

# UBUNTU

## NEWSFLASH

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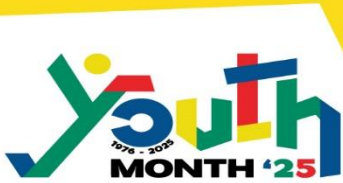
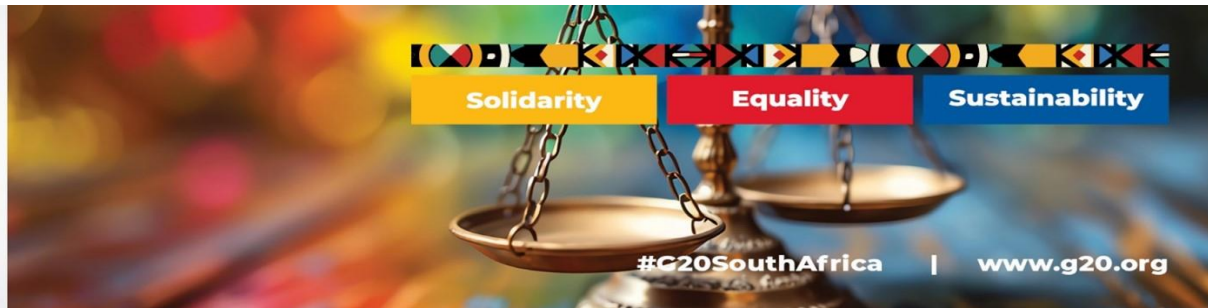
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CONFERENCE ON FINANCING SEEN AS AN ENABLER FOR SDGS

*The Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development (FfD4) has been described as a crucial opportunity to reshape the global financial system in support of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).*



This is according to President Cyril Ramaphosa, who delivered remarks at the high-level virtual meeting of the Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development on Tuesday, 3 June 2025.

“We must emerge from the conference with bold decisions and an ambitious action plan that leaves no country, no community, and no person behind.

“The world is in a race against time. In five years from now, we must have achieved the Sustainable Development Goals that are essential for human well-being and progress.

“We must achieve these goals not merely because we have committed them to paper, but because the health, welfare and happiness of billions of people depend on the progress we make,” the President said.

The FfD4 will take place from 30 June to 3 July 2025 in Sevilla, Spain, with the first citizen emphasising that the conference presents a critical opportunity for the global community to intensify its collective efforts.

He drew attention to the United Nations 2024 Report on the SDGs, which captures the seriousness of the situation.

“The report makes it clear that we must think and act differently. We must move faster and with far greater ambition. Importantly, we must align our efforts across all available fora and platforms,” he said.

South Africa, he noted, has been consistent in advocating that the priorities of its G20 presidency should complement and support the ambitious objectives of the conference.

The country has placed solidarity, equality and sustainability at the centre of its G20 presidency, driven by its conviction that global challenges can only be resolved through cooperation, collaboration and partnership.

“As one of the overarching priorities of our G20 presidency, we are advocating for action to ensure debt sustainability for low-income countries. The policy space available to developing countries is significantly constrained by their debt servicing obligations and their climate and development financing needs.

“We know, for example, that 23 countries in Africa are paying more for debt costs than critical development enablers like health care and education. South Africa seeks to advance sustainable solutions to tackle high structural deficits and liquidity challenges and extend debt relief to developing economies,” the President explained.

In support of this effort and in pursuit of sustainable funding of the SDGs, President Ramaphosa announced that South Africa will convene a side event at the FfD4 under the theme *Forging a Common Agenda to Achieve Debt Sustainability in Developing Economies*.

This side event aims to bring together leading voices from various debt-related initiatives to identify synergies and areas of convergence. It will seek consensus and highlight solutions that enjoy broad support. – Source: SAnews.gov.za



## PRESIDENT CYRIL RAMAPHOSA MOURNS PASSING OF THE REV DR TSHENUWANI SIMON FARISANI

***President Cyril Ramaphosa has expressed his deep sadness at the passing of theologian, former Member of Parliament, and former Speaker of the Limpopo Provincial Legislature, Dr Tshenuwani Simon Farisani, who has passed away at the age of 76.***



President Ramaphosa offers his condolences to the family, friends and comrades of Dr Farisani, who was a co-founder, alongside the President and the late Tshifhiwa Isaac Muofhe, of the Black Evangelic Youth Organisation in the early 1970s.

Rev Farisani was a Lutheran minister who fought apartheid from the pulpit and was arrested for his activism in the Black Consciousness Movement and the Black People's Convention, where he was a close associate of Steve Bantu Biko.

After the end of apartheid, Dr Farisani represented the African National Congress in the National Assembly and later served as a member of the Limpopo Provincial Executive, following which he served as Speaker of the Limpopo legislature.

President Ramaphosa said, "Dr Farisani has left us as part of a succession of stalwarts who have passed on recently and whose dedication to our freedom and national development demands both our mourning and reflection.

"TS Farisani preached the gospel of humanity and liberation in ways that energised our struggle and shook the apartheid regime into targeting him and depriving him of his personal freedom.

"From the pulpit of his congregations in Venda and the then Transvaal to the podiums of Parliament and the Speaker's chair in Limpopo, Dr Farisani's commanding baritone oratory conveyed his love for humanity and his fearless, sacrificial fight for our freedom.

"May his soul rest in peace." – Source: [www.thepresidency.co.za](http://www.thepresidency.co.za)

## MINISTERS LAMOLA AND TAU LEAD SA DELEGATION AT 2025 OECD MEETING IN PARIS

***The Minister of International Relations and Cooperation Ronald Lamola and the Minister of Trade, Industry, and Competition Parks Tau arrived in Paris on Monday to lead South Africa's delegation at the 2025 Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) Ministerial Council Meeting.***

The two-day meeting, chaired by Costa Rica and featuring Australia, Canada, and Lithuania as vice-chairs, began on 3 June and concluded on Thursday, 4 June 2025.

