

PLASTIC ISLANDS: A HIDDEN OCEAN DISASTER



Image Source: istockphoto.com

By Sonia Van Der Linde

You have probably heard of “plastic islands” floating in our oceans, but what are they exactly? Ocean garbage patches, known informally as plastic islands, are massive zones of plastic debris and refuse that have been caught in currents and essentially trapped. The best known of these is the Great Pacific Garbage Patch situated between California and Hawaii.

These garbage patches aren’t solid islands you can walk on, but rather areas in the water where small bits of plastic, microplastics, and larger pieces of trash are suspended in the water column. They are created when circular ocean currents known as the gyres trap floating debris at their centre.

These plastic patches are a massive and ever-growing problem. Every year, millions of tons of plastic waste reach the oceans from terrestrial sources, including rivers, beaches and cities. Marine animals like turtles, fish, sea birds and whales are also affected by this as they frequently consume the plastic or become entangled in it, often with lethal results.

Microplastics are small plastic pieces, measuring less than 55mm, that pose an even greater threat as they can be ingested by small marine organisms and thus enter the food web and ultimately humans via seafood.

The clean-up of such patches poses a tremendous challenge. It is dispersed over large distances, often at large depths underwater, and retrieving it without damaging marine organisms is impossible. Others try to pioneer technologies to remove plastics or prevent more plastic from entering the ocean.

Preventing plastic pollution begins on land -

Preventing plastic pollution begins on land – by limiting plastic use, improving waste management, and increasing global recycling efforts. As a result of this rising awareness, governments, industries and communities are being mobilized to prevent plastic islands from becoming an even bigger problem for marine systems and human life.

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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Spring has almost sprung – literally – and as we are preparing for the constant showers, crisp air and flowers blooming, we are also closing off Women's Month and finishing our first month on campus.

Between celebrating women, attending events and lectures alike, and bundling up due to the winter cold, our journalists and editors have been cooking up an edition that you can enjoy with a warm beverage and your favorite sweet treat, with.

This edition boasts well-written works highlighting the use of AI, the pros and cons of online dating, the process of healing, local campus and sports news, as well as some new additions to the world of science and technology. Basically, this means that as per usual, there is always something for everyone, and that this edition is jam-packed, and should be enough to tide you over until next time.

With Women's Month drawing to a close, we are reminded of the sacrifices made in 1956 when women protesting against discriminatory pass laws, when they marched to the Union Building. We commemorated them through various events throughout the month, and should continue honouring and being inspired by them generally.

I hope that you enjoy reading this edition as much as we enjoyed putting it together.

Until next time!

Leigh-Nakeetah Jason
Editor-in-Chief

LEGAL BURSARIES UNLOCK LAW STUDENT DREAMS

By Cinga Mgandela and Louisa Mkhabela

The Legal Practitioners Fidelity Fund (LPFF) is making a significant contribution in the lives of law students in South Africa through its targeted programme of providing critical financial support to academically outstanding young individuals who face financial challenges in pursuing a career in law.

The LPFF understands that access to education is a fundamental human right, and financial hardship should not stand in the way of pursuing and completing their studies.

Their bursary programme offers financial aid to students studying various law-related degrees, including Bachelor of Arts (Law), Bachelor of Commerce (Law), Baccalaureus Luris, Bachelor of Laws, or similar qualifications. To be eligible, applicants must be in the first semester of their second year at the time of application.

The bursary provides two years of funding, covering tuition for the third and fourth years of study. Additionally, third-year students are also encouraged to apply. If successful, they stand to receive full funding for their final year of study.

Many past recipients of the LPFF bursary have a track record of establishing successful careers in law, showcasing the long-term impact of financial support.

By investing in the education of aspiring lawyers, the LPFF is not only changing individual lives but also contributing to the development of a skilled and accessible legal profession.

If you're a law student looking for financial support to further your studies, don't miss this opportunity. Visit the LPFF website at www.fidfund.co.za/bursaries/ for more information on the programme and application process. You can also follow the LPFF on social media for updates.



Image Source: Pearl Ntsheni-Kola for Legal Practitioners Fidelity Fund

JUSTICE SERVED IN CELEBRITY MURDER CASE



Image Source: Kindel Media on Pexels

By Lesedi Morwe

On a Sunday morning, 20 November 2022, Oupa John Sefoka – popularly known as ‘DJ Sumbody’ - and his bodyguards, Sibusiso Mokoena and Sandile Myeza, were attacked by unknown gunmen while driving home from a show in Woodmead, Johannesburg. Their car was sprayed with a hail of bullets, killing them instantly, and injuring a third person driving by.

Almost three years after the incident, on 21 July 2025, the police arrested 4 suspects linked to the murder. Three of them, Michael Pule Tau (55), Tiego Floyd Mabusela (47) and Musa Kekana (35), are suspected to be hired hitmen. The fourth suspect, well-known businessman Katiso Molefe (61) is believed to be the mastermind behind the murders.

