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Mpumalanga welcomes new Provincial Commissioner as Lt Gen Modise takes over SAPS leadership

● EMMANUEL N. MTHIMUNYE

BETHAL – Mpumalanga Premier Mandla Ndlovu has officially announced the appointment of Lieutenant General Nkaokoane Aphania Modise as the new Provincial Commissioner of the South African Police Service (SAPS) in Mpumalanga.

Modise's appointment takes effect from 1 August 2026, ushering in a new chapter of policing leadership in the province. She was officially unveiled at Bethal Police Station in the Govan Mbeki Local Municipality on Friday, 31 July 2026, by Acting National Commissioner Lieutenant General Puleng Dimphe, who was joined by Premier Ndlovu and Mpumalanga MEC for Community Safety, Security and Liaison Jackie Macie.

The appointment brings to a close the tenure of former Provincial Commissioner Lieutenant General Semakaleng Daphney Manamela, who was suspended in June 2024 over allegations of misconduct, including claims that state funds were used to procure furniture and household appliances for her official residence. Following her suspension, Major General (Dr) Zeph Mkhwanazi was appointed Acting Provincial Commissioner and is credited with stabilising the provincial police leadership until his retirement on 1 August 2026.

Lieutenant General Modise brings more than 35 years of policing experience to the role. Having joined SAPS in 1989, she served as Station Commander at Senekal and Odendaalsrus before being promoted to Brigadier in 2012, where she was responsible for the Moqhaka Cluster in the Free State. She was promoted to Major General in

2016, leading the Thabong and Welkom Clusters, before being appointed Deputy Provincial Commissioner for Crime Detection in the Free State in 2020. She holds a National Diploma in Policing and a Bachelor of Arts in Public Administration.

Welcoming the appointment, MEC Macie said the department looks forward to working with the new Provincial Commissioner to strengthen community policing, improve response times and ensure the recently announced police reset agenda is fully realised. He also wished the Commissioner well and reaffirmed the province's support in providing oversight to enable SAPS to deliver on its mandate.

"We believe that the province will immensely benefit from her experience in crime detection, operations and extensive policing. Her appointment comes at a time when the province is faced with challenges of gun violence in the Calcutta policing precinct, illegal mining and organised crime, among others," said Macie.

The MEC also paid tribute to Major General (Dr) Zeph Mkhwanazi for his leadership during his tenure as Acting Provincial Commissioner. Macie credited Mkhwanazi with maintaining stability within the provincial police leadership, improving staff morale and strengthening the fight against crime, which resulted in significant progress in combating

criminal activities across the province. "We are grateful to Dr Mkhwanazi for his sterling service and dedication towards enhancing community safety. He was

instrumental in the reductions we have seen and in bringing many perpetrators of crime to book. We wish him all the best for the future," he said.



Mpumalanga MEC for Community Safety, Security and Liaison Jackie Macie, newly appointed SAPS Provincial Commissioner Lieutenant General Nkaokoane Aphania Modise and Premier Mandla Ndlovu during the official unveiling of the province's new Provincial Commissioner at Bethal Police Station on Friday, 31 July 2026.

DA challenges Mpumalanga department over Mkhulu Secondary scholar transport

Department rejects DA's claims as misleading, says all eligible learners are receiving scholar transport

● LUCAS SHONGWE

MIDDELBURG – A dispute over scholar transport at Mkhulu Secondary School in the Steve Tshwete Local Municipality has escalated after the Democratic Alliance (DA) announced on Friday, 24 July 2026, that it intends to report the Mpumalanga government to the South African Human Rights Commission (SAHRC).

The party alleges that 455 of the school's 1 140 learners have been unable to attend classes since the start of the third term due to a lack of scholar transport.

The DA claims the school, located about 22 kilometres outside Middelburg, requires 15 buses, but the provincial government is providing only eight.

According to DA Mpumalanga education spokesperson Annerie Weber, the school and its School Governing Body (SGB) have been paying between R80 000 and R100 000 per month for private buses, with some buses making two trips a day. However, the funding was exhausted at the start of the third term.

"Some of these learners are forced to travel more than 5 kilometres a day in risky conditions just to attend school," Weber said.

She added that unemployed parents had also been asked to contribute R50 per month towards transport costs, which the DA argues infringes on learners' constitutional right to basic education.

The DA cited Section 29(1) of the Constitution and a December 2024 Makhanda High Court judgment, arguing that scholar transport forms part of the constitutional right to education.

However, the Mpumalanga Department of Public Works, Roads and Transport rejected the DA's claims on 27 July 2026, describing them as "misleading."

Department spokesperson Bongani

Dhlamini said scholar transport is provided only to learners who live 5 kilometres or more from the nearest appropriate public school, in line with the Provincial Scholar Transport Policy.

"The learners referred to by the DA reside within a radius of less than 5 kilometres from the school and therefore do not meet the prescribed eligibility criteria," he said.

Dhlamini added that learners currently receiving scholar transport at Mkhulu Secondary School all live beyond the 5km threshold and were identified through the approved verification process.

"Consequently, there is no shortage of buses at Mkhulu Secondary School, as the fleet has been allocated in accordance with the approved number of eligible beneficiaries."

The department further stated that it cannot take responsibility for transport arrangements made independently by a school governing body that fall outside the requirements of the provincial policy.

"This criterion is applied consistently across the province," Dhlamini said, calling on the DA to "refrain from misleading the public for political gain and instead engage constructively... through the appropriate oversight mechanisms."

The DA maintains it will proceed with its complaint to the SAHRC and continue advocating for scholar transport for the affected learners, while the department insists the service is being provided fairly, transparently and in accordance with the approved policy.

