création Africa is a groundbreaking initiative that would not be possible without the support of key partnerships with the business development and incubation division of UVU Africa (UVU Accelerate) alongside the French public investment bank Bpifrance.

As the 12 entrepreneurs graduate from the initial stages and enter Création Africa’s incubation programme, Bpifrance will leverage its expertise to connect them with a global network of partners and investors to unlock investment opportunities to propel them forward.

“Congratulations to our cohort of 12 for reaching this stage in the programme. Their success through a very competitive field is a testament to their talent, dedication and great potential,” said Ambassador Martinon at the event.

“Business acceleration programmes in the cultural and creative industries, such as Création Africa, are crucial for nurturing creative talent and I am convinced that investment in ecosystems, skills development and innovation can drive productivity and competitiveness, leading to sustainable economic growth and job creation across our nations.

“In this latest phase, we aim to develop a holistic support system that ensures these entrepreneurs gain the competitive edge they need as well as providing them with essential industry insights and networking opportunities that will open doors to further their growth and success,” he said.

– Source: www.frenchinstitute.org.za



SOUTH AFRICAN MAKES HISTORY WINNING MISTER SUPRANATIONAL 2024

In an electrifying moment of pride and joy, South Africa continues to demonstrate its prowess on the global stage. Our nation’s vibrant flag was raised high as Fezile Mkhize clinched the prestigious title of Mister Supranational 2024.

This monumental achievement signifies a win for Mkhize and marks a historic moment for South Africa and the African continent.

The eight edition of the Mister Supranational pageant, held in the picturesque city of Nowy Sącz, Lesser Poland, saw contestants from around the globe vying for the coveted title. Among them, South Africa’s Fezile Mkhize captured the hearts of the judges and audience alike. Mkhize, a medical doctor and television host, showcased the charisma, intelligence and elegance that define the spirit of South Africans.



Iván Álvarez Guedes from Spain, the previous titleholder, graciously passed the crown to Mkhize on 4 July 2024. This victory is a milestone for South Africa, making it the first African country to win the Mister Supranational title. Moreover, Mkhize’s win is groundbreaking as he becomes the first black winner of the competition, setting a powerful example for diversity and inclusion in global pageantry. This significant win places South Africa alongside India, making us the second nation to achieve victories in both the Miss and Mister Supranational pageants.

Accolades like this reflect the exceptional talent within our country and also the potential and excellence of South Africans on the world stage.

The Mister Supranational pageant, known for its cutting-edge, high-fashion television production, aims to revolutionise the industry by discovering new talent and creating instant celebrities. Since its inception in 2016, the pageant has become a premier platform for aspiring models and television personalities. Diego Garcy of Mexico won the first-ever Mister Supranational title, and since then, the competition has only increased in prestige and popularity.

In a heartfelt Facebook post, the Mister Supranational Organisation welcomed Mkhize with open arms, stating, “Dr Fez Mkhize, a medical doctor and television host from South Africa, was named the eight ‘Mister Supranational’ at the conclusion of the 2024 Experience in Nowy Sącz, Malopolska tonight. He will take on the role as the new brand ambassador of the Mister Supranational Organisation for the next year. Welcome to the ‘Supra Family’ Fez!”

With this win, South Africa stands tall and proud, showcasing our nation’s ability to excel in diverse fields, Mkhize’s success reminds us that with perseverance and passion, we can all continue to break barriers and make history. – Source: www.goodthingsguy.com

“WELL DESERVED”: BRYONI GOVENDER CROWNED MISS SUPRANATIONAL AFRICA 2024

She has done it. Bryoni Govender has been crowned Miss Supranational Africa 2024 and she won a special award, Miss Friendship, at the 15th edition of the pageant in Nowy Sącz, Lesser Poland.

While Harashta Haifa Zahra, an environmental engineering student from Indonesia, was crowned Miss Supranational, awards were also presented to representatives who achieved the highest ranking within the continent, excluding those in the Top Five. They comprised Andrea Sáenz of Mexico for the Americas; Alethea Ambrosio of the Philippines for Asia and Oceania; Fiorella Medina of Puerto Rico for the Caribbean; and Victoria Larsen of Denmark for Europe.



The Miss South Africa organisers posted on their Facebook page: "Miss Supranational Africa 2024! Well deserved! Congratulations, Bryoni Natalie Govender."

