

# SA, world unite to celebrate Madiba legacy

Today, South Africa and the world come together to celebrate world icon and former President Nelson Mandela's 94th birthday, as well as the ideals he stands for.



Tata Madiba, who has bowed out of the public life, was last seen in pictures sent out last week when President Jacob Zuma visited him in his rural home in Qunu in the Eastern Cape. He had visited him after touring the construction site of a bridge that is being built in Madiba's honour to increase access to Mvezo village.

Zuma reported that he was in good health, happy and content.

At 8am this morning, millions of South Africans, including learners from the country's schools, prominent artists and personalities, united their voices in song to wish the country's favourite icon good health and a blessed day - a gesture of love and appreciation that will be broadcast on national TV and by most radio stations.

Basic Education Minister Angie Motshekga led learners in song from a school in Limpopo.

Approximately 12.5 million school children are expected to participate in the initiative, which is part of LeadSA in partnership with the Department of Basic Education and the Nelson Mandela Foundation - supported by Shout, Brand SA and Proudly South African.

LeadSA said the unique and memorable rendition of the Happy Birthday song will undoubtedly mark a place in time for all South Africans to preserve Madiba's living legacy.

The organisation said they wanted to an enduring memory by giving him the best birthday present ever - the love of the world.

**Give 67 minutes to make a difference**

In honour of the iconic leader, businesses, schools, government structures, charitable groups and ordinary South Africans will be giving 67 minutes of their time to give back to their communities.

July 18, which is known as International Nelson Mandela Day, is not only special to Madiba - but to ordinary citizens as they celebrate by taking action to help change the world for the better.

Moreover, this year is not any different, as people across the country will play their part by ploughing back into communities, either by refurbishing schools, helping out at old age homes and hospitals, among others.

Various events, both by government and non-governmental organisations, are planned across the country. The national event will be held in Zeerust, where Minister of Arts and Culture Paul Mashatile and the Premier of North West Thandi Modise will set aside time to do community service.

## **Cabinet minister get to work**

Staff at the North West Premier's office will hand out gifts to three schools today and tomorrow. The schools that have been identified to which donations will be made are the Madiba Comprehensive School in Rooigrond, Thutlwane and Madibogo Pan Primary school in Madibogo Pan.

Several other Cabinet ministers will also roll up their sleeves to do their 67 minutes. Public Works Minister Thulas Nxesi will be at the Refilwe Orphanage, Disability Centre in Cullinan, east of Pretoria, giving the centre much needed support.

The centre - which hosts 60 senior citizens, 200 vulnerable children and 56 people with disabilities - operates as a drop-in centre where vulnerable children, senior citizens and people with disability are cared for during the day by giving them food, educational and recreational activities.

Basic Education Deputy Minister Enver Surty will lead proceedings in Gauteng at the Batsogiale Primary School in Pimville, Soweto.

The Deputy Minister of Water and Environmental Affairs, Rejoice Mabudafhasi, will be at Boitumelo High School in Ficksburg, where she will mobilise the local community to provide their time and labour for free to paint the school; laying the foundation for toilets; cleaning the school yard and planting trees, amongst others.

Deputy Minister of Women, Children and People with Disabilities, Hendrietta Bogopane-Zulu and partners last night handed over blankets, soup and pizza and to people living on the streets in and around Tshwane.

## **Provinces get to work**

Provinces are also honouring their 67 minutes pledge. The Gauteng Department of Roads and Transport will undertake a cleaning campaign at the Mabopane Driver's Licence Testing Centre - one of its busiest centres in Tshwane. The campaign is expected to create a new face for the centre and make it environmentally friendly.

There will also be other activities including story-telling, motivational talks as well as sporting activities.

In the Eastern Cape, the Department of Transport together with Minister Ben Martins and Transport MEC Thandiswa Marawu will honour the 67 minutes initiative by painting road markings in Sutherland Street in Mthatha before educating learners at Milton Mbekele Senior Secondary about road safety.

The Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) will play their part countrywide as their staff dedicates their 67 minutes to 15 projects.

One of the projects will be the New Jerusalem Children's Home in Midrand. An estimated 60 IEC staff members will be

cleaning, painting and maintaining the home, which provides residential care for abandoned, abused, traumatised, orphaned or HIV-Positive children and vulnerable youth from 0 -18 years.

Others include the Ratanang School for people with disabilities in Limpopo, Othandweni Family Care Centre in Soweto, the Kgomotsego Old Age Home in Kuruman, among others.

## **Pansy excited**

IEC Chairperson Pansy Tlakula said she was excited at the high levels of energy demonstrated by IEC officials nationally and proud that the organisation will be involved in so many projects.

They hope that all who work on this project will remember the values that Madiba embraced and that they will honour his legacy everyday through acts of kindness to fellow South Africans.

Early birthday messages to Madiba have also been pouring in. Eastern Cape Premier Noxolo Kiviet assured Tata that they were working tirelessly - more than 67 minutes every day - to make sure that the face of his home province of the Eastern Cape changes for the better.

"We understand that unless that life of prosperity and greatness manifests for the most down trodden and poor people and their communities. We will be failing you and other past leaders who made supreme sacrifices for the freedom and democracy we are enjoying today," Kiviet said before wishing him good health.

This evening, soccer fans at the Moses Mabhida Stadium in Durban will once again sing for Madiba ahead of kick-off of the match between AmaZulu and Manchester United.

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