Caption: No bus, no school: The DA alleges that 455 Mkhulu Secondary School learners have been left without scholar transport and plans to approach the SAHRC, while the Mpumalanga Department of Public Works, Roads and Transport says all eligible learners are receiving transport in line with the provincial 5km policy. Photo: DPWTR.

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



The Remedy for Sin

By Pastor Chuck Swindoll

For the life of the body is in its blood. I have given you the blood on the altar to purify you, making you right with the Lord. It is the blood, given in exchange for a life, that makes purification possible. (Leviticus 17:11)

In ancient days, when a sinner found himself or herself in sin, broken in fellowship with God, it was essential that there be an animal sacrifice. Sometimes the sacrifice was with a goat, sometimes with a bull, sometimes with a heifer, or a sheep, or a dove, or even a pigeon. The details of such sacrifices are spelled out in this ancient book of worship used by the Jews and carried out by the priests—the Levites.

We find the process spelled out in four stages.

The first stage: The sinner brings an animal without defect to the altar. The plan was designed to be uncomplicated. As soon as one realizes that sin had come into his life, intentional or unintentional, that individual knew that the sin had caused a separation from

fellowship with God. To clear that up, an animal had to be brought to the altar. Not any animal, but an animal that was without defect to become a “sin offering.”

The second stage: The sinner lays his hand on the animal. According to Leviticus 4, this is the job of the priest who, in this case, is the sinner. He lays his hand upon the head of the animal. The act symbolized the transfer of guilt from himself to the animal.

The third stage: The animal is to be killed. God devised this plan: By the shedding of blood, two will be brought together as one. The blood of the animal will bring atonement between humanity and God. The blood would cover sin.

The fourth stage: The blood is poured or sprinkled as God required. Since the earliest days, as these Jews connected atonement with their Lord, there was a constant emphasis on blood and sacrifices. Sheep were slain at Passover by the thousands. The blood literally ran out of the city of Jerusalem. Priests were ceaselessly dealing with blood sacrifices. Day in and day out. God required it. That is why we must resist the modern tendency to remove the blood from our theology and our hymnody. Without blood, there is no remedy for sin.

Christ is the
great remedy
for sin.

MER tackles rise in illegal online betting and underage drinking among schoolchildren

LUCAS SHONGWE AND RODNEY HLATSHWAYO

MPUMALANGA – The Mpumalanga Economic Regulator (MER) has raised concern over the growing number of learners accessing illegal online betting platforms using tablets and cellphones as it rolls out an awareness campaign on underage gambling and alcohol consumption across schools in the Nkangala District.

The campaign, which began on Monday, 27 July, forms part of MER's efforts to educate learners about the dangers of underage gambling, underage alcohol consumption and other social challenges, while encouraging them to make informed decisions about their future. The awareness drive started at L.D. Moetanalo Secondary School, Ekwazini Secondary School and Mphanama Secondary School in Mhluzi, Steve Tshwete Local Municipality, after the Nkangala District Department of Education identified the schools as hotspots for underage gambling, alcohol consumption and related social challenges.

According to MER Chief Executive Officer Vusi Mtsweni, previous engagements revealed an emerging trend of learners accessing unlicensed online betting platforms through tablets, mobile phones and other digital devices. "These engagements have revealed an emerging trend where some learners access unlicensed online betting platforms using tablets, mobile phones and other digital devices," Mtsweni said. He said the increasing exposure to online gambling highlights the need to educate learners about the legal prohibition of underage gambling and the dangers of using unregulated betting platforms operating outside South Africa's regulatory framework.

During the sessions, learners were educated about the dangers of underage gambling and alcohol consumption, including addiction, poor academic performance and increased exposure to crime. They were also encouraged to

avoid gambling traps and informed about support services available to those affected by gambling addiction. The campaign is being conducted in partnership with the South African Responsible Gambling Foundation (SARGF), the South African Police Service (SAPS), the Mpumalanga Department of Education and Miss Mpumalanga 2026, Masibulele Mndebele, who serves as MER's ambassador. Mtsweni said the SARGF offers free counselling and early intervention programmes for individuals affected by gambling addiction.

The awareness drive continued on Tuesday, 28 July, at Swartklip Combined School, Sundra High School and Botleng Secondary School in the Victor Khanye Local Municipality, where learners were reminded that gambling and alcohol consumption are illegal for anyone under the age of 18. Learners were encouraged to resist peer pressure, make responsible decisions and pursue positive lifestyles, while educators were reminded of their role in protecting learners from exposure to age-restricted products and gambling-related activities.

The campaign continued from 29 to 31 July in the Thembisile Hani Local Municipality, where the team visited Matimba Secondary School, King Makhosonke Secondary School, Ndzundza Mabhoko Secondary School, Senzangakhona Secondary School, Zipha Khamiseni Secondary School, Vezikgono Secondary School and Vezibuhle Secondary School. Further visits are planned for Mehlwana Secondary School in Phola, Ogies, as well as Coronation Secondary School and

Pine Ridge Secondary School in Emalahleni on 18 and 19 August. On 19 August, the campaign will visit Ukukhanya Secondary School in Libangeni before concluding at Khayalami Secondary School, Morelig, and Emakhaseni Boarding School from 20 to 21 August.

MER said the programme previously ran in the Ehlanzeni District during 2025 and earlier this year as part of a broader provincial strategy to protect young people from the social and economic harm associated with gambling and substance abuse. The regulator defines illegal gambling as any gambling activity conducted without a MER licence, including operating illegal gambling machines and allowing persons under the age of 18 to gamble. It warned that unlicensed gambling machines pose an even greater risk because they lack the age-verification measures required of licensed operators.

