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DELMAS MEN URGED TO RETHINK FATHERHOOD

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MORE PARTIES, TOUGHER CONTEST AS ELECTION COUNTDOWN BEGINS

‘Once bitten, twice shy’: Segage demands written deal for future coalitions

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KwaPhahla woman receives oxygen machine after years of breathing difficulties

Speaker Jonas Boshomane says the donation was not politically motivated but aimed at giving back to the community

● EMMANUEL N MTHIMUNYE

SIYABUSWA – KWAPHLAHLA—A 24-year-old woman from KwaPhahla, who was diagnosed with systemic sclerosis and interstitial lung disease in 2024, has received an oxygen machine to help her cope with breathing difficulties. The machine was donated by Nkangala District Municipality Speaker Cllr Jonas Kabelo Boshomane, who is also the African National Congress (ANC) chairperson in the Nkangala Region. Speaking during the handover in KwaPhahla, Boshomane said the donation was made possible through collaboration with stakeholders and sponsors who came together to assist Nobuhle Dineo Mahlangu. “This was not about politics. It was about coming together with different stakeholders to assist someone who is in need so that she can live a healthy and happy life,” said Boshomane. He said he would engage the departments of Health and Social Development to arrange counselling to help Mahlangu come to terms with her diagnosis. Boshomane, who is also involved in community initiatives, including an annual beauty contest held in December to encourage young girls to pursue professional careers, said the donation formed part of his commitment to giving back to the community. Although he acknowledged that his community work is inspired by the values of his political organisation,

including personal sacrifice, caring and patriotism, he maintained that the donation was not part of an ANC campaign. “It is not about campaigning for the ANC. It is about humanity and giving back to the community,” he said. Mahlangu, who was studying to become a medical secretary at Jeppe College, said her illness had completely changed her life and forced her to abandon her studies in 2024. “I was diagnosed in 2024. It affects my life, I can't go out without oxygen. In 2024 I had to drop out of school. I spent a month hospitalised. I got admitted in early October while my exams were coming, I couldn't get time to prepare,” said Mahlangu. She said her condition has made everyday activities difficult, leaving her dependent on others for assistance. She also has to return to hospital every few months to use an oxygen machine. “I was facing difficulties staying in the house every day. If I want to go out I have to be with someone to assist me in everything I do, even to the bathroom,” she said. Mahlangu welcomed the donated machine, although she said its weight presented some difficulties. She also uses an oxygen cylinder as a backup,

which requires monthly refills. “Yes, it's reliable but a little bit heavy and I'm happy with it. The cylinder I'm using for back up, so every month I have to refill it,” she said. Boshomane commended Mahlangu

for speaking out about her condition and seeking assistance. He expressed hope that the machine would make her daily life easier and wished her a speedy recovery.



Radisson Hotel to Destiny Exclusive: The story behind the switch

● LUCAS SHONGWE

MIDDELBURG — The removal of the Radisson sign from the R650 million hotel in Middelburg has drawn attention after it was replaced with signage for Destiny Exclusive Hotel and Convention Centre. The change follows the termination of Radisson Hotel Group's operating contract, according to Akani Properties Group chairman Zamani Letjane. The *Highveld Chronicle* spoke to Letjane on the sidelines of the hotel's grand opening on 4 September 2026 to clarify the transition. Letjane said Radisson was only the operator of the hotel and that the investors had terminated its contract at the property. “The transition was very quick because, remember, Radisson is only an operator. The hotel also has its own operator. So you don't come in as an operator and invest money; you come in as an employee to run the hotel,” he said. Letjane said some investors were unhappy with how Radisson managed the hotel, which contributed to the decision to terminate the contract. “I was one of the investors who was not happy with the way Radisson was managing the hotel in Kempton Park. I think the financial management and controls were one of the aspects. They also failed to manage and even maintain the tools of trade,” he said. He cited a transformer failure which

he said forced the Kempton Park hotel to operate on diesel generators for about seven months. “We had a transformer blow up, and it forced the hotel to run on diesel for almost seven months because there was no transformer. So you had to use diesel generators and so on. That is a cost. There were many other issues that the investors, or the shareholders, were not happy with in terms of the running of the hotel, hence the termination,” he said. Letjane also alleged that Radisson attempted to stop the Middelburg hotel's official opening through an urgent court application. “For your information as well, they even tried to stop this event [the official opening] by going to court. Yes, they went to court on Tuesday the 3rd, and judgment and their application was dismissed. They had brought an interdict to stop the launch of this hotel,” he said. The publication contacted Radisson Hotel Group for comment on the termination of its operating contract, Letjane's allegations about the management of the hotel and the reported court application. A right-of-reply request was sent by email on 8 September 2026 to Saadiyah Hendricks, Area Director for PR & Social Media. No response had been received at the time of going to press. The allegations regarding Radisson's management of the hotel and the reported court application therefore remain Letjane's account.



