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RAMAPHOSA PRAISES ESKOM TURNAROUND DURING KUSILE OVERSIGHT VISIT

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Ramaphosa praises Eskom turnaround during Kusile oversight visit

● RODNEY HLATSHWAYO

EMALAHLENI — President Cyril Ramaphosa conducted an oversight visit to Kusile Power Station, signalling government's continued focus on stabilising South Africa's electricity supply and strengthening generation capacity.

The President was accompanied by Minister of Electricity and Energy Kgosientsho Ramokgopa, Eskom leadership and local government officials. The visit formed part of ongoing efforts to assess operational progress and the country's energy security outlook.

Ramaphosa's programme included a high-level meeting with the Eskom Board, engagements with senior management and a walkabout at the facility, where he interacted with workers during a guided tour of the powerstation.

The visit comes as Kusile Power Station marks a key milestone, with Unit 6 now fully operational. The additional unit is expected to boost electricity supply to the national grid, reinforcing efforts to maintain consistent power delivery.

Addressing stakeholders, Ramaphosa commended Eskom for what he described as a significant turnaround in performance. He highlighted more than 320 days without load shedding as a major step towards energy stability.

"We are seeing real progress in stabilising electricity supply, which is critical for economic growth and improving the lives of South Africans,"

he said.

Despite the gains, the President noted that challenges remain, particularly in addressing load reduction affecting some communities. He emphasised the need for equitable access to reliable electricity nationwide.

Ramokgopa said Kusile's return to full capacity reflects the impact of ongoing reforms within the energy sector.

He added that government remains committed to ensuring long-term energy security through continued maintenance, infrastructure investment and the diversification of energy sources. Eskom Group Chief Executive Dan Marokane highlighted the power station's contribution to job creation, noting that Kusile generated thousands of jobs during its construction phase and continues to support employment through its permanent workforce and contractors.

He said these opportunities have had a positive impact on local communities and broader economic development.

Marokane said the milestone at Kusile is expected to support the country's improved electricity performance, with continued investment and reforms remaining key to long-term energy stability. He also indicated that efforts are underway to eliminate load reduction, which

mostly affects rural areas, with a target to end it by 2027 through the rollout of smart meters nationwide.



FRONT ROW: Mpumalanga Premier Mandla Ndlovu, President Cyril Ramaphosa, Eskom Board Chairperson Dr Mteto Nyati, Eskom Group Chief Executive Dan Marokane, and Eskom top management (STANDING) IMAGE: Rodney

Former Steve Tshwete mayor drops ANC for Service Delivery Party

● LUCAS SHONGWE

MIDDELBURG — Former Steve Tshwete Local Municipality mayor Diphale Motsepe has officially joined the newly formed Service Delivery Party (SDP), citing failures in governance, accountability and service delivery.

Motsepe, who previously served in both the African National Congress (ANC) Veterans League and the South African National Civic Organisation (SANCO), resigned from the ANC on Thursday, 09 April 2026. He was officially unveiled as an SDP member on the same day during a media briefing held at Phetshile Guest House in Middelburg.

"The continued deterioration in governance standards, failure to prioritise the needs of our communities, and the erosion of public trust in democratic institutions have compelled me to take this difficult decision," Motsepe said in his resignation letter.

"As a former public representative, I hold firm the belief that leadership must always be exercised in a manner that promotes transparency, service delivery and the dignity of our people. Regrettably, these foundational principles are no longer consistently upheld."

Motsepe assumed office as mayor in March 2021 following the passing of former mayor Bagudi 'Tsietsi' Tolo. His tenure ended in November 2021 when Mhlonishwa Masilela was elected mayor after the local government elections.

Former Ward 18 councillor Thabo Motsepe has also joined the party.

SDP convenor for Steve Tshwete, Njabulo Nhlapho, said Motsepe brings a deep understanding of municipal governance and a solid record of executive leadership. He added that Motsepe's move reinforces the party's commitment to breaking away from partisan gridlock.

"While his experience strengthens our presence, our prospects are driven by the 'Pioneer' model, where we empower leaders with the technical and managerial acumen to deliver results," Nhlapho said.

The visit underscores government's broader strategy to secure long-term energy reliability, as South Africa continues to recover from years of power shortages and infrastructure constraints.

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President Cyril Ramaphosa inside the power-generating plant

"the path of the righteous winds upwards to flee from hell beneath us" Prov 15:24



Spirit-Empowered Self-Control

By Pastor Chuck Swindoll

But the Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against these things! (Galatians 5:22-23)

As we cultivate the discipline of self-control, you and I can experience victory over the very things we despise in ourselves. The new nature trumps the old nature as we allow the Spirit of God to rule our minds and our hearts. As a result, life soon begins to improve because the restraining power of the Holy Spirit overcomes the tempting urges of the flesh. He brings strength we do not have in ourselves.

Enkrateia is the Greek word translated "self-control." The stem is the term kratos, meaning "strength" or "might." Often kratos is translated "dominion." The prefix personalizes the word, in a manner of speaking. So enkrateia is the ability to have dominion over one's impulses or desires.

