

Chief Albert Luthuli

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News
JULY 2026



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Some members of the March and March during their protest.

The March and March members handing over their memorandum at the Municipal offices.

Elukwatini residents unite in march against undocumented immigrants

Kgabu Mahlatji

ELUKWATINI – More than 200 residents of Elukwatini and surrounding communities took part in a peaceful march on June 30, calling on government authorities to take stronger action against undocumented immigrants whom they allege are operating businesses and working illegally in the area.

The demonstration, organised by March & March, began at the eMbhuleni Tribal Council before proceeding to the Chief Albert Luthuli Municipality (CALM), where protesters handed over a memorandum outlining their concerns and demands.

March & March described the protest as a peaceful demonstration aimed at drawing the attention of government departments and law

enforcement agencies to what it believes are shortcomings in the enforcement of immigration laws, municipal by-laws and business regulations. The organisation called on undocumented immigrants to return to their countries of origin and urged authorities to strengthen immigration enforcement.

The memorandum was addressed to several government departments and agencies, including the South African Police Service, the Border Management Authority, the Department of Home Affairs, the Department of Employment and Labour, and the Chief Albert Luthuli Municipality.

In the document, the organisation raised concerns about the alleged non-compliance with South African immigration laws by some foreign nationals. It claimed that certain businesses were operating without

the necessary permits or licences and alleged that some employers were hiring undocumented immigrants in contravention of South African labour and immigration legislation.

The memorandum also expressed concerns over the alleged illegal occupation of state-owned buildings and RDP houses, as well as allegations relating to drug trafficking, human trafficking, organised crime and public safety, which the organisation attributed to undocumented immigrants.

It further criticised what it described as weak enforcement of municipal by-laws and called for greater municipal accountability. Among its key demands, March & March urged authorities to investigate businesses owned by foreign nationals, including food manufacturers, restaurants,

supermarkets, spaza shops and other food outlets, to ensure compliance with health and business regulations. The organisation also called for a review of the employment of foreign nationals in public institutions, including schools, higher education institutions, hospitals and clinics, to verify that all appointments comply with South African law.

As a precautionary measure during the protest, several businesses in the area temporarily closed their doors to protect their employees and property.

The march concluded peacefully without any reported incidents. Government departments are expected to consider the memorandum and respond to the concerns raised by the protesters in accordance with established procedures.

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Seven illegal immigrants arrested at Ogies illegal alcohol factory

Patrick Mavimbela

Police in Mpumalanga have arrested seven undocumented foreign nationals following the discovery of an illegal alcohol manufacturing operation at a property in Ogies on Saturday, June 27.

The police in Ogies were alerted to suspicious activities at one of the plots in the area and responded swiftly.

Upon arrival, officers discovered a large quantity of unlabelled alcohol, brewing equipment, chemicals, and packaging materials believed to have been used in the illegal manufacturing operation. The estimated street value of the illicit alcohol and seized items is still being determined.

The seven suspects found at the premises were arrested and charged with contravening the Liquor Act. Further investigations revealed that all seven suspects are undocumented foreign nationals, resulting in an additional charge of contravening the Immigration Act.

Police have launched a search for the owner of the property, while the suspects are expected to appear before the Ogies Magistrate's Court soon.



Some of the equipment that were used to manufacture the alcohol.



Some of the chemicals that were used to manufacture the alcohol.



The bottles that were used to package the alcohol.

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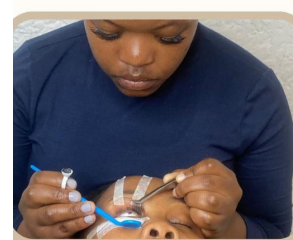
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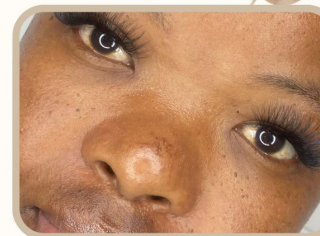


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Chief Albert Luthuli Municipality hosts health and Mayoral Outreach in Diepdale

Kgabu Mahlatji

The Chief Albert Luthuli Municipality hosted a Local AIDS Council (LAC) meeting and Mayoral Outreach Programme at Syde Sports Ground in Diepdale on June 30, bringing together government departments, stakeholders and community members to promote health awareness and improve service delivery.

