

# siyagibela taxiWorld

January - 28 February 2025

TRANSPORTING SOUTH AFRICA



## TAXI INDUSTRY CLASS OF 2024 CELEBRATED

2025: WHAT TAXI OPERATORS  
FACE IN THE YEAR AHEAD

FLYSAFAIR TURBULENT  
TIMES

ITHALA'S BANK HEADACHE  
FOR TAXI OPERATORS



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# 2025: A Year for the Taxi Industry to Take the Future Into Its Own Hands

**A**s we usher in the new year with optimism, many of us have big ambitions and a long list of long-term personal goals, along with detailed plans on how we want to achieve them. However, the challenge lies in translating these plans into action. This is a struggle the taxi industry knows all too well.

Over the years, the taxi industry has formulated well-crafted policies with programme of action plans designed to drive its envisaged growth and secure its rightful place in the mainstream economy. Yet, implementation has remained a serious challenge. When we look back, it's evident that the industry has not achieved as much as its potential compared to other sectors.

Today, the taxi industry has unprecedented opportunities to thrive compared to yesteryears. There is nothing stopping it from revisiting the idea of establishing a taxi bank or venturing into industries such as healthcare, hospitality, technology, manufacturing, aviation, and rail transport — the list goes on. The industry, contrary to popular belief, has the resources and capacity to make a meaningful impact in any of the above-mentioned sectors — provided it takes decisive action, coupled with equal commitment. However, continued over-reliance on external support will not advance its

cause if nothing is done to change this.

Various critics and experts often put the blame squarely at the doors of the taxi industry, pointing to challenges such as lack of unity, insufficient skills, violence and minimal government support as some of the barriers to progress. But taxi operators must wake up to the reality that no one else, will build their success for them. Economic empowerment starts from within. They themselves have power and the ability to change their own lives, and make the industry prosper as they make a meaningful contribution in the economy and communities it serves.

**ON A DIFFERENT NOTE** - we commend Toyota South Africa for its proactive role in empowering the taxi industry through the Ses'fikile training programmes. This initiative equips operators with essential skills to help them navigate the complexities of starting, managing, and running their businesses operations effectively and successfully.

It is important to note that since its launch, the Ses'fikile programme has to date transformed the lives of 1563 taxi operators since it started in 2016. We equally welcome Toyota South Africa's commitment to continue with the training programme this year as we celebrate with them the class of 2024!

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# Toyota South Africa reaffirms commitment to empowering as more taxi operators, administrators graduate from its training programme



Parks Moraledi

**T**oyota South Africa has assured the taxi industry that more resources will be made available to continue to fund training programmes aimed at supporting the taxi operators with both business and technical skills in an effort to enhance their personal development and operations.

The training programme was supposed to end 2021 but was renewed to continue until end of 2025.

Parks Moraledi, Senior Manager: Tender & Taxi Business says this was made because of the overwhelming response and results from this training initiative.

“Considering the response and impact the Ses’fikile programme have had in the taxi industry it was only natural that we review our plans to allow the programme to run again. The training programme runs in cycles of 3 years. The last 3 years ended 2022 – we then added another 3 years to end 2025,” Moraledi explained.

He said despite last year’s challenging trading conditions that affected the motor industry in its entirety, the taxi sector remains resilient.

“We are hopefully that this year things are going to change the economy for the better.

“We have seen how Toyota fully engaged with taxi industry in resolving current challenges posed by spotters, fraudulent transactions, banks reluctance in finance taxi industry amongst other things. We have seen satisfactory progress made including engagement with banks, also holding regular meetings with the taxi industry.”

Moraledi says the enthusiasm that the taxi industry has shown to embrace the training programmes has motivated the company to do more.

“We are humbled beyond measure by the unexpected support, particularly by the active engagement and participation of the taxi industry in all the training programmes we’ve put in place for the industry,” he said.

He added that the training programmes have also helped lay a foundation for the taxi industry to unite as a single force to speak with one voice on issues affecting taxi operators as a whole.

Moraledi further explained that the Ses’fikile training programme has not only improved individual skills but has also brought the industry closer together. Participants from different taxi organisations, such as South Africa National Taxi Council (SANTACO) and the National Taxi Alliance (NTA), are trained together, promoting unity in the industry.

“When we launched the Ses’fikile training programme one of the objectives is to foster taxi industry unity through training. During the implementation of the training

programmes, we took a decision that we are not going to have separate training sessions and classify taxi operators according to which taxi mother bodies do they belong to.

