

UBUNTU NEWSFLASH



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BUDGET 2025 VITAL FOR ECONOMIC GROWTH AND POVERTY ALLEVIATION

In his weekly newsletter, President Cyril Ramaphosa has emphasised the crucial role of the 2025 Fiscal Framework and Revenue Proposals, which were recently passed by Parliament, in driving economic growth and relieving the effects of poverty.

The budget—tabled by Finance Minister Enoch Godongwana in Parliament last month—was passed by Parliament last week.

“The 2025 Budget is directed at growing the economy and supporting the livelihoods of our people.

“It is a critical instrument to drive development, eradicate poverty and narrow inequality. At a time of constrained economic growth and narrow fiscal space, the budget must direct sufficient resources to activities that encourage inclusive growth and lay the groundwork for sustained economic recovery.

“It reflects the strategic priorities of the Government of National Unity: inclusive growth and job creation, reducing poverty and tackling the high cost of living and building a capable, ethical and developmental state,” he said.



Uplifting the nation

The budget has a strong focus on the social wage, with 61% of resources directed at, among others, healthcare, education, housing and social grants.

“Over the past 24 years we have implemented an indigent policy under which free water, electricity and sanitation services are provided to qualifying households.

“Social grants, like the childcare, old-age and disability grants, are another tool for alleviating poverty. This year, the value of these grants will increase above inflation. The Social Relief of Distress grant, which has played an important role in poverty alleviation, will also be extended for another year,” President Ramaphosa said.

As part of improving access to healthcare, the President said there will be a higher allocation of funding to clinics and community health centres.

He said government is investing in the recruitment and retention of health personnel, particularly doctors and nurses, and to employ newly qualified doctors after their community service ends.

The budget also allocates substantial funding to “other frontline services such as teachers, police, emergency personnel and the Border Management Authority”.

“Improving educational outcomes is key to community upliftment, development and producing the skills needed by our economy. Budgetary allocations have been made to support teacher training, for expanded mother-tongue bilingual education and for early reading programmes.

“This year sees a substantial investment in early childhood development, reflecting our commitment to establishing a solid foundation for the development of every child,” the President added.

Funding for public employment programmes and to support small businesses has also been allocated.

Driving growth

President Ramaphosa noted sustaining expenditure on the social wage requires “higher levels of economic growth”.

“The budget allocates considerable resources to encourage infrastructure development, which drives growth and job creation.

“Taken together, up to R1 trillion will be spent on infrastructure over the medium term. This includes the allocation in this budget of an additional R62 billion over the next three years for road maintenance, electricity transmission lines, water and sanitation projects, school infrastructure and to support the ongoing recovery of our rail networks.

“Support is also provided to other growth-enhancing measures in the medium term, including incentive programmes in automotive, business process outsourcing, special economic zones, electric vehicle production, clothing and textiles, and other sectors,” he said.

South Africa's municipalities will also receive adjusted budget allocations to help them address infrastructure needs and improve service delivery.

“In a challenging economic environment—both locally and globally—this year’s budget supports measures to drive growth and relieve the effects of poverty. At the same time, it aims to stabilise public finances and continue to reduce our national debt.

“The budget reflects the priorities of government’s Medium Term Development Plan, a five-year programme of action that prioritises rapid, inclusive growth, creating a more just society and building state capacity.

“At a time when our singular focus must be the South African people, we need to use the limited resources we have to work together for the common good,” President Ramaphosa concluded. – Source: SAnews.gov.za

PRESIDENT RAMAPHOSA APPOINTS PROFESSOR MARIANA MAZZUCATO TO G20 TASKFORCE

President Cyril Ramaphosa has appointed renowned economist Professor Mariana Mazzucato as technical expert to South Africa’s Group of Twenty (G20) Presidency and his Special Presidential Representative to Taskforce 1, focusing on Inclusive Economic Growth, Industrialisation, Employment, and Reducing Inequality.



In a statement on Monday, 7 April 2025, The Presidency said Professor Mazzucato will also contribute to Taskforce 3: Artificial Intelligence, Data Governance, and Innovation for Sustainable Development.

She will also support the Sherpa Track on Trade and Investment Working Group and the Finance Track Sustainable Finance Working Group, and International Financial Architecture Working Group.

Professor Mazzucato has been a member of President Ramaphosa’s Economic Advisory Council (PEAC) since 2019, advising on areas such as green industrial strategy, State capacity, and reform of State-owned enterprises.

In 2024, she co-chaired the Group of Experts for Brazil’s G20 Task Force for the Global Mobilisation Against Climate Change (TF-CLIMA).

“This appointment underscores South Africa’s commitment to leveraging its leadership in the G20 to shape a more inclusive and sustainable global economy.

“Professor Mazzucato, internationally recognised for her work on rethinking the State, green growth, mission-orientated innovation and public value creation, brings critical expertise to advancing South Africa’s goals on green industrialisation, inclusive growth, and long-term structural transformation,” The Presidency said.

Under President Ramaphosa’s leadership and the G20 theme of *Solidarity, Equality, Sustainability*, South Africa aims to lead global discussions on these key issues, advocating for policies that foster resilient economic development, particularly in developing countries.

