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September - 15 November 2026

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Referendum**

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North West Taxi Referendum Set to Move Forward

The taxi industry will hold a historic referendum in 2027 to determine how associations affiliate with national umbrella bodies and to curb the growth of splinter groups in North West Province.

The referendum puts democracy into practice by allowing taxi operators—not government—to decide how their associations should be governed and which umbrella body they wish to join.

Attention will centre on the Moruleng & District Taxi Association (MODITA), an affiliate of the National Taxi Alliance (NTA), whose members will participate alongside a splinter group using the same name and closely linked to SANTACO's regional structure.

Other taxi associations in the region facing similar disputes as MODITA will also participate, as the referendum will be conducted province-wide.

South Africa's last major referendum took place on 17 March 1992, when former State President F. W. de Klerk asked white voters to endorse negotiations to end apartheid.

The taxi referendum is significant

because it will take place under South Africa's democratic system, enabling taxi operators to exercise their constitutional right to freedom of association and choose which national taxi structure their taxi association to join.

We commend the North West provincial government for remaining impartial while supporting this industry-led referendum as a self-regulatory tool to strengthen democracy in the taxi sector.

We also applaud taxi operators for rejecting division and working together to grow their industry irrespective of the outcome of the referendum. The principle is clear: operators should determine their own future, while government should provide support through resources, legislation, and law enforcement.

Gauteng province provides a strong example of unity within the taxi industry across different umbrella bodies.

We hope the referendum will reduce splinter groups and promote peace and stability across the industry as the outcome will be binding on participants.

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MODITA calls for unity as Baloyi is re-elected chairperson



Daniel Baloyi was re-elected chairperson of the Moruleng and District Taxi Association (MODITA) at its 17 September conference in Moruleng, Rustenburg.

In his address, Baloyi reviewed the challenges and achievements of MODITA, an affiliate of the National Taxi Alliance (NTA) and United Taxi Front (UTAF).

He said MODITA had acquired three sites for commercial and office development.

The sites are intended for a mini taxi rank, retail store, hall and offices. Baloyi said a potential sponsor had been identified, and MODITA would relocate from Mogwase Shopping Centre when construction was complete.

He said his immediate priority was to unite the association.

"We must end the splinter group and have one taxi association affiliated with one mother body," he said.

A group led by David Phiri is affiliated with SANTACO, while the recognised structure remains with the NTA.

Baloyi said SANTACO and

the NTA were in talks and had revisited the referendum proposal in Rustenburg on 8 July to resolve MODITA's dual affiliation and divisions.

The meeting included transport and regulatory officials BM Bopalamo, Pheny Vilakazi and Sammy Fenny Gaolalwe; NTA representatives Philemon Nzima; and SANTACO representative Thomas Masase.

Baloyi said a referendum planned for early next year would allow members to choose a mother body and help resolve divisions among taxi associations across the province.

He blamed Vilakazi for MODITA's divisions, accusing him of favouring Phiri's group and opposing the NTA in the province.

"There is a hidden agenda to remove NTA structures from North West," he said.

Baloyi called for industry unity and urged regulators to promote growth, avoid division and act within the law.

He alleged that Vilakazi did not recognise him as MODITA chairperson and invited only Phiri's

faction to departmental activities, contrary to a court order.

Vilakazi denied that the department failed to recognise MODITA's current leadership.

He said the government treated taxi operators equally despite internal disputes and that unfairness claims should be tested.

Vilakazi said engagement with associations sought to prevent conflict, promote coexistence and expand access to government empowerment opportunities.

He said the industry proposed the referendum to prevent conflict when one association affiliates with two mother bodies.

Vilakazi welcomed it as a self-regulation measure and a step forward, though not an immediate solution to every problem.

He urged the industry to prioritise commuters through safe, reliable and affordable transport.

Baloyi also accused the department of boycotting MODITA activities, saying Vilakazi's office ignored an invitation to its 2026 elections.

He said the attendance of SANTACO and NTA representatives at MODITA elective conference demonstrated unity despite divisions allegedly encouraged by some provincial officials.

