



WEEKLY POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC HIGHLIGHTS

30 APRIL 2026

ECONOMIC UPDATES

GODONGWANA EXTENDS FUEL LEVY

- On 28 April, Finance Minister Enoch Godongwana announced an extension of the temporary fuel levy relief measures. The relief measures are explicitly temporary and phased, with the levy set to be halved in June to about R1.50 for petrol and R1.96 for diesel. These measures aim to ease the strain on consumers and businesses due to fuel price increases driven by global oil market volatility;
- The intervention maintains the existing R3.00 per litre reduction on petrol and introduces an extended relief for diesel of R3.93, effectively reducing the diesel levy to zero, in an effort to ease cost pressures across transport and logistics sectors;
- Government signalled that, despite the relief, fuel prices are still expected to rise, with the fuel levy relief set to be completely phased out in July, returning to the normal levels of R4.10 per litre for petrol and R3.93 per litre for diesel;
- National Treasury estimates the cost of the intervention at approximately R17.2 billion in foregone revenue, though it maintains that the measures will be fiscally neutral through revenue overperformance and expenditure adjustments;
- The easing of the levy reflects a balancing act between providing immediate consumer relief and maintaining fiscal discipline, with government emphasising that prolonged support is not sustainable given existing budget constraints.



GOVERNMENT UPDATES

R12.5BN BORDER INFRASTRUCTURE OVERHAUL LAUNCHED

- On 28 April, Home Affairs Minister Dr Leon Schreiber announced a R12.5 billion multi-year border infrastructure programme that will completely redevelop six of South Africa's highest-volume land ports of entry through public-private partnerships;



- The targeted facilities, Lebombo (Mozambique), Beitbridge (Zimbabwe), Oshoek (Eswatini), Kopfontein (Botswana), Maseru Bridge and Ficksburg (Lesotho), together manage roughly 80% of all cross-border trade and passenger traffic despite representing only 11% of the country's 53 land ports;
- Schreiber described the initiative as the largest single investment ever made in South Africa's border management system, aimed at replacing ageing, congested and fragmented infrastructure with modern, technology-driven facilities;
- The overhaul will shift operations from manual processes and duplication to integrated digital systems, enabling faster coordination, tighter security controls and reduced vulnerability to illegal migration, illicit trade and fraud;
- Key outcomes include significantly shorter clearance times, lower congestion, improved revenue collection and a markedly better experience for legitimate travellers and businesses;
- Studies cited by the Minister project that even a modest 5% reduction in border clearance time could boost intra-regional exports by around 10%, while the project is also expected to generate new jobs and support broader economic growth;
- This focused intervention on the highest-impact ports marks a decisive step in government's wider drive to modernise border management, unlock trade potential and strengthen national security.



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POLITICAL UPDATES

MARY PHADI JOINS ACTIONSA MAYORAL RACE

- On 25 April, ActionSA leader Herman Mashaba announced former uMkhonto weSizwe (MKP) Mpumalanga convener Mary Phadi as the party's candidate for mayor of the Nkangala district;
- The nomination follows ActionSA's decision last month to appoint Phadi as Provincial Campaign Manager in Mpumalanga, where the party highlighted her credentials as a grounded organiser with a proven track record in community activism;
- In her acceptance speech, Phadi painted a stark picture of governance failures in the district, citing persistent service delivery breakdowns including chronic water shortages, unusable roads, unreliable electricity and overflowing sewage systems;
- She also drew attention to widespread youth unemployment and the area's economic hollowing-out, characterised by abandoned factories left behind by de-industrialisation;
- Phadi stressed that these problems are not new, referencing repeated Auditor-General warnings over the past five years about failing municipalities across the district;
- She committed that, if elected, an ActionSA-led administration would prioritise unlocking Nkangala's economic potential and ensure that infrastructure projects deliver direct job opportunities for local residents.



LEGISLATIVE/REGULATORY UPDATES

AGSA BRIEFS SCOPA ON MUNICIPAL AUDIT OUTCOMES

- On 28 April, the Auditor-General of South Africa (AGSA) briefed Parliament's Standing Committee on Public Accounts (SCOPA) on the 2024/25 municipal audit outcomes. The briefing covered major metropolitan municipalities including Tshwane, Ekurhuleni, eThekweni and Mangaung, with SCOPA signalling that municipal financial management and audit performance will remain a central oversight priority;