South Africa’s G20 Presidency is committed to advancing a global economic framework that supports green growth, economic resilience, and social equity.

The year 2025, described by President Ramaphosa, President Lula da Silva of Brazil, and Prime Minister Sánchez of Spain as “a pivotal year for multilateralism”, will feature three major global gatherings: the G20 Summit in Johannesburg, the Financing for Development Conference in Seville, and COP30 in Belém. – Source: SAnews.gov.za

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THE PRESIDENCY NOTES NEW US TARIFFS

The Presidency has noted with concern the newly imposed tariffs on South African exports to the United States of America (USA).

While South Africa remains committed to a mutually beneficial trade relationship with the USA, unilaterally imposed and punitive tariffs are a concern and serve as a barrier to trade and shared prosperity.

The tariffs affirm the urgency to negotiate a new bilateral and mutually beneficial trade agreement with the USA as an essential step to secure long-term trade certainty. – Source: www.gov.za



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MINISTER RONALD LAMOLA UNDERTAKES WORKING VISIT TO SENEGAL TO BOLSTER DIPLOMATIC AND BILATERAL RELATIONS



The Minister of International Relations and Cooperation of the Republic of South Africa, Ronald Lamola, has arrived in Dakar, Senegal, for a two-day Working Visit to strengthen diplomatic ties and deepen bilateral cooperation between the two nations. Minister Lamola’s visit underscores South Africa’s commitment to advancing strategic partnerships with Senegal and fostering Pan-African solidarity.

During his visit, Minister Lamola will co-chair the inaugural session of the Ministerial Joint Commission for Bilateral Cooperation alongside his Senegalese counterpart, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Senegalese Abroad, Yassine Fall. This historic session establishes a structured framework for enhanced collaboration on mutual priorities, including political dialogue, economic cooperation, regional integration, and multilateral coordination.

Elevating diplomatic engagement

The Ministerial Joint Commission represents a milestone in formalising high-level dialogue between South Africa and Senegal. Minister Lamola highlighted the significance of the commission, stating, “This platform reflects our shared vision to consolidate bilateral relations and amplify Africa’s voice on the global stage. Through deepened diplomatic and economic collaboration, we aim to unlock new opportunities for our nations and the continent.”

Courtesy calls on Senegalese leadership

In a gesture of goodwill and diplomatic courtesy, Minister Lamola will meet with His Excellency Prime Minister Ousmane Sonko and His Excellency President Bassirou Diomaye Faye. These engagements will reaffirm South Africa’s commitment to strengthening political and economic partnerships with Senegal, aligned with the African Union’s Agenda 2063 and the Sustainable Development Goals.

A partnership anchored in shared values

The Working Visit builds on the longstanding fraternal relations between South Africa and Senegal, rooted in mutual respect and a common vision for African progress. Both nations are poised to enhance cooperation in areas such as trade, investment, peace and security, and climate action while advancing multilateral reforms to promote a more equitable global governance system.

Minister Lamola’s visit epitomises South Africa’s proactive and progressive foreign policy, which prioritises African partnerships to drive inclusive growth and sustainable development. The outcomes of the Ministerial Joint Commission are expected to pave the way for innovative bilateral initiatives and reinforce South Africa-Senegal relations as a cornerstone of intra-Africa trade. – Source: www.dirco.gov.za

SOUTH AFRICA UNVEILS STRATEGIC ECONOMIC DIVERSIFICATION PLAN AMID US TARIFFS

South Africa has unveiled a comprehensive strategy to mitigate the economic impact of new United States (US) tariffs, focusing on export diversification, value-added production, and strengthening regional trade partnerships.

This is after US President Donald Trump announced global reciprocal tariffs on most imported goods, with South Africa facing a 31% tariff increase.

“The new tariff regime arising from the decision by the US, which has been directed not only to South Africa but the entire world, necessitates strategic responses to maintain and grow our industrial base as a crucial avenue to pursue inclusive growth,” the Minister of International Relations and Cooperation, Ronald Lamola, said on Friday, 4 April 2025.



Minister Lamola was speaking during a joint media briefing with the Minister of Trade, Industry and Competition, Parks Tau.

He informed journalists that South Africa will continue to tackle the challenges and seize opportunities with resilience and innovation as the country moves forward with ensuring economic growth, industrial development, and the well-being of its citizens.

Minister Lamola outlined plans to navigate the challenges posed by the 31% tariffs set to take effect from 9 April 2025.

These include negotiating favourable trade agreements with the US, leveraging the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) to boost intra-African trade and prioritising high-value manufacturing to reduce tariff exposure.

In addition, he said government remains committed to building economic resilience and exploring alternative market access through existing trade agreements and strategic partnerships with countries across various regions.

“We will intensify efforts to diversify export destinations, targeting markets across Africa, Asia, Europe, the Middle East, and the Americas,” the Minister stated.

According to Minister Lamola, government aims to reduce dependence on single export markets and foster economic resilience.