SANTACO attendees included Ringo Masilo of Swartklip, Mr Mthombeni of Lesuma and Mr Ntsoeleng of Haramata taxi associations.

NTA attendees included Mr Montsi of Kanana Bosfontein, Reuben Molete of Phela Madikwe Township and Mapula Moholotsi of North Scholar taxi associations.



Gautrain new operator secures R9 billion facility as taxi industry is left out

Standard Bank has committed a R9 billion debt facility to fund Sihamba Sonke Mobility (SSM), following its appointment as the Gautrain's new operator.

The appointment officially ended the 19.5-year concession held by the Bombela Concession Company, which had been due to expire in March 2026.

Bombela Operating Company continued running the Gautrain under a six-month holdover arrangement while negotiations with the preferred bidder were finalised.

SSM will operate the Gautrain for the next 15 years, with a renewed focus on investment and modernisation to enhance the passenger experience.

Gautrain Management Agency CEO Tshepo Kgobe said the procurement process to appoint the new concessionaire took several years.

"A lot of people tend to see a concession and think that it's a few months," Kgobe said. "The PPP regulations, which is regulation 16 of the PFMA, is very exact about these things."

According to Kgobe, the SSM consortium demonstrated during the tender process that it could meet the requirements, including a commitment to match the

previous concessionaire's operating run rate.

He said under the new concession, French rail group Alstom will manufacture and supply eight new four-car trains for the Gautrain.

The trains will be built locally at Alstom's Ubunye facility in Gauteng, increasing the Gautrain fleet from 24 to 32 trains.

The failure to include the taxi industry as a strategic partner in the bidding consortium represents another missed opportunity for taxi operators.

National Taxi Alliance (NTA) spokesperson Theo Malele said the industry neither formally participated in the bidding process nor held any stake in the winning consortium.

Malele said the Gauteng government should have ensured that the taxi industry was included in the winning Gautrain consortium.

"It is ironic that the government, which is expected to drive transformation, is neglecting its responsibility to uplift Black-owned businesses in the transport sector by excluding the taxi industry," he said.

"This clearly does not reflect a transformation agenda. Some politicians, their associates and white business partners may be

benefiting. It is deeply disappointing, and history will judge us harshly," Malele said.

Fact sheet:

The SSM consortium comprises the following key participants and shareholders:

- **AIIM-Motseng Joint Venture:** A partnership between African Infrastructure Investment Managers (AIIM), owned by Old Mutual, and the Motseng Group, which is 95% women-owned and led.
- **Alstom:** A global French rail and smart-mobility manufacturer responsible for engineering, procurement, construction and fleet modernisation scope.
- **RATP Dev:** A French public transport operator with extensive local and international experience in passenger rail operations.
- **GIBB-Crede:** A South African engineering and infrastructure advisory company.
- **AIH Connect (AWCA Investment Holdings):** A Black women-owned investment holding company.
- **SSM InvestCo:** A broad-based Black Economic Empowerment (BEE) vehicle that enables Gauteng residents to acquire direct equity stakes.



FELLDTA strengthens sisterhood among women in the taxi industry

The Federated Local & Long-Distance Taxi Association (FELLDTA) recently brought together Women's Desk representatives from its 35 affiliated associations for an empowerment event in Silverton, Pretoria.

Mashudu Ratau, chairperson of the FELLDTA Women's Desk, told TaxiWorld the event celebrated women operators' achievements and created a space to connect, discuss challenges and learn how to build sustainable businesses.

She described the Women's Desk as an important women's structure within FELLDTA and its member associations.

Many women enter the industry after inheriting businesses from deceased husbands or relatives, while others join independently. The Women's Desk introduces them to industry operations and opportunities.

"We also prioritise women for

opportunities such as bulk vehicle purchases, training, products and services," she said. The event's theme, "Tsoga Mme" — Sesotho for "Woman, wake up" — urged women to take charge of their businesses.

