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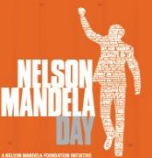
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A CAPABLE STATE WILL STRENGTHEN SOUTH AFRICA

President Cyril Ramaphosa has emphasised that building a capable state is a critical step to creating an inclusive economy that benefits all.



The President was addressing the nation through his weekly newsletter on Monday, 22 July 2024.

Strengthening the state is one of the key priorities of the Government of National Unity (GNU) outlined by the President in his Opening of Parliament Address last week.

This, the President said, comes in the form of rebuilding the “capability of the state and creating a professional public service”.

“This work is already well underway. The national framework for the professionalisation of the public service was adopted by Cabinet in 2022 to guide public service reform. The Department of Public Service and Administration [DPSA] has already issued two directives giving effect to the framework.

“The framework aims to build meritocracy in the public service. Recruitment and selection processes are being overhauled, as are performance management systems. Competency-based assessments and integrity tests are being introduced. These tests will be used across the public sector, including with persons appointed to political offices such as ministerial advisers and chiefs of staff,” he said.

Additionally, the national framework also seeks to open more doors for young people who want to work in the public service.

“One of the DPSA directives issued earlier this year waives the experience requirement for entry level posts with no supervisory responsibilities. It also makes provision for verification of academic qualifications from applicants who do not have their degree certificates because of outstanding student debt,” the President said.

Capable leaders

President Ramaphosa emphasised that capable leaders are required for a capable state.

In this regard, the President said, the National School of Government has been growing its “suite of executive education programmes designed for elected officials and executive managers”.

“These involve formal learning programmes delivered by renowned experts, high-level masterclasses and seminars on issues ranging from the art of execution to ethics and economic governance. There are also flagship programmes tailored for accounting officers and induction training for boards of state-owned enterprises.

“Leaders in national and provincial governments will undergo training and development programmes throughout the seventh administration, starting with the National School of Government’s ethical leadership and oversight programme.

“Other areas of training include economic governance, scenario planning and digital transformation. It is encouraging that traditional leaders are also prioritising their development through short learning programmes and formal qualifications,” he said.

The President further noted that public servants “need to be insulated from undue political interference and vested interests”.

“While there may be a temptation for members of the Executive to favour the policies of their own political parties, we are working to develop the Medium-Term Development Plan and implement the programme of government as a united government, not as individual parties.

“Within the public service, professionalism, integrity and commitment to the policies of the government of the day must transcend all political and ideological affiliations.

“State capture provided a bitter lesson on the vulnerabilities of the public sector to interference by private business interests. As the GNU, as a country, we must ensure that this never happens again. We must actively guard against the forms of executive overreach witnessed in the past,” he said.

The President called on all formations that form part of the GNU to come together to build a capable state.

“If we continue along the path of collaboration and cooperation, the GNU has the means and political will to transform the public service into a powerful driver of service delivery, economic growth and development,” President Ramaphosa concluded. – Source: SAnews.gov.za

BUILDING A BETTER SOUTH AFRICA, WEAVER BIRD STYLE

Just as friends and families often pull together to ensure a roof over the heads of their loved ones, or their general well-being, President Cyril Ramaphosa has appealed to the larger South African family to behave like weaver birds who give their all to build and cooperate.

The call to become birds of a feather was made by President Ramaphosa as he delivered the Opening of Parliament Address (OPA) on Thursday night, 18 July 2024, at Cape Town City Hall.

“We would like all of us as South Africans to behave like ‘weaver birds’. Weavers are among the most gregarious birds in that they build complex structures together and cooperate.

“Despite all the challenges, despite our differences, despite all the headwinds, as South Africans, we are called upon to remain firmly committed to pursue the path of cooperation, growth and inclusion,” said President Ramaphosa, who set the tone for the seventh administration’s Government of National Unity (GNU).



The formation of the GNU follows the historic National and Provincial Elections held on 29 May 2024, which produced no outright winner, necessitating the formation of the GNU which is made up of 10 parties represented in the seventh Parliament.

Indlulamithi Scenarios

Exactly fifty days since South Africa held the elections, the President, in emphasising the need for us to look after one another, referred to the Indlulamithi Scenarios 2035. The scenarios were the result of a diverse group of partners and stakeholders from across society coming together to consider various scenarios for the future of South Africa Inc.

One of the scenarios they described was “The Recrimination Nation”, using the loud Hadeda bird as its symbol. This described a situation of inaction, where the country’s problems go unresolved and everyone blames each other for South Africa’s ills. This scenario painted a picture of the country going into decline.

The second scenario, symbolised by a vulture, painted a picture of a desperate nation governed by a populist coalition whose main objective is self-enrichment and patronage. This scenario saw investment confidence being eroded, the growth path being low, and unemployment, poverty and inequality remaining extremely high.

Stakeholders and partners also described a scenario they called “The Cooperation Nation”, symbolised by the social weaver birds.

“This scenario paints a picture where, after disruptions and protests, there is a coming-together of political parties, the state, the private sector and civil society in order to jointly identify priorities and leverage the strengths of each.

“There is change in the form of governance and reform that leads to the economy growing, with more investment attracted, leading to the reduction of unemployment, inequality and poverty,” the President explained.

“By establishing the GNU, by preparing for a National Dialogue, we have deliberately set ourselves along the path towards a ‘cooperation nation’,” he said.

With the country charting its path in the new GNU, the President reflected on democratic South Africa’s founding President, Nelson Mandela, who was also being remembered on the same day through the Mandela Day initiative.

“Thirty years ago, President Nelson Mandela stood before this House to reflect on the first 100 days of the first GNU.

“Recognising the different views of the diverse parties within the government, he said: ‘What brings us together is the overriding commitment to a joint national effort to reconcile our nation and improve its well-being.’”

President Ramaphosa said the same could be said of the current GNU parties who share a commitment to reconcile the nation by advancing social justice and equal prosperity for all.

“We are committed to improving the well-being of our country and its people through inclusive growth, the creation of jobs and the reduction of poverty. This is an undertaking that involves us all.”

National Dialogue

To address the laundry basket of South Africa’s challenges, President Ramaphosa spoke of the holding of a National Dialogue and to agree on what needs to be done to achieve a better future.

Having announced the National Dialogue commitment at the Presidential Inauguration on 19 June, the President said people across society have expressed their support for the dialogue.

“They have said it should involve all key stakeholders in the life of our country, representing civil society, traditional leaders, the faith-based sector, labour, business, cultural workers, sports people and other formations representing the diverse interests and voices of our citizens.

“Following the example set by historic events, such as the Congress of the People in 1955, the Conference for a Democratic Future in 1989 and the CODESA (Convention for a Democratic South Africa) talks in the early 1990s and drawing on the experience of the writing of our new democratic constitution in 1996, we envisage a National Dialogue that involves extensive and inclusive public participation.”

He added that government will seek to forge a common vision and build a comprehensive social compact with a clear programme of action to realise aspirations for the country.

“Through this National Dialogue, we are called to be agents of change, to be champions of inclusive growth, to be creators of opportunity,” said the President.

While we may not have a crystal ball to gaze into collective South Africa's future, what is certain is that if we all remain eagle-eyed, South Africa will be better for all.

“We have an opportunity to make South Africa a better nation,” said the President. –Source: SAnews.gov.za

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SOUTH AFRICA’S RESPONSE TO CLIMATE CHANGE OUTLINED IN NEW LAW

President Cyril Ramaphosa has signed into law the Climate Change Bill, which sets out a national climate change response, including mitigation and adaptation actions, which also constitutes South Africa’s fair contribution to the global climate change response.

“The Climate Change Act, as endorsed by the President, enables the alignment of policies that influence South Africa's climate change response, to ensure that South Africa's transition to a low-carbon and climate-resilient economy and society is not constrained by policy contradictions,” The Presidency said on Tuesday, 23 July 2024.



The law also sets out to enhance South Africa's ability and capacity over time to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and build climate resilience, while reducing the risk of job losses, and promoting opportunities for new job opportunities in the emerging green economy.

“The Act has the aim of strengthening co-ordination between national sector departments and provide policy setting and decision-making to enable South Africa to meet the commitments in Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) under the Paris Agreement.

“The NDC is a set of commitments South Africa has made under the international Paris Agreement to reduce greenhouse emissions as part of climate change mitigation,” The Presidency said.

South Africa is one of more than 190 members of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change who are parties to the eight-year-old Paris Agreement.