The Radisson Hotel sign (left), which has since been replaced with Destiny Exclusive Hotel and Convention Centre signage (right) at the R650 million hotel in Middelburg.

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“the path of the righteous
winds upwards to flee from
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The Price of Leadership

By Pastor Chuck Swindoll

We are pressed on every side by troubles, but we are not crushed. We are perplexed, but not driven to despair. We are hunted down, but never abandoned by God. We get knocked down, but we are not destroyed. (2 Corinthians 4:8–9) Anyone who steps into the arena of leadership must be prepared to pay a price. True leadership exacts a heavy toll on the whole person—and the more effective the leadership, the higher the price. The leader must soon face the fact that he will be the target of critical darts. Unpleasant though it may sound, you haven't really led until you have become familiar with the stinging barbs of the critic. That implies one thing: good leaders must have thick skin. Paul describes the life of frail human vessels: “We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not despairing; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; always carrying about in the body the dying of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body” (2 Corinthians 4:8–10 NASB 1995). Always is the key word in verse 10.

The marks of death are evident in the lives of God's leaders because God wants to display the life of Jesus in us. God doesn't declare abstract truth from the lips of an angel; He puts truth in real life. Then He brings that life before people, whether it is in business, a Bible class, a group of disciples, a growing Christian school, a mission organization, or a church. He uses imperfect people to display the glory of God. Carping critics typically look at situations from a human point of view—their walls, their plans, their comfort, their procedure, their arrangement. They don't stop to think that they may be criticizing God's project. Let's call this what it is: spiritual warfare. And battles of that sort are best fought from a kneeling position. When those sidewalk supervisors tried to disrupt construction of the Jerusalem wall, Nehemiah responded to the criticism in two significant ways. First, he talked to God about the criticism. Take note of his unusual prayer in Nehemiah 4:4–5. Nehemiah's second response to criticism: He stayed on task. He persisted. I love what Nehemiah wrote in Nehemiah 4:6: “So we built the wall” (NASB). The words of criticism fell like rain, yet he continued on. I can just hear him. “Keep mixing the mortar and hand me another brick!” Critics demoralize. Leaders encourage.



More parties, tougher contest as election countdown begins

'Once bitten, twice shy': Segage demands written deal for future coalitions

LUCAS SHONGWE

MIDDELBURG — Middelburg and Hendrina Residents Front (MHRF) leader Jomo Segage says his party will not enter into another political coalition without a written agreement setting out the terms of cooperation. Segage made the remarks at a provincial Conference of the Left convened by the South African Communist Party

SACP Mpumalanga takes aim at neoliberal policies at consultative conference of the Left

LUCAS SHONGWE

MIDDELBURG — The South African Communist Party (SACP) in Mpumalanga has criticised policies it says have weakened the state, undermined job creation and reversed progress in the province. The party made the comments during the Provincial Consultative Conference of the Left at the Nkangala District Municipality Council Chamber in Middelburg on Sunday, 20 September 2026.

The gathering was attended by representatives from left-wing political and community formations, including the Middelburg and Hendrina Residents Front (MHRF), Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF), Africa Mayibuye, South African National Civic Organisation (SANCO), National Education, Health and Allied Workers' Union (NEHAWU), Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU), youth and student formations and environmental justice organisations. The conference resolved to convene a provincial Conference of the Left to adopt resolutions aimed at guiding future cooperation among left formations and the SACP beyond the upcoming local government elections.

The provincial gathering followed the national Conference of the Left held at the Birchwood Hotel in Boksburg from 29 to 31 May under the theme, "Building a Left Movement for Working-Class and Popular Power". The national conference established a Council of the Left as a coordinating structure and adopted a programme that included opposition to privatisation and outsourcing, among other policy positions.

'Privatisation has crippled the state' Speaking to the *Highveld Chronicle* on the sidelines of the conference, Council of the Left member Mazibuko Jwara described privatisation in Mpumalanga as an example of what he called neoliberal policies.

"Nelspruit was one of the first municipalities to privatise the provision of water. That is exactly an example of a neoliberal policy. Mpumalanga is also failing to redistribute land because the government's policy says land must be bought on a willing-seller, willing-buyer basis at market prices. That is another example of neoliberalism," Jwara said. He argued that outsourcing basic services had weakened the state's capacity to provide services directly.

