

WEEKLY ELECTRONIC NEWSLETTER OF THE DEPARTMENT OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND COOPERATION







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SOUTH AFRICA AND USA TO CONTINUE WITH ENGAGEMENT FOLLOWING FRUITFUL DISCUSSIONS

President Cyril Ramaphosa has described his bilateral meeting with United States of America (US) President Donald Trump as "robust and fruitful", signalling a new chapter of engagement between South Africa and the US, particularly in trade and investment.

Speaking to South African media upon the conclusion of his Working Visit to the US capital, Washington D.C., President Ramaphosa said the two leaders had an "in-depth and positive exchange", not only on lighter matters such as golf but also critically on economic cooperation and mutual concerns.

"We had a really good bilateral, although a number of issues came up, which you will all have observed, and we were able to have a robust engagement with President Trump in your presence.

"Following that engagement, which you all witnessed, we retired to the Cabinet Room for lunch. We were then able to have really good in-depth exchanges with President Trump and his other officials," the President said on Wednesday, 21 May 2025.



WATCH THE VIDEO

A major outcome of the meeting was a renewed commitment to sustained engagement between the two nations, especially at the trade and industry level.

President Ramaphosa stressed that discussions will continue on several key matters, including investment flows, tariff structures, and access to the US market through frameworks such as the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA).

"I want to confirm that there will be continued engagement between South Africa and the US officials, particularly at the trade and industry level, to deal with the package of issues that we had tabled that have to do with trade and investment.

"I was rather pleased that there's a firm agreement and undertaking that we are going to continue engaging, so there's no disengagement. For us, that was one of the key outcomes that we had wanted.

"Our objective in coming here was to reset relations between the two countries and to reposition our relations, which had become contaminated by some of the issues that had been raised during the engagement," the President said.

The President said the bilateral dialogue was an opportunity to clarify concerns and address misconceptions.

"It turned out that President Trump's concern is about the safety of the people of South Africa. Much as he zeroed it down to white farmers, we kept saying there is a security problem, and we are not running away from that. There is criminality.

"We even sought to deal with it from its genesis. When the economy is not growing, when there is poverty and when there's unemployment, one of the social ills that we get as a derivative is criminality that spreads itself around the country. It's not only in farms—it's in rural and even urban areas. He [President Trump] expressed his views on that, and I was rather pleased that a number of our compatriots were able to deal with that," the President said.

During the engagement at the Oval Office, Zingiswa Losi, President of the Congress of South African Trade Unions—the country's largest trade union—told President Trump that South Africa has a violence and crime issue rather than a race issue.

"If you go into the rural areas where the black majority are, [there is gender-based violence against] women and the elderly. The problem in South Africa is not necessarily about race, but it is about crime, and we are here to [look at] how both nations can work together to reset trade relations and investment and also help us [to] have the technology that is needed to address the level of crime we have in our country," Losi said.

Trade and investment

On the economic front, President Ramaphosa reiterated South Africa's call for increased foreign direct investment from the US, noting that US companies already play a vital role in the South African economy. He cited a recent American investment in a local lithium company as an encouraging sign of continued interest.

"In the discussions over lunch, we didn't dwell on that issue. However, he did ask what help do we need as a country.

"The main thing we said, in terms of assistance, is investments. We require more investments from the US, and we require a more positive disposition from the US because once the US government and the President emit a very positive disposition towards South Africa, it unlocks a lot of investments, and investors would then be willing to come and invest their money.

"We want foreign direct investment. We want to keep the jobs that we have that have been created by US companies, and we want more and more US companies to come and invest," the President said.

G20 Summit

President Ramaphosa also touched on global multilateral cooperation, confirming that the Group of Twenty (G20) was among the topics of discussion.

President Ramaphosa, who currently chairs the G20, said he urged President Trump to attend the upcoming summit in South Africa, saying he hoped to hand over the presidency "to a full chair, not an empty one".



"We also discussed the G20 and we stressed that the G20, having been formed by the US, of course, together with other countries, it is important that the US should continue playing a key role. I want to hand over the presidency of the G20 to President Trump in November, and I said he needs to be there.

"I don't want to hand over the presidency of the G20 to an empty chair (sic). I want to hand it over to him, sitting in that chair in November, and he is going to give serious consideration to it. In fact, I expect him to be coming to South Africa," the President said.

In a light-hearted moment, President Ramaphosa shared that he and President Trump exchanged books as gifts—a golf book from South Africa and a publication from President Trump, which he said symbolised the goodwill of the meeting.

Reflecting on the overall visit, President Ramaphosa described the meeting as a "great success," saying it had fulfilled South Africa's key objectives.

"I do believe that our visit here has been a great success. We've been able to achieve what we set out to achieve: re-engagement with the US to put the issues of investment and trade on the table and to ensure that we continue engaging through the various other formations. All in all, I'm rather pleased I go back [home] having a sense that we have done well," he said.

Back home, President Ramaphosa was widely praised for maintaining his composure during what many South Africans had anticipated might be a tense encounter.

"I know that many South Africans were filled with a great deal of concern, but that did not ensue," the President said, referencing public expectations of confrontation.

"I know that the media wanted to see drama and something really big happening, and I'm sorry we disappointed you somewhat in that regard," he said with a smile.

The meeting at the Oval House was attended by senior US and South African officials. The South African delegation to Washington D.C. consisted of several Cabinet Ministers, notable business figures, and prominent South Africans.

President Ramaphosa was flanked by the Minister of International Relations and Cooperation Ronald Lamola, Minister in the Presidency Khumbudzo Ntshavheni, Minister of Trade, Industry and Competition Parks Tau, and Minister of Agriculture John Steenhuisen.

In addition, the President was accompanied by Johann Rupert, the Founder of Richemont and Chairman of Remgro; Vice President of Business Unity South Africa (BUSA) Adrian Gore; and President of the Congress of South African Trade Unions Zingiswa Losi also formed part of the delegation. South African pro golfers Ernie Els and Retief Goosen were also in attendance.

President Trump was flanked by several key officials, including Vice President JD Vance, Defence Secretary Pete Hegseth, Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick, Deputy Secretary of State Christopher Landau, Chief of Staff Susie Wiles, Special Government Employee Elon Musk, and Dr Massad Boulos, who serves as a Senior Advisor for Africa, as well as on Arab and Middle Eastern Affairs. – Source: SAnews.gov.za

ADV DUMA NOKWE HONOURED FOR FIGHTING AGAINST APARTHEID

President Cyril Ramaphosa has paid tribute to the late Advocate Duma Nokwe for dedicating his life to the liberation of South Africa from the tyranny of apartheid.

