

# UBUNTU NEWSFLASH



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WEEKLY ELECTRONIC NEWSLETTER OF THE DEPARTMENT OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND COOPERATION

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## PRESIDENT RAMAPHOSA TO CO-CHAIR THE EIGHTH SOUTH AFRICA-EU SUMMIT

***President Cyril Ramaphosa on Thursday, 13 March 2025, co-chaired the Eighth South Africa-European Union (SA-EU) Summit with the President of the European Council, António Luís Santos da Costa, and the President of the European Commission, Dr Ursula von der Leyen, in Cape Town.***

This summit followed a series of preparatory engagements, including the Joint Cooperation Council (JCC) Meeting held on 15 January 2025 in Brussels; the Inter-Parliamentary Meeting held from 18 to 19 February 2025 in Cape Town; and the Ministerial Political Dialogue held on 19 February 2025 in Cape Town.

The Eighth SA-EU Summit took place within the framework of the strategic partnership between South Africa and the EU.

South Africa is one of 10 countries globally and the only African country with a strategic partnership with the EU. The EU is an important trade and investment partner of South Africa.



The EU is also a significant development partner, providing funding and technical assistance in critical areas aligned to the National Development Plan (NDP) Vision 2030.

Issues discussed at the summit included key areas of strategic collaboration, including trade and investment; the just energy transition, decarbonisation and sustainable supply chains, including in critical mineral resources; education, science and innovation; and health cooperation.  
– Source: [www.presidency.gov.za](http://www.presidency.gov.za)

## US REMAINS A STRATEGIC AND HISTORIC PARTNER FOR SOUTH AFRICA



***Government will continue engaging with the United States of America (US) administration and other stakeholders to address the mischaracterisation of South Africa while also strengthening diplomatic ties between the two countries, President Cyril Ramaphosa said.***

The President was speaking during a Questions for Oral Reply session in the National Assembly on Tuesday, 11 March 2025.

“South Africa maintains its active engagement with the United States through political, diplomatic, and economic channels.

“We have taken note of an Executive Order and recent statements by the current US administration about South Africa and aspects of our domestic and foreign policy. We have expressed concern about the mischaracterisation of the situation in South Africa and certain [parts] of our laws and our foreign policy positions,” he said.



Last month, US President Donald Trump issued an Executive Order titled *Addressing Egregious Actions of the Republic of South Africa*, ordering, in the main, that as a result of the Expropriation Act, the US shall not provide aid or assistance to South Africa, and that the "United States shall promote the resettlement of Afrikaner refugees escaping government-sponsored race-based discrimination, including racially discriminatory property confiscation", among others.

At the time, the South African government said it remains committed to finding diplomatic solutions to any misunderstandings or disputes arising from the recently promulgated Expropriation Act 13 of 2024 and other policies.

Signed into law by President Cyril Ramaphosa in January 2025, the Expropriation Act states that property may not be expropriated arbitrarily or for a purpose other than a public purpose or in the public interest.

The Expropriation Act, which underwent a five-year public consultation process, was deliberated in Parliament and is in line with the South African Constitution.

The Act repeals the Expropriation Act of 1975 and allows for the State to expropriate land in the public interest, subject to just and equitable compensation.

At Tuesday's session, the President highlighted that soon after the establishment of the Government of National Unity last year, the Minister of International Relations and Cooperation and the Minister and Deputy Minister of Trade, Industry and Competition undertook official visits to Washington, D.C., for engagements with the administration, members of Congress, business and academia.

"Following the election of President Trump in November last year, I had a telephone call with the President-Elect to congratulate him on his election and to reaffirm our commitment to strengthening relations between our two countries," President Ramaphosa said.

He also highlighted that Ambassador Ebrahim Rasool has recently been posted to Washington for his second stint as South Africa's envoy to the US.

Ambassador Rasool is on the ground with his team, engaging with various stakeholders to underscore the importance of deepening economic, political, and cultural relations between these two historic partners. – Source: SAnews.gov.za

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## PRESIDENT PAYS TRIBUTE TO ATHOL FUGARD

***President Cyril Ramaphosa has paid tribute to world-renowned actor, novelist, and playwright Athol Fugard, who passed away on Sunday, 10 March 2025, in Stellenbosch.***

Fugard was widely known as one of South Africa's greatest playwrights—writing plays that dealt with the apartheid government's injustices and working with artists across the racial divide during South Africa's darkest parts of history.

"Beyond the impressive body of work that he has left behind, Athol Fugard will be remembered for being an outlier among the millions of white South Africans who blithely turned a blind eye to the injustices being perpetrated in their name," President Ramaphosa said.

Fugard's most well-known works include the plays *No Good Friday*, *The Blood Knot*, *Master Harold and the Boys*, and *Sizwe Bansi is Dead*.

His book, *Tsotsi*, was also the inspiration behind the 2005 Oscar-winning movie of the same title.

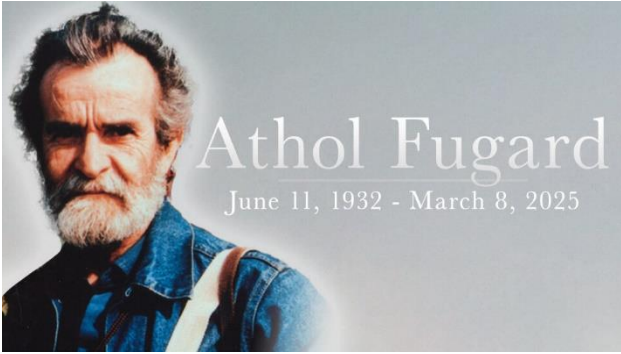
In 1985, *Time* magazine honoured Fugard as the "greatest active playwright in the English-speaking world".

"As a country, we are grateful that we were able to honour the legendary Athol Fugard during his lifetime with the National Order of Ikhamanga in Silver.

"The Fugard Theatre in District Six in Cape Town stands as a fitting tribute to a man whose life and works have left an indelible footprint and that will continue to inspire generations of creative professionals for time to come," President Ramaphosa added. – Source: SAnews.gov.za

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## PRESIDENT PAYS TRIBUTE TO GENDER ACTIVIST PAMELA MABINI



**President Cyril Ramaphosa has expressed condolences to the family, friends, and fellow activists of Gqeberha-based whistleblower and gender activist Pamela Mabini.**



Mabini played a vital role in supporting victims in the Timothy Omotoso alleged rape and trafficking case.

