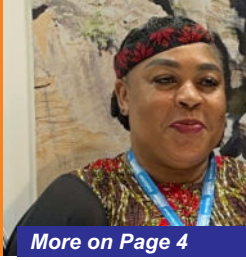


New Troya Clinic brings healthcare closer to rural communities

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MEC Sidell welcomes new MTPA and MEGA boards, says appointments will strengthen governance and stability



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Four arrested after Witbank spaza shop looting as police probe teen's murder

[Full Story on Page 5](#)

10 YEARS ON, STILL THE VOICE FOR THE VOICELESS

NKAMA SET TO UNLOCK NKANGALA TALENT

Nkangala Mayor commits to sustaining NkAMA through DDM

[Read More on Page 3](#)



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CHRONICLE**

Minister Majodina opens boreholes to improve water access in Thembisile Hani

● EMMANUEL N. MTHIMUNYE

THEMBISILE HANI – Communities in Thembisile Hani Local Municipality are expected to benefit from improved access to clean drinking water after Water and Sanitation Minister Pemmy Majodina and Rand Water officially handed over three new boreholes on **Friday, 03 July 2026**.

The boreholes, located in Vezubuhle, Mzimuhle and Rhenostenfontein, were donated by the Rand Water Foundation as part of the Department of Water and Sanitation's Nelson Mandela Month commemorations. The project aims to improve access to safe drinking water in previously underserved communities. The handover ceremony was attended by Executive Mayor Cllr Lesetja Dikgale, Deputy Minister of Water and Sanitation David Mahlobo, Mpumalanga MEC for Co-operative Governance, Human Settlements and Traditional Affairs Speed Mashilo, Nkangala District Executive Mayor Thomas Ngwenya, Rand Water Chairperson Ramateu Monyokolo, as well as municipal, Rand Water and Department of Water and Sanitation officials.

The fully equipped boreholes will benefit residents of Vezubuhle, Mzimuhle, Rhenostenfontein, Engwenyameni, Gembok, Rhenostenfontein Farm 152 and Rhenostenfontein Farm 155. Gembokspruit Mzimuhle resident Mama Mahlangu became emotional as she reflected on the community's long

struggle to access clean water. "For years we walked long distances and drank water that was not clean. Today we finally have purified water in our community. This is dignity restored," she said.

The Ward 20 councillor said residents had endured severe water shortages, with many forced to walk long distances and use wheelbarrows to collect water. "People were suffering because of water shortages. They had to carry water from a distance using wheelbarrows. Sometimes it took hours to get clean water. Today Rand Water has fulfilled that dream, especially during Mandela Month. This is a great achievement for our community. I encourage residents to protect this borehole because water is life."

Dikgale said addressing the municipality's water challenges would require continued cooperation between government and all stakeholders. Mashilo said the boreholes were a direct response to service delivery challenges in the area and called on all spheres of government to continue working together to improve people's lives.

Speaking to *Highveld Chronicle*, Rand Water Acting General Manager Anne Monaheng urged residents to safeguard the

boreholes against vandalism. "We urge the people of Vezubuhle and Rhenostenfontein to protect these boreholes at all times. If they are vandalised, communities will be back where they started and left without water. As the Minister indicated, the bigger project is the Loskop Dam project, which will ultimately provide water to Limpopo and Thembisile Hani. These boreholes will therefore serve as a temporary solution. We are confident the municipality will ensure they are

properly maintained." Majodina said the intervention was in line with former President Nelson Mandela's call to serve communities with compassion, adding that access to clean water remains central to restoring dignity and improving people's quality of life. The municipality said the project would also help reduce water-borne diseases while creating employment opportunities through the maintenance and operation of the boreholes.



Minister Pemmy Majodina cuts the ribbon during the official handover ceremony.



Victor Khanye and Thembisile Hani residents warned of possible water disruptions

● RODNEY HLATSHWAYO

DELMAS/THEMBISILE HANI – Residents and businesses in the Victor Khanye and Thembisile Hani local municipalities have been urged to prepare for possible low water pressure and intermittent water supply during Rand Water and Eskom's planned infrastructure maintenance later this month.

The maintenance is scheduled to take place from **07:00 on Friday, 17 July 2026, until 19:00 on Sunday, 19 July 2026**.