“This programme has helped the industry speak with one voice on issues that affect all taxi operators. We saw participants from both Santaco and NTA sitting under the same roof united as one.

“There is no doubt that this approach promotes social cohesion and harmony in the classrooms and the industry. There’s no doubt that this approach promotes social cohesion and harmony in the classrooms and the industry as a whole – as they graduated as one class of 2024,” he said.

Patrick Carroll General Manager: Vehicle Sales at Toyota says the taxi industry deserves the support the vehicle manufacturer has given though various initiatives that they have implemented over the years to empower the taxi industry including promoting road safety campaigns, sponsorships and training programmes.

“The taxi industry can always bank on the support of Toyota as they deserve it. We have over the years since the programme started in 2016 witnessed how taxi operators progressed from the basic management training to the advanced management programmes with consistency as they performed better obtaining distinctions during assessment examinations.”

He added: “An empowered taxi industry is good for the economy.”

Professor Melanie Wiese, University of Pretoria, taxi industry’s training course leader, says the training

*Continued to page 5*

programme has been an eye-opener for her and the staff.

“What I did not anticipate was that not only the delegates would gain knowledge and skills but also that facilitators would gain invaluable insights from delegates themselves,” Wiese enthused.

“It has been a privilege to be part of the shared dream of the taxi industry and Toyota.

“It was humbling to see the personal growth of delegates from being sceptical and insecure at the start of the training to confident leaders with a voice to help improve the industry,” she said.

National Taxi Alliance (NTA) President, Francis Masitse singled out Toyota’s long-standing support as historic and a sincere partner of the taxi industry.

“What Toyota South Africa is doing in the taxi industry is of unquestionable commitment to advance the taxi industry. This relationship between Toyota and us come a long way.

“We now have more qualified taxi operators trained by highly qualified facilitators from the University of Pretoria,” Masitse pointed out.

Mpumalanga Santaco Secretary, Simphiwe Sibanyoni says the beneficiaries of the Toyota’s Ses’fikile Training programme are going to apply and share their knowledge gained during the training with associations and youth structures.

“The training programme has

made an enormous difference on how taxi operators approach their businesses as owners and administrators from management point of view. Our delegates have learned a lot of things in an environment where courses were taught by highly qualified professionals from the University of Pretoria,” Sibanyoni said.

KZN Santaco Office Manager, Sifiso Shangase says the industry is benefitting from Toyota’s training initiative as more taxi operators and office administrators participate successfully.

“Toyota should continue giving back to the industry through this type of initiatives as we have seen how popular amongst our members this training programme has become.

“It has played a critical role in transforming the minibus taxi industry in the offices and regions where the participants or trainees were deployed. We have seen positive results and the progressive as a result of various interventions emanated from these individuals who have studied through this course. We also appreciate the amount of money that has been contributed by Toyota South Africa towards this initiative,” Shangase said.

He too added his voice to the need for a technical training orientated programme for mechanics.

“We would also like to see our mechanics included in the future in the training programmes that aims to expose and upskill them to the latest technical knowledge through

advanced training to service our members’ vehicles better and qualitatively.

“These mechanics can benefit immensely, and the advantage is that these vehicles are being assembled in KwaZulu-Natal, Durban,” Shangase said.

He added: “we are concerned about the uncertainty about the training programme ending, as the 2025 intake is reported to be last before the training programme is phased out,” he said.

### **FUTURE TRAINING PROGRAMME**

Moraladi reiterated that Toyota has heard the loud calls from the industry to introduce technical training programmes for informal mechanics operating within the taxi industry.

“Toyota is busy planning and looking at putting in place another training programme aimed at enhancing and reskilling informal mechanics.

“These mechanics plays an important role in making sure that taxis are not only fixed when broken but are an integral part of the ecosystem. These informal mechanics deserve to be empowered in an effort to formalize, professionalise them through certification as we respond to needs of the industry,” he promised.

The class of 2024 graduation events started on the 03 October covering Western Cape, Free State, KwaZulu-Natal, Free State, Mpumalanga and with the last lap of the graduation ceremony taking place in Gauteng’s Gallagher Estate’s Midrand on the 6th of December.

To date the training programmes enrolled more than 1563 delegates from 2016 to 2024.



