

FINAL GRANT BUT ALEX STILL A SLUM LAND



THE Alexandra Renewal Project will soon receive what could be its final grant after more than a decade of renewal work in the township. Final as the grant may be, a lot of work, especially in the heart of Alex, still remains to be done.

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**Close call as
man is stoned
by mob**

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addicts to
get help**

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**Countdown
to new Alex
school**

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**Referee cost
us the game
- coach**

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Man stabs drinking buddy to death

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Police in Alexandra are looking for a man who stabbed his drinking mate to death.

Alex police spokesperson, Warrant Officer Moses Maphakela said the police had been called to the scene of the murder and were told that the victim had been drinking beer with his friends. The victim is said to have called one of his mates and asked to speak to him in private and then proceeded outside the house. A few minutes later, the other drinking mates said they heard a commotion outside. Upon investigation, they

found the victim lying on the ground and bleeding from his chest. The man who the victim had summoned to speak to in private was holding a knife in his hand.

The alleged stabber is said to have called for an ambulance for the victim before disappearing from the scene. Maphakela said a murder case had been opened.

Alex News is on BBM. Add the team to your contacts to comment on crime in Alex. Share your leads with the team which could eventually lead to the arrest of this suspect. Pin: 29CA3017

Housemate 'steals' money

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A man who allegedly stole money from his housemate has been arrested.

Alex police spokesperson Warrant Officer Moses Maphakela said

the two housemates were at home when the accused took R400 of the complainant's from a cupboard in the kitchen. The complainant reported the matter to the police and the housemate was arrested on a charge of theft. He will appear in the Alexandra Magistrate's Court.

A MAN who allegedly stole money from his housemate has been arrested by Alexandra police.



ALEX police spokesperson Warrant Officer Moses Maphakela says no motive has been established for the stoning of a man in Setswetla.

Close call as man is stoned by mob

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An unknown man from Setswetla informal settlement in Alexandra owes his life to police officers from the local police station.

They saved him from certain death as he was being stoned by an angry mob of informal settlement residents. They also damaged police vehicles and injured two police officers who had come to rescue the man.

Alex police spokesperson, Warrant

Officer Moses Maphakela said the injured officers were taken to Sunninghill Hospital for treatment, but would not disclose which hospital the injured man was taken to.

He said the police had earlier received reports about a mob of about 1 500 residents running amok and stoning an unknown man. Police rushed to the scene, and as they tried to rescue the badly-injured and bleeding man, they themselves came under attack from the residents who were throwing stones, bricks and

bottles at them.

The cost of the damage caused to the vehicles was estimated at R80 000. No motive for the stoning was established and police were still investigating. No arrests have been made.

Do you know why this poor man was nearly stoned to death? Like the Alex News Facebook page to comment on this story.

Jealous landlord beats up woman

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A jealous landlord has been arrested for beating up a woman tenant for allegedly failing to report her whereabouts.

The 31-year-old woman of 2nd Avenue said she arrived home from

Thembisa to find her landlord waiting for her. The landlord demanded to know where she had been and that she must keep him informed of all her movements in future.

"Awungeke uze ukubone lokho", (I will never do that) insisted the woman in IsiZulu and the angry landlord then picked up a brick and hit her on the

head. While lying on the ground, the landlord is said to have kicked her and pulled her up by the hair.

A case of common assault was opened and the landlord arrested. Police spokesperson Warrant Officer Moses Maphakela said the suspect would appear in the Alexandra Magistrate's Court soon.

Woman 'hammered into compliance'

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According to a police statement a man 'hammered his lover into compliance' after he told her not to switch on the washing machine as it made an irritating noise.

Alex police spokesperson Warrant Officer Moses Maphakela said the 37-year-old woman had woken up early to do her washing. When she switched on the washing machine, her boyfriend who was trying to sleep, asked her not to.

She told him that she wanted to do

her washing which included washing the man's work uniforms. The man grabbed hold of a hammer and hit her on the head. The woman opened a case of common assault.

The boyfriend has since been arrested and will appear in Alexandra Magistrate's Court, said Maphakela.

'Alex Money Market' where are you?

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A man who goes by the name of 'Alex Money Market' bolted away with a stash of airtime vouchers after offering a helping hand to a shop owner.

The shop owner had just arrived at his shop in 16th Avenue laden with stock, when a man known to him as 'Alex Money Market' offered to give him a hand.

He handed the man some of the stock, including airtime vouchers

worth R1 100.

As he opened his shop the man bolted with a stash of airtime vouchers and climbed into a taxi.

Alex police spokesperson Warrant Officer Moses Maphakela said they were still looking for the man.

Armed men hold up truck and steal R40 000

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An unknown number of armed suspects held up a delivery van in 16th Avenue outside a tuck shop and made off with R40 000 in cash.

Alex police spokesperson Warrant Officer Moses Maphakela said the crew of the van had just delivered goods and collected some money from the tuck shop when they heard gunshots and discovered they had been surrounded by armed men.

One of the suspects opened the door of the truck and demanded money from one of the crew inside the van. He handed them the money and the suspects fled on foot. No one was injured in the shooting and Maphakela said they were still investigating

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Govt to award final ARP grant

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Alexandra will soon be a recipient of another ARP [Alex Renewal Project] developmental grant from the government.

This was announced by Obed Bapela, Deputy Minister for Performance Monitoring and Evaluation in the Presidency, recently at Sankopano Community Centre while meeting with local leaders.

The project was initiated by former President Thabo Mbeki and has been on-going for years with a mix of successes and challenges - some controversial due to alleged mismanagement and misappropriation. Its purpose was to de-densify the area in order to improve services and develop essential infrastructure and amenities to modernise the township.

The deputy minister said current funding for the ARP was almost exhausted through visible and non-visible underground infrastructure - water, sewage piping, electricity lines, social amenities, sports fields, schools, roads and bridges, taxi ranks and also transport and housing for those who were relocated to Tsutsumani, Diepsloot, Thembisa and Braamfisherville. "Despite these, several initiatives are still to be implemented and the President has said they have to be implemented to improve Alexandra's image and to offer dignity to its residents. He will be coming to Alexandra this month to pronounce on a 10 to 15 year master plan and budget allocation for the last development phase of the township. The budget allocation will be drawn from local, provincial and national governments to make sure it's sufficient for all the remaining projects," said Bapela.

He urged local leaders to form a leadership forum to compile integrated and comprehensive plans for non-negotiable projects to be included in the master plan. "The forum will also help to thwart competitive sectoral interests which could undermine programmes and projects which are for broader community benefit," he said.

A follow-up meeting of the leadership and a task team from government would be convened to verify the plan submissions and budget allocation.

While appreciating the pending presidential announcement, the audience asked the deputy minister to ensure stringent and transparent tendering processes for the implementation process and also for local service providers to be prioritised for the work.