For the person without Christ, the desires dictate and he or she obeys. Those in

Christ, living under the authority of His Spirit and ruled by Him, are able to defy this once-powerful dictator. As a result, we experience a transforming change that others notice.

As for the tongue, we exercise verbal restraint. Where our diet is concerned, we exercise restraint at the dinner table. (And I leave the ice cream in the freezer!) Pertaining to the temper, we exercise emotional restraint. As it relates to our thoughts, we exercise mental restraint. In terms of sexual lust, we exercise moral restraint. All of us have areas that tempt us more than others, so we must give ourselves over to the Spirit's authority. He steps in and empowers us to hold back before we take steps to satisfy our impulse and our desire.

Let's get practical. I have found that a three-second pause can make all the difference. Just as an impulse hits me, I decide to wait just three seconds before taking any action. During that pause, I do a quick assessment of what the consequences might be. Would this action be something that I would be embarrassed about later?

Sometimes I know that I shouldn't act, so I pray, "Right now, Lord, in this very moment, I'm struggling. Spirit of God, control my tongue. Stop my mind from dwelling on that thought. Don't let that impulse have its way." Obviously, all of that happens in an instant, and I rarely say those words out loud. But I am frequently amazed by how effectively the Lord provides self-control when I need it. As I release my struggle to Him, He takes over. Every time.



From left: Bongsi Mahlangu (Coordinator Secretary), Njabulo "Sgegede" Nhlapho (STLM coordinator), and Diphale Motsepe, former STLM Executive Mayor. IMAGE: Supplied

Highveld Mall robbery turns deadly, three suspects shot dead

● RODNEY HLATSHWAYO

EMALAHLENI — Three suspects were shot dead following a robbery at a jewellery store inside Highveld Mall in Witbank on Wednesday morning, 15 April 2026.

According to police, the incident occurred at approximately 10:00 when a group of about eight armed suspects stormed the store. The suspects allegedly held a security guard and a staff member at gunpoint before fleeing with an undisclosed quantity of jewellery.

Law enforcement agencies, together with private security companies, responded after receiving reports of a robbery in progress. The suspects fled the mall in multiple getaway vehicles but were intercepted shortly after leaving the premises.

A shootout ensued, during which three suspects were shot dead. The remaining suspects managed to evade arrest and

are currently on the run.

At the scene, police recovered three pistols, a rifle and ammunition believed to have been used in the robbery. A Toyota RAV4 fitted with false registration plates, suspected to have been used as a getaway vehicle, was also recovered. Some of the stolen jewellery was found inside the vehicle.

Police have opened a case of business robbery. The Independent Police Investigative Directorate (IPID) will investigate the circumstances surrounding the fatal shooting.

Speaking to the *Highveld Chronicle*, police spokesperson Colonel Mavela Masondo said authorities have intensified crime prevention operations across the province.

“Police are conducting regular

roadblocks during operations, as well as routine stop-and-searches of vehicles, targeting unlicensed firearms, stolen goods and individuals suspected of being en route to commit crimes,” Masondo said.

He added that the circumstances surrounding the fatal shooting would be subject to an independent investigation.

“As for the circumstances that led to the fatal shooting, we leave that to IPID to determine whether there was any wrongdoing by the police,” he said.

Authorities have launched a manhunt for the remaining suspects. Members of the public with information are urged to contact Crime Stop on 08600 10111 or use the MySAPS app. Police have assured that all information will be treated confidentially and that tip-offs can be made anonymously.

The recovered firearms will undergo ballistic testing to determine whether they were used in other crimes. Acting Provincial Commissioner in

Mpumalanga, Major General Zeph Mkhwanazi, said police remain committed to working with other law enforcement agencies to combat crime in the province.



A Toyota RAV4 fitted with false registration plates, suspected to have been used as a getaway vehicle
IMAGE: Supplied

Chris Hani's legacy lives on 33 years after assassination

● EMMANUEL N MTHIMUNYE

KWAGGAFONTEIN — Communities gathered in large numbers at Mthombomuhle Community Hall on Friday, 10 April 2026, to commemorate the life and legacy of struggle icon Chris Thembisile Hani, marking 33 years since his assassination.

Hani, a former South African Communist Party (SACP) leader and Chief of Staff of uMkhonto we Sizwe (MK), was assassinated on 10 April 1993, in Boksburg. His death remains one of the most painful and defining moments in South Africa's history, yet his legacy continues to inspire the fight for equality, justice and economic freedom.

The commemoration event brought together government leaders, political organisations, traditional leaders and community members, all reflecting on Hani's contribution to the liberation struggle and the ongoing challenges facing South Africa today.

Among those in attendance were Minister of Sports, Arts and Culture Gayton McKenzie, Deputy Minister Peace Mabe, Mpumalanga MEC for Cooperative Governance, Human Settlements and Traditional Affairs Speedy Mashilo, Chairperson of the Mpumalanga House of Traditional Leaders Kgoshi Lameck Mokoena, MEC for Health Sasekani Mnzini, MEC for Agriculture, Rural Development and Environmental Affairs Nompumelelo Hlophe, and Thembisile Hani Local Municipality Mayor Lesetja Dikgale.

Members of the Hani family, including his wife Dimpho Hani, daughter Lindiwe Hani and son Mphateli Hani, were also present, adding a personal and emotional dimension to the event.