South Africa's mitigation measures are a response to climate change impacts that are increasingly experienced across a number of sectors, including water resources; agriculture and food production; forestry and fisheries; human health; energy generation; industry; human settlements and migration; disaster management; biodiversity and terrestrial ecosystems.

“These impacts will disproportionately affect poor communities and vulnerable groups and could affect South Africa's ability to meet its development and economic growth goals, including job creation and poverty reduction,” The Presidency said.

The Climate Change Act sets out the functions of the Presidential Climate Commission, which includes providing advice on the Republic's climate change response to ensure the realisation of the vision for effective climate change response and the long-term just transition to a climate-resilient and low-carbon economy and society.

The law also stipulates the role provinces and municipalities will play in mitigation efforts. – Source: SAnews.gov.za.



ANTÓNIO GUTERRES, SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE UNITED NATIONS, ON NELSON MANDELA INTERNATIONAL DAY

Nelson Mandela showed us the extraordinary difference one person can make in building a better world.

And as the theme of this year's Nelson Mandela International Day reminds us – combatting poverty and inequality is in our hands.

Our world is unequal and divided.

Hunger and poverty are rife.

The richest one percent are responsible for the same quantity of planet-wrecking greenhouse gases as two-thirds of humanity.

These are not natural facts. They are the result of humanity's choices. And we can decide to do things differently.

We can choose to eradicate poverty.

We can choose to end inequality.

We can choose to transform the international economic and financial system in the name of equity.

We can choose to fight racism, respect human rights, combat climate change, and create a world that works for all of humanity.

Every one of us can contribute – through actions large and small.

I join the Nelson Mandela Foundation in urging everyone to perform 67 minutes of public service on Nelson Mandela International Day – one minute for each year he fought for justice.



Together, let's honour Madiba's legacy and turn our hands towards building a better world for all. – Source: www.un.org

MINISTER LAMOLA TO LEAD SOUTH AFRICAN DELEGATION AT AU EXECUTIVE COUNCIL IN GHANA

The Minister of International Relations and Cooperation, Ronald Lamola, headed the South African delegation to the 45th Ordinary Session of the African Union (AU) Executive Council, scheduled for 18 and 19 July 2024 in Accra, Ghana. The theme of this session was “Educate an African fit for the 21st century: Building resilient education systems for increased access to inclusive, lifelong, quality, and relevant learning for Africa.”



The primary objective of the Executive Council Meeting in Accra was to deliberate on and adopt the AU Budget for 2025. This budget is crucial for advancing the AU's mandate, including the implementation of Agenda 2063 and its flagship projects, as well as the Silencing of the Guns initiative.

Minister Lamola's participation underscored South Africa's unwavering commitment to the Second Ten-Year Implementation Plan of Agenda 2063.

Additionally, it emphasised the importance of strengthening the AU and its organs while achieving financial independence—a vital step towards addressing the development challenges faced by the continent.

During the Executive Council session, there were reflections on the AU's role in the upcoming G20 Leaders' Summit, scheduled for Brazil in November 2024. The council also discussed AU priorities within the G20 framework and explored resource mobilisation strategies to enhance its participation.

The African continent grapples with multifaceted challenges, including threats to democratic governance, peace, and security. These challenges manifest through unconstitutional changes of government, inter- and intra-state conflicts, terrorism, violent extremism, poverty, food insecurity, energy shortages, and heavy external debt burdens faced by several countries.

Minister Lamola utilised his time in Ghana to engage in bilateral discussions with counterparts from various African nations. These discussions focussed on AU-related matters, particularly the realisation of Agenda 2063 and its flagship projects. – Source: www.dirco.gov.za

JOINT STATEMENT NIGERIA AND SOUTH AFRICA

On 19 July 2024, Ronald Lamola, the Minister of International Relations and Cooperation of South Africa and Yusuf Maitama Tuggar, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, held a meeting on the sidelines of the African Union Executive Council in Accra, Ghana.

The two ministers reaffirmed the existing strong historical bilateral relations and bonds of friendship and solidarity between South Africa and Nigeria and committed to redouble their efforts to expand and deepen cooperation between the two countries in various sectors. In this regard, the ministers undertook to finalise preparations for the upcoming session of the Bi-National Commission, which is scheduled to take place in South Africa.



The ministers further exchanged views on regional and continental matters, including peace and security on the African continent. In particular, the two countries expressed grave concern at the on-going conflict in Sudan, which has resulted in the loss of innocent civilian lives, exacerbated the humanitarian crisis, displaced millions of people, affecting women and children, and led to the total destruction of critical infrastructure.

The ministers reiterated a call for an immediate ceasefire, an end to the conflict and the commencement of a process to expedite access to humanitarian assistance.

To this end, both nations call on the international community to take urgent, concrete and practical steps that will facilitate a peaceful resolution of the conflict in Sudan in an inclusive manner. – Source: www.dirco.gov.za

DEPUTY MINISTER BOTES AND HIS US COUNTERPART DISCUSS CLOSER SA-US RELATIONS

The Deputy Minister of International Relations and Cooperation, Alvin Botes, held a telephonic courtesy call with his counterpart from the United States (US), Deputy Secretary of State, Kurt Campbell on, 23 July 2024.

The main purpose of the teleconference was for Deputy Secretary of State Campbell to congratulate Deputy Minister Botes on his re-appointment as the Deputy Minister of International Relations and Cooperation and to reaffirm the close relations between the US and South Africa.



The Deputy Minister and his counterpart also briefly discussed numerous important geopolitical and economic issues, which included, among others:

- Our strategic bilateral relationship and, in particular, our trade, investment and development relations and the importance of the African Growth and Opportunity Act and the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief
- An update in respect of the current Palestine-Israel situation, particularly relating to a ceasefire, the hostage negotiations with Hamas and the broader peace process
- The Ukraine Peace Initiative.

Both Deputy Minister Botes and Deputy Secretary of State Campbell reiterated their commitment to strengthening our trade and investment relations.

Furthermore, Deputy Minister Botes and Deputy Secretary of State Campbell agreed to work together to find lasting solutions to the Russia-Ukraine and Palestine-Israeli conflicts.

Deputy Ministers Botes and Deputy Secretary Campbell agreed to have more deeper and structured engagements in the near future in respect of the issues discussed.

– Source: www.dirco.gov.za

SOUTH AFRICA WELCOMES THE DECLARATION OF UNITY BETWEEN THE VARIOUS PALESTINIAN GROUPS

South Africa welcomes the declaration of unity between various Palestinian groups and their stated intention to constitute an interim national unity reconciliation government. Palestinian unity has the capacity to bring Palestinians closer to achieving the core objectives of the Palestinian cause: self-determination, freedom, justice, peace and the establishment of an independent, sovereign and prosperous Palestinian state.

Our own struggle for a free, non-racial, non-sexist, democratic, united, undivided and prosperous South Africa instructs unity as the foundation of our collective strength, resilience and achievement.

It is through unity and solidarity that the Palestinian people can effectively confront the challenges of occupation and oppression, and work towards the realisation of their national aspirations. The declaration issued signals a commitment to overcome past divisions and advance towards a shared vision and future.

South Africa commends the various Palestinian groups, their leaders and their representatives who have chosen the path of dialogue, national reconciliation and common action in pursuit of the undoubtedly just Palestinian cause.

South Africa further remains committed to the two-state solution and a free Palestine. As we express our continued solidarity and unwavering support, we look forward to the positive impact that Palestinian unity and national reconciliation will bring, fostering hope and driving meaningful change. Let this be the dawn of a new era where the collective aspirations for freedom, justice and self-determination of the Palestinian people are fully realised. – Source: www.dirco.gov.za



SOUTH AFRICA WELCOMES ADVISORY OPINION OF THE ICJ ON ISRAELI PRACTICES

The Government of South Africa welcomes the Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) issued on 19 July 2024, in The Hague in respect of the Legal Consequences arising from the Policies and Practices of Israel in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem.



In its Advisory Opinion, which emanated from a request by the United Nations (UN) General Assembly on 30 December 2022, the ICJ unanimously reaffirmed its jurisdiction on the matter and that the State of Israel's continued presence in the Occupied Palestinian Territory is unlawful under international law.

The Court was of the view that the effects of Israel's policies and practices, and its exercise of sovereignty over certain parts of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, constitute an obstruction to the exercise by the Palestinian people of their right to self-determination. This includes Israel's annexation of parts of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, the fragmentation of this territory, undermining its integrity, the deprivation of the Palestinian people of the enjoyment of the natural resources of the territory and its impairment of the Palestinian people's right to pursue its economic, social and cultural development.

South Africa was among 49 member states of the UN, which delivered a statement to the ICJ in February 2024 on the matter.