Meanwhile, he announced that the State will invest strategically in industries impacted by the tariffs, supporting economic growth through modernisation and targeted infrastructure development.

The sweeping tariff measures will affect several sectors of South Africa’s economy, including automotive, industrial agriculture, processed food and beverage, chemicals, metals, and other segments of manufacturing.

According to Minister Lamola, South Africa’s tariff and industrial strategy are designed to support industrial development, employment growth, and economic resilience.

“By aligning these policies with the national interest, South Africa will ensure that its economy emerges stronger, more diversified, and resilient in the face of global trade complexities,” he explained.

This approach will also apply to the 7 February Executive Order, which led to the withdrawal from the Just Energy Transition (JET) partnership with South Africa.

“South Africa’s average tariff is 7.6%, and therefore South Africa needs clarity on the basis for the 31% to be implemented by the US.”

Minister Lamola clarified that products such as copper, pharmaceuticals, semiconductors, lumber articles, certain critical minerals, and energy and energy products, have been exempted from the reciprocal tariffs.

These reciprocal tariffs will also not apply to products already facing Section 232 tariffs of 25%, such as steel, aluminium, automobiles, and auto parts.

Currently, the Minister said the US represents 7.45% of South Africa’s total exports, while South Africa accounts for only 0.4% of the US’ imports.

“As such, South Africa does not constitute a threat to the US, and there is a trade imbalance in favour of South Africa. It is mainly on agricultural products, which are counter-cyclical, and on minerals, which are inputs in US industries.”

Highlighting the potential impact, Minister Lamola noted that the tariffs “effectively nullify the preference that Sub-Saharan African countries enjoy under the Africa Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA).”

However, despite the challenges, Minister Lamola said government remains optimistic.

“The tariffs affirm the urgency to negotiate a new bilateral and mutually beneficial agreement with the US that will establish more fair-trade relations with the US as an essential step to secure long-term trade certainty,” Minister Lamola added.

Transparency in tariff calculations

Meanwhile, Minister Tau stressed the need for confirmation from the US on how they arrived at the tariff number, referencing international norms and standards.

He also highlighted the importance of transparency in tariff calculations, using World Trade Organisation (WTO) standards and the most favoured nations mechanism.

“And that’s why we are advocating for a reform of the WTO and ensuring that it’s able to adapt to current reality but also ensuring that we’re able to reinforce a multilateral system of trade and transparency across the board. Otherwise, you’re going to have an environment where there are no global rules,” Minister Tau added. – Source: www.dirco.gov.za

PROGRESS MADE IN TACKLING GLOBAL CHALLENGES

South Africa's presidency of the Group of Twenty (G20) is making significant progress in tackling global challenges through an inclusive and collaborative approach.



This is according to the country's G20 Sherpa, Zane Dangor. Sherpas are the personal representatives of the G20 leaders.

"We believe this is important and that the G20 must work with the UN [United Nations] and other multilateral institutions to mitigate these challenges and to find practical solutions for all of us."

"We look forward to constructive engagements from all members of the G20, the invited guests [and] also the international organisations," he said on Thursday, 3 April 2025.

Dangor, who is also the Director-General for International Relations and Cooperation, chaired the second virtual meeting of the G20 Sherpas in Pretoria on Thursday.

He also stressed the importance of ubuntu—a philosophy of inclusiveness and solidarity—in addressing global challenges and achieving shared interests across international organisations.

"We must express our appreciation in the way that you embraced the spirit of ubuntu, the culture that underpins not just South Africa's culture of inclusiveness but also Africa's wider culture. Ubuntu really underpins our commitment and solidarity in addressing our common challenges in achieving shared prosperity," he said during the opening session of the meeting.

Dangor stressed South Africa's commitment to multilateralism and shared prosperity, with 15 working groups having already conducted their first meetings and three task force meetings.

Working Groups are made up of representatives from member countries' ministries. The G20 working groups cover diverse areas, including development, anti-corruption, culture, education, women's empowerment, environment, health, tourism, and disaster risk management.

"We hope that as you listen to the reflections of the working group members, you will be able to, in your own inputs, sharpen what you believe we should be taking forward as a collective."

He also touched on a diplomatic engagement where he told attendees that the Foreign Ministers' meeting in February this year expressed strong support for South Africa's themes and priorities, particularly in managing geopolitical issues.

At the meeting in February, G20 foreign ministers threw their weight behind South Africa's presidency priorities, which focus on sustainable development and debt sustainability for low-income countries, amongst others.

In addition, he said following Brazil's model, South Africa's presidency aims to develop in-depth discussions on geopolitical matters through ministerial and leadership channels while allowing working groups to focus on technical issues.

Dangor acknowledged the enormous task ahead and the need for support from key members and international organisations.

The Sherpa said the objective of the two-day meeting, which concluded on Friday was to take stock of what has happened, identify areas for improvement, and address key issues.

He announced that the next meeting for the G20 Sherpa will be held from 26 to 28 June 2025 at the Sun City Resort in the North West, marking an in-person gathering to continue collaborative discussions. – Source: www.dirco.gov.za

YOUNG VOICES MAKE THEIR MARK AT AFRICA CHILDREN'S SUMMIT 2025

Children have taken centre stage to address critical issues affecting their lives, from education access to violence prevention, proving that they are not just future leaders but active changemakers.