Speakers described Hani as a committed revolutionary who dedicated his life to fighting inequality, unemployment and injustice, particularly for the working class. His role in shaping the country's democratic path continues to resonate with many South Africans. McKenzie used the platform to call for unity within the alliance, urging the African National Congress (ANC) and the SACP to resolve their differences and work together in the spirit of Hani's vision.

“Comrade Hani fought for peace, solidarity, equality and freedom for all. We are not yet where we want to be as a country, but we are also not where we were, and that is because of leaders like Hani,” he said.

He stressed that South Africans must unite to confront persistent challenges such as unemployment, inequality and social division.

“When two elephants fight, the grass suffers. We must fix our differences and unite in the spirit of Comrade Hani,” McKenzie added.

Mashilo echoed similar sentiments, describing Hani as a central figure in the struggle for democracy and equality.

“The assassination of Comrade Chris Hani is one of the painful events to have rocked our country in the fight for democracy, equality, and constitutionality in our country. It reminds us of the sacrifices made for the democratic society we have today — a society that must remain free, equal, just, and non-racial” he said.

He called on South Africans not to be divided but to remain united in keeping the legacy of Comrade Hani alive as one nation, further emphasising that the ANC and SACP are one and should work together as a united family.

Hani's wife, Mam' Dimpho Hani, called for unity between the ANC and SACP, saying her late husband's vision was for the two to work together in solidarity.

“My wish and prayer is to see these two parties working together as one like before and forgiving each other, because there is no way that we can forgive whites for what they did to us and fail to forgive each other,” she said.

She emphasised that Hani's struggle was rooted in improving the lives of ordinary South Africans and urged leaders to honour his legacy through meaningful action rather than words.

SACP national treasurer Joyce

Moloyi Morupa said the party remains committed to fighting inequality and improving living conditions.

“We are commemorating this day with heavy hearts, but also with determination. As long as our people are not economically free, we cannot say we have achieved true freedom,” she said.

Morupa added that the SACP will continue to focus on addressing unemployment, poverty and inequality, particularly among young people who remain disproportionately affected.

Community members also used the platform to voice their concerns, highlighting ongoing struggles

related to unemployment, poverty and social challenges.

Some residents expressed frustration over the lack of tangible progress, saying more needs to be done to improve living conditions and create opportunities.

“We want better living conditions, we want jobs and we want stability. We are tired of promises — we want to see real change,” said one community member.

Others raised concerns about the growing impact of drug abuse, crime and the lack of opportunities for young people, calling on government to take decisive and sustained action.

The concerns raised reflect broader socio-economic challenges that continue to affect many communities across the country, particularly in

rural and township areas.

Despite these challenges, the commemoration served as a powerful reminder of Hani's enduring legacy and the continued relevance of his ideals.

Hani is widely remembered as a fearless leader who dedicated his life to the struggle for justice, equality and dignity for all South Africans.

His assassination, which was intended to destabilise the country, instead strengthened the resolve of South Africans to continue the struggle for freedom and democracy.

As the country marks 33 years since his passing, the message from the commemoration was clear — Hani's vision of unity, equality and economic freedom remains as relevant today as it was during the liberation struggle.

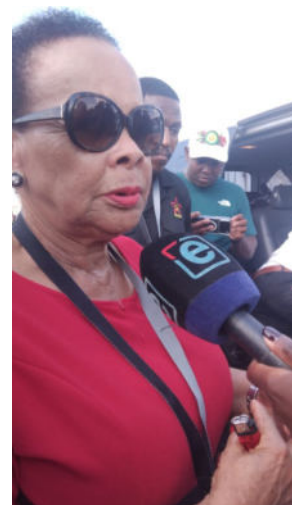


South African Communist Party (SACP) members

IMAGE: EMMANUEL N MTHIMUNYE



Minister of Sport, Arts and Culture, Gayton McKenzie, addressing the audience



Mam' Dimpho Hani, wife of Comrade Chris Hani



MEC for Cooperative Governance, Human Settlements and Traditional Affairs (CoGHSTA), Speedy Mashilo.

Delmas residents hit by repeated outages as vandalism disrupts power supply

● RODNEY HLATSHWAYO

DELMAS — Residents in Delmas are increasingly frustrated by persistent unplanned power outages that continue to disrupt daily life, with many calling for urgent intervention from the municipality and Eskom.

The outages, which often occur without warning, have affected households across several areas, particularly in the early mornings when families are preparing for work and school.

"I wake up at 04am hoping the power will be back, but most days it's not," said Cynthia Shongwe from Extension 3. "My children have to bathe with cold water before school, and it's especially difficult during colder weather."

Residents say the lack of electricity has made basic routines difficult. Parents

report that children often leave home without proper meals, while others are forced to bathe using cold water.

Another parent, Gugu Mthombeni, expressed concern about the long-term impact on children's well-being and education.

"It's not just about being uncomfortable. The children go to school tired and frustrated. Sometimes they can't even have breakfast because everything depends on electricity," she said.

Beyond the immediate inconvenience, residents are also reporting financial strain due to damage to household appliances such as fridges, caused by sudden

power cuts and surges when electricity is restored. For many families already struggling with the cost of living, replacing or repairing appliances is not an option.

