



HM Pitje Stadium Collapses Under Weight of Neglect

By **Zanele Makola**

news@studentlivings.a.co.za

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INTERNATIONAL

President Ramaphosa to Visit U.S. for High-Stakes Meeting with President Trump



By **Akhona Valashiya**

news@studentlivingsa.co.za

President Cyril Ramaphosa will undertake a working visit to the United States of America from 19 to 22 May 2025, with a key meeting scheduled with U.S. President Donald Trump at the White House on Wednesday, 21 May.

According to a statement released by the South African Presidency on Wednesday, the leaders will engage in discussions on bilateral, regional, and global issues of mutual interest. The visit is being positioned as a critical opportunity to reset the strategic relationship between South Africa and the United States.

"President Ramaphosa will meet with President Donald Trump at the White House in Washington, DC to discuss bilateral, regional and global issues of interest," the Presidency confirmed.

The visit comes against the backdrop of growing tensions between the two nations. Earlier this week, the U.S. granted refugee status to 49 white Afrikaners, following President Trump's claims—widely discredited by international observers—that white farmers in South Africa are facing "genocide."

President Trump, who returned to office in January 2025, has

taken a hardline stance on South Africa's domestic and foreign policies. In February, he signed an executive order halting all U.S. funding to South Africa, citing his opposition to the country's land reform programme and its genocide case at the International Court of Justice (ICJ) against U.S. ally Israel.

This scheduled meeting will mark Trump's first official engagement with an African head of state since his return to office, highlighting its significance for both countries' diplomatic futures.

While the White House has not yet released an official statement about the meeting, diplomatic analysts suggest it could serve as a turning point in the strained relations between Washington and Pretoria.

South African officials see the trip as a chance to reaffirm key areas of cooperation, particularly in trade, investment, climate action, and regional stability. However, with heightened political sensitivities on both sides, observers are cautioning that the outcomes of the visit will depend heavily on the tone and substance of the White House meeting.

As President Ramaphosa prepares to engage in high-level talks in Washington, many South Africans will be watching closely, hoping that diplomacy will prevail over division.

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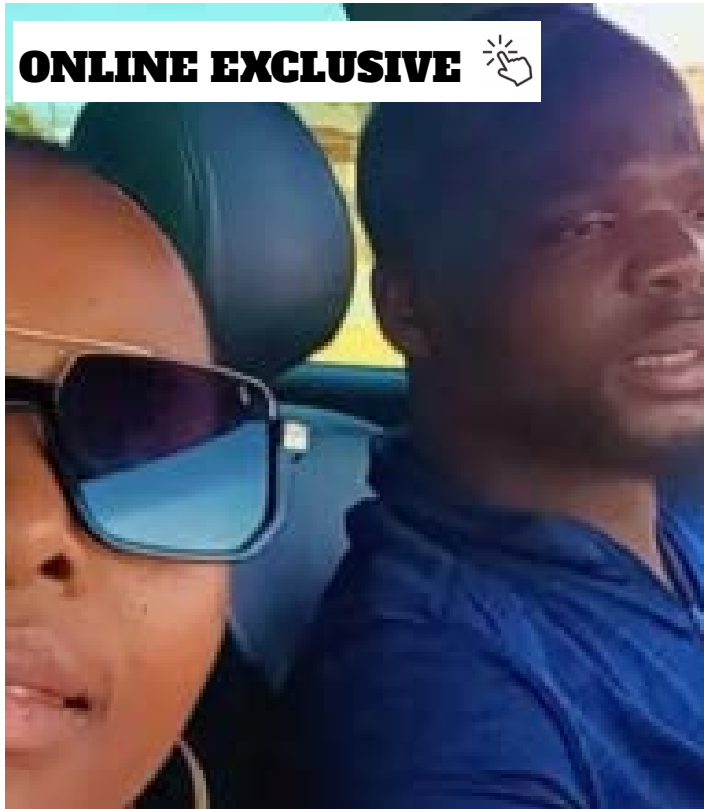


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Renowned Missing Journalist Aserie Ndlovu remains found

ONLINE EXCLUSIVE



By **Omphile Maebane and Zanele Makola**

news@studentlivingsa.co.za

On Thursday, May 8, the search for missing community journalist Sibusiso Aserie Ndlovu and his partner Zodwa Precious Mhluli, took a tragic turn when remains thought to be those of the couple were discovered during a police investigation. The couple disappeared under suspicious circumstances and have been missing since February 18th 2025.