In summary, the ICJ concluded that:

- the State of Israel's continued presence in the Occupied Palestinian Territory is unlawful
- the State of Israel is under an obligation to end its unlawful presence in the Occupied Palestinian Territory as rapidly as possible
- the State of Israel is under an obligation to cease immediately all new settlement activities, and to evacuate all settlers from the Occupied Palestinian Territory
- the State of Israel has the obligation to make reparation for the damage caused to all the natural or legal persons concerned in the Occupied Palestinian Territory
- all States are under an obligation not to recognise as legal the situation arising from the unlawful presence of the State of Israel in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and not to render aid or assistance in maintaining the situation created by the continued presence of the State of Israel in the Occupied Palestinian Territory
- international organisations, including the UN, are under an obligation not to recognise as legal the situation arising from the unlawful presence of the State of Israel in the Occupied Palestinian Territory
- the UN, and especially the General Assembly, which requested the opinion, and the Security Council should consider the precise modalities and further action required to end as rapidly as possible the unlawful presence of the State of Israel in the Occupied Palestinian Territory.

Responding to the Court's Advisory Opinion, the Minister of International Relations and Cooperation, Ronald Lamola, stated that "Today's ruling by the ICJ affirms South Africa's long-standing position that the occupation by Israel of Palestinian territory remains unlawful under international law. The international community must act to bring an immediate end to the occupation and the gross violations of international humanitarian and human rights law being perpetrated by Israel against the Palestinian people. There is now an additional legal obligation for all states to end complicity in Israel's illegal actions and to act to ensure respect for international law.

South Africa attaches particular importance to the Court's finding that Israel is in violation of Article 3 of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD), which provides that "States Parties particularly condemn racial segregation and apartheid and undertake to prevent, prohibit and eradicate all practices of this nature in territories under their jurisdiction".

"This finding of the Court reaffirms that the Israeli Government is guilty of practicing the crime of apartheid" as the Court put it.

"The Court observes that Israel's legislation and measures impose and serve to maintain a near-complete separation in the West Bank and East Jerusalem between the settler and Palestinian communities. For this reason, the Court considers that Israel's legislation and measures constitute a breach of Article 3 of CERD." – Source: www.dirco.gov.za

MINISTER GEORGE ATTENDS MINISTERIAL MEETINGS ON CLIMATE ACTION IN CHINA

Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment Minister, Dr Dion George, on Sunday, 21 July 2024, attended the Brazil, South Africa, India and China (BASIC) Ministerial Meeting ahead of the eighth Session of the Ministerial on Climate Action (MoCA) taking place in Wuhan, China.

The ministers responsible for climate change from the BASIC countries gathered for the bi-annual meeting to discuss key issues related to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) negotiations at the upcoming Conference of Parties (COP29).

These included the need to finalise the rules around carbon markets, adaptation indicators, the Just Transition Pathways Work Programme, the Mitigation Work Programme, and the new collective quantified goal (NCQG) on finance.

Minister George emphasised the importance of ensuring a balanced agenda that addresses issues critical to developing countries and to pressure developed countries to fulfil their commitments.

The BASIC group plays a pivotal role in unifying developing countries and providing leadership in climate negotiations.

“South Africa reaffirms its unwavering solidarity with fellow members of the global South. We regard the BASIC group as a key strategic platform for articulating and advancing the interests of developing countries towards a more sustainable, just and equitable international order,” Minister George said.

MoCA, which is taking place from 22 to 23 July 2024, is one of the platforms created at the initiative of individual states in support of the UNFCCC negotiations that seeks to identify issues of convergence and divergence at a political level with a view to bridge building and exploring potential landing zones ahead of the COP.

MoCA is convened by China, the European Union (EU) and Canada. It was initiated in 2017 to support the Paris Agreement and the multilateral climate process.

The MoCA in Wuhan was a key moment for ministers and senior climate diplomats to gather, coming shortly after the UNFCCC intersessional in June.

It was a chance to elevate sticky issues in climate negotiations to a higher political level.

Minister George said that such meetings were important because the negotiations often deadlock at the technical level due to geopolitical tensions and the national interests at stake.

South Africa has traditionally played a key role in the UNFCCC process, helping to secure consensus outcomes, including through special co-facilitation and chairing roles being conferred to successive South African presidents and ministers at climate summits and COPs over the past two decades.

“I look forward to the frank political discussions on the progress and complexities around implementing the COP28 outcomes, the role of carbon markets, the new collective quantified goal on climate finance beyond US\$100 billion per annum to be set at COP29 in Baku, Azerbaijan, as well as other critical negotiations items needed to be addressed,” Minister George said. – Source: SAnews.gov.za



SOUTH AFRICAN DELEGATION ARRIVES IN MUNICH AHEAD OF THE AIDS 2024 INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

The South African delegation led by the Deputy Minister of Health, Dr Joe Phaahla arrived in Munich on 21 July 2024 in Germany, ahead of the 25th International AIDS Conference, scheduled for 22 to 26 July 2024, under the theme “Put People First.”



AIDS 2024

22 – 26 July
Munich and virtual

This year's conference theme underscores a clarion call for all key role players to strengthen efforts to deepen human rights, provide adequate health care facilities and protect civil rights. The AIDS 2024 Conference offers a platform to address persistent challenges that impact negatively on countries' overall HIV responses.

Deputy Minister Phaahla is supported by the SA Patron of the Global Alliance for ending AIDS in children by 2030, Humile Mashatile, the South African National AIDS Council (SANAC) Chief Executive Officer, Dr Thembisile Xulu, Health Department Director-General, Dr Sandile Buthelezi, a team of health scientists, civil society activists, social partners, and senior government officials.

This important, as well as considered the world's largest and most influential conference on HIV/AIDS, will feature discussions among other, key population-led innovations, artificial intelligence and digital technology in healthcare provision, HIV and climate change, prevention of vertical transformation, and also consider lessons from COVID-19 on misinformation.

In this regard, the SA Global Alliance Patron, Humile Mashatile, will participate in panel discussions focussed on *Connecting data, programmes and communities with the view to contribute in defining Global Alliance Roadmap to Ending AIDS in Children by 2030*. Mrs Mashatile will also meet with the Executive Director of UNAIDS, Winnie Byanyima, to outline the strategic plans and programmes developed by key South African role-players, geared towards ending AIDS in Children by 2030.

The Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) of South Africa, which is Africa's largest dedicated social science and humanities research agency and policy think tank will utilise the opportunity at the 25th AIDS Conference, to present a study on South African HIV Prevalence, Incidence and Behaviour survey results. This critical work by HSRC, signifies an important legacy collection of public data that has contributed to the improvement of lives for citizens.

Deputy Minister Phaahla and his delegation join world activists in confronting challenges and identifying opportunities to accelerate progress in HIV science, policy and initiatives, to foster a more resilient, equitable and sustainable international community. – Source: www.gov.za

DEPUTY MINISTER NAREND SINGH OPENS 16TH INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON MERCURY AS GLOBAL POLLUTANT

The Deputy Minister of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment (DFFE), Narend Singh, officially opened the 16th International Conference on Mercury as a Global Pollutant (ICMGP) on Sunday, 21 July 2024, at the Cape Town International Conference Centre.

The first ICMGP was held in Sweden in 1990 with only 78 delegates. Since then, ICMGP has been an important gathering for sharing and assessing knowledge on mercury as a global environmental pollutant, as well as identifying solutions to reducing releases, emissions and exposures to this pollutant.

Research presented at previous ICMGP's was instrumental in countries becoming signatories to the Minamata Convention on Mercury aimed at protecting human health and the environment from the adverse effects of mercury pollution. In hosting the 16th ICMGP in 2024, South Africa becomes the first African country to host this unique conference that only focusses on one element.

Due to South Africa's primary reliance on coal for energy generation, there has been considerable international interest in the country's mercury emissions. Research conducted by the United Nations Environment Programme during the negotiations of the Minamata Convention highlighted that South Africa is a major emitter of mercury on the African continent. As the focal point of the Minamata Convention in South Africa, DFFE leads and coordinates the country's efforts in managing mercury in an environmentally sound manner. – Source: www.gov.za



DEPUTY MINISTER ZUKO GODLIMPI ATTENDS 14TH BRICS TRADE MINISTERS MEETING IN MOSCOW

The Deputy Minister of Trade, Industry and Competition, Zuko Godlimpi departed for Russia where he will attend the 14th Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa (BRICS) Trade Ministers Meeting in Moscow, on 26 July 2024. The Trade Ministers meeting will be preceded by a roundtable discussion with the theme “The Place of BRICS in the New Architecture of the International Economic System.”