"A lot of services that government and municipalities must provide directly are being provided by sub-contractors. That means the state is not able to build its capacity. Jobs are not created because

(SACP) in Middelburg at the weekend.

Addressing delegates, he said any future cooperation between the MHRF and the SACP in council would need to be formalised through a memorandum of understanding (MoU).

"We want a memorandum of understanding that formalises the

cooperation," he said.

"We are ready to collaborate, but we need an MoU that spells out what pro-poor policies we will support together, what we will not do, how decisions will be taken, and how we protect each other as partners so we are not just used for votes."

Segage said his position was shaped by what he described as two political betrayals following the 2021 local government elections.

He recalled how the MHRF had concluded talks with the Democratic Alliance (DA), Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) and an independent councillor to form a voting bloc aimed at unseating the ANC in the hung Steve Tshwete Local Municipality.

Under the proposed arrangement, Segage was to be the bloc's mayoral candidate. The parties and independent councillor together held 37 seats, comprising seven MHRF seats, nine EFF seats, 17 DA seats and one independent

councillor. The Freedom Front Plus (FF Plus), which held three seats, was also part of the arrangement through its pact with the DA.

However, Segage said he learnt at midnight before a special council sitting on 23 November 2021 that the DA intended to abstain from the mayoral vote.

The municipality's own account of the 23 November 2021 council sitting records that Masilela was elected executive mayor with 22 votes, while Segage received 16 votes. It also records that the DA and FF Plus abstained from the mayoral vote.

Segage also criticised the EFF in the presence of its provincial chairperson, Collen Sedibe, accusing the party of what he described as a second betrayal.

He said the EFF later supported a motion of no confidence against then Speaker Thato Mathunyane of the MHRF, which was debated in council on 10 February 2026.

EFF councillor Joseph Ngubeni was subsequently elected speaker unopposed. Segage said the ANC supported the motion, while the DA, MHRF and FF Plus abstained.

Segage said the two incidents had taught him not to enter into future political partnerships without a written agreement.

"I was taught a hard lesson: once bitten, twice shy," he said.

SACP Mpumalanga provincial secretary Lucky Mbuyane said the party was engaged in bilateral discussions with the MHRF and had noted its proposal for a formal agreement.

"We cannot just take a decision as a province because we report to a structure that is above us at national level. So I can say that we are still consulting with the national leadership about the MHRF's proposal," he said.



MHRF leader Jomo Segage addresses SACP leaders during the Conference of the Left in Middelburg



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Representatives from the MHRF, EFF, Africa Mayibuye, SAYCL, COSAS, SANCO, COSATU, NEHAWU and MEJN with SACP leadership during the Provincial Consultative Conference of the Left in Middelburg.

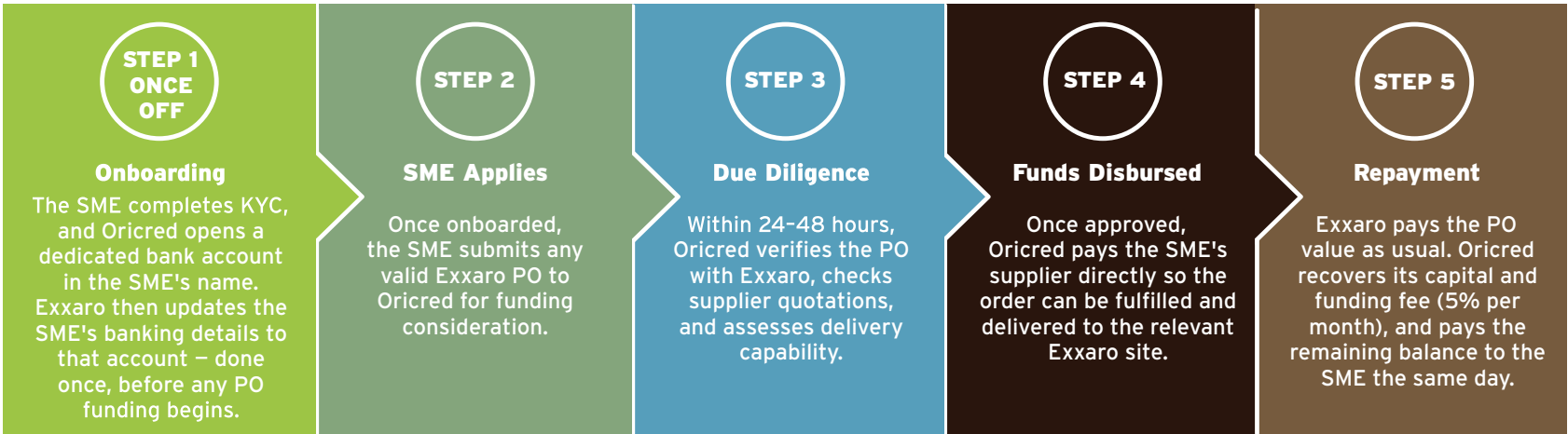


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- Q: Does this change Exxaro's payment process?**
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Delmas men urged to rethink fatherhood

