

UBUNTU NEWSFLASH

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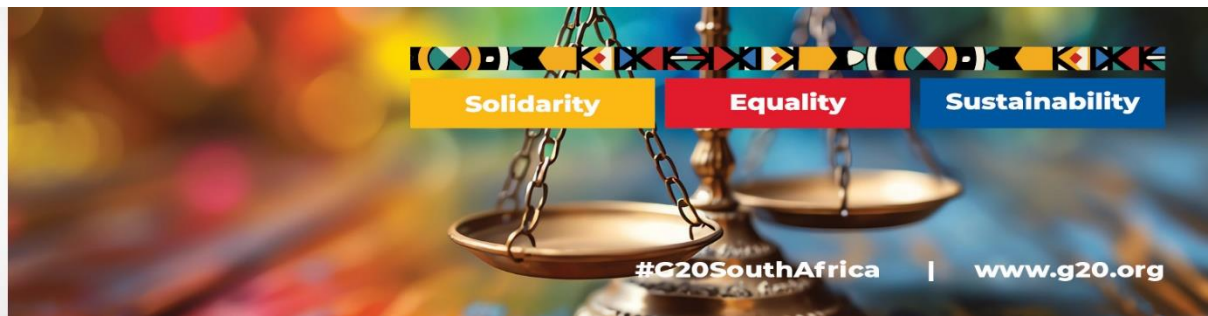
WEEKLY ELECTRONIC NEWSLETTER OF THE DEPARTMENT OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND COOPERATION

IT'S
YOUR VOICE
Internal newsletter of the Department of International Relations and Cooperation
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PRESIDENT RAMAPHOSA TO OFFICIATE FIRST MEETING OF G20 FOREIGN MINISTERS UNDER THE SOUTH AFRICAN PRESIDENCY

President Cyril Ramaphosa on Thursday, 20 February 2025, officially opened and addressed the Group of Twenty (G20) Foreign Ministers' Meeting in Johannesburg.

The Foreign Ministers' Meeting hosted by Minister of International Relations and Cooperation, Minister Ronald Lamola, takes place under South Africa's G20 Presidency theme of *Solidarity, Equality, Sustainability* on 20 and 21 February 2025 at the Nasrec Expo Centre.

South Africa's G20 Presidency commenced in December 2024, and South Africa will, during the course of 2025, host approximately 130 Working Group meetings and 23 meetings at ministerial level.

The year-long deliberations will culminate in a G20 Leaders' Summit in November 2025.



G20 SOUTH AFRICA 2025

The G20 Foreign Ministers' Meeting will, over two days of plenary sessions, discuss issues including current global geopolitical dynamics and reflect on South Africa's G20 Presidency High-Level Deliverables and the Review of the G20@20, which examines the impact of the G20 during the two decades of its existence.

G20 summits of heads of state and government bring together leaders from the world's largest economies to address pressing global challenges and foster economic cooperation.

Since its inception in 2008, the G20 has evolved from a crisis-management platform to a broader forum tackling issues like financial stability, climate change, sustainable development, and global health.

During its presidency, South Africa is prioritising Africa's development and the goals outlined in the African Union Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want.

South Africa's three priorities for the G20 Presidency focus on:

- Inclusive Economic Growth, Industrialisation, Employment and Reduce Inequality
- Food Security
- Artificial Intelligence, Data Governance and Innovation for Sustainable Development.

– Source: www.dirco.gov.za

PRESIDENT RAMAPHOSA CONCLUDES OFFICIAL VISIT TO ETHIOPIA FOR 38TH AU SUMMIT

President Cyril Ramaphosa on Saturday, 15 February 2025, concluded his visit to Ethiopia, where he participated in the 38th Ordinary Session of the Heads of State and Government of the African Union (AU).

The Assembly was held under the theme Justice for Africans and People of African Descent through Reparations from 15 to 16 February 2025.

The 38th Ordinary Session of the Heads of State and Government of the African Union (AU) was organised by the African Union Commission (AUC).

The opening ceremony of the AU Summit was held with the attendance of AUC leaders, officials, ministers, ambassadors from AU Member States, representatives of AU organs and offices, as well as partners.

President Ramaphosa congratulated the newly elected Chairperson Mahmoud Ali Yousouf and Deputy Chairperson Ambassador Salma Malika Haddadi, who will lead the AU during the next four years.

The Assembly also appointed new commissioners who will work as a collective in realising the aspirations of the continent and its people.



“South Africa congratulates the new leadership cohort of the union and is especially proud of Lerato Mataboge as the new Commissioner for Infrastructure and Energy,” The Presidency said in a statement.

SANews reported that Mataboge has been elected as the Commissioner for Infrastructure and Energy of the AU after her name was put forward by the South African Government.

She holds a BA Honours in Law and International Relations from the University of Witwatersrand, a Master’s Degree in International Political Economy from the University of Warwick, as well as a qualification in Infrastructure in Market Economy from the Harvard Kennedy School Executive Education.

Mataboge has since committed to providing credible responses to new technologies, including biotechnologies, digitisation, and artificial intelligence, while acknowledging Africa’s vital mineral resources in developing global technologies.

The Assembly further deliberated on the state of peace and security in Africa.

“It expressed grave concern for the evolving situation in the eastern DRC [Democratic Republic of the Congo]. The Heads of State called upon the M23 to cease fire to prevent additional loss of lives. The Assembly reaffirmed the urgent need for inclusive negotiations and political dialogue as the only solution to end conflicts on the continent.”

The leaders also took note of South Africa’s Presidency of the G20 and congratulated South Africa for being the first African country to host this important gathering.

They expressed their support for the successful G20 Leaders’ Summit scheduled to take place later this year in Johannesburg.

According to the President’s Office, the country’s Commander-in-Chief also had bilateral meetings with a few countries on the continent to exchange views on issues of mutual concern.

The Assembly also discussed the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), activities of the Africa Centre for Disease Control, infrastructure development, and institutional reforms, among other matters.

President Ramaphosa was accompanied by the Minister of International Relations and Cooperation, Ronald Lamola; the Minister of Defence and Military Veterans, Angie Motshekga; Minister of Justice and Constitutional Development, Mmamoloko Kubayi; Minister of Trade, Industry and Competition, Parks Tau; Minister in The Presidency, Khumbudzo Ntshavheni; Minister of Forestry, Fisheries and Environment, Dion George; Minister of Water and Sanitation, Pemmy Majodina; and Minister of Public Service and Administration, Inkosi Mzamo Buthelezi. – Source: SANews.gov.za

FALLEN SOLDIERS PAID THE ULTIMATE PRICE

SANDF FALLEN HEROES: 'WE SALUTE YOU'

SSGT W.C.D. COLA
9 DEC 1982 – 24 JAN 2025

SSGT M.I. MOLAHLEHI
20 JUN 1971 – 27 JAN 2025

SSGT S.T. SEEPE
03 SEP 1984 – 27 JAN 2025

CPL M.J. MALESA
25 FEB 1982 – 24 JAN 2025

CPL R. NEMAVHULANI
29 JAN 1986 – 27 JAN 2025

L CPL T.M. MOLAPO
11 JUL 1971 – 23 JAN 2025

L CPL M.S. RASWISWI
08 JUN 1985 – 23 JAN 2025

L BDR I.M. MOREO
29 DEC 1988 – 23 JAN 2025

RFN S.R. CHOKOE
30 MAR 1984 – 24 JAN 2025

RFN T.A. MABELE
4 DEC 1994 – 24 JAN 2025

RFN D. MALULEKE
30 MAR 1980 – 27 JAN 2025

RFN C.L. MOAGI
09 JUL 1996 – 24 JAN 2025

RFN M.J. MOBE
05 MAR 1991 – 24 JAN 2025

PTE P.J. STRYDOM
14 JAN 1991 – 24 JAN 2025

Graphic by Mallory Munien | Pictures: SANDF

President Cyril Ramaphosa has described the 14 South African National Defence Force (SANDF) fallen soldiers as gallant heroes who “made the ultimate sacrifice so others may live in peace.”

