



## PRESIDENT ZUMA LAUNCHES OPERATION PHAKISA ON AGRICULTURE, LAND REFORM AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

***Operation Phakisa: Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development aims to enhance and transform the agricultural sector as well as accelerate land reform to ensure an inclusive rural economy.***

President Jacob Zuma launched the Operation Phakisa segment focusing on agriculture, land reform and rural development on 24 February 2017.

The Operation Phakisa programme, modelled around the Malaysian Big Fast Results methodology, is used by government to intensively focus on a particular sector, bringing together government, business, labour and academia to dissect and find solutions to delivery problems. The programme has successfully been implemented in education, health and the ocean economy.



The programme was launched under the theme “Transforming the Agricultural Sector towards an Inclusive Rural Economy”. Among other interventions, the programme reviews existing producer-support models as well as development-finance models aimed at fast-tracking land reform to find workable solutions given the urgent need for government to make progress in land reform and food security.

The Operation Phakisa on Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development also seeks to address constraints in ensuring the equitable access to land, both towards economic development and agrarian transformation.

The Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries and the Department of Rural Development and Land Reform have embarked on a six-month consultation process on the Operation Phakisa Lab for Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development. The lab, which constitutes representatives from government, academic and research institutions as well as business, organised labour, private sector and non-governmental organisations, have finalised 27 initiatives across seven work streams, namely: Land Reform; Rural Development; Labour; Grains; Livestock; Horticulture; and Producer Support.

Agriculture, land reform and rural development remain one of the key factors of the Government’s Nine Point-Plan to boost economic growth and create much-needed jobs.

## PRESIDENT ZUMA PAYS TRIBUTE TO JUDGE MOOSA

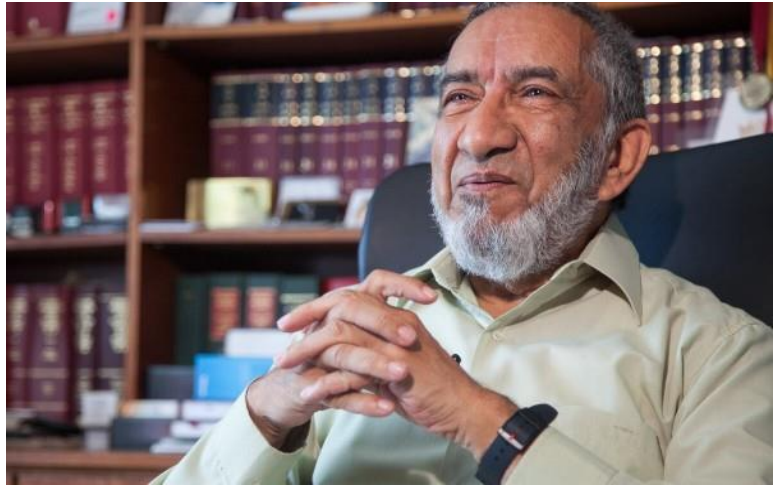
***The Presidency said Moosa would be remembered for his immense contribution in promoting and protecting human rights during his tenure as Supreme Court Judge as well as the founding and Executive Member of the National Association of Democratic Lawyers, where he chaired its Human Rights Committee.***

President Jacob Zuma has extended his heartfelt condolences on the passing of former Judge of the Supreme Court of South Africa and former human rights lawyer, Judge Essa Moosa, who passed away on 26 February.

The Presidency said the President had expressed his sadness after learning about Moosa's passing, who died at his home in Cape Town.

"We have learned with sadness of the passing of one of the country's renowned human rights activists and former Judge of the Supreme Court, Honourable Judge Moosa.