Mndebele urged learners to prioritise their education rather than gambling. "Gambling might look like a quick way to get money, but it is a trap that destroys dreams. Many young people

lose their school fees, their data, and even their future chasing a win that rarely comes. "As learners, your focus should be on your books, your talent and building a career. Gambling leads to addiction, debt and broken families. Don't gamble with your

future—invest in it." MER said it remains committed to working with its partners to build safer schools, empower young people and protect vulnerable groups from the harmful effects of gambling and substance abuse.



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GLENCORE

Ramaphosa launches 900MW Ummbila Emoyeni Wind Farm in Mpumalanga

Seriti Green says just energy transition "is real" as first 25 turbines begin delivering 155MW

● LUCAS SHONGWE

BETHAL – President Cyril Ramaphosa on Friday, 31 July 2026, officially launched the Ummbila Emoyeni Wind Farm, describing the R14.5 billion Seriti Green project as proof that South Africa's just energy transition is "being realised through practical action."

Joined by Mpumalanga Premier Mandla Ndlovu, Minister of Electricity and Energy Dr Kgosientsho Ramokgopa, Gert Sibande District Municipality Executive Mayor Walter Mngomezulu and Seriti Group Chairman Mike Teke, the President cut the ribbon on the first phase of the facility between Bethal, Davel and Morgenzon.

Developed by Seriti Green, the project will ultimately generate 900MW from wind turbines across the province. The first 25 turbines are already feeding 155MW into the national grid.

"Mpumalanga is known as the place of the rising sun, but it has not been known for its wind. In fact, some doubted the value of building a wind farm here," Ramaphosa said.

"This project demonstrates that this is a province with many energy sources and many opportunities."

For Seriti, the launch marks a significant step in its transition from a coal-focused

business to a diversified energy company. Teke told guests that Seriti had been accused of "greenwashing" when the vision was first presented to farmers and mayors on 23 March 2023.

"I stand here informing everybody that nobody is going to stand in the way of human progress," Teke said.

"We mine coal at several mines in this province. The ability to build a powerful mining company called Seriti enabled us to reach a stage where we are able to invest in renewable energy for the young boys and girls in this area."

He said the project demonstrates that South Africa's just energy transition is already taking shape.

"The just energy transition is not on paper. It is real. Seriti is not a coal miner. We are not greenwashing. We are an energy business."

Ramaphosa said the true measure of the energy transition lies in the opportunities it creates for local communities. He noted that the project has already created more than 1 000 jobs, with about half going to people living within a

10km radius of the site. More than 18 500 people have registered on the Seriti Green Skills Hub, with women accounting for more than 50% of participants.

"This project demonstrates the value of a strong focus on creating meaningful local economic participation and ensuring that surrounding communities benefit directly," the President said.

Premier Mandla Ndlovu said the project represents far more than renewable energy infrastructure. He said a wind resource study commissioned by Seriti Green found that the Bethal area has some of the strongest wind resources in the country, making the project viable.

"The people of our province understand that this project is about far more than wind turbines and infrastructure. It is about creating jobs, developing skills, attracting investment, restoring dignity to families, and opening opportunities for the next generation," Ndlovu said.

"It represents hope for young people seeking employment, empowerment for local businesses, and a catalyst

for inclusive and sustainable economic growth. Today marks an important milestone in addressing one of South Africa's greatest challenges, unemployment."

Teke stressed the importance of community partnerships, quoting a Northern Sotho proverb about advancing together. He also announced that Seriti would continue investing in solar and battery energy projects towards Middelburg, with

support from shareholders Standard Bank and Rand Merchant Bank (RMB).

The launch comes as government continues implementing electricity sector reforms. Ramaphosa announced that a task team under the National Energy Crisis Committee had completed the first phase of work towards establishing an independent Transmission System Operator.



Walking towards a greener future: President Cyril Ramaphosa, Seriti Group Chairman Mike Teke, Seriti Green CEO Peter Venn and Mpumalanga Premier Mandla Ndlovu officially launch the first 25 turbines of the Ummbila Emoyeni Wind Farm near Bethal. The project has already created more than 1 000 jobs, with about half going to people living within a 10km radius of the site.

KwaGuqa pipeline upgrade aims to improve water supply

● NODICAH FUNDAMA

EMALAHLENI – Construction of the KwaGuqa Water Pipeline Refurbishment Project officially got under way on Thursday, 30 July, with stakeholders saying the initiative will improve water supply and address ageing infrastructure that has long affected residents in KwaGuqa and surrounding communities.

The project was officially launched during a sod-turning ceremony at Lynnville Stadium, attended by representatives of the eMalahleni Local Municipality, Thungela Resources, the Nkulo Community Partnership Trust, traditional leaders and community members. Funded through a partnership between the eMalahleni Local Municipality and Thungela Resources via the Nkulo Community Partnership Trust, the project will replace ageing water pipelines that have been plagued by frequent pipe bursts, water losses, supply interruptions and rising maintenance costs.

The project, which will be implemented by local contractor Shodo Civils, will improve water infrastructure and benefit residents of Wards 9, 13 and 16. Addressing the gathering, Executive Mayor Vusi Nhlapho said the project represented more than an infrastructure upgrade.

"Water is not merely another municipal service. Life is water, and water is life. It is the foundation of health, dignity, education, economic activity and human development."

Nhlapho said replacing the pipeline would improve service delivery, strengthen water security and restore dignity to residents. He added that the municipality continues to work with partners to increase water supply despite ongoing financial challenges.

The mayor said the project would also create opportunities for local businesses and job seekers, while urging residents to protect the infrastructure from vandalism, illegal connections and unnecessary disruptions.

"We must fight in a manner that we want to hold hands and fix things in

eMalahleni. It cannot happen that we bring a project, and then you wake up in the morning and decide to shut it down."