Rand Water said the work forms part of a joint maintenance programme aimed at improving the reliability and long-term sustainability of the bulk water supply system.

Phase 2 of the programme will include electrical maintenance by Eskom at the Zuikerbosch Purification Plant, as well as the completion of connections between existing and newly installed pipelines.

During the 60-hour maintenance period, pumping capacity across several Rand Water systems will be reduced. The Mapleton System will be shut down for 12 hours, while the Palmiet, Zwartkopjes and Eikenhof systems will continue operating at reduced capacity.

Rand Water warned that the reduced pumping capacity could result in low water pressure or intermittent water supply in affected municipal systems, including Victor Khanye and Thembisile Hani.

Thembisile Hani Local Municipality has already informed residents that water supply interruptions are

expected between **17 and 19 July 2026**.

According to the municipality, the affected areas include communities supplied through the Verena, Phumula / Somaroborho (Tweefontein), KwaMhlanga and Moloto water schemes.

"The affected areas will be augmented through water carts," the municipality said.

Residents have also been urged to use water sparingly throughout the maintenance period.

Rand Water said it had given affected municipalities 21 days' notice to implement contingency measures, including arranging alternative water supplies for critical facilities where necessary.

While Thembisile Hani has informed residents of the planned maintenance and outlined contingency measures, the Victor Khanye Local Municipality had not issued a public notice at the time of publication.

The municipality had also not responded to questions from *Highveld Chronicle* regarding affected areas or measures to minimise the impact on residents.

Residents are encouraged to store sufficient water for drinking, cooking and sanitation before the maintenance begins, use water sparingly and follow updates issued by their municipalities.

Rand Water said the planned maintenance is necessary to strengthen the reliability and long-term sustainability of the bulk water supply network.

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



The Ultimate Response to God

By Pastor Chuck Swindoll

"Listen, O Israel! The LORD is our God, the LORD alone. And you must love the LORD your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your strength. (Deuteronomy 6:4-5)

What's true about life in general is also true about the Christian life in particular. You and I are in a little boat. And that little boat has put out to sea. We are on a journey toward knowing and obeying God. Have you noticed how few there are who stand alongside as we push out into the sea, saying, "Good for you! Go for it! You can make it! You're on the right track! God be with you!"?

I feel like we need many more who say such affirming things to all who desire to grow in their knowledge of God and the doctrines of His Word. In fact, as I write this, I think of myself on the pier cheering you on . . . because I believe in your journey. And I believe that if you have made the decision to know God fully and walk with Him obediently and

learn His truths thoroughly, He will honor that decision. He, too, applauds your determination to return to your theological roots and discover the ocean of truth that stretches out before you. Never lose that love for knowledge! Never stop exploring in this adventure of faith!

It's so important to know God—one of life's major pursuits. Let's consider the other side of the same coin—loving God, which is clearly our ultimate response.

Tucked away in the fifth book of the Bible is a profound statement and a wonderful command. I want you to see both statement and command together in Deuteronomy 6. The command is preceded by a statement. Let's look first at the statement, which talks about knowing God, and then let's observe the command, which addresses the importance of loving God.

Deuteronomy 6:4 is one of the most familiar statements in all of Jewish liturgy: Hear, O Israel! The Lord is our God, the Lord is one! (NASB)

You can't see it in English, but in the Hebrew that word one conveys the idea of "one in multiple," one as in that "cluster" or "group." Echad is the Hebrew word . . . it's the term for one, as in a cluster of grapes. "The Lord our God is one—one in Father, one in Son, one in Spirit." Moses says, "Hear O Israel, and come to know Him as your only God."



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NkAMA set to unlock Nkangala talent

Nkangala Mayor commits to sustaining NkAMA through DDM

LUCAS SHONGWE

MIDDELBURG – Nkangala District Executive Mayor Cllr Thomas Ngwenya has committed to ensuring the long-term sustainability of the newly launched Nkangala Arts and Music Awards (NkAMA) by integrating the initiative into the district's District Development Model (DDM). Ngwenya made the commitment during the official launch of NkAMA at the Nkangala District Municipality offices in Middelburg on Tuesday, 07 July 2026.

