



Media Excellence Takes Centre Stage in Pretoria

By **Staff Reporter**

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WORD FROM THE EDITOR

"Journalism is what we need to make democracy work." – Walter Cronkite



By Akhona Valashiya

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Welcome to Student Living SA! April is always a month of reflection and celebration - and in this issue, we're embracing both. As graduation season sweeps across campuses, we honour the hard work and resilience that carried so many young South Africans to the finish line. These moments are more than ceremonies - they're milestones of possibility.

At the same time, we tackle the VAT debate and

what a potential increase could mean for students already stretched thin (thank God it's been postponed). It's a reminder that policy and everyday life are deeply connected, and your voice in these conversations matters.

But it's not all policy and protest - we're shining the light on young people doing incredible things for charity, proving that generosity and community spirit are alive and well. In the spirit of Freedom Month, we also reflect on what it means to be free as a South African

youth today - and the responsibilities that come with that freedom.

This issue is a celebration of young people showing up, speaking out, and reaching higher. We hope it informs, inspires, and energises you.

Thank you for reading - and if a story moves you, let us know. Your feedback fuels our mission to tell stories that matter.

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Student Living South Africa, a MeD8 Media publication, fully supports media freedom as a key part of the right to freedom of expression guaranteed in Section 16 of the South African Constitution. We believe that students and all citizens have the right to receive and share information, ideas, and opinions freely. This is essential for informed decision-making, active citizenship, and growing a deeper understanding between people in our country.

Freedom of expression supports and protects other rights that are necessary for a democratic society where everyone enjoys equality, dignity, and freedom. As a publication that serves the youth and student community, we understand the responsibility we carry in keeping our readers informed, empowered and connected to the world around them. We pledge to report the truth and to always strive for accuracy, fairness, and balance in our journalism. We will investigate and expose abuses of power - whether political, social, commercial or economic - with courage and an unwavering commitment to the truth. We will remain independent, and not serve any interest group other than our readers and the broader student community across South Africa. We take seriously our role as a watchdog, especially for those who may not have a voice, and we will always reflect a diversity of opinions and experiences in the content we publish. We are committed to upholding the values of the Constitution and will follow the South African Press Code in all our work.

This pledge is our commitment to ethical journalism, in service of a more informed, active and united youth.

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Walter Sisulu University Student Murder Case Postponed.



The murder case against 54-year-old residence manager Manelisi Mampane, accused of fatally shooting Walter Sisulu University student Sisonke Mbolekwa, has been postponed to May 2 for a formal bail application.

Mampane made his first court appearance on Tuesday afternoon in the Mthatha Magistrate's Court. The shooting happened last week during a student protest over poor conditions in NSFAS-accredited residences. Three other students were injured, and Mampane's vehicle was torched.

Media were barred from recording the proceedings due to the case's sensitive nature, although the State did

not oppose media coverage. Outside the court, WSU students protested, demanding Mampane be denied bail.

An independent inquiry led by retired Justice Chris Jafta will investigate the incident and whether any failures occurred on the part of students or university officials.

In a separate case, the Mthatha High Court rejected WSU's attempt to evict protesting students. Judge Mbulelo Jolwana instead issued an interdict preventing evictions and further damage to property, stating that eviction should be a last resort.



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STUDENTLIVING SA



SADTU to March Against Austerity in Education

The South African Democratic Teachers' Union (SADTU) is scheduled to lead a national protest in Pretoria today, Wednesday, 23 April 2025, to oppose austerity measures affecting public education. The march will head to the offices of National Treasury, the Department of Basic Education, and the Department of Higher Education and Training.

According to SADTU, persistent budget cuts are undermining the quality of education and threatening the future of public schooling in South Africa.

"We cannot stand by while funding for public education continues to shrink," said SADTU General Secretary Dr. Mugwena Maluleke. "These austerity measures are not just numbers on a spreadsheet—they affect classrooms, teachers, and most importantly, our learners." The union warned that reduced state funding is paving the way for the privatisation of education, which it says will widen inequality and limit access

to quality schooling for the majority.