"His passing is an enormous loss to South Africa as of one of our seasoned human rights activists. We wish to extend our heartfelt condolences to the Moosa family and relatives; our prayers and thoughts are with them during this difficult period. May his soul rest in peace," said the President. – Source: SAnews.gov.za



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## MINISTER NKOANA-MASHABANE ATTENDS SADC MEETING IN TANZANIA

***Among other things, the meeting considered the situations in the Kingdom of Lesotho and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), the consolidation of democracy in the region and the request from the Union of Comoros and the Republic of Burundi to join the Southern African Development Community (SADC).***



The Minister of International Relations and Cooperation, Maite Nkoana-Mashabane, led a South African government delegation at the meeting of the SADC Inter-State Politics and Diplomacy Committee (ISPDC) that took place in Dar-Es-Salaam, United Republic of Tanzania, from 20 to 24 February 2017.

Regarding the situation in Lesotho, the meeting focused on:

- Reports on the deployment of the Oversight Committee. The committee has visited Lesotho several times since its operationalisation in November 2016.
- The return to Lesotho by opposition leaders who were in exile in South Africa. The former Prime Minister, Thomas Thabane, and other opposition leaders returned to Lesotho on 12 February 2017.

With regard to the DRC, the meeting received a report of the SADC Electoral Advisory Council.

The Union of Comoros and the Republic of Burundi have applied to join the SADC community. The Ministerial Committee of the Organ (MCO) Meeting, held in Mozambique from 1 to 5 August 2016, mandated the ISPDC to further consider the issue and to report to the MCO at its next meeting in 2017 for further consideration and advice to council and summit.

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## SOUTH AFRICA AND RUSSIA CELEBRATE 25 YEARS OF FORMAL DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS

***The Republic of South Africa and the Russian Federation marked the 25th Anniversary of the establishment of formal diplomatic relations on 28 February 2017. Bilateral relations between the two countries were established on 28 February 1992.***



The Minister of International Relations and Cooperation, Maite Nkoana-Mashabane, and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, Sergey Lavrov, have both exchanged congratulatory letters on this landmark event in the bilateral relations of the two countries.

South Africa and Russia share common values in terms of their respect for the rule of law in international relations, multilateralism, the central role of the United Nations (UN) in global governance, the primary role of the UN Security Council in the maintenance of global peace and security as well as respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity of states.

It is significant that the 25th Anniversary coincided with the conclusion of a 90-day mutual Visa Waiver Agreement for ordinary passport holders. The coming into operation of this agreement will give impetus to increased people-to-people contact as well as better prospects for growth in two-way tourism.

To date, the two countries have signed over 40 bilateral agreements in various areas of cooperation, including in science and technology, defence, mineral resources, energy, agriculture and justice.

South Africa will continue to maintain contact with the Russian Federation in the pursuit of strengthening relations between both countries as well as their citizens.

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## DEPUTY MINISTER LANDERS PARTICIPATES IN THE HIGH-LEVEL SEGMENT OF THE UN HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL (HRC) IN GENEVA, SWITZERLAND

***The thematic focus of the 34th Session was on vulnerable groups, in particular the empowerment of women and gender equality, the rights of the child, as well as the promotion and the protection of the rights of persons with disabilities, including persons with albinism.***

The Deputy Minister of International Relations and Cooperation, Luwellyn Landers, participated in the High-Level Segment of the 34th Session of the UNHRC (HRC34) from 27 February to 1 March 2017 in Geneva, Switzerland.

Deputy Minister Landers made an intervention in an interactive dialogue within the framework of the High-Level Panel on Human Rights Mainstreaming under the theme: "The Contribution of Human Rights to Peace-Building through the Enhancement of Dialogue and International Cooperation for the Promotion of Human Rights", on 27 February 2017.



The Deputy Minister also delivered South Africa's statement at the High-Level Segment of the Council on 28 February 2017, which outlined South Africa's continued implementation of its international human rights commitments. This year marks the 11th anniversary of the establishment of the UNHRC. In this regard, the Deputy Minister also highlighted South Africa's role as

a committed founding member of the council since its creation in 2006.