In the ongoing investigations, the police confirmed that the weapon used – an AK-47 – is also connected to the murder of Hector ‘DJ Vintos’ Buthelezi, who was shot and killed in March 2022 outside a nightclub in Orlando East, Soweto.

National Police-Spokesperson, Athlenda Mathe, confirmed on eNCA News after the court appearance, that the firearm used in the killings of DJ Sumbody, Mokoena, Myeza and DJ Vintos is the same weapon used in two other murders as well.

Molefe is expected to return to court on August 6 for a formal bail hearing, while the three co-accused have said they will not ask for bail. The State Prosecutor also said that there will be a centralization of cases to ensure that the murder cases of DJ Sumbody and his two bodyguards, DJ Vintos, and the other two murders are consolidated into one case.

The public praised this major breakthrough, but urged the police to work harder on other celebrity murder cases still unresolved, including that of Kiernan ‘AKA’ Jarry Forbes, a famous rapper shot outside a Durban restaurant in February 2023 and Luke Fleurs, a rising football star who was stabbed to death in a domestic incident in 2022.

PROFESSOR CALLS FOR HUMAN-CENTRED ORGANISATIONS IN INAUGURAL LECTURE

By Megan Potgieter

Professor Amanda Werner, director of the School of Industrial Psychology and Human Resources, delved into concepts of humanising workplaces through humanistic management in her inaugural lecture on 21 July 2025 at the Conference Centre on North Campus.

The lecture, titled “Navigating Change within Organisations: The Human Element,” drew on academic research conducted within the School of Industrial Psychology and Human Resources, as well as organisational case studies, to present empirical research on six key pillars of organisational change readiness, including organisational capability, employee readiness, communication, organisational culture, learning and leadership.

Calling for a universities and organisations at large to shape more inclusive and resilient workplaces, Professor Werner stated: “The organisation is an ecosystem, and we are the

curators of that system. The most profound change work is organisational culture. People are not the object of change. They are the change.”

As a registered chartered Human Resources professional with the South African Board of People Practices, Professor Werner holds a DTech in Human Resource Management and has also co-authored and edited multiple textbooks, supervised or co-supervised many postgraduate students and served on national- and international academic review or assessment panels.

“Professor Werner’s lecture addresses an important challenge – that of organisations grappling with what appears to be constant change in the uncertain and complex times in which we live,” commented Vice-Chancellor Professor Sibongile Muthwa, reflecting on the timeliness of the lecture’s theme.



Image Source: Nelson Mandela University

SMALL CHANGES, BIG IMPACT

By Asisipho Mpahleni

Let's be honest, climate change isn't exactly trending on campus. Between deadlines, funding issues, and dating apps, who's got time to think about the planet?

We live in a world of instant gratification, where we Uber Eats and binge-watch series on full brightness. The emissions? Not our problem... or so we think.

What are carbon emissions?

Imagine this: the Earth is wearing an invisible blanket. This blanket is made out of tiny things called carbon emissions. These are invisible puffs of smoke that come from cars, factories, airplanes and even cows! A little bit of this blanket is good because it keeps the Earth warm, like your cozy duvet in winter. Lately, we've been making too many of these puffs, and now the Earth's blanket is getting way too thick. It's like trying to sleep under 10 blankets... in summer.

Remember the Kwa-Zulu Natal floods, the Cape Town drought, and the intense heatwaves in Gauteng? That's climate change knocking.

But humans have to survive.

Like the fisherman who feeds his family at the

cost of a starving penguin population, we make choices that prioritize the now: fast food, fast cars, chasing status and income. Our rush to "make it" leads us to consume more than we care to admit.

Every choice comes at a cost; just because we don't see the price tag now, it doesn't mean we're not paying.

Our university is doing its part: solar panels, recycling bins, and awareness campaigns.