'Being a man of character means being true to the principles with which you were raised' – Motau, SDP National Coordinator

RODNEY HLATSHWAYO
DELMAS — Men in Delmas were urged to look beyond financial provision and take a more active role in their children's lives during the Men's Dialogue Conference 2026 at Joheve Conference Hall on Thursday, 24 September 2026. The conference, organised by the Service Delivery Party (SDP) under the theme **Building Responsible Men and Stronger Communities**, brought together men, traditional leaders, pastors and community members to discuss fatherhood, responsibility, violence, emotional struggles and the role men can play in strengthening their families and communities. Motivational speaker Selepe Madisha

said being a father should not be measured only by a man's ability to provide financially, but also by his involvement in his children's lives. "Men need to look within themselves, discover their purpose and understand that their value is not measured only by money, but by the character they demonstrate, the knowledge they share and the positive impact they make in their communities," he said. Madisha urged fathers to become involved in everyday aspects of their children's lives, including helping with homework, communicating with teachers and understanding what is happening at school.

For Pioneer Sibonelo Mvelase of Waaikraal, the discussion about fatherhood was shaped by his own experience of growing up without a biological father. Mvelase said he also witnessed violence in his home, describing his stepfather's alcohol abuse and physical abuse of his mother. He said his 21-year-old brother, whom he alleged was shot by police, was raised in an environment where violence was present and later struggled with negative influences, including gangsterism, before being expelled from school. "I grew up without a father, and I know the effects that absence can have on a child. We cannot only look at a man's actions without asking what shaped him and what he experienced growing up," Mvelase said. He said absent and irresponsible fathers should be held accountable, but argued that men also need spaces where they can speak about their own experiences and challenges. "We need to create spaces where men can speak about their pain, deal with impossible expectations and learn how to become better fathers and role models for their children," he said. Mvelase also raised concerns about the pressure placed on men, particularly firstborn sons, to provide financially for their families even when they are unemployed. He said providing for a family should not only be understood in financial terms and urged fathers to remain involved in their children's lives even when they cannot provide financially or are separated from them.

Communication key to stronger families
Speaking on behalf of the Ndzundza traditional leadership, Ndabezitha

Mduduzi Mahlangu said communication between fathers and children remains an important challenge in many families. He said traditional councils regularly encounter young people facing difficulties and warned that some turn to drugs and other harmful influences when they have no trusted person to speak to. "Many fathers struggle to communicate with their children, yet these are issues we encounter regularly in our communities. Young people face many challenges and need someone they can trust and speak to," Mahlangu said. "People should not remain silent when they are facing problems. They should find someone they trust, speak about what they are going through and seek help," he said. The discussion also focused on the challenges faced by men themselves, with Madisha saying men are often expected to remain strong for their families and communities even when they are experiencing difficulties. He said men also need support and someone who can ask whether they are coping. Madisha condemned violence against women while calling for greater recognition of men who also experience violence. "Men, women must not be killed in our name! Women must not be abused in our name!" he said. He said communities needed more open conversations about the factors that contribute to violence and ways of supporting boys before problems become more serious.

Character and accountability
SDP national coordinator Thabo Motau said a man's character is reflected in his everyday conduct, including how he behaves when nobody is watching. He linked responsible manhood to Ubuntu, discipline and accountability. "Being a man of character means



being true to the principles with which you were raised," Motau said. He said men should also be willing to acknowledge when they do not have all the answers and seek guidance when necessary. Motau further called on men to take an interest in their communities, challenge wrongdoing and protect the rights of men, women and children. "A child from your neighbour's home used to become your child," he said. The conference also touched on local government, with Motau saying the SDP wants people with different skills and experience to contribute to governance. The SDP was formed in Delmas earlier this year and has positioned service delivery and local governance among its priorities. "We don't want to rule. We want a better government for this town," he said. Motau said discussions about municipal leadership should be linked to the priorities of communities and the skills needed to address them. The conference ultimately placed responsibility, communication and involvement at the centre of its discussion on fatherhood, with speakers calling on men to remain present in their children's lives while also seeking support when they need it.



