

Tight security for Afcon tournament

PRETORIA: Soccer fans attending the Africa Cup of Nations (Afcon) tournament in South Africa can be assured of a fun and safe experience.



The South African Police Service (SAPS) jointly with the South African National Defence Force (SANDF) on Thursday, 17 January 2013, assured soccer fans who will be coming to the country for the tournament that they will be protected from the moment they arrive at the country's ports of entry.

Addressing the media on the security plan for the Afcon, LT General Elias Mawela from SAPS said all security-related operations, with regards to the tournament, would be coordinated through the National Joint Operational and Intelligence Structure (Natjoints).

Situated in Pretoria, with the most sophisticated technology, Natjoints comprises representatives from the SAPS, SANDF, Metro Police, Intelligence agencies and several representatives from various government departments. It will operate 24 hours during the duration of the tournament.

Natjoints started operating on the 10th and will continue with its operations until 19 February. Natjoints structures will be duplicated to other host provinces.

"The mandate is to plan, implement, execute and monitor all inter-departmental and cross-provincial operations affecting safety, security and stability in the Republic of South Africa," LT General Mawela said.

He further said much had been done to ensure that soccer fans enjoyed the tournament.

According to LT General Mawela, the Natjoints had been successfully coordinating major events for the past 12 years including the Rugby, Cricket and the Soccer World Cup and various international conferences and the most recent being the COP17.

He said police would also be deployed in all major routes leading to the stadiums, adding that there would be spotters

deployed in and outside the stadiums during the soccer matches to ensure that trouble makers are immediately identified and removed from the stadiums.

During the tournament, there would be air space restriction in all stadiums used for the Afcon tournament.

Police officials will also be deployed in trains to ensure the safety of those soccer fans who will be using trains to the stadiums.

General Mawela further said that there would be a team of dedicated detectives who will be tasked with dealing with all Afcon cases.

National Police Commissioner Brigadier Ria Phiyage expressed confidence on the Afcon security strategy, saying she was certain all would go according to plan.

The Afcon tournament kicks off on Saturday, with the opening match taking place at the National Stadium in Johannesburg.

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