Speaking on behalf of Thungela Resources, Nompumelelo Sithole described the initiative as an example of how partnerships between the public and private sectors can improve communities. She said the project initially focused on drilling a borehole, but technical assessments and consultations later identified refurbishing the ageing pipeline as the greater priority.

Sithole confirmed that Shodo Civils, a local contractor, had been appointed to implement the project, creating opportunities for local businesses while reinforcing the partnership's commitment to community development.

Calling on residents to safeguard the new infrastructure, she urged communities to protect the project from vandalism and interference.

"Once we've broken ground, once the contractor starts doing the work, you will guard this with your life."

Representing traditional leadership, Ndabezitha Nsizwa Mahlangu welcomed the project and praised the partnership between the eMalahleni Local Municipality, Thungela Resources and the Nkulo Community Partnership Trust.

He said traditional leaders would work with communities to ensure construction proceeds without disruption, while encouraging contractors to employ local people fairly and deliver quality work.

Construction is expected to improve the reliability of water supply in KwaGuqa and surrounding communities while reducing water losses and maintenance costs. Stakeholders said the project's long-term success will depend on continued cooperation and community ownership of the infrastructure.



Representatives of the eMalahleni Local Municipality, Thungela Resources, the Nkulo Community Partnership Trust and traditional leaders officially turn the sod to mark the start of the KwaGuqa Water Pipeline Refurbishment Project at Lynnville Stadium. The project will improve water infrastructure and benefit residents of Wards 9, 13 and 16.

Sibongiseni Sithole murder case transferred to Delmas Regional Court

● RODNEY HLATSHWAYO

DELMAS – The murder case against Mthokozisi Mabethe and Xolani Masuku has been transferred from the Delmas Magistrate's Court to the Delmas Regional Court, where the two accused are expected to appear on 4 September 2026.

The pair face charges of murder, imputing witchcraft and defeating the ends of justice in connection with the killing of Sibongiseni Sithole.

The transfer followed the pair's appearance in the Delmas Magistrate's Court on Wednesday, 29 July 2026, where the matter was formally referred to the Regional Court. Both men remain in custody pending their next court appearance.

Mabethe and Masuku were arrested in May 2026, nearly three years after Sithole was murdered

in June 2023. Their arrests followed a police investigation into the fatal incident in Delmas.

Since their arrests, the matter has been postponed several times to allow for further investigations and the completion of legal processes before being transferred to the Regional Court.

Speaking to *Highveld Chronicle* after the proceedings, Sibongiseni's mother, Siphiwe Sithole, welcomed the progress in the case.

"I am relieved that the case is moving forward. Hearing that it has been transferred and will be heard on 4 September gives me hope that justice is taking its course. It shows that the court process is progressing, and that means a great deal to our family. We will continue to attend every court appearance as we seek justice for Sibongiseni," she said. Both men remain in custody and are presumed innocent until proven guilty.



WORLD RANGERS DAY 2026

Mpumalanga honours rangers protecting its natural heritage amid growing conservation threats

By Esther Mahlangu



MPUMALANGA – MPUMALANGA – Field rangers who dedicate their lives to protecting wildlife and preserving South Africa's natural heritage were honoured during Mpumalanga's Provincial World Rangers Day celebration held at the Chief Albert Luthuli Songimvelo Nature Reserve on Friday, 31 July 2026. The event, hosted by the Mpumalanga Department of Agriculture, Rural Development, Land and Environmental Affairs (DARDLEA) in partnership with the Mpumalanga Tourism and Parks Agency (MTPA), recognised the courage, commitment and sacrifices of rangers working on the frontline of conservation. The celebration brought together government officials, conservation stakeholders, tourism representatives, community members and field rangers

to acknowledge their role in protecting biodiversity and ensuring future generations continue to experience the country's natural heritage. The event was also supported by the Eswatini National Trust Commission (ENTC), the institution responsible for nature conservation in Eswatini. Representing the organisation, Teddy Ncamiso Dlamini delivered a message of support, highlighting the importance of cross-border conservation and tourism collaboration. Eswatini forms part of the TriLand Route, a trilateral regional tourism partnership between the MTPA, the Eswatini Tourism Authority (ETA) and the Mozambique Institute of Tourism (INATUR).



Field rangers and community members gathered at Songimvelo Nature Reserve.

“Protecting our natural heritage is a shared responsibility.”

— MEC Khethiwe Moeketsi

Rangers recognised for dedication and sacrifice

The programme included the presentation of awards recognising outstanding performance and commitment, including Best Shooter, Best Male Magazine Loading and Unloading, Best Female Magazine Loading and Unloading, Best Performing Region and Project Managers. Certificates of appreciation were also presented to rangers in recognition of their dedication, bravery and continued contribution to protecting wildlife, natural resources and protected areas. Among the recipients was Mirriam Boroko, who received the Best Shooter award. Boroko said the achievement reflected her continued dedication to conservation but called for greater recognition and career development opportunities for field rangers. "I have won the Best Shooter award three times in a row over the past years. While we appreciate the recognition, we would like MTPA to also recognise our commitment and dedication through opportunities for growth and promotion," she said. Boroko said continued support and recognition would motivate field rangers to continue performing at their best while protecting the country's natural heritage. Boroko joined the Mpumalanga Tourism and Parks Agency (MTPA) in 1991 and has served as a field ranger since then. She is currently stationed at Loskop Nature Reserve. The event also paid tribute to the late J.J. Masinga, a field ranger who lost his life in the line of duty. His family received R50 000 as a gesture of appreciation for his sacrifice and contribution to conservation. Two vehicles were also handed over to parks officials to strengthen conservation operations and support field rangers working on the ground. Delivering the keynote address, Mpumalanga MEC for Agriculture, Rural Development, Land and Environmental Affairs Khethiwe Moeketsi praised field rangers for their dedication, describing them as symbols of courage, sacrifice and selfless service. The MEC said the celebration was particularly fitting during Mandela