The 46-year-old Mabini was shot outside her home on Friday, 7 March 2025.

The President paid tribute to Mabini for standing up for women who experienced gender-based violence.

“...[Mabini] made it her mission to ensure the police and our courts brought perpetrators to justice. The brutality inflicted on Dr Gomolemo Mokae and Pam Mabini—and recently, Imam Muhsin Hendricks—demonstrates that violent criminals have no regard for the lives of South Africans, including selfless and caring citizens who become known publicly for the contributions they make to the upliftment and protection of fellow citizens.

“Their deaths and those of all victims of violence must move communities to work together more closely as citizens and in partnership with the police to prevent violence and to identify perpetrators in instances where attacks result.

“I call on anyone who has information about any criminal activity, including these current cases, to play your role in making South Africa safer by sharing information with the police or community police forums. All of us look forward to law enforcement agencies playing their role in bringing violent criminals to book,” the President said on Sunday, 9 March 2025.

Mokae, 61, was found dead in his Ga-Rankuwa, Pretoria at his home on Wednesday, 5 March 2025, after he had last been seen on 28 February 2025. He had spent many years caring for patients in Ga-Rankuwa and was experiencing health problems of his own when he was shot in his bed.

The Minister of Justice and Constitutional Development, Mmamoloko Kubayi, joined the President in extending her heartfelt condolences and expressed deep sadness over the tragic murder of Mabini.

“The Department of Justice and Constitutional Development remains committed to ensuring the safety of court users, court officials, presiding officers, community activists, witnesses, and whistleblowers.

“Efforts are underway to strengthen legal protections, including reviewing legislation to close loopholes that hinder these safeguards,” the Minister said.

She emphasised that serving as a friend of the court is not only an act of bravery but also essential for fostering a safer society.

While respecting the independence of the judiciary and law enforcement agencies, Minister Kubayi urged for a swift and thorough investigation into this tragic loss.

She called on all relevant authorities to intensify efforts to combat gender-based violence and ensure safer communities.

Furthermore, the Minister encouraged whistleblowers not to be deterred by this act and urged anyone with information that could assist in solving this case to come forward. – Source: SAnews.gov.za

## PRESIDENT RAMAPHOSA PAYS TRIBUTE TO DR GOMOLEMO MOKAE

**President Cyril Ramaphosa has condemned the brutal killing of medical doctor, author, and black consciousness intellectual Dr Gomolemo Mokae.**

“The brutality inflicted on Dr Gomolemo Mokae and Pam Mabini—and recently, Imam Muhsin Hendricks—demonstrates that violent criminals have no regard for the lives of South Africans, including selfless and caring citizens who become known publicly for the contributions they make to the upliftment and protection of fellow citizens,” the President said on Sunday, 9 March 2025.

Mokae, 61, was found dead in his Ga-Rankuwa, Pretoria, home on Wednesday, 5 March 2025, after he had last been seen on 28 February 2025.

He had spent many years caring for patients in Ga-Rankuwa and was experiencing health problems of his own when he was shot in his bed.



“President Ramaphosa offers his deep condolences to the family, friends, neighbours, patients, and comrades of Dr Mokae who was a former national spokesperson of the Azanian People’s Organisation and a founder member of the Socialist Party of Azania,” The Presidency said.

In addition to his medical practice, Dr Mokae published several books and wrote for television as a proud exponent of his mother tongue, Setswana. – Source: SAnews.gov.za

## PRESIDENT TO OFFICIATE AT MICROSOFT INVESTMENT ANNOUNCEMENT

***President Cyril Ramaphosa delivered the keynote address at the Microsoft South Africa investment announcement in Johannesburg on Thursday, 6 March 2025, in Bryanston.***



In a statement, The Presidency said Microsoft South Africa has been a valuable partner in South Africa’s digital transformation over the past three decades.

It said the investment announcement will enhance South Africa’s standing as a leading artificial intelligence hub on the continent.

Microsoft’s announcement comes ahead of the South Africa Investment Conference, which will take place in March 2025.

Since the first Investment Conference in 2018, South Africa has attracted R1.14 trillion in investment commitments across a broad range of economic sectors, including mining, manufacturing, agriculture, energy and the digital economy.



“Microsoft South Africa’s investment lines up with government’s pursuit of inclusive economic growth and job creation in partnership with the private sector, and South Africa’s G20 objectives in Artificial Intelligence and Innovation for Sustainable Development,” The Presidency said in a statement. – Source: SAnews.gov.za

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## PRESIDENT RAMAPHOSA SURPRISES STUDENTS BY JOINING PUBLIC TRANSPORT

***President Cyril Ramaphosa recounted his experience travelling with students to university using public transport.***



Imagine spotting President Cyril Ramaphosa on public transport while you are busy with your commute. A few lucky students experienced this surreal moment when President Ramaphosa joined them on their journey to university.

President Ramaphosa posted videos of his interaction with the students who joined him in the early hours of Wednesday morning, sharing the moment with citizens.

Alongside the clip, the President shared that he had met a group of Cape Peninsula University of Technology students on public transport. The President said he had been impressed by the aspirations of those who shared their hopes for the future with him.

“Our journey took us all the way to District Six, and I got some insight into their world. I was impressed with their study choices, such as civil engineering and accounting. Some hope to become entrepreneurs.” President Ramaphosa said.

Additionally, the President learnt more about how the students managed to obtain higher education and their most pressing needs for their studies.

“The students shared that NSFAS was supporting their studies. Beyond fees, they are also provided with residence fees, books, food, and a travel allowance. They, however, need laptops. They did tell me they are in dire need of laptops for their studies.” President Ramaphosa revealed.

The National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) is a government student financial aid scheme that provides financial aid to undergraduate students to help pay for the cost of their tertiary education.

The President shared that the students had inspired him during his engagements with them.

“The energy, passion and optimism of these young South Africans was inspiring.” He concluded.

In line with this, President Ramaphosa recently touched on the importance of ensuring investment in science, technology, engineering and mathematics education.

The President highlighted that this is key for economic growth, job creation, productivity and economic competitiveness. Ramaphosa insists that education in these spheres prepares young people for a diverse range of occupations needed in a growing economy.

A recent report by the World Economic Forum on the future of jobs found that the need for science, technology, engineering, and mathematics-related jobs is fast outstripping the demand for “traditional” occupations.

With traditional jobs giving way to modern professions, President Cyril Ramaphosa highlighted the importance of South Africa’s education system evolving:

“Our basic education system has to produce learners that are able to find work in an ever-changing knowledge and technology-based global economy”, President Ramaphosa commented.