Ratau warned that some men exploit women through false romantic relationships, sometimes leaving operators without vehicles they once owned.

Ratau highlighted programmes that strengthened women's vehicle knowledge and business-management skills.

A Safeline workshop and brake-pad factory tour taught members how braking systems work and how to keep vehicles safe and reliable.

Women operators also received financial-literacy and customer-care training, including credit and budgeting skills to improve profitability.

Ratau said some drivers exploit women employers by under-reporting takings, keeping income and blaming missed targets on fuel costs or fewer trips.

She says rising costs, illegal operators and e-hailing make some routes unprofitable. Passenger affordability limits fare increases, while repossessions, limited affordable finance and rising repayments force some members out of business.

Ratau urged government to create a level playing field, saying taxis carry most public-transport users but receive no subsidies, unlike trains and buses.

She also warned women operators to guard against romance scammers seeking control of their vehicles.

After the successful launch, Ratau said the event exceeded expectations and would become an annual gathering.



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FELLDTA Women event



FELLDTA Women event



FELLDTA Women event



Free State - Kroonstad



Free State Provincial Regulatory Entity (PRE) issuing of operating licenses to widows



North West - Moruleng



MODITA Elective Conference



Gauteng - Fourways



UTAF Elective Conference



UTAF Elective Conference



Free State - Kroonstad



Free State Provincial Regulatory Entity (PRE) issuing of operating licenses event



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Skys The Limit Training Academy is a professional training and skills development institution committed to empowering individuals, organisations, communities, and the transport industry through quality education and practical training solutions.

Formerly known as the KZN Taxi and Commuter Corporation (KZNTCC), the Academy has grown into a respected institution that promotes professionalism, safety, leadership, compliance, entrepreneurship, and community development across South Africa.

We work closely with industry stakeholders, government institutions, municipalities, and regulatory authorities to ensure relevant, impactful, and nationally aligned training programmes.



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To provide quality education, skills development, leadership training, and empowerment programmes that promote professional growth, safer communities, and sustainable economic participation.

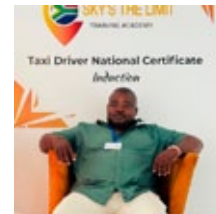
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Tladi urges talks before proposed taxi referendum



North West SANTACO provincial chairperson Ebusang Tladi has challenged the Moruleng & District Taxi Association (MODITA) chairperson Baloyi to an open debate on calls for a referendum that would allow the association's general membership to decide which mother body they want to affiliate with.

Tladi said Baloyi was responsible for splitting the association by joining the National Taxi Alliance (NTA) without securing majority support from members to leave SANTACO.

He explained that Baloyi had been elected under the oversight of SANTACO's Bojanala Region. According to Tladi, Baloyi joined the other

mother body after members became dissatisfied with his leadership.

He further alleged that Baloyi has since been recruiting new members and applying for operating licences on their behalf.

Tladi said SANTACO would support a referendum if participation were "limited to those who were MODITA members when the organisation split and moved from SANTACO to the NTA".

He stressed that both sides must first agree on the terms of the referendum as a first stage to holding the actual referendum. He also noted that the rival groups have accused each other of recruiting new members to increase their numbers and gain an advantage in the vote.

He warned that allowing these new members to participate could undermine the purpose of the referendum, which is intended to resolve the divisions affecting MODITA's original members.

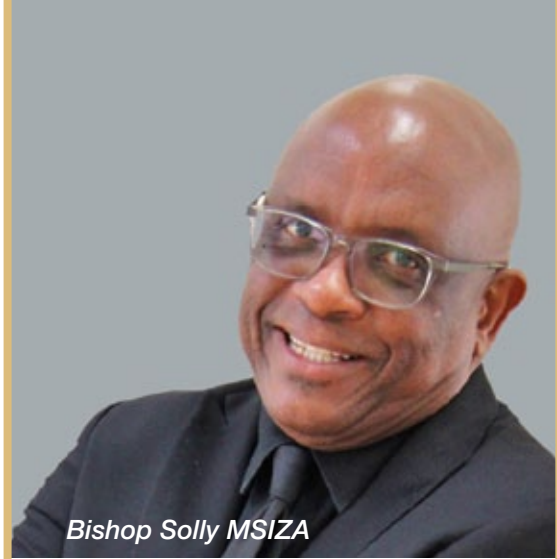
North West Transport on track to clear operating license backlog

The Department of Transport in the North West says it had a backlog of close to 5 000 operating permits in 2023.