"In court, Duma Nokwe was an advocate for justice. Outside the court, in the streets of our nation, in the capitals of the world, he was a respected and beloved advocate for freedom," the President said on Saturday, 17 May 2025.

The late struggle veteran and human rights lawyer was reburied in West Park Cemetery, Johannesburg, with his wife, Vuyiswa Malangabi-Nokwe, who passed away in 2008.

Nokwe passed away in Zambia in 1978, at the age of 50. He had lived in exile since 1963. His mortal remains were repatriated to South Africa in 2024.



"Duma Nokwe's legal expertise was brought to bear in shaping the views of the liberation movement around constitutionalism and democracy.

"He was a mentor to young black lawyers, and today this noble legacy lives on with the Duma Nokwe Group, the advocates' chambers," President Ramaphosa said.

In recognition of the eminent position he occupied in the legal profession, the President honoured him with the posthumous conferral of the honorary title of Senior Counsel (Silk).

"In doing so, we are correcting a grave injustice done to one of our foremost legal practitioners. We are making a declaration that his legal legacy did not end in exile, nor does it end today.

"We are confirming our belief in his conviction that the law is to be used not merely to secure courtroom victories but also to achieve profound, lasting change," the President said.

He described Nokwe's voice as emphatic, compelling and sincere—resonating as powerfully through the halls of the United Nations as it did across the airwaves of Radio Freedom.

"He wielded his words as instruments of liberation. He sought to persuade, to empower and to inspire.

"As a person, as an activist, as a leader, he was known for his humility and understanding, for his integrity and his unyielding commitment to the cause of humanity," the President said.

Nokwe was a youth activist who rose to become the Secretary General of the African National Congress.

"The apartheid regime tried in vain to thwart his activism. He was jailed, banned and restricted. He was dismissed as a teacher for his involvement in the Defiance of Unjust Laws Campaign. Yet nothing could crush his spirit nor temper his determination.

"He decided to enter the legal profession, believing in the power of the law as a shield for the vulnerable, as an instrument of change. He entered a profession that was designed to exclude black people. And yet he persevered, becoming the first black advocate to be admitted to the Johannesburg Bar," President Ramaphosa said.

The President noted that the late George Bizos said that Nokwe's admission to the bar was a moment that cracked the façade of white legal supremacy.

"Even as he reached this pinnacle, the regime continued to hound him, refusing to allow him to take chambers with his white colleagues in Johannesburg. He would not be cowed. He used his legal skills to defend those who stood up against tyranny," President Ramaphosa said.

The President called on South Africa to embrace all that Nokwe represented and embodied.

"At this time, when we strive to make a fundamental break with the many ghosts of our past, let us hold to the values that defined him and that make us so unique as a people: courage, empathy, understanding, and tolerance.

"We still have many more journeys to undertake. Our freedom is not yet fully formed. Let us affirm that as South Africans we are all of the same soil. We will never renege on the promise of equality, justice and freedom for all, as promised by our Constitution," the President said.

He said government will continue to build a South Africa in which no one—neither black nor white, neither woman nor man—feels themselves a pariah in the land of their birth.

"We owe this to the spirit and legacy of the great Duma Nokwe, who stood for non-racialism throughout his life. May his spirit rise. May it guide us in the hard work that lies ahead, and may it inspire us.

"Nokwe was a revolutionary. He was a servant of the people. He was a man of unwavering principle, of great courage and of unmatched selflessness.

"As we honour Nokwe today, let us rededicate ourselves to fulfilling his dream of a non-racial, non-sexist South Africa that will forever remain democratic and free," the President said. – Source: SAnews.gov.za

DEPUTY PRESIDENT PAUL MASHATILE UNDERTAKES AN OFFICIAL WORKING VISIT TO FRANCE



Deputy President Paul Mashatile will undertake a Working Visit to the Republic of France from 19 to 24 May 2025, to participate in the South Africa-France Investment Conference. The visit is aimed at strengthening relations between the two countries and, most importantly, mobilising investments in order to realise the country's economic growth and transformation objectives.

South Africa and France enjoy cordial relations underpinned by a robust bilateral cooperation programme in areas such as political dialogue, defence, science and technology, energy cooperation, education and skills development, health, transport, and arts and culture, among others.

This Investment Conference will be held under the theme *South Africa-France: A Partnership for Mutual Prosperity* with the objective of attracting Foreign Direct Investment (FDI), Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs), and financial resources focusing on key issues such as unemployment, poverty, inequality, climate change and transitions in the digital economy.

The conference will be centred on eight main sectors, namely energy, infrastructure, transport and logistics, finance, tourism, agriculture and agro-processing, and mining, as well as information and communication technology (ICT). There will also be breakaway groups, which will explore practical steps for projects and investments in these areas.

In addition, the conference will consist of a high-level segment by government officials who will lead on thematic discussions related to investment opportunities, policies, and the investment climate in South Africa.

The Deputy President is expected to have a bilateral meeting with his counterpart, Francois Bayrou, Prime Minister of the French Republic.

Deputy President Mashatile will be accompanied by Dr A Motsoaledi, Minister of Health; Stella Ndabeni-Abrahams: Minister of Small, Business Development; Barabara Creecy, Minister of Transport; Gayton McKenzie, Minister of Sport, Arts and Culture; Patricia de Lille, Minister of Tourism; Alvin Botes, Deputy Minister of International Relations and Cooperation; Buti Manamela, Deputy Minister of Higher Education and Training; Zuko Godlimpi, Deputy Minister Trade, Industry and Competition; and Samantha Graham-Maré, Deputy Minister of Electricity and Energy. – Source: www.gov.za

MINISTER RONALD LAMOLA ATTENDS FOURTH JOINT COOPERATION COMMISSION BETWEEN SOUTH AFRICA AND THE NETHERLANDS

The Minister of International Relations and Cooperation of the Republic of South Africa, Ronald Lamola, travelled to The Hague in the Kingdom of the Netherlands, to co-chair the Fourth Biennial Joint Cooperation Commission (JCC) alongside Caspar Veldkamp, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands.

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This high-level dialogue underscored the enduring partnership between the two nations, rooted in shared values and a commitment to advancing mutual priorities across strategic sectors.

The JCC serves as a cornerstone of bilateral relations. fostering collaboration in areas critical to sustainable development and inclusive growth. Key focal points of this year's include discussions advancing cooperation in agriculture, water and waste management, and energy security, reflecting both nations' dedication to climate resilience and food sustainability.