The protest forms part of a global campaign under the theme "Go Public! Fund Education," led by Education International, an international federation of teachers' unions.

SADTU also plans to use the march to demand stronger action from government to tackle corruption, recover lost funds through illicit financial flows, and hold tax-evading multinational corporations accountable.

"We believe that if government plugs the leaks in the system—corruption, tax evasion, and financial mismanagement—we can redirect those resources to strengthen our public education," said Maluleke.

The union is calling on parents, civil society organisations, and all progressive forces to join the march and show solidarity.

"This is not just SADTU's fight," Maluleke added. "It's a fight for every child in South Africa to access quality, well-funded public education."

Media Excellence Takes Centre Stage in Pretoria.



By **Tumelo Matlala**

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The National Press Club, Lebone Litho printers media and North West University celebrated excellence in journalism and outstanding work of communicators on Friday 25 April at the Center for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) convention in Pretoria. This prestigious award event was under the theme: "2024 newsmakers and journalist of the year."

This glitz and glam ceremony, honoured the outstanding work of journalists and communicators who have made significant contributions to the media and communications industry.

The awards were sponsored by the North-West University and Lebone Litho Printers. These awards were about honouring journalists and communicators who dedicate their lives to the pursuit of truth and the art of storytelling.

News 24's Sikonathi Mantshantsha scooped the National Press Club-North-West University (NWU) overall Journalist of the Year award. He won a cash prize of R115 000 from this category, sponsored by the North West University. This is in addition to the R30 000 from the Print/Online: Features/Investigative Journalism category he also won.

The government of national unity (GNU) was awarded the 2024 National Press Club Newsmaker of the Year. This accolade was a testament to the significant media coverage and profound impact the GNU has had in the past year. The award was received by the deputy minister in the presidency Kenneth Morolong.

The National Press Club Acting

Chairperson, Antoinette Slabbert said: "As the NPC, we are absolutely elated to witness the continuation and impact of our annual awards that celebrate the remarkable achievements of our media workers. These awards not only honour their hard work and dedication but also recognise the crucial role that spokespersons play within the media ecosystem."

The spirit of journalism thrives on the principles of accuracy, fairness, and integrity and these awards are about recognising individuals who embraced these principles while cognizant of the role the fourth estate plays in our democracy.

"We are living in an age where content is abundant, but clarity is scarce. Information flows at the speed of light, yet truth often struggles to keep pace. The noise of misinformation is loud, the silence of disengaged citizens even louder. This is why the work of journalists, their editorial discernment, investigative tenacity, and public interest framing, is more critical than ever," said Prof Daryl Balia, NWU Deputy vice-Chancellor for Information Technology and Potchefstroom Campus Operations.

The following winners of the 2024 Newsmaker & Journalist of the Year were each awarded a pocket of R30 000 with different categories;

Category 1 – Print/ Online: News: Norman Masungwini- City Press

Category 2 – Print/Online: Features/ Investigative Journalism: Sikonathi Mantshantsha- New24 Investigations

Category 3 – Print/ Online: Photojournalist: Felix Dlangamandla -Daily Maverick

Category 4 – Radio: News: Chanel September -Jacaranda FM

Category 5 – Radio: Features: Chanel September -Jacaranda FM

Category 6 – TV: News: Yusuf Abramjee eNCA

Category 7 – TV: Features/ In-Depth: Kate Berry- Carte Blanche

Category 8 – TV: Cameraperson: Lee Saunders- The Devi Show, eTV & eNCA

Category 9 – Community News: Print / Online: Dimakatso Modipa- Tshwane Talks

Category 11: Media Liaison Officer/ Communications Officer/ Spokesperson of the Year: Athlenda Mathe SAPS.