Contestants representing 68 countries and territories were selected to participate in the pageant.

In an earlier interview, Govender, from Johannesburg, who has a Bachelor of Law degree, said she was excited and honoured to have had the opportunity to participate in the Miss Supranational competition.

"I have been working tirelessly to prepare myself both mentally and physically for the competition. These preparations have included intense training sessions to enhance my physical fitness, catwalk, poise and stage presence. I have also been working with top-notch trainers to improve my communication skills and develop a strong and impactful voice. I always say that the most important thing for me when preparing for any competition is to have a positive and healthy mindset and to have put in all the necessary work."

Govender was a runner-up in Miss South Africa 2023 and participated in Miss Universe last year. – Source: www.iol.co.za

THE RECORDING ACADEMY WELCOMES SOUTH AFRICAN MUSICIAN BREINDY

Musician Breindy Klawansky (who works under the stage name Breindy and Matt) has recently enjoyed an artist's milestone after she joined the list of the few South African musicians who have earned their place as members of the Recording Academy/Grammys class 2024.

Breindy and Matt hardly offers the kind of music that can be chalked down to any one genre. The Johannesburg-based, South African Music Awards (SAMA)-nominated artist and rabbi's daughter has brought a vastly unique slice of talent to the South African music scene, meshing languages, sounds and emotions to create music that lives outside of boundaries.

This, along with her husband and fellow Wits music-graduate Matt, who is also the producer behind her work and director of her label, Ruth Ave Studio.

Breindy began her professional career over a decade ago and now stands on the hill of hard work as a respected musician known for her contributions to alternative and global music, the latter most evident in her collaborative work with Mbuzeni, a Maskandi SAMA-nominated artist from KwaZulu-Natal who sang in Zulu while Breindy sang the original Biblical texts of King David in Hebrew.



As for her new achievement as a voting member of the Recording Academy alongside the likes of Khanyisile Mthetwa, it's a big moment for South Africa that'll put more local voices at the decision maker's table.

Of being selected, she shared: "I feel very humbled and honoured to be able to represent my country and for my music, which is sung in the original Hebrew, to have been recognised and acknowledged. I am also excited to network and collaborate with the incredible community of musicians that are in the Academy, especially in the alternative and global scene."

Breindy and Matt released *Lo Sira* in 2023 and hope to release another single later this year while working on material for her third album. – Source: www.goodthingsguy.com

“FLYING BOY” SIZOLWETHU SOARS AT WORLD FREESTYLE CHAMPIONSHIPS

Following several achievements South Africa has enjoyed on dance floors across the globe recently, tiny dancer Sizolwethu Ngidi, known affectionately as “Flying Boy”, has recently become a world champion, giving South Africa all the reasons to get up and groove with joy.



Hailing from Gamalakhe township in Port Shepstone, “Flying Boy” let the wings of his dreams carry him from success to success. This achievement does not come without incredible amounts of hard work for any dancer, let alone one who is still in primary school. Against the odds that come with the territory of a dancer’s world and all the privileges that put others ahead of the game, Sizolwethu made his way to England, not only to compete but also to win and become the World Champion of the U12 Freestyle category, and the Vice World Champion for Slowdance in his age category.

From mall talent searches to the global stage, the talented dancer has come a long way to meet his dreams. As photographer Vee Ramsayi shared in reflecting on Sizolwethu’s appearance at a South Coast mall talent search, “I knew the old saying, ‘dynamite comes in small packages’ is so true.”

His family and his father, Dumisani, couldn’t be prouder of what he had achieved. Dumisani shared great thanks to everyone who supported the Flying Boy’s dreams and to Junior Dilape for helping train Sizolwethu, sharing: “Today, I mean right now I am getting ready to meet the World Champion and it’s all thanks to you.”

We may not know what the future has in store for this champion just yet, but if we had to place our bets, we’d say it’s one filled with sparkling stage lights, roaring applause and more young dancers believing in their wildest dreams because of people like Sizolwethu. – Source: www.goodthingsguy.com

SPRINGBOKS MAKE SOUTH AFRICA PROUD

The Springboks claimed victory against Ireland in a thrilling test match on Saturday, 6 July 2024. The Boks beat Ireland 27-20 at a packed Loftus Versfeld in Pretoria in the Castle Lager Incoming Series.

The 2023 Rugby World Cup (RWC) winning team scored in the first three minutes of the evening game with a try by Kurt-Lee Arendse.