This is according to the Department of Social Development, which hosted the Africa Children's Summit 2025.

Since its opening last week Friday, the summit has brought together some of the brightest and most courageous young leaders in person from across Africa, with hundreds joining virtually.



The children who attended in person are from South Africa, South Sudan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Kenya, Lesotho, Ghana, Liberia, Mozambique, Uganda, Zambia, and Zimbabwe.

In a statement, the department said the summit was child-led and child-centred, with its chairperson and programme facilitators all drawn from children invited to the summit.

“Under the theme *Seen, Heard, and Engaged in Education*, the children have boldly taken centre stage to address critical issues affecting their lives, from education access to violence prevention, proving that they are not just future leaders but active changemakers to day,” the department said.

One of the child leaders, 17-year-old Ison Cumbane from Mozambique, captured the spirit of the summit when he said, “Many children don’t have the opportunity to speak about their rights. We are here to give a voice to them and show that we can participate and influence decisions.”

The child-led initiative was hosted by the South African Government through the Department of Social Development, in partnership with the Nelson Mandela Children's Fund.

An Outcome Statement will be crafted by the children themselves, which will be handed over to the CEO of the Nelson Mandela Children's Fund and other key policymakers.

“The Outcome Statement outlines actionable recommendations for governments and civil society to implement policies that prioritise children's voices and rights across Africa,” the department said. – Source: SAnews.gov.za

IT'S YOUR COUNTRY; EXPLORE IT!

With the Easter long weekend fast approaching, Tourism Minister Patricia de Lille has called on local and international travellers alike to explore the country's breathtaking landscapes, rich culture and vibrant communities.

Minister de Lille launched the Easter campaign with an activation at Twin Venture, which is based at the Atlantis Dunes in Cape Town, specialising in quad biking and sandboarding experiences.



The activation was aimed at showcasing the variety of experiences for visitors across South Africa, especially in smaller towns.

Speaking at the event on Monday, 7 April 2025, which was attended by tourism business owners, industry associations, media and content creators, De Lille emphasised the importance of both domestic and international travel in sustaining and growing the tourism sector.

Domestic tourism: A growing market

Domestic tourism in South Africa continues to perform well, with travellers increasingly looking for affordable and unique experiences.

Recent insights from the 2024 Sho't Left Travel Week campaign highlighted key trends shaping local travel, including:

- Affordability remains a priority. Travellers are looking for more budget-friendly accommodation and experiences, making initiatives like Sho't Left vital in ensuring more South Africans can explore their own country.
- Lesser-known destinations are in demand. More South Africans are seeking off-the-beaten-path adventures, opting for places with fewer crowds and deeper cultural experiences.
- Personalised travel experiences are key. Families, solo travellers, seniors, and adventure-seekers are all looking for tailored travel options, including accessible tourism and wellness retreats.

"Every night spent in a guesthouse, every meal at a local restaurant and every souvenir bought from a market contributes to our economy. By supporting local tourism, we ensure that the benefits of travel extend beyond major cities, promoting inclusive economic growth," De Lille said.

International tourism on the rise

International visitors remain a key part of South Africa's tourism strategy. In the first two months of 2025 alone, the country welcomed nearly 1.8 million international visitors, an increase of 4.7% compared to the same period last year.

"International travellers are drawn to South Africa for its diverse cultures, breathtaking landscapes, and warm hospitality. We must continue showcasing what makes our country special and keep igniting the spirit of exploration," De Lille said.

South Africa Awaits—Come Find Your Joy!

To further promote tourism, South African Tourism recently launched its new global brand campaign: *South Africa Awaits—Come Find Your Joy!* This campaign encourages travellers—both local and international—to rediscover South Africa with the wonder and excitement of a first-time visitor.

"This is more than a tourism campaign; it's an invitation. Whether you're a young family, a group of friends, an adventure junkie, or someone who just needs a break, South Africa has something for you," the Minister said.

Minister de Lille urged travellers to take advantage of the upcoming long weekends to explore, experience and support local businesses.

"Take the trip. Book the stay. Discover the dorpie. Dance at the festival. Visit the market. Eat the magwinya. Support local. Make the memory. Take that Sho't Left! Our country is calling. South Africa Awaits – Come Find Your Joy!" the Minister said. – Source: SAnews.gov.za

APPLICATIONS INVITED FOR TRUSTED TOUR OPERATOR SCHEME

Home Affairs Minister Dr Leon Schreiber has gazetted a second invitation for applications to the highly successful Trusted Tour Operator Scheme (TTOS).

Since the first tourist visa applications from China and India were processed through this scheme on 12 February 2025, the department has been inundated with requests to expand it so that more tour operators can contribute to driving tourism growth.

The department said it is encouraged by this "overwhelmingly positive response", as it confirms the enormous potential of visa reforms to create more jobs by bringing more tourists to South Africa's shores.