Cyber security, innovations in digitalisation, trade and investment, and higher education, science, and innovation will also feature prominently, highlighting the role of technology and knowledge exchange in driving economic progress.

Further, the Commission will deepen partnerships in arts and culture to strengthen people-to-people ties. Environmental stewardship remains a shared priority, with joint initiatives aimed at protecting ecosystems and advancing green transitions.

Minister Lamola emphasised the importance of the JCC as a platform to deepen South Africa's engagement with the Netherlands, stating, "Our collaboration transcends traditional diplomacy, embracing pragmatic solutions to global challenges. By aligning our expertise in these pivotal sectors, we reaffirm our commitment to a future marked by equity, innovation, and shared prosperity."

The outcomes of the JCC are expected to yield actionable frameworks to enhance bilateral cooperation, reinforcing the robust ties between South Africa and the Netherlands. Both nations remain steadfast in their resolve to leverage this partnership for the benefit of their citizens. – Source: www.dirco.gov.za

NINTH MEETING OF THE SOUTH AFRICA-FRANCE FORUM FOR POLITICAL DIALOGUE

The Minister of International Relations and Cooperation of the Republic of South Africa, Ronald Lamola, was in France to co-chair the Ninth Forum for Political Dialogue alongside the Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs of the French Republic, Jean-Noël Barrot on 16 May 2025.



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This bilateral engagement enabled the two ministers to review progress and discuss key issues of mutual interest, further strengthening the strategic partnership between South Africa and France.

South Africa enjoys robust trade relations and significant investment flows with France, which remains one of its largest trading partners within the European Union. The two nations also collaborate strategically in critical areas such as education and skills development science, technology, arts, and culture, energy cooperation, health and defence.

The Forum further provided an opportunity for the ministers to exchange perspectives on pressing global and regional geopolitical developments, underscoring their shared commitment to multilateralism and a rules-based international order.

This dialogue reaffirmed the enduring partnership between South Africa and France, rooted in mutual respect and a common vision for advancing peace, sustainable development, and innovation. – Source: www.dirco.gov.za

SOUTH AFRICA CONDEMNS THE MASSACRE OF 143 PALESTINIANS ON 15 MAY 2025, THE DENIAL OF HUMANITARIAN AID TO GAZA, AND THE DESTRUCTION OF HOSPITALS AND CLINICS

South Africa condemns the killing of 143 Gazans by the Israel Defence Force on 15 May 2025, as Palestinians commemorated the 77th anniversary of Nakba Day, which marks the beginning of the displacement of Palestinians in 1948.

The Head of the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF), Catherine Russell, has said that the world should be shocked by the killing of 45 children in Israeli airstrikes in just two days, but it has been met with indifference. She has also noted that more than one million children in Gaza are at risk of starvation and are being deprived of food, water, and medicine.



South Africa's assertion during its recent presentations at the International Court of Justice (ICJ) during the hearings regarding the Obligations of Israel in relation to the Presence and Activities of the United Nations, Other international organisations and Third States in and in relation to the Occupied Palestinian Territory, were that Gaza has become a killing field and warned of the human-made famine in Gaza due to the deliberate blockade of humanitarian aid by the Israeli Government.

As famine conditions worsen in Gaza, and the ceasefire efforts remain stalled, Israel's complete blockade of aid into Gaza and its restrictions on humanitarian access contravene Israel's obligations under international humanitarian law and the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide. Israel's persistent grave violations are part of a broader strategy to remove Palestinians from their land by subjecting them to starvation and making the Gaza Strip uninhabitable.

South Africa reiterates its call for an immediate ceasefire and for the resumption of a political process to end the occupation.

The international community must act decisively to hold Israel accountable for violations of international law, pertinently international humanitarian, and human rights law. This includes the implementation of effective measures to bring an end to the occupation, the ongoing policies and practices of collective punishment, and the illegal blockade imposed on the Gaza Strip.

Furthermore, there must be an immediate halt to the practices of arbitrary and administrative detention, as well as to acts of torture and ill-treatment of Palestinian detainees, particularly children. These actions are in clear violation of international humanitarian law, including the Fourth Geneva Convention, and international human rights norms/standards as enshrined in the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment.

It is imperative that all Palestinian detainees held without due process be released, and that all victims – especially children – be provided with adequate compensation and rehabilitation, in accordance with international law and justice.

The credibility of the international order depends on the consistent application of international law and accountability for all violations, regardless of the perpetrator. – Source: www.dirco.gov.za



DEPUTY MINISTER BOTES IN CZECH REPUBLIC

Deputy Minister Alvin Botes paid a Working Visit to the Czech Republic to co-chair the Annual South Africa-Czechia Political Consultations with his counterpart, First Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Jiří Kozák in Prague, Czech Republic.

WATCH THE VIDEO

During the visit, Deputy Minister Botes delivered a public lecture at the Charles University in Prague, Czech Republic. The public lecture was held on 16 May 2025 and centred on *The Current Geopolitical Landscape that affects both Africa and Europe.* – Source: www.dirco.gov.za

FINANCING BIODIVERSITY KEY FOR REALISING AFRICA'S ECONOMIC POTENTIAL

Deputy Minister of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment, Narend Singh, has called on delegates from governments across the continent to innovatively think about financing biodiversity, beyond the traditional funding from national budgets.

According to the Deputy Minister, more than 7 000 species across the continent face extinction, which could harm Africa's economic potential.

"Biodiversity is not a luxury; it is the foundation of our economies, our health, and our survival. As you are aware that the financing gap to halt and reverse biodiversity loss by 2030 from all sources is estimated at US\$200 billion annually.

"Every hectare of forest cleared, every waterway polluted, and every species lost diminishes not just our ecological wealth, but our economic potential," Deputy Minister Singh said on Monday, 19 May 2025 in Cape Town.

He was addressing the regional dialogue for member States of the Southern African Development Community, the East African Community and other anglophone countries on the update or revision of national and regional biodiversity strategies and action plans (NBSAPs).



This regional dialogue offers an opportunity for countries that have already revised their NBSAPs to share good practices, address common challenges, and identify potential solutions.

The goal of the NBSAP is to conserve and manage biodiversity to ensure sustainable benefits to the people of South Africa, through cooperation and partnerships that build on strengths and opportunities.

"Strong NBSAPs are more than policy; they are strategic tools to unlock international finance, attract private investment, and guide public spending where it matters most. But a plan on paper is not enough—it must be matched by budgets and political commitment," he said.

The Deputy Minister offered insights into the innovative finance solutions that were developed in South Africa through the Biodiversity Finance Initiative (BIOFIN) programme.