President Cyril Ramaphosa highlighted the importance of education as a “powerful tool” to use in breaking the cycle of poverty, uplifting individuals and communities, and bringing about an equitable. – Source: [www.sapeople.com](http://www.sapeople.com)

## MINISTER LAMOLA TO HOST HIS CUBAN COUNTERPART FOR BILATERAL TALKS

***International Relations and Cooperation Minister Ronald Lamola hosted his Cuban counterpart, Bruno Rodríguez Parrilla, for bilateral talks in Pretoria on Monday, 10 March 2025.***

This Working Visit provided an opportunity for both Ministers to strengthen the strategic bilateral relations and cooperation programmes between South Africa and Cuba.

“The Ministers also exchanged views on regional and global issues of mutual concern,” a statement issued by the Department of International Relations and Cooperation (DIRCO) said.

Cuba is one of South Africa’s strategic partners in Latin America and the Caribbean.

“The relations date back well before the 1994 democratic elections, which in great part can be attributed to the remarkable contribution made by Cuba to the liberation of South Africa and the defeat of apartheid and colonialism,” DIRCO said.

The department said South Africa and Cuba are bound by ties of culture, history, shared struggles, international solidarity, and a joint commitment to advance the development agenda of the Global South.

“The long-enduring bilateral collaboration between South Africa and Cuba is multifaceted and sustained by a substantial number of bilateral agreements covering a wide range of areas, including health, public works, education, and water and sanitation cooperation.”

South Africa’s and Cuba’s foreign policies are centred on the peaceful resolution of conflict, multilateralism, the rule of international law, and the centrality of the United Nations in the maintenance of international peace and security. – Source: [www.dirco.gov.za](http://www.dirco.gov.za)



## US WITHDRAWS FROM JUST ENERGY TRANSITION PARTNERSHIP WITH SOUTH AFRICA

***South Africa says it notes the United States’ (US) decision to revoke the US International Climate Finance Plan, which had led to the withdrawal from the Just Energy Transition (JET) partnership with South Africa.***

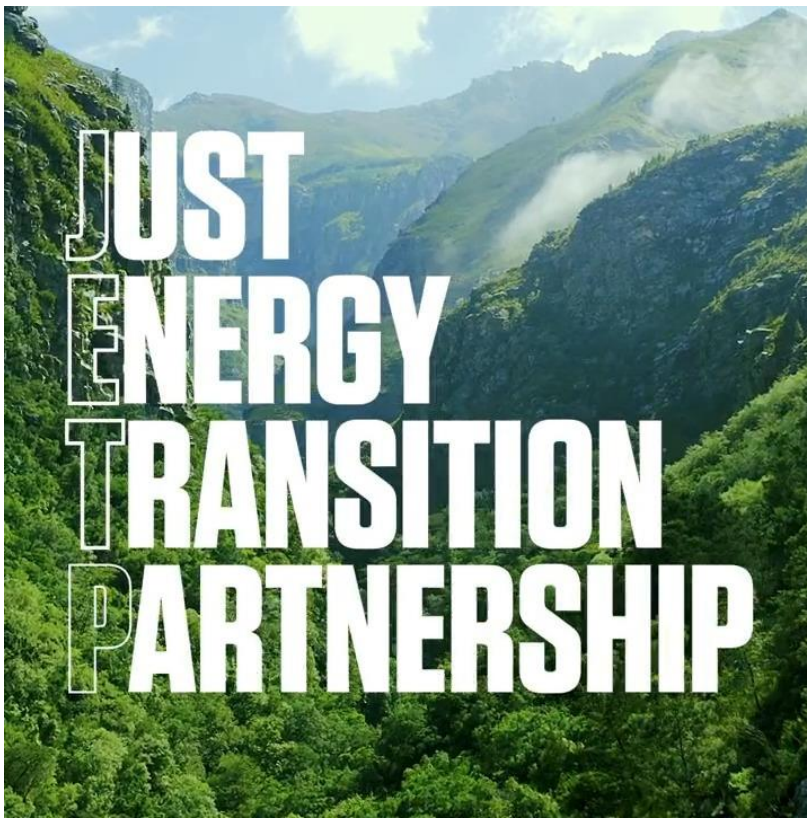
Last month, US President Donald Trump signed Executive Order 14162 to revoke and rescind this plan.

According to reports, this also means the immediate withdrawal by the US from the Paris Agreement designed to combat climate change by curbing global greenhouse gas emissions.

The Department of International Relations and Cooperation (DIRCO) said President Trump’s recent actions have affected the policies aimed at advancing South Africa’s Just Energy Transition Investment Plan (JETP).

“As a result, effective immediately, the US has announced the termination of its membership in the International Partners Group (IPG) for JETPs South Africa, Indonesia, and Vietnam,” the department explained.





With the US withdrawal, the department said associated financial pledges are also withdrawn.

“Grant projects that were previously funded and in planning or implementation phases have been cancelled.”

However, DIRCO said the country remains committed to implementing international agreements, including the decisions taken at the historic Paris Agreement.

“South Africa and other international partners will evaluate the implications of the US withdrawal from the JETP,” the department said.

During a parliamentary discussion regarding the US’ decision to reduce funding from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), DIRCO Minister Ronald Lamola said South Africa should not lament this change. Instead, the country should view this situation as an opportunity for transformation.

“We must act in unison to mitigate the negative impact of the USAID cuts. We must seize this moment to reconceptualise our global system and ensure that our domestic imperatives serve our nation efficiently and sustainably,” Minister Lamola told Members of Parliament (MP).

He highlighted that the US is South Africa’s biggest trading partner in the world after China. South Africa is home to 601 American companies, accounting for 143 000 jobs.

The Minister told MPs that in 2023, bilateral trade between the US and South Africa equalled US\$ 22 billion, with the US being a significant agricultural export destination for South Africa. South Africa exports platinum, motor vehicles, reaction initiators, ferroalloys, citrus, jewellery, nuts, chemicals, wines, engines, turbines, and ships and boats to the US.

According to Minister Lamola, about 22 South African companies are currently invested in the US, providing about 6 900 jobs. – Source: [www.dirco.gov.za](http://www.dirco.gov.za)

## G20 LEADERS’ SUMMIT AT THE END OF THE YEAR TO ENHANCE TOURISM AND ECONOMIC GROWTH

***The upcoming Group of 20 (G20) Leaders’ Summit at the end of the year is anticipated to significantly enhance the tourism sector’s contribution to economic growth and job creation.***

This is according to the International Relations and Cooperation Minister Ronald Lamola, who shared this perspective while responding to a parliamentary question about his department’s strategy to leverage South Africa’s G20 Presidency to create sustainable benefits for the economy, particularly for small businesses in townships and rural areas.