NkAMA is a partnership between the *Highveld Chronicle* and the Nkangala District Municipality aimed at recognising, promoting and supporting artists from all six local municipalities in the district. "Today we have seen the partnership between the district and the *Highveld Chronicle* in action with the launch of NkAMA, a new initiative born today," said Ngwenya.

The Mayor said he is confident the partnership will benefit communities across the district through its focus on promoting culture, sport, arts and recreation.

"We are confident that through this partnership, many people will benefit, particularly given its objectives of promoting culture, sport, arts and recreation in our society." Ngwenya said the integration of NkAMA into the

District Development Model would enable the *Highveld Chronicle* to work alongside government and the private sector to drive development in Nkangala.

"The Nkangala District Municipality operates through the District Development Model. From today, *Highveld Chronicle* will be one of our key stakeholders actively participating in the District Development Model," said Ngwenya.

He said the District Development Model brings together all spheres of government and the private sector to drive development across the district.

"In the District Development Model, we have Deputy Ministers participating. We also have MECs seconded by the Office of the Premier. We have the private sector, the mining industry and major businesses actively participating in our District Development Model Council."

Ngwenya also called on the business community to support NkAMA and invest in local talent.

"To our business community, I call on you to walk with us. Support these young artists. Sponsor them, mentor them and create

opportunities for them. When we support our artists, we are building jobs, strengthening the economy and enriching the soul of Nkangala."

Mfanuzile Dlakude, Co-founder and CEO of *Highveld Chronicle*, said NkAMA was established after the publication received numerous requests from artists seeking greater exposure and recognition.

"This initiative started after we received numerous requests from artists across the six local municipalities who wanted to be profiled and featured in the paper.

"There is massive talent in Nkangala. We want to make sure that we give a platform to those talented

individuals in the district."

Mulawu Mathye, Business Strategist at Highveld Chronicle, highlighted the economic value of the arts.

"We launched for one purpose, and that is to demonstrate that talent puts food on the table."

NkAMA was launched as a district-wide platform to recognise, expose and support artists from all six local municipalities in Nkangala.

The main awards ceremony will be held on 11 and 12 September 2026 in Middelburg.

District activation events, which will serve as build-up events to the main awards ceremony, will begin in

Thembisile Hani on 11 July 2026, followed by Dr JS Moroka on 25 July, eMalahleni on 02 August, Victor Khanye on 09 August, Steve Tshwete on 16 August and eMakhazeni on 23 August 2026.

Entries for the NkAMA remain open, with artists in music, visual arts and performing arts from all six local municipalities encouraged to register.

The awards are open to all citizens of the Nkangala District, with no age restrictions. The closing date for registrations is 15 July 2026.

For more information on award categories, entry criteria and registrations, contact 081 303 7023.



Nkangala District Executive Mayor Cllr Thomas Ngwenya admires his self-portrait by artist David M. Moima, while Mulawu Mathye (centre) and Mfanuzile Dlakude (right) hold the portrait during a photo opportunity.





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MEC Sidell welcomes new MTPA and MEGA boards, says appointments will strengthen governance and stability

LUCAS SHONGWE

MBOMBELA—Mpumalanga MEC for Economic Development and Tourism Jesta Sidell has welcomed the appointment of new boards for the Mpumalanga Tourism and Parks Agency (MTPA) and the Mpumalanga Economic Growth Agency (MEGA), describing the move as a significant step towards strengthening governance, leadership stability and accountability at the two entities.

Speaking after the appointments, Sidell said the new boards would play a critical role in strengthening oversight and ensuring both entities effectively deliver on their legislative mandates.

MTPA and MEGA are the department's key implementing agencies driving the priorities of the Seventh Administration, particularly Priority One, which focuses on inclusive economic growth and job creation. Sidell said the boards have an important oversight responsibility in ensuring the department delivers on its mandate to stimulate economic growth, drive transformation, create sustainable employment and reduce poverty in Mpumalanga.

"The appointment of Mr Fish Mahlalela as Chairperson of the MTPA Board gives me renewed hope that we are on the right path to repositioning the entity as a driver of tourism development in the province," said Sidell.

She said Mahlalela brings extensive government experience, having previously served as Deputy Minister of Tourism, and commended the outgoing MTPA Interim Board, under his leadership, for what she described as "an outstanding job in turning the MTPA around."