Month, as rangers continue to demonstrate values of commitment and service to society. "Our field rangers are living examples of Madiba's values. Through their dedication, resilience and willingness to place themselves in harm's way to protect our country's natural heritage, they demonstrate that true leadership is found in service to others," said Moeketsi. She said rangers remain central to protecting South Africa's biodiversity but continue to face growing challenges, including illegal mining, poaching, climate change, habitat destruction and human-wildlife conflict. "Illegal mining presents one of the most serious threats to protected areas. Illegal miners often operate in remote areas, making them difficult to detect and apprehend. Rangers frequently encounter heavily armed criminal groups, placing their own lives at considerable risk," she said. Moeketsi acknowledged operational challenges affecting rangers, including shortages of vehicles, equipment, communication systems and other essential resources. "As government, we recognise that effective conservation cannot succeed without well-trained, properly equipped and adequately supported rangers," she said. She called on communities to work with authorities by reporting illegal activities and supporting conservation efforts. "Protecting our natural heritage is a shared responsibility."



Mpumalanga MEC for Agriculture, Rural Development, Land and Environmental Affairs Khethiwe Moeketsi

Rangers highlight operational challenges

Speaking on behalf of field rangers, Tumelo Nkadimeng, a field ranger and assistant manager, said rangers remain committed to protecting wildlife and natural resources despite difficult working conditions. "Field rangers are the guardians of nature. They patrol our reserves, prevent poaching, control illegal activities and help conserve biodiversity for future generations," he said. He highlighted operational challenges, including shortages of vehicles, firearms, radios, staff and suitable accommodation. "We have shortages of staff and resources, which include vehicles. We also have shortages of firearms in some nature reserves and shortages of radios," he said. Nkadimeng also raised concerns about limited career development opportunities, saying a lack of training and promotions affects morale among field rangers. "We cannot have a field ranger who works for more than 10 years without moving to a senior position. That thing will demoralise you," he said. He called for stronger support from management and communities, emphasising that conservation requires collective responsibility. "Conservation is not only the responsibility of rangers; it is the responsibility of everyone in this country."

Tourism stakeholders call for greater investment

Chief Albert Luthuli Local Tourism Organisation chairperson Banele Nhlabathi raised concerns about challenges affecting Songimvelo Nature Reserve, including resource shortages and declining tourism activity. Nhlabathi said rangers require adequate tools of trade, including vehicles and equipment, to effectively respond to illegal activities threatening conservation. He also called for surrounding communities to benefit from conservation through tourism and agricultural opportunities. "Let us create revenue for people around Songimvelo and ensure communities benefit from conservation." He suggested that initiatives such as planting chilli crops to assist with elephant management could create opportunities for local farmers while strengthening conservation efforts.



Mayor praises rangers' commitment

Acting Executive Mayor of Nkangala District Municipality Cllr Bheki Buthelezi praised rangers for their bravery and commitment to protecting the country's natural resources. Paying tribute to the late J.J. Masinga, Buthelezi said rangers continue to make sacrifices while safeguarding wildlife and natural heritage. "Rangers are foot soldiers whose boots are always on the ground as the first and last line of defence, protecting our natural heritage from all kinds of threats," he said.

Protecting nature for future generations

The World Rangers Day celebration highlighted the important role played by field rangers in protecting South Africa's wildlife, ecosystems and natural resources. Speakers called for stronger partnerships between government, conservation agencies and communities to ensure protected areas remain safe while continuing to contribute to tourism and local economic development. Closing the event, Mpumalanga MEC for Agriculture, Rural Development, Land and Environmental Affairs Khethiwe Moeketsi thanked

field rangers for their dedication and sacrifice. "We hold our environment in trust for future generations, and our rangers have accepted this responsibility with selfless pride and dedication," she said. "Your service is deeply valued and your sacrifices do not go unnoticed." The MEC also highlighted government's commitment to strengthening conservation efforts and supporting field rangers across the province. Newly appointed MTPA board member Professor David Mabunda assured stakeholders that plans were already in place to restore Songimvelo Nature Reserve and strengthen conservation efforts. "We will not allow Songimvelo to decline. The fundamentals of turning Songimvelo into a viable, profitable and functional conservation asset are strong, and no one will be able to dismantle them," said Mabunda. Mabunda also welcomed government's intervention against illegal mining, saying the deployment of the South African National Defence Force (SANDF) alongside the South African Police Service (SAPS) to combat illicit mining was already yielding positive results through daily arrests. He said protecting conservation areas remains critical to safeguarding South Africa's natural heritage, noting that Section 24 of the Constitution places environmental protection at the centre of sustainable development.

ISIKO LETHU

Our Story

ILIZWI

WITH SIPHO MAHAMBA

Uphakanyiswe njenge Ngwenyama yamaNdebele undabezitha uMkhutjha II Mabena

Umtloli: Emmmanuel N Mthimunye

Bekungana bususwa benyawo ngengwenyameni kwaManala Mbongo eKlipfontain, ngo Sondo 26 ku Velabahlizwe nejngoba bekuphaka nyiswa iNgwenyama ezoku busa isitjhaba samandebele, undabezitha uMkhutjha II Mabena uphakanyiswe njenge Ngwenyama ezokuba lilanga elizoku khanyisela amandebele.

Leli kuligadango elithethwe singodlo sakwa Manala Mbongo njengoba kukhothome iNgwenyama Enock Makhosonke II. Ingwenyama Makhosonke II yakhothama, nge 9 kuMgwengweni, ngemva koku busa ininyaka ematjhumani amane 40years.

