

# UBUNTU NEWSFLASH



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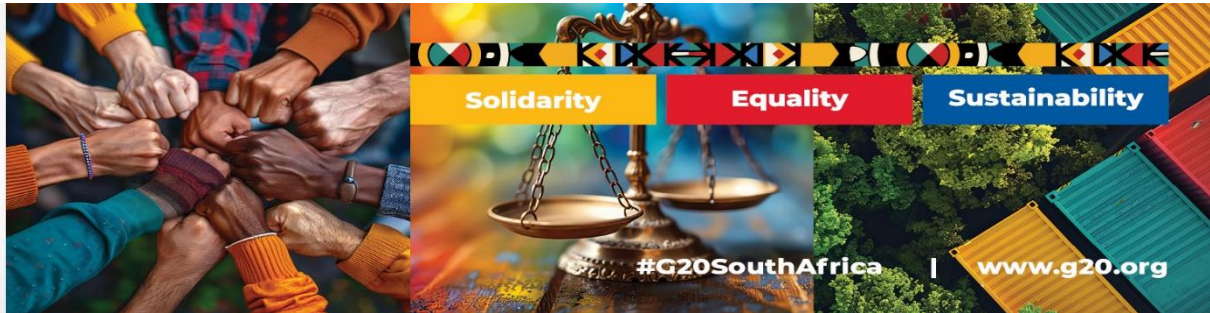
WEEKLY ELECTRONIC NEWSLETTER OF THE DEPARTMENT OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND COOPERATION

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## PRESIDENT RAMAPHOSA TO LAUNCH PHASE II OF OPERATION VULINDLELA

**President Cyril Ramaphosa launched the second phase of Operation Vulindlela on Wednesday, 7 May 2025, at the Union Buildings in Pretoria to unleash more rapid and inclusive economic growth.**

"President Ramaphosa will lead the launch of Operation Vulindlela Phase II, which builds on the foundation laid by the first phase, alongside ministers, senior officials, and business leaders," The Presidency said.

Operation Vulindlela was established in October 2020 as a joint initiative of the Presidency and National Treasury to accelerate the implementation of structural reforms.



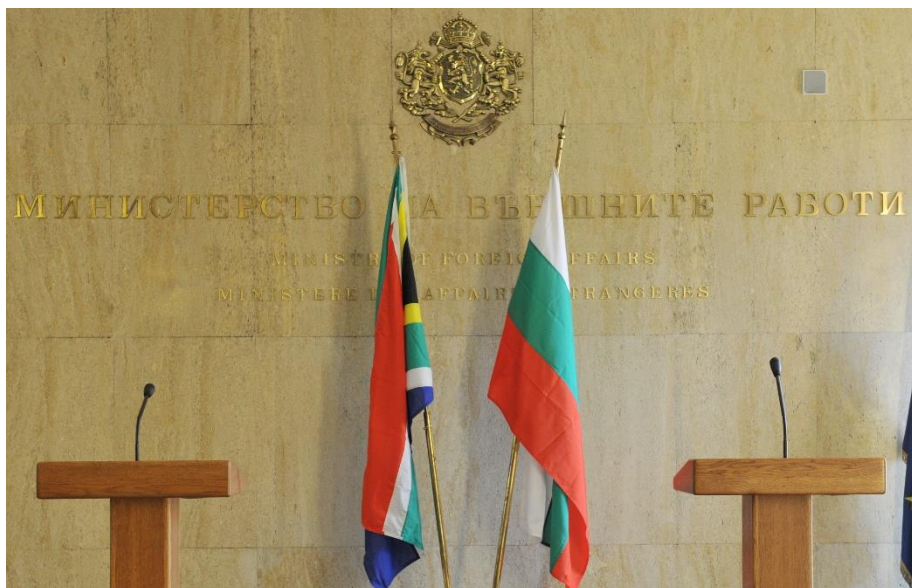
In its first phase, the operation focused on reforms in five key areas with a high potential impact on growth and jobs: energy, logistics, telecommunications, water, and the visa system.

Thirty-five reform actions were prioritised across these five areas, with government departments and agencies taking responsibility for implementation while a dedicated Vulindlela Unit in the Presidency and National Treasury monitored progress and provided support.

“Operation Vulindlela aims to modernise and transform network industries, including electricity, water, transport and digital communications. These network industries are the bedrock of economic growth and are essential to creating a globally competitive economy.

“In addition, reforms to the visa regime are being prioritised to attract skills and promote growth in tourism,” The Presidency said. – Source: SAnews.gov.za

## SOUTH AFRICA TO MAINTAIN CLOSE TIES WITH BULGARIA AS THE EMBASSY IN SOFIA WINDS DOWN OPERATIONS



***The Department of International Relations and Cooperation (DIRCO) announced the decision to close the South African Embassy in Sofia, Bulgaria, effective 30 June 2025.***

This decision, informed by prudent fiscal considerations and the need to prioritise national resource allocation, forms part of a broader strategic realignment of South Africa's diplomatic missions globally. Since 2021, South Africa has undertaken necessary adjustments to its international footprint to ensure fiscal sustainability while maintaining its commitment to effective diplomatic engagement and bilateral partnerships.

DIRCO underscores that this step is not reflective of the value South Africa places on its longstanding and cordial relations with Bulgaria. Rather, it is a measure compelled by the imperative of responsible fiscal stewardship.