South Africa was elected four times to the HRC. South Africa served a one-year term from 2006 to 2007 and was then re-elected for a three-year term from 2007 to 2010. South Africa was once again elected to serve on the council from 2014 to 2016 and was re-elected to serve for another three-year term from 2017 to 2019. South Africa has consistently participated in all previous high-level segments, thus confirming the seriousness with which South Africa regards the work of the HRC as one of the key UN bodies.

## INTERNATIONAL TOURIST ARRIVALS SURPASS 10 MILLION

***Tourism is a significant economic sector around the world, and it makes a substantial contribution in developed and developing countries. Tourism now comprises 30% of all global service exports.***



More than 10 million international tourists arrived in South Africa last year, 13% more than in 2015. This is well over the global average growth rate for the period. It is estimated that about 1,2 billion international tourists travelled the world in 2016, representing growth of 3,9% on 2015.

In South Africa, the role of tourism in the balance of payments has become increasingly important. In 2015, tourism's trade balance with the rest of the world was R36 billion, according to Statistics South Africa (Stats SA). This is a major stabilising force for the national current account.

A total of 10 044 163 international tourist arrivals were recorded in South Africa in 2016, according to the latest Stats SA statistical release, representing an additional 1,1 million international tourists.

Overseas and regional markets fared well. Overseas markets are typically associated with leisure tourism and business tourism events. Regional markets, particularly cross-border land tourist arrivals, make an enormous contribution to the economies of many border towns, as well as major cities and popular tourist regions.

Together, the differing travel patterns and behaviours of the various travel markets sustain a large and diverse sector of businesses across South Africa.

The Minister of Tourism, Derek Hanekom, commended all the people who were working hard in the private and public sector to develop and promote tourism, and to provide visitors with excellent service and memorable experiences.

“The spectacular growth in tourist arrivals indicates that the close collaboration between various government departments, between the Department of Tourism and industry, and between suppliers and service providers on the ground has paid off,” said Minister Hanekom.

## SA TO HOST WORLD TRAVEL MARKET (WTM) AFRICA 2017

***The WTM Africa is one of six shows in the WTM portfolio, with other exhibitions taking place in London, São Paulo, Dubai, Penang and Cannes.***



These expos place the focus on regional products and services while giving them a global reach that will boost the industry, and as such are the perfect platforms to exhibit African businesses to the world.

The WTM Africa will take place at the Cape Town International Convention Centre from 19 to 21 April 2017.

According to WTM Africa, the show aims to discover the latest travel trends, products and businesses at this incredible networking opportunity that sees thousands of travel industry professionals congregate in the Mother City.

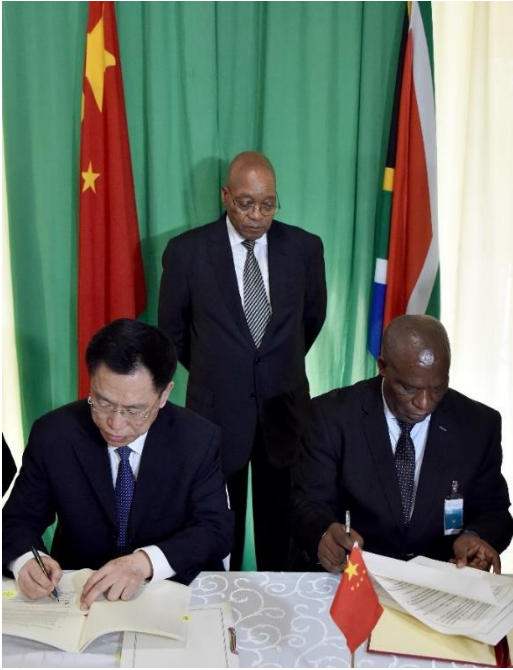
The WTM has invited stakeholders in the South African tourism industry to meet travel operators from around the world to create business relationships, launch products, enter new markets, promote brands, conduct market research, showcase destinations and interact with media professionals.