“Thank you for your sacrifice that others may be free. You died on the battlefield, far from all you held dear. But you are home now. You have come to your resting place. We are here to receive you with open arms and to lay you to rest,” the President said.

This as the President and Chief of the SANDF, General Rudzani Maphwanya, led the transfer ceremony and memorial service for the troops killed in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) at Swartkop Air Force Base in Tshwane.

Thursday's (13 February 2025) emotionally charged events saw the weather mirror the sombre mood as rain fell while the mortal remains of the soldiers were ushered in, offering a poignant backdrop to a painful moment for the nation.

The families of the deceased found some solace in receiving the remains of their loved ones as, addressing them and the nation, President Ramaphosa assured them that their sons had not died in vain.

"To the families gathered here, we thank you for your sacrifice, for you have made the ultimate sacrifice as well by letting this country have your sons so they can serve the cause of peace on our continent.

"And I thank you as a Commander in Chief of [the] Armed Forces because they have paid the ultimate price. We as South Africans join you in your grief as you feel pain as a result of your loss so overwhelming. As a nation, we will forever be thankful to you as individual families for the sacrifice you have made. We will give them the honours that they deserve."

Duty

The fallen soldiers had been deployed as part of South Africa's commitment to peacekeeping efforts in the DRC under the Southern African Development Community (SADC) mission. Their mission was to protect the defenceless and contribute to the vision of a conflict-free Africa.

"Our nation is in mourning for these brave souls who lost their lives in defence of our brothers and sisters in the eastern DRC. They lost their lives in the name of duty, in pursuit of peace, and in the cause of silencing the guns across our beloved continent," President Ramaphosa said.

The President also extended condolences to the families of the soldiers from Tanzania and Malawi who perished in the same mission, thanking the Ugandan government and SADC partners for their support in bringing back the nation's fallen heroes.

A nation in grief

Delivering his tribute, General Maphwanya expressed disappointment at the discourse surrounding SANDF's deployment, urging South Africans to respect the sacrifice of those who had perished.

"As South Africans, we sometimes behave as if we enjoy inflicting pain on ourselves. A nation in grief for their fallen heroes should not be throwing accusations and counter-accusations about the merits and demerits of our deployment," he said.

He also addressed the ongoing discussions about defence funding, arguing that while the issue remains pressing, it should not overshadow the moment of grief.

"Our fallen heroes would be asking if it is the right time to open a debate on defence funding. We have stated, without shame, that a drastic injection is required to build capacity in the SANDF, but these are interactions that we make with those who are supposed to listen to us," he said.

Maphwanya added that "we should not be politicising this matter, saying the SANDF could have done better. Our people were armed, resourced, and capable of meeting the challenge they faced."

President Ramaphosa also echoed General Maphwanya's concerns over the politicisation of the soldiers' deaths, calling for a moment of unity and respect.

"He is decrying the politicisation of this whole mission and indeed the politicisation of the lives of our soldiers. His call is a correct one. This is not a time to be debating all the matters that have been current in our media but a time to mourn the death of our fallen soldiers," he asserted.

Bravery

General Maphwanya paid tribute to the courage of the soldiers, stating that they had marched into the heart of darkness with unwavering resolve.

"Each member of the SANDF who answered the call to serve in the DRC carried out the mission with the spirit of selflessness and sacrifice. They fought gallantly against the M23 rebels who threatened the fragile peace, embodying the essence of what it means to be a defender of freedom," he said.

Turning to the grieving families, he reassured them that their loved ones bravery would never be forgotten.

"I want you to know that your loved ones served with unwavering bravery and looked death in the face. They challenged what seemed like a daunting task that many wouldn't have liked to face, and yet they persevered. Their commendable conduct personified the spirit of resilience, demonstrating a level of commitment that inspires us all. They did not back down in the face of adversity; instead, they rose to the occasion," he said.

Heroes

As the military planes stood silent on the tarmac and soldiers saluted their fallen comrades one last time, the weight of their sacrifice was felt.

“To the families, we say, take comfort that they were heroes. Their work in the DRC was not just about maintaining order; it was about building bridges, fostering understanding, and creating pathways to lasting peace,” President Ramaphosa stated.

Quoting the poet S.E.K Mqhayi, the President offered words of comfort.

“Be consoled, all you orphans. Be consoled, all you widows. Somebody has to die, so that something can be built. Somebody has to serve, so that others can live.”

As South Africa bowed its head in collective mourning, the President reaffirmed the nation’s commitment to peace, stability, and honouring the memory of those who had paid the ultimate price.

Stabilising the continent

The President emphasised that the country has a long-standing history of participating in peacekeeping missions, proving its dedication to stability on the continent.

Despite the sacrifices made, including the loss of soldiers, South Africa remains steadfast in its mission to build and maintain peace.

“As South Africa, we will not weaken in our resolve to realise the vision of an Africa free from war and conflict; an Africa free of poverty and underdevelopment; and an Africa at peace with itself and the world.

“The achievement of this vision is the most fitting tribute we can pay to our fallen heroes and the greatest honour to their memory. We will not forget them. These are the sons of our African soil, and these are the honoured heroes of our country,” President Ramaphosa said. – Source: SAnews.gov.za

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JOINT PRESS RELEASE: 16TH SOUTH AFRICA-EUROPEAN UNION MINISTERIAL POLITICAL DIALOGUE, 19 FEBRUARY 2025

The Minister of International Relations and Cooperation, Ronald Lamola, co-chaired the 16th Ministerial Political Dialogue (MPD) between South Africa and the European Union (EU) on Wednesday, 19 February 2025 in Cape Town. Minister Lamola was joined by Kaja Kallas, the EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice President of the European Commission in the context of the South Africa-EU Strategic Partnership.

The Minister of International Relations and Cooperation, Ronald Lamola, co-chaired the 16th Ministerial Political Dialogue (MPD) between South Africa and the European Union (EU) on Wednesday, 19 February 2025 in Cape Town. Minister Lamola was joined by Kaja Kallas, the EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice President of the European Commission in the context of the South Africa-EU Strategic Partnership.



