

ZS6KTS NEWS BULLETIN

Good evening, it is Tuesday 17th of February 2026.

This is **ZS6KTS**, being operated by Corrie ZS6CDB, with the weekly news bulletin of the Kempton Park Amateur Radio Technical Society.

This bulletin is being transmitted on the 2m Kempton Park Repeater, on 145.6625 MHz

Read only if Echolink is available Echolink users can connect to ZS6KTS, or node 8041 (or if club Echolink is not available ZS0AWA-L), to listen to and partake in the news bulletin.

Welcome to everyone on frequency. Please stay tuned for some interesting SARL and Club news items.

SARL NEWS:

AMATEUR RADIO TODAY — 48 YEARS ON THE AIR:

Amateur Radio Today celebrates 48 years on the air this week. The first broadcast was on 12 February 1978 by Gerald Klatsko, ZS6BTD, now a Silent Key and Hans van de Groenendaal, ZS6AKV. The programme has been broadcast every Sunday at 10:00 AM for the past 48 years. It started as Amateur Radio Mirror International but later changed its name to Amateur Radio Today.

Amateur Radio Mirror International originated from the then Johannesburg Branch of the SARL weekly Sunday morning bulletin. Over the years, several other amateurs joined the team as others retired. Currently, Hans, ZS6AKV, still anchors and produces the programme, with weekly contributions from Brian Jacobs, ZS6YZ; Dave Reece, ZS1DFR; Dave Long, ZS5FR and Dennis Green, ZS4BS. Follow the history and iconic contributions of many people over the next few weeks.

PICO BALLOON NEWS:

Here is a brief update on South Africa's pico balloons as of Friday, 13 February 2026.

ZS1AFB-1 is currently crossing the Atlantic Ocean at an altitude of 12,3 km and is due to complete its second lap around the world in the next few days. ZS6SRC-34, launched on 7 February, after an initial loop back over Mozambique, is now heading over the Indian Ocean towards Australia at an altitude of just under 13 km.

ZS1ERZ-12 is currently in its fourteenth circumnavigation of the planet. Over the past 48 hours, however, it has encountered erratic altitude fluctuations. After a gradual descent from its cruising altitude of 13,5 km, it dropped to 5 940 m by early yesterday morning, only to climb sharply back to 13 km within hours. It has since begun another descent. These swings likely correlate with an intense low-pressure system in the region (north of New Zealand); its survival remains uncertain until the next transmission is received.

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WEST RAND ARC NEWS:

Did you know that the West Rand ARC repeaters have been solar-powered and totally off-grid for the past four years? This past weekend, a technical team visited the repeater site for a significant solar upgrade. A special thank you goes to Nico, ZS6LOL and Phillip, ZS6PVT, for their hard work. A massive 200 W solar panel was added to the Victron MPPT charge controller, which maintains the 100 Ah lithium battery. With an average five-day standby time, this robust solar power system ensures that the West Rand repeater is always ready for daily use and emergency communications. We hope to hear you soon on 146,625 or 439,000 MHz.

While the previous system was sufficient, this expansion opens the door to exciting new projects. The Club has several ideas in the pipeline, including – Digital Weekends: test your Slow Scan TV (SSTV) skills by exchanging photos or practise Radio Teletype (RTTY) via the repeater in preparation for the next Club contest. Novice Nets and Parrot Repeaters: Long-term plans include a “parrot”-style repeater and a dedicated Novice net to help newcomers find their voice on the air after passing the RAE.

AllStar Link Expansion: With an AllStar link, the Club is looking towards establishing a 10 m FM repeater link, with a partner Club potentially joining this venture soon.

PROPAGATION REPORT:

Hannes Coetzee, ZS6BZP, reports that solar activity for the week is expected to remain at low to moderate levels. There are currently six sunspot regions with simple magnetic configurations visible on the solar disk. There is a moderate probability of C-class flares and a low probability of M-class flares. If you wish to do your own frequency predictions, the expected effective sunspot number for the week is around 99. The 10 to 30 m bands may provide good DX opportunities in the mornings and late afternoons. For further information, please visit spaceweather.sansa.org.za.

DIARY OF SOME UPCOMING EVENTS:

25 February – the Santon Power Hour Tech Talk

27 February - International Milk Tart Day

CLUB NEWS:

AGM AND MARCH CLUB MEETING:

We are looking forward to enjoy our Annual General Meeting at the March monthly club meeting. Please note that the AGM will be on Saturday the **14th of March 2026** at our **clubhouse in Ysterhout Street, Birchleigh from 14h00 onwards** as per the notification that went out yesterday and not on the 8th of March 2026 as per the first notification. Please remember that the committee is to be advised in writing at least 7 days prior to the AGM of any matter to be tabled under general at the AGM.

Call Anton ZS6WG to give feedback of the February club meeting:

Call Jacques ZS6MAV, for any AMSAT feedback and update:

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BIRTHDAYS AND ANNIVERSARIES:

We have no birthday's or anniversaries on our list for this week.

If we have missed out on your big day, please contact any committee member to update our records.

ADDITIONAL NEWS:

If there is anyone who would like to share any additional or any specific club news with the listeners, you are welcome to call in now.

1. _____ 2. _____

SWOP SHOP:

This is your opportunity to advertise a swop, or any amateur equipment for sale.

Please note that NO prices are to be quoted on air. Only a description of the items and your contact details must be provided.

1. _____ 2. _____

That brings us to the end of tonight's bulletin.

You have listened to the weekly news bulletin of the Kempton Park Amateur Radio Technical Society, read and compiled by Corrie ZS6CDB.

Thank you for having listened!