Also, they urged service providers



DEPUTY Minister for Performance Monitoring and Evaluation in the Presidency Obed Bapela says a final ARP grant is to be awarded.

in Alexandra to update their status with appropriate authorities in anticipation of the work opportunities.

Do you think the ARP has done enough work in Alexandra to deserve yet another grant from government? Like the Alex News Facebook page to comment.

Marlboro 'slumlord' is exposed

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Homeowners in Marlboro South have exposed an alleged slumlord's activities, which they say lowers the value of their properties.

More than 50 shacks occupy most of the space at 51 Hollywood Crescent owned by the alleged slumlord. Tenants on the property, who declined to be identified, claimed they are charged between R300 and R500 for rent every month. Some of them have been squatting at the house for years and claim they have never been issued receipts for their payments.

On 26 March, Metro police confirmed receiving complaints from neighbouring residents concerned about the potential devaluation of their properties.

According to Superintendent Ignus Jona, the alleged slumlord was "wishy-washy" about the situation.

"He says the rents are his only source of income but at the same time he had tried but failed on several occasions to evict the tenants," said Jona.

The owner couldn't adequately explain how the first tenants came to occupy his property, but said that many of them ran away at month-end to avoid paying rent but returned to the

shacks weeks later. The tenants disputed his statement, claiming that he engaged thugs who enforced rent payment from them and confiscated properties of those who failed to pay on time.

Jona said they had asked the man a while back to submit an affidavit with his concerns so the police and local authorities could take appropriate action, but he had not done so.

Also, Jona expressed concern about the illegal electricity connections from a nearby substation to the shacks. "The tenants do this with the owner's knowledge and once Eskom has disconnected the illegal wires the tenants reconnect them, [also] with his knowledge," Jona said.

"The wires run unprotected on the ground and above the shacks posing a danger from naked and unregulated voltage if stepped on and also possible fires. Eskom loses revenue every day from this electricity theft by tenants for their lighting, appliances and a panel beating business which we stopped recently."

Details: Superintendent Ignus Jona, 083 399 2835.

Is enough being done? Like the Alex News Facebook page to comment.

Land claimants to celebrate

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Alexandra land and property owners are poised to celebrate the awarding of title deeds to some of their counterparts.

This was said recently by Deputy Minister in the Presidency for Performance Monitoring and Evaluation, Obed Bapela at Sankopano Community Centre while meeting local leaders.

Alexandra residents, as in the rest of the country, submitted thousands of claims for land rights restoration and restitution to the Land Claims Commission almost 20 years ago.

Resolution of their cases has been slow, partly due to contestation by other parties - land owners, tenants, former hostel dwellers in the case of Alexandra, and also the absence of contact details of some contestants, as well as

ineptitude by government officials handling the claims. This has led to an inconclusive process with many claims still to be decided after many years of waiting.

In an attempt to address this problem, government recently promulgated the re-opening of the claim process until 2018 to also allow for the submission of new claims.

Of the thousands of claims submitted in Alexandra, 14 have now been finalised as they were not contested, and the title deeds are being drawn. President Zuma will present these title deeds to the claimants at a celebratory occasion in Alexandra soon, Bapela said.

Is this the beginning of the end of the decades old Alpoa land and property fight? Will government keep its promise? Like the Alex News Facebook page to comment.



LEADERS of Alpoa and their members might soon have a reason to celebrate as government promises to award them the title deeds to their properties.

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FROM THE EDITOR

Megan McLean

Hi-tech era

The Johannesburg Roads Agency has entered a new era and taken a leap forward into the 21st century.

At a media briefing on 24 April, the agency announced the launch of a Find & Fix mobile app that will allow road users to send photos and report potholes, storm water issues, traffic lights that are out of order and so on. This is very exciting stuff, but do they have the manpower to fix all that is reported? My guess is not, but I am hopeful that this is the turnaround we have all been waiting for.

Residents always say reporting an issue to the municipality is a mission, and most – not all – could not be bothered to go that extra mile. It's strange that it's normally those who complain the most, are the ones who are the most apathetic... Well now you'll have no excuse.

According to the simple demonstration presented at the media

briefing, reporting an issue should take a user no longer than two minutes. Gone (well, almost – the agency is still in the testing phase) are the days of sitting on the phone and listening to awful music while a voice repeats 'All our operators are currently busy, please hold'. The agency has said it hoped to make the new app live mid-May and I for one, am very excited. I will be watching this project closely and truly hope it is a success. While I understand that not all issues can be sorted out overnight, I do believe that the roads agency can do better. I hope the launch of the new app is a step forward and a promise of better things to come.

What is your opinion on the use of technology to improve service delivery? Post a comment on the Alex News Facebook page



VALISHA THOMPSON OF THE CITY OF JOBURG

Know your status

We need to work together to fight against our struggle with HIV/Aids and to reduce new infections.

We need to know our status.

Knowing your status puts you at an advantage. If you are tested HIV positive you can be treated as early as possible if your CD4 count is low. If you are tested negative, you can also take preventative measures to remain negative.

Knowing your status also helps you to lead a better and healthier lifestyle. You can also protect your partner if you are positive. Using condoms is extremely important if you want to remain negative.

Pregnant women who test HIV positive will be started on treatment immediately. They will start on a fixed dose combination (FDC – combination of three ARVS in one tablet) regardless of their CD4 count.

This is to protect their unborn babies from becoming positive. No pregnant woman should be turned away from a clinic without an HIV test being done. The HIV status of breastfeeding women must also be determined. Remember to take your treatment as prescribed by the clinician/doctor. The

HIV test at the clinic is reliable and quick. It is also done confidentially and you don't have to disclose your status to anyone. You will be also be counselled before and after your test. Everything is done privately so don't be afraid to test. Testing and knowing your status gives you the power to make wise decisions and to live longer, healthier lives.

What do I do if I am tested positive for HIV?

You also need to get tested for TB. You need to get support from the people that care about you. You are not alone, you can also receive more counselling from the clinic staff. There are also support groups at clinics.

Support groups provide emotional support for people living with the disease, and provide you with important information on how to deal with living with HIV/Aids

Family members or members of your church can also give you support. Get more information about HIV/Aids. The nurse will also give you treatment for any other infections. Ensure that you take your medication according to the nurse's instructions. Exercise and eat healthy foods.



THERE is a growing disrespect for bylaws and signage as residents dump as they wish.

Plan to address litter

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After complaints about rubbish littering the streets of Alex, City of Johannesburg officials Tisetso Mphenyeki and Andrea McGahey acknowledged the issue, saying the city has included in its 2014/15 Integrated and Development Plan budgets and projects to address the problem.

City officials were commenting on the

piles of rubbish which have become a common sight in the streets of Alexandra, with residents dumping as they wish.

The new plan includes bylaw enforcement, provision of 240-litre bins, building of fenced rubble transfer stations, cleaning of pavements and the development of food gardens in open spaces.