The meeting was also attended by Parks Tau, Minister of Trade, Industry and Competition; John Steenhuisen, South African Minister of Agriculture; Siviwe Gwarube, South African Minister of Basic Education; and Dr Blade Nzimande, South African Minister of Science, Technology and Innovation. The High Representative’s three-day visit to Africa at the beginning of her mandate signals the EU’s commitment to the partnership with South Africa and with the continent.

The EU-South Africa Ministerial Political Dialogue builds on the joint aspiration to further the strategic partnership, which has grown in depth and ambition over the years. The political and security cooperation is strong, and so are trade and investment relations: South Africa is EU’s largest trading partner in sub-Saharan Africa, and the EU is South Africa’s first trade and investment partner.

The Ministerial Political Dialogue is a key milestone ahead of the Eighth EU-South Africa Summit, which is scheduled for 13 March 2025. The political engagements between South Africa and the EU contribute to the celebration of the 25th anniversary of the European Union’s partnership with Africa. In this context, both sides underscored the importance of holding the European Union-African Union Ministerial Meeting and Summit in 2025.

The Ministerial Political Dialogue presented an opportunity for the EU and South Africa to reiterate their common commitment to multilateralism, a consistent approach to the rules-based international order, and the centrality of the United Nations (UN) Charter. The parties further agreed on the need to reform the UN Security Council, recognising the urgent need to make it more representative, inclusive, transparent, efficient, democratic, and accountable.

Both sides affirmed their unwavering commitment to act in accordance with international law, including UN Charter and its purposes and principles. Both sides noted with distress the immense human suffering and the adverse impact of wars and conflicts around the world. Both sides reaffirmed that all states must act in a manner consistent with the purposes and principles of the UN Charter in its entirety. In line with the UN Charter, all states must refrain from the threat or use of force to seek territorial acquisition against the territorial integrity and sovereignty or political independence of any state and affirm that all parties in conflicts must comply with their obligations under international law, including international humanitarian law and international human rights law. Both sides further agreed that, guided by these principles, they would support efforts towards a just peace in Ukraine, Occupied Palestinian Territory, Sudan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and other major conflicts around the globe.

South Africa and the EU also discussed their cooperation in multilateral and regional fora, focusing in particular on their joint efforts to promote human rights and sustainable development and to address climate change. The EU emphasised its alignment with, and support for South Africa's G20's presidency priorities.

In view of the summit, South Africa and the EU also looked at their economic, trade, and investment agenda, including outstanding issues on both sides. Underlining the importance of a just energy transition, the EU and South Africa reviewed opportunities to step up cooperation on sustainable value chains, including critical raw materials with a view to further their respective competitiveness, economic security and decarbonisation efforts. The parties agreed that critical minerals have emerged as a pivotal topic on the global stage, reflecting a critical role in driving industrialisation, technological innovation, and inclusive economic growth. South Africa underscored the need for the transition to a low carbon economy to be just, enhance energy security and create jobs. The two sides acknowledged the role of regulatory cooperation, investment facilitation, as well as of businesses in driving these initiatives. South Africa and the EU further welcomed the robust collaboration in the areas of education, research and innovation. Both sides discussed opportunities to further enhance cooperation on open science and nuclear medical applications, to ensure progress on South Africa joining the Clean Hydrogen Mission of Mission Innovation, to broaden the participation of South Africa in the EU Framework Programme for Research and Innovation (R&I) Horizon Europe and in the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions, as well as to promote mobility and cooperation through Erasmus+.

It was agreed that international trade is an important engine for inclusive economic growth, combating poverty and hunger, and promoting sustainable development and the Sustainable Development Goals. South Africa and the EU also stressed that for trade and investment to act as a driver of global growth, well-being and prosperity, a transparent rules-based multilateral trading system, that is non-discriminatory, fair, open, inclusive, equitable, and sustainable is a necessity. Both sides reaffirmed that the World Trade Organisation must be at the core of such a multilateral trading system. – Source: www.dirco.gov.za

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SOUTH AFRICA CONGRATULATES LERATO MATABOGE ON HER ELECTION TO THE AU COMMISSION



The Government of the Republic of South Africa congratulates Lerato Mataboge on her historic election to the position Commissioner for Infrastructure and Energy of the African Union (AU).

Lerato Mataboge, who currently holds the position of Deputy Director-General in the Department of Trade, Industry and Competition (the dtic), boasts an impressive track record. She is the founder and former leader of Trade Invest Africa, an initiative aimed at promoting sustainable partnerships between governments and the private sector, with a particular emphasis on boosting intra-African trade and investment in infrastructure and energy.

Minister Lamola said, “We are confident that Ms Mataboge will play a pivotal role in advancing infrastructure development and enhancing energy security across our continent.” – Source: www.dirco.gov.za

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SOUTH AFRICA ELECTED CHAIR OF AFRICAN REGIONAL LABOUR ADMINISTRATION CENTRE GOVERNING COUNCIL

The Ministry of Employment and Labour has welcomed the election of South Africa as the chair of the African Regional Labour Administration Centre (ARLAC) Governing Council for the 2025–2027 term of office.

The Minister of Employment and Labour, Nomakhosazana Meth, will serve as the chair of the ARLAC Governing Council following the election of South Africa at the 51st Governing Council meeting held in Lusaka, Zambia, from 10 to 14 February 2025.

The Minister was represented at the summit by Deputy Minister Judith Nemadzinga-Tshabalala, who successfully led the South African delegation.

The ARLAC is a regional institution with a mandate to strengthen labour administration systems in Africa through training, research, and consultancy advisory services. It was established in 1974 by the International Labour Organisation and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

“We welcome the election of South Africa by member countries and wish to thank the outgoing chair of the Governing Council, Minister E. Moyo from Zimbabwe, and wish him well in his endeavours. We wish to also extend sincere gratitude to the government of Zambia for their warm welcome and hospitality,” Minister Meth said.

Vice-President Mutale Nalumango of the Republic of Zambia was the guest speaker during the meeting of the Governing Council, and she emphasised the importance of fair employment and tackling informal employment.

The Governing Council meeting was preceded by a High-Level Ministerial Symposium on 12 February 2025, which featured a presentation by the International Labour Organisation (ILO) under the theme: “Innovative Approaches to Tackling Informality and Promoting Transition towards Formality to Promote Decent Work”, which is linked to Sustainable Development Goal 8 (SDG8) on “Decent Work and Economic Growth”.

The meeting focused on the importance of formalising informal work and the need to establish a legislative and policy framework to ensure the realisation of decent work on the African continent.

South Africa will also serve alongside four vice-chairs: Sierra Leone, Malawi, Sudan, and Zimbabwe.

Additionally, South Africa also serves in the Committee of Senior Officials, together with other officials from Zimbabwe, Sudan, Zambia, and Sierra Leone. The committee is tasked with overseeing governance, policy implementation, and programming, and meets four times a year to report to the Governing Council.