The BIOFIN programme supports countries to enhance their financial management of biodiversity and ecosystems.

"Through the BIOFIN programme, a framework has been developed to guide a fee setting process for biodiversity permits, which enables cost recovery and value attribution to the natural resources.

"The basis for this work is that revenue from sources such as protected area gate fees, tourism concessions, conferencing facilities, fees and permits related to biodiversity can play an important role in supporting the financial sustainability of the conservation estate," he said.

Through the programme, some municipalities have given rates relief to conservation areas leading to funds saved, which can be further invested into biodiversity conservation.

"The financial result of this has been US\$124 000 saved by conservation areas over the last three years. We were delighted to learn from the Botswana example, where their rate collection increased seven-fold," Deputy Minister Singh said.

A biodiversity offset portal will be launched on 22 May 2025 as part of celebrating the International Day of Biodiversity.

The offset portal which will be publicly accessible is aimed at improving the way offsets are conducted for the benefit of funding protected area management.

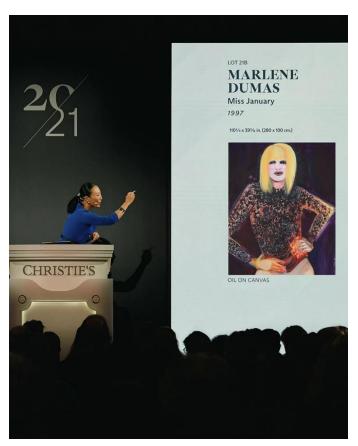
"The Biodiversity Sector investment portal was launched in 2022 and formally handed over to the Government of South Africa. The portal has been institutionalised within the department and established a Biodiversity Economy Investment Portal, officially recognised as an ongoing conduit of opportunities for investment in the small and medium enterprises. The department has fully taken over the portal and allocated a budget towards its ongoing maintenance," he said. – Source: SAnews.gov.za

SOUTH AFRICAN-BORN ARTIST MARLENE DUMAS BREAKS RECORD WITH R246 MILLION SALE

A 1997 art piece painted by South African-born artist Marlene Dumas has sold for more than R230 million at Christie's New York, setting a new benchmark for female artists in the 21st-century art market.

Dumas' provocative 2.74m-tall oil painting *Miss January* sold for a staggering US\$13.635m (R246.7m) on Wednesday, 14 May 2025, setting a new world record for a living female artist.

The monumental portrait, a striking image of a blonde woman nude from the waist down, captivated collectors during the 21st Century Evening Sale held via Instagram Live and YouTube.



WATCH THE VIDEO

Auctioneer Yü-Ge Wang, associate director and senior client adviser at Christie's, led the sale which saw fierce bidding and ultimately achieved a total of US\$96.5 million (R1.75 billion). An impressive 92% of lots were sold by number and 97% by value, with four artists breaking auction records: Louis Fratino, Simone Leigh, Emma McIntyre, and Marlene Dumas.

Dumas' record surpasses the previous benchmark held by British painter Jenny Saville, whose work *Propped* (1992) sold for £9.5 million (R228 million) at Sotheby's London in 2018.

Despite this groundbreaking achievement, Dumas' sale still trails the record for a living male artist, Jeff Koons' *Rabbit* (1986), which sold for US\$91.07 million (R1.65 billion) in 2019.

Christie's reflected on Dumas' evolution as an artist, stating: "Dumas started exploring and scrutinising the female form at age 10 with a drawing called *Miss World*, which depicted idolised glamour models. More than 30 years later, she returned to the subject with *Miss January*, a portrait that threads the line between revealing and concealing and serves as perhaps the best example of her influential female portraiture."

Born in Cape Town in 1953, Dumas is based in the Netherlands, where she represented the country at the 1995 Venice Biennale and was later featured in the central pavilion in 2015.

The online art marketplace Artsy describes her oil and watercolour paintings as deeply political and emotionally charged.

"She's often inspired by her experiences growing up in apartheid-era South Africa. Dumas has based compositions on photographs of friends and family, mass-media imagery of current events and celebrities, and art historical references. Her ghostly palette comprises mostly greys, browns, blues and pinks, and her style features blurred brushstrokes and thin washes of colour," says Artsy.

"Nude bodies are a frequent motif—sometimes they're engaged in amorous acts that highlight the figures' expression, contact and emotion."

Her works are held in prestigious institutions including Tate Modern, MoMA and the Stedelijk Museum. - Source: www.timeslive.co.za

SOUTH AFRICA STRIKES GOLD AGAIN AT THE RHS CHELSEA FLOWER SHOW

South Africa has struck gold once again at the 2025 Royal Horticultural Society (RHS) Chelsea Flower Show following last year's winning comeback.

WATCH THE VIDEO

It's another gold for South Africa at the RHS Chelsea Flower Show in London thanks to acclaimed horticulturist and floral legend, Leon Kluge right-hand Tristan Woudberg, and their larger team.

Following last year's magnificent and winning comeback that ended a lengthy hiatus South Africa took from the RHS Chelsea Flower Show, hopes were high that the 2025 South African floral display would continue our golden streak, hopes that bloomed in full.



This brings South Africa's tally of wins at the RHS Chelsea Flower Show (over a four-decade period) to an incredible 39 medals, an inspired total considering that this is considered the world's pinnacle flower show.

While last year's display offered a slice of the mountains and the Cape Floral Kingdom's wonders amid them, this year's design was inspired by the ocean.

The design explored the influence that two oceans South Africa knows well, the Indian and the Atlantic, have on the flora in our country to gorgeous effect, offering both fynbos and cliff-dwelling plant arrangements to celebrate South Africa as "the flower basket of Africa" as Kluge put it beautifully.

As such, the design required an incredible shipment of locally grown flowers and fynbos travel across the pond for the show. As Kluge shares, there were approximately 25 000 stems that had to be cut by the team in order to get them into the water.

Revealing the gold win to South Africa, Kluge explained that the team were nervous pre-show and that the win came as a wonderful relief.

South Africa couldn't be prouder of our natural heritage and those who nurture and celebrate it as much as this team does. – Source: www.goodthingsguy.com

CHRIS BERTISH TO SET SAIL ON WORLD-FIRST ADVENTURE FOR OCEAN CONSERVATION

South African adventurer, author, speaker, ocean pioneer, and ocean advocate, Chris Bertish, is poised to embark on his most daring voyage yet: the TransCat Expedition 2025, Oceans without Borders. A world-first adventure, the journey would see Chris become the first person to sail a production beach catamaran solo and unsupported across the Pacific Ocean. And he's doing it all for ocean conservation and education.