This will be implemented by various city agencies such as Pikitup, Metro police, social development, co-operatives, governance and traditional affairs.

Pensioners' struggle

Dawn Gomes writes:

I am writing in the forlorn hope that someone out there can give me some answers or advice.

In about July last year, an individual from the City of Johannesburg was interviewed on 702, who said that pensioners could apply for a reduction in rates and taxes. Articles have appeared in newspapers.

My neighbour and I are both eligible according to the criteria and have applied twice. We wrote letters to the newspapers

and also dropped letters off at Roodepoort Municipality, to no avail. This individual from the municipality was lying to the "elderly folk"! I would love to know whether there is a pensioner out there who has managed to get this discount on their rates account.

Response from ward councillor, Ingrid Reinten:

Yes we have had pensioners who have applied and received the grants.

I will contact them and discuss the application procedure with them.

Voting needs to add up

Vanesan Naidoo writes:

I don't believe voting should be on paper only. Each identity number should be given a pin.

After the election each pin and the selected party must be made public. So if the wrong party is next to your pin then you know you have been had. There's definite rigging if you know you voted for one party but next to your pin it says another party. We can't audit our votes currently so

how do we know it's free and fair? Voting should be done electronically and in print so that we can compare the electronic vote to the print vote and see if there is a strong correlation. If the electronic vote and print vote is vastly different then you know things are not halala. If there are 27 million registered voters and only 17 million turned up to vote then those 10 million blank ballots must be showed to the public so that we can see that things are adding up.

Have your say in May

The greater Johannesburg community speak out about the national elections and why they will be voting

DREAMING BIG: Kgosi Tiro, Kgalaeo Chiliza, Danika Heaton, Lufefe Marobe and Boitshepo Kakgahla from Urban Kids are excited about the national elections, which will take place on 7 May.



WITH the 2014 national elections around the corner, we took to the streets to find out what the greater Joburg community is thinking and why they are voting this year.



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FROM THE EDITOR
Megan McLean

Vote for your future

I DID not grow up surrounded by apartheid, fear and hatred.

When my family and I left the beautiful landscapes of Malawi and moved back to South Africa in 1994, my passport was stamped 'too young to sign'.

It was only later on in life, while paging through history books that I saw the ugly face of our old government. I was hooked and wanted to learn more. I became an avid reader and followed the careers of Max du Preez, the brave photographers of the Bang Bang Club and the likes of Henry Nxumalo and Donald James Woods.

I read every book I could find on apartheid, the struggle against it, and how South Africans freed themselves from the tight grip the government had on them.

I was inspired by the fight and bravery of the ANC and their military wing Umkhonto we Siswe.

Yes, I did not know apartheid in its ugliest form, but when I turned 18 and was no longer 'too young to sign', I knew that I had to vote. To me, this was not an option – this was something I would do out of respect for those who had lost their lives in the struggle

and for those who were still dealing with the effects of apartheid.

I know that South Africans are a strong and proud nation.

Let's vote because many before us did not get the opportunity.

Whether you vote for change or vote for more of the same, your vote symbolises your love for South Africa – a country that has come so far in such a short period of time.

My fellow South Africans, let's vote for our future, and so our children can look back and see that the fight for good governance did not end with apartheid.

We will continue to demand respect, and oppose corruption, bad governance and incompetence.

Go to your local newspaper's Facebook page to add your voice to this voting discussion.

Fourways Review, Sandton Chronicle, Midrand Reporter, Rosebank Killarney Gazette, North Eastern Tribune, Alex News, City Buzz.



Chairperson of Sun Valley Residents Association, Pierre Hefer writes:

VOTING is not only a privilege but it is a duty of every citizen... and one that should be taken very seriously indeed. I have voted before and I must say that voting at the first post-apartheid elections, which took me five hours in the hot sun to do, was a wonderful experience that I will never forget.

I am voting for a more effective and accountable government that can improve

the economy in order to create jobs and bring about a massive downturn in crime and corruption.

Voting day is a public holiday, so please spend at least 30 minutes of your time voting on that day and do your duty as a South African.

I value my right to vote as very important. South Africa has travelled a very long and hard road to eventually have achieved independence and democracy and many lives were lost along the way... The very least you can do today is participate in that democracy and your participation starts by you casting your vote.



Bambi Kellermann writes:

I MIGHT consider Malema. I like the way he uses the colour red. He's entertainingly scary – but I know nothing about politics, I'm a girl of leisure.



Thembaletu Bukhali writes:

I GUESS I am excited to be voting for the first time. Many people died for me to get this privilege so there is no way I won't be exercising that right to vote on 7 May.



Nyaniso Mini writes:

I'M going to continue voting for the same party that I have been voting for since I started voting in 2005. I believe that's the only party for me.

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Sydney Mathebula, a traditional healer writes:

I HAVE voted in three national elections.



Thato Motsepe writes:

WELL, voting is the only option that makes sense. So many people fought for this right, so just going to mark your X for a few minutes is not too much to ask.

Unemployed Arthur Chabela writes:
THE main challenge in the upcoming elections will be job creation.



POLITICAL JOURNALIST

Simone Samuels

The power of voting

TWENTY years after South Africans cast their vote in the first democratic elections, this young democracy continues to be a nation in transition.

This transformation begs the questions: 'Is South Africa moving forward or regressing?' and 'What will be my role in my country's story?'

The triumph of struggle stalwarts such as Nelson Mandela freed many young South Africans such as myself from the scourge of apartheid and the racial inequalities that imprisoned the nation.

I was spared from being forced to carry a 'dom pass'; fearing for my life at the hands of authorities, or being ordered to use specific benches, buses and toilets based on my race.

My knowledge of the oppressive apartheid era was shaped by the tragic stories my elders told me of being turned away from public facilities, removed from areas that were for whites only, and robbed of medical care because of the colour of their skin. These experiences made them bitter and resentful and made me grateful for the freedom that had been won for me.

But today, different inequalities such as poverty and unemployment divide us; corruption and maladministration create a disconnect between the government and the very

people that voted them into power. Political tensions continue to mount and voters are faced with increasing political intolerance and mudslinging as the elections approach.

As a young person, who is focused on what is best for my future and the future of my country, I find it difficult to single out a political party that I can entrust my vote to. But this will not deter me from exercising my right to vote.

It seems far too easy to disregard how much of a privilege voting is when given the choice whether or not to.

But when I think of the thousands of South Africans who for years were denied the right to vote, I will cast my vote—not only for myself and future generations, but for past generations who were robbed of that right.

My belief is that it is better to vote for a party that stands for some of my ideals than to cast my fate to the hands of others.

I've heard many people say that they would rather not vote because none of the parties contesting the elections seem worthy of their vote.

However, not voting is essentially stripping oneself of the power that our hard-earned democracy has afforded us.

While the ruling party has the power to govern the country, it is us voters that give them that power.

The power is in our hands... what will we do with it?