Sidell also welcomed the appointment of former MEC Jabulani Mahlangu as

Chairperson of the MEGA Board. Mahlangu previously served as Interim Chairperson following the resignation of the former board chairperson.

"Both MTPA and MEGA are crucial to driving Mpumalanga's economic growth and development agenda. Without leadership stability at board level, they cannot consistently deliver on their legislative mandates," she said.

New MTPA Board
The 11-member MTPA Board will be chaired by Fish Mahlalela and comprises Mohita Latchminarain, Raymond Sizile Ndlovu, Qondile Gloria Thabethe, Walter Makgai, Gladys Monama, Prof David Mabunda, Norah Mahlangu, Emmanuel Mtshali, Nomndeni Motha and Andy Le Monnier.

New MEGA Board
The 11-member MEGA Board will be chaired by Jabulani

Mahlangu and comprises Nkateko Khoza, Advocate Mthokozisi Xulu, Busisiwe Paulina Shiba, Sipho William Lubisi, Zakithi Makhubu, December Mavuso, Noxolo Zephania Oyiya, Jacques Modipane, Rev. Mhlupheki Micah Nthali and Elizabeth Mokoena.

Both boards will serve a four-year term in accordance with the legislation establishing the two entities.

Sidell thanked the newly appointed board members for making themselves available to serve the people of Mpumalanga and wished them success in executing their fiduciary responsibilities.

"Congratulations on your appointment to our strategic entities. I have full confidence that you are equal to the task ahead. I wish you all the best as you work to transform these entities into viable vehicles to drive inclusive growth and job creation in the province," she said.



Newly appointed MTPA Board Chairperson Fish Mahlalela with MEC for Economic Development and Tourism Jesta Sidell

MTPA rolls out technology and safety dialogues to boost tourism

LUCAS SHONGWE

MBOMBELA – The Mpumalanga Tourism and Parks Agency (MTPA) is rolling out technology workshops, exploring Artificial Intelligence (AI) solutions and planning community dialogues to strengthen tourism safety and environmental cleanliness across the province.

MTPA spokesperson Simphiwe Shungube was responding to a Highveld Chronicle enquiry following remarks made by MTPA Board Chairperson Fish Mahlalela during the agency's Tourism Safety Campaign and Environmental Clean-up Initiative held in Hazyview a week ago.

Speaking at Sanibonani Resort Hotel and Spa, Mahlalela said cleanliness and safety are essential to growing the province's tourism economy.

"A clean and safe destination keeps tourists staying longer. The public must understand that the arrival of every 10 tourists creates one job. Tourism is a key economic driver in the Mpumalanga Province."

He also called on taxi associations to support cleanliness initiatives by discouraging littering and providing bins or refuse bags in taxis.

As part of its follow-up initiatives, the agency plans to host community dialogues aimed at improving tourism safety and environmental cleanliness.

Shungube said the MTPA has already started conducting workshops for tour operators and other tourism stakeholders to promote the use of technology.

"Through these workshops, we invite technology experts to equip

tourism businesses with the skills and knowledge needed to leverage digital platforms, including online booking systems, to improve efficiency and enhance the visitor experience."

He said the agency is also exploring partnerships to introduce AI-driven solutions, including chatbots.

"The aim is to make tourism services more advanced, accessible and user-friendly for visitors."

Shungube said the initiative aligns with Mahlalela's call for the tourism sector to embrace innovation.

"We need to embrace technology, including artificial intelligence, to improve our effectiveness in the tourism sector."

He confirmed that planning is underway for a Tourism Safety Dialogue that will bring together key stakeholders to strengthen safety and improve the visitor experience.

"The dialogue will bring together key stakeholders, including the taxi industry, traffic law enforcement, bus operators, tourism businesses and community leaders, to discuss practical measures for improving safety and maintaining cleanliness at tourism attractions."

He added that engagements with traffic and transport stakeholders will focus on ensuring tourists enjoy a safe and hassle-free experience throughout the province.

"We want to ensure tourists enjoy a safe, welcoming and hassle-free experience in Mpumalanga Province, without being subjected to harassment or unnecessary inconvenience."