The show will host around 5 000 travel and tourism professionals, alongside 550 exhibitors, attending this leading global business-to-business expo that will showcase the inbound and outbound travel markets from over 45 countries.

Attendees will get a chance to access unique business opportunities and top quality contacts from around the world. Through pre-scheduled appointments and on-site networking, guests can drive their commercial success with all-year-round connections and updates on industry news, developments and technologies.

## MOU TO ALLOW FARMERS TO ACCESS CHINESE MARKET

**President Zuma announced during the State of the Nation Address on 9 February that South Africa would begin exporting beef to China this year.**



A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on the Entry and Exit Animal Inspection and Quarantine between South Africa and China will present an opportunity to smallholder farmers to access the Chinese market.

The Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, Senzeni Zokwana, recently signed the MoU and the Protocol on the Export of South African Beef to China, which will give effect to the exports of South African beef to China.

The Minister signed the agreement with Chinese Vice Minister of General Administration of Quality Supervision, Inspection and Quarantine, LI Yuaping, during the launch of the Operation Phakisa on Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development by President Jacob Zuma at Roodeplaat, Pretoria.

The agreement will further enhance and take forward the strong relations and strategic partnership between South Africa and China.

– Source: SAnews.gov.za

## ESKOM SCOOPS PRESTIGIOUS TECHNOLOGY AWARD

**Eskom scooped top honours in the same category in 2016. The focus was in the field of distribution planning with distributed resources.**

Eskom has been awarded the 2017 Technology Transfer Award. The award, given by United States-based Electric Power Research Institute (EPRI), is in recognition of research the power firm conducted in shaping the future of electricity.

“This award testifies to the groundbreaking research conducted by our Research and Development team, which continues to create unique opportunities for the future of electricity,” said Eskom’s Interim Group Chief Executive, Matshela Koko, recently.

He said the entity had prioritised research activities under the Eskom Power Plant Engineering Institute Programme, which has produced over 100 graduates at MSc and PhD level since its inception in 2012.



“We have the most versatile and robust engineering capabilities on the African continent and are well on our way to claim our place globally. We are extremely proud of our team for consistently achieving excellent results that put Eskom back on the global map,” said Koko.

EPRI conducts research and development relating to the generation, delivery and use of electricity for the benefit of the public.  
– Source: SAnews.gov.za

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## SANPARKS' INAUGURAL TOURISM INVESTMENT SUMMIT LOOKS BEYOND PARKS' BORDERS

***The inaugural Tourism Investment Summit organised by the South African National Parks (SANParks) will strive to present new investment opportunities, attract developers and financiers and profile national parks in South Africa as viable investment hubs.***



SANParks is putting its feelers out to engage in business with the private sector, with an Inaugural Tourism Investment Summit for South Africa's national parks held at The Maslow Hotel in Sandton, Johannesburg, on 27 March 2017.

"National parks offer potential investors with an unparalleled diversity of opportunities in various disciplines, which include adventure activities, eco-tourism properties, retail and many more," said SANParks CEO, Fundisile Mketeni.

He said, as far back as the year 2000, SANParks adopted a Commercialisation Strategy with a firm objective of establishing public-private partnership (PPP) initiatives, which has resulted in a two-tiered approach leading primarily to the granting of concessions for the construction and management of eco-tourism lodges and the outsourcing of retail shops and restaurants.

According to Mketeni, since the year 2000 with the adoption of the Commercialisation Strategy, SANParks has progressively increased the numbers of PPP transactions.

"By March 2016, there were more than 45 PPP projects in active implementation leading to infrastructural developments worth over R755 million with assets reverting to SANParks.

"This led to a significant funding of conservation and creating sustainability for SANParks," Mketeni says. "Commercialisation has resulted in a total PPP income of R816 million to SANParks."