*The proud delegates who successfully completed the training programmes received certificates in The Ses’fikile Programme in Management Principles and Practices, Ses’fikile Office Management Programme, and Ses’fikile Programme Advanced Leadership.*





# TAXI INDUSTRY GRADUATION 2024

MPUMALANGA PROVINCE - White River



# TAXI INDUSTRY GRADUATION 2024

FREE STATE PROVINCE - Bloemfontein







# TAXI INDUSTRY GRADUATION 2024

KWAZULU-NATAL PROVINCE - Durban



Taxi Industry Delegates and Toyota Staff at the Toyota Vehicle Manufacturing Facility





# TAXI INDUSTRY GRADUATION 2024

GAUTENG PROVINCE - Midrand



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# TAXI INDUSTRY GRADUATION 2024

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# Growing support from taxi industry to save Ithala Bank

**T**axi associations have rallied in support of Ithala Bank to prevent its complete closure.

This follows the KwaZulu-Natal legislature's Economic Development and Tourism Portfolio Committee's decision to back Ithala Bank in its legal battle against liquidation, urging national parliament to intervene.

"The Prudential Authority's decision to pursue liquidation undermines these efforts and the broader developmental role Ithala plays in the province," the committee said.

"The aim of the intervention is to reach a resolution that protects the businesses and people of KwaZulu-Natal who rely on Ithala Bank for their financial and developmental needs."

Nkosinathi Nala, Public Relations Officer of the Osizweni Taxi Association, expressed concern over the bank's pending liquidation.

"I have a bank account at Ithala, and so do many taxi operators I know personally who are also customers of the bank. I received an SMS message saying I cannot withdraw and deposit. There is one taxi owner I know with R1 million deposited and others who bought vehicles financed by Ithala," Nala revealed.

He explained that many taxi operators preferred Ithala due to its competitive interest rates for vehicle financing.

"Ithala offered taxi operators favourable financing terms including lower interest rates. We were happy that

Ithala had a good relationship with the taxi industry including attending taxi events to speak to our members about different services and products they were offering our members.

"If Ithala financed for example a Toyota Quantum 16-seater, your total costs of ownership would not exceed R1 million compared to other banks or finance institutions," he said.

Nala attributed Ithala's challenges to politics and poor management.

"We are where we are because of politicians and management of the bank including the Reserve Bank itself," he said.

He emphasised the urgency of resolving Ithala's challenges to restore trust among depositors.

"The bank's existential challenges must be resolved as soon as possible for us to resume with our normal lives. This closure has made the bank high-risk—no depositor is going to put their money again in the bank that they don't trust if this matter isn't resolved soon.

"Even if it reopens tomorrow, there will be a bank run. That means the bank will collapse as depositors rush to withdraw their savings and investments," he warned.

Nala highlighted Ithala Bank's significant role in addressing the needs of local communities in KwaZulu-Natal.

"The bank has a long history in the banking sector. It is known for supporting those who were considered unbankable, providing access to loans,

accepting deposits, and offering financial services for years without issues," he said.

He reminisced about the bank's role during Apartheid when it filled the gap left by other banks that excluded black customers.

"Local businesses grew with Ithala. The bank spoke our language and remains part of our economic heritage. Its services were good, affordable, and accommodating. During Apartheid, when banks did not serve black customers, Ithala was there for us," he added.

The Prudential Authority, a regulatory body under the South African Reserve Bank, argues that the liquidation is in the best interests of Ithala's 257,000 depositors. They believe that a liquidator can use insolvency legislation to recover and distribute funds.

However, Nala strongly disagreed. "There are many people, including stokvels and social clubs, who have invested in Ithala. You cannot liquidate a business that does not owe anyone. Maybe its only fault is being a state bank in the province, as we understand state banks are supposed to be national. But the Postbank is also struggling—where do we go now that Ithala is closed?" he asked.

"This is more about politics than what is being said about the bank's non-compliance. Ithala has been operating since 1958 without problems," he concluded.





Gerald Ferror

## Ithala Bank too important to fail

Let us give credit where it is due. The story of Ithala Bank and its current struggles takes us back to the vision of its founders. It would be both impossible and unfair not to acknowledge the man who started it all, the late Dr. Mangosuthu Buthelezi. Whether one admires him or not, the man's exemplary vision of financial inclusivity in deep rural areas is worth noting.

His political affiliations are irrelevant in this context, as the bank has historically served the poorest of the poor who lacked access to financial institutions elsewhere. Founded in 1958, Ithala Bank has grown into what it is today despite facing significant challenges. Its continued existence is a testament to the vision and strategic thinking of its founders.