Prior to this decision, extensive consultations were held between the governments of South Africa and Bulgaria. Minister Ronald Lamola personally engaged his Bulgarian counterpart, Minister Ivan Kondov, to reaffirm South Africa's steadfast commitment to strengthening bilateral ties.

To ensure continued collaboration, South Africa will maintain diplomatic and consular relations with Bulgaria through its resident mission in Athens, Greece, which will assume responsibility for bilateral engagements.

South Africa deeply values the presence of the Bulgarian Embassy in Pretoria and looks forward to sustained cooperation through this channel.

The South African Government remains optimistic that this closure will be temporary. Minister Lamola said, “We express our earnest intention to restore a dedicated diplomatic presence in Sofia as soon as fiscal conditions permit, reflecting our shared aspirations for a deepened partnership.” – Source: [www.dirco.gov.za](http://www.dirco.gov.za)

## NEW CHAPTER AS SANDF WITHDRAWS FROM DRC

***The withdrawal of the South African National Defence Force (SANDF) from the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) marks a new chapter in regional peacekeeping efforts, said Defence and Military Veterans Minister Angie Motshekga.***

“This withdrawal is a structured process designed to ensure the safe return of both our troops and equipment. All our logistical support will continue during this phase,” she said.

The Minister said the announcement follows “high-level consultation with several role-players in the peacekeeping efforts within the eastern DRC.”



Addressing a media briefing in Pretoria on Sunday, 4 May 2025, the Minister said that over the past four months, the region has witnessed renewed momentum towards peace and stability in the eastern provinces of the DRC.

“These political engagements have progressed with great momentum and led to the recent outcome of the recent DRC Summit of heads of states and governments, which was held in March 2025. The outcome of these meetings has led to a decision for the termination of the mission and withdrawal to allow political and diplomatic intervention to resolve the security issues in the DRC,” she explained.



The Minister further appreciated the commitment shown by the SANDF members who served with honour, pride, professionalism, and commitment under very challenging circumstances.

“I want to say to them that your contribution has helped to lay the groundwork for peace in the region. And to the families of those who made the ultimate sacrifice, your loss is shared by a very grateful nation full of appreciation.

“Their memories will forever be in the history of our commitment to peace on the African continent. South Africa remains committed to a peaceful state and a stable, prosperous DRC,” she said.

This is after 14 troop members lost their lives and others sustained injuries at the hands of the M23 as fighting in the Goma region escalated. The rebel group fought intensely against the Congolese armed forces, resulting in the deaths of soldiers from 23 to 27 January 2025 during M23’s advance on Sake and Goma.

These soldiers were part of the Southern African Development Community Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo (SAMIDRC), which aims to help restore peace, security, and stability in Africa’s second-largest country.

“Our diplomatic developments and humanitarian engagements will continue. As we transit out of the active combat deployment, we reinforce our commitment to African led solutions in the values of African Union Agenda 2063,” said the Minister at the briefing held at the Government Communication and Information System (GCIS) offices.

The SANDF troops will arrive back in the country in phases. Chief of the SANDF, General Rudzani Maphwanya, said the withdrawal of the troops in the DRC is not accidental.

“This withdrawal is not an accidental withdrawal, and withdrawal is not a sign of weakness,” he said.

He said that they were seeing “elements of peace” due to the M23 rebel groups “committed to cessation of hostilities.”

“Let me also pay my respects to the fallen soldiers that, during combat, laid down their lives for the betterment of the lives of others. I would also like to pay homage to those that were injured and are currently recovering,” he said.

The SANDF withdrawal is expected to be completed by the end of May 2025, this as movement began on 29 April 2025.

“Today as we speak, the second batch will be going, and this movement will be concluded by the end of this month,” he said.

He added that SANDF equipment will be shipped via air and land travel. – Source: SAnews.gov.za

## **SOUTH AFRICA TO PARTICIPATE IN COPENHAGEN CLIMATE MINISTERIAL IN DENMARK**

***Minister of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment, Dr Dion George, represented South Africa at the Copenhagen Climate Ministerial Meeting in Denmark, a critical platform leading to COP30 in Belém, Brazil.***

The ministerial meeting took place on 7 and 8 May 2025 and was attended by around 40 leaders and ministers to discuss key issues.

The Minister’s goal was to advance South Africa’s climate agenda with concrete outcomes on stronger global partnerships, clearer funding pathways, and renewed momentum to tackle climate change.



“South Africa aims to return with commitments that empower its people and protect its wildlife and marine resources, building a resilient, sustainable future for all,” the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment said in a statement.

For South Africans, this Ministerial is about protecting livelihoods, strengthening resilience, and safeguarding the nation’s natural heritage.

“Climate change brings droughts that jeopardise food security, floods that devastate communities, and rising temperatures that disrupt jobs in agriculture, fisheries, and forestry.

“It also threatens South Africa’s iconic wildlife, from elephants and rhinos to delicate ecosystems, and impacts fish stocks in our oceans, which are vital for coastal communities and food security.

“Through active engagement, South Africa ensures its Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) drive sustainable development, secure essential climate finance, and deliver a just transition to a low-carbon economy that benefits all citizens while preserving biodiversity,” the department said.

South Africa’s participation is vital to shaping global policies that deliver resources, technology, and support to its people and environment. Discussions on science, the Global Stocktake, and more translate into cleaner air, safer water, healthier oceans, and new jobs in green sectors for South Africans.

The Minister’s participation ensured the nation’s voice is heard in these critical decisions.

