LET'S GROW MPUMALANGA TOGETHER

PREMIER'S CALL TO THE PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECTOR TO SUPPORT YOUTH **BUSINESSES**



Premier Mtshweni-Tsipane tours Mr Sihle Ngwenya's state funded embroidery business entity at Leandra.

The Provincial government's investment to the youth has gained momentum. Since the introduction of the Premier's Youth Development Fund (PYDF) in 2020 179 beneficiaries have been supported across the three Districts, giving the youth the much needed financial boost to establish their own enterprises.

The "Black Child, the World is Yours", is a printing and embroidery business based at Leandra in the Govan Mbeki Local Municipality. The owner, Mr Sihle Ngwenya has created several job opportunities for the local youth, and list SASOL, EXXARO, Govan Mbeki Local Municipality and local businesses in its clientele base. Ngwenya's appreciation to the Premier's support was vivid when Mtshweni-Tsipane visited his business premises. He told the Premier and her entourage that they intend to expand through the establishment of many branches throughout the Province.

Apart from the Black Child, the Premier, Ms Refilwe Mtshweni-Tsipane has visited several entities to monitor their impact, among them, the Black Child, the 1246 Gym, a fitness centre in Bushbuckridge, and the Lungile Poultry Farm in Dr JS Moroka Municipality.

The a fitness centre attracts several members of the community as clients, and use thestate-of-the-art facilities for training purposes. Mtshweni-Tsipane is excited about the value derived from the PYDF investments. "We are very delighted to see what young people are doing in order to make sure that they address the issues of unemployment and that they are finding ways and means of dealing with huge economic challenges. It is so much encouraging to see what they are doing here. Indeed the future belongs to young people. They must be given the opportunities to become their own employers of choice. We would want to encourage other young people to be more innovative, very creative and dynamic and come up with great ideas that

will assist the government to fight the high rate of unemployment and inequality", the Premier stressed.

Mtshweni-Tsipane urges public institutions and the private sector to support the youth-led entities for the realisation of job creation targets. Recently, the Premier visited Vietnam and used the opportunity to link up the beneficiaries of the PYDF with the Vietnamese business sector, to explore business opportunities. "As a Provincial government, we cannot invest so much into these youth entities and not support them. We urge the public and the private sector to utilise their services," she expatiated

According to the Quarterly Labour Force Survey, by the third quarter of 2023, youth unemployment rate was 51.52 percent in South Africa and 48.4 percent in Mpumalanga. Through the PYDF and other job creation interventions, the Provincial Government is poised to reduce the level of youth unemployment.

Continues to Page 2

MPUMALANGA









2 LILANGA LETFU Vol 2023/24



Mr Phinda Dlamini of Royale P Holdings.

The Royale PHoldings is a youth-owned entity, established in 2013 and is based in Mbombela. The company specializes in Geo-technical engineering services, Geohydrological Services and Civil Engineering materials. The company boasts a work force of 15 employees. Let us support the company in its steady growth," Premier Mtshweni-Tsipane.

CONTACT DETAILS:

Mr Phinda Dlamini Contact: 076 8557 554



"The 1246 GYM is a training centre, equipped with the state-of-art-cardio vascular machines, to promote a healthy lifestyle. It was established in 2020 and is among the 179 youth business enterprise, funded through the Premier's Youth Development Fund. I has created six (6) jobs for the local youth," Premier Mtshweni-Tsipane.

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Continues from Page 1



Vol 2023/24 LILANGA LETFU 3

GRADUATES EXPRESS GRATITUDE TO STATE SUPPORT



Dr Ntando Makhubele completed his studies in medicine in Cuba.

Mpumalanga's training programme of medical students produces the desired outcome. The Provincial Government allocates bursaries and scholarships worth millions of rands annually, to successful applicants, to pursue their medical studies. Dr Ntando Makhubele, a former petrol attendant, is among the dozens of students who completed medical studies in various universities across the country and internationally, in Cuba and Russia.

Makhubele was granted a scholarship in 2015 to further his studies in Cuba. The approval of his application marked the start of a journey, which ultimately made his dream come true. "I fell in love with the biological sciences which I find so intriguing and very relevant to my country, given the shortage of medical personnel," explains Makhubele.