Ndlovu, the founder of Capital Live SA 99.0 FM situated in Denlyn Mall, Mamelodi, was last seen leaving work, while Mhluli was last seen at their home in KwaMhlanga, Mpumalanga.

General Fannie Masemola, the National Commissioner of the South African Police Service (SAPS), told journalists that the two people's remains

will now be subjected to rigorous testing to determine their identities. "The process with the human remains we have found, they would be taken to the pathologists and we will take DNA, process it with the closest relatives, it might be one or two relatives to determine the identity of those remains. Then we can confirm that it is indeed them or not," explained Masemola, who was with the Police Minister Senzo Mchunu.

According to Masemola, one of the accused individuals pointed out the location of the remains. "One of the suspects did point out, not right there, but close enough. We then examined the area till we discovered the remains," he stated.

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From UK to Nkomazi: Chef Ngwenya

By **Rodger Mandhlazi**

news@studentlivingsa.co.za

Vincent Ngwenya, 34, from Nkomazi in Mpumalanga, is a shining example of resilience and entrepreneurship. A professional chef with over a decade of experience, including a stint at one of the top hotels in the UK, Ngwenya's life took an unexpected turn when he was retrenched during the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020.

Instead of letting the setback define him, Ngwenya used it as an opportunity to transform his passion for food into a business. With limited resources but an abundance of determination, he started making and selling homemade pizzas from his home. "I started this business in 2020 after being retrenched. That's why I call myself a product of COVID," he said.

Just three months into his venture, the demand for his pizzas grew, prompting him to move into a rented space where he now operates his fast-growing pizza business, Nkomazi Pizza.

Bringing a traditionally urban favourite like pizza to a rural area was no easy feat. Ngwenya faced skepticism from many in the community who doubted he would survive in a market that some believed was saturated and too competitive. But he remained undeterred.

Today, Nkomazi Pizza has not only gained popularity among locals but has also become a beacon of quality and taste in the area. The business has created three jobs so far — employing two bakers and one motorbike delivery driver. "By employing these people, that's the



least I can do in fighting unemployment, especially in my area," Ngwenya said in an interview.

Customers from far-flung parts of Nkomazi travel to get a taste of his beloved pizzas. For those who prefer convenience, orders can be placed via Facebook and WhatsApp, with deliveries made to their doorsteps.

Ngwenya's pizzas range from a modest R60 to his best-seller, the R180 "Heavyweight" triple-decker. His commitment to taste, quality, and customer satisfaction has earned him a loyal following.

Looking ahead, Ngwenya has big plans for Nkomazi Pizza. Over the next five years, he aims to open four additional branches in Nkomazi and one in Mbombela. This expansion is expected to not only grow his brand but also generate more employment and contribute to the local economy.

From a retrenched chef to a thriving business owner, Vincent Ngwenya's journey is an inspiring reminder that with passion, hard work, and a little bit of courage, it's possible to turn adversity into opportunity.

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HM Pitje Stadium Collapses Under Weight of Neglect and Wasted Opportunity



By **Zanele Makola**

 news@studentlivingsa.co.za



Once a proud symbol of sporting unity in Pretoria's township of Mamelodi, the HM Pitje Stadium has now become a cautionary tale of mismanagement, squandered resources, and broken promises.

Named after struggle stalwart Hezekiel Mothibe Pitje, the stadium was more than just a venue—it was a community landmark and the original home of Mamelodi Sundowns, one of South Africa's most decorated football clubs. With a capacity of 25,000 and a lush grass pitch, it had the potential to not only host major sporting events but to unite and uplift the people of Mamelodi through sport.

Yet today, the site at 113 Kubone Drive lies in ruin, having suffered years of neglect, poor planning, and lack of sustained vision.

The decline of HM Pitje began in the early 2000s, with significant deterioration setting in by 2005. In a bid to restore the facility, the City of Tshwane invested approximately R140 million in a 2009 upgrade. The intention was to modernise the stadium to meet both South African Football Association (SAFA) and FIFA standards.

Despite the hefty investment, the stadium remained under-utilised. No major matches or regular events were hosted post-renovation. Instead, it stood idle—earning the derisive nickname “white elephant”—as maintenance faltered and management failed to provide strategic direction.

Several reasons were cited for the stadium's decline, including inadequate access routes and insufficient parking facilities. These logistical hurdles made it unsuitable for high-attendance events. Meanwhile, Mamelodi Sundowns had already moved to larger venues like Loftus Versfeld, effectively abandoning their original home ground.