Residents say they are unsure whether the outages are caused by load shedding, infrastructure faults or municipal distribution challenges, and that the lack of communication has only worsened the situation. Many claim they are left "in the dark" about when power will be restored.

Eskom: Outages caused by vandalism

Following a media inquiry from the *Highveld Chronicle*, Eskom confirmed that the outages

experienced in Delmas are not related to load shedding or load reduction, but are largely due to unplanned disruptions.

In its response, Eskom stated that "the direct and indirect causes have been the ongoing theft and vandalism of electricity infrastructure, which has severely compromised the reliability and stability of electricity supply in the area."

The utility added that such criminal activities often result in both visible and hidden faults, leading to repeated outages and longer restoration times.

Eskom further stated that the outages are not linked to maintenance issues or capacity constraints, but rather to infrastructure damage caused by illegal activities.

The power utility said its technicians respond swiftly when outages occur, but ongoing vandalism continues to delay restoration efforts.

Eskom also noted that it is working closely with the local municipality and community stakeholders to address the issue, while urging residents to report any suspicious activities that may threaten electricity infrastructure.

The municipality confirmed that it is engaging with Eskom regarding the situation.

Despite these assurances, residents say they are hoping for improved security of infrastructure, better communication and a more reliable electricity supply.

MDTA to hike taxi fares from 1 May, citing rising fuel costs

● RODNEY HLATSHWAYO

MIDDELBURG — Commuters in Middelburg and Mhluzi will pay more for transport from 01 May 2026 after the Middelburg District Taxi Association (MDTA) announced a R2 increase in taxi fares, citing rising fuel costs.

"We are forced to increase the price. Our operating costs are no longer sustainable at the current fares," said MDTA spokesperson John Madonsela.

Madonsela said the association had delayed fare increases since 2021 despite repeated fuel hikes.

"This is the first adjustment in five years," he said.

Drivers said the increase still does not cover their costs.

"Last year we used to fill up a Quantum with R1 300. Now it's more than R1 900 for the same tank of diesel," said Mandla Mahlangu, who has driven the Mhluzi-to-town route for eight years.

"We drive the whole day, but by the time we pay the owner and buy diesel, there's nothing left for us," he said.

Another driver, Vusi Skosana, said the R2 increase will help but will not close the gap.

"Tyres, oil, repairs — everything has gone up. If diesel keeps increasing, even R16 will not be enough," he said.

According to the new fares, Mhluzi local trips will increase from R10 to R12, while fares from Mhluzi to Middelburg town will rise from R13 to R15. Routes to surrounding areas, including Aerorand, Dennesig, Kanonkop, Middelburg Mall and industrial areas, will increase from R14 to R16.

Commuter Rose Sibanyoni, who works as a domestic worker and travels to Dennesig, said the increase will have a noticeable impact on her monthly expenses.

"An additional R2 may not seem like much, but if you take two taxis every day, it adds about R80 to your monthly transport costs. We are already struggling," she said.

In response to the fare hike, chairperson of the Nasaret and District Taxi Association (NDTA), Themba Mncina, said his organisation has not yet finalised its new fares.

"We plan to update our price list after our meeting next Thursday," Mncina said.

"While we are also feeling the pressure of rising fuel costs, it is important that we consult our members before making any changes," he added.



From 01 May, commuters in Middelburg and Mhluzi will see a R2 increase in taxi fares. IMAGE BY: Lucas Shongwe



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TENDER CLARIFICATION	Time and Place to Be Confirmed
SUBJECT:	RFQ's Requested
RFX REFERENCE	LPN006/ Exxaro Leeuwpan Coal Mine / 2026 – Topsoil Load, Hauling and Plant Hire Services

1. TYPE OF RFQ

Please mark (X) in the appropriate block

RFQ	An RFQ (Request for Quote) is a business process used to solicit quotations from potential service providers for specific commodities and/or services. The details of the commodities and/or service/s are provided in the RFQ. An RFQ intends to enter into an agreement (PO/Contract) with the service provider.	
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2. SUBMISSION INFORMATION

Date issued	01/04/2026
Closing date for the submission of tenders	30/04/2026 @ 16:00
Venue for tender delivery	tender@ritluka.co.za

3. DETAILS OF RFQ:

Ritluka Resources (Pty) Ltd invites all Local suppliers from the Victor Khanye Municipality to submit quotations. We are looking for a business partner that would assist in optimizing operations and building a strong delivery model for the following services: **Topsoil Load, Haul and Plant Hire** for our Exxaro Leeuwpan Coal Mine Operation:

SCOPE FOR THE PROJECT IS AS FOLLOWS:

- 8 X Articulated Dump Trucks (40/ 45 Ton ADTs) or equivalent
- 2 X Excavators
- 1 X D8 Dozer
- 4 x 4 Shift Cycle
- 36 Months Contract
- Machine hours (Less than 10,000 hours will be advantageous)
- Should be able to deliver within 2 weeks after an appointment / Award