Trade Ministers from Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa, Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran and the United Arab Emirates are expected to attend the meeting. The meeting is part of a series of meetings that Russia is hosting as part of the build-up to the BRICS Summit that will take place in Kazan, Russia in October 2024.

The BRICS Contact Group on Economic and Trade Issues Meeting, which will be attended by senior officials from the Department of Trade, Industry and Competition (the dtic), will take place before the BRICS Trade Ministers Meeting.

After the inclusion of new BRICS members, namely Iran, the United Arab Emirates, Egypt and Ethiopia in the BRICS grouping, the bloc has a combined population of about 3.5 billion people, representing more than 45% of the world's population and account for 36% of the global gross domestic product) when measured at purchasing power parity. The bloc also has 24.5% of the share in world exports and produce about 44% of the world's crude oil.

Deputy Minister Godlimpi says the BRICS Trade Ministers Meeting will provide South Africa with an opportunity to, among others, build mutually beneficial trade and investment relations that promote value-added trade and economic transformation, facilitate foreign direct investment into the productive sectors with BRICS plus partners and coordinate positions on global governance, including in relation to the multilateral trading system.

“South Africa’s membership in BRICS has been one of the key strategic partnerships of the democratic South Africa. One of the founding values of BRICS is to ensure a more equitable, balanced and representative global political, economic and financial architecture,” says Deputy Minister Godlimpi.

“Our participation in the 14th meeting of the BRICS trade ministers in Russia will enable us to contribute significantly in discussions aimed at creating a conducive environment for the participation of BRICS countries in global trade and also in intra-BRICS trade,” adds Deputy Minister Godlimpi.

He further explains that with the addition of new members to BRICS, including two countries from Africa, there will be an opportunity to further enhance the cooperation of BRICS countries on trade and investment in Africa, including in the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA).

“The meeting provides South Africa with opportunity to explore new areas of economic and trade cooperation particularly with new members,” he stresses.

BRICS members have strengthened cooperation on a wide range of trade and economic issues including efforts to strengthen Multilateral Trading System including World Trade Organisation reform, climate and trade-related issues, digital economy, supply chains for resilience and cooperation on promoting medium, small and micro enterprises).

The Russian Presidency in 2024 also introduced new initiatives including cooperation on utilising Artificial Intelligence (AI) for trade and investment and cooperation on Special Economic Zones (SEZs).

“BRICS offers a unique opportunity for member countries to extend and advance their cooperation in ways that meaningfully promotes their economic development agenda, in particular, and that of the global South in general. South Africa will continue to identify opportunities for cooperation with BRICS partners both bilaterally and through the BRICS platform, which would present opportunities for the continent to transition away from its historic role as a commodity exporter towards higher productivity value addition,” says Deputy Minister Godlimpi. – Source: www.gov.za.

WESTERN CAPE GOVERNMENT WINS PRESTIGIOUS UNITED NATIONS AWARD FOR PUBLIC SERVICE INNOVATION

The Western Cape Government (WCG) is deeply honoured to have been awarded the esteemed Public Service Innovation Award at the United Nations (UN) Public Service Forum, which took place from 24 to 26 June in Incheon, South Korea. The provincial government clinched the award out of 400 entries from over 70 countries.

This accolade recognises the ground-breaking work the WCG does in service of the residents of the province towards “Citizen-centric Digital Transformation”.

“We have always worked extremely hard in developing and nurturing innovation in our government, which is a key value we hold in high regard. Only by embracing innovation can we continuously improve services, especially for the most vulnerable in our province. We know that sometimes we may not get it right, but you will not succeed if you are not willing to try, fail, try and ultimately succeed—that is at the core of innovation—being willing to try,” said Premier Alan Winde.



The UN Public Service Awards recognise excellence in public service. It rewards the creative achievements and contributions of public service institutions that lead to a more effective and responsive public administration towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

Representing the WCG at the ceremony were the Department of the Premier’s Centre for e-Innovation (Ce-I) Deputy Director-General, Hilton Arendse, as well as Acting Chief Director Aneesa Basha and Director Marc Cloete. “The successes achieved through this project emphasise our province’s commitment to improving the quality of life of our residents through the innovative and effective use of digital technologies.” Arendse stated.

He added, “This achievement is attributed to the commitment and competence of the more than 400 Ce-I team members who have collaborated across multiple departments to bring this vision to life. We must also acknowledge our province’s political and administrative executive leadership who have fostered a culture of innovation that enabled us to responsibly explore and implement innovative solutions.”

WCG Digital Implementation Plans

Implementing the Citizen-centric Digital Transformation Plan is a key programme of the WCG's priority focus area that focuses on innovation, culture and governance. The provincial government set ambitious goals to positively impact residents' lives by leveraging digital technology. Premier Winde noted that by doing this, the WCG is successfully transitioning service delivery from traditional methods to a more efficient, reliable and citizen-centred model. He said, "This shift has significantly enhanced the accessibility and quality of government services, particularly benefiting the 70% of the Western Cape's population that is vulnerable."

"Through our vision of achieving optimised, citizen-centred service delivery, we have consciously shifted the focus from predominantly implementing internal-facing solutions to developing and implementing solutions that either directly or indirectly translate into value delivery to our residents," explained Basha.

"While this award is a recognition of our past achievements, it also serves as encouragement to continue striving towards excellence in achieving public value. This honour should be celebrated widely across the province, as it highlights the significant progress we have made and the promising future ahead," she added.

"Our digital infrastructure initiatives have played a crucial role in bridging the digital divide, ensuring that all residents, regardless of their socio-economic status, have access to vital services.

To this extent, our province's investment in connecting all government sites to high-speed network connectivity and our large-scale cloud migration were key building blocks of our digital transformation process," Cloete said.

The WCG remains committed to building on its sound digital government foundations to further improve public services.

The Premier concluded, "As much as we pride ourselves on our increased emphasis on innovation, it is also the people behind the scenes, our WCG family of over 90 000 officials, who made this success possible. Thank you for all you do for the people of the Western Cape." – Source: www.gov.za

TWO HUNDRED OIL PRODUCERS, STAKEHOLDERS FROM SOUTHERN AFRICA GATHER IN PRETORIA

The Department of Trade, Industry and Competition (the dtic) will this week host the third South African Conference on Essential and Vegetable Oils, bringing together 200 oil producers and stakeholders from across South Africa and Southern Africa.



The event aims to share innovative trends in the global marketplace, including various applications for essential and vegetable oils, as well as address critical issues faced by this industry.

According to the department, attendees will gain valuable insights from proven experts on the most pressing challenges, equipping them with the knowledge needed to thrive in the dynamic essential and vegetable oils sector.

Acting Deputy Director-General of Sectors at the dtic, Thandi Phele, said the upcoming conference will be a significant step in strengthening the quality of essential and vegetable oil exports from South Africa.

Phele said the conference will highlight the "technical competence and sustainability of the National Quality Infrastructure system and the conformity assessment services that serve the selected value chains in this industry".

SADC (Southern African Development Community) compliance with international standards, technical regulations and culture for quality will be addressed.

“This conference will serve as a pivotal platform for knowledge sharing and networking among key industry players. Our collaboration with the Swiss State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO), the United Nations Industrial Development Organisation (UNIDO), and the Southern African Essential Oil Producers' Association (SAEOPA) underscore our commitment to fostering growth and innovation within the essential and vegetable oils industry,” she said.

The conference will feature a series of presentations, panel discussions and interactive sessions, focusing on:

- Innovative trends shaping the global essential and vegetable oils market
- Addressing critical challenges faced by producers and stakeholders
- Strategies for expanding market reach from local to global

Head of SECO in South Africa, Daniel Lauchenauer, says the gathering presents an unparalleled opportunity for stakeholders to engage with industry leaders, share best practices, and forge partnerships that will drive the industry forward.

According to SAEOPA, the global essential oils market size was valued at US\$11 billion in 2023. It is projected to grow to US\$12,47 billion in 2024 and US\$27,82 billion by 2032.

South African exports of essential oils, perfumes, cosmetics and toiletries was US\$679 million during 2023, according to the United Nations Commodity Trade Statistics database on international trade.

The department will host the conference at the South African National Botanical Gardens in Pretoria from 25 to 26 July 2024, in partnership with SECO, UNIDO and SAEOPA.

The theme for the conference is *Local to Global: East West, Home is Best*. – Source: SAnews.gov.za.