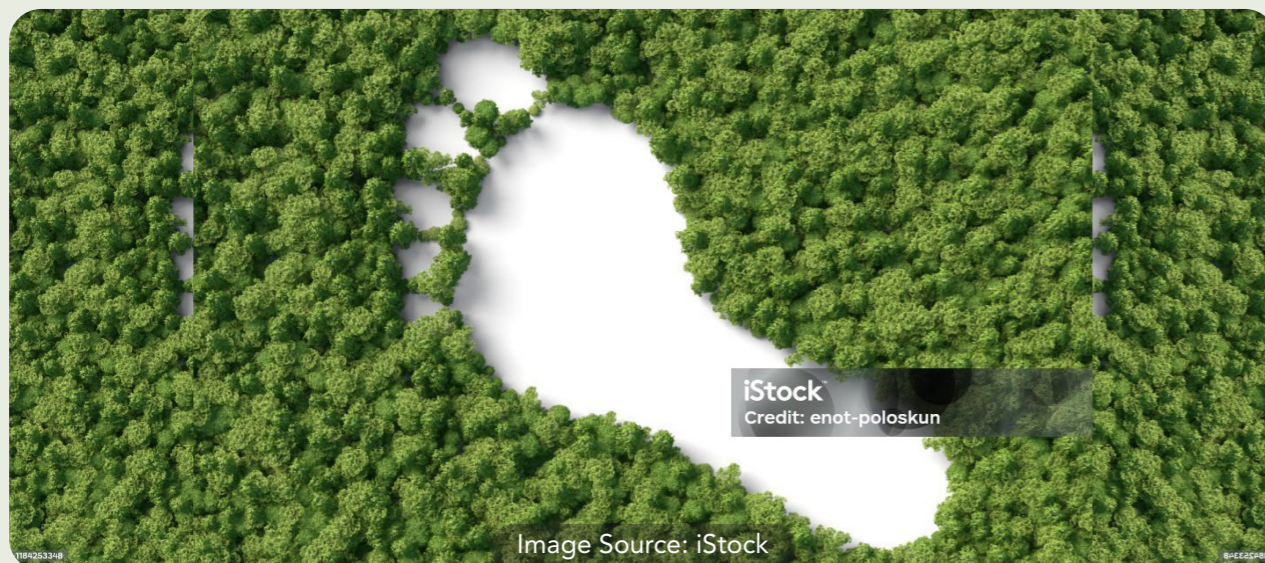
But do we notice or care?

Maybe it's time to start with you. Here's a link to calculate your carbon footprint: <https://www.footprintnetwork.org/resources/footprint-calculator/>

Every time we ride a bicycle instead of hopping in a car, eat more plants, or unplug devices when not in use, we help peel off one of those extra blankets.

And step by step, we help the Earth breathe again.

Not perfection, just awareness. The planet's future isn't just your grandkids problem; it's yours too.



THE SIGNIFICANCE OF WOMEN'S DAY



By Zukukhanye Maseti

Annually, South Africans celebrate Women's Day on the 9th of August, paying tribute to thousands of women who united and stood up against the pass laws for women in 1956.

The day was set to celebrate being a woman, their strengths, bravery and courage. At present, women are facing issues of gender, inequalities, GBV (Gender Based Violence) and many others.

Maintaining healthy relationships is quite a priority in eliminating these issues. LeadHER (the Women's Empowerment program) and Ebuhlanti/The Kraal (the men's leadership program) collaborated for the third time this Women's Month, educating young women and men on how to navigate healthy relationships in a changing world. Dr Mthokozisi Ntuli explained that the collaboration signifies that there is a role a man can play in women's empowerment to ensure that rights of women are recognized.

Ulleta Marais, the GBV counsellor in the Transformation Office, touched on building healthy relationships stating that one must educate themselves on healthy relationships, set respectful boundaries, take responsibility

to hear and respect someone else's "No", recognize harmful behaviours like invalidating people's feelings by saying things like "it's not that deep", call our unhealthy norms and create safety for each other. "Healthy relationships are not a privilege but are a right, and that right begins with the choice we make every single day."

Pastor Thando Madyibi spoke on the purpose-driven relationships, highlighting that broken relationships, whether with yourself, others or a higher power, are a result of today's crises, like rape. Advised people should build or maintain meaningful relationships that are purpose-driven. In doing so, a person must search for their higher power's original intent, not just for themselves but for mankind, and to value others above themselves, have integrity, a shared vision, and be intentional.

"We need to get to a stage where safety is universal, where it is not defined by certain circumstances or situations. The safety of every woman must be the same safety of every man," Thando replied on the safety in relationships. "If we could try to put ourselves in someone else's shoes more often, we would avoid a lot of the hurt we inflict on others."

BEING A WOMAN IN SOCIETY

By Ziggy Unam Motman

The definition of a woman becomes tricky to provide for many reasons, because one may want the biological definition of a woman, but also because of how they are represented and how they are used to being seen as a woman.

From her first breath, women are to possess the qualities of a leader. A woman holds down her family, she is a shoulder to lean on in tumultuous situations. She embodies strength as that it what is expected in our societies.

Society expects women to be kind, while simultaneously allowing themselves to be knelt on or absorb any pain inflicted on them all the while holding things down when no one else can.

These expectations raise the question of “do women want to be treated with an exemption of being able to hold it down because they are strong?” Sinomtha Ngeshe, a graduate student in BA Media Culture and Communications at Nelson Mandela University, said “I do not think women want or should be seen as this.”

She continued by saying “as much as we live in an evolved century where women do not lower voices, there’s still a lot to be done so that women would be accepted as they are not what society wants them to be.”

The notion of being defined by society has left many women struggling to fit in a mold because when they do not meet the standard, they are seen as strange. Our society ought not to place such high expectations on women, because at the end of the day, we are only human and there are times whereby we must show grace and compassion to one another.