4. RESPONSE TO RFQ TO BE ACCOMPANIED BY THE FOLLOWING:

- Company Registration (CIPC)
- Tax Certificate
- Letter of good standing (COIDA) if applicable
- Valid BEE Certificate
- ID Copy of owner/owners
- Victor Khanye Municipality: Proof of Residence

5. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- Equipment Inspections will be according to the client's tagging checklist.
- Service history of equipment must be available.
- Set – Aside for local companies (based in the Victor Khanye Local Municipality) and majority Black -Owned Companies with 51% or more, according to the BBBEE Act



MEC Sidell congratulates Graskop Gorge Lift Co on Responsible Tourism Silver win at WTM Africa 2026

● NODICAH FUNDAMA

CAPE TOWN — The Mpumalanga Department of Economic Development and Tourism has congratulated the Graskop Gorge Lift Company (GGLC) after the tourism attraction secured a Silver Award in the Nature Positive Responsible Tourism category at the World Travel Market (WTM) Africa Responsible Tourism Awards 2026. The award was announced on 14 April 2026 at the Cape Town International

Convention Centre (CTICC) during WTM Africa, one of the continent's leading tourism trade exhibitions.

MEC for Economic Development and Tourism, Jesta Sidell, described the achievement as a reflection of what can be achieved when innovation, environmental stewardship and community empowerment come together. "This award is a testament to what

can be achieved when innovation, environmental stewardship and community empowerment come together. Graskop Gorge Lift exemplifies the kind of tourism we want to see grow in Mpumalanga — one that creates jobs, protects our biodiversity and delivers unforgettable experiences for visitors," she said.

Oupa Pilane, co-founder of Graskop Gorge Lift Co., welcomed the recognition, describing it as a milestone for responsible tourism.

"Proud to announce that the Graskop Gorge Lift Co. has won the Silver Award at the World Travel Market (WTM) Responsible Tourism Awards. This recognition means the world to us. It celebrates our commitment to tourism that truly benefits local communities, protects our natural heritage, and creates meaningful, positive impact," he said.

"Thank you to the judges, our incredible team, partners, and every traveller who chooses responsible travel. Together, we're proving that tourism can be a powerful force for good. Here's to more sustainable journeys ahead," he added.

In a statement, the company said the recognition reflects its commitment to protecting the natural environment while creating meaningful and accessible visitor experiences. It highlighted that key features, including the viewing lift and elevated forest boardwalks, were designed to provide zero-impact access to the ecosystem.

The company also pointed to its role in conserving rare and endangered species, including the critically endangered Graskop cliff aloe (*Aloe nubigena*), and in restoring the gorge from previous environmental degradation.

According to the judges' citation, the area had previously been vulnerable to illegal activities such as plant harvesting, wood collection and poaching, which led to

environmental damage, including soil erosion and habitat destruction.

Beyond environmental conservation, GGLC said the award also recognises its contribution to community upliftment, with most of its workforce and suppliers drawn from the local Graskop area.

Graskop Gorge Lift Co., a flagship attraction on the Panorama Route, has been recognised for its innovative, low-impact tourism model. The attraction's zero-impact access system helps protect sensitive ecosystems while promoting local procurement and community participation.

The recognition comes as Mpumalanga continues to position itself as a competitive global tourism destination through its participation at WTMAfrica 2026.

The province, led by the Mpumalanga Tourism and Parks Agency (MTPA), showcased a wide range of tourism products at the event, alongside the Kruger Lowveld Chamber of Business and Tourism (KLCBT).

More than 6 000 global tourism professionals attended the three-day event, providing a platform for networking, investment opportunities and market expansion.

Mpumalanga exhibitors included tour operators, lodges, hospitality groups and municipalities, highlighting the

province's diverse tourism offering — from wildlife experiences around the Kruger National Park to attractions along the Panorama Route.

Speaking to the Highveld Chronicle at WTM Africa before the awards announcement, Pilane raised concern about visitor distribution within the province.

He noted that while approximately 1.9 million tourists visited the Kruger National Park in 2025, only between 200 000 and 250 000 explored other areas such as the Panorama Route.

"Our goal is for people to visit the Kruger National Park and then come out and experience other areas. The reason we are here is to expose tour operators who package the Kruger that there are other places of interest outside the park," he said.

Pilane emphasised that expanding tourism beyond the Kruger is critical for unlocking broader economic opportunities across the province.

Sidell added that the department remains committed to partnering with forward-thinking businesses to position Mpumalanga as a leading sustainable tourism destination in Africa.

"We will continue to support initiatives that promote responsible tourism, economic inclusion and sustainable development across the province," she said.

IQZ unveils manifesto ahead of local government elections in Middelburg

● LUCAS SHONGWE

MIDDELBURG —

Newly established political party Impuquko Ezweni Lethu (IQZ) has called on residents of Middelburg to take control of their circumstances as it unveiled its manifesto ahead of the upcoming local government elections.

"Just complaining won't address the challenges you're facing. You have the power to change your current situation," said IQZ spokesperson Kagiso Sibiya.

"The authority to effect change lies within you. We cannot continue to bemoan our issues. It is time to rise and take action for ourselves because, in the end, who will come to your aid if you do not first step up to help yourself?"