The OECD serves as a forum and knowledge hub for data, analysis, and best practices in public policy. It collaborates with over 100 countries worldwide to foster stronger, fairer and cleaner societies.

This week's meeting focused on achieving resilient, inclusive, and sustainable prosperity through rules-based trade, investment, and innovation.

OECD members engaged in high-level discussions, including conversations with partner countries that are not members, to identify priorities for international policy cooperation.

The Department of International Relations and Cooperation (DIRCO) said Ministers Lamola and Tau urgently called for action regarding the 500% premium interest that African nations are required to pay to access international capital.

According to DIRCO, this issue was highlighted in the 2024 African Development Bank's (AfDB) Economic Outlook report.



“Ministers Lamola and Tau will highlight how African countries currently incur interest rates on global bonds that are 500% higher than those on multilateral loans, such as those from the World Bank and AfDB. They will urge OECD-G20 collaboration to address this disparity.”

The department said as the holder of the Group of 20 (G20) presidency, the country has proposed specific reforms to make affordable capital accessible for climate-resilient infrastructure.

“We continue to seek sustainable and innovative solutions through dialogue, collaboration, and cooperation. South Africa’s G20 presidency stands firm in the belief that multilateral cooperation is not optional but imperative. Unilateral actions that undermine the rules-based order risk reversing decades of progress,” the statement said.

The department said financing for development was essential for Africa’s inclusive growth and urban sustainability and that the meeting’s focus directly supports the country’s G20 presidency for fair finance.

“Rules-based systems must prioritise fair capital access. Africa’s development is shackled by extortionate borrowing costs.”

Minister Lamola is of the view that South Africa’s presence in Paris signals a commitment to dismantle financial barriers hampering Africa’s sustainable development. “Africa’s prosperity cannot be deferred,” the Minister added.

Meanwhile, Minister Tau said South Africa’s engagement with the OECD is aimed at achieving four strategic aims. These include higher investment, inclusive economic growth, a prerequisite for addressing unemployment, poverty, and inequality. – Source: [www.dirco.gov.za](http://www.dirco.gov.za)

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## KILLING OF PALESTINIANS NEAR AID DISTRIBUTION SITE IN GAZA: SOUTH AFRICA OUTRAGED AND CALLS FOR ACCOUNTABILITY

***South Africa is gravely alarmed by reports confirming that at least 31 Palestinians were killed and over 200 injured on 1 June 2025, near an aid distribution point in Rafah, Southern Gaza.***



Eyewitnesses and medical personnel attest that Israeli forces opened fire on crowds of desperate civilians seeking to access humanitarian aid.

According to the Health Ministry, many victims were shot in the head and chest.

This atrocity is a stark reminder of the catastrophic and dire conditions under bombardment and siege in Gaza, where access to food and essential aid remains perilous and has become a matter of life and death.

South Africa joins the global call for an immediate, impartial international investigation and reiterates that Israel, as the occupying power, bears legal responsibility under international humanitarian law for the protection of civilians and to ensure safe access to aid.

The targeting, killing, and injuring of vulnerable civilians are in grave breach of the Geneva Conventions and incompatible with the principles of international humanitarian law and, accordingly, demand urgent scrutiny.

This tragedy has further intensified scrutiny of the Gaza Humanitarian Foundation (GHF), and South Africa further joins calls against the GHF, a private initiative that entrusts the distribution of aid to military personnel rather than impartial humanitarian actors.

This scheme is fundamentally at odds with the core principles of international humanitarian law, particularly the Geneva Conventions and their Additional Protocols, which mandate that humanitarian relief operations must observe the principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence.

We condemn in particular the deliberate marginalisation of established aid agencies, most notably the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), which has served as the primary agency responsible for the humanitarian needs of Palestinian refugees for over 75 years.

Discrediting or dismantling UNRWA's operations—while replacing it with politicised and militarised alternatives—further entrenches a system of collective punishment and deepens the humanitarian catastrophe in Gaza.

The Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC), the world's most authoritative source on food insecurity, has warned of an imminent risk of famine, stating that one in five Gazans is likely to face starvation in the coming weeks.

The above statements reveal a strategy to use starvation as a weapon of war, a practice that is expressly prohibited under international humanitarian law, including under Article 54 of Protocol I to the Geneva Conventions. Under no circumstances may an occupying power use siege or blockade to collectively punish a civilian population, nor may it deny humanitarian relief to protected persons.

The amplified international voices by initiatives such as the European Union's vote to review trade relations with Israel, and the Madrid and Hague Groups, bear testimony to Israel's continued violation of international law and its obligations under the Geneva Convention.

South Africa further recalls that the International Court of Justice (ICJ), in its ongoing case concerning the Application of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide against Israel, has issued three rounds of binding provisional measures aimed at halting irreparable harm to the Palestinian population. These have included specific instructions for the unhindered provision of humanitarian aid, all of which have been flagrantly defied by Israeli authorities.

South Africa calls on all states, institutions, and civil society across the globe to demand immediate, unconditional and sustained humanitarian access to Gaza; reinforce the mandate and funding of UNRWA and other neutral aid organisations; hold Israel legally accountable for its violations of international law, including through the ICJ, ICC, and domestic jurisdictions exercising universal jurisdiction; and take concrete steps to end the blockade, protect civilians and restore the rule of international law in Gaza.

The UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, Francesca Albanese, stated, "All camouflaged behind the language of aid, to divert international attention from legal accountability, in Israel's attempt to dismantle the very principles upon which humanitarian law was built." South Africa aligns itself with the comments above of the UN Special Rapporteur. What transpired in Gaza today is not a tragic anomaly – it is a direct consequence of the ongoing bombardment, siege, occupation and collective punishment of Gaza's people.

We further concur with the UN Special Rapporteur that "Accountability can no longer be deferred. The UN and States need urgently to establish an independent protection mechanism that Israel shall not stop—it has no sovereignty over the occupied territory, and it is about time States implement it."

We call on the international community to amplify calls to end the cycle of violence and the dehumanisation of a population.