South Africa will advocate for ambitious climate commitments that foster job creation, poverty reduction, and biodiversity conservation, embedding community and environmental upliftment in its climate plans.

The Minister also participated in sessions that focus on protecting workers in high-carbon industries while unlocking opportunities in renewable energy and green technologies.

“The Minister championed increased funding for adaptation projects, such as water infrastructure, climate-smart agriculture, and marine conservation efforts, improving daily life and protecting ocean ecosystems.

“From coastal towns to rural farms and wildlife reserves, South Africa will promote solutions to enhance resilience against climate impacts for both people and nature,” the department said. – Source: SAnews.gov.za

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## CALL FOR STRONGER INVESTMENT IN AFRICAN AGRICULTURE

***Agriculture Minister John Steenhuisen has challenged political leaders across the continent to uphold their commitments to enhance agricultural growth and productivity while increasing the level and efficiency of farm investments for a broader impact.***

Speaking at the launch of the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) Strategy and Action Plan 2026–2035 and the Kampala Declaration, held in Johannesburg on Monday 5 May 2025, Minister Steenhuisen emphasised that sustained investment in agriculture is critical to eradicating poverty and hunger while enhancing productivity across the sector.

Hosted by the South African government from 5 to 7 May 2025, the event was jointly organised by the African Union Commission’s Department of Agriculture, Rural Development, Blue Economy and Sustainable Environment (DARBE) and the African Union Development Agency–New Partnership for Africa’s Development (AUDA-NEPAD).

In his keynote address, Minister Steenhuisen underscored the urgent need of strengthening agricultural resource mobilisation to address the challenges facing smallholder farmers.

He added that prioritising the efficient allocation of available resources to boost sector productivity is not only critical but urgent “if we are to improve agricultural productivity.”



“In this context, evidence-based intra-sector prioritisation is vital for improving agricultural resource management. The strategy has highlighted that Africa’s progress over the last 20 years presents a picture of significant progress though there is evidence of sluggishness currently, which is concerning,” Minister Steenhuisen said.

The Minister also reiterated South Africa’s strong political leadership and commitment to drive the implementation, mutual accountability, and, significantly, the financing required to achieve the aspirations of CAADP.

### **Tackling data management challenges**

Minister Steenhuisen identified data management as a barrier to the effective implementation of the CAADP agri-food systems agenda.

He said with the assistance of the AU, AUDA-NEPAD, development partners, and experts, the leaders must address the challenges related to data management.

“This underscores the importance of emphasising mutual accountability during the Kampala period concerning investments to bridge data gaps.”

He further highlighted that innovation in the agrifood sector must respond to dynamic local conditions, including co-evolution of pests and diseases, degradation of water and land resources, and climate change.

“Eliminating distortions and resolving market failures hindering technology adoption are essential components of any productivity enhancement programme, particularly for smallholder farmers,” the Minister said.

In this context, he said, agricultural policy faces a significant challenge: the simultaneous need to address market failures is often constrained by government resource limitations and the difficulty of properly identifying issues and implementing effective reforms.

He underscored the importance of actively confronting these challenges, “as we embrace the Kampala Agenda and the CAADP strategy.”

Minister Steenhuisen reaffirmed the crucial role of governments in advancing agricultural innovation, saying governments must act as both investors in knowledge creation and advocates for the dissemination of technology.

“This role involves focused public investments and policy reforms that incentivise public institutions and private companies to create knowledge that meets users’ needs throughout the agrifood value chain. Our agri-food systems entail strengthening coordination among all stakeholders, crafting supportive policy frameworks, and prioritising capacity building alongside robust data and evidence management.

“It has been said during the Kampala Summit that delivering on the Kampala Agenda in the next decade will require re-evaluation of agricultural and nutrition policies that embrace the growing complexities of urbanisation, population growth, the challenges posed by youth, and shifting points of influence in planning,” Minister Steenhuisen said.

He reiterated that addressing hunger and poverty will require a multisectoral approach, particularly in the context of slow economic growth.

“Achieving transformation in [Africa’s] agri-food systems will necessitate extensive data from various sectors to make informed decisions regarding food security and nutrition. This requires addressing data deficiencies, particularly concerning diets, micronutrient levels, and food composition, through systematically gathering information and recognising potential within the food system,” Minister Steenhuisen said. – Source: SAnews.gov.za

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## **SCHOOL OF GOVERNMENT PARTNERS WITH CHINA TO TRAIN PUBLIC SERVANTS**

***The National School of Government (The NSG) has organised a learning exchange programme taking public servants and elected public representatives to China to gain firsthand experience of how China has managed the modernisation and professionalisation of the State.***

The programme on Modernisation and Professionalisation of the State runs from 7 to 27 May 2025.

According to the NSG, it is hosted by the Academy for International Business Officials in the People’s Republic of China and is supported by the Chinese Ministry of Commerce.



The programme explores the Chinese path of modernisation from a largely rural and agrarian society to a highly modernised and industrialised society, having abolished absolute poverty in 2020, ten years before the goal South Africa has set in the National Development Plan [NDP] and the United Nations Agenda for Sustainable Development, to eliminate poverty and reduce inequality by 2030.



The NSG's international exchanges are aimed at facilitating public servants' access to specialist knowledge and skills needed to enhance public sector performance and development through, among others, learning from the development trajectory of other countries in the global South and North.

"State capacity is important in pursuing equitable and sustainable socio-economic transformation as well as safeguarding the rights and dignity of the people of South Africa.