Launching from Dana Point, California, in late June, Chris will navigate 2 800 nautical miles to Oahu, Hawaii, over an estimated 17 to 21 days. The expedition will be powered solely by wind and solar energy, highlighting a commitment to sustainable exploration.

It won't be a comfortable ride by any means. The Wildcat is a 20-foot, semi-foiling beach catamaran that's designed for agility and speed. It lacks any comforts of traditional ocean-crossing craft, including a cabin for shelter, a kitchen or even a toilet.

This means he will face the elements head-on, full-time, 24/7. No escape from the sun, storms or the cold of night. And of course, there's the extreme solitude.

But Chris is positive about it all, with his eyes set on the bigger picture.

"This expedition is not just about breaking records; it's about inspiring change," says Chris. "By pushing the limits of what's possible, we aim to spotlight the urgent need for ocean stewardship and educational access.

"When we protect our ocean, we protect all life on this planet."

The TransCat Expedition is a multifaceted initiative aimed at global impact, including:

- Building a circular economy classroom for a school in Kenya. (July to November 2025)
- Paying for Ocean Education initiatives through SAAMBRA and the 2 Oceans Education Foundation in South Africa
- Paying for Mobile Ocean Aquarium and Educational Sessions for the Nine Miles Project, Waves for Change and the Sentinel Alliance
- Planting more than 1 000 trees in North America through the Sea Trees initiative and 3 000 trees in Africa, through the Word Forest initiative.
- Paying towards the Coral Restoration Project in Hanauma Bay in Hawaii, also through the Sea Trees initiative.

The new world-record attempt rides the coattails of Chris' record-setting endeavours. These include a solo stand-up paddle across the Atlantic in 2017 for 93 days and a solo wing-foil journey across the Pacific for 49 days.

Each world-first adventure has giving back at its heart, and the latest (which also happens to be the most extreme) is no exception.

"As Sir David Attenborough said—when we save the ocean, we save the world! We all need to take collective action for a sustainable future. Every small step and action counts, we can only accomplish this together!" Chris comments. – Source: www.goodthingsguy.com

THE SPIRIT OF SOUTH AFRICAN STORYTELLING SPREADS ITS WINGS IN MOROCCO

A picture is worth a thousand words. It was a lesson shared with a group of young orphans in Morocco recently, thanks to the team at Of Soul & Joy, who shared their photographic wisdom and inspired a new generation of storytellers.

Running until 18 May 2025, the Johannesburg-based vocational photography programme led a workshop at the Dar Al Atfal Sidi Bernoussi orphanage in Casablanca. This initiative, supported by Rubis Mécénat and Vitogaz Maroc, aimed to empower underprivileged children through the art of visual storytelling, offering them the tools to share their world their way.

And it's more than just a few lessons behind a camera lens. It's about igniting creative curiosity, building confidence, and making sure young voices are seen and heard far beyond the walls of their circumstances.

A South African Heartbeat in Casablanca

At the heart of this workshop is celebrated South African photographer Jabulani Dhlamini, joined by Moroccan counterparts Marouane Beslem and Abdelhamid Behlamidi. Together, they guided children aged 11 and 12 through the technical and artistic fundamentals of photography, empowering them to use the camera not just as a tool but as a voice.



"Photography is a universal language—it goes beyond barriers of language, ethnicity, and creed. It's a unifier, enabling individuals from diverse backgrounds to creatively tell their stories. What's truly powerful is that, through photography, these children can communicate with the world, and their stories will resonate with anyone, anywhere." – Jabulani Dhlamini.

The workshop ended with a public exhibition, which, for many of these young photographers, was their first opportunity to share their stories with an audience. The show, curated by Dhlamini, Beslem, and Behlamidi, was more than an exhibition; it was a celebration of resilience, creativity, and cross-cultural dialogue.

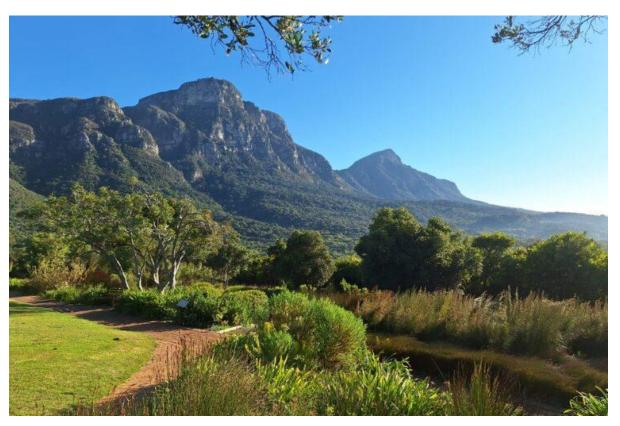
Now, the walls of the orphanage will also echo with creativity and new beginnings as the children learn to frame their world and envision a future through a different lens.

What began in South Africa as a small but mighty movement to uplift township youth through photography is now a continental conversation. With every shutter click, Of Soul & Joy reaffirms its mission: to create storytellers, changemakers, and dreamers who believe in the power of their perspective.

As the Moroccan workshop closes, it is a timely reminder of the role we all play in shaping the stories of tomorrow. South Africa is not only giving; it's guiding, inspiring, and helping children across Africa turn snapshots into legacies. – Source: www.goodthingsguy.com

THE NEW YORK TIMES' MUST-SEE GARDENS LIST INCLUDES A SOUTH AFRICAN GEM

Recently, "The New York Times" put horticultural experts to task to compile a list of must-see gardens from around the world, and a South African favourite made the cut.



The New York Times Style Magazine team was curious to learn which gardens were worth flying across the world for. With a panel of six renowned and experienced horticultural experts to lean (including Horticultural Society gold medallist Juliet Sargeant and architecture professor at the Harvard University Graduate School of Design, Toshiko Mori) the curation of the 25 Gardens You Must See list came to be, and bucket lists everywhere have inspiration since.

The panellists nominated 10 must-see gardens each before the final list was built. Importantly, the gardens have not been displayed in a kind of ranking order.

Excitingly for South Africa, it was the Kirstenbosch National Botanical Garden that nestled into the list beautifully. A space rich with natural heritage, historic moments and views that'll make you wonder whether you haven't accidentally teleported to a time long before mankind interfered with nature. If you haven't already gone exploring at Kirstenbosch, this is certainly your sign to do so.