The time for moral and legal clarity is now.

The international community must act decisively to prevent further loss of life and uphold the protections due to civilians under the Geneva Conventions and international law. – Source: [www.dirco.gov.za](http://www.dirco.gov.za)



***The Deputy Minister of International Relations and Cooperation, Alvin Botes, delivered remarks during a Group of 20 (G20) Multi-stakeholder Dialogue on Illicit Financial Flows, Domestic Resource Mobilisation and Financing for Development on Friday, 30 May 2025, at SNG Grant Thornton, Midrand.***

The dialogue served as a precursor to the Think 20 (T20) Midterm Conference in June and the G20 Leaders' Summit in November 2025. The dialogue was hosted by SNG Grant Thornton and the Institute of Global Dialogue. The multi-stakeholder engagement involved key participants, including representatives of the Government of South Africa, the United Nations (UN), the Institute for Global Dialogue, SNG Grant Thornton, representatives of foreign diplomatic missions, business leaders, and researchers, as well as students and learners who will engage on and make policy recommendations to the G20 and T20.



The participants explored how Africa, including South Africa, is losing billions of dollars every year through illicit financial flows (IFFs), such as money from corruption, smuggling and tax evasion. These losses make it hard for African countries to collect taxes, invest in development and reduce inequality. The growing digital economy is making it even harder to track and tax financial flows.

The discussion focused on how to curb IFFs using the latest tools and global cooperation, like the automatic exchange of tax information. With the global economy slowing down, aid shrinking and the climate crisis worsening, it is getting harder to find money for the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

In anticipation of the fourth International Conference on Financing for Development (FfD4) to be held from 30 June to 3 July 2025 in Spain, participants discussed how to better use local resources, push for reforms in global financial systems and find new ways to fund sustainable development. – Source: [www.dirco.gov.za](http://www.dirco.gov.za)

**SOUTH AFRICA, LESOTHO ENHANCES TRADE AND INVESTMENT RELATIONS**

***The Department of Trade, Industry and Competition (the dtic) and the Lesotho Ministry of Trade, Industry and Business Development have agreed to enhance trade and investment to advance shared interests.***

This emanated from a meeting which was held in Pretoria on Tuesday, 3 June 2025.

The Lesotho Ministry of Trade, Industry and Business Development is currently on a week-long study mission on Regulatory Framework for Indigenous Plants and Mechanisms to leverage trade agreements, including the Southern African Development Community (SADC)–European Union (EU) Economic Partnership Agreement, as well as to exchange experiences on how best to leverage trade agreements to promote growth and development.

According to the Deputy Director-General of Trade at the dtic, Ambassador Xolelwa Mlumbi-Peter, the importance of sharing resilience-building strategies amid the seismic shifts in global trade is timely and can also enhance the buoyancy of the region.

The mission follows the signing of the memorandum of understanding (MoU) on economic cooperation that has been negotiated and signed by the Trade and Industry Ministers of both sides during the Bi-National Commission (BNC) earlier this year.



The MoU offers a good platform to facilitate greater cooperation between the two countries to promote the exchange of experiences in a manner that promotes mutually beneficial trade and investment relations.

“We welcome the commitment between our two countries to work together to diversify production and to leverage trade agreements that the Southern Africa Customs Unions (SACU) are party to that provide a good platform to access global markets,” said Mlumbi-Peter.

The two sides also agreed to enhance cooperation on standards and on cross-border value chains in identified sectors such as automotive, clothing and textiles, cosmetics and essential oils, cannabis, fruits and vegetables and leather and meat products.

Furthermore, the two sides agreed to prioritise the implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) and to work together towards the conclusion of outstanding negotiations, particularly in sectors like clothing, textiles and automobiles that provide potential benefits to grow the economies of both countries. – Source: SAnews.gov.za

## MINISTER RAMOKGOPA TO ATTEND HAMBURG SUSTAINABILITY CONFERENCE

**Minister in the Presidency for Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation, Maropene Ramokgopa, represented South Africa at the Hamburg Sustainability Conference in Germany, which took place on 2 and 3 June 2025.**

The Ministry in The Presidency: Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation said the conference sought to accelerate global action to implement the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

“Minister Ramokgopa’s participation at the Hamburg Sustainability Conference underscored South Africa’s continued efforts to advance accelerated action to achieve domestic development goals through the National Development Plan Vision 2030 (NDP) and the Medium-Term Development Plan (MTDP) and global goals through the SDGs and the African Union’s Agenda 2063.

“The Minister will also advance the importance of partnerships and equality to achieve sustainable development,” the Ministry said in a statement on Saturday, 31 May 2025.

Established in 2024, the two-day conference will bring together key decision-makers from governments, civil society, and the private sector.

Spearheaded by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the Michael Otto Foundation, and the Free Hanseatic City of Hamburg, this initiative is designed to drive sustainable change.

The conference offers a unique platform to forge new partnerships and demonstrates the power of collaboration in tackling global challenges and transforming lives.

According to the Director of the Germany Representation Office at the UNDP, Melanie Hauenstein, the world is at a pivotal moment and confronting extraordinary challenges—climate change, conflict, and economic instability—all while investment in development and international cooperation faces unprecedented constraints.

She said that these realities underscore why multilateralism is essential for addressing shared challenges and securing a more stable, sustainable future.

“The Hamburg Sustainability Conference (HSC) is a vital platform for advancing this critical agenda. The HSC goes beyond reflection – it’s an opportunity to deepen our understanding of development and to imagine the sustainable futures we can create together,” she said. – Source: SAnews.gov.za

## HOSTING G20 LEADERS’ SUMMIT AT NASREC HOLDS SIGNIFICANT IMPORTANCE



***The upcoming Group of 20 (G20) Leaders' Summit, scheduled for November 2025 at the Nasrec Expo Centre in Johannesburg, holds significant historical importance.***

This is according to the Minister in the Presidency, Khumbudzo Ntshavheni, who emphasised the venue's symbolism of South Africa's journey from apartheid segregation to democratic unity.