In a province, charecterised by rural areas, the aspiration of the students would remain delusional, without the government's scholarships and

bursaries. The training programme contributes immensely to address the shortage of doctors in rurallybased health facilities.

According to the Premier, Ms Refilwe Mtshweni-Tsipane, a total of 1370 students furthered their studies in different universities within the country, supported through the Ephraim Mogale Bursary Scheme. 221 students who are furthering their higher education studies at various level in the Federal Republic of Russia, were supported.

Makhubele commends government's support as it makes the dream of medical students, come true. He regards it as a twofold solution, for the marginalised communities, to access financial support for study purposes and access to health facilities with medical expertise. "All I can say about the Programme is it made the dreams of thousands and thousands of marginalised, downtrodden and ambitious youth, to come true. We will forever be grateful," elaborates Makhubele.

BUHLE FARMERS' ACADEMY INTRODUCES AN AGRICULTURAL MODEL IN 3 SCHOOLS



The Provincial Government has commended the Buhle Farmers' Academy for implementing three essential agricultural projects, aimed at reviving agriculture in schools. The projects are implemented at the Phaphamani Secondary School, Delpark Primary School and Swartklip Combined School in the Victor Khanye Local Municipality.

At the core of the project, is the supply of eggs. As such a target of 750 000 eggs will be produced for the benefit of more than 10 000 learners in the three designated schools. To achieve this, facilities designed to support 3000 laying hens for long-term egg production and food security, have been built.



Apart from the nutritional benefits, learners will participate in the farming activities to gain valuable knowledge about food production. It is envisaged that their integration into the project, will spark an interest to consider farming as a career.



4 LILANGA LETFU

SCOOPING OF CONTINENTAL AWARDS NORMALISED



Agricultural experts, Ms Radha Srinivasah and Ms Nonhlanhla Dooka, led by Dr Maanda Dagada [centre) acknowledge the continental award.

The Mpumalanga Provincial Government has claimed yet another continental award in the agricultural sector. The Province won first place at the 14th African Association for Public Administration and Management's Innovative Management Award (IMA) held in Livingstone, Zambia recently. The award is the latest in recent times after claiming an award as a second runner-up in the Africa Public Service Day Awards held at the Victoria Falls in Zimbabwe.

The Provincial Government introduced the

poverty and unemployment within rural communities in Mpumalanga. It is now, as MEC Busi Shiba of Dardlea, explains, recognised as a continental-wide innovation as a farming method.

Shiba says the award validates Mpumalanga's relentless commitment to support food security in the era of climate change. "This recognition is an indication that we are on the right track, doing something that impact the lives of our ordinary people. We obviously did not come with the Smart Box idea to win Smart Agriculture Box initiative as part of its awards, but with climate change being the development goal 1 and 2, of fighting poverty farmers support programmes to alleviate centre of attention today, we had to come up and achieve a zero hunger.

with ways and means to sustain food security, and the box is proving to be a perfect initiative," she explained with jubilation.

The Climate Change-friendly Smart Agriculture Boxes are made from recycled polypropylene, suitable for both indoor and outdoor use. They are an efficient water user, self-watering, easy to assemble and to move, and grow both vegetables and herbs.

This boxes support organic farming, and are viewed as key for the attainment of sustainable



LILANGA LETFU 5 Vol 2023/24

MPUMALANGA'S POPULATION IS NOW **ABOVE 5 MILLION**

largest population in South Africa. According to the Census 2022 report, compiled by Stats SA. Mpumalanga has a population of above five-point-one million 5,1 million people. The Province grew by 27,3% from 4 (4 039 939) million in Census 2011.

The population figures are contained in the report presented to the Premier, Ms Refilwe Mtshweni-Tsipane and the Executive Council recently, by the Statistician General of South Africa, Mr Risenga Maluleke.

Mpumalanga, according to Mr Maluleke, shows a positive net-migration between 2011 and 2022, gaining 12 650 persons moving from other Provinces into Mpumalanga. He added that over and above the report depicts a population growth in all districts, with the City of Mbombela Local Municipality in Ehlanzeni district now as mostly populated. The Municipality is now ranked in the 10th position in 2022 from 14th position in 1996.