The outcomes of the 51st ARLAC Governing Council meeting and High-Level Ministerial Symposium reflect South Africa's continued commitment to promoting decent work, social dialogue, and regional cooperation within the ARLAC community.

The next Governing Council meeting is scheduled to take place on the sidelines of the International Labour Conference in Geneva, Switzerland, in June 2025.

“The Department of Employment and Labour welcomes the election of South Africa as chair of the ARLAC Governing Council, which is an important institution with a mandate to provide training for labour administrators, and the provision of consultancy and advisory service aimed at strengthening labour administration systems in member countries.

“This is a very proud moment for the country, as Minister Nomakhosazana Meth assumes the chair of the ARLAC Governing Council. Minister Meth thanked Deputy Minister Nemadzinga-Tshabalala for her outstanding work at the recent ARLAC Governing Council meeting,” the department said. – Source: SAnews.gov.za



SOUTH AFRICA’S PARTICIPATION AT THE 33RD HAVANA INTERNATIONAL BOOK FAIR 2025 IN CUBA

South Africa will be the guest of honour from 13 to 23 February 2025 at the 33rd Havana International Book Fair in Cuba.

The invitation for South Africa's participation as the guest of honour at the Book Fair was issued through the Department of Sport, Arts and Culture.

Havana, one of the Seven Wonders Cities of the World, will welcome readers, authors, publishers, and librarians to Book Fair. The Fair is considered the largest cultural festival on the island and the event with the highest attendance in Cuba.

The 33rd Edition of the Havana International Book Fair will be celebrated under the theme *A whole country in books*. This will be in celebration of the 25th anniversary of the creation of the Territorial Publishing System. The fair is also dedicated to the 130th anniversary of the fall in combat of Cuban national hero, José Martí.

South Africa's participation will be under the theme, *Papers of Resistance*, looking at the importance of writing in different forms.

Paper has always been at the heart of writing and storytelling. From a student writing their first poem in a notebook to a prisoner sharing their story on scraps of paper or a published book that changes how people think, paper is where ideas come to life. Even today, with computers and phones, paper still matters.

Old letters and documents in archives tell us about our past struggles. Banned books printed in secret gave people hope during hard times. For writers, paper is special. It is where they first put their thoughts down, where they cross out and rewrite until the words are just right. It's where stories are kept safe, where cultures preserve their memories, and where brave voices live on long after they're gone.

The country's literary landscape has been a powerful force in South Africa's journey from segregation and oppression to democracy and unity. Through their influential voices and diverse narratives, South African authors have traced the path towards equality, cultural renaissance and the celebration of diverse identities.

Minister Gayton McKenzie, reflecting on the theme for this year, said, "The medium of paper has been the keeper of our stories, our history, heritage and our dreams for the future. This fascinating window into our literary history should produce compelling discussions, insights and a celebration of who we are as a people and who we are yet to become."

A delegation of South African authors, poets and literary figures will participate at the South African Stand at the Fair, as well as other stands where they are invited to participate in discussions, seminars, interviews, conversations and lectures.

A delegation of fifteen literary practitioners has been supported to represent South Africa at the Fair. – Source: www.dsac.gov.za

SA AGULHAS II CONCLUDES ANNUAL RESEARCH VOYAGE TO ANTARCTICA

South Africa's iconic supply and research vessel, the "SA Agulhas II" has berthed in Cape Town, following two months in Antarctica for its annual supply and research voyage.

"As we welcome the SA Agulhas II to Cape Town, we celebrate its role as a platform for discovery, collaboration, and commitment to sustainability. Together, we continue to position South Africa as a global leader in environmental science and conservation, ensuring a healthier planet for future generations," Minister of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment Dr Dion George said on Monday, 17 February 2025.

Cape Town is the home port of the SA Agulhas II. Commissioned in 2012, the SA Agulhas II, is a cutting-edge polar research vessel equipped with advanced laboratories, state-of-the-art scientific instrumentation, and facilities for training marine cadets.

SA'S PARTICIPATION AT THE 33rd HAVANA INTERNATIONAL BOOK FAIR IN CUBA, FROM THE 13th – 23rd FEB 2025

S O U T H A F R I C A N A U T H O R S



Ms Farren Cloete



Mr Eugene Damons



Ms Nombeko Nontshokweni



Dr John Laurens Maralack



Ms Unathi Nkayi



Ms Mosima Mokoteng



Mr Zonwabele Tshayana



Ms Annerle Barnard



Ms Lungile Mtetwa



Dr Carl Hendricks



Mr Sven Axelrad



Mr Tuelo Gabonewe



Mr Tevin Boitumelo Mainganya



Ms Nokubongwa Lukhele



Mr Molaodi Sekake

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“Returning from its annual Antarctic relief voyage, the ship plays a pivotal role in enabling research missions to Antarctica and the Southern Ocean, contributing significantly to studying climate systems, biodiversity, and oceanography.

“The vessel facilitates groundbreaking research and strengthens South Africa’s contributions to global scientific initiatives and environmental sustainability,” the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment (DFFE) said.

En route back, the vessel docked in East London for a public Open Day and a demonstration cruise for members of parliament, stakeholders, and the media from 14 to 17 February 2025 at the Port of East London in the Eastern Cape.

Minister George acknowledged the important role played by the crew that took the vessel to Antarctica and back.

“To the crew of the *SA Agulhas II*, the scientists, and the experts on board, we commend your dedication and expertise. Your work in extreme environments is a testament to South Africa’s resilience, innovation, and leadership in environmental science,” he said.

The schools’ Open Day on Friday, 14 February 2025, saw more than 1 000 learners drawn from schools across the Buffalo City Metro experience the wonders of marine science and gain firsthand insights into the operations of this ice breaker.

“This initiative highlights our ongoing commitment to education and capacity building, inspiring the next generation of scientists, explorers, and environmental custodians,” Minister George said.

During the public Open Day on Saturday, 15 February 2025, over 3 000 attendees engaged with exhibitions hosted by the department and its partners.

Visitors had the unique opportunity to tour the vessel, interact with experts, and learn about the groundbreaking research taking place in the Southern Ocean and Antarctica.

These engagements not only underscored the significance of the work done but also reinforced the vital role these regions play in shaping our shared environmental future.

“We extend our heartfelt appreciation to Deputy Minister Narend Singh for his outstanding leadership throughout the school’s programme, the *SA Agulhas II* Open Day, and the demonstration cruise to Cape Town.

“His unwavering commitment to engaging with stakeholders and the public has been invaluable. Our gratitude also goes to the members of parliament who participated, demonstrating their strong support for South Africa’s scientific and environmental initiatives,” the Minister said. –

Source: SAnews.gov.za

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HOME AFFAIRS LAUNCHES NEW TOURISM PROGRAMME FOR CHINA AND INDIA

The Department of Home Affairs officially launched its new Trusted Tour Operator Scheme.



Phase one of the Department of Home Affairs' new visa programme, which was announced last September, officially went live on Wednesday, 12 February 2025. The Trusted Tour Operator Scheme (TTOS) will now make it easier for selected tour operators from China and India to obtain visas for tourists who wish to visit South Africa.