Currently, the department says it has managed to process over 3 000 permits.

The Department of Transport's Provincial Regulatory Entity (PRE) says it is working around the clock to clear the backlog.

"As at 31 of December 2023 the backlog stood at 4 921, to date 3 368 adjudications have been done and we are sitting at the balance of 1535, that's on the backlog. We cannot single out MODITA alone out of all association we have in the province. We have adjudicated to date over 160 applications from MODITA alone and those adjudications have been completed." chairperson of the entity, Phenye Vilakazi says.



Bishop Solly MSIZA

THE POWER OF DIVINE ELEVATION

"For promotion comes neither from the east, nor from the west, nor from the south. But God is the Judge: He puts down one and exalts another." Psalm 75:6-7

Elevation means being lifted from a lower position to a higher position. In the Kingdom of God, true elevation does not come from human connections, wealth, education, or influence alone. While God may use people as instruments, He remains the ultimate source of promotion. Many people are struggling because they are looking to man for what only God can do.

1. God Elevates Those Who Humble Themselves

"Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He shall lift you up." James 4:10

Humility is the pathway to promotion. Pride caused Lucifer to fall from heaven, but humility caused Jesus to be exalted above every name.

"And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself... Therefore, God also has highly exalted Him." Philippians 2:8-9

When we submit ourselves to God and serve others with a humble spirit, God responds by lifting us up.

2. Obedience Leads to Elevation

"The Lord your God will set you high above all nations of the earth." Deuteronomy 28:1

Obedience unlocks divine blessings and promotion. Abraham obeyed God's call, left his comfort zone, and became the father of many nations.

Partial obedience delays elevation, but complete obedience attracts God's favor.

(Continues on page 13)

UTAF strengthens commitment to taxi operators after overcoming challenging times

More than 117 delegates from 12 affiliated taxi associations attended the United Taxi Front's (UTAF) 2026 elective conference, held recently at the Indaba Hotel in Fourways, Gauteng.

Delegates elected Zweli Mchunu as chairperson, expressing confidence in his leadership as the organisation rebuilds following the deaths and resignations of several leaders.

These leadership challenges prompted UTAF to convene an early elective conference.

According to re-elected secretary-general Thami Buthelezi, the conference was originally scheduled for May 2027 but was brought forward following the deaths of chairperson Thamsanqa Moyo and deputy chairperson Joseph Ngubane.

"Circumstances forced us, as the mother body, to convene the elective conference a year early. The term of the executive elected in Durban in 2022 was due to end only in May 2027," he said.

Buthelezi said the executive members resigned because of issues within their primary associations, rather than problems with UTAF itself.

"Deputy secretary Innocent Maseko, government liaison officer Netta Greef, grievance officer T. Thabanyana, public relations officer Sihle Makhanya and disciplinary committee officer Eleck Khanyi resigned because of matters involving their individual taxi associations, not UTAF," he clarified.

"Together, these factors made

2026 - 2031 Elected Executive Committee



an early conference necessary. Only five members of the executive committee elected in Durban in 2022 remained, which affected UTAF's operations," he said.

Buthelezi said UTAF could not wait another year to stabilise the organisation and give a newly elected leadership a fresh mandate.

"We could not wait another year to fill the vacant posts and seek a new mandate to govern the affairs of the mother body.

"The five remaining members

did not have a mandate to run the organisation. They were secretary-general Thami Buthelezi, training officer Philemon Nzima, social and development officer Julia Vilakazi, head of business Zwelakhe Welcome Mchunu and treasurer Senzo Ngubane.