"We celebrate the sterling work done by all our winners, especially Sikonathi Mantshantsha who scooped the first prize for his sterling journalism work. The spokesperson of the year category seeks to recognise communicators who reflect excellence, outstanding in communication skills, accessibility, helpfulness and we believe that in Athlenda Mathe, SAPS communications is in steady hands," concluded Antoinette Slabbert.

Health & Wellness



Master Your Emotions, Maximise Your Tertiary Experience

By Staff Reporter

 news@studentlivingsa.co.za

College can be amazing—but let's be real, it can also be a lot. Between classes, deadlines, social life, and personal growth, it is normal to feel emotionally stretched. That's why emotional regulation is so important.

What Is Emotional Regulation?

Emotional regulation is your ability to recognize, understand, and manage your emotions—especially when things get stressful. It's not about suppressing how you feel; it's about learning how to respond, not just react.

For example, if a taxi driver cuts in front of you and nearly causes an accident, your heart rate might spike, and you might feel anger rising ("letting off steam"). With good emotional regulation, you can calm yourself quickly after assessing the situation—recognizing you're safe now and getting angry won't help.

When we're dysregulated, however, we struggle to calm down. Our bodies stay in survival mode, responding to the threat long after it's passed. You might still feel angry hours later, replaying the incident in your mind during class or while trying to study.

The same applies when your professor returns that paper with a lower grade than expected. Emotional regulation helps you take a deep breath, assess the feedback

constructively, and plan to improve—rather than spiralling into self-doubt.

Why It Matters

Your brain's emotional centers can sometimes override your rational thinking when you're stressed. That's biology at work! Emotional regulation techniques help your prefrontal cortex (the thinking part of your brain) stay online when emotions run high.

This leads to:

- **Better focus when life feels chaotic**
- **Improved mental health and reduced stress**
- **Stronger relationships with friends and classmates**
- **Faster recovery from setbacks and disappointments**

Build Your Emotional Toolkit

Here are some practical techniques to help you regulate your emotions:

Pause + Breathe: Before responding to that frustrating text or disappointing grade, take 60 seconds to breathe deeply. Count to four as you inhale, hold for four, and exhale for six. This simple practice activates your parasympathetic nervous system, helping you calm down physically.

Reframe Your Thinking:

Shift from "I'm failing this course" to "I'm figuring out which study methods work best for me." This cognitive reframing helps you see challenges as opportunities rather than threats.

Move Your Body: When anxiety builds before a big presentation, take a 10-minute walk outside. Physical movement helps process stress hormones and shifts your mental state. Even stretching at your desk can help reset your mood.

Journal It Out: Set a timer for five minutes and write without stopping about what you're feeling. Getting thoughts on paper helps create distance between you and overwhelming emotions.

Talk to Someone: Whether it's a trusted friend, family member, or campus counselor, sharing your struggles lightens their weight. Your university likely offers free counseling services—taking advantage of them is a sign of strength, not weakness.

Practice Makes Progress

If you've been feeling off lately—moody, drained, or just stuck—it could be your mind's way of saying, "Hey, I need a break." The good news? Emotional regulation is a skill you can build—and the more

you practice, the easier it gets.

Remember that everyone struggles with emotions sometimes. The difference is in how you respond when they arise. With practice and patience, you can learn to ride emotional waves instead of being swept away by them.

Your college experience isn't just about what you learn in class—it's also about developing life skills that will serve you long after graduation. Emotional regulation might just be the most valuable skill you take with you.

Your mental health matters. If you need support, reach out to your campus counseling center. You've got this.

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Benjamin Dube Bids Farewell to Spirit of Praise



By **Staff Reporter**

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Renowned gospel singer and reverend, Benjamin Dube, has officially announced his departure from Spirit of Praise, the gospel ensemble he has anchored since its formation in 2008.

Taking to social media on Monday, Dube shared an emotional statement confirming the news. He described the decision as deeply personal and not taken lightly, explaining that it came after "prayer, reflection, and conversations with key stakeholders."