AI: FRIEND OR FOE



Image Source: pexels.com

By Katlego Mokone

Remember when talking to yourself was a red flag? Now, it’s increasingly common to “talk” to a computer. Whether it’s ChatGPT, Replika, people are pouring out their hearts, fears and frustrations to algorithms. It is the ultimate judgment-free zone, available 24/7, and it costs a lot less than a real therapist. For many, especially those feeling lonely, anxious or just needing a vent after a tough day.

For people struggling to connect with others, or who face barriers to traditional mental health care, Artificial Intelligence can feel like a lifeline. It can help sort out jumbled thoughts, offer a different perspective, or simply be a safe space to unload.

Here’s the catch though – that comforting, understanding AI? It’s not actually understanding anything. It’s an advance algorithm predicting the next best word to keep you engaged. While it can mimic empathy impressively, it lacks genuine emotion, lived experience, or the ability to truly connect on a human level.

Relying too heavily on AI for emotional support can create an illusion of connection that might actually push us further away from real human

relationships. If we get used to a perfectly tailored, always-agreeable “friend” we might find the messy, imperfect, and sometimes challenging world of human interaction less appealing. We learn and grow through navigating those real-world bumps, not by conversing with a perfectly programmed echo chamber.

AI can never substitute for a trained mental health professional, it fails to diagnose complex conditions, understand nuanced human emotions, or provide the critical insights that come from human interaction.

Friend, Foe, or Just a Tool?

Perhaps neither, or a bit of both. It’s a powerful tool, but with any tool, it needs to be used wisely and with caution.

For the those quick, low-stakes vents, AI is a convenient outlet. But for building meaningful connections, you cannot substitute the rich, complex dynamics of real-life relationships. Let’s embrace the helpful aspects of AI, but never forget the irreplaceable value of being truly seen, and understood by another human being.

ONLINE DATING: SAFE, SMART AND SELECTIVE

By Ayanda Nkosi

Dating has transformed in the current generation. While some are still firm believers in the traditional way of dating with in-person approaches and dates, others have welcomed the prospect of finding their soulmates on the opposite end of the planet through online dating. However, online dating does come with its fair share of challenges, which have cast a dark shadow on the option of online dating.

With over a thousand different dating sites worldwide, this does more than broaden the dating pool of suitors to choose from. In addition to apps, sites and other platforms, several forms of digital contact, like texting, voice and video calls, make it possible to contact one another across different cities, time zones and even continents. While some may appreciate the opportunity to establish emotional connections over the phone without being misdirected by physical attraction, external influences, and opinions or materialistic attractions.

However, with violations, harassment, and crime on the rise, most people raise their guard

regarding any online activity to avoid scams, endangering their assets and well-being. Unfortunately, these platforms have also offered catfish, scammers and traffickers a platform to hunt for their unsuspecting victims. Catfishing a deceptive tactic that some may use to gain a relationship or other benefits. Perpetrators tend to use fake names and images or stolen identities in attempts to deceive their victims.

Ever considered online dating but felt like instead of putting yourself out there, you would be putting yourself in harm's way? It may be possible to explore online dating with the necessary precautions in place, such as:

- Avoid sharing personal information with new acquaintances.
- Meet in public for in-person meetings.
- Avoid/ ignore financial help requests.

Remember that feeling uncomfortable should not factor in any part of dating, and if that is the case, it might be time to cancel a match or block a potential date. Over and above the stigma of online dating, you might be one swipe away from meeting the partner of your dreams, but watch out for those red flags!