According to *Tourism Update*, the TTOS addresses an ongoing obstacle to tourism growth from these nations due to long queues, red tape, and not being able to process group applications timeously.

Before the TTOS was established, there were only two South African missions in China and only two in India. These were expected to serve the 2.8 billion people living in those countries who wished to visit South Africa.

Now, under the new TTOS digital-first system, tourists from both these countries using approved tour operators will not have to visit a mission, fill in a form, or stand in a long queue for visas. They will instead receive their visas digitally within three days.

"The fact that Home Affairs took the TTOS from conceptualisation to implementation in less than six months demonstrates our commitment to embracing digital transformation and to playing our role as an economic enabler to create jobs." Minister of Home Affairs, Dr Leon Schreiber, said.

A boost for the economy

Minister Schreiber also said that the TTOS was only the start of Home Affairs' embrace of their role as an economic enabler.

"Research indicates that boosting tourism by only 10% per year can boost annual economic growth by 0.6% and create tens of thousands of new jobs for South Africans. Travelling in large groups is the preferred option for many tourists from some countries, and it is time for our visa system to adapt in order to reflect and capitalise on this reality." he said when the visa scheme was announced.

"Exciting as it is, TTOS is itself but an interim measure to boost tourism while we move with speed to digitally transform Home Affairs. Ultimately, our vision is for a fully automated process that delivers secure tourist visa outcomes digitally and within seconds to tourists from around the world." Minister Schreiber added. – Source: www.sapeople.com

WORLD TRAVEL MARKET AFRICA 2025: A GATEWAY TO GLOBAL TOURISM OPPORTUNITIES

The global travel industry is set to gather in Cape Town for World Travel Market (WTM) Africa 2025, a premier event that brings together industry leaders, investors, and travel professionals for three dynamic days of networking, innovation, and collaboration.

Taking place from 9 to 11 April 2025 at the Cape Town International Convention Centre, WTM Africa offers attendees a comprehensive platform to engage in high-impact meetings, gain insights from cutting-edge conferences, and explore the latest trends shaping the tourism sector.

With more than 600 exhibitors representing diverse sectors of the travel industry, this year's event will feature discussions on crucial topics such as the diaspora, wine tourism, youth development, business travel, investment, travel technology, responsible tourism, and LGBTQ+ travel. This multifaceted approach ensures that WTM Africa continues to serve as a global hub for industry professionals looking to expand their market presence and build meaningful partnerships.

Key highlights of WTM Africa 2025

One of the most anticipated elements of WTM Africa is the Speed Networking session, an exclusive opportunity for exhibitors and hosted buyers to engage in rapid one-on-one meetings. This structured format is designed to maximise connections and foster business relationships that drive growth and innovation.

Another standout feature is the Painting with Wine: Conservation Focus initiative. In collaboration with Painted Wolf Wines, this unique experience raises awareness for wildlife conservation through wine-painted art displays. Contributions from the event will support the Painted Wolf Wines initiative, with one lucky participant taking home an exquisite piece of artwork.

For those looking to connect in a more relaxed setting, The Buzz Bar will serve as the event's newest networking hub. Showcasing local beverage brands, this space will allow attendees to socialize and collaborate in an informal yet professional environment.



Africa Tourism Investment Conference: Unlocking growth opportunities

A major draw for investors and stakeholders in the travel sector, the Africa Tourism Investment Conference, in partnership with JLL, will take a deep dive into investment opportunities across various sectors. With a renewed focus on real estate prospects and economic growth, the conference will provide actionable insights into the future of tourism development in Africa.

Tickets for the conference and other key events will soon be available on the WTM Africa website, ensuring that attendees have access to exclusive sessions and networking opportunities tailored to their interests.

As WTM Africa 2025 approaches, the excitement within the industry is palpable. With an emphasis on innovation, sustainability, and strategic growth, this year's event promises to be a transformative experience for professionals eager to shape the future of global travel.

For those passionate about tourism and looking to connect with industry leaders, WTM Africa 2025 is the must-attend event of the year. –
Source: www.thenewspaper.co.za

HERMANUS TO WELCOME WORLD-CLASS WHALE CENTRE

A groundbreaking new South African Whale Centre is set to rise in the heart of Hermanus, promising a world-class fusion of marine conservation, cutting-edge research, and immersive education.



Hermanus, the whale-watching capital of South Africa, is set to welcome an incredible new addition to its marine conservation efforts—a state-of-the-art South African Whale Centre (SAWC).

The project, spearheaded by the Old Harbour Museum board of trustees, in collaboration with a dedicated project development team and the University of Pretoria's (UP) Mammal Research Institute (MRI) Whale Unit, will transform the current Whale House Museum into a globally recognised hub for marine research and education. This cutting-edge facility will house the prestigious UP MRI Whale Unit, which has long been a key player in cetacean research. Previously based at an off-campus field station in Hermanus, the Whale Unit will now have a permanent home at the SAWC, where it will continue its groundbreaking research on whales, dolphins, and porpoises in southern African waters.

More than just a research hub, the SAWC will redefine how people engage with marine life. Visitors will be able to step into an extraordinary 3D immersive dome, where interactive exhibits and augmented reality displays will bring whale behaviour and migration to life. Whale song, one of the most fascinating aspects of these ocean giants, will also be explored through virtual encounters that offer a unique window into their underwater world.

But the SAWC isn't just about education—it will also serve as a key international research facility. In partnership with the UP MRI Whale Unit, the centre will remain at the forefront of scientific advancements, ensuring that the latest research is used to promote conservation and understanding.

“The University of Pretoria has been a cornerstone of whale research in Hermanus for many years, and our partnership with the SAWC represents a significant step forward in our shared commitment to marine conservation,” said Dr Els Vermeulen, head of the UP MRI Whale Unit.

“This new centre will not only provide a world-class platform for research but also offer unparalleled educational opportunities, inspiring future generations of marine scientists and conservationists. We are excited to continue our long-standing collaboration and contribute our expertise to the SAWC, ensuring its success as a leading centre for whale research and education.”

Grahame Lindop, Conceptualisation Lead at the SAWC, echoed these sentiments, adding, “Our mission is to create a world-class facility that not only showcases the beauty of whales but also educates the public on marine conservation. We believe in the power of community, collaboration, and legacy to drive awareness and conservation efforts.”

The UP MRI Whale Unit has been at the forefront of whale research since its establishment in 1985, dedicated to understanding the behaviour, ecology, and population dynamics of cetaceans.

“For 40 years, the UP MRI Whale Unit has been dedicated to understanding and protecting these incredible creatures,” added Dr Vermeulen.

“The SAWC provides an exciting opportunity to build on this legacy, expanding our research capabilities and reaching a wider audience with our vital conservation message. We look forward to a future of impactful research, education, and collaboration at the SAWC.”

The project has received strong backing from provincial departments of Cultural Affairs and Sport, as well as Finance and Economic Opportunities, recognising its potential to enhance tourism and drive economic growth in the region. The SAWC team remains committed to developing a world-class facility that will inspire every visitor to take action in protecting our oceans.