SDP national coordinator Thabo Motau

From quiet learner to teacher inspiring others

NODICAH FUNDAMA
SENOTLELO — As a quiet Grade 8 learner, Zandile Charity Mnguni preferred to stay away from the spotlight until her teacher, Mr Hadebe, saw something in her that she had yet to recognise in herself. He entered her into debate and oral competitions, pushing her beyond her

comfort zone and helping her discover a confidence she did not know she possessed. Today, Mnguni is an educator at Molapalama Combined School in Dr JS Moroka Municipality, where she teaches English, Social Sciences and Creative Arts. She is also a subject head for Social

Sciences and English, a GEC coordinator, Teachers' CAN 2024 Fellow, 2026 Lead Multiplier and provincial moderator for Social Sciences. "I was one quiet and observant learner who did all she could to avoid the spotlight," Mnguni recalls. Hadebe, however, saw her potential. "When no one believed in me, this boosted my confidence and made me believe in myself as it evoked the potential I myself didn't know I had," she says. Hadebe passed away while she was in Grade 9, but his influence remained. Mnguni promised herself that she would become a teacher in his honour and be to other children what he had been to her. Since entering the profession in 2018, she has worked to create classrooms where learners actively participate in their education. She has particularly worked to change perceptions around Social Sciences, with former learners going on to choose History and Geography in Grade 10. Mnguni also mentors several former learners who are now student teachers. Her teaching approach is shaped by challenges such as learner discipline, disengagement and poor academic performance. In History, learners participate in role-playing and debates, while Geography is brought to life through fieldwork and excursions. "I believe it lies in me knowing my subject content, being confident

about it and selling the subject to my learners. I live my subject, walk my subject," she says. For Mnguni, every lesson carries a deeper responsibility. "Whenever I go to class, I have an understanding that a certain family's last hope is in that class, giving them the small wins is what makes them hungry for more success in life." One of her career highlights came in 2021 when she travelled with learner Mphofela Tshireletso to represent Mpumalanga at the National Inkosi Albert Luthuli Oral History Competition. The experience was particularly meaningful as Tshireletso presented research at national level and boarded a plane for the first time. Mnguni's commitment has since earned her recognition in the Excellence in Secondary School Teaching category. After being nominated by her principal, she prepared a presentation highlighting her work and its impact on learners. At the district awards held at Witbank High School on 28 July, Mnguni took first place in her category against teachers from across the Nkangala Region. On 28 August, she represented Nkangala at provincial level, competing against educators from Gert Sibande, Ehlanzeni and Bohlabela districts, and again emerged in first place. She has since presented before the national panel and is awaiting the final results. For Mnguni, the recognition reflects the values that guide her as an

educator. "My work speaks for itself. I'm never too busy to assist whenever help is needed at my school," she says. She describes herself as someone willing to continue learning and adapting. "I reserve the spirit of being teachable at all times." The recognition has also exposed her to different departments and opportunities she once never imagined. "This nomination means the whole world to me. I believe that everything happens in God's timing and that it's finally my turn," she says. Despite the recognition, Mnguni remains focused on her learners and encourages them to believe in themselves. "If someone can do it, you most definitely can do it too," she says. She also thanked her learners for embracing her teaching methods, her colleagues for their support and the Senotlelo community and Molapalama School Governing Body for trusting the school with their children. "Thank you for trusting the school with your children. We promise to do our level best to see them elevated." From the quiet Grade 8 learner encouraged to step into the spotlight to an educator now helping others discover their potential, Mnguni's journey reflects the lasting influence one teacher can have on another generation.



Award-winning educator Zandile Charity Mnguni celebrates her achievements and dedication to inspiring the next generation.

ISIKO LETHU

Our Story

ILIZWI

WITH SIPHO MAHAMBA

Amakhosi athethe isiqundo soku gidinga iiminyanya yamagugu ngaphasi kwesiqubulo soku khalima izehlakalo zoku hlukumeza kanye noku bulala abantu bengubo

Njengoba kugidingwa inyanga yama gugu nje amakhosi weendawo ngoku hluka hluka nonyaka nje naka bamba iimbizo zaqobe mnyaka zoku gidinga inyanga le. Nonyaka nje athethe isiqundo soku hlela iimbizo zabo ngaphasi kwesi qubulo soku khalima izehlakalalo ezimasikizi ezihlathisela umzimba zoku bulawa kwabantu bengubo kanye nabe ntwana. Lokhu kuza ngemva kwezehlakalo ezivele nge Ekurhuleni nge thagwini yange Johannesburg endaweni ye Kempton Park lapho kubikwe khona bona kuthola kele imiizimba yabantu bengubo babulewe. Yeke amakhosi athi akakhambisani nezenzo ezifana nalezi zokubulala ngobu dlobongela nanges'hlungu bathi nanyana umuntu angakona kangangani akuka vumeleki bona umthathele umphefumulo.