Per The New York Times:

"While native gardening has only recently become mainstream in the United States, the concept is nothing new in South Africa. Case in point: this botanical garden in the Western Cape province, the first of its kind in the world dedicated entirely to indigenous flora, which was established over a century ago in 1913. Located eight miles outside the city centre and set against the backdrop of Table Mountain's eastern slope, the 1 305-acre public space showcases more than 7 000 species, with high priority given to the singular fynbos biome, which is found almost exclusively in the country's Western Cape region and includes stiff, structured proteas, shaggy, flowering ericas and tufted, reed-like plants called restios.

There's also a robust collection of spiky cycads, a type of seed plant some believe predates the dinosaurs, and visitors might also spot local fauna, including brilliantly coloured sunbirds—which resemble hummingbirds—owls and wildcats. The Tree Canopy Walkway, a curved, steel-and-timber treetop bridge inspired by a snake's skeleton, winds 65 feet above it all, offering mountain vistas and sweeping forest views."

Other gardens on the list include Australia's Royal Botanic Garden in Sydney, the Saihoji Kokedera Temple and Moss Gardening in Kyoto, Japan, Giardino di Ninfa in Cisterna di Latina, Italy and the Classical Gardens of Suzhou in China to name a few. – Source: www.goodthingsguy.com

SOUTH AFRICA'S SIZZLING SUCCESS: TWO LOCAL STEAK SPOTS NAMED AMONG WORLD'S BEST

South Africa is on fire with pride as two local steakhouses have cracked the 2025 World's 101 Best Steak Restaurants list.

Stellenbosch's acclaimed VUUR took 87th place, and Johannesburg's butcher-to-table The Blockman landed at 97th. It's a thrilling achievement that has chefs, diners and the whole country beaming. After all, being ranked alongside the world's very best is a hugely exciting vote of confidence in our homegrown talent.

VUUR (Stellenbosch)

Perched at Remhoogte Wine Estate in the Winelands, VUUR (Afrikaans for "fire") lives up to its name with theatre-style open-fire cooking. Chefowner Shaun Scrooby is a self-taught fire master who uses up to six different types of wood to smoke, char and flame roast each dish. The team

crafts a seasonal seven-course menu showcasing the best local meats, seafood and veg, and every course is cooked on the spot and served at the table with stories from the chefs. Scrooby himself sums it up: "Fire cooking is still the name of the game." No wonder VUUR—once a cosy old stable under a giant oak—has been hailed as Africa's top meat destination.

Fun fact: VUUR's new "Goose Island" outpost sits on a tiny dam island reachable by a little bridge, named for the Egyptian geese that used to live there.

The Blockman (Johannesburg)

In leafy Parkhurst, The Blockman is a steak lover's paradise built around whole-animal butchery. Owner-chef Vassilios (Basil) Holiasmenos is both a trained chef and a butcher, and his philosophy is refreshingly simple and honest: "Source ethically, butcher inhouse, cook over coals and let the meat speak for itself." Prime South African beef is all cut and aged on-site. From thick, dry-aged ribeyes to lesser-known heritage breeds and diners can even choose their steak from a big glass-fronted ageing room.







Each cut is cooked over wood coals and served with only salt and a touch of fat, letting the natural flavour shine. The Blockman's menu also features clever seasonal sides (think ember-roasted carrots, bone-marrow bread and crisp salads) and a proudly South African wine list. It's a warm, convivial space, exposed brick, glowing candlelight and gentle music, where the primal thrill of steak takes centre stage.

These nods on the global list are huge news for South Africa's food scene. Not only does it shine a spotlight on our chefs and farms; it shows the world that South African steak and hospitality belong on the international stage. Both VUUR and The Blockman use local ingredients and time-honoured techniques, proving that innovation and quality are alive and well here.

Diners nationwide are celebrating. Many have already jumped online to book a table and taste the magic for themselves. It's a joyous reminder that every braai and grill session is part of a proud culinary tradition. – Source: www.goodthingsguy.com

FROM PIETERMARITZBURG TO PRIME TIME: THUSO MBEDU JOINS HBO'S NEXT BIG SERIES



From the quiet streets of Pietermaritzburg to the dazzling lights of Hollywood, Thuso Mbedu's story is nothing short of inspirational.

WATCH THE VIDEO

Now, the Emmy-nominated and award-winning actress is gearing up for her next big adventure, starring as Aleah in HBO's upcoming crime drama series *Task*. She'll be acting alongside a powerhouse cast: Mark Ruffalo, Emilia Jones, Tom Pelphrey and Silvia Dionicio. As news of her new role breaks, fans and media back home have erupted with joy, declaring themselves "proudly South African" and celebrating every step of her success.

Mbedu's rise has been extraordinary. Raised by her grandmother in Pietermaritzburg after losing both parents at a young age, she dreamed of telling stories on stage and screen. After earning her acting diploma at the University of Witwatersrand, she broke into South African television

and quickly became a household name. Her true breakthrough came in 2021 when she was cast as Cora in Barry Jenkins's *The Underground Railroad*. In doing so, Mbedu made history as the first South African to lead an American television series. Her fearless performance as an enslaved woman seeking freedom earned her rave reviews and multiple awards, including an Independent Spirit Award and a Gotham Award for Best Actress. It was a moment of collective pride for South Africa, with local media praising her as someone "taking the world by storm with her bubbly personality and thespian excellence," showcasing to the world the talent emerging from Mzansi.

The love and support from home has been overwhelming. When Mbedu promoted *The Underground Railroad*, she was moved to tears by fans' reactions.

Taking to Instagram to thank her countrymen, she wrote: "My fellow South Africans! Y'all showed up and showed off with the love. Thank you, thank you guys. Thank you, I love you, South Africa."

Social media quickly filled with messages of admiration. One fan commented, "From the day I saw you, I knew you would go far." Another wrote, "We love you Queen Thuso. Upwards and onwards. Thank you for making us proud!"

Local press marvelled at Mbedu's humility and celebrated her as a South African trailblazer, even headlining that "Mzansi [is] brimming with pride" over her international success.

Her next milestone was equally stirring. In 2022, Mbedu made her big-screen debut as Nawi in *The Woman King*, a historical epic about the Dahomey Amazons, starring Viola Davis. Filming partly in South Africa, *The Woman King* brought global attention to the region's rich heritage. Mbedu described debuting the film in South Africa as "moving," and the national response was immense. During her press tour in Johannesburg, she told local media how blessed she felt by the country's support. Again her fans answered with enthusiasm, commenting on her posts that she was "making us proud" and showering her with blessings.