Minister Ntshavheni was briefing the media on the outcomes of the Cabinet meeting on Wednesday, 28 May 2025.

The National Agricultural, Sports and Recreation Events Centre (Nasrec), built in 1984 during the height of apartheid, was originally positioned at the boundary between Johannesburg and Soweto, symbolising the stark racial divisions of the past.

Situated between the developed city and Soweto, which has historically served as a reservoir of cheap labour, the Minister said that Nasrec now represents the democratic government's vision of spatial reintegration and equal development.

"The democratic government continues to develop the Nasrec precinct to serve as a bridge against the apartheid spatial planning divide that separated the developed and undeveloped South Africa, which remains a true South African characterisation of two countries in one," Minister Ntshavheni said.

Today, the venue serves as a powerful metaphor for national reconciliation, with the developments around the Nasrec precinct as a smart city, which also hosts the FNB Stadium, known as Soccer City.

"Soccer City, which hosted the first soccer World Cup match on African soil, is amongst the top 20 largest stadiums in the world. Therefore, the hosting of the G20 Leaders' Summit, like many other events, in the Nasrec precinct continues to contribute to making Nasrec a symbol of spatial integration towards an equal South Africa."

Meanwhile, she said the G20 Summit represents more than just a diplomatic gathering but a testament to South Africa's ongoing journey of healing, unity, and national transformation.

She told the journalists that South Africa will soon unveil its G20 Social Summit plan and programme.

The G20 Social Summit initiative is part of the programme adopted from the Brazil G20 Initiatives, which created a platform for social movements and civil society organisations that are impacted by geopolitical and macroeconomic decisions made by leaders of the powerful G20 countries.

Ntshavheni said meetings are being held across the country as part of the ongoing G20 content preparations.

The summit is scheduled for November 2025, promising to be a landmark event in the country's international diplomatic calendar. – Source: SAnews.gov.za



**SOUTH AFRICAN NPO NOMINATED FOR A 2025 EARTHSLOT PRIZE**

***The Earthshot Prize was all anyone could talk about last year, as South Africa, namely Cape Town, played host to the prestigious award ceremony and even welcomed His Royal Highness (HRH) Prince William to our beautiful shores. This year, we get to celebrate that a South African NPO has earned a nomination for the 2025 edition of the awards.***

In October 2020, HRH Prince William launched the most prestigious global environment prize in history, The Earthshot Prize. The international prize highlights five disciplines, and winners receive a total of £1 million. The project is set to run over the course of the next decade, meaning a total of £50 million will be given to causes working to repair the Earth.

The I AM WATER Ocean Conservation Foundation is proud to announce its nomination for the prestigious Earthshot Prize 2025. This nomination reflects over a decade of dedicated work reconnecting underserved youth with the ocean, resulting in the OCEAN FOR ALL Alliance Global initiative.

"We believe that to protect our oceans, we must first connect people to them, especially the next generation," said Hanli Prinsloo, Founder of I AM WATER. "This nomination reaffirms the urgent need for ocean connection experiences and the power they have to transform hearts, minds, and communities."

The I AM WATER Cape Town Hub continues to deliver grassroots ocean connection experiences. Since 2019 alone, I AM WATER has reached more than 48 900 beneficiaries through immersive, ocean-based education.





In 2024, the foundation's flagship Ocean Guardians Workshops welcomed 1 259 children to see beneath the surface of the ocean in South Africa, fostering personal connection, awareness, and stewardship for marine ecosystems.

A recent long-term impact study on I AM WATER's Ocean Connection Methodology, conducted in partnership with the University of North Carolina Wilmington, showed that participants not only increased their ocean-positive actions following the workshops but sustained these behaviours over time, providing evidence of long-term, transformational change.

The next phases of the prestigious competition will take their course, but we are, as always, so proud to be championing a local cause that is doing incredible things on the global stage.

"Thank you to all our donors, friends, partners and team members. Together, we're proving that grassroots organisations can drive global change."  
 – Source: [www.goodthingsguy.com](http://www.goodthingsguy.com)

## PROFESSOR ANIL SOOKLAL HONOURED WITH A SIVANANDA PEACE AWARD FOR HIS EFFORTS TO DEVELOP SOUTH AFRICA

***In a heartfelt ceremony held in Inanda on Sunday, 1 June 2025, the Sivananda World Peace Foundation bestowed the prestigious Sivananda Peace Award on Professor Anil Sooklal, South Africa's High Commissioner to India.***

This recognition comes as a tribute to his significant contributions to development within the country, particularly as International Yoga Day approaches on 21 June.

President of the Sivananda World Peace Foundation, Ishwar Ramlutchman, expressed deep admiration for Sooklal's quiet yet impactful work, stating, "We know he has been doing great and silent work in the country for decades."

Reflecting on their first encounter in 2009 during a presidential delegation to India, Ramlutchman praised Sooklal's ability to forge productive partnerships, particularly with his Indian counterparts. "That silent work that you've been continuously doing on behalf of our country, we say a big thank you," Ramlutchman added.



The Sivananda Peace Award has previously been granted to notable figures including His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama, Dr Nelson Mandela, and the late Winnie Madikizela-Mandela.

In a gesture filled with honour, Ramlutchman stated, "Today, we feel honoured to present it to you." He highlighted the importance of recognising such individuals while they are still living, urging them to continue their contributions to the nation.

In his acceptance speech, a humble Sooklal attributed the accolade not to himself but to the collaborative work of his government role over the last 30 years.

"I'm extremely grateful that I'm being acknowledged for the work I do," he said, emphasising that his position is not just a title but a trust bestowed by the government to promote South Africa's interests abroad.

As an ambassador for South Africa in India, Sooklal spoke passionately about his responsibilities to foster beneficial relationships that can lead to investments and job opportunities for South Africans. Currently, approximately 150 Indian companies operate in South Africa, with Vedanta Mining leading the charge by employing around 6 500 people in the Northern Cape.