Undabezitha uSipho Mahlangu ngaphasi kobukhosi bakwaSogutjhe nge Ogies nga phasi kuka mas'pala we eMalahleni uthenaka thula ikulumo yakhe yelanga emnyanyeni wokugidinga ilanga lama gugu nge 24 kiyo inyanga ephezulu le ka Khukhulamungu ngele Sine, ebewu banjelwe eMabande Sports Ground ekuli tatawu lemidlalo, Ukhaliwe bewehlaba kab'khali abantu abahlukumeza abantu bengubo kanyenabentwana.

"Ikinga yokubulala abantu bengubo kanye nabentwana akusiyikinga yes'funda thizeni kodwana kuyikinga yenarha mazombe kungakho namhlanje simakhasi ngokuhluka kwethu sithathe isiqundo sokuthi sigidinge ilanga lama gugu

ngokukhalima kanye noku vuselela isirhunzi nokubuyisa unembeza esitjhabeni. Simakhosi asikhambisani nobudlobongela obufana nalobu, yeke lobukubulwelwe ukufuzeke sibulaphe besibukhiphe kithi".

uMahlangu urage wathi sile kufike isikhathi sokobana amakhosi nawo asukume, arhelebbhisane nebomthetho ekulwisaneni nekankere esile iqeda Ubuntu no nembeza ebantwini.

"Ezinye zeenzathu ezihlohlolozela izeehlakalo ezifana nalezi, ziindakamizwa kanye nokuthanda imali yeke simakhosi sele kufike isikhathi sokuthi sisebenzisane nebomthetho ekulwisaneni nekankere le ehlasela inarha yethu yeke sele kufike la kufanele sihlome ijima loku lwisana neendakamizwa kanye nabo gala jana abagalaja

abantu begodu baba rhebele kizo iindakamizwa yeke lokho kukodwa kuhlohlolozela unembeza wokulimaza kanye noku bulala, kungakho kufanele sibambisane nebomthetho ekulwisaneni nekankere esahleleko le". uMahlangu uswaphelise ngakuthi akuna muntu ekufuzeke aphile ngokusaba enarheni yekuluko netjhaphuluko yeke ngalokho uyakhalima

Iimbalo balo ziveza bona kusukela ngenyanga ka Sihlabantangana ukufikela enyangueni ka Mgwengweni sele bama khulu amahlanu namatjumi asindathu kanye nethoba (569), abantu bengubo esele babulewe enarheni yerhu kiwo umyana ophezulu lo. Yeke ngalokho norhulumende uyakhalima phezukwe zehlakalo ezifana nalezi.



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Mayor Ngwenya urges youth to put education first

EMMANUEL N MTHIMUNYE
THEMBISILE HANI — Nkangala District Municipality Executive Mayor Cllr Thomas Ngwenya has urged young people to prioritise education as a way of avoiding teenage pregnancy, crime, substance abuse and other social challenges.



Nkangala District Municipality Executive Mayor Cllr Thomas Ngwenya addresses residents during the IDP outreach programme at Thembaletu Community Hall in Thembisile Hani.

Ngwenya made the call at Thembaletu Community Hall in Thembisile Hani on 19 September during the final Integrated Development Plan (IDP) outreach programme of the current administration. “Education is very serious and crucial. It is something that will take you out of teenage pregnancy, out of crime, substance abuse and other unwanted illicit activities,” said Ngwenya. He encouraged young people to equip themselves with education and skills to participate in development opportunities across the district. “Education is your way out and your way in. You can be in technical, you can be in Human Resource, you can be in Agriculture, but you need education to participate. We want every youth to be part of this development,” he said. According to the Draft IDP, the district has set aside R5 million for the Mayoral Bursary Fund for the 2026/27 financial year. The fund supports students from Thembisile Hani wards to access universities, universities of technology and TVET colleges.