Yeke ngemva koku bona, bona isitjhaba sisebaleni isigodlo saphakamisa u Ndabezitha uMkhutjha II Mabena njenge ngwenyama yesitjhaba,

Amakhosi namaduna asamukele ngezandla ezimhlophe isiqundu sokuphaka nyiswa kuka Ndabezitha uMkhutjha II njengoba embizweni yokuphakanyiswa kwakhe kuvezwe bona uphakanyiswa ngokomthetho ziindlukulu zebukhosini ngokulandelana kwazo, ekungilezi, yindlu yakwaPofu, yindlu yakwa Ndidi, yindlu yakwa Marhagwa, yindlu yakwa Kolonje kanye neyako Somlokotho lezi ku ziindlukulu (Prime houses) esivezelwe zona bona ngeze bukhosi bakwa Mabena.

Ingwenyama uMkhutjha II ilindeleke bona ithome amahlelo wayo wokuthoma ukusebenza esikhathini esingaphelisi hliziyo.



Isithombe: The Ndebele Kingdom

PARAGON DEEP



DATE: 2026/06/17

NOTICE: RELOCATION OF GRAVES

Notice is hereby given that:

On behalf of Tlou Coal -Masalani Colliery, Paragon Deep (Pty) Ltd and a local Funeral Undertaker.

Intend applying in terms of the National Heritage Resource Act (Act 25 of 1999); the National Health Act (Act 61 of 2003) and any other relevant National, Provincial or local Acts, Regulations and bylaws; to the:

- Provincial Administration of the Province in which the graves are located;
- South African Heritage Resources Agency (SAHRA) (graves older than 60 years);
- Relevant District and Local municipalities and
- The local Tribal authority (if relevant)

for approval to exhume and re-inter in a local cemetery, graves situated at the following locations:

- Site CBS (Eighteen graves) on portion 5 of the Farm Straffontein 252 IR at 26°9'41.12"S; E28°52'43.49"E

The graves are negatively impacted by future mining activities and will be exhumed from their current place of burial and reburied in a new location as per the wishes of the deceased's families. All persons descendant from the buried individuals and all persons by tradition concerned with the graves are invited to participate in the process and must forward their contact particulars using the details below:

- Within 30 days of the date of this notice, if the grave(s) are younger than 60 years; - Within 60 days of the date of this notice, if the grave(s) are older than 60 years.

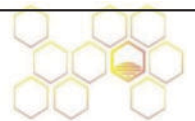
Please use the following reference: 001GR

Ms Nonjabulo Mthethwa

Cell: 072 633 8797 | Email: nonjabulo@paragondeep.co.za

A Model Of Excellence

PARAGON DEEP



DATE: 2026/06/17

ISAZISO: UKUSUSWA KWAMATHUNA

Niyaziswa ukuthi:

Egameni lase-Tlou Coal -Masalani Colliery, i-Paragon Deep (Pty) Ltd kanye nomasincwabisane wendawo. Banqume ukufaka isicelo ngokwemigomo ye-National Heritage Resources Act (uMthetho wama-25 wango1999); National Health Act (uMthetho wama-61 wango-2003) kanye nayo yonke eminye imithetho, imigomo nemibandela kaNgqongqoshe, Wesifundazwe nowendawo efanelekile; Kuya:

- Kuhlulumeni Wesifundazwe lapho amathuna etholakala khona;
- Ku-South African Heritage Resources Agency (SAHRA) (amathuna eqile eminyakeni engu-60);
- KuMasipala wesiFunda kanye noMasipala wendawo.
- Ebukhosini bendawo besikhundla (lapho kunesidingo)

ukuze kugunyazwe ukuvuswa nokufihlwa kabusha emathuneni endawo, amathuna atholakala endaweni yaseDelmas:

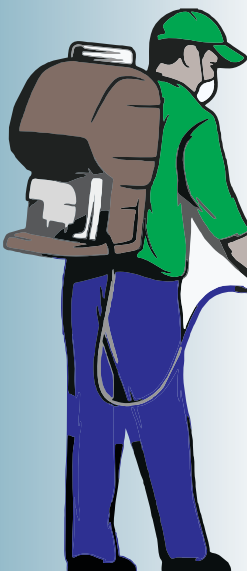
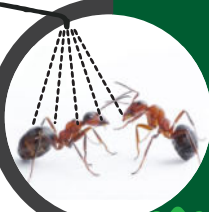
- Indawo CBS (amathuna ayishumi nesishiyagalombili, 18 graves) kwinxenye yesi-5 ye-Farm iStraffontein 252 IR ku-26°9'41.12"S; E28°52'43.49"E

Amathuna aphazanyiswa yizinhlelo zemisebenzi yaseMayini, azosuswa lapho ekhona manje aphinde abekwe kabusha endaweni entsha ngokwezifiso zemindeni yabangasekho. Bonke abantu abanolwazwi, abahlobene kanye nabathintekayo ngokweSiko sicela bathumele imininingwane yokuxhumana nabo besebenzisa imininingwane engezansi:

- Ngezinsuku ezingu-30 kusukela osukwini lwesaziso, uma anamathuna eneminyaka engaphansi kwengu-60;
- Ngezinsuku ezingu-60 kusukela osukwini lwesaziso, uma anamathuna eneminyaka edlule engu-60.

Sicela nisebenzise i-Reference elandelayo: 001GR

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Eskom partnership donates learning resources to Botleng Secondary

● RODNEY HLATSHWAYO

DELMAS – Learners at Botleng Secondary School will benefit from improved learning conditions after Eskom Kendal Power Station, in partnership with Steinmüller Africa and Siemens Energy, donated essential learning resources during a Mandela Month Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiative.

The donation included 510 desks and chairs, four chalkboards, 1 200 sanitary towels, seven dustbins, and a commitment to install two 360-degree security cameras to improve safety at the school. The handover ceremony featured performances by the school choir and a gumboot dance group, creating a celebratory atmosphere for learners, educators and guests.