Join the conversation on BBM:

- Midrand Reporter: 2B9432E6 • City Buzz: 29CA2D88
- Fourways Review: 2B93A930 • Alex News: 29CA3017
- North Eastern Tribune: 29BEEF78
- Rosebank Killarney Gazette: 29C7976C

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Mikateko Mafuyeka writes:
 AS a first-time voter, I am going to vote because I understand what freedom means to black South Africans, being one myself. If it weren't for the people who stood in the hot sun in those long queues to vote for change 20 years ago, I would have half the things I have today, and it would be rather ungrateful if I didn't. I vote because my vote is my voice, I vote because I care about this beautiful country and how it's governed. I vote because I believe in equality, fair governance and democracy. I vote because I love South Africa.



Walter Shivambu writes: I HAVE been voting since 1994 and I plan to vote come 7 May. The reason I vote is that I want to be able to hold government accountable. It is my right to have basic services, and it is also my right to complain when the very same services are not delivered. So voting gives me a voice and power to change my world.



Katekani Khoza writes:
 I AM going to the polls for the first time this year and I am very excited. Voting gives me the opportunity to have a say in government. I will vote in this year's elections because I believe South Africa needs a change in leadership.
 Our education system needs a bit of work, and I believe my vote can influence who gets to take over and make the necessary changes.



Lisa Yang writes:
 BECAUSE I am born free and I would feel guilty not to.



Derryn Orpen writes:
 EVERY day you get to choose what you want to be: happy or sad. It is not every day you get to help choose who will lead our country. Choose to vote.



Jessica Hunkin writes:
 I REALLY do think every vote makes a difference, and I don't think you cannot vote and still have an opinion on the way things are run.



Candice James writes:
 NOT only will I vote in the upcoming elections, but I cut off my ponytail to donate to a cancer patient during the Cansa Shavathon in March.

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Bronwen Vallence writes:
 I VOTE because it would really be an insult to the men and women who fought for democracy if I didn't.
 I don't have the right to complain about the situation in our country if I don't vote. It's very important for me to make a decision that is informed and not just based on who my friends and parents vote for.
 That's why I'll be doing my own research.
 What I'm really looking for is reliability and trustworthiness in a party.



Jacqueline Malepeng writes:
 MANDELA inspired me, I want to vote in his honour.
 I'm voting for a positive change in South Africa and I know my vote will make a difference.
 If I'm going to give a party my vote, I want to see more than just promises and policies. They should strive to keep my neighbourhood clean, and really change communities.
 I want a party that cares about people and takes the initiative.



Robert Williams writes:
 FOR democracy to work you need to vote and not just vote but think about your vote and how you're using it.
 For democracy to work you need to have a strong opposition because the only way a government will perform to the best of its ability is when it's under threat of losing power.
 People fought for our democracy so not voting would be like disregarding the sacrifices people made for the right to vote.

The winner of a SABC 1 reality TV show, Johannes Mapalakyane from Kaalfontein in Midrand writes:

THIS will be my third time voting since I got my identity document. Voting gives us, the citizens of South Africa, the power to put in power a president that we think is capable of leading the country.
 As young people we will always complain about the government not creating job opportunities for us. We now have the chance to change all that by voting in our next national elections. I encourage everybody to go and vote on 7 May. The future of this country is in our hands.



Allandale resident David Nhlapo writes:

I AM voting so that there will be positive changes in the economy and health sector, and to stop corruption from spreading. I will vote because my vote may be the difference between getting better service delivery and always complaining about it.
 I have to vote to stop tenders being issued. Tenders make one person rich instead of job creation that could benefit many South Africans. A lot of people who were previously disadvantaged have not benefited from the fruits of the new South Africa.



Midrand community member Deshni Harricharan writes:

I VOTE so that I feel that I have a say on who governs my country.
 I have voted before and it made me feel important and proud. I hope to see a change in leadership of my country with my vote. It's our duty to vote.
 We have the power to make the change we want to see in our country. It's highly important to vote, as it is my time to let my voice be heard with a simple X.
 However, during registration the tents were very poorly displayed, and while there were signs all over the place reminding you to register, it was difficult to find out where the nearest registration place was.

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FROM THE POLITICAL ANALYST

Siphiso Siso

Democracy – A dream come true?

COMING back home after almost 20 years in exile, and voting for the very first time in 1994 for democracy was a dream come true for many of us who had yearned for freedom and fought apartheid to bring about this new order in South Africa.

Going into exile itself is a nightmare. One does not know the conditions and pitfalls that lie ahead. It's like venturing into the unknown and into the darkness of a lightless tunnel.

That tunnel may have been dark and the end not so nigh, but we believed one day we would see the light at the end of it.

In exile, one ventures into the unknown – not knowing where your next meal will come from, where you will lay your head to rest, who you are going to meet and what the reception will be like, and above all, not knowing what the future holds for you. But when the news of the pending release of Nelson Mandela filtered through, though unbelievable as it was, it finally sank in when we saw him walk free in the world on TV news stations, and ultimately making that trip to Lusaka in Zambia to meet his comrades. We had to pinch ourselves several times to make

sure we were not in deep sleep.

I was then a senior reporter for the *Botswana Gazette* in Gaborone and made the trip to Lusaka on assignment from my editor and former member of parliament in Botswana, Clara Olsen – and came face to face with this awesome man, Mandela who, was hand-in-hand with his then-wife, Winnie.

To me that was the beginning of my trip back home, although I tracked back more than a few kilometres deep into Africa rather than just jumping the Botswana border and landing in the City of Gold – Johannesburg.

Coming home in late 1992 and voting in 1994 in one of the world's most peaceful elections after the turbulent era of apartheid is one thing I will treasure most in my memories. Joining those long, winding, endless queues reminded me of my times in Zambia when there were similar queues for food items in grocery shops.

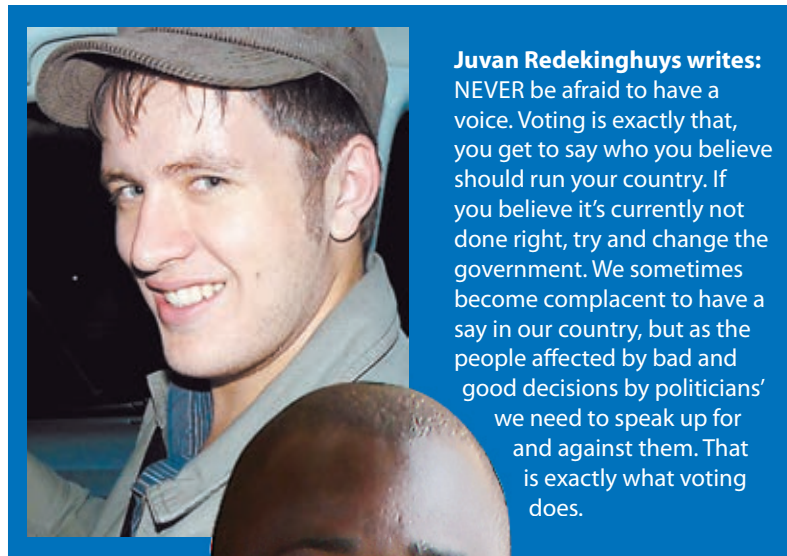
Having cast my vote, I shouted to my comrades and colleagues and the public at large at the Saratoga Roman Catholic Parish in Berea: "I have voted for democracy, I have voted for a

free South Africa, I have voted for equality, equal rights, freedom and dignity. I have voted to free both black and white South Africans from the mental bondage of apartheid."