However, what matters now is not so much about its founders, but a lot about the vital role the bank plays in providing financial services to those in need. As veterans of the taxi industry, we feel compelled to step in, raise our concerns, and voice our support to ensure Ithala Bank is saved from doom.

For many of our peers, this bank has been a trusted alternative to the existing traditional banking institutions. As taxi operators we continue to rely on it, with some of us still holding accounts and financing our vehicles through it. Its potential closure, as considered by the Reserve Bank Prudential Authority – citing non-compliance – is deeply troubling.

As taxi industry veterans are deeply concerned about Ithala Bank's potential liquidation, it is our hope that those in power will recognise the indispensable role it played – and continues to play – in uplifting local communities and supporting vulnerable sectors of society. It must not be allowed to fail, for the sake of its loyal customers, and the communities it serves.



Pastor Sizwe Mahlangu

## Word of Encouragement

As we look back on the year 2024, we are reminded of the challenges and struggles that came our way. It was a year filled with unexpected difficulties—some so overwhelming that, at times, we weren't sure we could face them on our own.

Across the industry and in our personal lives, we encountered obstacles that threatened not only our goals and livelihoods but also our health, our strength, and our hope. Yet, even in these moments of trial, we found a powerful source of encouragement and strength in God's Word.

In 2 Corinthians 12:9-11, Paul reminds us of a profound truth: "For when I am weak, then I am strong." This message of reliance and divine strength speaks to us now more than ever. Though we may feel weak or even defeated, we are never left without support.

God has carried us through our weaknesses, and in His strength, we have been able to stand. These words remind us that our challenges, though difficult, have also allowed God's power to shine through. Every time we reached the end of our own strength, He was there to lift us, showing us that our weaknesses are not failures but opportunities for His strength to manifest.

As we prepare to step into a new year, we do so with renewed hope and courage, knowing that the same God who sustained us in 2024 will continue to guide us through whatever lies ahead. Our challenges may be real, but so is the promise of His strength in our weakness. Let us move forward with confidence, rooted in the assurance that we are never alone, and that in every trial, He is carrying us through.

# Sibanyoni Foundation Committed to Supporting Disadvantaged Communities



The Joe Sibanyoni Foundation (JSF) is gearing up for a productive 2025, with plans to roll out a series of community and social empowerment programmes.

Launched last year by Joe Sibanyoni, executive president of SALLBO and Taxi Choice, the foundation serves as a platform to build collaborative relationships with corporate and public sector partners. Its goal is to tackle societal challenges that align with government priorities, focusing on areas such as job creation, economic growth, and social relief.

“One of the most urgent challenges we face today, is the alarming number of graduates sitting at our homes without job opportunities,” Sibanyoni emphasised. “Together with the government of South Africa, we must address these critical things for our economy to grow faster and create more jobs for everyone.”

The JSF aims to serve as a catalyst for collaboration between public and private stakeholders, driving initiatives that not only support economic growth but also address pressing societal issues.

In December, the foundation demonstrated its commitment to community upliftment by providing a home to a disadvantaged family in Soshanguve, Tshwane. Conducted alongside officials from the Tshwane Municipality, this, Sibanyoni added is key part of the company’s mission to give back to communities in meaningful ways.

The foundation has also received a significant financial boost, with Sibanyoni contributing R10 million as seed funding on his personal capacity.

## Sallbto’s General Secretary Dallas killed in cold blood at his business premises



Oppa “Dallas” Sithole, described by those who knew him as a quiet person whose only sin could have been that he was too trustworthy, was brutally shot and killed on December 23rd at his business premises in Soshanguve.

Sithole, the general secretary of the South African Long and Local Bus and Taxi Organization (Sallbto) and a member of the Pretoria Mabopane Polokwane (PMP) Taxi Association, was reportedly gunned down by unknown assailants after closing his business for the day.

At his funeral, he was described by speaker after speaker as a “good

person” who was always willing to sacrifice his time to assist others in need.

His colleague Mashope Mashopye, who worked closely with him at Sallbto office, praised Sithole for his unwavering dedication to his duties.

“It will be difficult for me to work without him,” Mashopye said.

The funeral was attended by several notable figures from the taxi industry, including Gauteng National Taxi Alliance (GNTA) chairman Thami Moyo and Santaco Gauteng chairman Mid-day Mali, who paid their last respects and acknowledged Sithole’s stellar contributions to the taxi industry.