The Local AIDS Council, led by Khulelaphi Mkhwanazi, focused on strengthening the fight against HIV, tuberculosis (TB) and sexually transmitted infections (STIs) by providing residents with information on prevention, treatment and available health services.

Several organisations, including Thubelihle, Mothers2Mothers, the Department of Health, the Department of Education and other partners, participated in the outreach by offering health education, counselling and support

vir,” Magubane said.

The Mayoral Outreach Programme also gave residents an opportunity to engage directly with the Executive Mayor and municipal leadership on issues affecting their communities.

Magubane outlined several service delivery projects undertaken by the municipality and acknowledged that additional resources were needed to improve the quality of life for residents. He also recognised community requests for the development of sports facilities to provide young people with safe recreational spaces and help steer them away from social challenges.

Residents raised concerns about service delivery, poverty and youth unemployment during the engagement. In response, the Executive Mayor reaffirmed the municipality’s commitment to addressing these challenges through continued collaboration with government departments and stakeholders. As part of the outreach, the municipality donated food parcels to 10 elderly residents to assist vulnerable members of the community.

During the health awareness session, the Department of Health highlighted its achievements during the current reporting period, including the continued reduction in mother-to-child transmission of HIV through improved prevention and treatment programmes.



CALM Mayor Cllr Mbuso Magubane.

services to community members. Executive Mayor Cllr Mbuso Magubane encouraged residents to take responsibility for their health by following the advice of healthcare professionals and making use of the services available at local health facilities.

He also informed the community that the HIV prevention injection, Lenacapavir, has not yet been introduced in the municipality but expressed optimism that it would become available in the future to benefit local communities.

“The introduction of new HIV prevention methods will strengthen our efforts to reduce new infections. We encourage residents to continue using the prevention services currently available while we await the rollout of Lenacapa-

The department also announced that the annual Pink Drive Campaign will take place in August at Nhlabatshe 4, Nhlabatshe 6, Mayflower, Dundonald and Emanzana health facilities.

The campaign will focus on screening and raising awareness of the five most common cancers affecting South Africans: breast, cervical, prostate, lung and skin cancer. Residents were encouraged to visit their nearest health facility for information on screening dates and available services.

Municipal officials said the outreach formed part of the municipality’s ongoing commitment to improving access to healthcare, strengthening partnerships with government departments and ensuring residents have a platform to raise service delivery concerns while receiving essential health information and support.



Some of the residents who attended the outreach.

DA slams conditions at Rob Ferreira Hospital

Patrick Mavimbela

The Democratic Alliance (DA) has raised serious concerns about conditions at Rob Ferreira Hospital, alleging that the facility has been without hot water for more than four years, forcing nurses to bathe patients with cold water, even during winter.

DA spokesperson on Health in the Mpumalanga Legislature, Bosman Grobler, said the party will write to the Office of the Health Ombud (OHSC), calling for Health MEC Sasekani Manzini to be held accountable for what it describes as systemic and critical failures at the hospital.

“Recently, the DA and the South African Human Rights Commission (SAHRC) conducted an oversight visit to the hospital after meeting with the CEO. We observed visitors bringing kettles to heat water so they could bathe and make tea for their relatives. When we asked why, staff members, who spoke to us on condition of anonymity, said the hospital has been without hot water for more than four years and that they have given up asking why. They have accepted it as normal, to the point where many of them bring their own kettles from home,” he said.

Grobler said the lack of hot water is only one of several challenges facing the hospital. He alleged that the facility is also struggling with severe staff shortages, long waiting times for patients and overcrowding, which some staff members claimed is worsened by undocumented immigrants seeking healthcare.

He further alleged that patients are

often forced to bring their own blankets, bed sheets and pillows because of a severe shortage of linen.