Other education programmes include career guidance, teenage pregnancy awareness and anti-drug and substance abuse campaigns. While residents welcomed the emphasis on education, they also used the outreach to raise service delivery concerns. Ward 19 resident Freddy Chauke welcomed the focus on education but raised concern that Lithabong Science School does not have a laboratory for science experiments. Johannes Mulauzi from Pumula, Ward 23, raised concerns about electricity, unfinished RDP houses, roads, water and the condition of Jabulani Primary School. “Roads in Pumula are not in a good condition, they need reconstruction and refurbishment. The paving project is not showing progress. We don’t have running water daily. And Jabulani Primary School needs renovations, it is not in a good state for our learners,” he said. Mama Masilela welcomed developments in the municipality but raised concerns about graduate unemployment and the lack of a TVET college in Thembisile Hani. “We appreciate everything that has been done, but the concern is that

while sending children to tertiary institutions to study, they come back with those qualifications but the issue is unemployment,” said Masilela. She also appealed for a TVET college to allow young people to study closer to home instead of travelling to other areas. Responding to residents, Thembisile Hani Mayor Cllr Lisetja Dikgale said electricity falls under Eskom, but the municipality is working with the utility to accelerate connections. He said illegal connections remained a challenge. “If people can stop illegal connections, everyone will have electricity daily,” Dikgale said. On water, Dikgale said work is continuing on the Loskop Dam bulk water project, which is expected to improve water supply in Thembisile Hani once completed. The Loskop Regional Bulk Water Supply Scheme is a major project designed to augment water supply to the municipality, with further electrical connection work still appearing in 2026 procurement plans.

Dikgale said the municipality is also working with the Department of Public Works, Roads and Transport on roads, with projects being implemented in stages. “These are projects that will take time to be finished, but as the municipality we make sure that every citizen has access to proper roads and everything they need because we are here to serve our residents,” he said. On the demand for a TVET college, Dikgale said plans have been developed and discussions are underway about converting a school in Kwaggafontein, Entokozweni, into a TVET college for Thembisile Hani. He said concerns raised by residents would be taken into account and followed up. The outreach formed part of the municipality’s IDP community engagement process, providing residents with an opportunity to raise priorities and service delivery concerns for consideration in municipal planning and budgeting.



Residents from different areas across Thembisile Hani

Heritage cannot justify GBVF, says Mashilo

EMMANUEL N MTHIMUNYE
WATERVAL — Heritage and tradition must never be used to justify gender-based violence and femicide (GBVF), Mpumalanga MEC for Cooperative Governance, Human Settlements and Traditional Affairs Speedy Mashilo said during the province’s Heritage Day celebration on Thursday, 24 September. Mashilo, who spoke on behalf of Premier Mandla Ndlovu at the provincial celebration held at the Metsimadi Sports Ground in Waterval, said heritage should promote dignity and respect rather than be used to defend practices that violate human rights. The celebration was attended by Dr JS Moroka Local Municipality Executive Mayor Nkosikazi Nomsa Mtsweni, members of the House of Traditional Leaders led by Kgoshi EP Chaane and community members. Held under the national theme, Celebrating Our Living Heritage: Strengthening the Ties That Bind Us, the event focused on preserving cultural identity while ensuring that heritage remains relevant to present and future generations. The theme was also used for the 2026 National Heritage Day celebrations. “Heritage Day is not merely about looking into the past; it is about understanding who we are, what binds us together and what kind of society we want to build for future generations,” Mashilo said. He said heritage should help people understand their dignity, identity and place in society. “There is no place for GBVF in our heritage,” he said. Mashilo said cultural preservation must go hand in hand with the protection of human rights, particularly the rights of women and children. “Our heritage must be used to promote dignity, respect, compassion and the protection of women and children. We must be clear that gender-based violence and femicide cannot be justified in the name of culture or tradition,” he said.

He said traditional communities had historically placed importance on respect for women, elders, children and the broader community, and called for these values to be reclaimed as part of cultural preservation. “We must reclaim those positive values and reject harmful practices and attitudes that undermine human dignity,” Mashilo said. He also called on men and boys to play an active role in addressing GBVF, saying the responsibility cannot be left to women alone. “The fight against GBVF cannot be left to women alone. Men and boys must actively participate in creating communities where women and girls are safe and respected,” he said. Mashilo said young people should be taught that strength should not be associated with violence, control or intimidation, but with responsibility and respect.

Preserving living heritage
The MEC also highlighted the importance of preserving Mpumalanga’s living heritage, including languages, music, dance, customs, stories, food, indigenous knowledge and craftsmanship. He said these forms of heritage must be documented, protected and passed on to younger generations. “Young people are custodians of tomorrow’s heritage. If we want our heritage to survive, we must make young people active participants rather than passive observers,” he said. Mashilo singled out music and song as important ways of preserving cultural memory and called for more opportunities for young people to learn from traditional musicians while also

developing contemporary interpretations of heritage. He said this could contribute to tourism and enable communities to benefit from the heritage economy. “Living heritage is not frozen in time. It evolves as communities evolve. Our responsibility is to preserve the values, knowledge and cultural expressions that define us while allowing new generations to contribute their own creativity and interpretation,” Mashilo said.



