

Semenya to feature in film

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MIDDLE distance runner and world champion Caster Semenya will be featured in the SABC3's acclaimed short-film television series 21 Icons this Sunday.

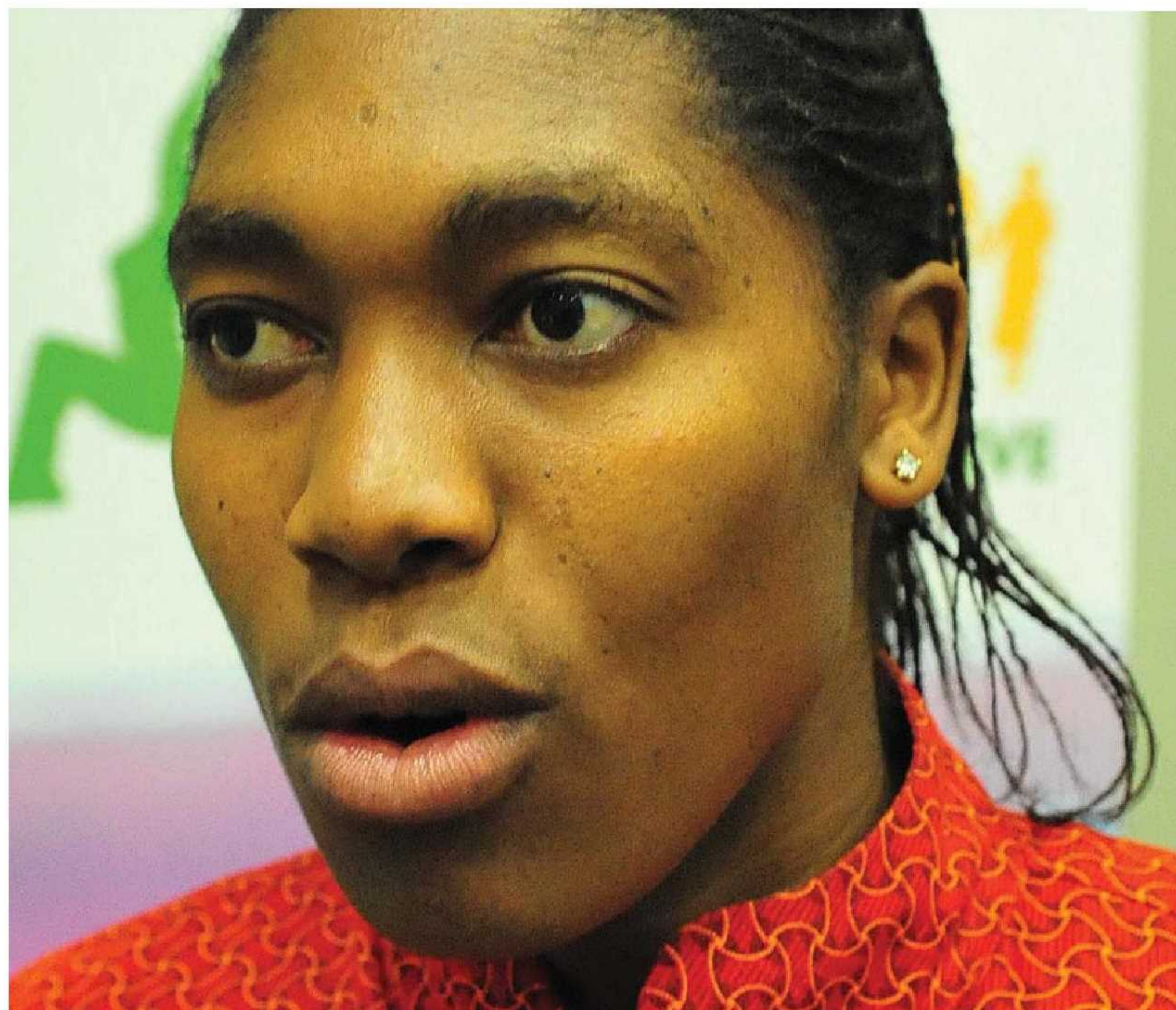
The series traces South Africa's history, moving from the fight for freedom to the country's growth during democracy and concluding with a vision of the future.

This third season has been envisaged as a tribute to the country's future, shedding the spotlight on young South African icons. The 24-year-old middle-distance runner and former world champion was selected for the series "as an individual whose life serves as an inspirational example to others to never give up and pursue your dreams despite hardships".

"I feel free and I can just be myself," Semenya says of her love of running. "I would watch the Olympics and the All Africa Games and see my role models running. I had that feeling that maybe I could be like them or better," she said.

Following her victory in the 2009 World Championships, it was announced amid great controversy that Semenya had been subjected to gender testing.

In an intimate conversation with filmmaker and photographer Gary van Wyk, she said: "I'm just a human being. I don't control things. I run because I love running. If I'm taken away from



HOPE AND BELIEF: Caster Semenya is inspired by Madiba's words to 'believe in herself' and now she features in a TV series.

it that doesn't change me or mean I will stop running. I'm not doing it for anyone else."

She won silver medals at the 2011 World Championships and the 2012 Summer Olympics, both in the 800m.

Semenya recalled a conversation she had with Madiba: "Nelson Mandela told me that I must just believe in myself. Where there is hope, there is belief. He told me to just keep doing what I am

doing - I'm the best at what I do, nobody can change that."

Last month it was reported that Semenya had married her long-time girlfriend fellow runner Violet Raseboya in Limpopo. The athlete, has, however, remained intensely private about her personal life and has not explicitly addressed her sexuality. The film will be screened on Sunday at 7.27pm.

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