- The audit outcomes indicate a continued deterioration in clean audits, with only about 8% of municipalities achieving clean audit outcomes, down from the previous year's approximately 16%, while the majority remain in the "unqualified with findings" category, reflecting persistent weaknesses in financial management and compliance;
- Across municipalities, the AGSA highlighted systemic governance and control failures, particularly in supply chain management, where weak procurement oversight, inconsistent bid evaluations, and poor contract management have created an environment vulnerable to fraud, irregularities, and abuse;
- Financial and operational weaknesses remain widespread, including irregular expenditure, weak internal controls, poor revenue collection, and delays in paying creditors, all of which undermine service delivery and financial sustainability at municipal level;
- While there are areas of improvement, with some municipalities achieving unqualified audits and strengthening reporting quality, progress is uneven and often undermined by recurring compliance failures and weak consequence management;
- The briefing thus highlights that despite incremental improvements in certain areas, local government remains characterised by structural governance challenges, with capacity constraints, poor oversight, and weak financial discipline continuing to hinder meaningful improvements in audit outcomes and service delivery.



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AFRICA WATCH

MALI THWARTS COORDINATED TERROR ATTACKS

- On 25 April, Mali's junta government confirmed that armed terrorist groups affiliated with Al-Qaeda launched coordinated attacks on several cities, targeting the residence of Defence Minister Sadio Camara in Kati and killing both the minister and his second wife;
- The assaults also struck Mali's main army base, areas near Bamako's airport and the strategic northern town of Kidal, from which Russian troops supporting government forces were pushed out, leaving at least 16 people wounded;
- Junta leader General Assimi Goïta remained out of public view in the immediate aftermath but later appeared in official photographs meeting Russian ambassador Igor Gromyko to discuss the crisis and reaffirm the strong partnership between Bamako and Moscow;
- Malian military leadership subsequently declared the situation under control, describing the events as a foiled coup attempt and pledging to neutralise those responsible;
- The attacks have prompted strong international condemnation, with UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres expressing deep concern, strongly condemning the violence and urging coordinated global support to combat terrorism while addressing urgent humanitarian needs in the country.



INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS UPDATES

KING CHARLES STATE VISIT TO THE U.S.

- On 27-30 April, King Charles undertook a four-day state visit to the United States, hosted by President Donald Trump, aimed at reinforcing the "special relationship" amid growing political tensions between Washington and London;
- The visit included high-level engagements such as a ceremonial White House welcome, a state dinner, and a historic address to the US Congress, where the King emphasised shared democratic values, NATO cooperation, and support for Ukraine, while deliberately avoiding direct political confrontation;
- In his Congressional speech, King Charles subtly warned against isolationism and unchecked executive power, signalling implicit contrasts with elements of Trump-era policy, while positioning the monarchy as a unifying, non-partisan diplomatic actor;
- The visit unfolded against a strained political backdrop, with UK Prime Minister Keir Starmer having faced criticism from Trump over foreign policy issues, particularly Iran, highlighting underlying tensions in the bilateral relationship;
- Notably, Trump publicly claimed that King Charles agreed with his stance on preventing Iran from obtaining nuclear weapons, a statement that prompted a cautious response from Buckingham Palace reaffirming the UK's longstanding non-proliferation position without endorsing Trump's interpretation;
- Despite these tensions, the visit was marked by warm personal diplomacy and symbolism, including humour, ceremonial gestures, and mutual praise, with Trump highlighting the King's ability to bridge political divides in the US;
- Ultimately, the visit functioned as an exercise in soft diplomacy, using royal influence to stabilise UK-US relations and offset political friction linked to Starmer-Trump disagreements, while reinforcing long-standing institutional ties despite a volatile geopolitical environment.





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MIDDLE EAST WAR UPDATES

- On 24 April, the conflict in the Middle East intensified as Israel expanded its military operations in the Gaza Strip, with sustained airstrikes and ground engagements leading to rising civilian casualties and widespread destruction of infrastructure;



- In the days that followed, violence escalated across multiple fronts, including cross-border clashes with Hezbollah along southern Lebanon, where missile and drone exchanges resulted in further fatalities among both combatants and civilians;
- Iran adopted a more assertive posture through its regional proxies, contributing to broader escalation, while the United States increased its military presence in the region to deter further conflict spillover;
- Attacks and security incidents affecting vessels around the Red Sea disrupted key shipping routes, compounding economic pressures and contributing to volatility in global oil markets;
- The cumulative impact of the fighting had resulted in significant loss of life, worsening humanitarian conditions, and growing international concern, with the United Nations and global powers calling for urgent de-escalation, though without a breakthrough;
- While the US-Iran ceasefire earlier this month reduced full-scale confrontation, it did not end the violence. The current period has been characterised by intensifying violence, mounting casualties, and expanding regional risk, with the conflict increasingly affecting global economic stability developments that have directly informed the decision by Enoch Godongwana to extend fuel levy relief measures in South Africa to momentarily shield consumers from rising fuel prices.

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