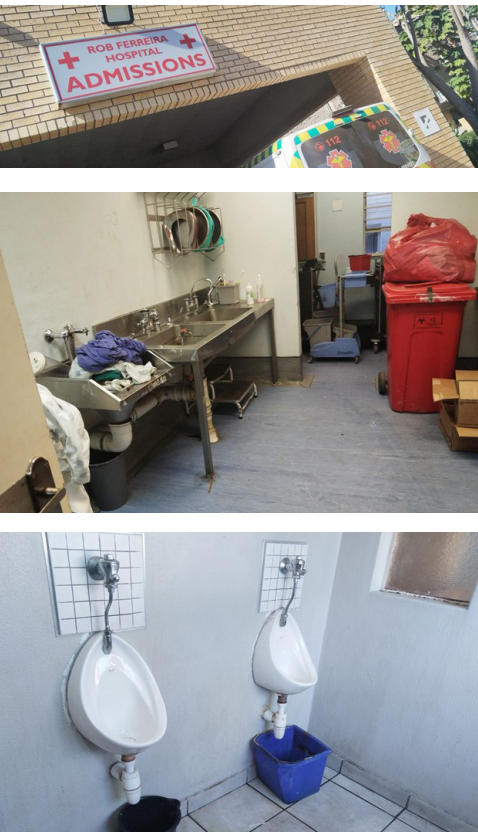
“Our oversight also found that the hospital has a shortage of beds, forcing nurses to use stretchers and wheelchairs as makeshift beds. Some patients are even given mattresses to sleep on the floor,” Grobler said.

He added that many toilets in the male, female and maternity wards are either not functioning or frequently have no running water. Some of the working toilets reportedly have no doors, forcing patients, including new mothers, to leave their babies unattended while searching for usable facilities elsewhere in the hospital.

“The inhumane conditions at Rob Ferreira Hospital compromise hygiene and place patients at risk. A hygiene-compromised environment can be fatal for patients recovering from surgery, those with chronic illnesses or people with weakened immune systems. We want the Health Ombud to intervene and hold MEC Manzini accountable for the systematic failures at the hospital,” he said.

Grobler said the DA also hopes the South African Human Rights Commission will pursue the matter further following the joint oversight visit, during which, he said, commissioners witnessed the conditions firsthand.

Mpumalanga Department of Health spokesperson Christopher Nobela said the department would verify the information and respond to the allegations. They only learned about the hospital failures from the DA statement.



DARDLEA empowers youth through smart farming and entrepreneurship

Gugu Mathebula

The Department of Agriculture, Rural Development, Land and Environmental Affairs (DARDLEA) is intensifying efforts to empower young people through modern farming, entrepreneurship, and strategic partnerships aimed at unlocking economic opportunities across Mpumalanga.

Speaking at the Departmental Youth Event held in Manzana under the Chief Albert Luthuli Municipality, MEC Khethiwe Moeketsi said the department is actively driving youth development by promoting smart and modern agricultural practices while creating pathways to financial literacy, business funding, and mental health support.

Moeketsi reaffirmed government's commitment to investing in young people through the Presidential Youth Employment Initiative and several other programmes designed to create sustainable livelihoods and stimulate economic participation. "We are committed to ensuring that young people have access to the resources, skills, and opportunities they need to become successful entrepreneurs and future leaders in agriculture," she said. The event brought together several strategic partners who provided valuable



MEC Khethiwe Moeketsi with some of the young people from CALM.

information and services to help equip young people for success.

Old Mutual encouraged participants to take charge of their financial futures through proper planning, budgeting, and financial discipline. The Departments of Social Development and Health addressed the importance of mental health and wellness, highlighting the need for young people to prioritise their emotional and psychological well-being while pursuing their personal and professional goals.

The National Youth Development Agency (NYDA) urged aspiring entrepreneurs to take advantage of its grant funding opportunities for start-up businesses and encouraged them to submit

applications through its online ERP platform.

Youth in Agriculture and Rural Development inspired attendees to explore farming as a viable business opportunity, encouraging them to establish their own agricultural enterprises and contribute to rural economic growth.

The event concluded with a strong message that young people must become innovators rather than spectators. Agriculture was highlighted as one of the country's most powerful tools for job creation, food security, and rural development, offering youth the opportunity to become leaders in transforming the sector and building sustainable communities.