Even international icons took notice. After Mbedu's appearance on *The Ellen DeGeneres Show*, Ellen praised her to Oprah Winfrey, saying: "I can't tell you how amazing you are; you're incredible."

All these accomplishments have painted a moving picture of talent and tenacity. As one South African music and culture page put it, "South African pride!" A sentiment echoed by media outlets and countless fans. Today, Mbedu stands on the cusp of her next big chapter. In *Task*, set in the suburbs of Philadelphia, she'll play a key role in a tense FBI drama from the creators of *Mare of Easttown*. With Ruffalo as the lead FBI agent and Mbedu in the ensemble, *Task* promises to be another major showcase for her skills. The series is slated for September 2025 and already has South Africans counting the days with pride and excitement.

Thuso's story is still being written, but one thing is clear—from that little girl in Pietermaritzburg to an actress on the world stage, her journey has filled South Africa with pride. She has overcome every hurdle with grace and grit, and as she takes on *Task* and whatever comes next, a whole nation is cheering for her! Onward and upward. – Source: www.goodthingsguy.com

SOUTH AFRICA'S U20S STUN MOROCCO TO LIFT FIRST-EVER AFCON TITLE

South Africa's U20 national team etched their name into African football history with a nerve-wracking 1-0 victory over Morocco in Sunday night's CAF U20 Africa Cup of Nations final — delivering the country its first-ever continental crown at this level, "Cape {town} Etc" reports.

The Cairo International Stadium bore witness to an unforgettable night on 18 May 2025, as Raymond Mdaka's Amajita overcame the odds to lift the trophy—a feat that had eluded South Africa for decades. This landmark triumph came 28 years after the nation's last appearance in the final, where they were narrowly defeated by Morocco in 1997.

This time, however, the story ended differently.

Both sides entered the clash unbeaten in the knockouts, having shown steel and resilience throughout the tournament. South Africa shook off an opening loss to hosts Egypt to register key victories over Tanzania and Sierra Leone, and their group-topping campaign was followed by knockout wins against the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Nigeria.



Morocco's journey to the final was equally impressive, with the North Africans brushing aside Kenya and Tunisia before navigating a tough draw with Nigeria. Their resolve showed in narrow knockout wins against Sierra Leone and an extra-time thriller with Egypt.

The final itself was a tense, tactical encounter, marked by superb goalkeeping and defensive grit. South Africa's Fletcher Smythe-Lowe was immense between the sticks, making several key saves to keep Morocco at bay, including a fingertip stop to deny Mouad Dahak's tricky effort and a commanding claim under pressure from Jones El Abdellaoui just before half-time.

The game's decisive moment arrived in the 70th minute. With Morocco pressing high, Smythe-Lowe launched a long ball that turned defence into attack in a heartbeat. Shandre Campbell latched onto the pass and timed his run perfectly before setting up Thulani Kekana, who slotted home with composure.

Though the assistant referee's flag initially ruled the goal out for offside, a lengthy VAR review flipped the script — Kekana was in line, and the goal stood. The celebrations erupted on the touchline and in the stands as South Africa took a historic lead.

The closing stages saw end-to-end action as Morocco threw everything forward. Othmane Maamma had a glorious chance to level matters in the 83rd minute, but he failed to hit the target with the goal gaping. Moments later, Shakeel April—one of Amajita's brightest stars throughout the tournament —burst forward again but was denied by the Moroccan keeper.

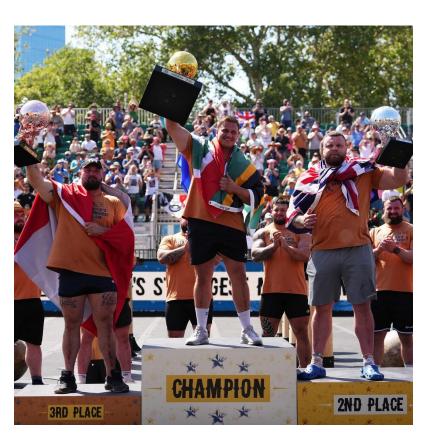
Substitute Thabang Mahlangu also went close to sealing the deal, only for a crucial block to keep the game within reach for Morocco. But as time ran out, South Africa's youngsters showed maturity beyond their years, maintaining composure and structure to see out the final moments.

As the final whistle echoed around the stadium, history was sealed.

It wasn't just a win—it was a redemption arc for a nation that had waited nearly three decades to return to the continental spotlight at youth level. For head coach Raymond Mdaka and his staff, it was the ultimate reward after years of nurturing a generation that's now set to define South Africa's football future.

With this title, South Africa's U20s have sent a powerful message—the next generation is here, and they're not just participating anymore; they are winning. – Source: www.capetownetc.com

RAYNO NEL CROWNED WORLD'S STRONGEST MAN—AFRICA'S FIRST EVER CHAMPION



In a historic triumph, 30-year-old Rayno Nel shocked the strongman world on 18 May 2025 in Sacramento, United States of America. In his very first World's Strongest Man (WSM) final, the former rugby star clinched the title by the slimmest of margins, just 0.5 points, edging out defending champion Tom Stoltman.

WATCH THE VIDEO

Nel became the first man from outside Europe or North America to win the competition that has been running since 1977. In the final Atlas Stones event, he loaded his fourth stone mere fractions of a second ahead of his rivals, sealing a 47–46.5 victory in an epic showdown. By winning, he has become the first WSM winner from South Africa, the continent of Africa and the southern hemisphere.

Nel's journey to the top was anything but ordinary. Born in Upington and raised in the rugby heartland of Bloemfontein, he played for the Central University of Technology and the Free State Cheetahs. After retiring from rugby in 2019 to work as an electrical engineer, he discovered the sport of strongman. Starting in 2023, he dominated immediately, winning South Africa's Strongest Man back-to-back and taking Africa's Strongest Man in 2023 and 2024. He even swept the 2024 Strongman Champions League season, becoming the world series champion.

This rapid rise from local athlete to global contender set the stage for Sacramento—a "rookie turned legend" almost overnight.

At the 2025 finals, Nel stamped his authority early. On Day 1 he won the opening KNAACK Carry & Hoist and took second place in both the massive 18-inch deadlift and the Hercules Hold. These results gave him a commanding lead (roughly seven points ahead of his nearest rival) going into Day 2. Stoltman fought back with wins in the Sunday events, but Nel's cushion was just enough. The title came down to the final Atlas Stones lift: Nel and Stoltman went head-to-head, stone-for-stone. Nel loaded his final stone a heartbeat faster than the competition, a tiny margin that secured his 47–46.5 victory.