Critics say the heart of the problem was a lack of long-term planning and accountability from the City of Tshwane. The absence of a viable operational strategy after the 2009 revamp raised red flags about how public funds were being used—and wasted.

In February 2024, the Gauteng provincial government announced that HM Pitje Stadium would be demolished due to irreparable structural damage. The cost of demolition was pegged between R84 and R87 million—a figure that sparked public outrage given the R140 million spent on renovations just 15 years prior.

“We as a community do not approve of the amount that's been discussed to renew the stadium,” said Immelda Mokoba, a local community leader. “We appreciate the stadium, but our community is facing a lot of economic problems that are our priority at this moment. Let that money be redirected to shelter for our needs as a community.”

Despite the discontent, plans are now underway to construct a new, state-of-the-art facility on the same site. The proposed stadium would seat 30,000 with space for an additional 15,000 standing spectators. It's envisioned as a world-class venue that

exceeds FIFA and SAFA standards—one that could bring Mamelodi Sundowns back to their roots and reinvigorate community pride.

On social media platform X, fans have expressed excitement, calling for the stadium to become “The Brazilians” official home once more.

But optimism is tempered by deep scepticism.

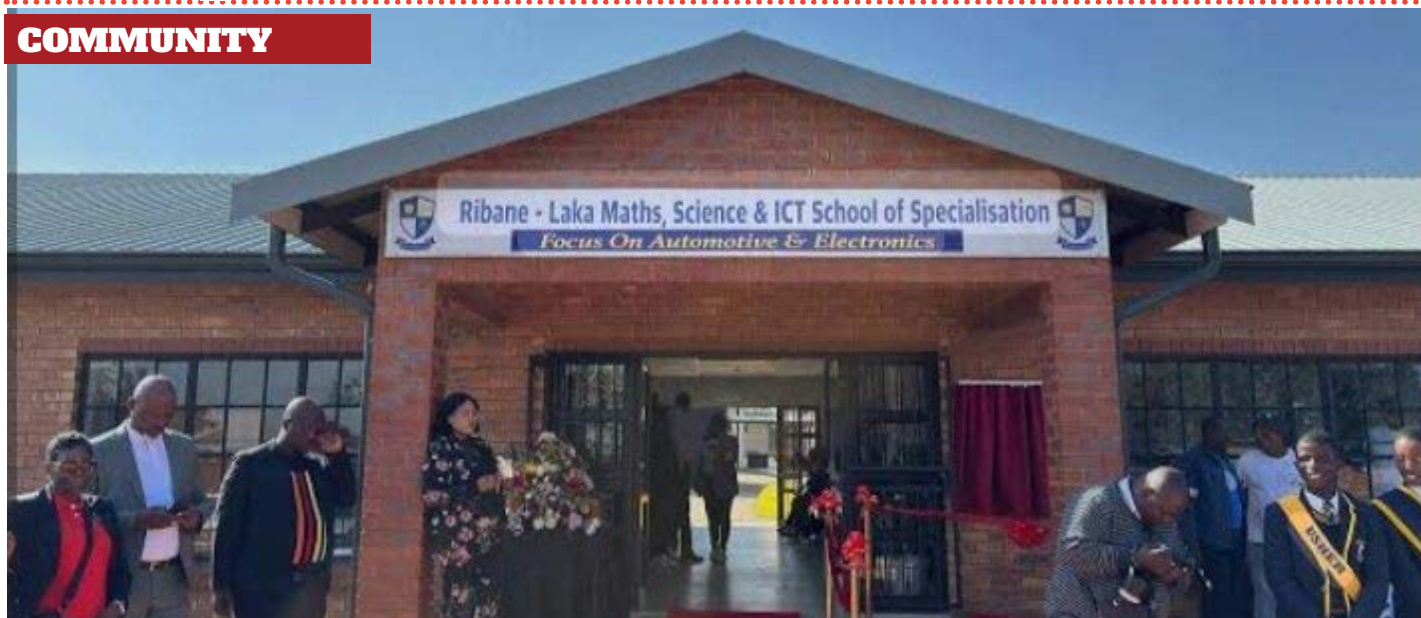
The reconstruction remains in the planning stages, with no confirmed timeline or budget. While the City of Tshwane has promised transparency and community consultation, residents remain wary of another cycle of broken promises.

“At this point, we stand by hope that promises will turn into reality,” said Sam Sibiya, a lifelong Mamelodi resident. “There are a couple of unfinished projects in Mamelodi that were promised years ago. Some are still in the same state. I really hope the stadium is fixed—we need something to be proud of.”