Youth encouraged to embrace entrepreneurship at Mpuluzi dialogue

Nompumelo Mkhwanazi

Young people in Chief Albert Luthuli Municipality were encouraged to embrace entrepreneurship and take advantage of available government support programmes during the Youth Employment Dialogue held in Mpu-luzi on June 24. The event brought together government officials, aspiring entrepreneurs and business owners to share information and opportunities aimed at empowering young people economically. Representing the Local Economic Development (LED) Unit of Chief Albert Luthuli Municipality, MP Sithole delivered a presentation focusing on co-operatives, small businesses and the Spaza Shop Programme.

The presentation highlighted the importance of establishing compliant co-operatives and local businesses to enable young entrepreneurs to access government funding opportunities, training programmes and other forms of support. Sithole emphasised that entrepreneurship remains one of the key drivers of economic growth



Bongani Maseko from Fernie Furniture Makers.

and job creation, particularly among young people.

Through information sharing and collaboration, participants were equipped with knowledge on how to start, register and sustain successful businesses while taking advantage of available government initiatives. The dialogue also featured inspiring testimonies from local entrepreneurs who shared their journeys of building successful businesses despite various challenges.

Mandlenkosi Nkosi spoke about how he established and grew his Catering and Decor business, highlighting the importance of perseverance, hard work and dedication. He encouraged young people to believe

in their ideas and take the first step towards becoming entrepreneurs. Bongani Maseko of Fernie Furniture Makers also shared the story of how the business started and developed into a sustainable enterprise. He urged young people to make use of the support structures and funding opportunities provided by government institutions and development agencies. The entrepreneurs encouraged attendees to view entrepreneurship as a viable career path capable of creating employment opportunities for themselves and others within their communities.

Their stories demonstrated that with determination, commitment and access to the right support, young people can build sustainable businesses and contribute meaningfully to local economic development and job creation. The Youth Employment Dialogue forms part of ongoing efforts by the municipality and its partners to address youth unemployment by providing information, skills and opportunities that enable young people to participate actively in the economy.

Mpumalanga records 75 road fatalities as MEC calls for safer driving

Kgabu Mahlatji

Mpumalanga recorded 75 fatalities from various road crashes between 1 April and 31 May 2026, prompting renewed calls for responsible road use as schools prepare to close for the winter holidays.



MEC for DCSSL Jackie Macie.

According to statistics released by the Department of Community Safety, Security and Liaison, (DCSSL) 61 of the deceased were men, while 14 were women. Of the 61 male victims, 24 were drivers, 17 were passengers and 20 were pedestrians.

The figures have raised concerns about the role of human behaviour in road crashes, with authorities emphasizing that most accidents are preventable.

In response to the alarming statistics, MEC for DCSSL Jackie Macie, has appealed to all road users to remain vigilant and obey traffic laws during the busy travel period. Macie particularly called on men to take responsibility and lead by example on the roads.

"Men should help save lives on the road by obeying the rules, sticking to the applicable speed limits and not drinking and driving," he said.

The MEC noted that men, as leaders within families and communities, have an important role to play in promoting safer driving habits and encouraging responsible behaviour among other road users.

The call comes as thousands of learners prepare to begin their school holidays on Friday, a period that traditionally sees increased traffic volumes on major routes across the province.

MTPA launches tourism safety and clean-up campaign in Hazyview

Nompumelelo Mkhwanazi

The Mpumalanga Tourism and Parks Agency (MTPA) successfully hosted its Tourism Safety Campaign and Environmental Clean-Up Initiative at the Sanibona-

Mpumalanga's tourism economy. A clean and safe destination keeps tourists staying longer. The public must understand that the arrival of every 10 tourists creates one job. Tourism is a key economic driver in the Mpumalanga Province," said



The MTPA and its stakeholder who attended the clean-up-campaign.

ni Resort Hotel and Spa in Hazyview on June 30. The launch brought together key stakeholders to promote responsible tourism, environmental sustainability, and community participation.

The campaign was attended by representatives from the tourism industry, the Kruger Lowveld Chamber of Business and Tourism (KLCBT), SANParks, the Sabi Sand Nature Reserve, traditional leaders (Amakhosi), church leaders, community members, and government officials.

Addressing delegates, MTPA Interim Board Chairperson Fish Mahlalela stressed the importance of maintaining clean and safe tourism destinations to improve visitors' experiences and strengthen

Mahlalela.