Final standings confirmed the nail-biter: Nel 47.0 points, Stoltman 46.5, Canada's Mitchell Hooper 43.5. In a sport often dominated by stalwarts from colder climates, a South African giant had emerged.

The reaction back home was instant jubilation. In Mzansi, Nel's triumph was hailed as a rainbow-nation moment. He has made history as "the first African athlete to win the world strongman title in the 48-year history of the competition." South Africans from Cape Town to Johannesburg took to social media in pride, calling it a national first.

Even South Africa's official government account posted, "HISTORY MADE! Congratulations to Rayno Nel, Africa's first-ever World's Strongest Man champion!".

Nel himself was humble, saying he was "just over the moon" and that representing his country "feels surreal."

"To represent (South Africa) in any way whatsoever, it feels surreal. I mean, we're a small country with a lot of struggles. To have something like this, I know means a lot to my people."

He even quipped about post-competition celebrations, lamenting he couldn't enjoy his favourite Black Label lager in California and would have to "try American beer tonight."

For his part, Nel insists this is only the beginning. In a candid interview he said his progress has been rapid and he's "still improving" every season.

"My strength came up really fast, and I'm still improving," he said, a sign that he's not resting on his laurels.

His win has galvanised a nation. A reminder that in South Africa's "rainbow nation," even the strongest title in sport is now within reach. – Source: www.goodthingsguy.com

AKANI SIMBINE CONTINUES WITH WINNING STREAK

South African sprinter, Akani Simbine, continued his dominance in the United States when he surged to victory in the 100m at the Atlanta City Games, stopping the clock in 9.86 seconds.

The time won't be recognised as the fastest of the year, given that it was wind-aided, but that won't matter to the star South African.

"After winning both 100m Diamond League events this season, winning a medal at the World Indoors and anchoring Team SA to gold in the 4x100m World Relays, Simbine unquestionably the fastest man on the planet right now," the South African Sports Confederation and Olympic Committee (SASCOC) said on its website.



Simbine competed in the Atlanta City Games on Saturday afternoon, 17 May 2025.

Reacting to the victory, Simbine said: "It's no pressure. I get to come enjoy something that is no stress; I just run and have fun. I wasn't expecting that [time] at all. Crazy."

He was expecting, however, the reigning Olympic champion, Noah Lyles, to be lining up alongside him, but the American scratched from the race, withdrawing due to a "tight ankle" that has impacted him in the last two weeks.

"Simbine's 9.90 from the Botswanan Golden Grand Prix last month remains as the official world lead for 2025, though his performance on Saturday clearly pleased him, too. He started a bit slow but hit his stride at the 50-metre mark well ahead of Nigerian Udodi Onwuzurike, who was second with a 10.05," SASCOC said.

Also in action was men's 400m world record holder, Wayde van Niekerk, who was making his seasonal debut. He placed a creditable third in the 200m in 20.03. – Source: SAnews.gov.za

"WE DID THAT!" REYAAN TRAUT CLINCHES GOLD AT THE AFRICAN TRACK CHAMPS

Reyaan Traut has added yet another stunning gold medal to his collection, following his power cycling performance at the African Track Championships in Egypt.



The event, which took place at the Cairo International Velodrome in Egypt between 12 and 16 May 2025, formed a critical part of the continental competition calendar, offering UCI points and an opportunity for athletes to gain exposure and benchmark themselves against Africa's top track cyclists.

Traut was among the strong blend of elite competitors, up-and-coming juniors, and para-cycling talent our nation has to offer, and he didn't disappoint.

With a stellar podium finish, making him a three-time African Champion, the para-athlete clinched top honours in the Paracycling Individual Pursuit, Cycling South Africa reports.

"Thank you, everyone. We did that. Not once, not twice, but three times. African Champion," Traut wrote in two recent posts following his triumph.

His journey is truly captivating. Hailing from Elfindale, he discovered cycling unexpectedly after an accident where he lost his left arm. We previously shared a story about how Traut's tragedy became a catalyst, igniting a determination and competitive spirit that has seen him become one of the most decorated para-cyclists of our time.

Standing tall today as the epitome of a true champion, Traut has made his mark in the books of South African cycling history and has, through his life story, proven that there is still an extraordinary life to be lived after tragedy. – Source: www.goodthingsguy.com

UIPM 2025 WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS HEAD TO MOSSEL BAY

[&]quot;The heat, the vibe and the victory. Grateful for all the support and strength given to me."

The coastal town of Mossel Bay in South Africa's Garden Route will host the International Modern Pentathlon Union (UIPM) 2025 Biathle, Triathle, and Laser Run World Championships from 9 to 14 December 2025, marking a major milestone for both the country and the African continent.

Organised by the South African Modern Pentathlon Association (SAMPA) in partnership with #ICONIC Mossel Bay, this prestigious event will draw top athletes from around the world to compete in three fast-paced, spectator-friendly UIPM disciplines:

- Biathle: A continuous race combining swimming and running
- Triathle: Swimming, running, and laser shooting
- Laser Run: Alternating running and laser pistol shooting



Held at Santos Beach, the competition promises a vibrant atmosphere with age groups ranging from under-11 to masters (70+), making it a truly inclusive and family-friendly event.

"This is a huge moment for modern pentathlon in South Africa," says Kate Vos, spokesperson for the Eden Modern Pentathlon Association (Eden MPA). "We're not only hosting a world-class competition—we're creating a platform to grow the sport and inspire the next generation."

Modern pentathlon, governed globally by the Union Internationale de Pentathlon Moderne (UIPM) since 1948, combines five disciplines: swimming, fencing, obstacle course racing (now replacing show jumping), and the laser run. While the full version is contested in the Olympics, the stand-alone events like Biathle, Triathle, and Laser Run are rapidly growing due to their accessibility and dynamic format.

South African athletes have already shown their mettle in recent national championships, with more opportunities coming up in the months ahead.

The road to Mossel Bay began with SAMPA's successful bid to the UIPM in late 2024. The goal was not only to host a premier international event, but also to elevate the visibility of modern pentathlon nationally and across Africa.

Vos, who attended the 2024 Laser Run World Championships in China, says Mossel Bay will deliver the same level of excitement. "Teams from countries like Egypt, India, Portugal, and Mexico will be here, often travelling with families and support crews—bringing with them a wave of cultural exchange and economic benefit."

More than just a competition, the 2025 World Championships aim to build a long-term legacy. "We're planting seeds," Vos adds, "so that every young athlete, coach, and supporter in South Africa sees that this sport is for them." – Source: www.capetownetc.com













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