"For many years, Spirit of Praise has been a significant part of Reverend Dube's ministry," the statement read. "Through this platform, lives have been touched, worship

elevated, and the message of Christ spread across South Africa and beyond. But as seasons change, so do assignments."

Reverend Dube revealed that he will now focus on expanding his personal ministry, mentoring young gospel artists, and embarking on new projects aligned with his divine calling.

He also expressed heartfelt gratitude to Spirit Music Group, the Spirit of Praise team, and the ensemble's founders, Aubrey Peacock and Matthew Nkabinde. "Reverend Dube departs with nothing but love, honour, and profound appreciation in his heart," the statement concluded.

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Caps Off! Graduation Season Kicks Off Across Campuses

By **Staff Reporter**

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As the air fills with autumn leaves, one thing is certain: graduation season is upon us. Caps are being flung, gowns are being ironed, and hearts are bursting with pride. For students across the country, this time marks not just the end of an academic journey, but the beginning of something extraordinary, the beginning of a new chapter.

Whether you're earning a diploma, or collecting a degree, walking across that stage is a powerful milestone. It's a moment to reflect on early mornings, late-night study sessions, the friendships made, the hurdles jumped as well as the strength it took to get here.

Graduation is more than a ceremony. It's a celebration of resilience, dreams, and the unspoken moments of personal growth along the

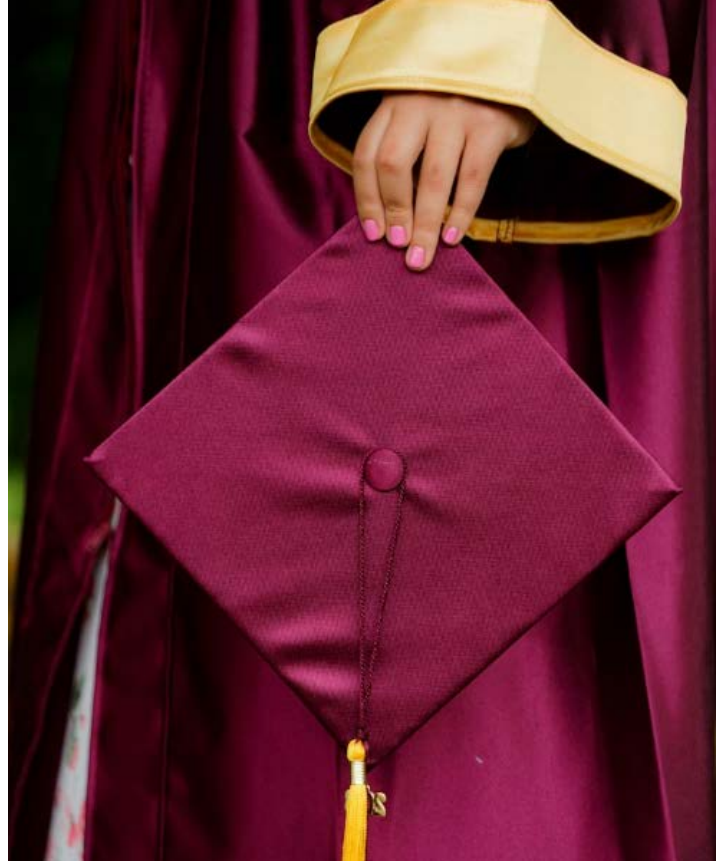
way. It's in the first time you set foot on campus, the tutor who saw potential in you, the tears cried in the library, the breakthroughs and the belly laughs in between deadlines.

Every graduate has a story. And this season, we honour them all — the quiet achievers, the comeback kids, the overcomers, and the late bloomers. You've earned this moment.

Now, as tassels are turned and new doors open, there's excitement and uncertainty in the air. But here's the thing: no one starts with all the answers. What matters is your willingness to keep showing up, to keep learning, and to keep believing in the magic of your own story.