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New Troya Clinic brings healthcare closer to rural communities

EMMANUEL N. MTHIMUNYE

TROYA VILLAGE – Residents of Troya Village and surrounding rural communities will no longer have to travel long distances to access basic healthcare services following the official opening of the new Troya Clinic on **Tuesday, 07 July 2026**. Mpumalanga Premier Mandla Ndlovu officially opened the facility, accompanied by Health MEC Sasekani Manzini, Dr JS Moroka Local Municipality Executive Mayor Nomsa Mtsweni and Kgoshi Mathupa Lameck Mokoena of the Mpumalanga House of Traditional and Khoisan Leaders. Following the ribbon-cutting ceremony, Ndlovu toured the newly completed facility, which will provide primary healthcare services closer to residents of Troya and neighbouring villages. Addressing the gathering, Ndlovu said the clinic reaffirmed government's commitment to ensuring quality healthcare remains accessible to all communities. "The handover of this clinic reaffirms our belief that quality healthcare is not a

privilege for a few but a constitutional right for every South African. This milestone will restore dignity to our people and improve access to quality healthcare services," he said. Health MEC Sasekani Manzini welcomed the opening, saying the clinic would bring essential healthcare services closer to residents. "This clinic will bring essential healthcare services closer to our people, reducing travelling distances and related healthcare costs. It will improve maternal and child health services, support the management of chronic illnesses and contribute to healthier families throughout our municipality," she said. The clinic will provide primary healthcare services, including maternal and child healthcare, chronic disease management, HIV and TB services, immunisation, routine health screenings and health promotion programmes.

The facility is expected to serve approximately 4,960 people within its catchment area, reducing the distance travelled and waiting times previously experienced by residents when accessing healthcare. Speaking to *Highveld Chronicle*, Dr JS Moroka Local Municipality Executive Mayor Nomsa Mtsweni said the clinic would significantly improve healthcare services in the area. "I'm very happy that today, as government, we've managed to provide the people of Troya with a clinic. These are rural areas. That's why this clinic will serve as a mini

hospital because it has everything that a hospital has. Although it's an eight-hour clinic, the way it is built will enable it to assist thousands of people in and around this village," she said. Mtsweni added that residents would no longer have to rely solely on mobile clinics to access medication, although she acknowledged that water shortages remain a challenge in the area. Residents also welcomed the opening of the clinic. Troya resident Metha Sebothuma said the facility was long overdue but highlighted the need for improved

access to clean water. "We are happy because we now have a clinic. We will be able to access medication here. But the main issue that is still affecting us is water. We do not have clean, purified water," she said. The facility is equipped with medication storage facilities, backup systems and a solar-powered electricity backup. The opening also included free health promotion and screening services for community members, including screenings for hypertension, diabetes, HIV, TB and cancer.



Mpumalanga Premier Mandla Ndlovu delivers the keynote address.



Four arrested after Witbank spaza shop looting as police probe teen's murder

RODNEY HLATSHWAYO

EMALAHLENI – Four people have been arrested following the looting of foreign-owned spaza shops in Witbank, while police continue investigating the murder of a 19-year-old man who was fatally shot during the unrest. The looting followed the deaths of a 43-year-old man and his four-year-old nephew, who allegedly consumed biscuits believed to have been stored after stock was removed from a foreign-owned spaza shop during the unrest. Police have opened two inquest dockets to determine the circumstances surrounding their deaths, and no link between the biscuits and the deaths has yet been confirmed. According to the South African Police Service (SAPS) in Mpumalanga, the four suspects — three men and one woman aged between 22 and 52 — were arrested on Thursday, 09 July 2026. They were allegedly found in possession of items believed to have been stolen during the looting on Wednesday evening. Police said the unrest began at a foreign-owned spaza shop in the Siyanqoba area of Witbank, where community members allegedly looted the premises.

It is alleged that while the looting was taking place, a sedan drove past the scene and its occupants opened fire on the crowd. When police arrived, officers found a 19-year-old man with a gunshot wound. He was declared dead at the scene, and a murder case was opened. Police, assisted by other law enforcement agencies, launched operations targeting suspects linked to the looting and the fatal shooting. Four suspects were subsequently arrested and charged with possession of suspected stolen property. No arrests have been made in connection with the murder. Provincial police spokesperson Colonel Mavela Masondo confirmed that investigations are continuing.