Sibiya was speaking to the *Highveld Chronicle* on the sidelines of the party's manifesto launch held on Friday, 10 April 2026, at Adelaide Tambo Hall in Mhluzi.

The party, formed in October 2025, outlined key priorities it plans to advocate for ahead of the elections, including education, job creation, water and sanitation, healthcare and energy access.

Education and development

IQZ said it aims to strengthen early childhood development (ECD) by promoting skills training through collaboration between the public and private sectors. The party also plans to improve educational facilities and support community-based initiatives.

It emphasised the importance of technical and vocational education and training (TVET) to address skills shortages, adding that partnerships between municipalities, private enterprises and educational institutions will be key to delivering relevant programmes.

The party also pledged investment in school infrastructure, digital

learning tools and teacher development to improve learning outcomes.

Job creation

The party said it plans to leverage the town's industrial base, agricultural assets and mining sector, while supporting small businesses and township economies.

It aims to attract investment into the mining sector and equip communities with skills for self-sufficiency, with the goal of building a workforce that can sustain itself and attract further investment.

Economic opportunities

IQZ said it will introduce business-friendly policies to attract investors and create direct employment opportunities.

The party also plans to integrate spaza shops and informal traders into the mainstream economy, while addressing challenges such as nepotism, favouritism and discrimination to support local enterprises and create a fair business environment.

Healthcare

The party said it plans to improve public health facilities, including upgrades to clinics as well as district and regional hospitals. It also aims to address staff shortages and ease the burden on healthcare workers to improve service delivery.

Energy and electricity

IQZ said it supports access to affordable and reliable energy, including the installation of solar systems in households.

The party said its goal is to improve energy security and reduce costs for residents.

Water and sanitation

IQZ said its priority is to provide safe and clean water, committing to expand water and sanitation services to all households.

It also plans to establish reserves to sustain communities in case of unforeseen circumstances.

Sibiya said the implementation of these plans depends on electoral support.

"These are the issues we will focus on if we are elected to council. We will do our best to improve conditions, and we are inviting the people of Steve Tshwete to join us in making Middelburg better," he said.



Graskop Gorge Lift Co. directors, James Sheard (left) and Oupa Pilane (right)



**EMALAHLENI LOCAL MUNICIPALITY
PUBLIC NOTICE**

The public is invited to community outreach meetings (Mayoral Izimbizo) according to Section 29 (b)(i)(ii)(iii) of the Local Government Municipal Systems Act No.32 of 2000, as per the dates mentioned below:

WARDS	DATE	DAY	TIME	VENUE
10, 11, 13, 14, 16, 17	22/04/2026	Wednesday	17:00	Lynnville Community Hall
18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 24, 33 & 34	23/04/2026	Thursday	17:00	eMalahleni City Hall
12 & 15	24/04/2026	Friday	17:00	Klarinet Extension 6 Community Hall
28, 30 & 31	26/04/2026	Sunday	09:00	Mabande Secondary School Sportsground
25, 26, 27 & 32	26/04/2026	Sunday	14:00	Thubelihle Community Hall
1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 23 & 29	28/04/2026	Tuesday	17:00	Extension 4 Park – opposite Siphosensimbi Clinic

Mr. H.S. MAYISELA
MUNICIPAL MANAGER
Civic Centre,
29 Mandela Street, eMalahleni
www.emalahleni.gov.za

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kwamasiko kutjho bona kufanele bona abantu bahloniphane.

Ukuhloniphana kufaka hlangana ukungazibandakanyi eendaweni lapha kuphethwa khona isiko thizeni ngaphandle kokumenywa, ukungasebenzisi

amagama ongawazwisisiko, ukungavunuli izembatho onganalwazi lazo, ukubuza ngaphambi kobana wenze, ukungenzi ihlekisa ngeminye imihlobo, ukungavumi iingoma zeminye imihlobo kanye nokungathathi iinthombe ungakalayelwa.

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Court grants Malema leave to appeal sentence, not conviction

● LUCAS SHONGWE

KuGompo — Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) leader Julius Malema has been granted leave to appeal his sentence, while his application to challenge his conviction has been dismissed by the East London Magistrate's Court. His legal team acted immediately to avert the possibility of him being sent to jail, as

the law dictates once a sentence has been handed down.

Malema was sentenced to five years' direct imprisonment on Thursday, 16 April 2026, after being found guilty of contravening the Firearms Control Act.

The charges relate to an incident in July 2018, where Malema

discharged a rifle during the EFF's fifth anniversary celebrations in Mdantsane. He was convicted on five counts, including unlawful possession of a firearm and ammunition, discharging a firearm in a public space, and reckless conduct that endangered people or property. The court imposed a five-year sentence for unlawful possession of a

firearm and an additional two years for possession of ammunition. He was also fined R20 000 for the remaining charges or faced an additional six months' imprisonment.

Magistrate Twanet Olivier denied Malema leave to appeal his conviction but granted leave to appeal the sentence.

Legal expert Jonas Ben Sibanyoni from Sibanyoni (JB) Attorneys said the refusal to grant leave to appeal the conviction suggests the court believes there are no reasonable prospects of success in a higher court.

He explained that Malema still has the option to petition the High Court within 21 days to challenge the conviction.