MEC for Cooperative Governance, Human Settlements and Traditional Affairs Speedy Mashilo delivers the keynote address on behalf of Premier Mandla Ndlovu during the provincial Heritage Day celebration on Thursday, 24 September.

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Under-13 girls light up eMalahleni football championship

● SHARON CHILOANE

EMALAHLENI — Twenty-two schools from across the eMalahleni Local Football Association (LFA) competed for honours in the 2026 Under-13 Girls Schools League “Champs of Champs” tournament at Witbank High School on Tuesday, 22 September. The tournament, supported by Glencore and the Mpumalanga Department of Education, brought together zonal winners from Kriel, Location, Klarinet, Ezinambeni and Phola-Ogies for a championship aimed at giving young girls an opportunity to develop their football skills and compete against schools from different communities. The championship forms part of efforts to strengthen girls' participation in football at grassroots level, with organisers looking to involve more schools and introduce young players to the sport from an early age. Martha Mokgaloane Mogadime, known as “Lady Coach uMamkhize wase Phola”, says one of the main objectives of the league is to challenge perceptions that girls should only participate in sports such as netball. Mogadime, who serves as secretary of the Phola-Ogies Zone, third vice-president of the eMalahleni LFA and chairperson of women's football in the Nkangala Region, says the association wants to create more opportunities for girls to play football. With football programmes already catering for older girls, she says the Under-13 league is intended to introduce players to the sport at a younger age, attract more schools and provide young players with a positive activity while developing their sporting talent. The competition produced two champions, with KwaGuqa Primary School winning the Silver Plate final and Moruti Makause Primary School taking the main “Champs of Champs” title.

KwaGuqa triumphs in Silver Plate

KwaGuqa and Nelson Gubeni played to a goalless draw in the Silver Plate final before KwaGuqa secured a 2-0 victory on penalties. The victory earned KwaGuqa R5 000 and gold medals, while Nelson Gubeni received R2 000 and silver medals. Buhle Mnisi was named Player of the Tournament in the Silver Plate competition, while Langa Nkosi finished as the competition's top goal scorer. KwaGuqa coach Vusi Kabinde, known as “Coach Gattuso”, says the team's success was significant after the players endured a difficult campaign in the Ezinambeni Zonal League, where they finished at the bottom. “Beyond winning trophies, the girls learnt the importance of teamwork, discipline, resilience, respect, confidence and never giving up,” Kabinde says. He says representing their school and community also gave the players a sense of pride and showed other young girls that football offers opportunities to participate and develop their talent. “For the girls of KwaGuqa Primary School, representing their school and community created a sense of pride and belonging. It also showed other young girls in the community that football is a sport where they can participate, develop their talents and achieve meaningful goals,” he says.

Moruti Makause crowned champions

In the main championship final, Moruti Makause produced the biggest result of the day, defeating Alex Mampana Primary School 5-

0. Moruti Makause received R10 000 for winning the championship, while Alex Mampana received R3 000 as runners-up. Kagiso Nkosi was one of the standout players of the championship, finishing as the main tournament's top goal scorer and being named Player of the Tournament. Lesego Mmoaeng was named Goalkeeper of the Tournament, while Bongani Mabena was the winning coach. The championship finalists emerged from zonal competitions. Bonginhlahlhla Primary School won the Kriel zone, Sibukosethu represented the Location zone, Alex Mampana came through Klarinet,

KwaGuqa represented Ezinambeni and Hlanguphala Primary School qualified from Phola-Ogies. Each zonal winner received R3 000.

Building confidence through football

The tournament also gave coaches an opportunity to expose their players to competition beyond their immediate communities. Hlanguphala Primary School coach Swelumlomo Vincent Mntungwa says one of his hopes was for the players to become comfortable competing against girls they had never met before. “I hope and I believe my players learnt to engage with other players coming from different areas. They learnt not to

be afraid to play with unknown players and face them for the first time,” Mntungwa says. He says the support surrounding the tournament and the players' success can also help change attitudes towards girls' football. According to Mntungwa, some families have not always understood or supported girls who want to play football, making tournaments and victories such as these important for the players, their schools and communities. With the Under-13 championship now established, organisers want to see more schools enter the league and more girls given an opportunity to develop through football.



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