"Four suspects, three males and a female, aged between 22 and 52, were arrested on Thursday, 09 July 2026, in connection with the looting of spaza shops in Witbank. The suspects were found in possession of items believed to have been taken during the looting," said Masondo. Police said investigations into the murder, the looting and the two inquest cases are continuing. Anyone with information that may assist the investigations is urged to contact the nearest police station, call the Crime Stop hotline on 08600 10111, or submit anonymous tip-offs through the MySAPS App.

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iindawo zokugdanfisa umvumo nezikulingisa, amadamu lapha bafundiswa khona ukududa kanye nezinye iinkghonakalisi ezizokurhelebha ilutjha bona likghone ukubona amakghono abanawo. Iindawo ezifana nalezi zingaqinisekisa bona ilutjha elinengi liyasuka eendleleni nakwezinye izinto ezingasizihle, zibanikele indawo ephephileko lapha bazoku qeda khona isikhathi sabo. Banengi khulu abantu abatjha besifunda seMpumalanga abanamakghono, ebebangarhelebheka nange bekukhona iindawo ezifana nalezi. Nanjalo, abanye abazi bona nabo baphiwe amakghono lawa, kodwana bazokubona mhla sele bazibandakanya ingathana bezikhona iindawo ezifana nalezi eduze. Urhulumende ,abadosi phambili besifunda kanye nemiphakathi kufanele bona basebenzisane ukwakha iindawo ezifana nalezi zibezinengi komunye nomunye umphakathi. Lokhu kuzokurhelebha ilutjha elinengi begodu lizokuvula namathuba wemisebenzi.

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Victor Khanye challenges Treasury's decision to withhold equitable share allocation

RODNEY HLATSHWAYO

DELMAS – Victor Khanye Local Municipality (VKM) is challenging National Treasury's decision to temporarily withhold its July 2026 equitable share allocation, saying it had complied with the required conditions and was surprised to be included among the municipalities affected by the measure.

National Treasury announced on 07 July 2026 that it would temporarily withhold July 2026 equitable share transfers from selected municipalities across South Africa to enforce financial discipline and strengthen accountability in the management of public funds.

Victor Khanye, eMakhazeni and Nkomazi are the three Mpumalanga municipalities affected by the decision. Treasury said the move followed persistent and serious non-compliance with the Municipal Finance Management Act (MFMA), despite ongoing support, guidance and engagements with the affected municipalities.

According to Treasury, the temporary withholding is aimed at addressing unauthorised, irregular, fruitless and wasteful expenditure while strengthening accountability among municipal officials and political office-bearers.

Treasury said the affected municipalities were notified in writing and given an opportunity to make representations before the decision was implemented.

The South African Local Government Association (SALGA) supported measures to strengthen financial management and accountability but cautioned that withholding equitable share allocations should be balanced against the potential impact on service

delivery and municipal financial sustainability.

SALGA said municipalities continue to face challenges, including declining revenue collection, weak local economies, rising bulk electricity and water costs, ageing infrastructure, infrastructure backlogs and increasing poverty.

The association welcomed Treasury's assurance that the temporary withholding is a corrective rather than punitive measure and that equitable share allocations will be released once municipalities meet the required conditions.

However, documents seen by *Highveld Chronicle* indicate that Victor Khanye Local Municipality believes it had already addressed National Treasury's concerns before the announcement was made.

In correspondence to Finance Minister Enoch Godongwana, the municipality acknowledged owing Rand Water R510.6 million as of 31 March 2026, but said the debt is governed by a debt settlement agreement concluded with Rand Water.

The municipality said it has complied with the repayment agreement, remains up to date with its current monthly bulk water accounts and has not accumulated any new arrears since the agreement came into effect.

VKLM further stated that it submitted the signed repayment agreement, proof of payment and supporting documentation to National Treasury as evidence of

compliance.

The municipality appealed to the Minister to reconsider the decision to invoke Section 216(2) of the Constitution, arguing that it had met the requirements communicated by National Treasury and was therefore surprised that its July equitable share allocation had been temporarily withheld.

National Treasury has maintained that the withholding is a corrective, rather than punitive, measure intended to encourage compliance with financial management obligations.

Treasury said equitable share transfers will resume once municipalities satisfy the prescribed conditions and provide proof of compliance. It added that the temporary withholding is not expected to disrupt service delivery.