Although the report provides a grim picture in some areas of government performance,

Mpumalanga is the sixth Province with the however, the overall picture depicts an improvement. On education, Mr Maluleke indicates that Ehlanzeni district has the highest percentage of children aged 0-4 not attending any Early Child Development (ECD) programme in 2022 at 45,1%. However there are higher proportions of young learners attending school in 2022 with a 93% increase compared to 1996 at 22,1%.

> Mr Maluleke points to the decline in the number of people with no education, as one of the good performance of the Mpumalanga Province. "The results on educational attainment showed that the percentage of persons above 20 years with no schooling declined from 30% in 1996 to 11,8% in 2022. The percentage of persons aged above 20 years that had completed Grade 12 (Matric) in Mpumalanga in 2022 was 40,5%, an increase from 14,9% in 1996," he expatiated.

> Mr Maluleke's assertion that the outcome of the report plays a significant role in planning, policy formulation, evaluation and budget allocation, was validated by Premier

Mtshweni-Tsipane. "We are very delighted. The results shown in the report will form part of the basis when planning for the upcoming Medium-Term Strategic Framework (MTSF) so that moving forward we do not see extreme deterioration in terms of service delivery", she asserted.

While the Premier acknowledged that more work still need to be done to improve the lives of the people in Mpumalanga, she however expressed confidence in government's plans that they are responsive to the prevalent socioeconomic challenges. "High unemployment is a national crisis government is still grappling with. However, we are encouraged as a Province to see a decline from 38.4% to about 35,5%. This indicates that the Provincial Government is moving towards the right direction and we are anticipating to flatten the curve even more through the implementation of various aggressive intervention measures. such as the Mpumalanga Economic Reconstruction and Recovery Plan (MERRP), she emphasised.

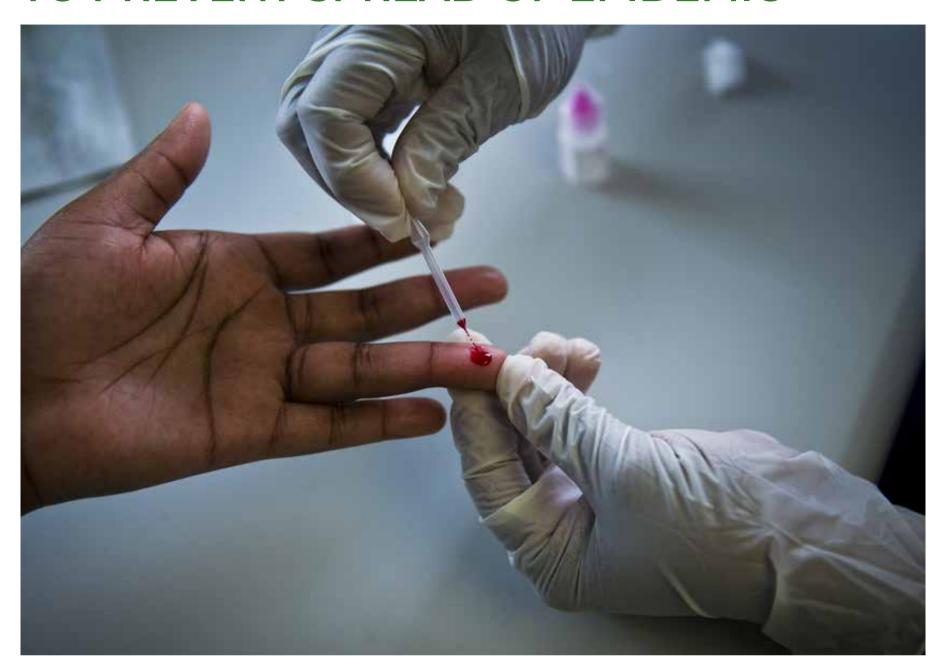


Premier Mtshweni-Tsipane acknoledges the Census report of 2022 from the Statistician General, Mr Maluleke at the EXCO board Room.