The organisation aims to attract more key decision-makers in tourism investments, which include financiers, lenders, developers, tourism retail and services operators, bankers, investment advisers, real estate, property consultants, financial intermediaries, government tourism officials and media.

In a most recent development, for example, the Garden Route National Park has announced that a new Zipline attraction would be erected near Knysna and Plettenberg.

This all forms part of SANParks' plans to "capture tourism growth and create long-term sustainability for the organisation whose primary mandate is the conservation of biodiversity and cultural heritage of South Africa", Mketeni says.

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## PARTNERS FOR POSSIBILITY (PFP) GARNERS INTERNATIONAL RECOGNITION

***The annual HR.COM awards are held to recognise the work being done in leadership development throughout the world by individuals and organisations such as PFP. The HR.COM LEAD2017 CAwards ceremony was held during the LEAD2017 Leadership Forum on 7 and 8 February.***



We have been announced as #6 in the **Top Leadership Partner** category at the **#LEADAwards** in Nashville, Tennessee.



The PFP education initiative has been awarded sixth place at the HR.COM LEAD2017 Awards, held in Nashville, Tennessee. The organisation was one of 200 in the running for the award.

Education is one of the most important factors in South Africa's development and improving the country's education system is one of the most pressing issues when it comes to securing its future.

It was with this in mind that PFP was created, uniting some of the best business minds with teachers and principals from schools around the country.

These partnerships were created to bring some of the best business practices to the running of the schools. The objective was to help these schools run more efficiently and ensure learners got the most out of their time there.

By developing partnerships and leadership, the programme ensures that everybody involved benefits, from the business leader and principals to the children at the schools and the communities around them.

"What we have in this country is the most remarkable culture of active citizenship and citizens who actually stand up, who make a difference, who go out of their way to touch the lives of other people," said Robyn Whittaker, the stakeholder engagement lead at PFP.

"It's important that we showcase this as much as we can." – Source: [www.brandsouthafrica.com](http://www.brandsouthafrica.com)

## OR TAMBO NAMED AFRICA'S CARGO AIRPORT OF THE YEAR

*The Air Cargo Africa event was held recently in Ekurhuleni and attracted a record number of 80 international exhibiting companies, more than 500 global industry decision-makers and brought in more than 3 000 trade visitors from across more than 60 countries, including from 30 African nations.*



OR Tambo is not only South Africa's busiest airport, but Joburg's international airport has just been named African Airport of the Year at the recent Air Cargo Africa conference.

This is the third consecutive year OR Tambo has taken the title. The award recognises the airport's intent to boost cargo traffic and enhance its status as the leading airfreight hub in Africa – this as the airport has just exceeded 20 million passengers serviced in 2016 with a 3,8% increase, despite a number of operational challenges last year.

Floods severely affected certain parts of the airport in November, as did facilitation of international passengers due to new biometric requirements for first-time international visitors to the airport.

OR Tambo General Manager, Bongiwé Pityi, says the management and staff of the airport are humbled by the award which underscores their drive to boost cargo volumes.

"We decided two years ago that we need to focus more on the needs of our stakeholders in order for us to deliver the best

infrastructure required for the total air cargo value chain.

“We are especially pleased that our attention to providing real-time support to cargo stakeholders is beginning to make meaningful contributions to the growth and sustainability of the sector which is currently under considerable economic pressure,” says Pityi. – Source: Traveller24

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## SOUTH AFRICA TO HOST A NEW RUSSIAN SATELLITE TRACKING SYSTEM

*The HartRAO site has become a station of international standing, and the addition of the new Russian SLR station increases its reputation in geodesy.*



A new satellite tracking system was unveiled at the Hartebeesthoek Radio Astronomy Observatory (HartRAO), west of Johannesburg, on 27 February.

HartRAO, a facility of the Department of Science and Technology's entity, the National Research Foundation, will host the new Russian satellite tracking system, which will be used to track the Russian GLONASS satellite (Russian version of the USA GPS), to calibrate satellite orbits. It will also track other satellites mostly used for scientific research purposes.