It remains unclear whether Victor Khanye's submissions were received after Treasury had finalised its decision, whether the submissions were still under consideration when the announcement was made, or whether Treasury and the municipality differ on whether all the prescribed conditions had been met.

Highveld Chronicle sent detailed questions to National Treasury seeking clarity on Victor Khanye's inclusion among the affected municipalities, the status of the municipality's submissions and whether its representations had been considered before the decision was taken.

Treasury acknowledged receipt of the media enquiry but had not responded by the time of publication.

GCIS pledges support for Sakhelwe community garden project

LUCAS SHONGWE

DULLSTROOM – The Government Communication and Information System (GCIS) has pledged to support young people running the Ezibayeni Community Garden in Sakhelwe, within the eMakhazeni Local Municipality.

GCIS, in partnership with Community Project Workers (CPWs), visited the project on Thursday, 09 July 2026, under the theme "Play Your Part: Love Your Street."

As part of the initiative, GCIS assisted with greening the existing community vegetable garden while promoting environmental sustainability and food security. The activation also encouraged community members to take pride in their environment and support sustainable food production.

Located behind a church in Sakhelwe, the cabbage-growing project relies largely on the dedication of volunteers despite facing water shortages, limited space and a lack of equipment.

Project leader Jack Monate told *Highveld Chronicle* that access to water remains the project's biggest challenge.

"Water is a challenge. If we can get a 1 000-litre JoJo tank, I think we can be productive," said Monate.

He said the project also requires fertiliser, gardening tools and fencing to protect the crops from roaming animals.

Despite the challenges, the garden generates income, with all proceeds reinvested into the project.

"We are able to sell the cabbages and all the money we make is spent on things like fertilisers, pesticides and equipment."

Two young people currently volunteer at the garden.

Volunteer Koketso Makhubela said he joined the project last year because of

his passion for agriculture.

"We experience water interruptions almost every day, making it difficult to continue planting. We have tried to engage the local municipality, but it has made no difference."

Fellow volunteer Sifiso Hlatshwayo appealed for greater support from government and other stakeholders.

"I am appealing to authorities to take the project seriously and assist us where we cannot reach. In a community like ours, where youth unemployment is high, projects like these help young

people fight poverty."

Patricia Matsila, GCIS Nkangala Regional Communication Coordinator, said the organisation will support the project through capacity-building workshops in partnership with the Department of Agriculture and other stakeholders.

"The workshops will focus on sustainable farming practices, garden management, possible funding opportunities, record-keeping and access to markets."

She said the initiative aims to equip volunteers with practical skills to strengthen the project and improve its long-term sustainability.



Determination in every leaf: Ezibayeni Community Garden project leader Jack Monate, with volunteers Koketso Makhubela and Sifiso Hlatshwayo, display freshly harvested cabbages grown in Sakhelwe. The volunteers say projects like these help young people fight unemployment and poverty in the Emakhazeni Local Municipality.

From Delmas to Durban July: Da Style Guru's fashion journey

RODNEY HLATSHWAYO

DELMAS – From childhood fashion inspiration to becoming one of the standout personalities at South Africa's biggest fashion and lifestyle event, Goodman Bongani Mavimbela – better known as **Da Style Guru** – has built a brand rooted in creativity, confidence and resilience.

The Delmas-based master of ceremonies, fashion stylist and image consultant attracted photographers, journalists and social media users with his carefully curated look at the 2026 Durban July, held at the Hollywoodbets Greyville Racecourse on **Saturday, 04 July 2026**.

For Mavimbela, the recognition represented more than a fashion moment.

"My Durban July experience was amazing. For the first time in my life, a fashion designer approached me to collaborate on my Durban July look. Normally, because I'm a celebrity stylist, I style myself from start to finish."

Born in Kwaggafontein before moving to Tweefontein at the age of three, Mavimbela credits his parents for inspiring his love of fashion. He later studied Information and Communication Technology at the Tshwane University of Technology before entering the clothing retail industry. In 2015, he travelled to Turkey, Dubai and Mauritius, where he gained valuable exposure to international fashion and design.