6 LILANGA LETFU

HIV TESTING MOUNTED ON LARGE SCALE TO PREVENT SPREAD OF EPIDEMIC



Mpumalanga is rated as the second Province after KwaZulu-Natal with the highest HIV prevalence in the country. According to the latest statistics Mpumalanga recorded 596 996 people living with HIV/AIDS.

Although the country implements advanced awareness campaigns to eradicate the stigma associated with HIV/AIDS, there is still a need to mobilise people to participate in the screening and testing programmes to reduce the epidemic proportions. The Mpumalanga Provincial Government says a community-centred approach in which communities undergo screening and testing, is key to achieve the viral suppression of the epidemic. MEC Sasekani Manzini of Health asserted this approach during the annual commemoration of World AIDS Day in Matsulu, in the City of Mbombela, recently.

Manzini has encouraged communities to take part in the programmes. "Our records show that during the second quarter of the current financial year, we have tested 390 000 patients in our health facilities. Therefore the Department of Health will continue to pursue high targets in reaching the 90% HIV/AIDS testing, 90% HIV infected persons receiving sustained antiretroviral therapy, and 90% of people receiving ARV treatment, for viral suppression," she explained.

Through the theme: "Let communities lead", for the 2023 World AIDS commemoration, government is intensifying the screening and testing programmes, aimed at strengthening community-led interventions and community-centred approach.

of World AIDS Day in Matsulu, in the City of Manzini expressed concern about the few Mbombela, recently.

Manzini expressed concern about the few number of men who present themselves to

the screening and testing programmes, and added that the war against HIV/AIDS requires an aggressive campaign to mobilise them, to visit health facilities for this purpose. She says knowing one's status will not only preserve lives, but is also key to achieve the target of life expectancy. "Government has invested extraordinarily on a trouble-free health system for HIV/AIDS patients to access quality health care conveniently, aiming to reach a life expectancy of at least 70 years", stated MEC Manzini.

The Mpumalanga Provincial AIDS Council (MPAC), a body that constitutes the Civil Society, led by the Premier, Ms Refilwe Mtshweni-Tsipane is instrumental in the allocation of resources for HIV/AIDS programmes. The District AIDS Councils are also lauded as a vital link between the programmes and the communities.

Vol 2023/24 LILANGA LETFU 7

GOVERNMENT INTENSIFIES 'WAR' AGAINST GBVF AND CRIME



Government's fight against Gender Based Violence and Femicide (GBVF) is at an advanced stage. Massive human and financial resources are being invested in a quest to stem the tide against the scourge.

Crime statistics depict a grim picture of how women and children bear the brunt of GBVF and various forms of crime. Mpumalanga is not spared from the scourge of crime. The second quarter crime statistics depict cases of sexual offences rising from 6,7% in 2022 to 7% in 2023.

In an effort to rid the eliminate GBVF and various forms of crime government has intensified measures through the justice system to prioritise the prosecution of perpetrators without delays. R21 billion was dedicated to implement comprehensive strategy plans, and new interventions to address

high levels of GBVF in SA. These measures, and many more, were announced by the Deputy President, Mr Paul Mashatile during the launch of the 16 Days of Activism for No Violence Against Women and Children campaign at Nsikazi stadium, near Kabokweni.

Mashatile says the investment is already producing the desired outcome. "The South African Police Services (SAPS) plays a critical role by bringing to book, GBVF perpetrators. Rape kits are now available in all Police Stations. DNA backlogs are eliminated and the National Prosecution Authority's (NPA) intervention has improved the conviction rate of 74% in sexual offences and 91,9% conviction rate in femicide prosecutions", Mashatile explained.

Evidence of government's GBVF fighting plan is demonstrated through the life sentences, handed

down to criminals, found guilty for rape and murder cases, in Mpumalanga. These include the following:

- Mr Mugiyo Mabunda, who shot and killed his wife, Tebogo in 202. Mabunda is now serving a life sentence, after a guilty version by the Mpumalanga Division of the High court;
- Mr Richard Khensile Ndlovu, who is serving a life sentence for committing rape cases in 2016.
- Mr Sibucesso Cossa, who is serving two life sentences and fifty years incarceration for rape cases. Both criminals were sentenced in the Tonga Magistrate court.