Welcoming the donation, principal Steven Motaung said the intervention would significantly improve teaching and learning.

"There were learners who had to attend lessons without proper desks and chairs. This donation restores their dignity and will boost their confidence. We are currently ranked number one in our circuit this term, and we achieved those results despite having inadequate furniture. Imagine what our learners can

achieve now."

Motaung urged learners to take care of the donated resources and encouraged the school choir to continue developing its talent by participating in music competitions. School Governing Body (SGB) chairperson Zakhele Masilela described the donation as timely and much needed.

"Today we received desks, chairs, chalkboards, sanitary towels and dustbins through the partnership between Eskom Kendal Power Station, Steinmüller Africa and Siemens Energy. The promised surveillance cameras will greatly improve security after the school recently experienced a break-in during which six computers were stolen. The cameras will also help us monitor learner discipline and curb unauthorised access to the school."

Masilela said the shortage of furniture had previously forced some Grade 8 learners to stand throughout the school day, making it difficult for teachers to conduct lessons effectively.

"The learning environment will now be far more conducive, and

we will ensure that the furniture is properly maintained."

Speaking to *Highveld Chronicle*, Kendal Power Station General Manager Tshepiso Temo said Eskom's responsibility extends beyond generating electricity.

"Communities often only see Eskom's power stations but do not always see the opportunities and community support that come with our presence. Today is about demonstrating that we are partners with our communities. We understand their challenges, and where we can assist, we will."

Temo said Kendal Power Station works closely with contractors such as Steinmüller Africa and Siemens Energy to identify community needs and deliver meaningful support.

She said the partnership is guided by the values of Ubuntu, care, respect and sustainability, and extends beyond infrastructure through mentorship programmes, career guidance initiatives and other educational interventions aimed at preparing learners for future employment opportunities.

"We want learners to see a future for themselves. Through partnerships

such as these, we hope to help them succeed academically and eventually enter the world of work."

Kendal Power Station Human Resources Manager Nandi Koenabaho said Eskom recently hosted a career guidance programme attended by several schools, including Botleng Secondary School.

She added that management had committed to rewarding the school's five top-performing learners at the end of the year with laptops to encourage academic excellence.

The donation was welcomed by learners, educators and community members, who said the improved learning resources, enhanced security and continued support from Eskom and its partners would contribute to better academic performance, improved learner discipline and greater opportunities for learners at the school.



When life changed, art became his greatest masterpiece

● RODNEY HLATSHWAYO

EMALAHLENI – Long before his artwork began turning heads, Bongani Sylvester Mabena had already discovered the quiet comfort of a pencil and a blank page. As a young boy, drawing was simply something he loved. Years later, when life dealt him one of its toughest blows, that childhood passion became the very thing that helped him heal.

Today, Mabena is admired for his striking hyper-realistic portraits, but his work reaches far beyond recreating faces. Through abstract paintings, expressive sketches and symbolic pieces, he tells stories of identity, hope, resilience and the shared human experience.

For him, art has never been just about creating beautiful images.

"Sometimes I speak clearly through realism, and sometimes I speak in colours, shapes and symbols. Art is how I understand the world and how I communicate with people," he said.

His journey began at the age of seven while attending Nelson Ngubeni Primary School. What started as a fascination with drawing portraits stayed with him throughout his years at Empucukweni Secondary School and later at the Tshwane University of Technology's eMalahleni Campus, where he studied Human Resource Management. He also completed an entrepreneurship learnership through Sinolwazi Training Company in partnership with the National Youth Development Agency (NYDA).

Although he never received formal training as an artist, Mabena spent years refining his craft through patience, discipline and relentless practice.

"I believe my talent is God-given, but it is something I have nurtured throughout my life," he said.

Just as life seemed to be unfolding, everything changed.

In 2019, a workplace injury forced him to put many of his dreams on hold. What followed was one of the most physically and emotionally difficult periods of his life. Yet it was during those dark moments that he found his way back to the one thing that had always given him peace.

Art was no longer just a hobby. It became therapy.

Mabena credits his occupational therapist, Natasha Biddulph, with

helping him rediscover not only his creativity but also his purpose.

"She believed in me when I was at my lowest. That's when I realised art could heal and speak truth."

The experience transformed the way he approached his work. While portraiture remained the foundation of his artistry, he began exploring abstract art, using colour, texture and symbolism to express emotions and experiences that words often fail to capture.

Today, his portfolio moves effortlessly between detailed portraits, expressive sketches and deeply symbolic paintings, each carrying its own message.

Using graphite, charcoal, acrylics, oils and mixed media, Mabena adapts his technique to suit each piece. A detailed portrait may take three to four days to complete, while an abstract painting can take weeks as he patiently layers meaning into every brushstroke.

"My portraits are detailed, my sketches are raw and free, and my paintings carry deeper meanings about life, identity, struggle, nature, culture, hope, emotions and the world around us."

"The biggest challenge with portraits is capturing the soul in someone's eyes. With abstract art, it's translating deep feelings into colour and form without losing honesty."

Among all his creations, one piece holds a particularly special place in his heart.

Titled *The Circle of One*, the artwork explores the interconnectedness of humanity, nature and existence.

Beyond creating original works, Mabena has also produced portraits of internationally recognised figures, including Tupac Shakur and football superstar Lionel Messi, showcasing his ability to capture not only a person's likeness but also their character.

Despite growing recognition, he said life as a local artist is far from easy. Access to quality materials remains a challenge, as does finding consistent clients and

encouraging people to appreciate both realism and abstract art.

Social media, however, has helped him take his work beyond the boundaries of his community.

"It connected me with people who understand my message. My art has travelled much further than I ever imagined."