"Chinese leadership and achievements serve as a great source of inspiration for transformation on the African continent. African officials participating in these exchanges contribute to innovation and strengthening of public institutions to play a transformative role," said Minister for Public Service and Administration, Inkosi Mzamo Buthelezi, in congratulating the officials nominated to attend the programme.

The South African government has committed itself to drive inclusive growth and job creation, to reduce poverty, and to tackle the high cost of living with a developmental and capable state playing a central role in this regard, as the NDP puts it: "South Africa can realise these goals by drawing on the energies of its people, growing an inclusive economy, building capabilities, enhancing the capacity of the state, and promoting leadership and partnerships throughout society."

This exchange is part of a series in the NSG's international cooperation for public sector development and performance.

The NSG forms part of the portfolio of the Ministry for the Public Service and Administration. – Source: SAnews.gov.za

## MOODY'S UPGRADES CAPE TOWN'S CREDIT RATING, BOOSTING INVESTMENT PROSPECTS

***In a significant boost for the City of Cape Town, Mayor Geordin Hill-Lewis announced on Thursday evening, 1 May 2025, that Cape Town has achieved a coveted credit ratings upgrade from Moody's.***

This upgrade not only enhances the city's financial credibility but also reinforces its position as a premier destination for global and local investment in the region, reports *Cape {town} Etc.*

This commendable recognition from the renowned credit agency underscores Cape Town's commitment to enhancing its economic landscape, particularly through the diversification of water sources and infrastructure upgrades.

Mayor Hill-Lewis highlighted that the city is poised to invest a substantial R23 billion over the next two years in various infrastructures, aimed at fortifying resilience and addressing vulnerabilities identified in previous ratings downgrades.



"The city's ongoing efforts will further strengthen our financial metrics and position us favourably compared to international benchmarks," said the Mayor.

He also noted that Moody's assessment characterised Cape Town's financial management as strong, resulting in what he termed a "slow but steady" improvement in the city's economic outlook.

"This has been a long-term effort, and the upgrade confirms everything we have worked towards. Cape Town is a standout investment partner and a solid example of good governance," Hill-Lewis stated, emphasising the city's ability to cultivate a stable and attractive environment for investors.

The upgrade from Moody's not only signals confidence from international credit rating agencies but is also expected to inspire greater local investment, ultimately fostering job creation and economic growth for the city.

As Cape Town navigates through an evolving economic landscape, its leadership remains steadfast in addressing vulnerabilities, ensuring the city can withstand future challenges. – Source: [www.capetownetc.com](http://www.capetownetc.com)

## AMERICAN HEARTS BEAT FOR RHINOS: US EVENT RAISES OVER R300 000 FOR ZULULAND CONSERVATION

***In the heart of California, a charity event united conservation leaders and advocates for wildlife to directly support the crucial on-the-ground work of the Zululand Conservation Trust and the Zululand Rhino Orphanage.***



Through an incredible and well-supported event orchestrated by the Global Conservation Force (GCF) in Temecula, California, hundreds of thousands were raised for rhino conservation this month.

The stunning evening featured presentations from conservation leaders, the exclusive screening of the Oscar-nominated film *The Last Ranger* and a silent auction that boasted safari experiences. Its success? GCF managed to raise an amazing US\$17 885 (about R332 735) for the boots-on-the-ground partners at Zululand Conservation Trust and Zululand Rhino Orphanage. According to GCF, US\$12 885 (R239 710) was raised through the event, and another US\$5 000 (R93 028) in additional support from GCF funds.

“That’s US\$17 885.17 directly hitting the ground in Zululand to protect rhinos and support orphan care.

“We’re beyond proud of our GCF team, who showed up in full force—the backbone of our United States (US) operations, always stepping in to support fundraising, programmes, education, and admin with grace and grit,” GCF said.

The partnership between GCF and the Zululand Conservation Trust emerged following the tragic attack on Thula Thula Rhino Orphanage—one of the most violent poaching-related attacks in recent history. With GCF’s swift intervention, the reserve was stabilised to help safeguard the remaining rhino orphans and staff and facilitate their secure relocation to what is now the Zululand Rhino Orphanage.

Every generous dollar raised will serve as a vital lifeline, helping to keep the orphanage and the Trust moving forward in rhino rescue, rehabilitation, protection, and conservation across KwaZulu-Natal. – Source: [www.goodthingsguy.com](http://www.goodthingsguy.com)

## TWO SOUTH AFRICAN COFFEE SHOPS NAMED AMONG WORLD’S BEST

***Two South African coffee shops just brewed their way onto the list of the world’s best, proving that when it comes to flavour, passion and community, Mzansi serves it hot.***

The World’s 100 Best Coffee Shops for 2025 have been announced, and two proudly South African spots have earned their place among the best on the planet—Espressolab in Cape Town at number 11 and The Whippet in Johannesburg at number 89.

The rankings were compiled using a mix of public votes (30%) and expert input (70%), and after all the caffeine-fuelled data was poured over, Toby’s Estate in Sydney, Australia, was crowned number one. But let’s be honest, our local favourites give them a serious run for their money.





Ranked just outside the global top 10, Espressolab Microroasters is located inside Cape Town's Old Biscuit Mill in Woodstock and is as much an experience as it is a coffee shop. With a sleek, minimalist, lab-like aesthetic, this spot draws in coffee lovers who are serious about their beans.