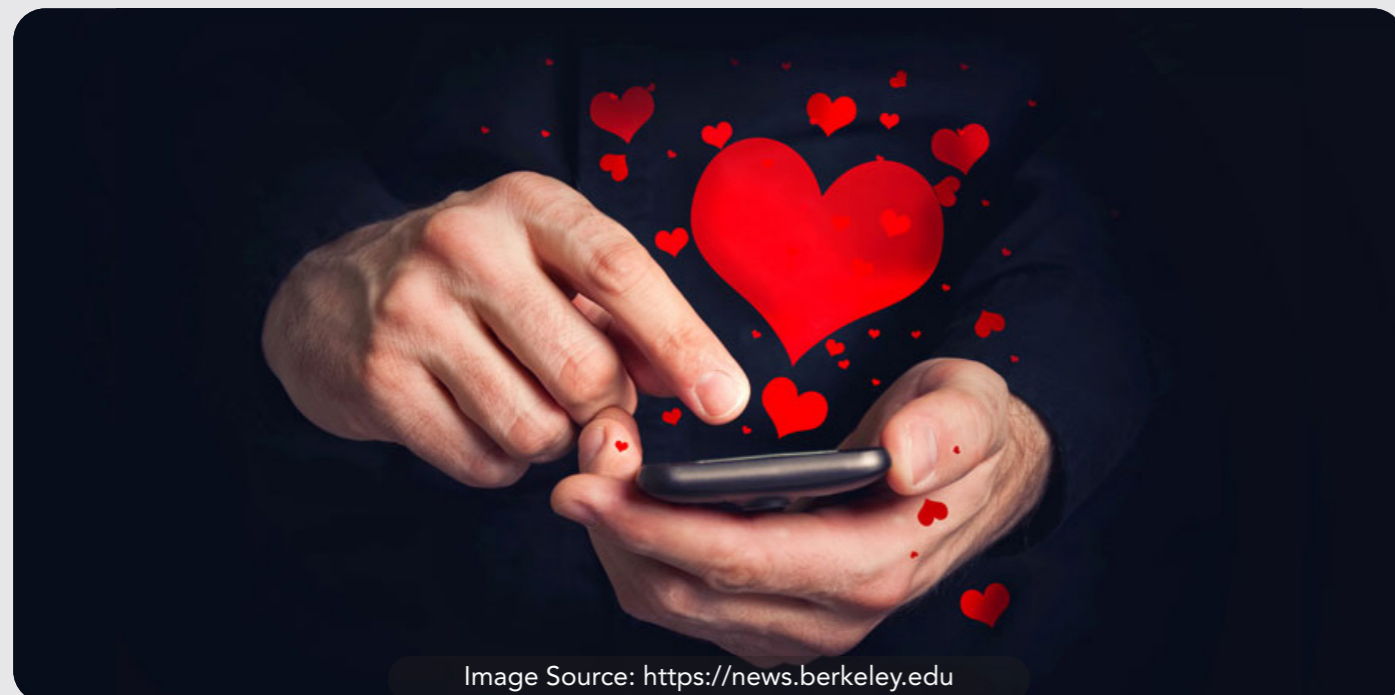


Image Source: <https://news.berkeley.edu>

THE RISE OF THE GIG ECONOMY ON CAMPUS



Image Source: pexels.com

By Katlego Mokone

For many students at Nelson Mandela University, gig work on platforms like Uber and Bolt is not about acquiring extra pocket money, it is about survival.

The financial strain that comes with university life in South Africa makes it mandatory to have a form of income as a student. While the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) is meant to ease this burden, delays, admin glitches and the overwhelming demand often leave students stranded. In this gap, the gig economy, with its low entry barriers, becomes a quick but precarious lifeline.

However, the demands of gig work do come at a price. Balancing books with bookings is a brutal equation. Spending hours behind the wheel results in sacrificing crucial time meant for lectures, tutorials, studying and completing

assignments. The grind of navigating traffic, managing passengers and chasing ratings – chips away at both the individual's time and mental energy.

The impact stretches beyond academics. The unpredictable income, the constant performance pressure, and the relentless push to do more foster a cycle of stress and burnout. For many, university life becomes less about growth and discovery, and more about survival.

When students are forced to simply "get by" instead of thriving, the joy of learning fades. Higher education, meant to be a launchpad to a brighter future, begins to feel like just another burden. For many at Nelson Mandela University, gig work is not a choice. In most cases, it is the only option. The resilience that these students demonstrate is undeniable, but the question remains: should the cost of a degree be measured in both tuition and exhaustion?

TRUSTING THE HEALING PROCESS & NOT RUSHING IT

By Nura du Plessis

A human beings, we go through many things in our daily lives, such as breakups, friendships ending, us growing as individuals and life just changing in general. Due to this, we go through healing processes to obtain a better lifestyle for ourselves for the future. However, what one may not understand is that if it takes time, it is okay.

Healing will always be part of our lifestyles, whether we realize that or not; it's not something we do after a bad thing happens, but it is an ongoing process incorporated into how we grow, relate, and take care of ourselves.

Everyone heals differently; some people take a very long time, and others instantly get their lives back on track, and that too – is normal. We are not all the same. The important part about a healing process is always to trust it, just like the saying goes, "Trust the process, don't rush the process." Having trust in a difficult time is not about feeling better every day, but it is about knowing that there will be ups and downs, which is part of the process, meaning that just because you are hurting today, that does not mean you are not healing.

The feeling that you may never overcome a situation is normal, but day by day it will get better; it always does, and once one has accepted that this is a journey that will be over in time, it will get so much better. Healing is a never-ending rollercoaster of emotions, and sometimes it's more difficult times than happy times, but at least its a movement. Always remember to move at your own pace; one's lifestyle is determined by the way one takes care of it, and it should not concern anyone but you, as long as you get better for you.