TWO WESTERN CAPE SPOTS UP FOR UNESCO WORLD HERITAGE STATUS

Two of the Western Cape’s historic sites have been nominated for the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) World Heritage Status.

From 21 to 31 July 2024, a high-level delegation from South Africa will be attending the 46th session of the World Heritage Committee meeting to discuss and consider nominations for the list of UNESCO World Heritage Sites.

According to a release, South Africa has submitted two nominations, which, if successful, will be protected under the World Heritage Convention and added to the World Heritage List.

The “Emergence of Modern Human Behaviour” nomination includes three South African Middle Stone Age sites that have globally provided significant evidence on understanding of “who we are” today.



“These sites are Diepkloof Rock Shelter close to Elands Bay (Western Cape), the Pinnacle Point Site Complex in Mossel Bay, (Western Cape) and Sibhudu Cave in KwaDukuza (KwaZulu-Natal). said the Chief Executive Officer of KZN Amafa and Research Institute, Dr Dlamuka

“These three sites display a suite of evidence of the emergence of modern human behaviour dating from as early as 162 000 years, displaying the development of more complex cognitive abilities in our ancestor”, Dr Dlamuka added as per the media release.

The provincial minister of cultural affairs and sport, Ricardo Mackenzie also said that these sites were not only global archaeological treasures but also symbols of our resilience, creativity and capacity for innovation.

“They remind us of the importance of preserving our cultural and natural heritage for future generations. It is incredible to imagine the early humans who lived in and passed through these places. I am excited about the potential for World Heritage Site status to boost tourism, economic development, and enable job creation.” Mackenzie said in the press release.

South Africa currently has 10 sites declared as world heritage sites scattered around the country and should this new nomination succeed, the country will have an additional 11th world heritage site. Source: www.sapeople.com

CAPENATURE BEACH VOTED AMONG WORLD’S BEST BY *CONDÉ NAST*

CapeNature proudly celebrates Die Plaat Beach’s inclusion in “Condé Nast Traveller’s” list of “The Best Beaches in the World”, highlighting its pristine beauty within Walker Bay Nature Reserve, near Hermanus.



Die Plaat stands out as the only beach in South Africa to be recognised among a prestigious list of 34 beaches worldwide.

This incredible accolade underscores its exceptional natural beauty and unique features, solidifying Die Plaat’s status as one of the most remarkable coastal destinations globally.

This 17-kilometre stretch of beach is renowned for its stunning scenery, rich biodiversity and historical significance.

Its unspoiled beauty is preserved by the Walker Bay Nature Reserve’s protective status and biodiversity management efforts.

Striking limestone outcrops dot the rugged backdrop, while visitors to nearby Hermanus often detour to Walker Bay for prime whale watching and to see seals along the shore.

CEO of CapeNature, Dr Ashley Naidoo, expressed immense gratitude for the recognition of a beach on one of the reserves by *Condé Nast Traveller*.

“Die Plaat’s inclusion on the list is an invitation to travellers from around the world to discover the beauty of the whale coast.

“This achievement is a testament to the extraordinary natural beauty of the Walker Bay Nature Reserve and the hard work and dedication of our teams on the ground to keep it in pristine condition.”

Die Plaat Beach, within the Walker Bay Marine Protected Area, is a vital nurturing ground for southern right whales, especially during the whale season from June to December.

The reserve is also home to numerous seabirds, including the African black oystercatcher.

Klipgat Cave, along the coastline, was home to Middle Stone Age people 85 000 to 65 000 years ago and Khoi and San people 2 000 years ago.

Visitors to Walker Bay enjoy hiking, angling, swimming and picnicking, though the sea can be rough.

With its rich marine life, historical significance and stunning views, Walker Bay Nature Reserve offers a unique experience for nature enthusiasts and adventure seekers. Source: www.capetownetc.com

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THREE LOCAL LODGES READERS TOP 10 LIST

There are few experiences quite as enthralling as visiting a game lodge, especially in our breathtaking country. For those who travel many kilometres across the sea just to catch a sight of the Big Five and those of us lucky enough to take a quick drive to reconnect with our wild side alike, game lodges are a top choice travel experience for many.

Recently, game lodge lovers and readers of *Travel + Leisure* revealed their favourite African lodges as part of the *Travel + Leisure* “World’s Best Awards” 2024 survey.

The findings will come as great news to South Africans, with our country being the most popular country in the category, boasting three local lodges in the Top 10 out of the whole continent and the top spot.

The ratings were classified based on various characteristics, from service to location, with thousands of readers casting their votes.



“The 2024 results highlight a blend of time-honoured favourites and emerging destinations, reflecting the diverse interests of today’s travellers. We’re delighted to honour these exceptional places and experiences that inspire our audiences to explore the world,” said Jacqui Gifford, *Travel + Leisure* Editor.

These are the South African lodges that made the global spotlight:

Claiming first place is South Africa’s Monwana Game Lodge in the Thornybush Nature Reserve with a reader score of 98.90. Following in seventh place is Lion Sands Game Reserve: Sabi Sand Game Reserve with a score of 97.89. And in ninth place came Thornybush Game Lodge: Thornybush Private Game Reserve with a score of 97.83. – Source: www.goodthingsguy.com

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GRAND GOLD AND SIX GOLD MEDALS FOR SPIER AT THE 2024 CONCOURS MONDIAL DE BRUXELLES

Spier Wine Farm’s commitment to crafting good wine, from good people and grown in good soil has once again been recognised on the global stage.

At the 31st Concours Mondial de Bruxelles, Spier secured six Gold Medals and one Grand Gold Medal, showcasing the farm’s dedication to quality across style and price point.

Spier’s award-winning wines at Concours Mondial de Bruxelles 2024 were as follow:

Grand Gold Medal:

- Spier 21 Gables Cabernet Sauvignon 2020

Gold Medals:

- Spier 21 Gables Chenin Blanc 2021
- Spier 21 Gables Sauvignon Blanc 2023
- Spier Creative Block 3 2020
- Spier Seaward Chenin Blanc 2023
- Spier Seaward Chardonnay 2023

- Spier Seaward Cabernet Sauvignon 2022



The competition, which brings together experts from across the international wine sector, saw nearly 7 500 wines from 42 countries blind-tasted by a panel of carefully selected judges. Only 30% of the wines presented were awarded medals. South African wines continue to improve in quality year-on-year, with a significant increase in Grand Gold Medals (6) and Gold Medals (35) awarded to the country's producers.

Spier's performance was particularly notable, securing seven of the 35 Gold Medals awarded to South African wines, building on their success from last year when they received five Gold Medals.

This result highlights the farm's consistent excellence and underscores South Africa's growing prominence in the global wine industry.

Cape Coast Goodness Spier's 21 Gables Cabernet Sauvignon 2020 clinched the coveted Grand Gold Medal, marking the third consecutive year this wine has received top honours at the Concours Mondial de Bruxelles.

This impressive streak began in 2022 when the 2018 vintage secured Grand Gold, followed by a Gold Medal for the 2019 vintage in 2023. Sourced from the Helderberg area, these Cabernet Sauvignon grapes benefit from both the region's ideal growing conditions and the subtle coastal influence.

This combination results in wines of exceptional quality and character, further cementing Stellenbosch's reputation as a world-class Cabernet Sauvignon producer.

In addition, the Seaward range, influenced by cool coastal breezes, performed exceptionally well, with three Gold Medals awarded to the Seaward Chenin Blanc 2023, Chardonnay 2023, and Cabernet Sauvignon 2022.

Johan Jordaan, Cellar Master at Spier, expressed his excitement about the results:

"We're thrilled to see our Stellenbosch Cabernet Sauvignon continuing to impress on the world stage. But what's particularly heartening is the success of our Seaward range. The coastal influence clearly brings something special to these wines, offering fantastic quality and value.

"This is definitely a range to watch. From the top-shelf 21 Gables range to the wonderful Seaward selection, Spier continues to deliver wines that showcase the best of Stellenbosch and South Africa's coastal regions." – Source: www.capetownetc.com

CAPE TOWN'S CAR SCENE AMONG WORLD'S BEST, NEW STUDY REVEALS

Cape Town has ranked third on a list of the cities with the best car communities. The list was compiled from research done by the United Kingdom (UK) automotive platform Auto Trader.

The research analysed the number of car meets, auto events and motor shows in over 400 cities worldwide, along with the number of Instagram posts associated with each city's car meets; to show how strong the car-loving community presence is in each location.

Best cities for car lovers

Scoring over 98% is the city of Austin, Texas, in the United States (US). Many factors play into the city's booming car community, including Austin's role in hosting major events such as the Formula 1 US Grand Prix and the MotoGP Red Bull Grand Prix of the Americas. But it's the city's car clubs and dozens of car meets that push it to the number one city with the biggest car community spirit.