But little did we know that this democracy would one day descend into the greed we see today, into the plunder that is happening, into the looting which is a daily occurrence in many African countries, and is the source of endless war, coups and genocides that we continue to see in Rwanda, Central African Republic, Somalia, Liberia, Sierra Leone – the list is endless.

Watch out brothers and sisters, lo and behold, for that is also coming our way. We shall chase each other with spears, pangas, AKs, machetes and many more weapons of mass destruction. It may not happen in my lifetime, your lifetime, our children's lifetime but it surely will – one day.

Those who care to vote can go and do so, my time is up!



Juvan Redekinghuys writes: NEVER be afraid to have a voice. Voting is exactly that, you get to say who you believe should run your country. If you believe it's currently not done right, try and change the government. We sometimes become complacent to have a say in our country, but as the people affected by bad and good decisions by politicians' we need to speak up for and against them. That is exactly what voting does.



Sedge Malatji, a street barber writes: I VOTED in the last elections and will vote again in May.

Welcome to the political fray

Simone Samuels
simones@cxton.co.za

AS THE race to the polls gains momentum, voters begin to see and hear more from the country's political parties.

However, while most South Africans are familiar with the policies of the popular front runners, a few new parties have emerged, adding a unique mix to the political pool.

Although not all of these parties are registered and contesting in the 2014 elections, many have gained strong support based on their political agendas.

One of the most well-known of these parties is the **Dagga Party of South Africa**.

The party was formed by users of the cannabis plant, or marijuana, who aimed to form a party that promulgates the legalisation of dagga.

Led by Jeremy Acton, the party puts forth policies that highlight some of the benefits of legalising marijuana.

The Front Nasionaal (National Front), another new political party, has been launched from within the ranks of Afrikaner activists. The party is strongly focused on Afrikaner self-determination, aims to preserve Afrikaans schools and transfer Afrikaans universities, and all Afrikaans libraries, monuments, museums, art collections and cultural goods to a council determined by the party and other

Afrikaner organisations.

Led by Hannes Engelbrecht, the party also campaigns against language discrimination and so-called ethnic farm murders.

This election also welcomes the world's first gay political party.

Nobel Peace Prize laureate and South African Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu surprised many South Africans by forming the **Democratic Religious Alliance Against Minority Antagonism**.

Spurred by his passion for gay and minority rights, Tutu formed the party, which is set to be at the forefront of minority human-rights issues.

Outraging many Christians by his comments, Tutu said, "I would refuse to go to a homophobic heaven... No, I would say sorry, I mean I would much rather go to hell..."

I would not worship a God who is homophobic and that is how deeply I feel about this."

Meanwhile, popular political figures have moved in new directions in their careers.

Scorned former ANC Youth League President Julius Malema was quick to get back in the political saddle after his expulsion from the ruling party in 2012.

Malema launched the **Economic Freedom Fighters** (EFF) in October last year.

While the party maintains growing support and flexed its political muscle, committing to "transforming South Africa for the betterment of all", the EFF's strides

have often been overshadowed by Malema's personal antics and his unpredictability.

In February, Malema was placed under provisional sequestration by the Pretoria High Court for his unpaid R16-million tax bill.

In the same month, he was in court following charges of reckless driving. Despite being acquitted, Malema's woes were far from over as traffic officials planned to appeal the ruling.

Businessman and socialite Kenny Kunene has traded his sushi parties for a political party.

Kunene launched the **Patriotic Alliance** political party in 2013 with former jailmate and convicted bank robber, Gayton McKenzie.

The party has reportedly welcomed some prominent gangsters into its ranks.

Kunene has been affiliated with several parties and went from being an ANC member, to head of campaigns, mobilisation and special projects for Julius Malema's EFF, to starting his own party.

In total, 195 parties have registered for the general elections and 48 parties are registered provincially.

But numerous unregistered parties continue to assert their agendas.



Lungelo Nkosi writes: I'M voting because I want proper service delivery in my community.



Barack Burger writes: I'M voting because we need to eradicate poverty, unemployment, crime and corruption. I want to see a better education system.



Mthunzi Kinana writes: PEOPLE must vote in order to voice their issues. You can't be heard if you don't vote.



Dipuo Motlout writes: I'M voting for a party that I believe will bring change because I'm not happy.



VOTE FOR YOUR COMMUNITY: Members of the newsroom from Caxton Johannesburg North office, which include the Rosebank Killarney Gazette, North Eastern Tribune, Alex News, Midrand Reporter, Fourways Review, Sandton Chronicle and City Buzz newspapers.

Use your voice and vote

The Johannesburg North office encourages voters to continue using their voting power to bring about change in South Africa

Khanyisile Ngcobo
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AS THE date for the national elections draws nearer, South African citizens are gearing up to cast their vote and potentially alter the political landscape forever.

Political parties across the board are encouraging citizens to vote and make their voices heard.

And added to the voice is the Caxton staff, who had a few words of encouragement to residents for the upcoming elections.

Norman Dawe, branch manager at the Johannesburg North office, encouraged voters to stand united and use their voting power to continue moving the city from strength to strength.

He highlighted that the community

had demonstrated the power to bring change in the city and encouraged this to continue.

“Over the years I have seen the Joburg North community grow from strength to strength... as Joburgers, we have a voice – and a loud one at that,” he said

His sentiments were echoed by various staff members, with an overwhelming majority stressing the need for the community to use their voice to bring about change.

“Your vote ensures that the right politicians, who represent your ideals, enter the national assembly,” Adriaan Roets said.

Duenna Mambana added that the biggest way to have your voice heard is to vote as it gives you the power to influence who governs the country.

“Over the years I have seen the Joburg North community grow from strength to strength... as Joburgers, we have a voice – and a loud one at that”

Aimee McGill said that for her, voting is her small contribution to making sure that her child grows up in a South Africa that is “the best it can be”.

Lucas Khumalo especially encouraged new voters to make their mark because whatever happens will

have an impact on their future. Janese Glasscoe agreed, saying that it’s essential to vote, “... especially for new voters because it’s important to

exercise your right which was fought so hard for.”

While the majority were in agreement and uttered words of encouragement, Afrika Mdolomba, in contrast, said that he would not encourage people to go out and vote but conceded it was their choice to make at the end of the day.