For now, the grounds of the former HM Pitje Stadium are silent—a hollow reminder of unfulfilled potential and wasted opportunity. The community waits, watches, and wonders whether the legacy of Hezekiel Mothibe Pitje will be honoured, not just in name but in purpose.

Whether the new stadium becomes a beacon of hope or another monument to mismanagement depends entirely on the will of those in power to listen, act, and be held accountable.

COMMUNITY



Ribane-Laka School of Specialisation Opens as a Beacon of Innovation in Mamelodi

By Zanele Makola

news@studentlivingsa.co.za

In the heart of Mamelodi East, a powerful transformation in education is taking root. The newly re-launched Ribane-Laka Maths, Science and ICT School of Specialisation officially opened its doors, marking a new era of innovation and opportunity in township education. Backed by a R148 million investment from the Gauteng government, the school now stands as a model for educational excellence and future-ready learning.

Located at 19558 Maseko Street, Ribane-Laka is more than just a school to the 1,600 learners who fill its modern classrooms—it's a symbol of possibility in a community ready for change.

Long known for academic distinction, the school has continued its legacy under the leadership of Principal MZ Ngoma. Ribane-Laka has consistently achieved impressive matric results, boasting a 92.31% pass rate in 2023, a 95.3% rate in 2022/2023, and a near-perfect 99% in 2016. This year's 98% first-term pass rate reflects the school's enduring excellence.

Ribane-Laka's tradition of strong performance in

Mathematics, Science, and Accounting is exemplified by alumni like Tebatso Raselapi, who earned seven distinctions in 2016.

The 2025 upgrade elevates the school to the next level. The campus now features state-of-the-art science laboratories, ICT suites, and specialised classrooms tailored for practical instruction in fields like automotive engineering and electronics. Construction began in 2021, aiming to address issues such as overcrowding and limited infrastructure.

A key component of the school's new vision is its partnership with the Tshwane Automotive Special Economic Zone (TASEZ), which links students with real-world industry experience. Skills such as engine maintenance are now part of the curriculum, designed to align education with economic growth.

"We are delivering education that powers economies," said Gauteng Premier Panyaza Lesufi during the opening ceremony, emphasizing the school's role in preparing learners for the Fourth Industrial Revolution.

Ribane-Laka, catering to grades 10–12, offers

a rich curriculum that includes Mathematics, Physical Sciences, ICT, and Economics, all tailored to nurture innovation. As a no-fee Quintile 4 school, it remains accessible to families across Mamelodi, with admissions managed through the Gauteng Department of Education's online portal.

Beyond academics, students benefit from a range of extracurricular activities, while the school encourages parental involvement through both in-person visits and its Facebook page, reinforcing that education is a community effort.

Gauteng Education MEC Matome Chiloane urged

the local community to safeguard the school's new facilities and ensure they benefit generations to come. Ribane-Laka's story is one of resilience—overcoming challenges like a 2019 teacher shortage—to become a flagship institution in Gauteng's Schools of Specialisation programme.

Today, Ribane-Laka is more than a school—it's a launchpad. Whether students are learning to code or repairing engines, they are actively building a future where Mamelodi flourishes through education, innovation, and opportunity.





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SA Mourns the Loss of Presley Chweneyagae



By **Akhona Valashiya**

 news@studentlivingsa.co.za

South Africans are reeling following the heartbreaking news of Presley Chweneyagae's passing. The actor, who captured hearts at home and beyond with his unforgettable performances, has died at the age of 40.

His death was confirmed by Nina Morris Lee, CEO of Moonyeenn Lee & Associates, the talent agency that represented him.

"It is with profound sadness that we confirm the untimely passing of one of South Africa's most gifted and beloved actors, Presley Chweneyagae," the statement read.

"He was a gifted writer and director, co-authoring the internationally acclaimed stage play *Relativity* ... His passion for empowering the next generation of artists will remain an integral part of his legacy."

Further details around memorial services will be communicated in due course, the agency said.

Presley wasn't just a performer—he was a storyteller who carried the weight of South Africa's soul through every role he embodied. From his breakout role in *Tsotsi*, which catapulted him onto

the global stage when it won the Academy Award for Best Foreign Language Film in 2006, to portraying a young Nelson Mandela in *Mandela: Long Walk to Freedom*, Presley brought depth, honesty, and a quiet kind of power to the screen.