Toronto, Canada, ranks second on the list of cities with the largest "car-munity", with a score of 95.4%. Toronto's car scene presence on social media is what propels the city into second place, with the hashtag #torontocarcommunity gathering nearly 49 000 Instagram posts. Canada features again in the top 15 list, with Edmonton narrowly missing out on a top 10 spot in 11th place with a car-munity score of 39.3%.

Following Toronto in third place is Cape Town, one of two South African cities in the top 15. Out of all the “Cars & Coffee” events hosted in South Africa, over half take place in Cape Town, making it one of the best cities to visit worldwide for fans of all things cars.



Also joining the top five is Turin, Italy, in fourth place. While Turin’s automotive heritage runs far and wide (it is the home of Fiat, after all), Italy’s third-largest city is also a bustling hub for car lovers, with a car-munity score of 76.1%.

In fifth place is Munich, the first of three German cities in the top 15; with a car-munity score of 68.1%. Interestingly, looking purely at planned meetups and auto shows shared on Eventbrite and Google Events, just 8% of all Deutsche car events happen in the country’s capital, showing that there’s no shortage of other locations for auto fans to visit in Germany.

However, Munich should still be the first stop, particularly for its annual Oktoberfest car meetups, which bring in travellers from around the world. The German cities of Frankfurt and Stuttgart then join the car-loving communities rankings, in eighth and 13th place, respectively.

The UK hosts the second-highest number of car events shared on Eventbrite and Google Events worldwide, second only to the US. As a result, two UK cities appear as the best destinations for car lovers to visit: London is sixth and Wolverhampton is 12th.

Following London, the capital of Poland achieves a 58% car-munity score, with Warsaw motor lovers being particularly active on social media, sharing their favourite vehicle spotting as well as the city’s exciting auto shows.

Rory Reid, YouTube director at *Auto Trader*, commented:

“In today’s digital age, it’s encouraging to see how many petrolhead communities thrive across the globe, allowing motor lovers to connect in-person and show off their wheels.

“From the annual Oktoberfest car meetups in Munich to the vibrant car scenes in Pretoria, each city offers unique events that bring enthusiasts together.

“This shows how, for many people, their cars are more than a means of transportation and, in fact, act as an expression of individuality and a source of passion. Whether you’re from Christchurch, New Zealand or London, England, the car community truly is a place that fosters friendships.” – Source: www.bizcommunity.com

JOHANNESBURG BARTENDER TO REPRESENT SOUTH AFRICA AT DIAGEO WORLD CLASS

A Johannesburg bartender has won the national title in the Diageo World Class competition and will now represent South Africa on the global stage.

After entering the South African Diageo World Class Bartender of the Year six times, Jody Rahme promised his girlfriend that 2024 would be his last attempt. And the seventh time proved the charm, as the 35-year-old finally made it to first place.

Rahme was crowned the national champion after three days of challenges in Johannesburg and will now represent South Africa in the World Class global finals in China in September, competing with the best bartenders from more than 60 countries.

Cape Town’s Liam Jukes, of VUE Shortmarket, came in second and also received the Bartenders’ Choice Award, and Devon Andreka, general manager of Obscura in Rosebank, Johannesburg, finished in third.



After reaching the top 10 on every occasion and coming third twice, Rahme, 35, said he was overjoyed to win.

“It’s been my biggest dream to take this title one day, be the best bartender in the country and go overseas to represent South Africa and meet other bartenders who’ve worked so hard for this,” Rahme said.

The Johannesburg bartender’s first World Class foray was in 2017, when he started working at Sin+Tax in Rosebank and was instructed to enter.

“I was thrown into the deep end and I had two weeks to prepare,” he said. “On that occasion, it was more about learning and seeing what the community was about.”

Seven years later, his approach to the competition couldn’t be more different. “I’m very structured,” says Rahme, who lives in Morningside, Sandton and looks after wholesale clients for the Kramerville roastery, Father Coffee.

“I conceptualise my drinks on a spreadsheet, coming up with a bunch of different ways to use an ingredient and ensuring I tick all the boxes for a cocktail competition. Then I get to work in the kitchen. Once I have the drink flavours down, I start working on the verbal delivery and the presentation.”

Making his own ingredients is a key part of Rahme’s approach. “It’s not just because I’m a bit fickle about wanting to know what’s going into my drinks, but I love cooking, learning the techniques and understanding flavour,” he said.

Having won the national final, Rahme’s next task is to absorb the 45-page brief for the global finals in Shanghai and start conceptualising drinks, preparing ingredients and testing everything on family and friends.

Diageo will host the 15th edition of the World Class global finals in Shanghai, China, from 9 to 13 September 2024. – Source: www.sapeople.com

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KIDFLUENCER KAIRO FORBES WINS COVETED NICKELODEON KIDS CHOICE AWARD

South African celebrity child star and “kidfluencer” Kairo Forbes has walked away with a big win from the Nickelodeon Kids’ Choice Awards after winning the “Favourite African Kidfluencer” category.

Other South African youngsters were also in the running for the “Favourite African Kidfluencer” title, including sibling musicians Biko’s Manna and Lethukuthula Bhengu, who won the award last year.

At the tender age of eight, little Kairo’s name is already known across the world and the kidfluencer boasts a following of 1.5 million people. Loved by locals first and foremost, last year she won the Kid Influencer of the Year Award at the South African Social Media Awards.

Who is Kairo Forbes?

Kairo is the daughter of DJ Zinhle and the late Kiernan Forbes (AKA) who bubbles with tons of personality and embodies her parents star power so much so that Glamour magazine once said she's might just be giving them a run for their money.

Taking time to reflect on the award, the young star thanked her family and all those who voted for her, adding that this award is for her dad.

"I'm very happy and I appreciate your support. I hope that I inspire other kids to have dreams and that their families will support their dreams. Thank you God, for all your blessings. This one's for you, Daddy" – Source: www.goodthingsguy.com



“LIGHTS, CAMERA, ACTION” FOR DURBAN FILM FESTIVAL

Taking place from 18 to 28 July, the Durban International Film Festival (DIFF) is expected to boost the KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) province's goal of positioning itself as a global tourism and film destination.



This is the 45th edition of the event, and the first to be held under the auspices of the KwaZulu-Natal Tourism and Film Authority (KZNTAFA), an entity established through a merger of the KZN Tourism Authority and the KZN Film Commission.

The festival will see almost 100 films produced by 53 countries being screened at locations across Durban.

“This event has become a must-attend festival for film enthusiasts from all over the world, affirming our strategy to position KZN as a global tourism and film destination,” said KZN MEC for Economic Development, Tourism and Environmental Affairs Musa Zondi at the festival's launch.

A group of delegates will also be embarking on a familiarisation trip of the province, in order to scout for locations and experience the region's tourist attractions.

“We know that while deals about new movies will be discussed, many of you will also take the time to explore some of our tourism offerings and explore the city's vibrancy, food and nightlife. You will break bread with the people of the province, dip your toes into our warm ocean, enjoy a shopping trip at our world-class malls and even enjoy some township experiences,” said Zondi.

The festival's Isipethu Programme will also allow emerging film makers to attend workshops, panel discussions, seminars and scriptwriting courses led by industry experts.

In partnership with community television station 1KZN, KZNTAFA is launching a series on the Made for TV Quality Boost Programme, a two-year incubation programme that is funding 10 film makers.

“This makes DIFF more than just a film festival, but a place where young people can showcase their skills and learn from those that have done it before, making this the perfect platform for skills transfer,” said Zondi.

In 2022, the KZN Film-Induced Tourism Strategy highlighted that the province was South Africa's fastest-growing film destination and accounted for 12% of the country's filming activity. – Source: www.tourismupdate.co.za

SPRINGBOKS TOO GOOD FOR PORTUGAL IN HISTORIC BLOEMFONTEIN TEST

A 14-man Springbok team proved far too strong for Portugal in their first ever test at the Free State Stadium in Bloemfontein on Saturday, 20 July 2024.

The world champion Springboks won 64-21 after leading 29-7 at halftime.

The Springboks were reduced to 14 men as early as the third minute of the match when centre Andre Esterhuizen was shown a yellow card for a head clash in a tackle.

Esterhuizen's yellow was upgraded to a red card following a TMO Bunker review.

The Springboks scored 10 tries, with Os Lobos replying with three well-worked tries of their own.