“The Boks held a 13-8 lead at the break and apart from a dominating opening 30 minutes, it was not the smoothest win ever, but a seven-point margin over the second ranked team in the world is not something to sniff at,” said SA Rugby.

The second half of the match that saw South Africa beat Ireland for the first time since 2016 was a tense affair.

“Overall, the goal was achieved, but it was far from a perfect performance,” said Springbok coach Rassie Erasmus.

Bok captain Siya Kolisi said he was pleased with the result but cautioned that the series remained very much alive.

“Of course, this game was very important for us. We haven’t beaten them since 2016, so it was special for our confidence. But the job is not done yet. We want to win the series and we know they are going to come back harder,” said Kolisi.

“After that stellar opening performance by KB Motsilanyane, I knew we had this one in the bag: #GoBokke #StongerTogether,” said new Sport, Arts and Culture Minister Gayton McKenzie in a social media post on X, previously known as Twitter.

This as the singer led the singing of the national anthem backed by the crowd gathered at the stadium.

“We are a winning nation,” the Minister said in a follow-up post.

The second test between the Springboks and Ireland is set to take place at Hollywoodbets Kings Park stadium in KwaZulu-Natal on Saturday, 13 July 2024. – Source: SAnews.gov.za



TEAM SA FLAG BEARERS FOR PARIS OLYMPICS 2024 CONFIRMED

Team South Africa was given a rousing send-off on their way to the Paris Olympics 2024 and Paralympics at a glittering banquet held at Emperors Palace in Johannesburg on Tuesday night, 9 July 2024.

There was a buzz of excitement and expectation as they were given their final good wishes ahead of the Games. The gala dinner coincided with the celebration of 50 days to go to the Paralympic Games and 17 days to go to the Paris Olympics.

The Paris Olympics will be held in the French capital from 26 July to 11 August, followed by the Paralympics, which will be held from 28 August to 8 September.

The highlight of the evening was the announcement of the flag bearers for both the Paris Olympics and the Paralympic Games.

They are Akani Simbine and Caitlin Rooskrantz (Paris Olympics) and Mpumelelo Mhlongo and Kathrine Swanepoel (Paralympics).

FLAG BEARERS



All four of the athletes were part of the Tokyo Games 2020 (held in 2021 due to COVID-19).

About the South African Paris Olympics 2024 Flag Bearers

Akani Simbine

Simbine has added his name to the list of great South African sportsmen and women over the years. Now aged 30, he will be attending his third Olympics, having reached the final of the men's 100-metre at both the Rio 2016 and Tokyo 2020 Games, where he finished fourth and fifth, respectively.

He is the first South African to make the 100-metre finals at an Olympic Games.

He holds the national record of 9.84 seconds and has won gold at championships including the Commonwealth Games and African Championships, and he is a six-time South African 100-metre champion and a nine-time winner on the Diamond League circuit.

Simbine has qualified for the 100-metre individual event. He has attended two Olympic Games for Team SA, his first being Rio 2016 and Tokyo 2020. He is also a member of the 4x100-metre men's relay team, which has also qualified for the Paris Olympics.

Simbine has finished inside the top five in the last four major championship 100-metre races, including World Championships, African Championships, Commonwealth and Olympic Games.

Caitlin Rooskrantz

Rooskrantz, still only 22, will be at her second Olympics.

As a teenager in Tokyo, she and Naveen Daries became the first female gymnasts of colour to represent Team SA at an Olympics.

Having won bronze in the uneven bars at the 2022 Commonwealth Games, Rooskrantz won two gold medals at the 2024 South African Championships.

Some of her personal achievements include being awarded Gymnastics South Africa Women's Artistic Gymnast of the Year for 2022, and the University of Johannesburg Sports Awards Age Group Sportswoman of the Year and Student-Athlete of the Year in 2022. – Source: www.thesouthafrican.com

MEET THE PARIS PARALYMPIC SQUAD FLYING SOUTH AFRICA'S FLAG HIGH

The first cohort making up the Paris Paralympic squad, who will compete for South Africa in August, has officially been announced, with a total of 26 athletes having successfully qualified for the Games.

As has been the case for the Olympic squads, the roll-call of our Paralympic athletes will be called out over the coming months, with less than 50 days to go until the Paralympic Games kick-off on 28 August.