With a vision that combines cutting-edge technology, vital research, and impactful education, the South African Whale Centre is set to make waves—not just in Hermanus, but across the world. This is a project driven by passion, science, and a shared love for the ocean's gentle giants. And when it finally opens its doors, it will be more than just a museum—it will be a space where knowledge meets wonder and where every visitor leaves with a renewed commitment to protecting our marine world. – Source: www.goodthingsguy.com

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INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT CHANGES YOUNG LIVES IN THE EASTERN CAPE

Students in the Eastern Cape have received a great deal of support from international donor David Brown, who has chosen to boost education in South Africa.

Twelve beneficiaries currently receive educational support from an American funder via Tangible Africa, an engagement project of Nelson Mandela University Computing Sciences Department and the Leva Foundation non-profit organisation.

Prof. Jean Greyling, Tangible Africa Founder and Associate Professor at Nelson Mandela University Computing Sciences Department, said the support received has been ongoing for learners and students strong in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM).

“I have been actively involved in raising bursaries for students and learners for nearly 10 years, and I am convinced that well-managed educational scholarships must be the most effective way not only to impact individuals but also to change the trajectory of families and communities,” said Greyling.



At the end of last year, Amazon Vice President David Brown committed a substantial amount from his own pocket towards bursaries managed by the Leva Foundation and Tangible Africa.

Brown currently supports four Grade 10 learners from Daliwonga Senior Secondary School in Cofimvaba who have come through Tangible Africa's coding club in Tsomo; four Grade 10 learners at Alexander Road High School in Gqeberha who have come through Tangible Africa's coding clubs in the city; two second-year and two first-year students doing Computing Sciences degrees at Nelson Mandela University, as well as a PhD researcher who is investigating the impact of unplugged coding on primary school Mathematics.

Seattle-based Brown, an Alexander Road High School alumnus and BCom Honours graduate from Nelson Mandela University, is a long-time supporter of Tangible Africa.

"Tangible Africa is one of the groundbreaking initiatives pioneered by The Leva Foundation. I have personally witnessed the impact of this programme, which has enabled us to identify naturally gifted young programmers among students who might otherwise never have discovered their talent. It is an honour to be able to contribute to some of their sponsorships, opening pathways to university degrees and careers in technology," said Brown.

Kieran White, a student in Computer Sciences at Nelson Mandela University, said the impact of the bursary is immeasurable. "David has changed my life in ways I can't describe, and I can't imagine where I would be right now if he had not offered to sponsor my studies. He isn't just a silent figure in the background, though. He takes an active part in ensuring that I am coping with my studies and life in general. He does this by regularly checking up on me and providing assistance where he can. He is truly an incredible man and role model to me," said White.

John Emery received funding to study BSc Computer Sciences at Nelson Mandela University this year and is excited to start his studies.

"The financial relief [of the bursary] is massive and the burden of me studying further has been lifted. I'm incredibly grateful to be given the opportunity to better myself. On a personal level, the understanding, compassion, and commitment shown by Mr Brown and the Leva Foundation has had a huge impact on me. It has shown me that faith, hope, and trust do exist. And that exceptional people of value do exist. I hope that in some manner I can 'pay this forward' one day," said Emery.

Corban Olivier, a BCom student in Computer Sciences and Information Systems, also wants to pay it forward one day:

"Having been introduced to Tangible Africa's coding games in Grade 9 sparked my interest in coding. I am grateful for the bursary as it affords me the opportunity to merge my interests in Business and Computer Sciences. The scholarship also allows me to meet other people who are passionate about making an impact on their communities through Computer Sciences," said Olivier.

In Tsomo in the rural Eastern Cape, Tangible Africa's Future Skills Programme Coordinator Lusanda Maqungo reports that the four Grade 10 learners who had been part of the Tsomo Academy since Grade 6, will again this year receive tutoring and mentorship in Mathematics, Coding and Robotics, and English.

"This support gives them a strong foundation. Thanks to the investment and guidance of the David Brown bursary scheme, these learners have emerged as promising young scholars with bright futures in STEM fields," said Maqungo.

Leva Foundation CEO Ryan le Roux was also grateful to Brown for investing in the Eastern Cape's talented youth.

"Leva Foundation works towards getting people active in the economy. We encourage companies and individuals to partner with us in this. By registering an NPO in the United States, we have created an ideal platform for people like David." – Source: www.goodthingsguy.com

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TYLA AND SEAN PAUL DROP *PUSH 2 START* REMIX—A CELEBRATION OF SOUTH AFRICAN AND JAMAICAN VIBES

South African star Tyla has done it again—this time teaming up with the legendary Sean Paul for a sizzling remix of “Push 2 Start”, which dropped on Friday, 14 February 2025.



The collaboration is already setting the internet on fire, and fans can't get enough of the electrifying blend of Afro-pop and dancehall beats.

Tyla, the rising star who has been putting South Africa on the global music map, continues to make her home country beam with pride. Known for her captivating vocals and viral hits, Tyla's journey from Johannesburg to international stardom has been nothing short of inspiring. Now, the talented singer has joined forces with Sean Paul, who needs no introduction. He's the voice behind some of the biggest dancefloor anthems of

the last two decades. From *Get Busy to Temperature*, his tracks are still guaranteed to fill dancefloors worldwide. His collaboration with Tyla brings together the best of South African and Jamaican flavours—a fusion that fans are celebrating with pure joy.

Speaking about the collab with Billboard, Tyla shared her excitement, “Everyone loves Sean Paul, there’s so many songs of his that I absolutely loved growing up,” she said, even breaking into the hook from his iconic 2003 hit *I’m Still in Love With You*.



“All those songs are so nostalgic and special and vibey. I really wanted that feeling in the song. And he’s been speaking to me about wanting to do something, so I felt like this would be the perfect thing.”

Tyla is no stranger to blending sounds from different corners of the world. She previously teamed up with Jamaican dancehall star Skillibeng and rapper Gunna on her track *Jump*, proving that her talent knows no boundaries. This latest remix with Sean Paul is yet another reminder of her versatility and ability to bridge cultures through music.

And fans are living for it—the internet is buzzing with excitement and fans have flocked to YouTube to share their love for the remix.

Tyla’s journey continues to inspire, and this latest remix is a feel-good celebration of music’s power to bring cultures together. South Africa stands proud, watching its star shine brighter than ever. – Source: www.goodthingsguy.com

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TEN-YEAR-OLD CHESS PRODIGY FROM JEFFREYS BAY TO COMPETE AT WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP

Ten-year-old Bulumko Ndumela, with her sharp mind and unwavering determination, is poised to take on the world of chess, earning a coveted spot in not one but two prestigious competitions.

At just 10 years old, Bulumko Ndumela has proven to be quite a skilled chess player after being selected to participate in the under-10 Female Section of the South African Junior Closed Chess Championships (SAJCC) 2025. The event will take place from 31 March to 5 April 2025 in Cape Town in the Western Cape. There, she will represent her region and the province at the nationals.