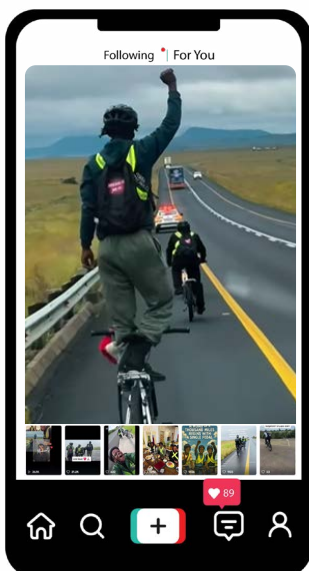
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GAUTA BMX COMPLETE THEIR JOURNEY TO CAPE TOWN FROM LIMPOPO

By **Zanele Makola**

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Three cyclists known as the Gauta BMX from Burgersford, Limpopo, arrived in Cape Town on Monday after completing a 1700-kilometre cycle journey they started on the 2nd of April to gather funds and sponsorship for their bike club.

Marabou Mokomo from Riba in Sekhukhune District, age 21, Mahlakwane Gauta from GA Mathabatha-Makgoba Capricorn District, age 22, and Ndo Maxwell from Vhembe, age 24, are the BMX cyclists who are driven by passion, tenacity and a spirit of unity.

Their campaign also aims to raise awareness about

Gender-Based Violence (GBV) and other social issues affecting South African communities. As they travelled across the country, they promoted awareness and collected donations. Many South Africans were impressed by their voyage and followed along on social media.

Morgan Mohlala, a Limpopo-based businessman donated to Gauta BMX, as well as brands including Huawei South Africa, Red bull and Jacaranda.

Award-winning producer DJ Karri, who has been with the young men for the whole journey, stated that while it was difficult for him even though

he was following by car, it was much more difficult for the young men on bikes.

"This is very special for these boys. I joined the boys on Monday and when I got there, I could see that they were about to give up but I told them, 'don't give up'. I also told them I would use my social media, we would get sponsors and... We have arrived! I had to emphasise the importance of finishing what they have started, it did not look possible but they made it possible," he explained.



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Soweto Derby Showdown: Pirates vs Chiefs in 2025 Nedbank Cup Final!



By **Staff Reporter**

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Get ready for a massive Soweto Derby in the Nedbank Cup final, two of South Africa's biggest football clubs — Orlando Pirates and Kaizer Chiefs — are set to face off in Durban on May 10, 2025 after both teams claimed dramatic semi-final wins on Sunday.

Pirates March Into a Third Straight Final

Orlando Pirates secured their spot in the final with a hard-fought 1-0 win over Marumo Gallants at Orlando Stadium. The winning goal

came from Kabelo Dlamini, who coolly slotted the ball into the bottom corner after receiving a sharp pass from Patrick Maswanganyi.

This win means Pirates have now reached three consecutive Nedbank Cup finals — a major milestone! If they win it again this year, they'll be the first club in the modern era to win the competition three times in a row.

Chiefs Break the Curse & Stun Sundowns

Kaizer Chiefs booked their final spot with a thrilling 2-1 comeback victory over

Mamelodi Sundowns at a sold-out Loftus Stadium. After Teboho Mokoena scored a world-class free-kick for Sundowns just before halftime, things looked tough for the AmaKhosi.

But Chiefs bounced back with a fire second-half performance! Wandile Duba, just 20 years old, scored his sixth goal of the tournament to level the score. And with just minutes left on the clock, Ashley du Preez smashed home the winner to send Chiefs fans into a frenzy.

This marks the first time since 2019 that Chiefs are

back in a Nedbank Cup final — and they'll be fighting to end a 10-year trophy drought, having last lifted silverware in 2015.

All Roads Lead to Durban

The final will be played at Moses Mabhida Stadium in Durban, promising fireworks as two of the country's most loved teams go head-to-head. Pirates want to make history. Chiefs wants redemption.

One game. One trophy. One epic Soweto Derby. Who are you backing?