“This is what we are constantly doing at the High Commission,” Sooklal explained, focused on drawing further Indian investments into South Africa’s economy while simultaneously promoting skills development.

Highlighting the collaborative efforts unfolding between the two nations, Sooklal noted that India has initiated significant skills development programmes for South Africans, including a skills centre in Tshwane and another underway in KwaZulu-Natal.

“They are providing the expertise and creating opportunities to skill South Africans,” he stated, capturing the essence of his mission to bridge the gap between South Africa and India economically and socially.

The ceremony not only honoured Sooklal's contributions but also served as a celebration of international ties and the spirit of partnership, reinforcing the importance of recognising those whose dedicated work often goes unnoticed.

The event encapsulated the ethos of the Sivananda World Peace Foundation in promoting peace and development through dedicated service and mutual respect. – Source: [www.msn.com](http://www.msn.com)

## SOUTH AFRICAN WINS GLOBAL PHOTOGRAPHY PRIZE WITH HEARTBREAKING TRIBUTE

***Lindokuhle Sobekwa was recently named the winner of the 2025 Deutsche Börse Photography Foundation Prize. From a high school photography project in Thokoza to one of the world’s most prestigious art prizes, Lindokuhle Sobekwa’s journey is nothing short of remarkable.***



**WATCH THE VIDEO**

This international award is a really big deal: £30,000 (over R700 000) and a global spotlight on the most influential photography of the year, and Sobekwa won it with a project so personal and powerful that it's leaving people around the world speechless.

It is called *I Carry Her Photo With Me*, and it's not just a photobook; it is a love letter, a tribute, and a deeply moving journey of grief, memory and what it means to keep someone's story alive.

And it all started with one photo of his sister.

Sobekwa was born in Thokoza, a township outside Johannesburg, in 1995. He picked up a camera for the first time thanks to a school programme called Of Soul and Joy. That programme taught him to take photos, but it also unlocked a way to make sense of the world around him. He started documenting real stories, right from his community. Not glamorous, not sugar-coated. Raw and real. His early work focused on Nyaope addiction, poverty and the unseen parts of South African life, but always with compassion and care. He never looked away, but he never stripped anyone of their dignity either.

And people noticed. Sobekwa quickly found himself exhibiting in galleries, working with Magnum Photos, and eventually becoming one of their full members, which is massive in the photography world.

But through it all, he stayed focused on telling stories that matter. Stories like his own.



The photo that sparked *I Carry Her Photo With Me* is one of those you never forget.

It was a family portrait, the only photo of his older sister Ziyanda, but her face had been cut out. Years later, he found that missing cut-out tucked inside his mom's Bible. That was the moment everything changed. Sobekwa started tracing Ziyanda's story, piecing together memories, asking questions and using his camera to capture not just images but feelings. What followed was a deeply emotional journey through family grief, healing and the things that go unsaid in South African homes.

Ziyanda disappeared after a tragic accident involving Sobekwa when they were kids. She blamed herself. She left. For more than a decade, she was gone. And when she returned in 2013, it was too late; she was ill, fragile and carrying invisible scars. She passed away not long after coming back home.

This project was his way of keeping her close. Of remembering her fully. And of making sure no one else feels that kind of absence without being seen. What makes this project even more incredible is its simplicity. Sobekwa didn't use fancy gear or expensive setups. Just a basic camera, handwritten notes, found family photos, scribbled memories and raw emotion.

The result? A book that feels like paging through someone's soul.

Photos of washing lines where her dresses once hung. Candlelit rooms. Quiet shadows. Places where she once walked. And between the images, scribbled thoughts that say what so many of us feel but never say out loud.

The judges said it best, "This is what photography can be when it's used to truly connect, not just capture."

At the awards ceremony in London, Sobekwa stood there, humble and overwhelmed, and simply said, "What a journey."

Honestly, it's more than that. It's a reminder of what South Africans can do when given a chance. It's a reminder of how powerful our stories are. And it's proof that something deeply painful can be transformed into something healing, not just for the artist but for everyone who experiences the work.

This is also a moment of back-to-back pride. Last year, South Africa's Lebohang Kganye won the same prize. And now, it's Sobekwa's turn. Two wins. Two years. One incredibly talented country.

Sobekwa's story is a quiet one. There are no bright lights or shouting headlines. Just a brother, trying to remember his sister. Trying to understand the spaces she left behind. And trying to offer that story to the world, so we all feel a little less alone.

It's heartbreaking. It's beautiful. And it's one of the most powerful reminders we've seen in ages of why art matters. – Source: [www.goodthingsguy.com](http://www.goodthingsguy.com)

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## MEET KIARA NIRGHIN: THE TEEN WHO FOUGHT DROUGHT WITH FRUIT WASTE

***Kiara Nirghin was just 16 when she turned kitchen scraps into a water-saving superhero, and now the whole world's talking about it again.***

*Goodthingsguy* actually covered this incredible South African invention years ago, but it's doing the rounds again thanks to a massive Facebook page called *Project Nightfall*. They have over 17 million followers around the world, and they shared the story this past weekend. Now, South Africans are all over social media and are re-sharing it once more.

Back when she was just 16 years old and still in high school, Johannesburg's Kiara Nirghin came up with a world-changing idea: using orange peels and avocado skins to create a super-absorbent, biodegradable polymer that helps crops survive droughts.

Her invention, which she called "No More Thirsty Crops," works like this: the peels are ground down and transformed into a natural material that can hold up to 300 times its weight in water. When added to soil, this little fruit-powered powder acts like a mini reservoir, slowly releasing moisture to thirsty plants. That means crops can stay hydrated for longer, even when the rain refuses to fall.

The whole process is completely biodegradable, affordable and made from waste we would normally dispose of.

Nirghin's motivation came during one of South Africa's worst droughts in decades. Instead of just watching the news and feeling helpless, she asked herself, "How can I help?" and then she actually did something about it. She spent 45 days experimenting in her kitchen, mixing and testing, until she got it right. And it wasn't long before the world took notice.