He was sentenced by the Tonga Magistrate court. The 16 days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence (GBV) campaign is a call to end the horrendous acts of the scourge remains a top priority for government to intensify and accelerate efforts against the country's second pandemic in order to create a society where women and children are secured and feel protected.

Government has been proactive in Strengthening effective round-the-clock rapid response assistance to survivors.

In addition, the 16 days of activism for no violence against women and children campaign acknowledges the GBVF occurrences are not a stand-alone incidence, but are systematic issues deeply embedded in patriarchal norms and gender bias. On international's Men's day, Government launched the Tukwani Riime Programme of Action for 2023 – 2025 in Limpopo. The programme led by the National's Men's parliament seeks to encourage men to take a position to address the many GBV related issues mushrooming in our society.

In support, Mpumalanga Premier, Ms Refilwe Mtsweni-Tsipane discouraged the practice of patriarchal social system when raising our young boys and girls. "We must, create a society that does not support male notions of authority and control over women, and a nation that do not tolerate violence against women and children". She pleaded.

Deputy President, Mr Paul Mashatile urged men in society to guide young boys as role models and contribute to nurturing a society that respects women. He also made a call to traditional leaders to collaborate with government by intensifying their role as community leaders against unfair inheritance of GBV practices and eschew cultural practices detrimental to women and children such as muthi killings, witchcraft burning and ukuthwala. On the day, the deputy President visited the Karino Water Treatment Plant, and the construction of the bridge at Tekwane South.

THUTHUZELA CARE CENTRE OPERATIONS: HOW DOES THE TCC WORK?

STEP 1: You can report a rape case directly to a TCC (based at community clinics or hospitals) or to a police station

STEP 2: TCC staff will assist to get you immediate medical attention at the Centre

STEP 3: TCC staff will arrange counselling services at the Centre

STEP 4: TCC staff will assist you to open a police case (if you want to do so immediately or even at a later stage)

STEP 5: TCC staff will arrange for on-going counselling and court preparation (if the case goes on trial)

SERVICES OFFERED AT THE THUTHUZELA CARE CENTRES (TCCS)

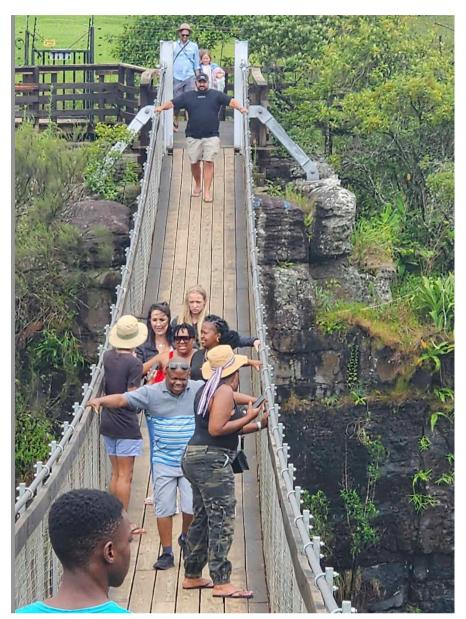
- Welcome and comfort from a site cocoordinator or nurse.
- An explanation of how the medical examination will be conducted and what clothing might be taken for evidence.
- A consent form to sign that allows the doctor to conduct the medical examination.
- A nurse in the examination room.
- After the medical examination, there are bath or shower facilities for victim use.
- An investigation officer will interview the survivor and take his/her statement.
- A social worker or nurse will offer counselling.
- Anursearranges for follow-up visits, treatment and medication for Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs), HIV and AIDS.
- A referral letter or appointment will be made for long-term counselling.
- The victim (survivor) is offered transportation home by an ambulance or the investigating officer.
- Arrangements for the survivor to go to a place of safety, if necessary.
- Consultations with a specialist prosecutor before the case go to court.
- Court preparation by a victim assistant officer.
- An explanation of the outcome and update of the trial process by a case manager.

GBV help line on 080 0428 428, SMS HELP to 31531.



8 LILANGA LETFU

SECURITY HEIGHTENED IN TOURISM SITES





Security measures have been beefed up in tourism attraction areas such as Graskop Gorge.