He also appealed to taxi associations to play an active role in keeping the province clean by discouraging littering during travel. Mahlalela encouraged taxi operators to provide bins or refuse bags inside their vehicles to promote responsible waste disposal among passengers. Mahlalela said the participation of tourism stakeholders, traditional leaders, faith-based organisations, communities, and government institutions is essential in influencing positive behaviour and promoting tourism safety, environmental cleanliness, and responsible tourism practices.

He further encouraged the tourism sector to embrace modern technology, including artificial intelligence, to

improve service delivery and strengthen the industry's competitiveness. „We need to embrace technology, including artificial intelligence (AI), to improve our effectiveness in the tourism sector. Communities must also be actively involved and recognise the value of tourism. We must create an environment where local communities benefit from tourism," he said.

Stakeholders welcomed the initiative and pledged their support for ongoing efforts to ensure that Mpumalanga remains one of South Africa's leading tourism destinations. The MTPA announced that it will roll out a series of follow-up initiatives, including community dialogues aimed at promoting tourism safety and environmental cleanliness across



Some of the stakeholders who assistant in cleaning.

the province. These programmes are expected to strengthen partnerships with communities while enhancing Mpumalanga's reputation as a safe, clean, and attractive destination for both domestic and international visitors.

Premier pauses adviser appointment amid SIU probe



Mduzi Vilakazi.

Kgabu Mahlatji

Premier Mandla Ndlovu has suspended the proposed appointment of former Mpumalanga Tourism and Parks Agency (MTPA) CEO Mduzi Vilakazi as a special adviser following concerns linked to an ongoing Special Investigating Unit (SIU) investigation into procurement at the agency.

The spokesperson for the Office of the Premier George Mthethwa, confirmed that the recruitment process had been halted pending the outcome of verification processes and legal checks after concerns were raised about Vilakazi's tenure at the MTPA. The SIU is currently investigating alleged tender irregularities and procurement-related matters at the agency as part of a broader probe into governance and accountability within provincial entities. The decision to pause the appointment was a precautionary measure and should not be interpreted as a finding of wrongdoing against Vilakazi," „The integrity of appointments to the Office of the Premier is paramount, and no appointment can proceed while matters of this nature remain unresolved," Mthethwa said.

The Office of the Premier confirmed that no final decision on Vilakazi's appointment will be taken until the SIU has concluded its investigation and the necessary verification processes have been completed. Meanwhile the decision has drawn mixed reactions. Civil society organisations and opposition parties welcomed the move, saying it demonstrates a commitment to transparency and accountability in public appointments. They argued that senior officials entrusted with advising the premier should be free from any unresolved concerns that could undermine public confidence.

Others, however, cautioned against equating an investigation with guilt. Supporters of Vilakazi maintained that he remains innocent unless proven otherwise and that the suspension of his appointment should not prejudice the outcome of the SIU investigation.

240 illegal immigrants arrested in Mpumalanga



Some of the police officers who was part of the Operational Shanela.

Mpumalanga police arrested 240 illegal immigrants during intensified enforcement operations targeting immigration-related offences and cross-border crime.

According to Mpumalanga police spokesperson Sergeant Thulisile Magagula, the arrests were made during Operation Shanela II, which was conducted across the province from June 25 to 28 in collaboration with various government departments and law enforcement agencies.

The operation also led to numerous arrests for serious, violent and economic crimes, including murder,

rape, assault, illegal liquor trading, drug-related offences, driving under the influence, possession of explosives, and firearms-related offences. Several wanted suspects were also traced and arrested for priority crimes," she said.

Magagula said the integrated operation included high-visibility patrols, roadblocks, vehicle checkpoints, searches of persons, vehicles and premises, as well as inspections of businesses, farms, mines and liquor outlets. Several unlicensed liquor outlets were also shut down during the operation.

During the operation, members

also recovered illicit drugs, firearms and explosive components, counterfeit goods, illegal cigarettes, copper cables and precious metals, underscoring the impact of the operation on organised and economic crime," she said.

Magagula commended all participating departments and law enforcement partners for their coordinated efforts in ensuring the success of Operation Shanela II, adding that the operation continues to strengthen police visibility and enhance public safety across Mpumalanga.