Here, it's not just about the caffeine fix; it's about the craft. Espressolab sources sustainable single-origin beans from Africa and South America, roasting them in small batches to bring out every subtle note and nuance. The baristas are artists in their own right, offering not just a cup of coffee but a masterclass in flavour, balance, and origin.

Coming in at number 89, The Whippet has long been a local treasure in the leafy suburb of Linden, Johannesburg. It's the kind of place where regulars are known by name, and the story behind the building, once the Old Linden Hotel, is just as rich as the coffee served inside.

Celebrating the area's agricultural heritage, The Whippet serves its signature Linden Blend (a perfectly balanced mix of Costa Rican and Malawian beans), roasted locally to ensure each cup is as fresh and flavourful as possible. Pair it with their buttermilk chicken benedict or a slice of old-school milk tart, and you'll quickly understand why it's earned a spot on the global map.

But more than that, The Whippet is about people. It's a hub for the community, a place that champions local produce, friendly faces and a good, strong cuppa.

This kind of recognition goes far beyond bragging rights. It shines a spotlight on the skill, creativity and hustle of South African entrepreneurs and baristas who have mastered their craft and shared it with the world. It cements South Africa's place on the global coffee map, drawing in curious travellers, uplifting local farmers and producers and fuelling a thriving café culture that's uniquely ours. – Source: [www.goodthingsguy.com](http://www.goodthingsguy.com)

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## SOUTH AFRICAN ROBOTICS TEAM LEAVES GLOBAL MARK AT WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS

***After an impressive victory at the South African Nationals FIRST Tech Challenge, where they won the top Inspire Award and the Winning Alliance Captain title, robotics team Texpand earned their place among the elite at the FIRST World Championships in Houston, United States of America.***



Out of the more than 10 000 teams that competed globally, Texpand was one of 256 teams that qualified. FIRST Robotics is a tool to educate school students in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Maths skills (STEM) using robotics games as the mechanism.

Every year, the competitors are faced with a brand new robotics game with a variety of tasks and challenges that they must perform to outscore the opposing teams. Teams are given about four months to design and build a robot to score maximum points in the game.

This season's challenge was titled *Into the Deep*, a sea-themed game where robots were tasked with collecting box-shaped game pieces called "samples." Points were scored by placing these samples in small baskets positioned high above ground level. Alternatively, a sample could be taken to a designated corner where a human player would attach a clip to turn it into a "specimen." This specimen could then be scored by clipping it onto a horizontal bar.

In each match, two robots formed an alliance to compete against another alliance. Typically, one robot specialised in scoring samples in the baskets, while the other focused on scoring specimens on the bars.

### Texpand establishes itself as a dominant force

Texpand has been recognised as a leading "sample" team globally throughout the entire season, setting autonomous records from September 2024.

At the World Championships, they continued to set records, achieving the highest divisional score, setting a new world record for autonomous samples, and boasting the highest sample points scored by a single robot in any match this season. The team also became the first African team to rank high enough in qualifying rounds to become an alliance captain and pick partner teams for the final playoffs.

Although the team's performance in scoring samples was unrivalled in the world, this wasn't enough to win the championship because each match is played in a two-team alliance, and Texpand was eliminated in the final playoff stage of the competition when their alliance partner's autonomous (first 30 seconds of a match) failed, putting them well behind on score.



Texpand also managed to win the Control Award again this year—a judged award given to the team that demonstrates innovative thinking and solutions to solve game challenges such as autonomous operation, improving mechanical systems with intelligent control, or using sensors to achieve better results.

### A team that inspires

The popularity and respect gained by Texpand throughout the season were shown by a continuous flow of people from all over the world coming to their stand to find out more about their robot and express appreciation for the inspiration that Texpand has been to the global FTC community.

Although the four-day World Championship competition schedule was demanding, the Texpand team members made the most of being around the best of the best teams in the world, attending evening meetings and participating in practice “scrimmage” sessions to improve their global connections.

The World Championships is the highlight of Texpand's season, not only because they get to play with and against the best robots in the world but also because they get to meet the online friends they've made on the community Discord. They also get to collaborate and share ideas with teams whose work they've respected and followed throughout the season, and most of all, they get to reconnect with old friends from the previous years.

Many of the connections made at the World Championships have opened doors for Texpand to collaborate on joint projects and online conferences, giving them exposure to working with people from other cultures and languages. This has, in turn, attracted financial investment into SA robotics and enriched the robotics community, both locally in South Africa and abroad.

### Texpand looks ahead

Now, with the World Championships behind the team, the education effort and teamwork will go on. Looking ahead, Texpand is committed to nurturing the robotics community, hosting workshops with top international teams and participating in prestigious global events. – Source: [www.goodthingsguy.com](http://www.goodthingsguy.com)

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## LOCAL FILM, GLOBAL IMPACT: VENDA MOVIE CLAIMS INTERNATIONAL AWARD

***A powerful new voice in South African cinema is rising, and it is coming from the valleys of Venda.***

Murena Emmanuel Netshitangani, a passionate filmmaker from Limpopo, has just clinched the Best African Film award at the Cannes World Film Festival for his riveting feature *Lubuny*. And while some media headlines may have confused the win with the more famous Cannes Film Festival (which kicks off later this month), this achievement is still hugely significant and worth celebrating properly.

Murena is a name to remember, not only because of his storytelling prowess but also because of how far he has taken a deeply local story, filmed in a village many South Africans have never even heard of, and placed it on a global stage. And he's done it with heart, grit and an unwavering belief in his dream.