“By hosting G20 meetings across all provinces, South Africa aims to achieve a considerable economic boost, attracting tens of thousands of delegates and support staff from major global economies to provinces throughout its year-long presidency,” he told Members of Parliament (MPs).



**G20** SOUTH AFRICA 2025



South Africa assumed the Chair of the G20 on 1 December 2024, taking over from Brazil. The G20 consists of 19 countries, along with the European Union (EU) and the African Union (AU), which joined last year. This group brings together the world's major and systemically important economies.

The Minister believes that this surge in tourism presents significant opportunities for South African provinces and cities to showcase their cultural heritage and tourism potential. According to Minister Lamola, South Africa's Presidency of the G20 is anticipated to be one of the largest national projects, requiring whole-of-government and society participation.

From 1 December 2024 to 30 November 2025, South Africa will host well over 100 in-person meetings across the country.

“Firstly, the G20 will boost South Africa’s tourism sector, increasing employment and allowing provinces to showcase their cultural treasures.”

The Minister highlighted that the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) reported that South Africa’s tourism sector employed 1.46 million people in 2023. This number is expected to increase to 1.7 million jobs soon, driven by a targeted initiative aimed at significantly boosting employment over the next five years.

He also mentioned that WTTC statistics showed that tourism’s direct and indirect contribution to South Africa’s gross domestic product was 8.2% in 2023, with expectations to rise to 8.8% in 2024.

In addition, it also allows for a demonstration of the nation’s advancements across multiple sectors. According to Minister Lamola, the G20 meetings are anticipated to generate considerable economic benefits, creating many direct and indirect jobs during and beyond this period.

The Minister believes that Africa’s G20 presidency offers an opportunity to promote inclusive growth, combat poverty, and ensure sustainable development.

“Ultimately, the high-level deliverables and priorities identified for South Africa’s G20 Presidency will benefit South Africa at the national, continental, and global levels.

“The G20 serves as a strategic platform for South Africa to lobby for policies aimed at advancing the three strategic priorities of the seventh administration.”

These include driving inclusive growth and job creation, reducing poverty and tackling the high cost of living, and building a capable, ethical, and developmental State.

In addition, South Africa’s second priority under its G20 Presidency is ensuring debt sustainability for developing economies.

“In pursuing this, South Africa aims to see greater urgency in addressing the debt and solvency challenges many countries face, determining clear solutions to mobilise low-cost financing for development.

This approach will help reduce debt service costs for developing countries, including South Africa, thereby freeing up spending on essential services such as education, healthcare, and the infrastructure needed for economic development,” he told MPs.

Meanwhile, he said the nation seeks to leverage its G20 Presidency by promoting “harnessing critical minerals for inclusive growth and development.”

“South Africa calls for a G20 framework on green industrialisation and investments to ensure progress towards a grand bargain that adds value to critical minerals, particularly near the source of extraction.”

He believes that promoting the beneficiation and local value addition of resources at the source will result in a more additive rather than extractive relationship.

“As mineral extraction accelerates to meet the energy transition needs, the countries and local communities endowed with these rich resources must be the primary beneficiaries,” he added. – Source: SAnews.gov.za

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**SOUTH AFRICA’S G20 PRESIDENCY TO BENEFIT ALL**

*International Relations and Cooperation Deputy Minister Thandi Moraka says South Africa’s G20 Presidency is aimed at ensuring resource-rich nations and communities in places like Limpopo can benefit equitably from their mineral wealth.*



"In the midst of global geopolitical tensions and rising protectionism South Africa's G20 Presidency will champion cooperation, collaboration, and partnerships between individuals, groups, peoples, and nations," Deputy Minister Moraka said.

Speaking at the G20 Community Outreach event at the University of Venda in Limpopo on Friday, 7 March 2025, Deputy Minister Moraka said strengthening partnerships and expanding dialogue with a wide range of actors is important to collectively shape the G20's approach to issues requiring international cooperation.

"South Africa will therefore also host a G20 Social Summit, prior to the Leaders' Summit, by expanding outreach to communities beyond the 13 official G20 Engagement Groups," the Deputy Minister said.

Deputy Minister Moraka said during South Africa's Presidency, there will be more than 85 in-person meetings throughout the country, including five meetings in Limpopo.

"We encourage the people of Limpopo to become more involved in these processes. We have been asked, and rightfully so, what benefits does the G20 Presidency brings to South Africa?

"Tens of thousands of delegates and support staff from some of the world's largest developed and developing economies are expected to arrive in South Africa over the year-long Presidency.

"In addition to many ministers, the heads of state and government of more than 40 countries will attend the Leaders' Summit in November 2025," the Deputy Minister said.

Deputy Minister Moraka said the G20 Presidency was without a doubt a mammoth task, requiring considerable personnel and resources, and, by most accounts, this was the largest national project that South Africa has ever undertaken.

"This project is expected to have significant economic benefits for South Africa, notably for the tourism, transport, restaurant, entertainment, and hospitality industries, with global visibility in all nine provinces.

"There is also significant opportunity for South African provinces and cities to promote their cultural, heritage, tourism, and innovation, but also an opportunity to demonstrate South Africa's technological, industrial and commercial advances across various sectors," Deputy Minister Moraka said.

A number of direct and indirect jobs are expected to be created during South Africa's G20 Presidency.

"It therefore goes without saying that the support of all South Africans in telling a good story and highlighting our successes is critical if we are to leave a permanent G20 legacy for South Africa and the whole of the African continent.

"It is important for us all to work in synergy and in cooperation and partnership, more so in a fractured world filled with conflict and destruction. As much as we are excited to host the first G20 Presidency on the African continent, we are also cognisant of the enormous task that is before us," the Deputy Minister said.

Also speaking at the same event, Limpopo Premier Dr Phophi Ramathuba said she was delighted to welcome esteemed members of the diplomatic corps, government officials, business leaders and all distinguished guests to the historic occasion, the first-ever G20 community outreach to be held in the province.



Ramathuba said the engagement was an opportunity to strengthen ties, advance collaboration, and ensure that global economic policies translate into meaningful opportunities for local communities.