Some of the illicit products that was recovered.



Dr Mathews Phosa and Premier Mandla Ndlovu with provincial government officials during a high-level engagement on tourism investment opportunities in Mpumalanga.

Premier Ndlovu, Dr Phosa explore tourism investment opportunities

Patrick Mavimbela

Premier Mandla Ndlovu recently hosted former Premier of Mpumalanga, Dr Mathews Phosa, for a high-level engagement focused on exploring investment opportunities that will strengthen the province’s tourism sector and stimulate economic growth.

The discussions centred on leveraging Mpumalanga’s vast tourism potential to attract local and international investment, boost economic activity, and create sustainable employment opportunities for communities across the province.

Recognised for its world-renowned natural attractions, rich cultural heritage and strategic geographical location, Mpumalanga is well positioned to become a leading global tourism destination. During the engagement, Dr Phosa highlighted these competitive advantages, noting that the province has enormous potential to attract investors and visitors from around the world.

Dr Phosa’s continued involvement in the province’s development reflects his enduring commitment to

the growth and prosperity of Mpumalanga. His contribution reinforces a shared vision of positioning the province as a globally competitive tourism destination that delivers inclusive economic benefits.

Premier Ndlovu reaffirmed the provincial government’s commitment to creating an enabling environment that encourages investment, supports business growth and unlocks new economic opportunities.

“Through strategic partnerships and sustained engagement with stakeholders, the province continues to pursue opportunities that will strengthen the tourism sector, diversify the economy and create meaningful jobs, while contributing to the long-term prosperity of the province and its people,” said Premier Ndlovu.

The engagement forms part of the provincial government’s broader efforts to harness tourism as a key driver of economic development. By fostering collaboration with experienced leaders and strategic partners, the government aims to maximise Mpumalanga’s tourism assets, attract new investment and build a resilient economy that benefits all residents.

Mpumalanga strengthens UK trade and investment ties

Kgabu Mahlatji

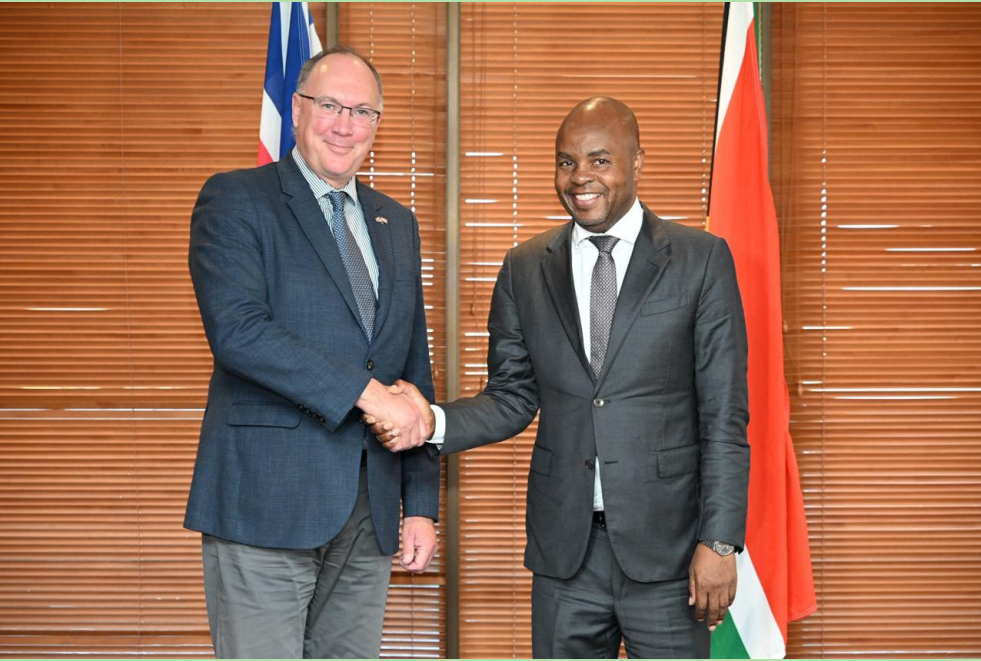
Premier of Mpumalanga, Mandla Ndlovu, hosted the British High Commissioner to South Africa, Antony Phillipson, and his delegation during a high-level engagement focused on strengthening trade and investment relations between Mpumalanga and the United Kingdom.