She entered her invention into the Google Science Fair, a massive international competition, and won the Grand Prize, beating out thousands of other students from around the world. At the time, she was only 16 years old.





The judges were blown away. *Scientific American* called it “inspiring”. Google called it “genius”.

What makes Nirghin’s idea even more special is how many problems it solves at once. It helps crops grow in dry conditions. It reduces the need for constant watering (saving time, money and precious water). And it gives value to waste, using fruit peels that would normally end up in landfills.

Imagine the impact this could have on small farms across South Africa or anywhere in the world where drought is a daily challenge. With proper scaling and support, Nirghin’s invention has the power to make a massive difference and it all started in a high school kitchen.

Since that win, Nirghin has kept the momentum going. She’s been recognised by *TIME* Magazine, *The Guardian*, *Glamour* and loads of science and education platforms. She’s used her platform to promote women in STEM, environmental innovation and youth empowerment, and she has written a book.

Nirghin continues to dream big and work hard, showing the rest of us that changing the world doesn’t always start in a lab; sometimes it starts in your kitchen with a handful of peels and a heart full of purpose.

This story isn’t technically “new” but it is worth celebrating all over again. If you’re seeing it for the first time, welcome to the brilliance. If you’re sharing it again, thank you for reminding the world that South Africa is packed with smart, kind, creative change-makers.

Kiara Nirghin is proof that one person, no matter how young, can make a huge difference. And sometimes, that difference starts with just one orange peel. – Source: [www.goodthingsguy.com](http://www.goodthingsguy.com)

## DANCING SENSATION CHLOÉ WINDELL TO REPRESENT SOUTH AFRICA AT WORLD CUP FINALS IN SPAIN

***From America to Prague and beyond, Chloé Windell has graced international stages with incredible rhythm and control. Now, the contemporary dancer is putting the finishing touches to her routines before she makes her way to the 2025 Dance World Cup Finals in Spain this July to showcase the talent that South Africa has to offer.***

The event will take place from 3 to 12 July 2025 and comes after she secured first, second, and fourth places in the Jazz, Lyrical, and Contemporary dance categories at the South African qualifier competition held in Centurion, Pretoria, earlier this year.



The Courtney International House student’s debut international appearance was at the American Dance Awards in Miami, Florida, in 2022. This pivotal moment propelled her into an already decorated dancing career, where she has competed against some of the world’s best and earned World Cup titles in both Jazz and Lyrical disciplines.

Quite the ballet dancer too, Windell was also selected this year to rejoin the elite Dance World Cup Contemporary Ballet Company under the direction of renowned British choreographer Richard Wherlock.

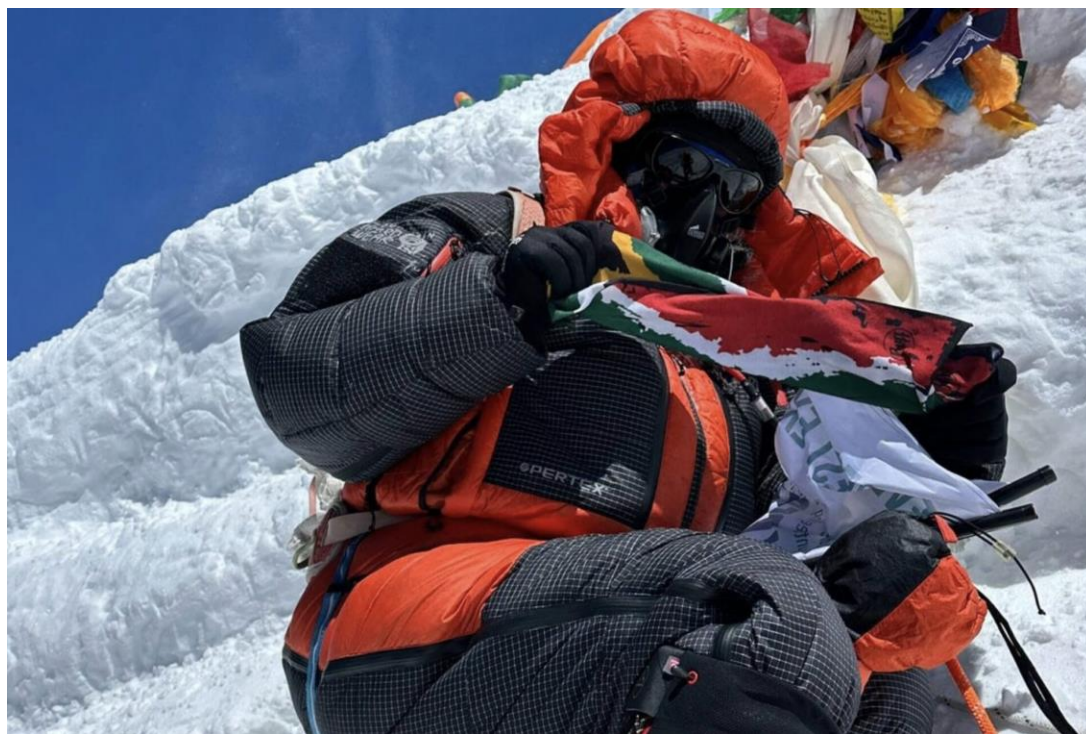
Windell's repeated selection to represent South Africa is not just inspiring but also embodies the world-class talent our nation possesses.

Beyond her preparations for the World Finals in Spain, Windell also looks toward her future, as she plans to pursue further studies at Stellenbosch University next year but remains open to opportunities that may arise during or after her upcoming performances. – Source: [www.goodthingsguy.com](http://www.goodthingsguy.com)

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## SOUTH AFRICAN SUMMITS EVEREST

***A life spent exploring mountains led South Africa's Jeanette McGill to Everest at last and she has become the oldest female South African to do so.***



Originally from Port Elizabeth, McGill grew up mountain-curious. At 13, she sneaked her way into the Mountain Club of South Africa, anxious to be a part of the excitement of life on the slopes as soon as she could. The risk would pay off, leading Jeanette to a life filled with adventure.