“It is also a symbolic gesture, a recognition of the role that provinces like Limpopo play in shaping the broader economic landscape of South Africa and the African continent,” the Premier said.

As the only African nation represented in the G20, South Africa carries a profound responsibility in ensuring that the voices of developing economies, particularly those in Africa, are heard on the global stage.

“The G20’s focus on economic growth, trade, investment, climate action and digital transformation resonates deeply with developmental priorities in Limpopo.

“We understand that global economic policies have real, tangible effects on the lives of ordinary people, and it is our duty to ensure that these policies translate into meaningful opportunities for our communities,” Dr Ramathuba said.

Lutendo Luvhengo, a third-year student at the University of Venda told *SANews* that although she had little knowledge about G20 and South Africa’s G20 Presidency, she hoped that South Africa’s hosting of the G20 meetings would benefit ordinary people.

“I believe that our country’s economy is going to improve. The guests coming to South Africa—some of them are going to invest in our country and that will create more jobs,” she said.

Luvhengo was confident that the G20 meetings were going to be successful.

Echoing the same sentiments was Israel Marema, first-year BCom student, who said the G20 meetings were “investments in the country”.

“This is going to reduce the level of poverty by creating more job opportunities,” he said.

This launch of the G20 Outreach Programme forms part of a series of initiatives aimed at fostering wider public dialogue and participation in South Africa’s G20 Presidency. – Source: [www.dirco.gov.za](http://www.dirco.gov.za)



## SOUTH AFRICA OBSERVES COMMONWEALTH DAY

***On 10 March 2025, member countries of the Commonwealth commemorated Commonwealth Day. Commonwealth Day is the annual celebration observed by people all over the Commonwealth in Africa, Asia, the Caribbean, the Americas, as well as the Pacific and Europe.***

Commonwealth Day is celebrated to renew our bond with the organisation, strengthen our commitment to the Commonwealth values, and re-energise the union of the member states.

The Commonwealth theme for 2025 is *Together We Thrive*. This year’s theme underscores the power of partnerships, reaffirming that we are stronger and more resilient together than when we stand alone.



The theme also builds on the outcomes adopted and the vision of transformation discussed during the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM 2024) that was held in Apia, Samoa, on 24 and 25 October 2024.

South Africa attaches great importance to the role of the Commonwealth to promote and protect the values and principles set out in the Commonwealth Charter. The ownership of the Commonwealth and directing the activities of the Commonwealth to truly serve all the member states in achieving our development goals remain of utmost importance to South Africa.

As a member of the organisation since 1994, South Africa believes that the Commonwealth continues to play an important role in a world where there is increasing pushback against the forces promoting multilateralism as well as international solidarity and cooperation. The organisation, which represents countries from across the development spectrum should use its unique position and membership from around the globe to continue calling for the strengthening of existing multilateral mechanisms and institutions and transform them to suit current global realities. The

Commonwealth provides an opportunity to address issues of common interest, including implementation of development goals and the reform of constitutions of global governance, in particular the International Monetary Fund, World Bank, and the United Nations.

The Commonwealth must remain at the forefront of the struggle for the advancement and promotion of human rights and fundamental freedoms, gender equality, and women empowerment.

Only through increased solidarity will the 56 members of the Commonwealth be able to assist each other to address the challenges we are currently facing. This will ensure that the Commonwealth continues to remain relevant and grow.

On Commonwealth Day, South Africa once again renewed its pledge to uphold and serve the values and fellowship of the Commonwealth. – Source: [www.dirco.gov.za](http://www.dirco.gov.za)

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## SOUTH AFRICA SECURES MARKET ACCESS FOR FRESH TABLE GRAPES TO THE PHILIPPINES

***As South Africa's agricultural sector continues to drive economic growth, the country has successfully gained market access to export fresh table grapes to the Philippines.***



Agriculture Minister John Steenhuisen announced the development in a statement last week. This marks a significant achievement for South Africa's agricultural industry, with producers now able to export table grapes to the Philippines.

"The market was opened on 26 February 2025, which means that producers can start exporting table grapes to the Philippines. The negotiations for this market started on 20 January 2015 and took about 10 years to get market access," Minister Steenhuisen said.

The Minister highlighted South Africa's position as one of the top five global exporters of table grapes. He also underscored the vital role the industry plays in the country's economy, contributing significantly to foreign exchange earnings, employment generation, and agricultural growth.

According to the South African Table Grape Industry (SATI), approximately 55% of the country's table grape exports are destined for the European Union (EU), while 20% are sent to the United Kingdom (UK).

During the 2022/2023 season, a total of 63 million cartons of table grapes were exported, with the industry providing jobs to around 86 870 seasonal workers and 14 843 permanent employees.

Minister Steenhuisen noted that the opening of the Philippines market will also advance the Department of Agriculture's empowerment initiatives, particularly in fostering participation by black farmers in international export markets.

He also noted that expanding access to agricultural markets will drive increased production, boost exports, and enhance the sector's contribution to South Africa's gross domestic product (GDP).

"Just yesterday, data released by Statistics South Africa showed that our economy expanded by 0.6% in the fourth quarter of 2024, with agriculture being one of the sectors that primarily drove this growth with better performance in livestock, some field crops, and fruits," the Minister said.

To ensure the successful exportation of fresh table grapes to the Philippines, the Minister said South African exporters must comply with the applicable phytosanitary and food safety standards, as outlined in the final phytosanitary import conditions for the export of fresh table grapes to the Philippines.

The Minister urged interested exporters, including production units and packhouses, to register with the Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (DALRRD) to obtain the necessary codes: a DALRRD production unit code and packhouse code.



“Growers of registered production units must implement good agricultural practices, which must include orchard sanitation, use of integrated pest management, or adequate control measures, to ensure that the Philippines’ identified quarantine pests of fresh table grapes are eliminated during the production period.

“It is pivotal that producers comply with the phytosanitary import conditions for the export of fresh table grapes from South Africa to the Philippines in order to safeguard this market, as it took a very long time to negotiate and obtain market access,” Minister Steenhuisen said.

He said an announcement will be made when the first consignment is ready for loading. – Source: SAnews.gov.za

## SOUTH AFRICA ATTENDS UN COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN

***South Africa’s participation at the 69th Session of the United Nations (UN) Commission on the Status of Women (CSW69) will underscore the country’s ongoing commitment to ensuring that global gender policies translate into meaningful and tangible change at both regional and national levels.***

Minister in the Presidency for Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities, Sindisiwe Chikunga, will lead the South African delegation to the 69th Session, which will take place at the UN Headquarters in New York from 10 to 21 March 2025.