The meeting, held on June 24 at the Mpumalanga Government Complex, was attended by Members of the Executive Council (MECs), Director-General Maggie Skosana, and Heads of Departments. It formed part of Premier Ndlovu’s ongoing efforts to strengthen strategic partnerships with international investors

with significant potential for collaboration, describing Mpumalanga as a strategic partner capable of supporting the United Kingdom’s investment ambitions in South Africa.

Discussions also focused on unlocking investment opportunities linked to the just energy transition and the broader green economy. Ndlovu emphasised that the province is committed to ensuring that the transition to a low-carbon economy creates meaningful opportunities for communities, small businesses, and emerging entrepreneurs.

Ndlovu thanked the United Kingdom for its continued interest and confidence in Mpumalanga and reaffirmed the provincial government’s commitment to creating an enabling



Antony Phillipson, and Mandla Ndlovu.

and development partners to drive economic growth and job creation in the province.

Ndlovu described the visit as a reflection of the longstanding friendship and cooperation between South Africa and the United Kingdom. He said the relationship continues to thrive through trade, investment, education, and cultural exchange, while reaffirming that Mpumalanga remains an attractive and secure destination for investors.

The Premier assured the delegation that investments in the province are protected and continue to deliver positive returns.

“I called for the continuation and expansion of existing United Kingdom investments, stressing that the partnership between Mpumalanga and the UK should be elevated to unlock greater opportunities for mutual growth,” he said.

Ndlovu also highlighted tourism, agriculture, renewable energy, and skills development as key sectors

environment for sustainable investment.

He said the provincial government remains focused on building strategic partnerships that will stimulate economic growth, create employment opportunities, and improve the lives of the people of Mpumalanga through inclusive and sustainable development.

Meanwhile, Phillipson outlined several areas for enhanced cooperation, including expanding export opportunities for Mpumalanga-produced goods such as citrus to the United Kingdom, strengthening university exchange programmes through scholarship opportunities for South African students, and continuing collaboration on the green transition.

“These priorities build on the strong partnership between South Africa and the United Kingdom, which already spans economic growth, climate action, health, science and innovation, and the digital economy,” he said.

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Mpumalanga Voices Soar as Schools Shine on Day One of National Choral Eisteddfod

Thapelo Nkosi

The National ABC Motsepe South African Schools Choral Eisteddfod unfolded as a spectacular celebration of talent, harmony and cultural excellence, with Mpumalanga’s learners delivering memorable performances that earned national recognition and filled the province with pride. The opening day featured breathtaking performances from exceptionally gifted learners whose voices resonated with passion, discipline and hope. Choirs from across South Africa took to the stage, demonstrating the power of music to inspire, unite and celebrate the country’s rich cultural diversity.

Mpumalanga emerged as one of the standout provinces, with Grootboom Primary School from eKulindeni being crowned National Champions in the Sextet Category for Farm and Small Schools. The prestigious title reflects the school’s unwavering commitment to musical excellence and the dedication of its learners, educators and coaches, whose hard work has culminated in national success.

Adding to the province’s celebrations, Njanji Primary School from Mkhuhlu in Bushbuckridge conquered the Mixed Choirs (African) category to claim the national championship. The remarkable

achievement is a testament to the school’s passion for choral music and its commitment to nurturing young musical talent.

Basizeni Secondary School from eMbalenhle also delivered an exceptional performance that left a lasting impression on adjudicators and audiences alike. Although not crowned champions, the school’s powerful presentation showcased the depth of musical talent within Mpumalanga and earned widespread admiration.

Throughout the day, Mpumalanga’s choirs performed with confidence, pride and determination, carrying the hopes and dreams of the province onto the national stage. Their performances reflected not only outstanding vocal ability but also teamwork, discipline and a deep appreciation for South Africa’s rich musical heritage.

As the curtain fell on an unforgettable opening day, every participating learner and school had contributed to a vibrant showcase of South African choral excellence. The performances served as a reminder that music has the unique ability to inspire, unite and uplift communities while providing young people with a platform to develop their talents and pursue excellence.