Image Source: Nura Du Plessis

YOUNG FANS AT THE RISK OF GAMBLING ADDICTION

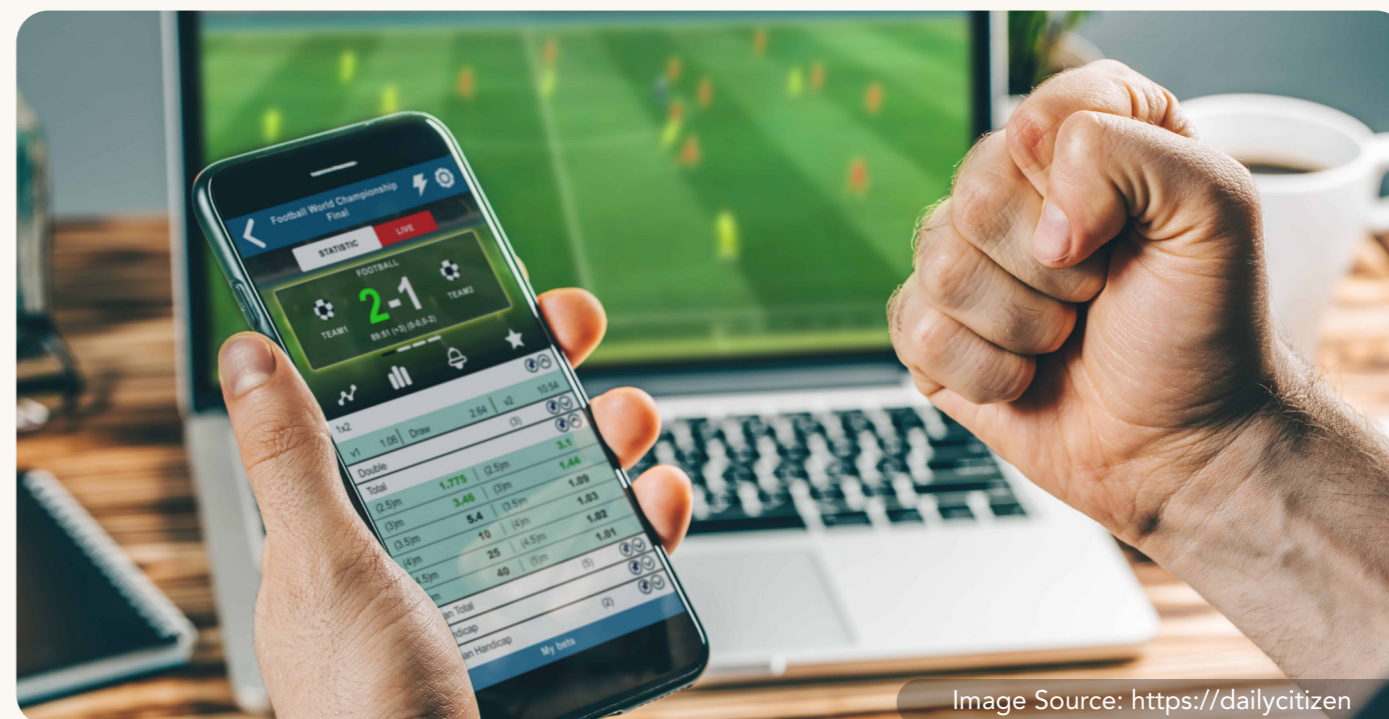


Image Source: <https://dailycitizen>

By Ayanda Nkosi

"Life as a student can be financially demanding" - a sentence students would unanimously deem the understatement of the century.

The transition from having lived your whole life as a dependent thrusts all of us into an overwhelming life of responsibility, including how we utilize the financial resources we have. This introduces a need to explore methods to make an extra buck here and there, using methods such as sports betting and gambling. While betting on your favourite team may seem like harmless fun as an avid sports fan, it may quickly transgress to having not just your mood but your finances hanging in the score of the next match.

Sports betting refers to placing a wager on an unpredictable event, such as a winning team. Gambling on the other hand, is a risk taken with a desired result, like winning the game. Both gambling and sports betting have evolved over the years; it was only available in casinos, in-store tellers, and racetracks. With the digital era in full swing, advancing with each smartphone

upgrade, we have a wide variety of sports betting options right in our hands.

Subsequently, mobile apps and online platforms have made placing bets convenient, accessible, and prevalent. Research indicates that 29% of all betters and gamblers are citizens aged 18-34, forming the highest percentage comprised of the same age group. Sports fans have been recorded to partake in a substantial amount of sports betting through professional soccer and basketball league teams.

All adults above the age of 18 are urged to gamble responsibly, as the line between gambling for entertainment or a couple of extra rands and addiction may be easier to cross than we think. An addiction that can lead the youth to unfavourable consequences of financial vulnerability, poor academic performance and a negative impact on mental health.

While there might be no harm in betting on your favourite team, it might be a good idea to monitor how often or how much you're betting. After all, too much of anything may be a bad thing.

HOW YOUNG SOUTH AFRICANS GET THEIR NEWS



By Ayabonga Malima

The way we consume news is changing dramatically in the age of the internet and Artificial Intelligence (AI).

This transformation is, unsurprisingly, met with mixed reactions, both positive and negative. On one hand, access to news and information has become easier and more convenient with people being able to stay informed through their smartphones from virtually anywhere in the world. On the other, this shift comes at the cost of traditional media, and it increases the risk of audiences falling victim to false news, misinformation, disinformation, and mal-information, collectively known as information disorder.