"With only five of the 13 executive committee members remaining, we did not have a quorum to manage the organisation's affairs. This affected UTAF's ability to serve its member taxi associations," he said.

He added that many of the challenges that weakened UTAF and limited its effectiveness emerged after the 2022 elective conference in Durban.

"Internal conflicts developed among UTAF's affiliated associations, leading some of them to leave the organisation," he said.

Buthelezi says UTAF's member associations challenges also included illegal operators of seven-seater vehicles operating on established routes, competition from e-hailing services, reduced passenger numbers during the COVID-19 pandemic, retrenchments, rising fuel and operating costs, difficulty meeting vehicle instalments, repossessions and operating-licence backlogs.

He says operating licenses applications that should have taken three months to issue takes longer.

"Taxi operators are faced with a challenge of operating licenses back logs. In certain cases, applicants had to wait longer than necessary. Sometimes it takes a year or longer to issue because

Mbalula fast-tracks operating licences for widows



Free State MEC for Community Safety, Roads and Transport Jabu Mbalula has fulfilled his pledge to prioritise widows in the taxi industry when issuing operating licences.

Speaking at a recent ceremony at the Moqhaka Municipality Town Hall in Kroonstad, where operating licences were handed to widows of deceased taxi operators through estate transfers, Mbalula praised the taxi industry's contribution to the economy and reaffirmed his department's commitment to helping women-owned businesses thrive.

"Today, we are not simply handing over pieces of paper. We are creating economic opportunities, opening doors, building women entrepreneurs and transforming the industry. May these licences become businesses, may

these businesses become employers, may these employers become leaders, and may the women we celebrate build lasting legacies."

Mbalula encouraged the women operators to seize the opportunity and make their mark in the taxi industry.

Mrs Tsikwane, one of the recipients, received two operating licences. She thanked the government for transferring her late husband's business to her, enabling her to continue the family enterprise.

She urged the government to go beyond issuing operating permits by helping women access affordable finance to purchase vehicles.

Rev. Majoe, also a taxi operator, called on the industry to respect and protect women operators. He warned that women without vehicles, or whose vehicles have been repossessed, can be pressured to rent out their permits and may sometimes be robbed, forcing them out of business.

Free State SANTACO's provincial and regional leaders attended the event and thanked the Provincial Regulatory Entity (PRE) and the MEC for honouring deceased operators' legacies by safeguarding continuity, dignity and lawful ownership of their operating licences.

(Continued from page 11)

"If you are willing and obedient, you shall eat the good of the land." Isaiah 1:19

3. Faithfulness Brings Elevation

"He who is faithful in what is least is faithful also in much." Luke 16:10

God tests people with small assignments before giving them greater responsibilities.

David was faithful as a shepherd before becoming king. Joseph was faithful as a servant and prisoner before becoming governor of Egypt.

4. God Can Elevate You Suddenly

"When the time is right, I, the Lord, will make it happen." Isaiah 60:22

God's promotion can come suddenly.

Joseph went from prison to the palace in one day. Esther went from being an orphan to becoming a queen. David went from the sheepfold to the throne.

One phone call, one opportunity, one divine encounter can change your life forever.

"He raises the poor out of the dust... that He may seat him with princes." Psalm 113:7-8

5. Prayer Precedes Elevation

"He raises the poor from the dust and lifts the needy from the ash heap." 1 Samuel 2:8

Prayer is the bridge between where you are and where God wants you to be.

Hannah prayed and God changed her story. Jabez prayed and God enlarged his territory. Elijah prayed and heaven responded.

Every great elevation in Scripture was preceded by prayer.

6. Divine Elevation Often Comes After Testing

Before Joseph wore the crown, he wore chains. Before David sat on the throne, he faced lions, bears, and Goliath. Genesis 41:39-41

God often prepares us through trials before promotion.

The test is not meant to destroy you; it is meant to prepare you.

No one can stop God's plans

No one can stop the elevation that God has ordained for your life. People may reject you, overlook you, criticize you, or underestimate you, but when God's appointed time arrives, He will lift you up.

