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SONA

Parliament prepares for R6m State of the Nation Address

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THE 2025 State of the Nation Address (SONA) will take place at City Hall at 7pm, marking the beginning of the current (seventh) term of Parliament.

Parliament has allocated R6 million for this year's address, which will be delivered by President Cyril Ramaphosa. Following the SONA, a two-day debate and reply by Ramaphosa will occur in the dome next week.

Ramaphosa's spokesperson, Vincent Magwenya, said that the SONA will reflect on the nation's progress and reaffirm the commitment to building the country envisioned at the start of democracy. "In the Address, the president will outline the tasks of the Government of National Unity in implementing three strategic priorities: driving inclusive growth and job creation; reducing poverty and tackling the high cost of living; and building a capable, ethical, and developmental state," he said.

Magwenya also said Ramaphosa was looking forward to a constructive, substantive, and enriching debate that will follow his Address next week.

Secretary to Parliament, Xolile George, confirmed the R6m budget pro-



vision for SONA, ensuring adequate coverage of costs for the delivery at City Hall and subsequent debates in the dome. National Assembly Speaker Thoko Didiza noted that Ramaphosa's Address will be the only agenda item.

"We are guided by the joint rules that are there to regulate how proceedings are supposed to be dealt with and those are standing, and we will continue with those," said Didiza.

National Council of Province chairperson Refilwe Mtsweni-Tsipane said disruptions will be taken care of by the rules.

Didiza also said nearly 2 000 guests are expected to attend SONA. Former presidents Thabo Mbeki, Kgalema Motlanthe, and Jacob Zuma will be in attendance as well as other former parliamentary presiding officers.

Didiza said the SONA proceedings

will retain a full ceremonial format, including a 21-gun salute, an aircraft fly-past, and a ceremonial guard, among other things.

Addressing concerns regarding the serving of alcohol at SONA, Didiza said that no drinks or food will be served until the event concludes. "People will eat and take drinks, and they will depart," she clarified. Mtsweni-Tsipane confirmed that the dome will be ready for the SONA debate and reply next week, as the Department of Public Works and Infrastructure continues its preparations.

In preparation for the SONA, Minister of Police Senzo Mchunu will also address police officers today. He is expected to discuss the integrated deployment of NATSJOINTS to ensure security during the event. Due to safety protocols, specific details regarding the number of officers on duty will not be disclosed.

The City's law enforcement agencies, along with Metro Police, will collaborate with the police for safety measures.

Strict road closures will be enforced, and motorists were informed a week in advance about restricted areas. Signage will be installed in the CBD to guide motorists, who are encouraged to familiarise themselves with the list of affected roads.