Later on in life, McGill became the first female leader in 24 years at the Winter July Camp in Drakensburg. This big moment was followed by a series of mountaineering moments overseas that shaped her as one of South Africa's most experienced mountaineers.

McGil has undertaken many a feat, including 8x8000m expeditions, becoming the first South African to summit Himlung Himal, 2023 (7,126m), Manaslu, 2018 (8,173m), and to attempt Dhaulagiri, 2019 (8,176m).

"I had a chance to consider Everest when the *Sunday Times* had a competition to find a female member for the 1996 expedition," she says. "I also heard via the grapevine that the outcome was in fact known, so I decided to throw my application away and focus on my studies instead."

"I thought Everest wasn't for me, but three years ago I changed my mind, deciding I did in fact really want to summit! I just hoped I hadn't left it too late in my life!"

McGil explains that patience and resilience got her to the summit, but not without obstacles, disappointment and most importantly, trying again. In 2023 she fell ill and only reached Camp 2. In 2024 she reached South Col but technical equipment let her down as well as some personal matters.

"I was going to quit my Everest goal but decided I'd regret not giving it one last decent try, so I focused on my training, pooling my resources, been strategically nomadic for a year and came back one final time in 2025."

"On 22 May I went for the summit but strong winds turned me around early on 23 May at the Balcony (8440m). Everyone else aborted their climbs that day, not summiting. I was going to settle for going to Lhotse the next day, but my leader said I was strong enough to go up again (normally people rest lower at C2 before trying again).

"That night I repeated climbing up the Balcony (so 2 8000m in 2 days) and did continue on to the summit, reaching the top of the world and realising my dream on 24 May. I am now the 10<sup>th</sup>, and at 52, the oldest, South African woman to summit Everest."



“Besides appreciating the incredible view from the top of the world I found the experience very emotional. I cried my eyes out on the summit. My journey there had been so long—over 30 years! I gave so much personally, and so much was taken from me along the way. I love mountains and respect them deeply. They are not a showplace for personal gain.

“My summit is a message of resilience and grit and never giving up on yourself—no matter your age. That is why I support a mountaineering scholarship through the AWE Scholarship Foundation specifically allocated to women from African countries so that they might learn about the transformative power of the outdoors.”

In offering advice for anyone facing mountains (proverbial or literal) in their own lives, McGill (who knows the ebbs and flows, slopes and lows of life well), shares:

“We all have our own mountains in our lives: be it health, relationships or just life in general. I succeeded my literal and figurative Everest by having a plan, letting people support me along the way, and focusing on the goal while on the mountain—not letting distractions deter me. I am filled with gratitude and humility that I realised my dream after so many years and can share my story of resilience and determination.” – Source: [www.goodthingsguy.com](http://www.goodthingsguy.com)

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## A BRIGHT SOUTH AFRICAN STAR TO WATCH NAMED BELLA ALEXANDRAS

***A young actress, singer and producer named Bella Alexandras is carving out a presence in the global entertainment landscape, earning her place as a rising South African star to watch.***



Along with fellow South African and *I Hate Pirates* co-star Davin Beiersdorf, Alexandras recently attended and waved the South African flag high at the Cannes Film Festival.

Alexandras has already made a name for herself in different spheres of arts and culture. In high fashion, she has been a part of campaigns including the likes of Karl Lagerfeld and DKNY. Not to mention, she has graced the runways of Paris and London Fashion Weeks and has enjoyed her fair share of red carpet moments at just 19 years old.

A designer herself, she even helped create an entire capsule collection *dubbed BONTON by Bella* alongside the Parisian brand, which is said to have sold out worldwide.

Then there's music, a space the young South African is also making strides in with her debut EP set to come out soon.

A true South African all-rounder, Alexandras also includes advocacy on her busy to-do list and is a keen supporter empowering youth in the arts through the Princess Grace Foundation.

Naturally, the Cannes Film Festival was a watershed moment for the multi-talented Bella.

“It honestly didn't feel real at first,” she shares. “Just being in Cannes and being surrounded by people I've looked up to, walking past posters of films that shaped me, was overwhelming in the best way. I felt like a little girl from South Africa who somehow stepped into her own dream.”

“I wouldn't be where I am and on the trajectory I'm on if it were not for my team. For every person who's supported me—every acting coach, vocal coach, every casting director, mentor, my manager and agents, and everyone who's believed in me, including my parents and my amazing grandmother. I wouldn't be able to do what I do if it were not for them.”

As for screenings that stood out, Alexandras sang Kristen Stewart's praises for the director's *The Chronology of Water*.

“It reminded me that cinema is universal. I left Cannes with a much clearer sense of who I want to be as an artist. I want to tell bold stories but keep my soul in the process.”

Beyond rubbing elbows with acclaimed talents, Alexandras notes the gratitude of the experience with humility.



“More than anything, I just feel grateful that people took time to speak with me and made me feel like I belonged in those rooms.”

As for the future, Alexandras has excitingly landed a lead role in a new American film production in West Virginia (though details are under wraps).

Commenting on South Africa's place in her journey, she shares:

“South Africa is full of creativity, resilience, and brilliance—and I carry that with me. I'm so proud to be part of a generation that's redefining what South African talent looks like on a global stage. I never forget where I come from. I carry it everywhere.” – Source: [www.goodthingsguy.com](http://www.goodthingsguy.com)

**BANYANA BANYANA WIN TRI-SERIES WITH A PERFECT RECORD AHEAD OF WAFCON**

***Jermaine Seoposenwe starred for Banyana Banyana, who pulled off a clean sweep in the Cosafa Tri-Nations series in their preparations for the Women's Africa Cup of Nations (WAFCON).***

Seoposenwe scored the winner in the 2-0 win over Zambia in the final game of the series at Lucas Masterpieces Stadium on Tuesday afternoon, 3 June 2025. The Mexico-based striker had also scored a brace in the 3-2 win over Botswana in their opener, as they finished the series with a perfect record on home soil.