In response to these calls, and after effecting additional upgrades to the online platform that processes TTOS applications, Minister Schreiber opened a second window for more tour operators to apply to join the scheme.

Tour operators who want to apply have 30 days to submit their applications through the dedicated online portal accessible via the department's website. No paper-based applications will be accepted.

As with the first intake, applications will be assessed by an interdepartmental team using artificial intelligence tools to vet and select successful participants.

"The key to the success of TTOS lies in the fact that the process has been digitally transformed from start to end.

"Whereas prospective tourists from China and India previously had to stand in long queues, submit paper applications, and sometimes wait so long for paper outcomes that they missed their flights, the digitalisation of this process through TTOS means that even visa outcomes for large groups are now issued digitally within hours," he said.

"In the weeks since TTOS was launched, over 2 000 additional tourists from China and India, who would otherwise not have come to our country owing to previous visa inefficiencies, have come to our country.

"Even more encouraging is the trend of applications received. On the first day of operation, 12 February, 21 applications were received.

"[On] 3 April, this figure had grown to 165 per day and shows no sign of slowing down. The intake of more operators will further accelerate this growth, as Home Affairs delivers on our commitment to replace a manual, paper-based and insecure visa system with secure, world-class digital infrastructure to drive economic growth," the minister said. – Source: SAnews.gov.za

GRAAFF-REINET FOSSIL CENTRE OPENS, HOUSING WORLD'S BIGGEST COLLECTION OF UNIQUE SPECIES

The Karoo Origins fossil centre houses the Rubidge family's unique collection of fossils from the area, including what globally respected palaeontologist Professor Bruce Rubidge described as the biggest collection of unique species in the world.

Professor Bruce Rubidge, who inherited his grandfather's impressive fossil collection housed for 91 years on the farm Wellwood near Nieu Bethesda, said the facility housed the biggest display of holotypes (unique species) in the world and is also an educational and research centre.

The centre, in Graaff-Reinet, is a dream held for decades by the family that has now come true.

Rubidge headed the Evolutionary Studies Institute at the University of the Witwatersrand for more than three decades.

"Karoo Origins already serves as a field base for local and international scientists actively involved in research on the rocks and fossils of the Karoo," he said.

All of the fossils in Rubidge's collection are displayed, but it is also a live collection—they will add and research new fossils found.

At the centre, visitors can learn about the geological history of the Karoo and why it is considered a remarkable area for fossils, which include dinosaurs, tortoises, crocodiles and especially mammals.



The fascinating history of how Rubidge's grandfather, Sidney, became interested in fossils is also told at the centre. In 1934, Rubidge's daughter Peggy (10 at the time) came to him and asked: "Daddy, what are fossils?" In response, Sidney took his family on a picnic to a rocky outcrop on his farm. This outing resulted in the discovery of the remarkably complete skull of a large flesh-eating therapsid, a mammal-like reptile, which was described as a new species, *Dinogorgon rubidgei*, by the internationally acclaimed palaeontologist Dr Robert Broom.

Some of the quirky letters exchanged between Broom and Sidney Rubidge are also on display. The exhibitions in the centre are designed by Colin Payne and Diane Makings from the design studio Fancy Horse. Payne said he was delighted to find some of the letters exchanged between Rubidge and Broom, including one where, in the middle of a scientific discussion, Broom asked about a ram that Rubidge was having trouble with on the farm.

Professor Rubidge, who is passionate about keeping the collection in the Karoo, said one day Broom asked his grandfather if they could move this specific skull, also on display, to the fossil centre at the University of the Witwatersrand in Johannesburg.

"Grandfather answered that the skull had been in the Karoo for millions of years and most certainly did not want to travel to Johannesburg," Rubidge said.

After the first skull, Sidney Rubidge began collecting fossils on and around his farm. His collection, Rubidge said, provided much information about the Permian and Triassic animals of southern Africa. The centre also tells the story of the remarkable fossil hunter James Kitching, who, as a child, was paid to find fossils by Sidney Rubidge.

"An important feature of the Rubidge Collection is the very large number of holotype specimens. A holotype is the reference specimen of a newly described species. As all 107 of these holotype specimens are on display, Karoo Origins has the distinction of displaying the greatest number of fossil holotype specimens in any exhibit.

"The Rubidge Fossil Collection contains a wide diversity of fossil "reptile" species that lived between 250-260 million years ago, and at that time, the most abundant land-living vertebrates were therapsid mammal-like reptiles, the most distant ancestors of mammals," Rubidge said.

He said the rocks of what is known as the Karoo Supergroup were deposited between 300 million and 180 million years ago.

"These rocks are internationally renowned for their wealth of ancient fossil reptiles that lived during the existence of the supercontinent of Gondwana. This giant continent included the present-day Africa, South America, Madagascar, India, Antarctica, and Australia."

He said this made the collection internationally important.

"The rock outcrops north of Graaff-Reinet hold the best record on land of the greatest global mass extinction event of all times. This occurred 252 million years ago, at the end of the Permian Period, and obliterated 90% of species," he said. This, Rubidge pointed out, made Karoo Origins a unique centre where the public could learn about past extinction events and also about the current sixth extinction.