Mpumalanga's crime fighting strategy has been bolstered by the purchase of fourty seven (47) new motorbikes and several new police vans. The new assets have been distributed to various Police Stations across the Province to assist the South African Police Services (SAPS) in combating crime. The investment signals the SAPS' commitment to tackle crime head-on in Mpumalanga, to enforce compliance to traffic laws and road safety rules.

This is the assertion of the Premier, Ms Refilwe Mtshweni-Tsipane, MEC Vusi Shongwe of Community Safety, Security and Liaison, and Provincial Commissioner, Lieutenant-General, Semakaleng Manamela, during the hand over of the vehicles and motorbikes at the Themba Senamela Stadium in Mhluzi. A sting operation led to the confiscation of illicit liquor at the local tarvens and recovery of a stolen vehicle.

Premier Mtshweni-Tsipane's call to the police not to give criminals a chance, is in sync with police's zero-tolerance to crime. "Anyone found disobedience to the law should face the full wrath of the law," she stated.

Meanwhile, the crime fighting strategy has been heightened in the tourism sector, to offer the visitors, an exhilarating experience of nature without security concerns, such as theft, mugging, and scams. The tourism sector in Mpumalanga plays a significant role in boosting the revenue of the economy, creating job opportunities, and improving the infrastructure. It is viewed as a key strategic sector in the country's efforts to push back the frontiers of poverty, during this period of economic upheaval.

Tourism statistics suggest that Mpumalanga was the third Province, among the five in the country, with the highest number of tourists in 2020. Although the COVID-19 pandemic left a trail of devastation, however, the Mpumalanga Provincial Government is pulling out all stops to reposition the tourism sector as the Province's jewel. The construction of the God's Window Skywalk and a cable car, linking the Drierondavels view site and Swadini Dam, seek to achieve the tourism advancement objective.

This include the deployment of resources to strategic areas. A team of 220 tourism safety monitors have since been deployed across the Province:

- 80 of them are stationed in the Panorama route;
- 40 are in Nkomazi, including the border posts;

- 30 are in the Chief Albert Luthuli, including the Oshoek border post;
- 20 in the Mbombela;
- 10 in Emalahleni;
- 10 in Secunda;
- 10 in Ermelo;
- 6 in Middleburg;
- 3 in Kwamhlanga;
- 3 in Siyabuswa;
- 4 in Waterval Boven;
- 2 in Belfast and Mkhondo respectively.

In During the festive season, In recent times, The Provincial Government recognises the role of tourism, hence the investments into the sector. Working with the Tourism Business Council of South Africa, a financial injection of R5 million was invested in Mpumalanga to install surveillance cameras, that are linked to the South African Police Services (SAPS), and purchase of drones for surveillance in strategic tourist areas, such as Hazyview, Sabie, Graskop and Numbi.



Vol 2023/24 LILANGA LETFU 9



MEC Mashilo hands over housing units to the two families in the Nkomazi Local Municipality.

MEC MASHILO ADDRESSES THE PLIGHT OF CITIZENS THROUGH SHELTER AND TITLE DEEDS

Government's quest to address the plight of citizens in a dire need for housing, has picked up. MEC Speed Mashilo of Human Settlements is on the forefront of ensuring that citizens are sheltered in proper houses to restore their dignity.

Recently, two families from Sibange and Mangweni villages in the Nkomazi Local Municipality, registered their names on the growing list of beneficiaries for houses in Mpumalanga, when Mr Mashilo handed over furnished houses.

Ms Maria Khoza (92) with her three grandchildren, have been living in a dilapidated structure and relying on her pension for sustenance. Her situation was no different from that of Ms

Nomvula Ndlovu (34), an unemployed single parent. Ms Ndlovu has been living in a wrecked mud house with her two children. At Langeloop, Mr Mashilo handed over a new house to 96 year old Ms Emmah Mathenjwa.

Mpumalanga is experiencing a housing backlog. According to a report in 2022, the backlog was at 275 000. However, through the department's intervention measures, including a partnership with donors, Mr Mashilo is adamant that the backlog will be reduced steadily.

Meanwhile, Mr Mashilo has embarked on a Title Deeds Friday campaign, aimed at providing the beneficiaries of houses with the security tenure. Since the campaign started in the 2023/24 financial year, thousands of title deeds have been distributed to the beneficiaries across Mpumalanga.