One of the proudest moments of his journey came when the National Youth Development Agency (NYDA) recognised his potential and awarded him a business funding grant.

"Being recognised and supported by the NYDA motivated me to push even harder."

Like many artists, Mabena admitted there were moments when giving up felt easier than carrying on.

"Yes, I wanted to give up. But seeing someone connect with my art, even if it's only one person, reminds me why I started."

He draws inspiration from South African artist Thulani Nhlapho, whose work and artistic philosophy continue to influence his own creative journey.

"He encouraged me to keep pushing no matter what."

Looking ahead, Mabena hopes to exhibit both his portrait and abstract collections on local and international stages, collaborate with other artists and mentor young creatives, showing them that art can become a powerful tool for expression, healing and hope.

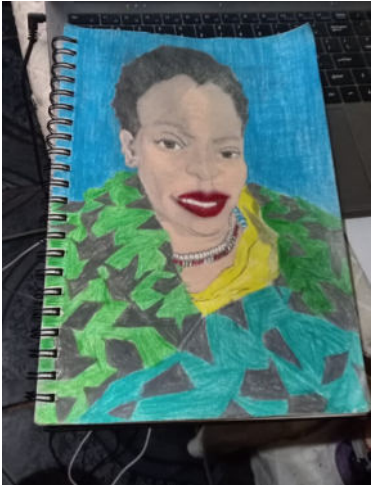
His advice to aspiring artists is simple: "Don't box yourself. Explore portraits, sketches and abstract art. Let

your creativity grow with you, and always put meaning into everything you create."

While his dream is to leave behind remarkable works of art, Mabena hopes his greatest legacy will be something far more meaningful.

"I want to be remembered as an artist who honoured people's faces and honoured their stories through symbolic art."

For Mabena, every portrait begins with a pencil, every painting starts with an idea, and every piece tells a story. His journey is proof that even life's most painful moments can become the foundation for something beautiful, one brushstroke at a time.



Bongani Sylvester Mabena

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Sport takes centre stage as NkAMA Activation builds excitement for awards

LUCAS SHONGWE,
EMMANUEL MTHIMUNYE AND
NODICAH FUNDAMA

KAMEELRIVIER – Sport, entertainment and community spirit took centre stage at Kameelrivier Stadium in Siyabuswa as the Nkangala Arts and Music Awards (NkAMA) hosted a two-day activation on Saturday and Sunday, 25 and 26 July, bringing together football and netball teams from across the Dr JS Moroka Local Municipality ahead of the 2026 NkAMA.

The activation, led by *Highveld Chronicle* in partnership with the Nkangala District Municipality, aimed to promote local talent while building excitement for the awards ceremony. The weekend also featured entertainment, prizes and an opportunity for communities to come together through sport.

Football kicked off the activation on Saturday, with eight local teams competing in the NkAMA Top 8 Tournament.

The quarter-finals produced plenty of goals as Eskom thrashed Liverpool 5-0, John Vuligate defeated Mthambothini 6-3, Mementos beat Barcelona 4-0 and Babethu Legends overcame Ngwenya Royals 4-0 to book their places in the semi-finals.

The competition intensified on Sunday as Mementos secured a convincing 5-1 victory over Babethu Legends to reach the final, while Eskom defeated John Vuligate 2-1 to set up a championship clash.

The final lived up to expectations, ending 1-1 before Eskom held their nerve to defeat Mementos 3-2 on penalties to lift the NkAMA Top 8 Tournament trophy.

An elated Eskom coach, Perseverance Mohlala, said the victory reflected the team's determination and discipline.

"We approached the game with determination and discipline. We wanted to show everyone what we are capable of. We are not called Eskom for nothing, we are dangerous, just like electricity."

Mohlala also thanked the NkAMA

organisers for creating opportunities for local players.

"Most importantly, we would like to thank the NkAMA organisers for giving us the opportunity to showcase the talent that exists in KwaNdebele. We are looking forward to the upcoming events on the NkAMA calendar."

Although disappointed with the result, Mementos coach Memento Skhosana praised the tournament for providing a platform for rural talent, while raising concerns about the standard of officiating.

"I would like to thank the organisers of the NkAMA Tournament for unearthing talent in our local rural areas. The tournament was properly organised to a high standard. Everything was professionally run, just like a PSL match, and this is exactly the kind of development we need in our communities."

While football entertained supporters on the field, Sunday's netball tournament showcased the growing standard of the sport in the municipality as four teams battled for the Dr JS Moroka NkAMA Activation Netball title.

Blue Birds booked their place in the final with a commanding 37-17 victory over Valsch United, while Dipoko NC defeated Young Stars 36-27 in a closely contested semi-final.

The final produced another exciting contest, with Dipoko NC overcoming Blue Birds to be crowned the 2026 Dr JS Moroka NkAMA Activation Netball champions.

Team captain Kgaphola Perseverance said winning the tournament was a significant achievement for the side.

"It was a great victory for us because it was our first tournament of the year. We are thrilled to have achieved our goal of winning the championship. Our target from the beginning was to lift this trophy. The key to our success was our confidence, the way we

encouraged one another, our team spirit and discipline. Team spirit and discipline always win games."

The activation highlighted NkAMA's commitment to using sport as a platform to identify local talent, encourage community participation and unite residents ahead of the annual awards ceremony. With thrilling football and netball action throughout the weekend, the event successfully built momentum for the 2026 NkAMA while celebrating the talent and potential that exists across the Dr JS Moroka Local Municipality.



Soccer Champions, Eskom



Netball champions, Dipoko NC

Nkangala Arts & Music Awards

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09 AUG - VICTOR KHANYE LM	16 AUG - STEVE TSHWETE LM	23 AUG - EMAKHAZENI LM

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