Under the chairmanship of Saudi Arabia, the CSW69 will bring together representatives from across the globe to discuss key gender equality issues.

With just five years remaining before the 2030 deadline for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the international community will evaluate progress made on the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (“Beijing +30”), which was adopted at the 1995 World Conference on Women.

Minister Chikunga stressed the importance of South Africa’s participation in such global forums, emphasising that these engagements are vital for shaping policies that affect South African citizens directly.

“South Africa’s presence at CSW69 reinforces our commitment to gender equality and ensures our national interests are reflected in international gender policies and frameworks,” the Minister said in a statement.

The key issues South Africa will address at CSW69 include:

- Beijing+30 Report: The Minister will outline the progress made in implementing the Beijing Declaration, challenges encountered, and priority areas requiring urgent intervention to advance gender equality.
- Women’s economic empowerment and leadership: South Africa will advocate for policy interventions that eliminate economic barriers for women, increase access to productive assets, financial resources, and ensure equal participation in all platforms where decisions are made and power is exercised.
- Gender-based violence and femicide (GBVF): Addressing legislative advancements, law enforcement initiatives, and survivor support programs, while pushing for greater international accountability on gender-based violence.
- South Africa’s role in the G20 Women’s Empowerment Working Group (WEWG): As the Chair of the G20’s Women Empowerment Working Group, Chikunga will use CSW69 as an opportunity to align global priorities with South Africa’s ongoing gender transformation agenda.
- Strengthening International Partnerships: Bilateral meetings with global leaders will be used to forge strategic partnerships aimed at enhancing South Africa’s domestic and international gender policies.

South Africa’s Beijing+30 Report reflects on the strides made in gender equality over the past five years, while also highlighting the key challenges that demand urgent action. Among the key findings include:

- Political representation: South Africa has achieved significant progress in political representation, with women now holding 43.5% of seats in Parliament, occupying 171 out of 400 seats, an increase from 28% in 1994. Women also occupy 42.66% of executive positions in the current administration.



- Education and skills development: Gender parity has been surpassed in higher education, with female students now graduating in larger numbers than their male counterparts in almost every field of study. However, there is still a need for greater representation of young women in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) fields.
- Economic participation: In addition to facing significant wage gaps, women remain underrepresented in patterns of ownership, management, and control of key productive sectors of the economy. The informal sector continues to be a major employer of women, highlighting the need for stronger policies for financial inclusion, access to credit, and workplace protections.
- Gender-based violence and femicide (GBVF): Although legislative and policy improvements have been made, gender-based violence and femicide remains a national crisis. In accordance with the National Strategic Plan (NSP) on GBVF, we are rallying together traditional and religious leaders, educational institutions, stronger implementation of laws, increased funding for survivor support services, and enhanced accountability mechanisms.
- Health and well-being: Maternal health has improved, and access to sexual and reproductive health services has expanded. However, significant disparities remain, especially in rural areas. The report highlights the need for continued efforts to improve healthcare access and promote gender-responsive budgeting. – Source: SAnews.gov.za

## SOUTH AFRICA HOSTS FIRST G20 TOURISM WORKING GROUP MEETING

***Tourism Minister Patricia de Lille has urged the G20 to find ways to use tourism to change the lives of communities around the world.***



“As you convene during the first Tourism Working Group, I implore all delegates to focus on how we can use tourism to change people’s lives, communities, and the world,” she said in a video-recorded message.

The Minister was addressing the first G20 Tourism Working Group meeting held virtually from the offices of the Department of International Relations and Cooperation (DIRCO) in Pretoria last week.

This meeting was the first of a series of engagements that will take place throughout the year, ahead of the G20 Tourism Ministers’ Meeting in September 2025.

“South Africa is excited to welcome all G20 delegates, member states, and organisations to our beautiful country and proud to host the G20 for the first time,” she said.

The Director-General at the department, Nkhumeleni Victor Vele, chaired the meeting, which was attended by senior officials and experts in the tourism sector of the G20 countries, invited guest countries, and international organisations.

At the meeting, delegates deliberated on and agreed to work on four priorities for the year, namely:

- People-Centred Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Innovation to enhance Travel and Tourism Start-Ups and SMMEs
- Tourism Financing and Investment to Enhance Equality and Promote Sustainable Development
- Air Connectivity for Seamless Travel
- Enhanced Resilience for Inclusive, Sustainable Tourism Development.

The Tourism Working Group exchanged knowledge and best practices among the member countries with a view of crafting actionable deliverables. The group is among the 16 Working Groups of the G20 during South Africa’s presidency focusing on solidarity, equality, and sustainability.

In its statement, the Department of Tourism said that as the first African country to preside over the G20 Presidency, South Africa is utilising its term to drive a developmental agenda to benefit the African continent.



In 2023, the G20 welcomed 69% of all international tourists and accounted for 71% of tourism exports worldwide. In 2023, tourism direct gross domestic product (GDP) reached 3.1% of the G20 economies.

The department added that tourism plays a critical role in the global economy and is one of the vital economic sectors contributing significantly to socio-economic development but remains vulnerable to natural and manmade hazards.

For many countries, the tourism economy is growing faster than most other economic sectors. With its extensive value chain and labour absorption capacity, it is acknowledged as a tool for inclusive economic development, playing a significant role in responding to socioeconomic challenges.

“Tourism is an important economic sector in Africa. In 2023 the continent’s tourism direct GDP reached US\$85 billion [dollars] representing 3.5% of the region’s GDP. This value is still below the pre-pandemic US\$ 94 billion [dollars] reached in 2019 (4.3% share).”

The challenges facing the African travel and tourism sector include air connectivity, limited investments, financing for tourism development, positioning and marketing, social and environmental sustainability, as well as safety and security, among others.

South Africa’s tourism priorities for the 2025 G20 Presidency are aligned with the continental priorities as expressed in Agenda 2063 as well as with the core objectives contained in the UN Tourism Agenda for Africa: Tourism for Inclusive Growth, the strategic roadmap guiding the promotion of sustainable tourism development across the African continent.