“From the timeless mountains of Khakhu Makuleni, a name shall now echo across the world,” he wrote on social media.

“What once was a patient waiting game has blossomed into a triumph—we bask in the glory of history: the second professional Venda film ever made.

“Who could have foreseen that it would all lead to this singular moment in time?

“Today, crowned with the title of Best African Film at the Cannes World Film Festival, we celebrate a monumental achievement—a boy from Venda, armed with nothing but a dream and a relentless spirit, has carried the heart of Venda culture onto the grand stage of the world. Congratulations to the cast and crew.



“All gratitude to World Film Festival in Cannes.”

Founded in 2020, the Cannes World Film Festival is an independent hybrid event that takes place in Cannes, France. It is not affiliated with the official Festival de Cannes, which runs this year from 13 to 24 May 2025. Instead, it offers a monthly and annual competition format where filmmakers from around the globe can submit their work via platforms like FilmFreeway. The festival celebrates fresh perspectives, under-represented voices, and socially-conscious storytelling. Monthly winners like *Lubunyu* qualify for the prestigious “Luciole d’Or” (Golden Firefly) at the annual awards held in the same iconic city.

This structure opens the door for independent creators and has become a vital launchpad for powerful stories that may not otherwise be seen on international screens.

And *Lubunyu* is just that: a deeply layered film grounded in Venda history and modern-day conflict. Filmed entirely in Ha-Khakhu Makuleni, Limpopo, the title translates to “the naked intruder”. A metaphor that begins to unravel as the story unfolds. Inspired by real events with fictional threads, the film explores the complex tensions between tradition and change, diving into themes of justice, deception and identity.

The cast is stacked with heavyweights of South African television and film: Tshamano Sebe, Macdonald Ndou, Elsie Rasalanavho, Hangwani Ramakuwela, Nokukhanya Luthuli, Azwidohwi Tshirangwana and Murendeni Ramunenyiwa all bring their A-game to this powerful project.

To call it a win for Murena would be an understatement. It’s a win for Venda. A win for South African cinema. A win for homegrown storytelling that doesn’t try to be anything but itself and still manages to resonate far beyond our borders. – Source: [www.goodthingsguy.com](http://www.goodthingsguy.com)

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## TYLA STUNS AT THE 2025 MET GALA

***The first Monday in May is always reserved for fashion’s most fabulous affair, and this year, South Africa’s Tyla turned heads once again at the 2025 Met Gala.***



WATCH THE VIDEO

But while the gowns glittered and the carpet sizzled, the real headline might just be what the event achieved behind the scenes.

Fresh off her global *Water* success, Tyla arrived at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in a fitted off-the-shoulder dress designed by Jacquemus. Unlike her sandy, sculptural look from last year that nearly broke the internet, this time she swapped sand for stripes and served elegance with a side of legacy.

The look was completed with a dramatic coat and an exaggerated train that cascaded down the iconic Met steps in bold black-and-white stripes. More than just high fashion, the ensemble was a tribute to the late André Leon Talley, the legendary *Vogue* editor and fashion icon. Tyla’s stylist, Law Roach (who also dressed Zendaya this year), shared a video to his Instagram, confirming the homage and anchoring Tyla’s outfit in fashion history.

This year’s Met Gala theme, *Superfine: Tailoring Black Style*, drew from Monica L. Miller’s work exploring black dandyism and the nuances of diasporic identity through fashion. The exhibit celebrated style as resistance, expression and storytelling, and we think Tyla’s look fit the brief perfectly.

But beyond the glitz and glamour, this year’s Met Gala made headlines for a completely different reason: it broke records. According to museum officials, the 2025 gala raised an eye-watering US\$31 million (over R500 million), the highest total in the event’s 77-year history. That’s not just a fashion win; it is a serious philanthropic flex. The money raised goes directly to the Met’s Costume Institute, helping preserve and celebrate the art of fashion through curation, conservation and education. It supports everything from mounting exhibitions to acquiring new pieces that reflect fashion’s evolving story. – Source: [www.goodthingsguy.com](http://www.goodthingsguy.com)

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## BRILLIANT BLITZBOKS CROWNED KINGS OF LOS ANGELES

*The Springbok Sevens team saved their best for last to win the final tournament of the season, the HSBC SVNS World Championship in Los Angeles, with a 19-5 victory over Spain in the final, wrapping up a flawless weekend in California early on Monday morning, 5 May 2025.*



The Blitzboks were determined on defence and clinical on attack against a plucky Spain to win their second title of the 2025 season, after raising the trophy in Cape Town in December 2024.

They managed to keep Spain away from their tryline with solid defence, and when in possession, struck when it mattered and even managed to score when down to six men following a late yellow card to Zander Reynders.



The performance in the final wrapped up a magnificent effort at the tournament, where the Blitzboks had no peers and hard as Spain tried, they had no answers to unlock the determination of their opponents to not let them get past them.

After four minutes of defence, South Africa struck when Selvyn Davids, who was named Player of the Final, stepped past the Spanish defence for a brilliant solo try.

A long spell of possession by Spain was left in ruins as—from a rare moment with ball in hand at that stage—Davids attacked from a scrum 80m out and ran almost the length of the field. Ronald Brown converted for a 7-0 lead, which was the halftime score as well.