Sibanyoni added that the granting of leave to appeal the sentence allows Malema to apply for bail pending the outcome of the appeal.

"If the appeal is denied, he will serve the sentence. If a higher court overturns the conviction, he will be released. If unsuccessful, he may approach the Supreme Court of Appeal, and thereafter the Constitutional Court if there are constitutional grounds," he said.

Mixed reactions from political parties and civil society

The sentencing has sparked mixed reactions from political parties and civil society.

Democratic Alliance (DA) leader Geordin Hill-Lewis welcomed the outcome, saying it reinforces the rule of law.

"Today is a good day for the rule of law in South Africa," he said, adding that strict consequences for illegal firearm use are necessary to curb gun violence.

The National Prosecuting Authority (NPA) said the sentence reaffirms its commitment to justice without fear or favour.

"The sentence reaffirms our commitment to upholding the rule of law and proper administration of justice, regardless of social status," said Eastern Cape NPA spokesperson Luxolo Tyali.

Afriforum, which initially laid the criminal charges, also welcomed the judgment.

Chief spokesperson for Community Safety Jacques Broodryk said the reckless discharge of a firearm in a

public space posed a serious risk to human life.

"It is important that such behaviour is not normalised or justified under any circumstances," he said.

However, the EFF has strongly rejected the sentence.

EFF Mpumalanga chairperson Collen Sedibe described the ruling as politically motivated, arguing that Malema was unfairly targeted.

"We anticipated this outcome because the magistrate displayed hostility from the beginning. It is concerning that a case where no one was harmed resulted in a five-year prison sentence without suspension," he said.

Sedibe further claimed that external influence played a role in the outcome, alleging that the case was driven by political interests.

Malema's position in Parliament remains safe for now

The case also carries potential implications for Malema's position in Parliament. In terms of Section 47 of the Constitution, a Member of Parliament is disqualified if convicted of an offence and sentenced to more than 12 months' imprisonment without the option of a fine. However, such disqualification only takes effect once all appeal processes have been concluded or the time to appeal has expired. This means Malema may remain in office while his appeal is underway. If ultimately unsuccessful, the disqualification would remain in place for five years after the completion of the sentence. Sentences that include the option of a fine do not trigger this provision, but the final outcome of the appeal process will be critical in determining his future in Parliament.



EFF President Julius Malema and Mpumalanga EFF members who came in numbers to Mbombela to follow court proceedings, watching on a big screen
IMAGE: EFF

Case against eMalahleni mining activist Mandla Bothman dismissed for lack of urgency

● LUCAS SHONGWE

MIDDELBURG — The Mpumalanga High Court has dismissed an urgent application against Mandla Bothman, leader of the Greater eMalahleni Mineral Revolution (GEMR), on the

grounds that it lacked urgency. The ruling was delivered on Tuesday, 14 April 2026, at the Mpumalanga Division of the High Court in Middelburg. The court also ordered that the applicant, Aubrey Tshivandekano, regional manager at the Department of Mineral Resources and Energy (DMRE), pay legal costs.

Tshivandekano had approached the court on an urgent basis to address what he described as ongoing defamatory remarks and threats allegedly made by Bothman on social media following a protest march led by GEMR at the DMRE offices in eMalahleni on 19 March 2026. According to the applicant's legal representatives, Bothman made defamatory remarks, issued threats and directed insults at Tshivandekano on social media platforms. They sought a court order to interdict him from continuing these statements, arguing that they tarnished Tshivandekano's reputation.

However, the court dismissed the application, stating that the applicant failed to demonstrate urgency. The court further

indicated that the allegations against the respondent should first have been reported to the South African Police Service (SAPS) before being pursued through the courts.

GEMR Secretary-General Agrippa Skosana said the ruling marks a significant victory not only for Bothman but for the broader eMalahleni community. "We are all celebrating this outcome. It is important to remember that this matter arose from residents' concerns about their lack of participation in the mining industry. We have been engaging the DMRE, seeking guidance on how communities can be involved in mining activities," he said.

"Following these engagements, accusations of threats emerged. I want to make it clear that we never threatened Aubrey or anyone else. Our intention has always been to participate in the mining sector. Regrettably, our efforts were misinterpreted as hostility, which was never the case. We are simply seeking a seat at the table."



Mandla Bothman, in a white shirt, is flanked by members of the Greater eMalahleni Mineral Revolution (GEMR) celebrating outside the Mpumalanga Division of the High Court in Middelburg.
IMAGE: Lucas Shongwe

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Lawyer JB Sibanyoni says Malema can petition the High Court for leave to appeal Magistrate Twanet Olivier's decision to convict him on count one

Notice is hereby given that the Hope of Residents is applying for registration in terms of the Electoral Commission Act, 1996 (Act No.51 of 1996). The date on which the application was submitted to the Chief Electoral Officer was Monday the 10th of November 2025. The abbreviation of the name of the party is HOPE. The distinguishing mark or symbol of the party is printed underneath.



Anyone wishing to raise an objection against the intended registration must do so by written notice, in which the grounds are set out for the objections, and which must be delivered at the office of the Chief Electoral officer within 14 (fourteen) days after the publication of this notice.