The meeting also appreciated South Africa’s intention to build on the efforts and successes of the last three G20 presidencies of the Global South and to champion Africa’s developmental agenda. – Source: SAnews.gov.za

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SCHOOL OF GOVERNMENT ON SIGNING OF MOU WITH INDIA

*The National School of Government (NSG) and the Administrative Staff College of India (ASCI) have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to foster collaboration in capacity building, research, consultancy, and knowledge sharing to enhance governance and public sector performance.*



school of government

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Department:  
National School of Government  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

The partnership will enable both institutions to utilise their expertise in training, research, advisory services, and professional development to equip public servants with the necessary skills and competencies to drive national development.

Key areas of cooperation under this MOU include:

- Capacity building and training programs for public sector professionals.
- Joint research initiatives to inform policy and governance best practices.
- Advisory and consultancy services.
- Knowledge sharing and networking platforms.
- Exchange programmes.

The collaboration between the two institutions will take various forms, such as facilitated field study tours, seminars, workshops, and information sharing, to foster mutual learning and professional growth.

The NSG principal, Prof. Busani Ngcaweni, said, “Partnerships are a key focus for the NSG as they enable us to expand the depth of training delivery and diversity and allow access to expertise that we do not have. This collaboration with ASCI aligns with NSG’s mission to build a highly skilled and ethical public sector. We aim to strengthen governance and service delivery through joint research, training, and advisory programs.”

Prof. Ngcaweni added that the signing of the partnership marked the beginning of a strategic partnership that will enhance public sector capacity and capabilities, promote good governance, and facilitate international best practices in administration and management. The signing of this MoU is a milestone in the growing bilateral relations between South Africa and India. These relations were forged during the struggle against apartheid, with India becoming one of the first countries in the world to impose sanctions against the apartheid regime and bringing the issue of apartheid to the attention of the United Nations and other relevant international platforms. – Source: www.gov.za

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## SOUTH AFRICA AWARDED BEST GOLF DESTINATION WORLDWIDE BY SWISS GOLFERS

***The Republic of South Africa has been awarded the Best Golf Destination Worldwide by the Swiss Golfers during a prestigious ceremony held on 26 February 2025 in Zurich, Switzerland.***



South Africa's excellence was particularly evident in categories such as "Best Golf Courses" and "Best Golfing Experience". During the awards ceremony, South Africa was represented by Curtis Singo, Counsellor at the South African Embassy in Bern, Switzerland.

The Swiss Golf Awards ceremony is a beacon of inspiration, designed to honour outstanding contributors to the golf industry. With Swiss golfers actively participating through their votes, the ceremony celebrates the best in golf-related services, from favourite golf clubs to service partners across various categories.

These awards celebrate diversity, bringing together a multitude of important role players in the fields. From golf clubs to a diverse array of service providers, such as exquisite restaurants, reputable travel companies, and reliable airlines, the awards recognise exceptional service and quality based on the golfers' personal experiences. This inclusivity is what makes the Swiss Golf Awards a true reflection of the global golfing community.

South Africa emerging as a premier global golf destination during the Swiss Golf Awards is a vibrant testament to a brand successfully charting its course internationally. This prestigious recognition is a powerful affirmation of the government's pivotal role in transforming the country into a sought-after hub for tourism and investment. The unique features of South Africa's golf courses, such as the stunning landscapes and challenging designs, have undoubtedly contributed to this achievement. – Source: The South African Embassy in Bern, Switzerland

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## AIR FRANCE FLIES TRAFFICKED LIONS TO THEIR NEW HOME IN SOUTH AFRICA

***Air France-KLM recently announced the successful repatriation of two lion cubs, Yoda and Ysis, to South Africa.***

Victims of animal rights abuses in Europe and once exploited for use in music videos, the two lions were rescued in 2020 by the *30 Millions d'Amis Foundation* (30 Million Friends Foundation) and then cared for by the Tonga Terre d'Accueil association at the Saint-Martin-la-Plaine Zoological Park.

The journey home for Yoda and Ysis began with a flight from Lyon to Paris, then followed by Air France flight AF 990 from Paris to Johannesburg. Fully funded by the *30 Millions d'Amis Foundation*, the lions arrived in South Africa on 4 March 2025 and are already settling in to their new home.

Now, after spending the past five years in care, Yoda and Ysis will begin a new chapter at the SanWild Sanctuary Wildlife Trust.

Located in Limpopo, just a few kilometres south of Leydsdorp and near the western boundary of the Kruger National Park, SanWild is a 5 000-hectare wildlife rehabilitation centre and reserve.





Under the care of the SanWild team and as part of The Roar Project led by Alexandre Blanchon, the lions will initially live in semi-freedom, allowing them to gradually re-adapt to their natural environment.

Genetic tests have since confirmed that they are siblings, a bond that has been evident since they were rescued.

Wilson Tauro, Country Manager Southern Africa at Air France-KLM, expressed his pride in the airline's commitment to animal welfare.

"Air France is dedicated to ensuring that distressed wildlife is given the opportunity to return home. Repatriating Yoda and Ysis is a proud moment for us and reinforces South Africa's reputation as a premier destination for wildlife rehabilitation," Tauro said.

"We are committed to transporting live animals safely and efficiently, and we believe that our efforts will help these lions begin a new life at SanWild Sanctuary." Tauro also added. – Source: [www.thesouthafrican.com](http://www.thesouthafrican.com)

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## CRAZYBIKEGUY AND SON TO PEDAL 40 DAYS IN EUROPE FOR LOGWOOD VILLAGE

***Deservingly dubbed the "CrazyBikeGuy" for his extreme gestures in support of the greatest causes, Grant Cameron-Smith, together with his 15-year-old son Julian, is embarking on an incredible 40-day cycling journey across Central Europe.***



From 30 March 2025, the father-and-son duo will be pedalling for a purpose from Warsaw to Milan to raise essential funds for a charity that does so much for intellectually disabled adults: Logwood Village in Johannesburg.

The village offers a unique and supportive community where independence, dignity, and opportunity are at the heart of everything they do. Here, residents are given the opportunity to thrive in a safe, caring environment that fosters growth and connection.

No stranger to clocking the kilometres for those in need, CrazyBikeGuy is gearing up once again to do what fuels his spirit and gives his life purpose.

"Through this ride we're aiming to not only raise critical funds but also awareness, because stories like Logwood deserve to be heard in our world of craziness."

Beyond the fundraising element, Grant and Julian are also inspiring us all to recognise the beauty and value of inclusivity. – Source: [www.goodthingsguy.com](http://www.goodthingsguy.com)

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## THIS CAPE TOWN PIZZA SECURED ITS SPOT ON THE WORLD'S 19 BEST PIZZAS LIST

***Who would have thought that hidden within the heart of Cape Town's southern suburbs lies the eighth-best pizza in the world?***

This is according to global media and hospitality giant *Time Out*, which tasked its travel writers and international editorial staff with identifying their "absolute favourite spots for when they're craving pizza, from Cape Town to Lisbon, Buenos Aires to Miami" before ranking them in a list of the 19 best pizzas in the world.