The Springboks will now turn their attention to the Rugby Championship where they take on Australia in their opening match at the Suncorp Stadium in Brisbane on Saturday, 10 August. – Source: www.thesouthafrican.com



SOUTH AFRICA'S JAMES BARCLAY MAKES HISTORY AS JAGUAR CLAIMS MAIDEN FORMULA E TITLE

South Africa's James Barclay, team principal of Jaguar TCS Racing, has made history this weekend after leading Jaguar to the British marque's maiden Formula E title.

After a strong season, Jaguar has claimed the Formula E Team's Championship after a thrilling race in London. Jaguar entered the final race weekend ahead of TAG Heuer Porsche in second and finished the campaign with a margin of 36 points as Season 10 concluded.

It was a bittersweet moment for Jaguar though, as the team missed out on the Driver's Championship, with drivers Mitch Evans and Nick Cassidy finishing the season in second and third, respectively.

Long-time championship leader Nick Cassidy was forced to retire from the season finale after he suffered a puncture towards the end and Evans could not convert his strong performance into a win.

Picking up the pieces though was Porsche's Pascal Wehrlein, who was able to claim the Driver's Championship after finishing the race in P2, leaving him five points ahead of Evans in the final standings. This marks the half-Mauritian driver's first Formula E World Championship and makes him the first driver of Mauritian descent to claim an FIA World Championship.

Speaking on this achievement, Wehrlein said: "It feels good. I don't know what to say. It's definitely not expected, [but] I always believed in it. In the last couple of weeks, at the beginning and end of each day, I'd tell myself, 'I can do this'. I am just super proud of everyone at the factory as well."



As a result of Jaguar's success, Barclay has become the first South African team principal to guide a team to a Formula E World Championship. He led the team's entry into Formula E in 2016 and has been at the helm ever since.

Since joining the sport, Jaguar has claimed 44 podiums, which includes 16 wins. Season 10 has been a record-breaking one for the team, as Cassidy and Evans have combined for 13 trips to the podium, four of which were wins.

"Jaguar has a rich racing history, and when we started our Formula E programme back in 2016, we were determined to add to that legacy. To win the 2024 ABB FIA Formula E Teams' World Championship—the pinnacle of electric racing—is [a] fitting reward for everyone's hard work and winning mindset. I feel for both Mitch [Evans] and Nick [Cassidy] coming so close to the Drivers' crown is tough for both of them but they have driven incredibly well all year and I know they will be fighting for the title again next year," said Barclay.

The team also claimed the newly introduced Manufacturer's Trophy, thanks to strong performances from Evans and Cassidy and a solid points haul from customer team Envision Racing.

Season 11 of the ABB FIA Formula E World Championship will resume later this year with pre-season testing in Valencia, Spain and an opening race in São Paulo, Brazil. – Source: www.supersport.com

SOUTH AFRICA STRIDES INTO SEMI-FINALS OF THE POLOCROSSE WORLD CUP

After three convincing wins, South Africa has secured its spot in the semi-finals of the 2024 Ignition Group Polocrosse World Cup, with sights set on their third championship title.

The eight top countries competed in a round-robin format from 20 to 22 July 2024, with Australia, Zambia and New Zealand also making it into the semi-finals, and the bottom four going into the playoffs from Thursday, 25 July 2024.

The action culminates in the finals on Sunday, 28 July 2024. South Africans are encouraged to come out in green and gold to support the national side competing at KwaZulu-Natal's Durban Shongweni Club, situated in the Valley of a Thousand Hills.

The first weekend of the World Cup has been nothing short of exhilarating. Led by team captain and four-time South Africa World Cup player, Jan-Albert Steenkamp, the South African team has emerged as a formidable contender, securing their spot in the next phase of the journey to World Champions with a series of convincing victories.

Commenting on the play over the weekend, Steenkamp says, "It's the greatest honour representing your own country and being able to secure our spot in the next round is a testament to the hard work and dedication of our entire team and management committee. This weekend has been unforgettable, with record-breaking chukkas that showcased our team's determination and skill."



Dr Manfred Rohwer, President of the Polocrosse Association of South Africa, the event hosts, extended their congratulations to all the competitors for the phenomenal polocrosse action so far and said, "Audiences have been enthralled by the high level of on-field action displayed over the past

few days and things are only set to heat up. Team South Africa has really brought their best and knowing that their country is behind them makes all the difference. We call on everyone to come out and show their support!"

Looking ahead to the semi-finals, fans can anticipate a weekend of intense competition and unforgettable polocrosse. The anticipation is palpable as these top teams vie for the coveted World Champion title, each bringing their unique strengths and strategies to the field. The stage is set for an epic showdown, with all eyes on who will emerge victorious in this prestigious tournament.

From Thursday, 25 July 2024, teams will fight for their spots in the world rankings. In addition, a South African Development side has been selected to play against a Rest of the World Barbarian side, featuring players from South America, Canada, and Europe, among others. These exciting matches will be played in between the deciding World Cup games in the coming days, showcasing the up-and-coming talent of South Africa and the polocrosse world. – Source: www.goodthingsguy.com

SOUTH AFRICAN DEAF RUGBY PRESENTS BLOCKBUSTER INTERNATIONAL SERIES IN AUGUST

For the first time on South African soil, the South African Deaf Rugby Association (SADRA) will be hosting a ground-breaking international Deaf rugby series from 3 to 8 August. This historic event will see top teams from around the world, including Australia, England, Japan and hosts South Africa, competing in an exciting series.



SADRA continues to break new ground in the sport of Deaf Rugby. Coming off a fourth-place finish at the 2023 World Deaf Rugby Sevens Championship in Argentina and picking up the award for Associate Member of the Year at the SA Rugby Awards. SADRA is excited to announce a momentous international series that will lay the foundation for the continued development and growth of the sport and association.

The series is set to take place at St Stithians College in Johannesburg with the dates for each as follow:

- South African Deaf Rugby Sevens International: 3 to 4 August 2024
- South African Deaf Rugby Tens International: 7 to 8 August 2024

“St Stithians College is honoured to host the SA Deaf Rugby International Series, which is supported by the South African Rugby Union (SARU), our strategic partners in promoting rugby growth on campus. This event underscores our commitment to inclusivity and excellence in sports, highlighted by the Women’s Day clinic aimed at fostering rugby skills development among girls and ladies. This initiative aligns perfectly with our strategy to expand rugby within our girls’ school, empowering young female athletes on our campus.” – Richard Little, Acting Director of Boys’ College Sports



Included in this fantastic series are matchups between the England Deaf Rugby ladies and the R10C select teams coached by Ryno Combrinck.

With SA Deaf Rugby trials conducted across the country, you can be certain that the best of the best will be showcasing their skills. The competition requires a hearing classification of a 40DB loss. All players are over 18 years old and proudly don their national colours.

This series promises to be an unforgettable celebration of rugby, showcasing the skill and passion of Deaf Rugby players. Spectators will have the unique opportunity to watch, learn, and engage with the game, witnessing that Deaf rugby is officiated and played no differently from normal rugby. Fans will also have the chance to get signatures and photos with players and coaches from around the world.

SADRA is thrilled to announce a partnership with SuperSport Schools, ensuring that every game will be broadcast live on the SuperSport Schools app. This exciting collaboration means that not only will South African fans be able to support their team, but friends, family, and fans around the world can follow the action. This global viewership will not only boost enthusiasm but also foster growth and excitement from emerging Deaf Rugby countries.