# DORLJOTA's Mabe Calls on Minister Creecy to Implement Taxi Subsidy Without Any Further Delays

**D**obsonville Roodepoort Leratong Johannesburg Taxi Association (DORLJOTA) chairperson, Peter Mabe, has called on the government to fulfil its long-standing promise of subsidizing the taxi industry without further delays.

Speaking at the DORLJOTA AGM recently held in Ethekwini, Durban, Mabe expressed sympathy for Transport Minister Barbara Creecy, acknowledging the challenging task she inherited to fast-track the subsidization process.

"The subsidization issue has been on the table for many years, and it is time we move to the next stage," Mabe stated.

He noted a positive shift in the taxi industry, saying it is more united than ever. "What is encouraging is that SANTACO, NTA, and Top Six Management are now speaking with one voice on many issues of mutual interest at the national level. This augurs well for the unity, stability, and future of the taxi industry," he said.

However, Mabe expressed concern over the impact the reintroduction of trains in the townships is having on taxi business as the trains are subsidized.

"As DORLJOTA we are deeply dismayed at the government's tacit approval of the uncompetitive behaviour of the Passenger Rail Agency of South Africa (PRASA)

"While the gradual and systematic reintroduction of the suburban rail commuter in our townships is welcome as it helps to restore South Africa as a modern country that provides options for commuters, we are outraged that this is done at the expense of the survival of the taxi industry, particularly DORLJOTA," he explained.

Mabe also highlighted the organisation's partnership with the Johannesburg Social Housing Company (JOSHCO) to provide housing for their members and drivers.

He praised Cllr. Mlungisi Mabaso for making it possible for his members to have access to affordable housing closer to their workplace.

"Through this intervention, spearheaded on the City's side by MMC for Human Settlements, councillor Mlungisi Mabaso, our drivers monitors and other members are renting flats developed by JOSHCO in the Roodepoort CBD to be closer to their workplace, great schools for their children and business amenities," he said.

Furthermore, he called on government to Fasttrack the issuing of New Operating Licenses.

"New Operating Licenses are not being issued because of the two spheres of government at both local and provincial levels not adhering to NLTA, which is a burden to our members. We hope this matter is sorted out."

Mabe has harsh words for banks criticizing them for the excessive interest rates they charge when financing vehicles. "It would seem banks are hell-bent on throttling us out of existence. The onerous conditions they put on new applicants for taxi finance and astronomical charges they impose on us are putting our members on the brink of bankruptcy. We are barely surviving as the financial sector is milking us dry," he said promising action.

"This is an issue that we need to tackle with utmost decisiveness, vigour and speed inside and outside DORLJOTA."

## CRITICISM OF BANKS

Mabe did not mince words when addressing the financial sector, accusing banks of exploiting taxi operators with excessive interest rates.

"It would seem banks are hell-bent on throttling us out of existence. The onerous conditions they put on new applicants for taxi finance and astronomical charges they impose on us are putting our members on the brink of bankruptcy. We are barely surviving as the financial sector is milking us dry," he said.

He promised decisive action on the matter, stating, "This is an issue that we need to tackle with utmost decisiveness, vigor, and speed inside and outside DORLJOTA."

# FlySafair vows to overcome legal turbulence



**FlySafair**, a leading South African domestic airline, is facing a major threat of being grounded or fined after the Air Services Licensing Council (ASLC) confirmed that the company does not comply with local aviation legislation.

This follows a recent similar ruling from the International Air Services Council (IASC), which found that FlySafair's shareholding structure is not compliant with South African laws.

According to the Air Services Licensing Act of 1990, an airline operating in the country's domestic space must be majority owned by South African citizens.

ASL Aviation which is an Irish company is alleged to owns nearly 75% of FlySafair's shares, directly and through subsidiaries. As a result, it has been deemed a foreign entity by the IASC.

Kirby Gordon, the chief marketing officer at FlySafair, disputed the interpretation of the company's shareholding structure, deeming it non-compliant with South African law.

"It is more of a matter of paperwork really than anything to with nuts and bolts," Kirby said, adding: "We really hope that sanity will prevail across the board, and we can prevent any undue harm to the flying public and our employees," he said.

The ASLC's says that airlines must have individual person shareholders, not trust and companies as shareholders of the airline — which is the case as it stands. It said this interpretation ignores the fact that most individuals do not have the capital or resources to own an airline.