But Bulumko’s journey doesn’t stop there. Her exceptional abilities have also earned her an invitation to the World Cadet and Youth Rapid and Blitz Chess Championship (WCYRB) in Rhodes, Greece, from 12 to 18 April 2025.

“This wonderful chess trip will provide her with the opportunity to travel and compete against top players from around the world,” said Makukhanye Primary School where Bulumko attends. – Source: www.goodthingsguy.com



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SOUTH AFRICAN SPRINT LEGEND AKANI SIMBINE MAKES SOLID START TO INDOOR CIRCUIT IN BERLIN

It’s not often that you see Akani Simbine running in February, but they say 2025 should be viewed as 20 20 THRIVE—and that is what the South African sprinting legend is trying to do by running on the indoor circuit for the first time.



The 31-year-old Olympic silver medallist—from last year’s Paris Games in the 4x100m relay—began his journey to September’s world athletics championships in Tokyo by participating in the ISTAF World Indoor Tour meeting in Berlin on Friday night, 14 February 2025.

Simbine lined up in the 60m dash, where his outdoor personal best is 6.53 seconds. At least the indoor meetings allow for a heat and final for the sprinters, which made Simbine’s trip to the German capital more worthwhile. He emerged victorious in his heat in front of a packed 12 000-capacity crowd at the Mercedes-Benz Arena.

Simbine stopped the clock in 6.63 seconds to edge out Nigeria’s Folawiyo Olaoye, who was awarded the same time, while Germany’s Lucas Ansah-Pepurah finished third in 6.65.

Another German, Heiko Gussmann, won the second heat in a quick 6.57 and entered the final as the favourite.

Despite Simbine’s best efforts, Gussmann clinched the final in the same 6.57 time, which the South African was also awarded to claim second spot, while Kevin Kranz of Germany was third in 6.61.

The most notable performance on the night came from pole vault superstar Armand Duplantis, who set a new meeting record of 6.10, which was also a world lead for 2025.

But for Simbine—who finished fourth in the 100m final at the Paris Olympics—the cobwebs of the pre-season training has now been removed, and he will hope to quicken up over the next few weeks ahead of the world indoor championships, which will take place at the Nanjing Sports Training Centre in China from March 21-23.

Two other potential South African medallists for the world indoor championships will be 800m star Prudence Sekgodiso and middle-distance athlete Tshepo Tshite.

Olympic finalist Sekgodiso broke the South African 800m indoor record in Karlsruhe, Germany, last week and equalled her time of 1:59.88 at a meeting in Lievin, France on Thursday night.

Tshite, whose preferred distance is the 1 500m, showed that he is in tremendous early-season form in the men’s mile at the same Lievin meeting.

He posted a new South African indoor record of 3:54.10 to finish fifth behind Norway’s Jakob Ingebrigtsen, who produced an astonishing run to break the world record with 3:45.14. – Source: www.iol.co.za

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SOUTH AFRICAN RIDER RUCHE MOODLEY MAKES HISTORY, JOINING MOTO3 CHAMPIONSHIP

Ruche Moodley joins the Binder Brothers on the world stage as he begins his Moto3 Championship journey.

Gqeberha-born teenager Ruche Moodley has made a huge career jump, joining Moto3 for the 2025 Championship. Joining fellow South Africans Brad and Darren Binder, Moodley has big dreams and a heart set on reaching MotoGP one day, too!

When he was younger, he made it clear, “I want to be MotoGP World Champion,” and has remained laser-focused in his pursuit of this goal.

Sharing the sheer joy of his recent success, Moodley explains that he is excited to start this next journey.

"I'm super excited to start this new journey. It's a dream come true to be racing in the Moto3 World Championship. It's a great opportunity, and I need to work hard to make the most out of it," said Moodley of his recent promotion.

Moodley is the son of former South African superbike champion Arushen Moodley, so racing runs within his blood.

Moodley has joined the world stage as a member of the BOE Motorsports squad. In doing so, he will be the first South African rider of colour to compete in this world championship series. A big historic moment for the South African. Riding a KTM, he will ride alongside teammate Cormac Buchanan of New Zealand. BOE Motorsports has previously nurtured the talents of Joel Kelso, David Muñoz, and Ana Carrasco, the first female to compete in the world championship series.

"In the team we have already worked with young riders before, and Moodley is the new project we have for 2025. It's going to be a year of hard work with the hope that results will come, sooner rather than later. Ruche has a lot of potential, and after the first day of testing in Portimao, I believe that we can achieve good results this season," said BOE Motorsports team owner, Jose Angel Gutierrez Boe.

Moodley hopes to follow in his mentor, Brad Binder's tracks after he became the first South African to be crowned the Moto3 World Champion in 2016.

"My ambition is to learn as quickly as possible. I want to be fighting at the front to show what I'm capable of. South African fans will be entertained in each category on race days with Brad Binder in MotoGP, his brother Darryn in Moto2, and me in Moto3. I'm proud to be representing my country in one of the most competitive categories in the world," concluded the youngster.

The 2025 Moto3 season features 22 Grand Prix races across 18 countries on five continents. The opening round of the 2025 championship takes place in Thailand on 2 March 2025 and concludes on 16 November 2025 in Valencia, Spain. – Source: www.goodthingsguy.com



JABHI MABUZA'S JOURNEY TO REPRESENTING SOUTH AFRICA IN ESPORTS IS INSPIRATIONAL

Jabhi Mabuza is on a journey to Japan, where he will represent South Africa at the Capcom Cup XI—a global eSports tournament.



Jabhi "JabhiM" Mabuza is a competitive Fighting Games player for Goliath Gaming, hailing from Alexandra township. However, before he was one of South Africa's best eSports athletes, he did everything he could to learn. The tale of how Mabuza has earned his place in representing South Africa globally is one of determination and inspiration.

Mabuza was first introduced to eSports via YouTube. He developed a passion, but without a console of his own to play games, he spent his days studying strategy and watching other esports athletes on YouTube. When he finally got a gaming console, he dived into the gaming world armed with unique insights that quickly pushed him to the top of the game. His game of choice is *Street Fighter*.

Now Mabuza has qualified to compete in the prestigious Capcom Cup XI being held in Japan. Between 5 and 9 March 2025, the best Street Fighter esports athletes will compete for the top prize, a whopping US\$1.28 million prize pool.

Mabuza is excited to be heading to Japan for the Capcom Cup and is looking forward to representing his country on the global stage once again. He competed in several tournaments to earn his place at the Capcom Cup. His participation in the big event marks a significant milestone for both Mabuza and the South African esports community.

"I feel this will be a whole new Capcom Cup experience for me. I now have a character who's opened my eyes to the game and has shown me what I feel I have been missing in previous competitions. Leading up to the tournament I've been putting in the work behind the scenes and will do my best to represent South Africa as best as I can in Japan," said Mabuza.

The manager of Goliath Gaming, Stephan Vermaas, shared how great it was watching the gaming community rally around Jabhi before he heads off. Many have assisted him in his preparations.