South Africa's hosting of the Russian Satellite Laser Ranger (SLR) system, solidifies the country as a significant space science research partner globally, and further avenues for new scientific collaborations and building relations with other partners.

HartRAO already hosts the USA Moblas6 SLR system (which is older technology but still very accurate), and with the addition of the Russian SLR, larger and higher quality data output from both collocated stations will be generated.

The HartRAO site has become a station of international standing, and with the addition of the new Russian SLR station, improves its stature as a global "Fundamental Station".

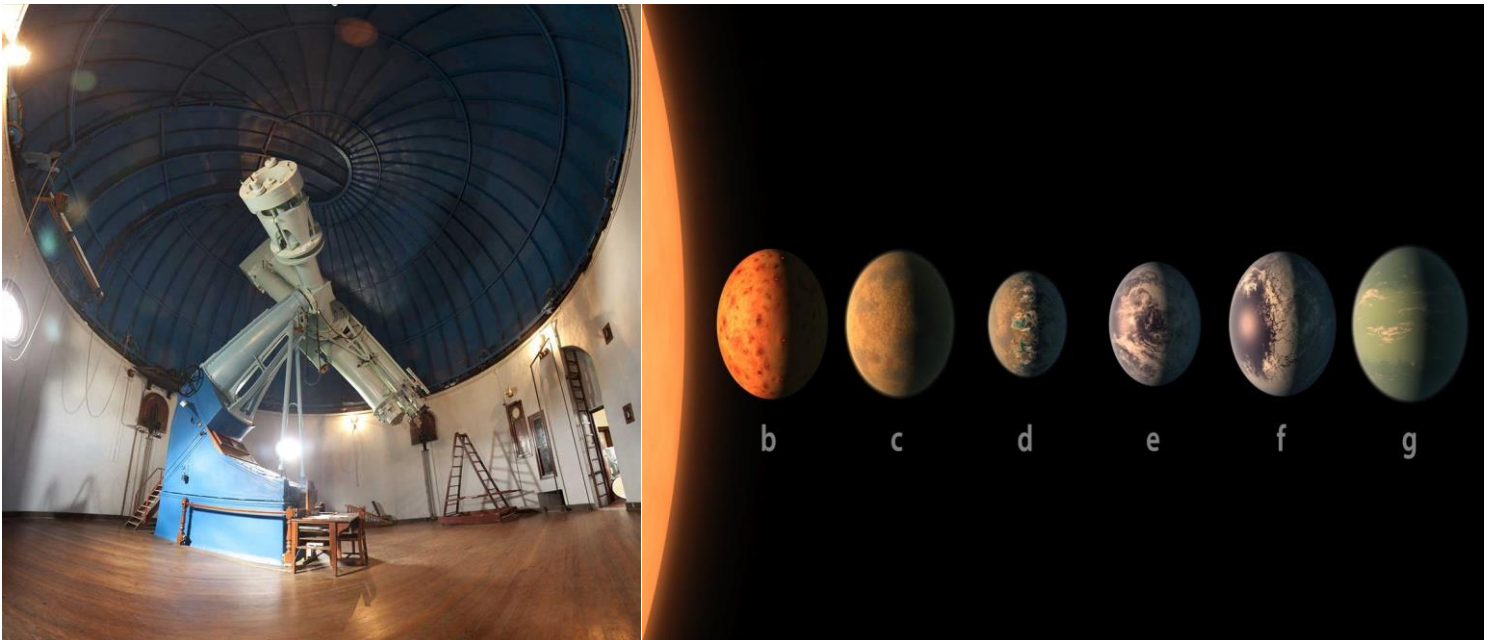
All these geodetic networks are international as they need to be located over the globe for good geometry and data coverage purposes; and it is advantageous that South Africa was chosen for this collaboration. – Source: [www.dst.gov.za](http://www.dst.gov.za)

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## SA TELESCOPE HELPS REVEAL SEVEN NEW PLANETS

*The data from the South African Astronomical Observatory (SAAO) telescope was used to discover the seven Earth-sized planets orbiting a star 40 light years away.*





Three of these planets are in the star's "habitable zone". This means they could have liquid water on their surface, which increases the chances of them hosting life.