“This groundbreaking event is a significant step towards providing equal opportunities for all athletes to showcase their talents. It embodies our commitment to inclusivity and highlights the remarkable abilities of our deaf rugby players. We look forward to witnessing the passion and skill that will be on display at one of our partner schools and believe this series will inspire many more to pursue their dreams, regardless of the obstacles they face.” – Pearl Mashego, Marketing and Communications Manager, SuperSport Schools. – Source: www.goodthingsguy.com

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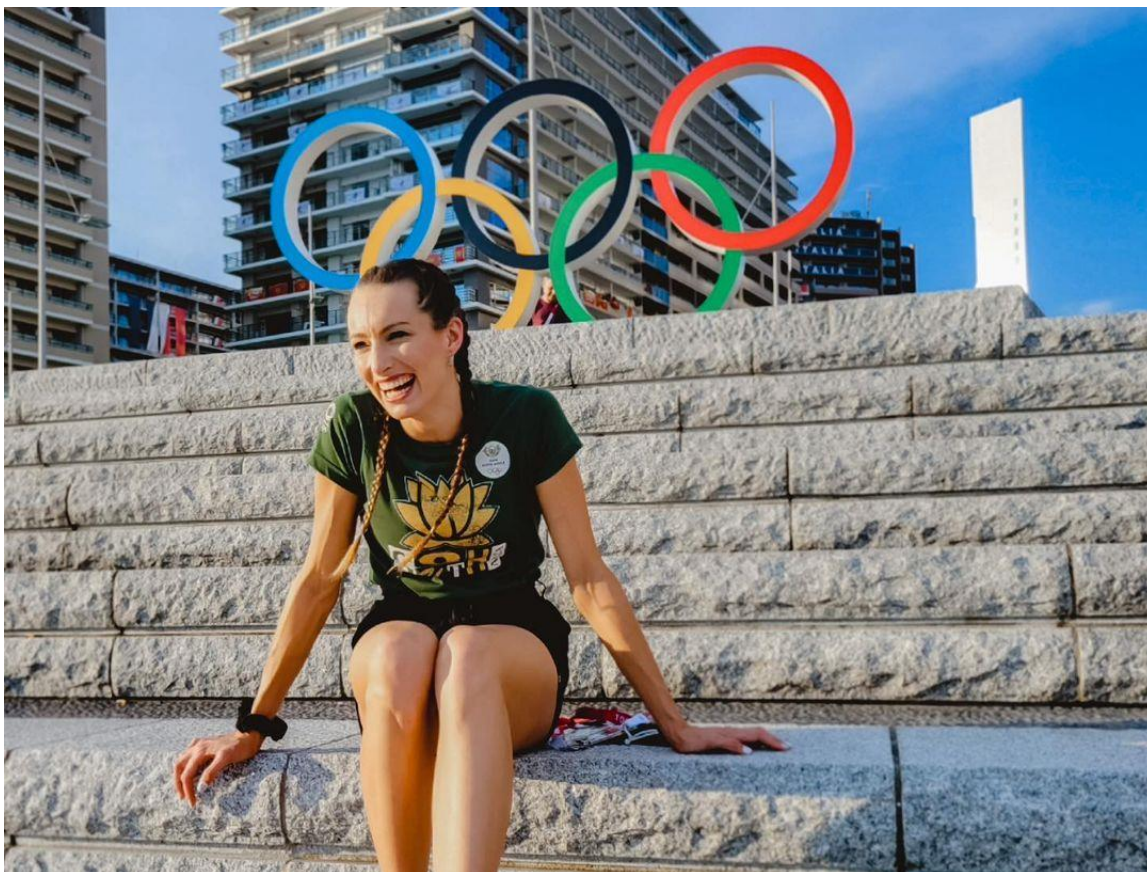
SOUTH AFRICA’S GOLDEN GIRL, TATJANA SMITH, HEADS TO PARIS FOR 2024 OLYMPICS

Tatjana Smith (formerly Schoenmaker), known as South Africa’s Golden Girl, is heading to Paris to compete in the 2024 Olympics. She will represent South Africa in the 100m and 200m Breaststroke events.

Smith made history at the Tokyo 2020 Olympics by winning Silver in the 100m and Gold in the 200m Breaststroke, becoming the first South African woman to win Olympic Gold in swimming since 1996. Now, she is set to compete again in Paris, with the games starting on Friday, 26 July.

Smith will be joined by seven other top South African swimmers: Aimee Canny, Kaylene Corbett, Erin Gallagher, Rebecca Meder, Pieter Coetze, Chad Le Clos and Matt Sates.

Recently celebrating her 27th birthday, Smith shared her journey and preparations for Paris on social media. Before leaving, she enjoyed a traditional South African braai and expressed her gratitude to her supporters: “On my way to Paris. *Baie dankie* to all my sponsors,” she wrote, along with a clip of herself “swimming” to the Olympics.



Smith’s preparations for Paris come after a milestone year, including her marriage to Joel Smith, brother of Springbok “First Lady” Rachel Kolisi, in November 2023.

The nation proudly supports its Golden Girl as she heads to Paris. Swimming South Africa, the governing body of aquatics in South Africa, wished her the best on social media, stating, “We’re sending Tatjana all our love, support, and best wishes as she takes on this incredible challenge! The entire nation is proudly behind you every stroke of the way.” – Source: www.capetownetc.com

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MCGILLIVRAY, SMITH AND BAUM TO REPRESENT SOUTH AFRICA AT THE 2024 PARIS OLYMPIC GAMES

Three South African surfers are competing in the Olympic Games: Jordy Smith, Matt McGillivray, and Sarah Baum. They have set off for the surfing events of the Paris Olympics in Teahupo’o, Tahiti, with competition days from 27 July to 5 August 2024.

Jordy Smith will come up against Ethan Ewing (Australia) and Tim Elter (Germany) in his first-round encounter, and Matt McGillivray will face Joan Duru (France) and Jack Robinson (Australia). Sarah Baum will come up against Yolande Hopkins (Portugal) and Caroline Marks (United States) in her first-round heat.

“I’m super-excited about competing in the Olympic Games, and Teahupo’o is an intense venue, so there is much anticipation around the event,” said Smith. “I think we’ve got a very confident and strong team, with Matt and Sarah, so hopefully we can bring home some medals. It always feels pretty electric at Teahupo’o, especially when there are waves, everyone wants to get a great barrel.”



The contest venue, Teahupo’o in Tahiti, is a much-revered surf location with waves that can get big and terrifying. Both Smith and McGillivray have excelled here in the past, and Baum is confident in waves of consequence, so there is much belief that our surfers will do well at this venue.

“In the surfing world, if you win a gold medal, for the rest of your life, you’re known as an Olympic Gold Medalist,” said Baum on her thoughts on the Olympics. “Whether you retire from surfing and you’re 60 at a barbecue or something, being a gold medallist is huge among people who don’t surf.”

Team manager Reza De Nicker is also very upbeat about the Olympics.

“Our athletes have reached the pinnacle of sports: the Olympic Games. The stage is right before them as we embark on a life-changing journey. Being in their corner is a humbling experience and a huge honour. They are as ready as possible with all the hard work already; now they just have to shine and soak it all in!” – Source: www.goodthingsguy.com

SOUTH AFRICAN WOMEN’S TOUCH RUGBY “TOUCHBOKS” TEAM EARNED BRONZE

The South African Women’s Touch Rugby team has made South Africa proud, earning bronze at the Touch Rugby World Cup in Nottingham, England. The over-35s team earned a first-ever for South Africa.

“They have worked so hard and are so driven, and I feel the country needs to hear their story” – Caryn van Herwaarde.

The sport is similar to other rugby formats. However, in this case, the team is made up of 14 players. Six players are on the field and the remaining team members wait along the sidelines to be used as substitutions. Subs are unlimited and can switch into the game as needed.

The sport has minimal physical contact and is unique in that it also allows for mixed-gender teams and has a diverse age range, going up to teams in the over-55s category.

The sport has been adopted by many of the usual rugby nations, including the United Kingdom, France, Australia and New Zealand, to name a few.



The Federation of International Touch was founded to unite teams across the globe and it plays host to events like the World Cup. This year, the World Cup ran from 15 to 21 July 2024. The Federation aims to build the sport internationally.

The “Touchboks”, as the local team is affectionately named, represented South Africa in several divisions, flying the flag high each time. The next World Cup will be hosted in New Zealand in 2028. – Source: www.goodthingsguy.com

SOUTH AFRICAN SPEEDSOFT TEAM DAZZLES AT FIRST GLOBAL TOURNAMENT

South Africa’s Speedsoft team made a remarkable debut at their first global tournament in the Netherlands, finishing 10th and celebrating with pride and flair.



The South African team, in their first-ever global Speedsoft competition, made a splash by placing 10th at the “NSL Nations Cup” awards.

For those unfamiliar, Speedsoft is a thrilling, high-adrenaline sport that combines elements of paintball and airsoft with the strategic depth of tactical games. Teams face off in fast-paced matches where speed, precision and teamwork are crucial. Players must navigate through obstacles and take down their opponents with skill and strategy, making for an intense and exciting competition.

Despite being up against 10 other seasoned teams from around the world, the South African squad held their own, impressing everyone with their performance. This was an incredible feat, especially considering the team lacked access to some of the top-notch equipment and specialises fields their competitors had.

The tournament concluded with an unforgettable moment that perfectly captured the team’s spirit and camaraderie. During the final interview, one of the South African players, brimming with pride and joy, appeared on screen clad in nothing but his South African flag swim briefs. This playful nod to rugby star Faf De Klerk, known for his iconic post-match celebrations, brought smiles and laughter all around. – Source: www.goodthingsguy.com



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