"What is being created here is an exciting experience and journey into the distant past. We are looking forward to welcoming anyone with an interest in palaeontology, whether it be amateurs with a general interest in the geological history and fossils of the Karoo to local and international scientists, as well as undergraduate and postgraduate students," Rubidge said. The development in technology had opened the frontiers for new knowledge about fossils. He said that through CAT scans of the fossils, new research was being conducted on the metabolism of extinct animals, and how biodiversity had changed over time.

"The more specialised a creature is, the more vulnerable to extinction," he said. He said they were investigating which animals survived extinction events.

He said preserving a sense of place for the fossils was very important to him. "Museums don't usually display holotypes. This is the biggest collection of holotypes in the world."

In the 1940s, the former Monuments Council wanted to move the fossils, but Rubidge's grandfather persuaded the council to allow him to keep them in the Karoo.

"He realised that it would be difficult to keep them on the farm. He said the family, however, had serious concerns about the collections in South African museums becoming neglected—even 25 years ago, South Africa's biodiversity collections were under threat. After Rubidge intervened, steps were taken to correct the situation, but there are still concerns that more and more scientists are retiring and that collections will again be threatened.

"I think this collection has great potential for tourism," Rubidge said.

The centre is open from 8.30am to 4.45pm in Parsonage Street, Graaff-Reinet. – [www.msn.com/The Daily Maverick](http://www.msn.com/The_Daily_Maverick)

WARREN EVA MAKES HISTORY AS FIRST SOUTH AFRICAN TO SUMMIT MOUNT ANNAPURNA

Warren Eva has made history as the first South African to summit the treacherous Mount Annapurna in Nepal, cementing his place among the world's elite mountaineers after conquering one of the most dangerous peaks on earth.

This monumental achievement is not just a personal victory but a powerful story of determination, courage, and heart.

After conquering K2—the world's second highest peak—in 2022, Warren and fellow climber John Black became the first all-South African team to do so. That climb alone was nothing short of historic. K2, often referred to as the Savage Mountain, is notorious for its treacherous terrain and brutal weather. Only 377 people had ever stood on its summit before. On that day in July, the number climbed to 379, and two of those were proudly South African.



Now, Warren's name has once again been etched into mountaineering history.

This time for summiting Mount Annapurna I in Nepal. At over 8 000 metres, Annapurna is infamous for its staggering fatality rate, once considered the most dangerous of all the 8000ers. But danger was never the goal; purpose was.

The daring duo—Warren and John—had originally planned to make their summit attempt at the end of April. But in true adventurer style, they made a bold, last-minute decision to begin their final push sooner than expected. A metre of snow was forecast to fall early the following week, which would've made the mountain impassable for the rest of the season. Their window was closing. It was now or never.

"There's been very little snow until now, which has left the ice exposed, making some parts of the route more dangerous," Warren shared in an update from base camp. "We've had high winds all week, and now we're facing a metre of snow by Monday. If we don't go now, we may not get another chance." So, they went.

On 7 April 2025, Pioneer Expeditions and Annapurna 2025 confirmed the news we were all holding our breath for: Warren Eva has successfully summited Mount Annapurna.

John unfortunately made the tough decision to call off his summit attempt and returned to Camp 3. He is safe, strong, and in good spirits. More details around his decision will be shared in time, but what's clear is that he is beyond proud of Warren for pushing through and reaching the top. This achievement lifts the South African flag even higher on the global stage. It reminds us that courage, resilience and unity can take us to unimaginable heights, quite literally. From Benoni to the top of the world. – Source: www.goodthingsguy.com

CAPE TOWN'S ZIP ZAP CIRCUS HITS NEW YORK WITH A SHOW INSPIRED BY UBUNTU

The talented artists of the Zip Zap Circus will take to the New Victory Theatre stage this month to showcase the unifying spirit of "ubuntu" through amazing performances of vibrant traditional dances like gumboot and pantsula.



WATCH THE VIDEO

The From 12 to 26 April 2025, the global stage of the New Victory Theatre will host some of Mzansi's most extraordinary aerial and trapeze performers as they present a special performance titled *MOYA: a one-of-a-kind South African circus*.

This special production beautifully embodies the warm spirit of "ubuntu" and shines a spotlight on dynamic cultural expressions like gumboot and pantsula dance by talented performers who inspiringly found their way into a circus that would greatly change their lives.

More than just a circus

As a social circus, Zip Zap is an embodiment of the spirit of ubuntu, using circus arts to build community and empower young people.

One young man who has been given a second chance at a fulfilling life is Jacobus, "Trompie", as he's affectionately known.

Like many South Africans, Jacobus was born into a home where money was scarce and domestic violence was pervasive. Around the age of 10, he ran away from home. He was alone, hungry and turned to drugs as an escape. However, a chance meeting with a good Samaritan led him to a shelter for homeless children.

Jacobus was able to go to school and sleep with a roof over his head for the first time in years. It was there that Trompie discovered Zip Zap Circus—a place that would not only nurture the performer inside him but also a sense of belonging.