"Many of the top South African players, who frequently attend our McDonald's gaming activations and private training bootcamps, have given their time and talents to help him prepare! Our brand partners like McDonald's SA, Acer Africa, Red Bull, Nike, and Ridge Park Sports Club have each offered support to see our local hero represent South Africa abroad. Jabhi's journey has really been an inspiration to the South African esports' community, and we'll be shouting for him all the way!" Vermaas adds. – Source: www.goodthingsguy.com

RECORD SETTERS: PRUDENCE MAKES HISTORY AND TSHEPO TOPS THE SHORT MILE

Athletes Prudence Sekgodiso and Tshepo Tshite have made South Africa proud thanks to the new records they set on international indoor tracks.

Sekgodiso held her own in Liévin, France at the World Athletics Indoor Tour Gold meeting like a superstar—quite literally equalling the indoor 800m national record she set herself in Germany's Karlsruhe where she won—while Tshite set a new national record of his own.

In Liévin, Sekgodiso not only clocked a time of 1:59.88 once again; she also went on to scoop second place for her stretch. What is remarkable about her 800m record is that it was set in what just so happened to be her second indoor 800m heat.



This achievement made her the first South African female athlete to shave off enough time to get under the two-minute mark indoor style, as Team South Africa proudly shared.

Coming in blazing, Tshite earned a time of 3:54.10 for the short track mile he undertook in Liévin. As per Athletics South Africa, this clipped a national record that had stood for over two decades as previously set by Clyde Colenso.

The short mile star of South Africa also managed to nab fifth place with his time in his race, bringing home a new clock for other athletes to beat. – Source: www.goodthingguys.com

CAPE2RIO 2026 YACHT RACE OFFICIALLY LAUNCHED

The highly anticipated Cape2Rio 2026 Yacht Race was officially launched on 13 February 2025 in Cape Town at the Royal Cape Yacht Club (RCYC), setting the stage for another thrilling edition of this iconic transatlantic sailing event. Known for its gruelling 3 300-nautical-mile course from Table Bay, Cape Town, to Guanabara Bay, Rio de Janeiro, Cape2Rio continues to attract top sailors from around the world, eager to test their endurance, skill, and ocean racing expertise.

Registration is now open, with 11 teams confirmed, including five from South America, out of an expected 30 competitors. The race begins on 27 December 2026, and can take up to a month to complete, testing sailors in one of the most challenging ocean crossings.

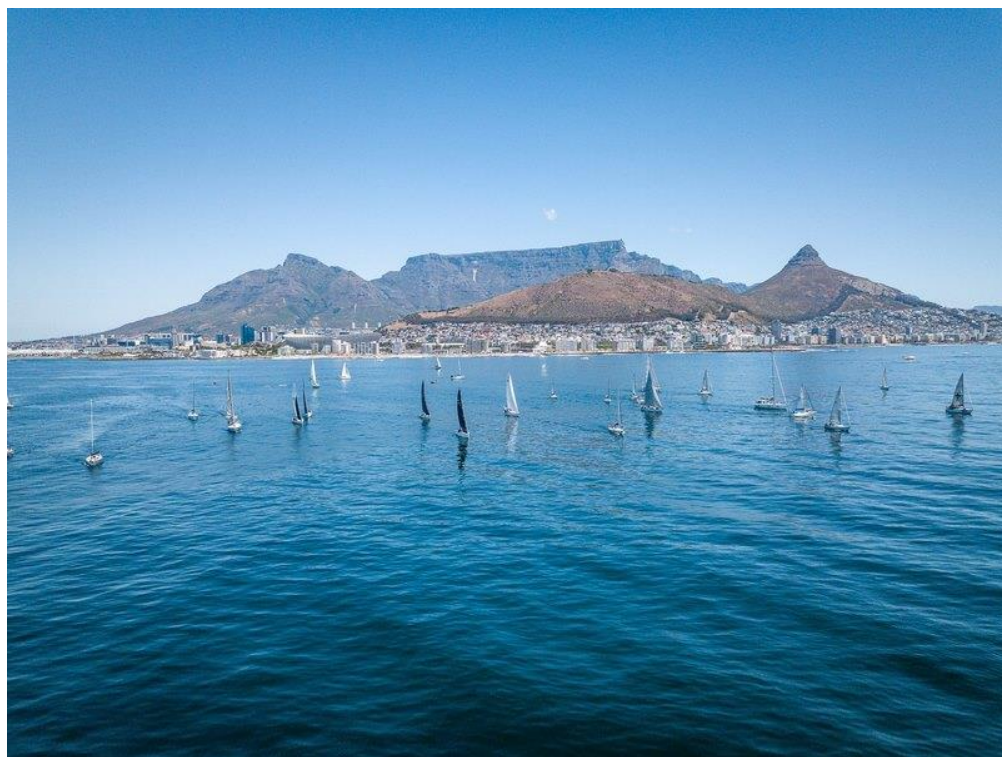
A celebration of sport, partnership, and sustainability

The launch event featured a keynote address by Cape Town Mayor Geordin Hill-Lewis, who highlighted the strong relationship between Cape Town and Brazil, strengthened by South African Airways' new direct flights to São Paulo. 2023 Cape2Rio champion Adrian Kuttel shared his experience of winning one of the world's most prestigious yacht races.

A key highlight of the evening was the introduction of major sponsors:

- Alexforbes was unveiled as an official sponsor of Cape2Rio 2026.
- Alexforbes reaffirmed its commitment to South African sailing by sponsoring the RCYC Sailing Academy team.
- South African Airways was named a travel partner, aligning with its new direct flight route from Cape Town to São Paulo.

Empowering the next generation of sailors



Following the success of the Alexforbes ArchAngel entry, which secured third place in 2023, Alexforbes continues its support for youth sailing by introducing an all-female crew from the RCYC Sailing Academy. The young sailors, aged 21 to 26, are undergoing rigorous training to prepare for the 2026 race, focusing on teamwork, boat handling, and navigation.

The RCYC Sailing Academy, established in 2012, has provided young South Africans with valuable life skills through sailing, opening doors to competitive opportunities and maritime careers.

Cape2Rio 2026 Champions Ocean Conservation

The race has taken a major step forward in environmental responsibility with the introduction of SeaKeepers as its official environmental partner. Participating yachts will join the SeaKeepers Discovery Programme, supporting marine research initiatives during the race.

Competitors will also contribute to the Nippon Foundation-GEBCO Seabed 2030 Project, a global initiative to map the world's ocean floor. This collaboration underscores Cape2Rio's commitment to ocean conservation, ensuring the race not only tests human endurance but also benefits scientific research.

The countdown to Cape2Rio 2026 begins

With just under a year to go, excitement is building for Cape2Rio 2026. From seasoned professionals to ambitious newcomers, this race remains a true test of skill, endurance, and teamwork. As teams make final preparations, Cape Town eagerly anticipates another historic transatlantic journey, uniting the sailing community in a celebration of adventure and perseverance. – Source: www.thenewspaper.co.za



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