The result? The Fellini pizza from NOVO—which opened its doors just over a year ago on 8 March 2024—claimed spot number eight on the list, beating the likes of Paris, Madrid, Chicago, and other global greats.

“NOVO is a new kid on Cape Town’s pizza block, but this family-owned place in Little Mowbray has quickly built up a loyal following among locals. Why? The quality of the toppings, that’s why,” explains local *Time Out* expert Richard Holmes.

The Fellini pizza is topped with fennel sausage, caramelised red onion, and fior di latte mozzarella.

“Simplicity on a pizza only works when the ingredients are top-notch, but you don’t need to worry about that here: fennel sausage from renowned cured meats producer Richard Bosma, fior di latte from Italian cheese specialists Puglia, and dough slow-proved over 48 hours.”

Beyond The Fellini, the young pizzeria serves a compact offering, which Holmes says allows NOVO to focus on getting each pizza perfect.

As for the other pizzerias that made up Time Out’s list, the title of the world’s best pizza was aptly awarded to the Pizza Margherita from Pizzeria da Attilio, a third-generation establishment in the birthplace of pizza—Naples, Italy.

Second place was snatched by Scarr’s Pizza in New York City for its Cheese Slice that gives justice to the original with its airy, slightly tangy crust, while third place offered a spotlight on the creative flair of Tokyo’s Pizza Marumo for its Japanese Umami pizza. – Source: [www.capetownetc.com](http://www.capetownetc.com)



## SOUTH AFRICA’S NEW GARDEN DESIGN FOR THE 2025 CHELSEA FLOWER SHOW



***South Africa’s new garden design for the 2025 Chelsea Flower Show has been revealed, much to the anticipation of floral enthusiasts and proud locals everywhere.***

Following a long hiatus, South Africa made a magnificent return to the RHS Chelsea Flower Show in London, where we claimed the gold and the praise of green thumbs everywhere. As the 2025 edition looms, Flower King Leon Kluge (an acclaimed horticulturist and floral artist) took pride in unveiling the new garden design alongside the team behind it. While nothing is certain, we wouldn’t be surprised if this year’s Chelsea Flower Show attracted another gold for South Africa.

Whereas last year’s garden embodied a slice of local mountains, this year, the focus is on coastal charms.

As Kluge explains, “This year’s design showcases the influence of two magnificent oceans, namely the Indian and Atlantic, on the flora of South Africa. Cutting through a mountain of fynbos runs a canyon where tannin-rich water flows. On the Atlantic side of the display, the drier West Coast is represented by its colourful geophytes and bright flowers, while the Indian Ocean on the opposite end is home to a lush collection of well-known subtropical plants.”

As such, the design boasts a diversity of fynbos and cliff-dwelling plants. Adding to the art of it all are woven sculptural pieces that draw on culture and tradition. Kluge explains that these accents “celebrate South Africa as the flower basket of Africa”, a simply stunning concept.

With much space between now and the Chelsea Flower Show in May, for the vision to come to fruition, South Africans are holding their thumbs that the 2025 showdown will be another year of success for our natural treasures and the artists who amplify them. – Source: [www.goodthingsguy.com](http://www.goodthingsguy.com)

## ADRIAAN WILDSCHUTT KNOCKS ANOTHER RECORD OFF ITS FEET



***At the Boston University Last Chance meet, the South African long-distance athlete, Adriaan Wildschutt, managed to break the South African record for the short track 5 000 metres—a record he had previously set himself.***

“Wildschutt clocked 12:55.02 over 25 laps of the indoor track. He took second place behind American athlete Nico Young, who won the race in 12:51.56,” reported Athletics South Africa, adding that the young star has been on a record-breaking spree.

The latest record officially makes Wildschutt the fastest athlete at this distance nationwide, on either indoor or outdoor tracks. It came as his first race in six months, just as the iconic record he broke in 2023 came as a comeback of note in which he shattered a record that had stood firmly for decades. In 2024, he broke six records.

“The more Adriaan focuses on improving his times, the more he edges closer to clipping the next national record,” President of Athletics South Africa, James Moloi, said.



“This is basically how he began his record-breaking spree season last year. He started early in the year, and persisted until he set multiple national records the previous year and this season his focus must be to bring his times closer to competing for the World Champs podium. So, congratulations to Adriaan, coach, and support staff!”

This follows other exciting news where records were defeated by young South African athletes, including Prudence Sekgodiso and Tshepo Tshite, who recently made South Africa proud thanks to the new records they set on international indoor tracks. – Source: [www.goodthingsguy.com](http://www.goodthingsguy.com)

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**SOUTH AFRICAN RUCHÉ MOODLEY MAKES MOTO3 DEBUT AND EARNS POINTS**



***Making his debut at the Moto3 opening round in Thailand, Ruché Moodley faced challenging conditions and managed to earn his first points in the championship.***

The Gqeberha local made his way to Southeast Asia last week for the opening round of the 2025 Moto3 season. He raced at the Chang International Circuit in Buriram, a first time seeing the track, and had a painful crash on his second practice run, but he shook it all off and shifted his mindset for the qualifier.

“I was a little sore after the high-side crash, but thankfully I was not injured. I knew there was still plenty to play for over the rest of the weekend,” said Moodley.

Qualifying 19th on the grid, the start of the race came with chaotic and aggressive moves that pushed Ruche back a few spaces, but he kept cool and pushed forward.

“I knew that I had to be smart about the race, and my strategy was not to go crazy from the opening lap.” And it worked.

Every lap, he pushed his way forward, keeping cool. Several leading riders retired from the race early, giving Ruche the edge to push ahead. By the final lap, he was contending for P10, and after a nail-biting finish, he earned P11 and five points to boot!

“The race was very tough physically and mentally. It's by far the hottest race I've ever competed in. I tried really hard to defend into the final corner. I was a bit disappointed to be overtaken because I was really close to a top 10 finish.

“But overall, it was a positive weekend as I gained a lot of experience and confidence. This is just the beginning of a long season. I am happy about how we have started and we will continue growing from here. I am hungry for more,” concluded Moodley. – Source: [www.goodthingsguy.com](http://www.goodthingsguy.com)



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