Your background cannot stop God's elevation. Your age cannot stop God's elevation. Your enemies cannot stop God's elevation.

When God says, "Rise," no one can say, "Sit down."

Stay humble, remain faithful, keep praying, and trust the Lord. The God who lifted Joseph, David, Esther, and Daniel is still elevating His people today.

of inefficient government systems,” he said.

Turning to Shesha, an e-hailing company that received financial support from the Gauteng Taxi Industry Trust to help taxi operators compete with Bolt, Uber and other platforms, Buthelezi said the industry remains hopeful that the initiative will be revived.

“Our provincial structures, SANTACO and the NTA, must revive Shesha so that it can compete on equal terms with Bolt, Uber and other e-hailing services,” he said.

The executive committee led by Zwelakhe Mchunu has identified the following priorities:

- Strengthen UTAF’s organisational capacity to serve member structures
- Re-engage associations that have left UTAF

- Develop ways to participate and compete in the e-hailing market
- Adopt technology across the taxi industry
- Improve taxi operations
- Strengthen customer care and safety campaigns

After his election as chairperson, Mchunu thanked delegates, business partners and everyone who contributed to the conference’s success. He pledged to serve UTAF as it begins a challenging but promising new chapter. The new executive’s term runs until 2031.

FACT SHEET:

The United Taxi Association Front (UTAF) is a major regional taxi organisation affiliated with the National Taxi Alliance (NTA) and the Gauteng National Taxi Alliance (GNTA).

- Bara-City Taxi Association

- Bara-Meadowlands Taxi Association
- Phefeni Wescol Taxi Association
- Meadowlands Dube North Taxi Association (MDN)
- Witwatersrand Taxi Association (WATA)
- Soweto Taxi Services (STS)
- Johannesburg Southern Suburbs Taxi Association (JSSTA)
- Lenasia United Taxi Association (LUTA)
- Leratong Randfontein Bara Taxi Association (LERABA)
- Orange Farm Taxi Association (OFUTA)
- Kopanang Basotho Taxi Association (KOBALTA)
- Sebokeng Internal Taxi Association (ITA)
- Moruleng & District Taxi Association (MODITA)

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Gerald Ferror

Let's support the renewal of UTAF

We congratulate the United Taxi Association Front (UTAF) on successfully holding its elective conference.

UTAF warrants particular attention after enduring major challenges following the deaths of its chairperson, Thamsanqa Moyo and deputy, Joseph Ngubane, as well as the resignation of other executive committee members early in the term that began at its 2022 elective conference in Durban. These setbacks significantly weakened the organisation's ability to operate effectively.

The 2026 elective conference demonstrated UTAF's resilience. Instead of falling apart, the organisation regrouped and elected new leaders to unite its member taxi associations around a shared vision.

The new executive committee, led by Zweli Mchunu, faces a difficult but achievable task. To meet its objectives during this term, UTAF needs support from communities, commuters, government, the private sector and other stakeholders. A stable and thriving UTAF will benefit the taxi industry in Gauteng and beyond.

We wish UTAF's new leadership every success.

We extend the same message to other taxi organisations that have successfully held conferences across the country.



Pastor Sizwe Mahlangu

Soul Corner

EBENEZER — THUS FAR THE LORD HAS HELPED US

As we celebrate Transport Month, it is time to pause, reflect and celebrate the journey of the South African taxi industry. "Thus far the Lord has helped us" — Ebenezer (1 Samuel 7:12).

Our journey has not always been easy. There have been victories and challenges, progress and setbacks, good steps and difficult ones. Yet through it all, the taxi industry has remained resilient, serving communities and moving the nation forward.

This is a moment to acknowledge every operator, driver, owner, association, and industry stakeholder who has contributed to this journey. We give God the glory for how far He has brought us, and for the role He has allowed the taxi industry to play in the life of our nation.

The taxi industry is, and will continue to be, the heart of South Africa's transport story.

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