Born in Soweto and raised in North West, he represented the grit and grace of township youth— young men who dream big despite the odds. His recent portrayal of Thuso "Cobra" Mokoena in *Cobrizi*, the spin-off of *The River*, showed yet another side to his range—flawed, complex, and deeply human.

What many didn't see was the Presley behind the scenes: a mentor, a writer, a theatre-maker. He believed fiercely in the power of the arts to change lives, and his work off-screen was just as passionate as what we saw on it. He poured himself into youth development, helping young artists find their voices and their paths.

As the tributes pour in, one thing is clear—South Africa hasn't just lost an actor; we've lost a cultural icon, a brother, and a mirror that reflected both our pain and our beauty back at us.

Rest easy, Presley. You were ours, and you always will be.

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Imaginary House wins Bologna Book fair

By **Staff Reporter**

news@studentlivingsa.co.za

In a world where African stories are often overlooked, one Cape Town-based publisher just proved they're not only worthy of shelf space — they're worthy of the world stage.

Imaginary House, the beloved home of imaginative, local children's books, has won the **2025 Bologna Prize for Best Children's Publisher: Africa** — a milestone moment at the prestigious **Bologna Children's Book Fair** in Italy. The fair is the Olympics of children's publishing, and this win is like bringing home gold for South African storytelling.

And what a story it is.

Imaginary House is a South African publisher and developer of children's and YA content, dedicated to nurturing bold African voices and bringing original, imaginative

stories to young readers across the globe.

Started in 2015 by Brad and Alison Harris, the publishing house began as a dream shared across kitchen tables and creative sketches — a mission to amplify bold, authentic African voices in children's literature. Ten years later, their books are not only found in local classrooms and libraries, but also in bookshops across Europe, Asia, and America.

"We've always believed our stories matter," said Alison Harris, co-founder and Creative Director. "Being surrounded by global giants at Bologna didn't intimidate us — it inspired us. This win validates what we've known all along: South African talent is world-class."

With beautifully crafted titles like *Hello Trees* and *Finding Filbert Frog and Friends*, Imaginary House has carved

out a space where children can see themselves — their homes, their dreams, their languages — on the page. And readers around the world are paying attention.

The Bologna Prize is awarded to publishers who push boundaries, champion creativity, and elevate diverse voices. For Imaginary House, it's more than an award. It's a celebration of every author, illustrator, editor, and child who believes in the magic of storytelling.

Brad Harris, Publishing Director, described the moment as "surreal, humbling, and deeply personal."

"This started as a passion project between Alison and me, but today it's a platform for so many South African creatives to be seen and heard globally. This win belongs to all of them."

It's not their first recognition — the publisher was

previously shortlisted in 2019 and 2020 — but 2025 is the year the dream came full circle. And it's already opening new doors: more international deals, wider reach, and a renewed energy to take African stories into film, audio, and beyond.

In an industry often dominated by the West, Imaginary House is a loud, proud reminder that the South has something to say — and children everywhere are listening.

As Education and youth development remain at the heart of Africa's future, Imaginary House's rise signals more than success. It's a rallying call: to support local creatives, to invest in our stories, and to make space for a new generation of dreamers with something worth telling — and publishing.



Glory at Last: Amakhosi wins Nedbank Cup



By **Akhona Valashiya**

news@studentlivingsa.co.za

Kaizer Chiefs have secured their first major trophy in 10 years after defeating Orlando Pirates 2-1 in a thrilling Nedbank Cup final yesterday, Saturday 10 May 2025, at a packed Moses Mabhida Stadium in Durban.

The long-awaited triumph marks a turning point for Amakhosi, who have endured a challenging 10-year spell

without silverware, despite their rich history and massive fan base. The victory not only ends that drought but also injects renewed hope into the club's future under head coach Nasreddine Nabi.

The match was a tightly contested affair from the first whistle. Chiefs took the lead early in the first half through a penalty kick by Gaston Sirino, only to be pegged back by

an equaliser from Orlando Pirates forward Evidence Makgopa. Chiefs captain and midfielder Yusuf Maart scored the winning goal with a shot from inside the area in the 80th minute.

The final whistle was met with scenes of jubilation from Chiefs players and fans alike. For many, this win represents more than just a trophy—it's a symbol of resilience,

rebuilding, and renewed belief.

The victory brings an emotional and symbolic end to Chiefs' decade-long wait and raises hopes for a new era of success. For Orlando Pirates, the defeat was a bitter blow in what has otherwise been a strong season under head coach Jose Riveiro who is leaving the club at the end of this season after three seasons with the Soweto boys.

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