His belief is that all politicians are the same and should not be trusted, so he would not encourage people to place their hope in them.

Ultimately, the choice rests with the voters, and whether they choose to use their vote to express their voice, one thing is clear: The majority in the newsroom agrees that voting is the most powerful tool citizens have to change the country.



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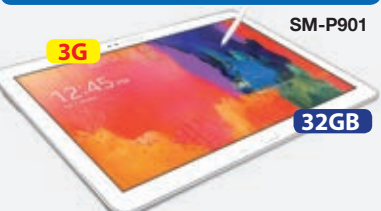
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Help gambling addicts

STAFF REPORTER
alexnews@caxton.co.za

People addicted to gambling in Alexandra are invited to a workshop organised by the National Responsible Gambling Programme on 10 May.

The workshop, designed to help people understand the risks of irresponsible gambling, will be held at My Father's House Christian Fellowship Church, 3260 1st Avenue, corner 1st and 3rd avenues, Melville.

It will start at 11am and end at 4pm, but will be preceded by a praise and worship session from 10am. Addicted gamblers keen to kick the habit are invited to join the worship session and the workshop.

Many people who suffer from gambling addiction turn to the church for help, and the workshop is designed to help those in faith-based communities to identify and assist those in trouble.

The programme hopes to increase public awareness about the potential consequences of gambling and promote healthy lifestyle choices, said the programme's executive director Nana Magomola.

"We want to ensure we do not condemn or judge, but rather help people understand the consequences of their choices in an informed and responsible way, and to reduce risks related to problem gambling and risky lifestyle choices," she said.

The workshop is funded by the Gauteng Gambling Board and the Gauteng Provincial Government's Department of Economic Development.

Among the speakers will be Magomola who is a lawyer, businesswoman and gender activist with a background in healthcare and government administration.



NATIONAL Responsible Gambling Programme executive director Nana Magomola.

Another speaker will be Bishop Robert Kelley, founder of the My Father's House Christian Fellowship Church, who hails from Washington DC and has worked in Africa for the past 17 years facilitating mentorship, training, and entrepreneurship for women.

Details: Ursula Johnson, 011 462 1087 or 082 540 3430.

Do you think initiatives like these can help gambling addicts? Like the Alex News Facebook page to comment on this page.

Family seeks woman

STAFF REPORTER
alexnews@caxton.co.za

An Alexandra family, originally from Maandagshoek in the GaMamphahlane area of Burgersfort in Limpopo, is looking for a woman thought to have had a relationship with their late brother, Lawrence Phasoane Makgoga.

The woman is believed to have lived in Soweto while Makgoga used to live in 3rd Avenue, Alexandra. She is also thought to have been pregnant at one time, and the family's suspicions are that she might have been pregnant with their brother's child.

Makgoga, who was deaf, was killed in 1976 during the apartheid era and buried by the apartheid government. The family managed to locate his grave and remains, and reburied him in 2010 but they do not mention where they reburied him.

The Makgoga family believes, if the woman is still alive, she might not be aware that

Lawrence died as they were no longer living together.

"We tried by all means to locate the woman but nothing has come of it," the family said. They then approached the Government Communications and Information Systems in Alexandra for assistance who, in turn referred the matter to *Alex News* for publication.

The Makgoga family said the reason they wanted to locate the woman was to ensure they take every responsibility for the woman and the child on behalf of their late brother.

"We appeal to anyone with information that may lead the family to locate the whereabouts of the woman and the child to assist us," they said.

Details: Emmanuel Makgoga, 082 343 5095.

Do you recognise the woman in the picture? Add the Alex News team to your contact on BBM to send your tips. Pin: 29CA3017



THE MAKGOGA family is looking for the woman in white.



THABISO Sebata of Start Up Media facilitates the workshop.

SME workshop

LESEHO MANALA
lesehom@caxton.co.za

Small businesses in Alexandra fail to reach their potential because of a lack of business skills and branding.

This was revealed at a start-up workshop attended by 11 young entrepreneurs at Ikemeleng Youth Centre and conducted by Itumeleng and Thabiso Sebata of Start Up Media.

The workshop is part of a series of ongoing monthly training sessions to help improve operations of small, micro and medium enterprises in townships. The facilitators plan to extend the workshops to other Gauteng townships and provinces.

According to Sebata, most businesses in Alexandra are survivalists and have no strategies for growth and development. They are not creative, have no long-term growth strategies, don't understand the value of marketing their products and services, tend to compete for everything, and don't understand the value of collaborating in order to maximise their customer base and income.

"Our training is tailored to help them brand their products and services, and to develop marketing strategies to help them withstand competition from any new entrants to the local business

environment," added Sebata. "For survival they need to know how to profile themselves against competition and low pricing from mainly savvy foreign entrepreneurs, who order products in bulk to benefit from discounts thus enabling them to undercut local businesses."

He said this strategy had resulted in many local business closing down instead of reworking their strategies to continue in business. "Some of the looting and burning of foreign-owned shops is our local businesses' failure to adapt, learn and apply new business strategies."

The workshop trained the participants on product development and promotion, pricing, communication, business etiquette, access to finance, development and use of websites to access business opportunities, and adherence to legal requirements for business operations such as taxation.

Details: Mpho Modise, 076 082 1636.

Send you messages of support to the husband and wife team of Thabiso and Itumeleng Sebata on their initiative to help aspiring entrepreneurs in Alex by adding the Alex News team to your BBM contacts. Pin: 29CA3017

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She Hunted And Found Her Childhood Rapist
FOR 19 long years Jennifer hunted the man who stole her innocence, slit her throat and left her for dead...

I Put My Son In Jail
FOR years, Gordon Dewar refused to believe his child was a drug addict. Only after his son and his son's girlfriend cleaned out his wife's jewellery and confessed to spiking heroin did Gordon finally realise the true extent of the problem. After turning to ToughLove for help, he and his wife made a drastic decision - they put their son behind bars.

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JULIA Burnham (seated left with head gear) is Alexandra's rising dance star. She is with the Vuyani Dance Theatre cast.

Alex's rising dance star

SIPHO SISO
siphos@caxton.co.za

Stand aside Dada Masilo, here comes a new dance sensation from Alexandra with the name of Julia Burnham.

The Riverpark girl is the new kid on the block of dance in South Africa. A former Maryvale Catholic School pupil who moved to Marlboro Combined School for her matric in 2008, is making waves in the dance world since joining Vuyani Dance Company earlier this year.

Born in Johannesburg's Corronation Hospital in 1990, Burnham's family relocated to Alexandra years ago when she was still young and settled in 6th Avenue. "I had always been an enthusiastic dancer when I was young and my mother ensured I attended ballet classes at school," said the 23-year-old.

From school ballet Burnham joined community groups such as Rising Stars and a hip-hop crew and ultimately joined Moving Into Dance Mophathong in the Johannesburg CBD.