Seoposenwe's goal against the Copper Queens came late in the second half, as she capitalised on a poor clearance at the back before slotting home from close range. Bongeka Gamede had put the defending African champions in the driving seat in the 74th minute, as she rattled the roof of the net with a thunderbolt free kick.

On paper, it was the perfect day in the office for Desiree Ellis and her troops, but the coach will know that Banyana's work is still cut out for them ahead of WAFCON next month.

The Copper Queens' talisman Barbra Banda had many openings in this game, especially in the first half. She only lacked support, which could have punished Banyana. So, given there'll be no room for error at WAFCON, Banyana need to be at their best in defence—if they are to plug their shortcomings.



Ellis will put her head on the block in the next few weeks and announce her final squad for WAFCON, as she's already naming the preliminary squad.

**Scorers**

Banyana Banyana (0) 2

Gamede 74, Seoposenwe 82

Zambia 0

– Source: [www.msn.com](http://www.msn.com)

**SOUTH AFRICAN SPRINTERS EXCEL AT KIP KEINO CLASSIC IN NAIROBI AS NENE LEADS CHARGE**

***With all the attention focused on Zakithi Nene's blistering world lead of 43.76 to take gold in the 400m at the Kip Keino Classic in Nairobi on Saturday, there were also podium finishes for Bayanda Walaza in the 100m and Shaun Maswanganyi in the men's 200m contest.***



**WATCH THE VIDEO**

The achievements marked another stellar weekend for South African sprinters.

Nene was the best of the South African athletes on the international track and field circuit this weekend. He became the second South African athlete to run under 44 seconds over the one-lap distance after world record holder Wayne van Niekerk.

Nene finished well clear of Nigerian athlete Chidi Okezie, who took second place in 44.98. All eyes will be on the one-lap star as he heads for the Rome Diamond League meeting to see if he can repeat the feat.

Junior record holder Walaza also impressed in the men's 100m race in Nairobi, though he had to settle for the runner-up spot. He got off to a good start, but the athletes were called back by the starter, and though there were no disqualifications for a false start, they were made to go again, and this time Walaza looked a little hesitant out of the blocks the second time.

Bayanda Walaza, South Africa's teenage sprint sensation, took silver in the 100m at the Kip Keino Classic at the weekend.

He nonetheless delivered another impressive result, crossing the finish line in 10.03, with Lachlan Kennedy of Australia securing top spot in 9.98.

Maswanganyi failed to hold off the charge of Liberian athlete Joseph Fahnbulleh in the 200m, who triumphed in 20.40. He took second place in a season's best 20.47. Fellow SA sprinter Sinesipho Dambile withdrew ahead of the race.

Later in the programme, Maswanganyi went on to finish fourth in the 100m race in 10.24.

Meanwhile, on Friday night, Mondray Barnard took second position in the 110m hurdles at the Irena Szewinska Memorial, a World Athletics Continental Tour meeting in Bydgoszcz. He clocked 13.49, with Belgian athlete Elie Bacari taking the win in 13.43.

The fact that the in-form Akani Simbine, who is unbeaten over 100m this year and boasts the world-leading time, did not even feature at the weekend speaks volumes for SA's abundance of sprinting talent. Simbine is also not scheduled to compete in Rome. – Source: [www.iol.co.za](http://www.iol.co.za)

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## **SOUTH AFRICAN BROTHERS CROWNED CHAMPIONS IN WORLD’S TOP HOCKEY LEAGUE**

***It’s official: South African hockey stars Dayaan and Mustapha Cassiem have just helped Amsterdam secure their first Dutch Hoofdklasse title in over a decade.***

The Hoofdklasse is considered one of the toughest and most prestigious hockey leagues in the world. And this year, two brothers from Cape Town played a massive part in taking one of the oldest clubs in the Netherlands straight to the top.

Dayaan and Mustapha are no strangers to making headlines on the field. They have both represented South Africa on the international stage, bringing flair, precision and undeniable energy to every game. But this season, they’ve taken that magic to Europe, and the Dutch hockey world has taken notice. Playing for Amsterdam H&BC, the brothers were standout performers all season, scoring crucial goals and dazzling crowds with their skill. Whether it was Dayaan opening the scoring or Mustapha securing the win, the Cassiems were a constant threat up front.



Amsterdam faced Kampong in the finals of the 2024–25 Men's Hoofdklasse. The match was everything you'd expect from a top-tier league: fast-paced, edge-of-your-seat action. The title came down to a shoot-out, and Amsterdam clinched it, lifting their 22nd national title and their first since the 2011–12 season. You could practically hear the cheers all the way from Cape Town to Amsterdam.

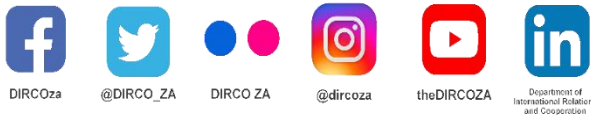
But this win isn't just about medals and trophies. It's about representation. It's about South African athletes shining on a global stage. It's about young kids back home watching two brothers who came from their neighbourhoods and now playing in the big leagues and realising that anything is possible. It's also a proud moment for South African hockey, a sport that often doesn't get the spotlight it deserves. The Cassiem brothers are changing that, one goal at a time.



In an earlier interview, Dayaan once said, “We want to make South Africa proud and take our hockey as far as we can.”

The brothers took to social media to celebrate, but it was Mustapha who said it best, “Dutch Champions!!! It doesn't get better than this team and club. I am forever grateful to my family, supporters and those closest to me and even those who didn't believe. 13 years later, the most beautiful club holds the title again and a childhood dream has been fulfilled.”

The win is being celebrated widely on social media, with South Africans flooding timelines with messages of pride, support, and congratulations.  
– Source: [www.goodthingsguy.com](http://www.goodthingsguy.com)



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