The recently published Digital News Report 2025 by the Reuters Institute, provides key insights and data on how young South Africans consume and engage with news today.

The respondents, according to the report, were generally young, educated up to tertiary level, and largely urban residents. Among older media – television, print, and radio – 46% of young South Africans said that their main

source of news was SABC News across SABC 1, 2 and 3. eNCA came next, with 42%. Local radio news is relevant too, as a quarter of the population listen to it weekly. When it came to print media, the Sunday Times had a readership of 25% among young South Africans.

Hence, is it no surprise that the youth get their news online. Among these websites, News24 is the most frequently accessed online news source, having a weekly reach of 58%, followed by eNCA Online at 45% and SABC News Online at 40%.

News is also accessed by young South Africans via social media like Facebook, YouTube and WhatsApp. Facebook is in the lead, since half of young people use it as a source of news, followed by YouTube and WhatsApp, at 42% and 41% respectively.

As of 2025, a remarkable 86% of young South Africans access news through their devices, highlighting the ongoing decline of traditional South African media platforms. The upside of the report is that the level of trust in news has increased from 49% to 55% in 2025. This places South Africa well above the global average of 40% for trust in news.

HOW YOUR GUT MAY BE INFLUENCING YOUR MIND



By Sonia Van Der Linde

Each of us is home to trillions of bacteria, viruses, fungi and other microscopic life-forms, collectively referred to as the microbiome. Although they inhabit all areas of the body, the gut microbiome is of special interest to researchers due to its possible link to the brain.

The connection, commonly referred to as the gut-brain axis, is a two-way communication system, establishing the link between the gastrointestinal tract, and the central nervous system. Gut bacteria aids in digestion, the production of vitamins, and the generation of food by-products like short-chain fatty acids and neurotransmitters. Some of these neurotransmitters, like serotonin, gamma-aminobutyric acid (GABA) and dopamine, are well known to regulate mood, stress and cognition.

The imbalance of gut bacteria, known as dysbiosis, has been linked to psychological issues, including anxiety and depression, as well as neurodevelopmental disorders like

autism. Although these processes are not yet fully understood, scientists believe that inflammation, changes in brain chemistry, and altered stress hormone levels are believed to play a role.

The health of the microbiome can be affected by diet, lifestyle of antibiotics. High fiber, fermented, and diverse-plant based diets generally favour healthy bacterial populations. On the other hand, processed foods that are high in sugars and unhealthy fats can promote the growth of harmful bacteria.

Despite the lack of microbiome research, preliminary studies show that probiotics (beneficial bacteria) and prebiotics (the stuff that feed the bacteria) could play a role as an adjunctive therapy in the treatment of mood disorders. But they should not solely be used as alternatives to conventional medical care, they can simply be applied in a larger context of mental wellness. In simple terms; taking care of your gut might just help take care of your mind too.

SLASH-AND-BURN: ADVANTAGEOUS OR ENVIRONMENTAL CRISIS?



Image Source: istockphoto.com

By Sonia Van Der Linde

Slash-and-burn agriculture is a more traditional form of farming where land is cleared for crops by felling and burning trees and plants from that area. Already common practice for centuries, particularly in tropical areas such as the Amazon basin, central Africa, and South East Asia, it is a tradition rooted in numerous rural and indigenous communities' culture and survival.

There are many advantages to slash-and-burn. The ashes left by the burning plants are a temporary source for fertilizers that contain nutrients such as, Potassium, Phosphorous, Calcium, etc which are essential for plant growth and health, and the technique enables farmers to avoid chemical use on their fields. Because in very low-density populations, the fallow land is left for such long periods of time (often 10-20 years), that the land is able to properly regenerate, and the cycle is sustainable.

But given the current situation, it is an even more damaging and abused practice. As the populations rise and forest areas diminish, land is recycled too rapidly for ecosystems to rest and recover. This results in deforestation, loss of biodiversity and permanent damage to soils.

Without tree cover, rains can strip the top soil from the land, rendering it infertile and also increasing flooding and landslides.

Burning also emits significant quantities of Carbon Dioxide (CO₂) and other greenhouse gases that cause climate change. As an example, on some days in 2015 when Indonesia has experienced slash and burn fires, the country has surpassed the United States in daily CO₂ output. These practices in the Amazon have led to all time high rates of deforestation in the region, as well as affecting climate within the region.

There exists solutions – if only they were implemented. More sustainable options are agroforestry, no-burn farming, and stronger land rights for indigenous communities. In certain places, governments and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are collaborating with local people to integrate indigenous knowledge with contemporary conservation technologies.

Slash-and-burn agriculture is not necessarily a wrong practice – it all depends on the how and where it is done. In a changing climate and crowded world, balancing tradition with sustainability is more important than ever.

FRANS AND SOLOMONS SET THE PACE



Image Source: Petrus Rademeyer

By Fullstop Communications

Battling winds and rain, Melikhaya Frans and Refeloe Solomons powered to victory in the third edition of the Madibaz half marathon held at Nelson Mandela University's South Campus in Gqeberha.