"This is where I started perfecting my dance career into a more professional approach," she said.

"To me, dance has become much more than just a hobby that I used to love at school.

"I never thought dance could become a profession for me but the various travels I have undertaken with Moving Into Dance Mophathong and the Vuyani Dance Company have become an eye-opener.

"After seeing how some people, especially abroad, have made dance their chosen career and profession, I was motivated to follow suit and here I am now."

She said she dreams of being the best she can be and also choreographing and teaching dance one day.

Burnham, who is currently on a tour of France with Gregory Maqoma's Kudu dance piece, urged aspiring dancers, especially in Alex, to believe in themselves and be committed to what they love most and stay away from drugs, alcohol abuse and indulging in sexual activity.

When Burnham and the Vuyani Dance Theatre return later this month, they will move to the Joburg Theatre to perform their epic work, *Full Moon* from 30 April till 11 May.

Send your messages of support for Julia Burnham by adding the Alex News team to your BBM contacts. Pin: 29CA3017

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SOLOMON SEKWAILA
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SA TAXI Foundation staffers with pupils from Zenzeleni Primary School celebrate the donation of DeskBags.

Gifts of DeskBags

LESEHO MANALA
lesehom@caxton.co.za

Pupils in Alexandra schools are among the seven million in the country needing desks and chairs to perform well in their school work.

This was said by the SA Taxi Foundation, a subsidiary of SA Taxi, when donating 1 350 DeskBags from PRWorx to pupils at Zenzeleni Primary School. SA Taxi is a financier of the taxi industry.

The DeskBags cost R100 to R130 each and are made of durable, recyclable material with a reinforced front flap which, when lifted becomes an instant desktop.

The bags can last the entire school period if well cared for.

The foundation's director Kalnisha Singh said while Zenzeleni may be better equipped than other more rural schools, it was chosen as a beneficiary by local taxi members because of the poverty of many of its learners. "Children's education extends to the home, and most of them at Zenzeleni

come from extremely poor households with no space or money to purchase household furniture for children to sit on when doing homework. They will use the DeskBags when seated on the floor, in the school yard, at parks and other open spaces," she said.

The foundation also gives bursaries to needy children for university study, and supports its members to improve their business operations through free advanced driver training, road safety and regulations training.

"We further support them through taxi media advertising of social services and business opportunities, and train them in business skills and customer care," she said.

The occasion was attended by 2014 Mr South Africa contestant Armond du Plessis and Miss Earth finalist Shannon Roscher.

Armond, who is a final year law student at the University of Pretoria said, "I major in child law so that I can help children as they are close to my heart. Education is the appropriate platform to affirm their rights,

especially for poor children," he said.

Roscher, a partner in DeskBags, is involved in various children's charity projects such as school vegetable gardens and hospitals. She has been chosen 'best up and coming public relations practitioner in SA' by Public Relations Institute of South Africa.

Commending the donation, Zenzeleni's principal Thandi Gumede said the DeskBags would be distributed to each child.

"The donation is a major contribution to educating the African child. They [DeskBags] will replace the plastic bags used by children to carry their books and help restore their self esteem," she said.

Do you think these DeskBags will make a meaningful difference in the lives of school children in Alex? Like the Alex News Facebook page to comment on this story.

Countdown to new Alex school

SIPHO SISO
siphos@caxton.co.za

Wahida Tolbert-Mbatha, the co-founder of Kgololo Academy, a world-class school set to open its doors in Alexandra next year, said she was looking forward to the opening day.

"The last few months have been quite a challenge as we work to bring this dream to life, however as a team we have persevered and are excited about building a firm foundation for the children of Alexandra," said Tobert-Mbatha, who co-founded the school with her husband, Thulani.

"The roadblocks and challenges have strengthened our resolve and will be a part of the story that we will tell at our grand opening next year. I cannot wait for that day."

She said the school would begin recruiting students in May.

"We will host a series of information sessions in Alexandra and will share more details closer to the date," she said.

"We have already embarked on a search for founding teachers for



WAAHIDA Tolbert-Mbatha, the co-founder of Kgololo Academy.

the school, who together with the support of the community will assist students in setting their dreams free."

She thanked everybody in the community of Alexandra and beyond for "keeping us in your prayers and

for the positive vibes, and financial support over the past two years. We look forward to continuing this journey with you for many more years to come and we appreciate you for sticking with us".

Donations for Alex High

LESEHO MANALA
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Alexandra High School has received a double dose of donations from the Fikile Mbalula Foundation.

The donation was made recently at the school by Fikile Mbalula, Minister of Sports and Recreation in the presence of students, teachers and alumnis of the school. Minister of Arts and Culture Paul Mashatile and Deputy Minister of Performance Monitoring and Evaluation Obed Bapela, as well as the Johannesburg East District director of education Raymond Martin, were present.

The donation was in the form of a fully equipped science laboratory from EduSciMat Foundation and full bursaries to two students – Pertunia Mamoloko and Busisiwe Dladla – who obtained university entry passes in science in matric last year. The donation was also in recognition of the school's best matric results among the five secondary schools in the area.

Mbalula called on local leaders and wealthy people to lead in uplifting their communities and institutions in order to minimise reliance on external donors or philanthropies. "We should pay back to society for our successes, and education is central to this. It is irreplaceable but requires passion, enthusiasm and belief in one's abilities. The science lab will nurture this belief and help students to excel in science and maths which many township children are afraid of. Because of its [lab] experiential nature, it will encourage them to consider careers