Inspired by those experiences, he opened **The Famous Fashion Door** boutique in Pretoria's CBD in 2016, styling celebrities including DJ Zinhle, Khutso Theledi, Shame from YFM, Tumi "The Barber", Dineo Moloisane and Mizz Dee.

The COVID-19 pandemic forced him to close the boutique, but he reinvented himself by combining fashion styling with professional MC work under the **Da Style Guru** brand.

"I realised I loved talking, connecting with people and making people feel good. My business

boomed. I was booked left, right and centre."

In 2022, Mavimbela relocated permanently to Delmas after accepting a position with the Department of Health.

His growing reputation led Pretoria designer Ronnie Ron to approach him to collaborate on a custom outfit for the 2026 Durban July.

"We wanted something timeless that people could still admire years from now. Fashion shouldn't just follow trends; it should tell a story."

The grey suit, inspired by 1970s tailoring and complemented by crystal detailing and maroon accessories, attracted widespread attention.

"When we arrived, the attention was unbelievable. Journalists wanted interviews, photographers kept stopping us and everyone wanted pictures."

The look was featured by fashion photographer ArtOn Artwork, platforms including Boom Town and Comfort, and received coverage from iKwekwezi FM.

"The designer posted the pictures, celebrities reposted them and people across the country started sharing them. Together with Tumi 'The Barber', our pictures reached around 41,000 likes."

Looking ahead, Mavimbela hopes to establish a public relations and branding agency to mentor aspiring stylists, MCs, DJs, models and artists.

"Dream big. It doesn't matter where you come from. Keep knocking on doors, keep learning and never stop believing in yourself."

For Da Style Guru, the 2026 Durban July was more than a fashion showcase. It was a milestone that reflected years of perseverance and reinforced his belief that style is about confidence, authenticity and telling a story.





Sihappy S'ngaphezulu FC edge Zation City 2-1 to boost title hopes

● RODNEY HLATSHWAYO

DELMAS – Sihappy S'ngaphezulu FC strengthened their Victor Khanye Local Football Association (VKLFA) Promotional League title challenge after coming from behind to defeat Zation City FC 2-1 at Riverside on Sunday, 05 July 2026. Both sides struggled to create clear scoring opportunities during a tactical first half, which ended goalless. Zation City coach Moeketsi Khoetsa said the match was evenly contested before opening up after the break. "The game was good. The first half ended 0-0 and it was very tactical. We were locking horns," Khoetsa told *Highveld Chronicle*. Khoetsa said his side increased the pressure in the second half but were punished on the counter-attack. "We started attacking them repeatedly, but they kept breaking on the counter. Eventually they scored from one of those counter-attacks." Zation City responded through captain Ndondo, who converted a free kick after a handball decision. "We wanted to get the winner and kept pushing, but in the dying minutes we made a defensive mistake during another counter-attack and they scored the winning goal. That's how we lost 2-1." Sihappy S'ngaphezulu FC coach Bahlezi Mahlangu credited his players' mentality and determination for securing the victory. "I feel the boys' mental strength, hunger and willingness were the only difference in today's game," Mahlangu told *Highveld Chronicle*. Despite claiming all three points, Mahlangu admitted he was not entirely satisfied with his team's overall performance. "To be quite honest, the result is not a true reflection of how the game went. It

was an unsatisfying performance from the boys." Mahlangu said his plan was to score early and unsettle Zation City, but their opponents' possession-based approach frustrated his side during the opening half. "As we move towards the end of the season, I told the boys to get an early goal, but our opponents' plan to keep the ball away from us worked and the first half ended goalless." He said he reminded his players at half-time to return to their own possession-based style, which helped them score twice and secure maximum points. "It was a collective effort. The boys kept encouraging one another, which showed how hungry they are to earn SAB League status." Mahlangu admitted there is still room for improvement in both attack and defence but singled out goalkeeper and captain Sphamandla for several crucial saves. "We had to dig deep. Mental fortitude won us the game because we all knew what was at stake." Thabo Mahlangu scored Sihappy S'ngaphezulu FC's equaliser before Ntando Masilo netted the winner, with both goals coming in the second half. Mahlangu said the squad remains determined to win the league title despite several key players being away at initiation school. "The boys said they don't want to squander the league after so many setbacks. They believe the best welcome-back present for those players would be winning the league title."



Sihappy S'ngaphezulu FC



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