The South Africa Sports Confederation, Olympic and Paralympic Committee (SASCOC) made the announcement earlier this week to a South Africa waiting eagerly in anticipation, and with many acclaimed para-athletes on our team (and Paralympians), we have no doubt that there will be a wealth of proud moments to look forward to from Paris.

“Team South Africa has always competed with pride and excellence at the Paralympics. This edition, we expect similar results. The initial squad represents the best of the best and we are hopeful that our athletes will continue to add to the country’s reputation at the Paralympics. We wish them every success and assure them that they have the support of the entire nation behind them,” beamed SASCOC CEO Nozipho Jafta.

More qualification spots are on the cards for disciplines including para judo, wheelchair tennis and the para triathlon. – Source: www.goodthingsguy.com

TASNEEM SOLOMONS WINS AT WORLD EIGHTBALL POOL CHAMPIONSHIP

Tasneem Solomons’ name has been etched into the history books by becoming the first South African to win a title at the World Eightball Pool Federation (WEPF) World Championships. She won the Women’s Singles World Masters Champion title.



The WEPF World Championship was hosted in Blackpool, England at the Grand Hotel in June. It saw teams and individuals from around the world compete for various world titles.

Tasneem Solomons, from Bonteheuwel in the Western Cape, has been playing pool for the past 20 years. She credits the sport with keeping her off the streets in her youth and is overjoyed to have won the title.

She faced Wales’ Kirsty-Lee Davies in the finals, and by keeping her cool and measuring up her opportunities, Solomons was able to bring home the win. With three balls on the table and the eight ball, she calmly sunk them all in one round, beating out Kirsty-Lee’s two balls and the eight.

Tasneem and her doubles partner Naathierah Taliep also earned the runner-up spot in the Women’s Doubles. – Source: www.goodthingsguy.com

ROOTING FOR OUR OLYMPIC ROWERS: MEET THE QUALIFIED CHAMPS

Paige Badenhorst has qualified for the Paris Olympics, where she’ll join the likes of legend John Smith and young hotshot Chris Baxter as the Olympic rowers, making South Africa proud.

For our Olympic rowers, a unique dynamic will play out for team South Africa that merges upcoming talent and a wealth of experience as Olympian John Smith (who won Gold in 2012) and young hotshot Chris Baxter (2022 World Record holder) team up.

It’s an exciting time for Gauteng as both Olympic rowers attended schools in the province and both race for the University of Pretoria Rowing Club.

While the Men’s Pair Dynamic is something new, it’s a thrilling chance for South Africa to bring different eras of talent together to create what we’re sure will be a memorable Olympic season.



In other news to be proud of, Paige Badenhorst has successfully qualified for the Olympics where she'll compete in the Women's Single Scull.

Badenhorst is a Gauteng girl who attended St Andrew's School for Girls in Senderwood before representing Michigan University, Cambridge University, and at present, the University of Pretoria. This incredible athlete has definitely earned her moment in the sun. – Source: www.goodthingsguy.com

SOUTH AFRICAN-FOUNDED ESPORTS TEAM HEAD TO EUROPE FOR GREAT OPPORTUNITIES

Local esports team Bravado Gaming is relocating its Counter-Strike 2 (CS2) team to Belgrade, Serbia from mid-2024 until mid-2026. The objective of the move is for the team to practise in optimal conditions and to pit themselves against the world's best CS2 competitors, while also competing in the most significant CS2 leagues and tournaments in the world.



Already leaders in their respective sectors in South Africa, each achieved global recognition by putting in the hard yards in tougher industries with deeper talent pools and being able to access better resources, with their obvious talent helping them rise to the top in a far more competitive field.

Bravado Gaming previously experienced great success after a training camp in North America for a year from 2018 – first in Phoenix, Arizona and then Austin, Texas – known as “Project Destiny”. The camp in Belgrade has been christened “Project Destiny 2.0”.

The benefits of playing out of more developed regions are clear, according to Andreas Hadjipaschali, co-founder of Bravado Gaming: “To be the best, you have to play the best. The European scene will allow us to face a far more skilled and diverse pool of teams, amplifying our rate of growth tremendously and I really believe that they’re going to turn heads. While we may not have seen success recently in the Middle East as part of the PGL Major 2024 closed qualifiers, we are absolutely certain that given time alongside the plentiful support and resources that we know we can provide, along with the incredible support by our sponsors Alienware, Dell Technologies and Intel, our CS team will be able to produce results that the entire African region can be proud of.”

