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SUSTAINABILITY NEWSLETTER

SEPTEMBER 2025

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NATIONAL

KUSILE POWER STATION HAS REACHED COMPLETION – Eskom has announced that Unit 6 at Kusile Power Station entered commercial operation on 29 September 2025, marking the completion of its major build programme. Together, Kusile and Medupi now provide 9,600MW of coal-fired power, about 15% of Eskom's total capacity, strengthening South Africa's electricity supply.

The milestone comes after years of delays and rising costs, with Kusile now operating at its full 4,800MW capacity. Eskom says both Kusile and Medupi are achieving an energy availability factor above 70%, a sharp recovery from past performance. This boost has helped deliver 105 consecutive days without load shedding by late August and underpins Eskom's Summer Outlook, which forecasts no load shedding until March 2026. However, the utility cautions that heatwaves or sudden plant failures could still trigger short evening "load reduction" periods.

Alongside new coal capacity, Eskom is also restoring older plants, investing in battery storage, and upgrading the grid to integrate more renewables, supported by the Just Energy Transition Partnership. Electricity Minister Kgosientsho Ramokgopa says South Africa is “nearing the end of load shedding as we know it,” while energy experts stress that long-term stability will depend on accelerating the shift to solar and wind.

Source: <https://www.saffarazzi.com/news/kusile-power-station-hits-full-throttle-eskoms-9600mw-milestone-lights-up-south-africa/>

WHO WARNS POLLUTION KILLING THOUSANDS OF SOUTH AFRICANS ANNUALLY – The World Health Organisation (WHO) has called on South Africa to adopt stricter air quality standards aligned with global guidelines and accelerate a just energy transition. Air pollution is a major health threat, causing an estimated 26,000 premature deaths annually in the country, particularly affecting children and the elderly. South Africa ranks fourth in Africa for deaths linked to particulate matter pollution, with nearly the entire population exposed to unsafe air.

Despite regulations under the National Environmental Management: Air Quality Act of 2004, enforcement is weak, especially in coal-heavy regions like Mpumalanga’s Highveld. Budget constraints and a shortage of environmental health practitioners further limit progress.

The WHO has outlined five priorities for South Africa over the next two years:

- Strengthen monitoring systems by linking air, water and waste data with health outcomes;
- Invest in climate-resilient health facilities with clean energy, safe water and waste management;
- Protect children from toxic exposures, including enforcing lead paint standards;
- Address legacy pollution; and
- Expand public education and disease prevention efforts.

Globally, air pollution causes 7 million premature deaths each year, with Africa accounting for 1.1 million.

Source: <https://www.medicalbrief.co.za/who-warns-pollution-killing-thousands-of-south-africans>

PROPOSED NAME CHANGE OF KRUGER NATIONAL PARK – The Mpumalanga Provincial Legislature has reignited debate over heritage and identity by proposing that the Kruger National Park be renamed Skukuza National Park. The motion, introduced by an EFF representative, argues that the current name honours Paul Kruger, a political figure associated with colonial and apartheid legacies. Supporters say the change would promote transformation and inclusivity in post-apartheid South Africa.

However, the proposal has faced strong opposition from tourism experts, historians and community organisations. Critics warn that changing the name of one of Africa’s most iconic conservation areas could harm South Africa’s international tourism image, cause confusion among visitors and negatively affect the economy at a time of financial strain. Many argue that Kruger National Park has become a globally recognised brand that extends beyond its historical associations.

The debate has gained significant attention online with the hashtag #KrugerParkNameChange. Some South Africans support the renaming as a step toward decolonisation, while others argue it could negatively impact tourism and national unity. Groups like AfriForum and TLU SA oppose the change, emphasising that practical governance should take priority over political symbolism. This issue reflects broader discussions about how South Africa honours its history in

public spaces. While the park's name remains unchanged for now, the controversy highlights the tension between historical transformation and the need for economic sustainability and national heritage.

Source: <https://www.thesouthafrican.com/mpumalanga/kruger-national-park/outrage-over-proposal-to-change-name-of-kruger-national-park/>

INTERNATIONAL

CHINA'S FIRST EMISSIONS REDUCTION TARGET SPARKS DEBATE - China has announced a new target to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions by 7 to 10% from peak levels by 2035, marking the first time the country has set an outright emissions reduction goal. The plan also includes raising the share of non-fossil fuel energy to over 30% and expanding wind and solar capacity sixfold compared with 2020.

While the announcement is a significant moment in global climate efforts, experts have criticised it as underwhelming and insufficient to meet the Paris Agreement's goals, which would require cuts of around 30%. Concerns remain over China's continued investment in coal and the lack of clarity on how peak emissions are defined.

China's emissions trends, partially influenced by the COVID-19 pandemic, suggest its peak may already have occurred. Despite falling short of expectations, the country's dominant role in renewable energy, including solar, wind and electric vehicles, gives hope that actual decarbonisation could exceed the stated target. Observers suggest China has the potential to play a more proactive role in global climate leadership, leveraging its clean tech capacity to surpass current pledges.

Source: <https://www.aljazeera.com/economy/2025/9/25/underwhelming-chinas-new-climate-target-falls-far-short-experts-say>

ACTIVISTS CALL FOR JUSTICE AND REPARATIONS AT COP30 - Hundreds of environmental and human rights groups have called on the upcoming COP30 climate conference in Brazil to prioritise justice and reparations for communities disproportionately affected by climate change, colonialism, and slavery. The groups urged organisers to centre the voices of Africans, people of African descent, and Indigenous Peoples, highlighting Brazil's large Afro-descendant and Indigenous populations.

The activists emphasised that industrialised nations bear historical responsibility for emissions and have a legal obligation to lead in climate action. Despite previous pledges under COP agreements, funding for loss and damage in developing countries remains far below the \$1.3 trillion estimated need, with last year's \$300 billion target still \$200 billion short.

The call for reparations comes amid worsening climate impacts, including severe floods in Pakistan and rising food prices affecting crops like Brazilian coffee and Ghanaian cocoa. Signatories include global organisations such as the Global Afro-descendant Climate Collaboration for Climate Justice and HBCU Green Fund, with support from Colombia's environment minister. The campaign reflects growing global momentum for reparations while acknowledging ongoing debate over historical accountability.

Source: <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2025/9/27/cop30-urged-to-link-climate-justice-with-reparations-for-historical-crimes>

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For more information contact admin@imbewu.co.za or visit <https://imbewu.co.za/she-electronic-legal-registers/>



24 October 2025- International Day of Climate Action <https://dots.eco/environmental-day/international-day-of-climate-action-2025/>

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