Relentless defence forced Spain into mistakes and they battled to get into the South African half, barring their early attack in the opening spell.

The second half had more of the same. Spain had most of the ball and attacked from all corners, but stout defence forced them backwards and into mistakes.

They were finally rewarded when Quewin Nortje was beaten by a delayed pass and Pol Pla scored from 50m out. Davids cut the Spanish speedster off, forced him to score out wide, and the conversion missed, keeping South Africa in the lead.

The turning point came soon after when Mfundo Ndhlovu, who last played in Cape Town in December 2024, outfoxed a rushing defence and then raced away from inside the SA 22 to score. Brown converted and at 14-5 and two minutes to play, the advantage was with the Blitzboks.

Reynders caused some heartache as was he was yellow-carded from the restart, leaving the team one man short for the remainder of the match, but that didn't matter. Siviwe Soyizwapi showed his experience with a crucial turnover, with his team under pressure and a man down, which handed possession back to South Africa.

Ricardo Duarte sealed the deal after close combat with the Spanish and a probing Tristan Leyds run found some gaps and momentum from where Duarte pounced.

Blitzbok coach Philip Snyman praised the players afterwards, saying that their willingness to keep working made the win possible.

Earlier, the Blitzboks kept their hot streak going following pool wins against France, Great Britain and Argentina, outscoring New Zealand by four tries to one and never giving the Kiwi side a look-in at all with a 26-5 win in their semi-final.

Shilton van Wyk opened the scoring in the first minute, pouncing on a loose pass from New Zealand after a lineout, kicking ahead and winning the race to the line. Ronald Brown converted for a 7-0 lead.

The second try by South Africa was more structured but still a thing of beauty. Selvyn Davids delayed his pass from a tap penalty and Nortje could race in to score under the sticks. Brown converted and the lead was 14-0 after four minutes of play.



The rampant Blitzboks scored a third try before the half-time buzzer when some crisp passing and hard running gave Van Wyk a second try in the opening seven minutes. Brown, whose pass freed up Van Wyk, converted from the sideline for a 21-0 lead.

The second half start was equally impressive. Brown's spot-on cross-kick found Nortje in the corner for his second try, despite having his shirt ripped in two, to push the lead to 26-0.

New Zealand finally managed a play of note three minutes into the second half with a good move from within their half to score, but it was too little too late.

**Scorers:**

**South Africa 26 (21) New Zealand 5 (0)**

SA - Tries: Shilton van Wyk (2), Quewin Nortje (2). Conversions: Ronald Brown (3).

NZ - Try: Frank Vaenuku.

**South Africa 19 (7) Spain 5 (0)**

SA - Tries: Selvyn Davids, Mfundo Ndhlovu, Ricardo Duarte. Conversions: Ronald Brown, Tristan Leyds.

Spain - Try: Pol Pla. – Source: [www.sareferees.co.za](http://www.sareferees.co.za)

**RISING STAR KYLE ARMDORF SECURES VICTORY FOR SOUTH AFRICA AT PRESIDENT’S CUP REGATTA**

**South African paddler Kyle Armdorf headed to the President’s Cup 2025 Regatta in Azerbaijan—a first for South Africa—and he absolutely smashed it with two gold medals to show for it.**

According to Sport South Africa, the rising star won his first international race in Sugovushan, Azerbaijan, on 30 April 2025 by winning gold in the U14 Boys K1 200m sprint with a time of 00:40.88. In the next leg of the regatta in Mingachevir, Armdorf went on to win the 500m race in a time of 2:22.17, completing it with yet another gold medal.

His performance was praised by Canoeing South Africa, who highlighted the significance of the result for the young national team.

Armdorf’s achievement will certainly go down in history, as this was South Africa’s first appearance at the President’s Cup Regatta, which drew in over 200 athletes from more than 20 countries across Europe, Asia, and Africa.



In an interview with *Idman.biz*, Armdorf shared that he encountered multiple health issues during training leading up to the international event.

“But I never gave up,” he said.

“I stood up, recovered, and kept going. I’m proud to have represented my country and family with dignity.”

Armdorf’s victory, a showcase of his athletic prowess, undeterred grit, impressive discipline and national glory, has us roaring in celebration. The young athlete has his sights set on competing in the Olympic Games, and if his debut performance at the President’s Cup is anything to go by, he is well on his way. – Source: [www.goodthingsguy.com](http://www.goodthingsguy.com)

## RISING SOUTH AFRICAN CLIMBER LUKE WESTMAN SET FOR IFSC WORLD CUPS IN JUNE



***Rising star Luke Westman from Fourways will represent South Africa in two major International Federation of Sport Climbing (IFSC) competitions in Europe this June.***

Westman previously earned his Protea Youth Climbing Colours after competing at the Youth World Championships in China in August 2024.

Now, the 18-year-old is set to test his strength and skill against the world's best. He'll compete in Bern, Switzerland, from 13 to 15 June 2025 and then in Innsbruck, Austria, from 25 to 29 June 2025.

"I'm both nervous and excited," Westman said. "It's a dream to represent South Africa on the world stage."

These events mark his debut on the Open IFSC World Cup circuit—a leap forward in his already impressive career. The Innsbruck leg is especially prestigious, widely regarded as one of the most competitive stops on the climbing calendar.

Westman has been training intensely, five to six days a week, at CityROCK in Randburg under head coach Devin Sender, who praised the climber's dedication and growth. "Luke started with me when he was just nine. Watching his development into one of the country's top athletes has been a privilege," said Sender.