After progressing through Zip Zap's youth and outreach programmes, he became a full-time performer, and he now uses his craft to share his story on stage.

Trompie has excelled as an artist, and he has performed around the world; he was also the main character in the Canadian documentary *First Man*. His sense of fun, comedy, and quirky character makes him an endearing audience favourite.

A uniquely South African production

Much like Jacobus, the talented performers on stage in *MOYA* represent the most exceptionally talented graduates of Zip Zap's life-changing programmes which promote social cohesion, create opportunities, unlock potential, and transfer skills for life.

MOYA is an exceptional show that has creatively captured the buzz of Cape Town, where traditional gumboot dancers stomp their wellies to the ebullient beats of local music and pantsula dancers flex their fancy footwork—all while showcasing the vibrant humanity of the Rainbow Nation.

"It's so exciting to have Zip Zap Circus join us to close out our season and headline our 2025 New Victory Family Benefit on 27 April," said New 42 Artistic Director Mary Rose Lloyd.

"This unique circus will dazzle kids and families while also teaching us something new about the richness of South African culture."

Zip Zap Circus CEO and Co-Founder Laurence van Rensburg expressed how having a troupe performing at the New Victory Theatre fills him with pure excitement, pride, and gratitude!

"I can't wait for our performers to share their genuine spirit on stage, inspiring both young and old alike. Through collaborations, we hope to create meaningful connections and spread joy throughout New York. This journey is not just about entertainment; it's about fostering understanding and sparking creativity in every heart we touch." – Source: www.goodthingsguy.com

JEREMY LOOPS TO BRING HIS MUSIC MAGIC TO THE GLASTONBURY FESTIVAL

Jeremy Loops is set to play at the Glastonbury Festival and we can hear the crowd roaring already.



Music fans will know what a huge deal this is for any artist, especially South Africans for whom global opportunities are few and far between.

The magnitude that is making the cut to play at the world's most iconic music festival is a dream achievement for Loops.

"It's legitimately the pinnacle festival to play," he said. "Beyond the thrill of being invited to play, I'm just buzzing to soak it all in as a fan. I can't wait to bring *Feathers & Stone* to that stage and share it with everyone who's been part of this wild journey. Time to fly the South African flag high!"

Of his invitation to play, Glastonbury shared in Loops' excitement, stating, "We're so excited that the incredible Jeremy Loops is bringing his magic music to us."

Loops is set to play the Acoustics stage on the Saturday of the festival. Glastonbury is taking place from 27 to 29 June this year.



This exciting news comes on the back of Loops' latest album—*Feathers & Stones*. Equal parts powerful and personal, this is a story-telling record exploring themes of the artists' fascination (self-discovery, human connection and resilience), which many listeners will relate to.

Putting it beautifully, Loops explained the album as follows:

"These songs are built on the raw, real stuff—live instruments, human hands, human hearts. There's magic in the flaws, in the wobble of a string, the crack of a voice, the rhythm that's not quite perfect. That's where the truth lies," Loops says. – Source: www.goodthingsguy.com

YELLOWSTONE CAST SOAK UP TIME IN SOUTH AFRICA



Denim Richards (Colby) and Cole Hauser (Rip) of "Yellowstone" fame had a little South African adventure, going wine tasting in Cape Town.

Denim Richards and Cole Hauser from the popular television show *Yellowstone* were recently in South Africa, enjoying all the spoils our beautiful country has to offer. The duo, who are usually captured in the Yellowstone Bunkhouse or wrangling cattle, recently decided to soak in some summer sunshine and bubbles.

Denim Richards, who plays Colby, a cowboy, in the show, is a huge fan of Africa. He shared some comparative images showing what people think it looks like to live in Africa (i.e. waking up to lions) versus what it actually looks like (traffic in a busy V&A Waterfront) and then sharing that both can be true. He actively encouraged people to visit, and we just love him for that.

Denim is originally from Gaborone, Botswana, so he is constantly advocating for travel to the African continent and taking up important causes regarding the well-being of Africans, whether his own Batswana or the larger African population.

“What people think it looks like when I say I live in Africa vs what it actually is ... lol you’re playing yourself if you don’t come visit and see for yourself! Don’t believe what you see in the media. Both experiences can be true but to living in Africa isn’t wading yourself through hell and trauma. Who’s coming to visit me?”

Denim had Cole Hauser, who plays Rip Wheeler, join him for a visit to Cape Town and the duo were spotted wine -tasting at Lourensford Estate, where cellar master Hannes Nel talked them through the wines they had on offer.

Denim most recently spent time at the University of Botswana, where he was a guest lecturer and mentored students in the drama department. He gushed about how much talent there is to be nurtured, and we totally agree.

We love it when international stars highlight the beauty of our country and surroundings. Source: www.goodthingsguy.com

MPUMI NYANDENI BOWS OUT IN STYLE AS BANYANA FIGHT BACK TO BEAT MALAWI

Banyana Banyana came back from a goal down to record a 2-1 win over Malawi in an international friendly at the Lucas Moripe Stadium on Tuesday, 8 April 2025.