SAAO's 1-m telescope was used to take observations of the planetary system over several nights in June and July last year, said Amanda Sickafoose, head of instrumentation at SAAO. The telescope is equipped with the Sutherland high-speed optical camera, which can take up to 70 images a second.

"This system is quite different from our solar system, which also raises new questions. The SAAO is proud to have played a small role in this advancement in our understanding of planetary systems," Sickafoose said.

Other telescopes used include the National Aeronautics and Space Administration's Spitzer Space Telescope and ground-based telescopes in Chile, Morocco, Hawaii and the Canary Islands. – Source: [www.timeslive.co.za](http://www.timeslive.co.za)

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## LOCAL TV CHEF GOES INTERNATIONAL

***Season one premiered on Food Network in more than 90 countries and territories across Europe, Middle East and Africa. Based on the successful performance of the first season, the second season premiered on Food Network in January 2017.***

Neill Anthony Private Chef is going global. The 13-part second season of the successful cooking show hosted by Neill Anthony has been sold to Scripps Networks Interactive.

Season two will feature Neill as he travels to new, breathtaking destinations and cooks in extraordinary, outdoor locations and kitchens while he prepares unforgettable meals for new friends, old acquaintances and A-list clients.

Speaking about the second season Neill says, "I'm truly excited about the new series where I create new and complex flavour combinations designed to make the palette 'think'. I hope that I can encourage viewers to experiment at home."



Popular Australian media company Foxtel has also acquired the broadcast rights for seasons one and two of the series for its Lifestyle FOOD channel, which is also home to original series such as *The Great Australian Bake Off*.

The *Private Chef* series is expected to launch on Lifestyle FOOD in May 2017. – Source: [www.channel24.co.za](http://www.channel24.co.za)

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## PRETTY YENDE SHINES IN NEW YORK

***Pretty Yende was recently the winner of the Ubuntu Arts and Culture Diplomacy Award (Youth). The annual awards, hosted by the Department of International Relations and Cooperation, are held to celebrate South African citizens who play an active role in projecting a positive image of South Africa internationally through their good work.***



South African singing sensation Pretty Yende has started 2017 off with a bang! The soprano's successful international career took another positive turn in New York recently when she unexpectedly stepped in to perform in Bellini's *I Puritani* at The Metropolitan Opera after lead Diana Damrau, revered as one of the greatest singing actresses, fell ill.

The press and opera fraternity raved, saying Yende's performance was "a triumph" and "spectacular in every way". It was even more notable as she had only sung the role once before, in a non-traditional production last year in Zurich.

Pretty Yende is currently singing Rosina in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* also at The Met and once she finishes the run of Rosina, the soprano continues as Juliette in Gounod's production of *Romeo et Juliette*. – Source: [www.channel24.co.za](http://www.channel24.co.za)

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## AB DE VILLIERS TOPS 9 000 ODI RUNS

***Controlled bowling by New Zealand took the gloss off a record-setting performance by AB de Villiers as South Africa were restricted to 271 in the third one-day international in Wellington on Saturday, 25 February.***



De Villiers won the toss and was keen to bat first on a hard track under clear skies at Westpac Stadium.

He played his part with a rapid 85 off 80 balls in which he became the fastest batsman to amass 9 000 ODI runs.

He reached the milestone in his 205th innings, outperforming the previous record of 228 held by India's Sourav Ganguly.

– Source:  
[www.news24.co.za](http://www.news24.co.za)

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