But the path to Europe isn't without its challenges. Unlike athletes in more mainstream sports, climbers often have to fund their trips entirely on their own. Gauteng Climbing secretary Bridgette Erdey appealed to both public and private sponsors to assist. "These trips are expensive, and families make huge sacrifices. We hope more entities will help support Luke and others flying our flag abroad." – Source: [www.joburgetc.com](http://www.joburgetc.com)

## SOUTH AFRICA'S RISING ARCHERY STAR VALENTINO GALANTE TAKES AIM AT EUROPE

***At just 16 years old, Valentino Galante is preparing to take his first official step onto the international archery stage, representing South Africa with pride and precision.***

Already a standout talent, Galante holds both North Gauteng Indoor and Outdoor Colours and has qualified for not one but two major European archery tournaments.

This year, Galante will compete in two prestigious events in Slovenia from 26 July to 3 August: the World Archery European Youth Cup and the World Archery Central European Cup.

Originally selected to compete at the World Archery Youth Championships in Canada, Galante's plans had to change due to the extensive Canadian visa process, which made it impossible to attend this year's event. But where one door closed, another opened, as Slovenia now becomes the stage for Valentino's international debut as a professional archer.

These European competitions are highly respected events that attract the best young archers from across the globe. Competing there will give Galante a powerful opportunity to gain international experience, exposure, and ranking, cementing his entry into the world of professional archery.

"At the age of only 16, Valentino has shown a sense of commitment and maturity beyond his years towards the sport of archery, and is a potential medallist at these European events," comments the South African National Archery Association.

Despite his achievements, Galante's journey hasn't been easy. In a country where archery is still a small and often underfunded sport, his rise has been powered by grit, sacrifice, and relentless determination.



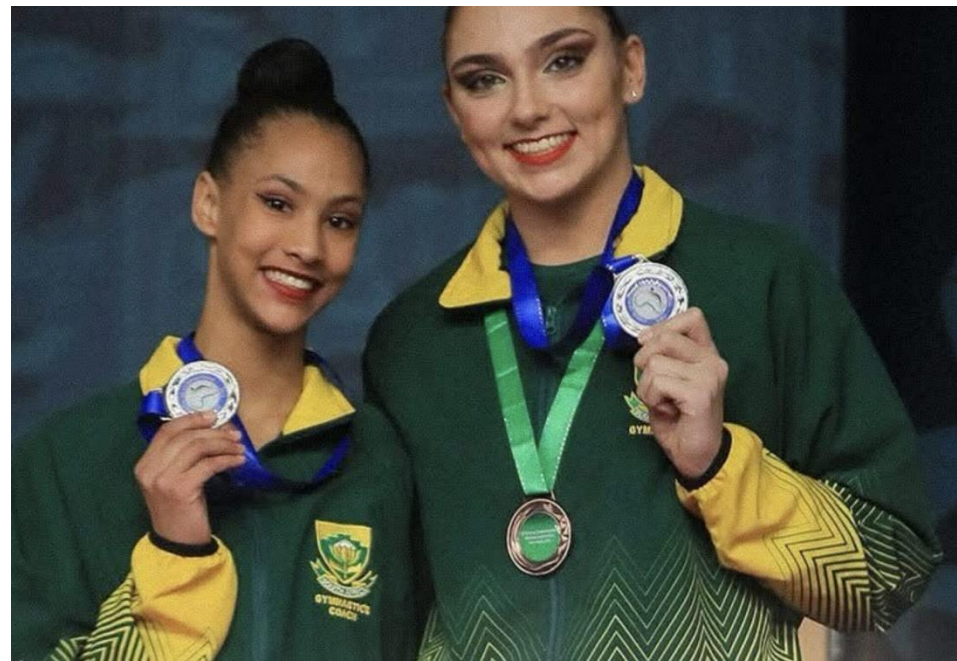


The young archer trains diligently, balances his schooling with his sport, and dreams not only of competing but of building a full-time career in archery—something few South Africans have had the opportunity to do and of course to participate in the Olympics.

Beyond his own aspirations, Galante hopes to represent hope, excellence, and the future of South African sport, creating a pathway for himself and for the generations of archers who will follow in his footsteps. – Source: [www.goodthingsguy.com](http://www.goodthingsguy.com)

## SOUTH AFRICAN GYMNAST DUO SCOOP SILVER AT AFRICAN CHAMPS

*Rhythmic gymnast duo Chade Jansen and Stephanie Dimitrova represented South Africa at the 19th Senior African Rhythmic Gymnastics Championships in Cairo, Egypt, where they walked away with a proud podium finish.*



The gymnast duo competed from 2 to 3 May, with each finishing second overall at the Championships, meaning they return back to South Africa donning new silver thanks to their performances in Cairo. The duo were the only two to represent South Africa for this slate of the African Champs.

Dimitrova also won the bronze for the All-Around Competition at the Championships, as well as the individual ball clubs and hoop competitive stretches.

The latest achievement marks yet another notch of success on the young gymnasts' belts. Hot off the heels of showcasing her skills in another part of the world, Dimitrova recently competed at the International Gymnastics Federation—FIG Rhythmic Gymnastics Sofia World Cup held in Bulgaria in early April. Meanwhile, Chade Jansen was the Rhythmic Gymnastics Junior Olympic All-Around Champion (North West). – Source: [www.goodthingsguy.com](http://www.goodthingsguy.com)



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