Around 1500 runners braved the cold for the 21.1 km, 10km and 5km races, showing resilience and spirit despite the weather. Frans, who finished second last year, took top honours in the men's half-marathon, clocking 1:05:34. He crossed the line almost two minutes ahead of defending champion Andile Motwana with Sicelo Mashaba from Madibaz finishing third.

"When you enter a race, you never know what the weather will bring. You just make the best of it," Frans said. "This wasn't ideal weather, but you can't control it. You just go out and give it your all."

The simultaneous start of the 10km and half-marathon allowed Frans to feed off the energy

of training partners Sinawo Poti and Lithobe Menzeleleli before pulling away at the halfway point with the wind behind him. He now sets his sights on defending his Baywest 10km title.

In the women's race, Solomons dominated once again, claiming her third straight Madibaz title in 1:22:39. "I came into this race determined to win it again," she said. Running alongside training partners early on, helped her maintain a strong pace, despite concerns over slippery conditions.

Solomons thanked her coach Luvuyo Stephen, for his continued support behind the scenes. "He plays a big role in helping me stay competitive."

Madibaz athletics manager Bernard Petersen, said the turnout was slightly affected by the weather, but the energy remained high, especially with the Personal Best Bell which "was a big hit" among participants. Plans are already underway to build on this success for 2026.

BACK TO THE DRAWING BOARD FOR SIGCAU AFTER NATIONAL SELECTION



Image Source: Fullstop Communications

By Fullstop Communications

First year tourism student Stella Sigcau, has had a rapid journey into University Sports South Africa's (USSA) National Volleyball Team. Her selection did not come easily, and the path was far from straightforward despite her natural talent.

Originally from the small village of Natbankulu near Mthatha, she first encountered volleyball after enrolling at Bloemfontein South High. "I didn't even know volleyball existed in South Africa, let alone Bloemfontein," she confessed. But with encouragement from a school coach who spotted potential in her and her sister, she gave it a try and never looked back.

In her first season, she impressed the selectors and earned a spot in the Free State team that competed in a tournament in Cape Town. That experience exposed her to the tactical and technical aspects of the game. "Seeing how my teammates and opponents approached it

made me want to grow even more," she said. Her move to Madibaz this year has helped her build on that foundation.

At the recent USSA tournament in Cape Town, Sigcau's performance stood out. Playing as a middle blocker for the Nelson Mandela University team, she helped secure wins against CUT and UFH, despite tough losses against UKZN and UNIZULU. Madibaz ultimately placed 10th out of 11 teams.

To her surprise, she was selected for the national team after the tournament. "I was really shocked," she admitted. "I didn't expect anything like that, especially after my first USSA tournament." She described the week as both amazing and challenging calling it a mental and physical test.

Now, with national recognition under her belt, Sigcau remains grounded. "It's back to the drawing board now because there's still so much to improve on".

MAMELODI SUNDOWNS SHINE IN CLUB WORLD CUP



Image Source: KICKOFF

By Thandolukayise Shangase

Mamelodi Sundowns Players were awarded the chance to show off overseas after participating in the Club World Cup in the United States of America.

The South African giants faced the biggest challenge in their history as the gold medal would mean the best team in the world, defeating many challenge different European giants like Real Madrid. The Brazilians have an admirable record in CAF Champions League for the past four consecutive years, which led them to 2025 Club World Cup.

Mamelodi Sundowns have enjoyed a dominant run over the past four seasons, collecting seven major trophies – including five consecutive league titles, the Nedbank Cup, MTN8 and the 2023 African Football League. In the AFL, Sundowns defeated Petro de Luanda and Al Ahly before overcoming Wydad AC 3-2 on aggregate in the final, overturning a first-leg deficit with a 2-0 win at Loftus Versfeld to become the first champions.

Second leg and away goal rules seem to be the problem for Mamelodi Sundowns after being knocked out in CFL finals for the past 4 consecutive seasons through them. These results show Sundowns as the perfect team to represent Africa along with Al Ahly (Egypt) CAF Champions League winners in 2021, 2023 and 2024, Wydad AC (Morocco) Champions in 2022, Espérance de Tunis (Tunisia), Qualified via four year CAF ranking.

Mamelodi Sundowns were drawn against Ulsan HD, Fluminense, and Borussia Dortmund at the FIFA Club World Cup. They earned 4 from a win, a draw, and a loss finishing as the best-performing African team, ahead of Espérance (3 points), Al Ahly, and Wydad (0 points).

In a thrilling 4-3 loss to Dortmund, Lucas Ribeiro Costa's opener was later voter Goal of the Tournament. "Some teams came here and took nothing, but Mamelodi Sundowns leave with a lot, we took four points, we lost just one game and we drew one game in which it was clear we had the best chances." Coach Miguel Cardoso said to Supersport after their exit.