Notice issued by:
BEN MOKOENA (General Secretary)



Sihappy S'ngaphezulu FC thrash Vukuzenzele 11-0 to go top of LFA Promotional League

● RODNEY HLATSHWAYO

DELMAS — Sihappy S'ngaphezulu FC thrashed Vukuzenzele United Palace 11-0 in a top-of-the-table clash in the LFA Promotional League at Riverside Sports Ground on Saturday, 11 April 2026, moving from second place to the top of the standings.

From the outset, Sihappy controlled proceedings and dominated in all areas of the pitch. Their structured tactical approach and high pressing intensity overwhelmed Vukuzenzele midway through the first half, particularly between the 15th and 35th minutes, when the momentum decisively shifted in their favour.

Head coach Hlezmento Mahlangu, however, remained cautious despite the emphatic victory, emphasising the need for continued improvement.

“There's still room for improvement. The boys showed character and hunger, but we still have a long way to go,” he said.

“Our intensity increased as the game progressed, and that's when we knew we had control.”

Sihappy S'ngaphezulu FC's attacking

display was led by Laizer Masina, who operated as a winger and attacking midfielder, scoring four goals in a standout performance. He was supported by Prince Mabuza, a composed midfielder who added a hat-trick, and Lifa Mkhwanazi, the team's striker, who also registered a clinical hat-trick as the team dismantled Vukuzenzele's defence.

Despite the scoreline, Mahlangu said maintaining discipline remains a concern.

“After scoring early, the players became excited. We had to remind them to stay focused because football can change quickly. Discipline and structure are crucial.”

Mahlangu also highlighted the debut of a young player, Papi, praising his tactical awareness and composure.

“He is tactically disciplined and understands when to commit and support the attack. He is definitely one for the future.”

Mahlangu said the team aimed not only to win but to maximise their goal tally, which could prove decisive in the title race.

“The primary goal was to win, and the secondary goal was to score as many as possible. Goal difference can be important at the end of the season,” he said.

“We are taking it one game at a time, but we believe we are on the right path.”

For Vukuzenzele, it was a difficult afternoon marked by tactical and organisational shortcomings.

Head coach Sphiwe Tjhilas admitted his side struggled to cope with the intensity of the opposition.

“We failed to read the game and lost focus during key moments,” he said.

“However, this result does not define our season. We will learn and come back stronger.”

Tjhilas said there was a breakdown in structure between defence and midfield, as well as poor communication.

“We lost shape and lacked communication. There are also issues of unity and understanding among players, which we must fix.”

He confirmed that the team will regroup ahead of the second round of fixtures.

“We are going back to the drawing board. We will rebuild, work on our weaknesses, and aim to return stronger.”

Despite the heavy defeat, Tjhilas acknowledged the lessons from the opposition.

“We learned a lot from Sihappy S'ngaphezulu FC, especially about team spirit and discipline.”

The victory marks a significant shift in the title race, with Sihappy S'ngaphezulu FC now leading the LFA Promotional League standings.



Sihappy S'ngaphezulu FC players celebrate after their dominant 11-0 victory over Vukuzenzele United Palace. (Image supplied)

Blessing 'The Chosen One' Shongwe targets SA title

● LUCAS SHONGWE

MIDDELBURG — Blessing Shongwe, known as “The Chosen One”, is a 25-year-old boxer from Malelane in Nkomazi who has set his sights on the South African title after recently being crowned Mpumalanga champion.

He claimed the vacant provincial title following an impressive victory over Mthobisi Nkosi from Secunda.

Shongwe triumphed in a closely contested 10-round bout during a boxing tournament held on 27 March 2026 at Eastdene Community Hall in Middelburg.

The event was hosted by Ilanga Boxing Promotions in collaboration with Boxing South Africa and the Department of Culture, Sport and Recreation.

He delivered a composed performance against the experienced Nkosi, earning a unanimous decision.

“I couldn't let Nkosi see my weaknesses because if he picked up on them, he would exploit them and take the victory. So, I employed strategies like staying nimble and avoiding any traps,” he said.

Shongwe is now targeting the South African title currently held by Moyisi Booi, who has a record of eight wins and one loss from

nine fights. Speaking to the *Highveld Chronicle*, Shongwe said he entered the fight against Nkosi while carrying minor injuries from training but managed to conceal them from his opponent. He also expressed gratitude to those who supported him throughout his journey.

“A huge thank you goes to my grandmother, Gogo Mabuza, who raised me and taught me invaluable lessons along the way. I am immensely grateful for her unwavering support,” he said.

“I must also recognise my mother, Lungile Maseko, for always being in my corner. I would also like to thank my trainer and supporters, including Excellent Sono, Bongumusa Mavuso, Henk Wessels and Muzi Magagula, for their guidance and encouragement.”

Shongwe has a record of two wins, three losses and one draw from six fights.

He said his immediate priority is to defend his provincial title before pursuing a challenge against Booi from Mdantsane in the Eastern Cape.

Additionally, he is eager to take on a six-round bout to assess his fitness levels.



Mpumalanga champion Blessing Shongwe celebrates after securing victory over Mthobisi Nkosi in a 10-round bout at Eastdene Community Hall in Middelburg. IMAGE: Lucas Shongwe

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