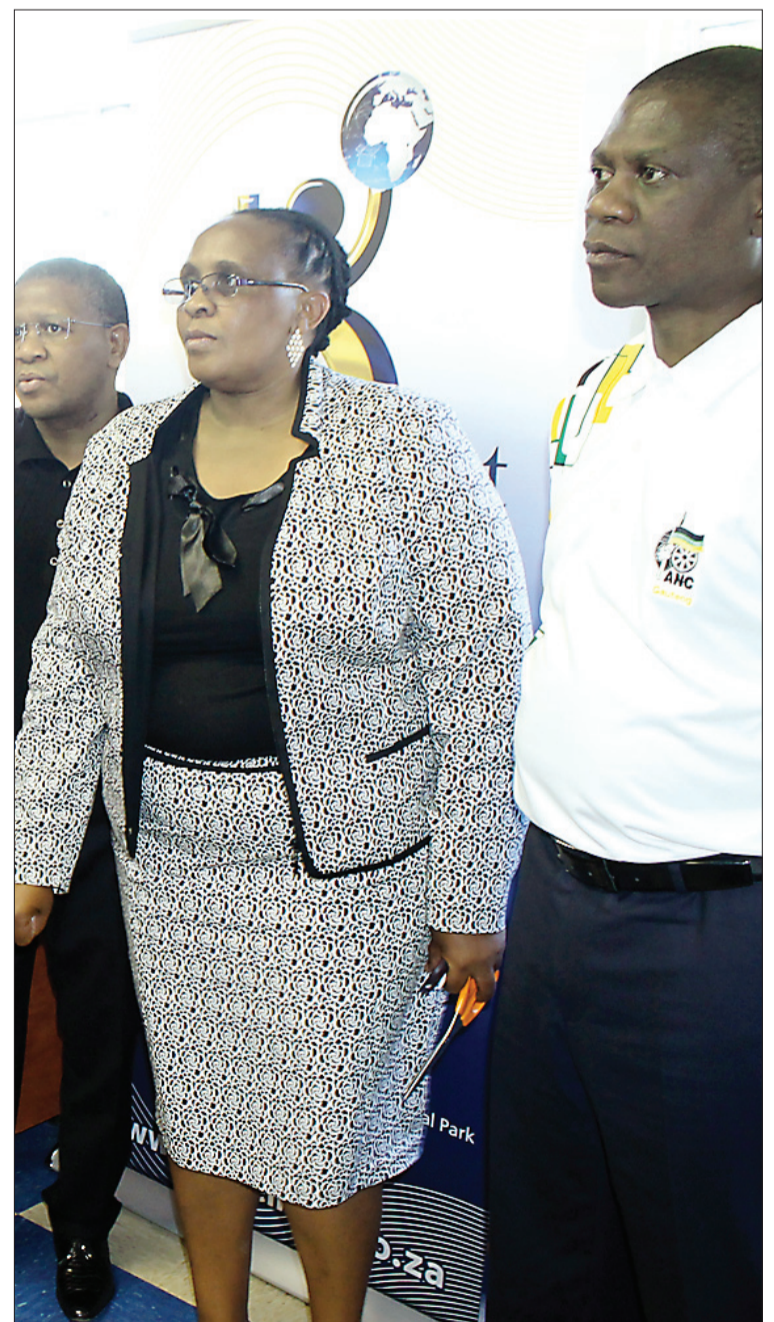
in science which is essential for the country's developmental needs. My foundation sponsored 10 students to attend universities countrywide last year and we intend to sponsor two more students from this school next year if they get good results," he said.

Thanking the foundation, the principal Zoleka Lebelo said the lab was a first for the school and a timely contribution. "We have improved our matric pass from 51 percent to 88 percent and increased the number of students qualifying for bachelors study at university from 20 to 63 from 2012 to 2013. With the lab, we expect these numbers to increase drastically," she said.

The director of education said the laboratory would help the school aim for 100% pass rate in science this year. He urged the students to value and maintain the equipment for their use and for future students.

A Grade 12 student Bongani Jokweni vowed to achieve a 100 percent pass in science this year. "We will use the lab to experiment on broad and amazing things in science. It will make us think out of the box and discover opportunities and careers which we would never have thought about," he said.

Do you think Alex High School can be saved from its educational decay and return to its glory days when it used to be the epicentre of academic excellence in Alex? Like the Alex News Facebook page to comment on this story.



SPORTS and Recreation Minister Fikile Mbalula, school principal Zoleka Lebelo and Arts and Culture Minister Paul Mashatile admire the science equipment donated to Alex High School.

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TALENT was in abundance at the recent coaching clinic held by Manchester City School of Football at the Greek Sporting Club in Linksfield.

LOCAL TALENT IMPRESSES MAN CITY COACHES

SIPHO SISO
siphos@caxton.co.za

Coaches of the Manchester City School of Football returned to London impressed with the talent they saw at their coaching clinics at Linksfield-based Mpumalanga Black Aces Youth Academy.

Andy Smith, Manchester City technical director of coaching said, "Your young football players have the core ingredients: desire to play, respect for their coaches and teammates, and the thirst for knowledge to further their careers in football."

He was impressed with the boys'

improvement over the three days of coaching. He had his eye on three players from the development teams from eMalahleni, whom he felt with the right football education, could have what it takes to play overseas.

"I only feel that an element that is still missing is the 'how to' – how to implement the skills.

"I am looking forward to coming back in July and seeing how the boys have improved and if the coaches have been successful in implementing the clinics' lessons that we have held with them."

The Manchester City coaches will complete two more visits to South

Africa this year to help Black Aces develop a strong youth development academy.

"We have been so impressed with the skill and experience that the Man City coaches have brought to our young players," said Mario Morfou, Mpumalanga Black Aces co-chairperson and CEO.

"We at Black Aces have a strong belief in development football and through this programme we aim not only to develop young players for our first team, but also for our national team."

More than 300 aspiring young footballers took part in the clinics.

Referee cost us game – coach

SIPHO SISO
siphos@caxton.co.za

FC Godisanang coach Abby Mofomme blamed what he called "dubious referee decisions", for his team's away draw to MD Spartans on 19 April.

The SAB League game was played at the Congo Grounds in Dobsonville, opposite the Dobsonville Stadium which is home to premiers side Moroka Swallows. "We could have

easily won the game, had it not been for the dubious refereeing decision we witnessed on the day. It was like the referee was determined to see MD Spartans win the game. "But an away nil-nil draw for us, was a better game anywhere. Each time we play Spartans these sort of things always happen with referees," Mofomme said. Godisanang came to this game inspired by a previous 2-0 win at home, against an Orange Farm outfit, Orange Stars. Godisanang captain

Donald Somo led from the front and scored the brace to hand his team three vital points in the SAB League.

Do you think the performances of the referees in our football matches are up to scratch? Like the Alex News Facebook page and comment on this story.

On a wing and prayer

SIPHO SISO
siphos@caxton.co.za

Six gymnasts of the Alexandra Trampoline Club have been selected to represent South Africa at the 2014 Indo-Pacific Championships.

Among the countries included in the Indo-Pacific Championships to be held at Sun City from 29 June to 5 July are Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, Japan, Mexico, Namibia, New Zealand, Qatar, and the United States of America.

As the competition is self-funded, selected gymnasts will need to raise funds to pay their own costs, which includes accommodation, transport, competition attire and entry fees of R12 000 per gymnast.

The South African Gymnastics Federation has appealed for any financial help to enable the

talented gymnasts to participate and represent South Africa.

"We appeal to various companies and individuals who may be in a position to assist these talented gymnasts with sponsorship to come forward," said federation president Helen van der Walt.

"It will be very disappointing if lack of funds prevent these talented gymnasts from competing in their own country," said Alex Trampoline Club co-ordinator Glenda Schmidt.

Details: Helen van der Walt, 082 921 6301; helen@trampolinesport.co.za; Glenda Schmidt 082 924 7384; glenda@alextra.co.za

For more and latest sports stories from Alexandra, visit www.alexnews.co.za



ALEX gymnasts included in the South African team are: Front row: Phaphama Nxumalo and Nombulelo Masilo; second row: Xolani Nxumalo and Offering Tlaka; third row: Sicelo Mabizela and Michael Schmidt; and back row: Hudson Nxumalo (head coach).