The South African women’s football team honoured legendary midfielder Mpumi ‘The Goat’ Nyandeni’s last match with a victory against a stubborn Flames outfit. Head coach Desiree Ellis also continued her preparations for the defence of the upcoming Women’s Africa Cup of Nations (WAFCON) title with a largely changed-up side.

The visitors took a surprise lead in the 57th minute, capitalising on defence errors by the Banyana defence and mainly goalkeeper Kaylin Swart.



The first-choice keeper made a poor call in trying to play sweeper keeper outside the box, an incident that resulted in a corner, and the Flames used that corner as they headed themselves in front with Swart again flapping on the 50th appearance.

Although it took a while, Banyana responded with a set-piece of their own, which second-half substitute Hildah Magaia converted. The winger reacted quickest in a congested box to blast home a half volley after the Malawi goalkeeper’s punch was not strong enough to clear.

In the 87th minute, midfielder Amogelang Motau completed the comeback with a rocket of a free kick. The 28-year-old scored her third goal in national team colours to ensure the hosts rounded off their preparations in a positive fashion.

Following an emotional first friendly four days ago that saw the end of Noko Matlou’s international career, it was now the turn of Nyandeni to take her bow in Pretoria.

The 37-year-old midfielder captained Banyana for her 150th cap and lined up alongside the likes of Linda Motlalo and the young Adrielle Mibe in the creativity department. The game was slow and lacklustre in overcast conditions, with the only real chance of the opening half coming in the first minute for the visitors.

When the two sets of players were afforded a water break after 35 minutes, coaches Desiree Ellis and her assistant Thinasonke Mbuli laid into their charge with a serious tongue lashing.

The core of those heated exchanges revolved around the team’s inability to establish any kind of rhythm and that they could not make precise and progressive passes when it mattered most. That telling off seemed to bring life into the hosts as they smashed the crossbar just three minutes after the resumption of play.

Kgaelebane Mohlakoana, back in the squad after a prolonged absence, was the guilty party after being played through with a thorough ball, but her attempt was too high and cannoned off the posts and out.

The heavens opened up heavily just two minutes before the half-time break and forced the referee to send both sets of players into the change room early and gave the respective benches a chance to make adjustments.

Ellis chose to swap out both wingers Mohlakoana and Mibe for the more explosive and experienced Hildah Magaia and Thembi Kgatana, the duo lifting the game almost immediately. In the end, Banyana had more quality than the COSAFA visitors and made it back-to-back wins against them.

– Source: www.iol.co.za

JOBURG ICE SKATER BRINGS GOLD MEDAL BACK FROM SPECIAL OLYMPICS IN ITALY



Johannesburg figure skater Naledi Hlalele returned to a hero's welcome after she won gold at the 2025 Special Olympics World Winter Games in Turin, Italy, this month.

Naledi Hlalele was one of six athletes who represented South Africa at the international winter games earlier in March 2025.

Naledi Hlalele, 20, joked that when they announced that she had won, she thought she was being teased. "I said 'no guys, stop lying'. But then they told me again, and I was really excited," she said. "I started jumping around and celebrating; it was a great feeling," said Hlalele.

The Special Olympics is an international sports organisation for children and adults with intellectual disabilities.

Hlalele was one of six athletes chosen to represent South Africa at the international winter games from 8 to 15 March, which featured more than 1 500 athletes from about 100 countries. The South African athletes competed in figure skating and speed skating. Besides Hlalele's gold, Team SA also won three silver and two bronze medals.

The team, especially Hlalele, returned to a hero's welcome, with scores of relatives and fans rushing to take photographs with them on their return to OR Tambo Airport.

Besides Naledi Hlalele's gold, Team SA also won three silver and two bronze medals.

Hlalele attends the Jiswa School in Lenasia, an education and training centre for learners with intellectual disabilities. The school runs a programme where learners are taken for ice skating lessons at the Northgate Ice Rink in Johannesburg. This is where Hlalele's love for the sport began.

At first, she found the ice challenging, but with the help of her coaches, she progressed quickly. "I can't dance to save my life, but when I'm on the ice, I feel like I can dance. I love being on the ice. I feel so free," said Hlalele.

"I have to thank my family, my teachers, and my coaches who always encouraged and supported me. Without them I wouldn't be here today celebrating a gold medal."

The school has supported Hlalele throughout her journey, even helping to raise money for her trip to Italy. "Naledi's victory is a true inspiration, reminding us of all that with hard work and determination, anything is possible. We are beyond proud of her and celebrate this amazing milestone with her," the school said in a statement after her return.

Special Olympics South Africa chairperson Mathews Phosa said he was proud of the team but emphasised that the competition goes beyond just winning medals.

“This victory tells us a story as South Africans, to not exclude or hide people with intellectual disabilities. The rights of people with intellectual disabilities must be asserted,” said Phosa.

Hlalele, who will be completing her schooling this year, plans to pursue her interest in beauty and skincare while continuing to skate.

“I would encourage kids to focus on their sport. They must be committed, and they must be disciplined. And they must believe in themselves,” said Hlalele. – Source: www.goodthingsguy.com

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