Bravado Gaming co-founder Dimitri Hadjipaschali says that the better inherent latency of networks in Europe will remove a major disadvantage to the team’s training.

“We [in South Africa] are stuck in a bubble because of latency. You have to be with the teams you want to beat in order to hope to be better than them,” he says.

The team’s roster for Project Destiny 2.0 is one of the strongest that Africa has ever produced. It includes Wiljhane “Wilj” Smith (20), Marchant “March” Smith (22), team captain Johnathan “Doru” Fox (23), and Kian “Triton” Gibson (21), coached by 29-year-old Daniel “LaBishop” Hufton.

“We are all massive fans of Counter Strike. It’s our bread and butter, our heart and soul and the majority of management has competed in CS for years themselves,” says Andreas.

“The objectives of Project Destiny 2.0 include reaching and maintaining a top 30 HLTV rating; qualifying for a major tournament; consistent content development and distribution and sharing their ‘zero to hero’ story. “I kind of see this as a one-shot opportunity to follow my passion for Counter-Strike,” says team captain Fox.

“Alongside this group of guys, my teammates, who I can genuinely say are some of my nearest and dearest friends, it’s an absolute no-brainer for all of us to capitalise on this amazing opportunity.” – Source: www.goodthingsguy.com

SOUTH AFRICA SET TO HOST BASKETBALL WITHOUT BORDERS CAMP

The National Basketball Association (NBA) and the International Basketball Federation (FIBA) have settled on South Africa as the host of this year’s Basketball Without Borders (BWB) Africa edition event.

The meet, in its 20th edition this year, will be held at the American International School of Johannesburg from 3 to 6 August 2024, marking the 16th time that the NBA and FIBA’s global basketball development and community outreach programme will be held in South Africa.

According to NBA Africa CEO Clare Akamanzi, this year’s edition of BWB Africa, will bring together 30 boys and 30 girls from more than 20 African countries, who will get a lifetime opportunity to learn directly from current and former NBA, WNBA and FIBA players, legends and coaches and compete alongside their peers from across the continent.

“Bringing Basketball Without Borders back to South Africa for its milestone 20th edition reflects the incredible momentum we’re seeing for basketball in the country,” added the CEO,” she explained in a statement.



Previously, BWB Africa camps have been held in Dakar, Senegal (2010 and 2019), Luanda, Angola (2016) and Cairo, Egypt (2022). Basketball Without Borders has reached more than 4 400 participants from 142 countries and territories since 2001, with 127 former campers advancing to the NBA or Women’s National Basketball Association (WNBA).

With elevating the level of basketball in each region where the camp is hosted and providing elite basketball instruction and development opportunities to maximise the potential of international talent being BWB’s core mandate, budding basketball players in the host nation end up as the main beneficiaries.

The campers and coaches who will be announced prior to the camp, she said, will also take part in life-skills, leadership development and NBA Cares programming.

“We look forward to welcoming some of the most talented boys and girls from across the continent for four days of high-level basketball training, competition, and leadership development that will have a lasting impact on their on-court and personal journeys,” Akamanzi further explained in the statement.

Basketball Without Borders has been touted as a game changer, with FIBA Africa Executive Director Alphonse Bilé terming it a real leveller for basketball on the African continent.

“As part of our ongoing collaboration with the NBA in Africa, which also includes the Basketball Africa League (BAL), BWB continues to elevate our sport and provide invaluable opportunities and experiences for African youth and coaches, both on and off the court,” he said.

Statistically, 41 former BWB campers were among the record 125 international players on opening-night rosters for the 2023–24 NBA season, including 2022–23 Kia NBA Most Valuable Player (MVP) Joel Embiid of Philadelphia 76er from Cameroon BWB Africa 2011.

Embiid became the first former BWB camper to be named NBA MVP, and 2019 NBA champion Pascal Siakam, Indiana Pacers; Cameroon; BWB Africa 2012.

In total, 13 former BWB Africa campers have been drafted into the NBA since the first BWB Africa camp in 2003, including Ulrich Chomche (Cameroon), who was selected 57th overall by the Toronto Raptors in the 2024 NBA Draft last month.

Sixty-three former BWB Africa campers have also been featured on BAL team rosters over the league’s first four seasons. - Source: www.goodthingsguy.com



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