At the time of going to press, Mr Mashilo had distributed title deeds to the following areas:

- About one thousand title deeds at Rockdale (Middleburg), Steve Tshwete Local Municipality.
- About one hundred title deeds at Ridgeview (Siyathemba) in Dipaleseng Local Municipality.
- Over two thousand title deeds at Ekukhanyeni (Kwaggafontein) in Thembisile Hani Local Municipality.



Vol 2023/24

"STOP THE ILLEGAL PRACTICE OF DEMANDING 30% IN LOCAL PROJECTS" WARNS MEC NDLOVU



MEC Ndlovu and Bushbuckridge Executive Mayor, Cllr. Sylvia Nxumalo take notes during a briefing session ahead of the sod-turning ceremony to mark the start of the D4382 road construction.

The demand for a 30% share of the construction budget is an impairment of development and robs communities their constitutional rights of access to quality services. Investigations by law enforcement agencies conclude that this practice is wedged by syndicates, calling themselves 'business forums', in each locality. In areas where this practice was confirmed, investigators have concluded that the 'construction mafias' are fully armed, thereby putting the lives of contractors at risk.

MEC for Public Works, Roads and Transport (PWR&T) Mr Mandla Ndlovu has warned communities against such practice. Ndlovu is on a crusade to stop the illegal practice in Mpumalanga. This as the construction of the D4832 road, between Belfast and Justicia in the Bushbuckridge Local Municipality gets underway. "But for the road and the communities to fully benefit, there must be no fighting and disruptions. If people want 30% they must

work for it and refrain from disruption. This will ensure that it is completed on records time. We must ensure that this project is conducted in a cost-effective way, to prevent over-expenditure", Ndlovu warns.

Across South Africa, 183 projects were hijacked, as the perpetrators extort money from multimillion rand projects. This has led to the establishment of a national forum to coordinate cases against the syndicates, such as attempted murder, common robbery, conspiracy to commit murder, incitement to public violence and contravention of court orders. Already, several arrests have been made by the South African Police Services (SAPS) as government reigns the syndicates.

Mr Ndlovu says the construction of the new road, and any other infrastructure project, confirm the commitment of the government to improve the lives of the communities. "Our government regards the provision of access to tarred roads as fundamental to economic reconstruction and development. There is no doubt that the community of Belfast and Justicia will benefit from this project," Mr Ndlovu asserts.

He says by building the road, government is responding to the views raised by the communities. He laments the hijackings of projects as damage to the constitutional rights of communities to government's services, and that this affects plans to complete the projects within set deadlines. "The demand for improved roads is high in our province. We have to do it equitably, within the limited resources. Sometimes it takes longer, than expected, due to budget constraints. The hijackings exacerbate the predicament," he expatiated.

In a developmental state, such as South Africa, economists suggest that the illegal practice cost the economy more than a billion.



Vol 2023/24

IN BRIEF













- 1. MEC Vusi Shongwe of Community Safety, Security and Liaison and Minister Sindisiwe Chikunga of Transport emphasise road safety measures during a press briefing on the N3 Wilge Toll Plaza.
- 2. Mpumalanga's biodiversity sites, such as the Graskop Gorge has become a destination of choice for local and international tourists during the festive season.
- 3. Premier Refilwe Mtshweni-Tsipane hands over a new fleet of fire emergency to Thaba Chweu's Executive Mayor, Cllr. Friddah Nkadimeng at the Provincial Disaster Management Centre in Mbombela.
- 4. MEC Mandla Ndlovu of Public Works, Roads and Transport, accompanied by traffic officials and Councillors, inspect public transport at a check point in Msukaligwa Municipality to ensure the safety of commuters.
- 5. King Makhosoke II of the Ndebele nation (extreme right), accompanied by Ikosi Cecil Mahlangu, welcomes Premier Mtshweni-Tsipane to his palace in Kwamhlanga to discuss local development initiatives.
- 6. MEC Sasekani Manzini of Health welcomes several new babies born during the festive season in various hospitals by handing over gifts to their mothers.



12 LILANGA LETFU Vol 2023/24



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