The Mpumalanga Department of Education congratulated Grootboom Primary School, Njanji



Njanji Primary School.



Grootboom primary school.

Primary School, Basizeni Secondary School and all participating schools for representing the province with distinction.

Their achievements continue to inspire learners across Mpumalanga

and reaffirm the province’s reputation as a home of exceptional young musical talent. They sang with pride. They sang with heart. They sang for Mpumalanga.

Anti-smoking council warns of ongoing tobacco industry influence

Thapelo Nkosi

The National Council Against Smoking (NCAS) has launched the 2025 South Africa Tobacco Industry Interference (TII) Index, warning that the tobacco industry continues to exert significant influence on public policy and calling on government to strengthen measures that protect health policies from commercial interference.

The report, endorsed by the NCAS and the Africa Centre for Tobacco Industry Monitoring and Policy Research (ATIM) at the University of Pretoria, found that South Africa’s Tobacco Industry Interference score remains unchanged at 64. The score reflects persistent tobacco industry influence and insuffi-

cient implementation of measures required under Article 5.3 of the World Health Organization Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (WHO FCTC).

According to the report, South Africa has consistently recorded a score above 60 since the index was introduced, indicating that tobacco companies and their affiliates continue to influence policymaking through lobbying, misleading economic arguments, delays to tobacco control legislation, and efforts to shape public opinion on tobacco and nicotine products.

NCAS Executive Director Professor Lekan Ayo-Yusuf said the findings show that tobacco industry interference remains deeply entrenched despite South Africa’s international commitments to protect public

health. He also expressed concern over the government’s failure to ratify the Protocol to Eliminate Illicit Trade in Tobacco Products and the repeated delays in introducing comprehensive tobacco control legislation.

The report recommends urgent action, including ratifying the protocol, adopting a code of conduct governing interactions between public officials and the tobacco industry, improving transparency around engagements with the industry, and finalising legislation regulating tobacco and vaping products.

NCAS and its partners in the Protect Our Next campaign welcomed Parliament’s Portfolio Committee on Health’s support for the desirability of the Tobacco Products and Elec-

tronic Delivery Systems Control Bill. Professor Catherine Egbe of the South African Medical Research Council warned that continued delays in updating tobacco legislation could reverse progress in reducing tobacco use, particularly among young people who are increasingly targeted through the marketing of nicotine products.

The proposed Bill aims to modernise South Africa’s tobacco laws by regulating emerging nicotine products, restricting advertising, strengthening protection against second-hand smoke, and preventing young people from taking up smoking and vaping. Public health advocates say its adoption is essential to reducing tobacco industry influence and safeguarding public health.



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All Blacks Crowned Let Them Dance Top 4 tournament champions

Freddy Mpangane

The All Blacks FC emerged as worthy champions of the under 17 Let Them Dance Top 6 Tournament after producing a flawless run of victories at the Kromdraai Sports Ground on July 01.

The tournament showcased exciting football action, with local teams battling for top honours in a series of closely contested knockout matches.

All Blacks began their successful campaign with a hard-fought 1-0 victory over Junior Argentina in the opening round. The narrow win secured their place in the semi-finals, where they continued their impressive form by defeating Cameroon 1-0 to book a place in the championship final.

The final proved to be another tightly contested affair as All Blacks faced Ajax, who had reached the decider after overcoming Ravens 2-0 in their semi-final clash. Despite Ajax's

determined performance, All Blacks maintained their defensive discipline and capitalised on their opportunity to claim another 1-0 victory, sealing the tournament title.

One of the tournament's most dramatic encounters came in the quarter-finals, where Rebels and Cameroon played to a thrilling 1-1 draw before Cameroon edged the contest 5-4 in a penalty shootout to progress.

Throughout the tournament, All Blacks demonstrated consistency,

defensive resilience and clinical finishing, winning all three of their matches by a single-goal margin without conceding a goal.

Their unbeaten run earned them the Let Them Dance Top 6 Tournament championship, capping off a memorable day of community football at the Kromdraai Sports Ground. The competition once again highlighted the abundance of local talent and provided entertaining football for supporters who gathered to witness the exciting matches.

