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NEWS

INCORPORATING LIMPOPO, MPUMALANGA AND GAUTENG - FRIDAY, 14 FEBRUARY 2025

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"Thought Leaders in Community News"

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MPUMALANGA LEGISLATURE ENGAGES TRADITIONAL LEADERS AND MORAL REGENERATION MOVEMENT IN NKANGALA DISTRICT



Mpumalanga Legislature's Political Steering Committee engages with traditional leaders and the Moral Regeneration Movement in Nkangala District, fostering community involvement and addressing local challenges through the Taking Legislature to the People initiative. Picture Credit: Supplied

By Thulane Madalane

Delmas -On Tuesday, the Political Steering Committee on Taking Legislature to the People (TLP), led by Mr. Daniel Nkosi, conducted crucial meetings with the House of Traditional and Khoisan Leadership and

the Moral Regeneration Movement (MRM) at the Victor Khanye Local Municipality Council Chambers in the Nkangala District. During the opening of the meeting with traditional leaders, Mr. Nkosi announced that the Legislature, typically based in Mbombela, would temporarily relocate to the Victor Khanye Local Municipality,

establishing a base at the Simon Gondwe Sports Centre from March 10 to 14, 2025. This initiative aims to fulfill the Legislature's constitutional mandate of oversight and public engagement while ensuring that government departments are accessible to local citizens. "The Legislature is here to make follow-ups on the commitments made by government and how far service delivery has progressed," said Nkosi. Mr. Henry Ngoma, the Speaker of the Victor Khanye Local Municipality, expressed gratitude for the decision to hold the TLP in their community, emphasizing that it demonstrates governmental commitment and inclusion of the municipality in state planning. He noted that the area had previously been difficult to access, but improvements have been made to enhance accessibility. The Chairperson of the meeting then introduced Mr. Thulare Madileng, the convenor of the technical task team, who provided a comprehensive presentation on the TLP concept. He highlighted that this marks the first time the Legislature has brought the TLP to the Victor Khanye Local Municipality and elaborated on the Legislature's role in fulfilling its Constitutional duties. The traditional leaders, known as Amakhosi, expressed appreciation for the consultative session, recognizing it as a vital step toward addressing challenges faced by their communities in the Nkangala district. They raised several pressing concerns, with the most prominent being the outstanding recognition of certain chiefs by the government. The Amakhosi requested assistance from the Legislature to expedite this process to enhance their operational effectiveness. Additionally, they highlighted the need for enabling

resources, including adequate office space and tools of trade, and called for improved communication from both government and private sectors regarding developmental projects in their areas. In response, the Chairperson of the Steering Committee assured the Amakhosi that the Legislature acknowledges the importance of traditional leadership, regardless of their official recognition status by the government. The Chairperson mentioned that all raised issues would be addressed through the ongoing TLP and at feedback sessions scheduled within six months following the event. After the meeting with the traditional leaders, the Steering Committee proceeded to engage with the Moral Regeneration Movement (MRM) for similar discussions. The Chairperson commenced the session by extending a welcome, with Cllr Ngoma emphasizing that the TLP's presence brings hope to the Victor Khanye community. Mr. Madileng also presented the TLP concept to the MRM, which was met with enthusiasm and appreciation. The MRM representatives valued their involvement with the Legislature, highlighting the significance of oversight governed by morality and conscience. They expressed their commitment to promoting the spirit of Ubuntu and pledged to facilitate broader participation from the inter-faith community in the TLP project. In closing, Political Steering Committee members Mr. Stephens Sekoakoa and Ms. Sonto Malepeng emphasized the need for stakeholders to mobilize the community of Victor Khanye to actively engage in the TLP, contributing ideas and feedback to bolster the growth of both the municipality and the province.

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Valentine's COMPETITION

14-22 FEBRUARY

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- Post your picture on our competition post on Facebook
- Tell us what Valentine's Day means to you and your partner
- Share our post and stand a chance to win!

T's & C's apply

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LARGER THAN LIFE
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LIMPOPO PREMIER DR. PHOPHI RAMATHUBA DELIVERS INSPIRING RESPONSE TO THE ADDRESS ON THE STATE OF THE NATION



Limpopo Premier Dr. Phophi Ramathuba delivers a powerful response to State of the Nation Address honoring sacrifices for peace and outlining a vision for sustainable development, economic growth for Limpopo Province. Picture Credit: Supplied

By Thulane Madalane

Cape Town: Limpopo Premier Dr. Phophi Ramathuba expressed both gratitude and determination while reflecting on the state of the nation. She began by honoring the brave soldiers who made the ultimate sacrifice

for peace in the Democratic Republic of Congo, noting that among them were eight from Limpopo. The Premier extended deep condolences to their families, pledging to uphold the values of stability, security, and a better future for all. Drawing inspiration from the marula tree, which is currently in season across Limpopo, Ramathuba highlighted the

importance of leadership, emphasizing the need to extend opportunities to those below while ensuring that all benefit from shared resources. She proclaimed that Limpopo is poised to be at the heart of South Africa's global engagement as it prepares to host key G20 meetings focused on agriculture, financial architecture, the digital economy, and health. This positioning not only highlights the province's role in sustainable development but also allows it to showcase its natural beauty and rich heritage to the world.

Ramathuba welcomed President Ramaphosa's focus on water security, acknowledging the struggle many communities face with water shortages. She appreciated the recognition that many rural municipalities lack the financial and technical capacity needed to ensure a sustainable water supply. The Premier informed the assembly that the provincial government has engaged the Department of Water and Sanitation to seek practical solutions, particularly in Polokwane Municipality, where water and infrastructure challenges remain persistent. She noted that the Executive Council is finalizing a water provision strategy aimed at enabling every municipality to meet both economic and social needs.

Furthermore, Ramathuba stated that reducing the cost of living in rural areas is essential for unlocking economic growth, commending the President's R940 billion infrastructure investment plan as a transformational initiative. She remarked that for too long, apartheid-era spatial planning has disconnected rural communities from economic opportunities. This investment is expected to reshape Limpopo, linking people to jobs, markets, and essential services. She also highlighted the effectiveness of public-private partnerships, citing the near-completion of the Steelpoort Bridge, which was constructed in collaboration with the mining sector, as an example of successful cooperation between government and business.

Looking to the future, Ramathuba discussed renewable energy developments

in Limpopo, recalling a commitment made during a meeting with the President and his Cabinet in November 2024. She announced plans for a switch-on ceremony in April 2025 for electricity supplied to 400 households in Musina Municipality, powered by solar and battery storage, along with 5G connectivity. The Premier expressed enthusiasm for the R120 billion pledged at the 2024 investment conference, noting that mining companies in Fetakgomo-Tubatse are already leading solar energy projects, and the first solar-powered electric vehicle charging stations are set to launch along major routes.

The Premier emphasized the importance of healthcare in the province's development agenda, announcing that the long-awaited revitalization of Siloam Hospital is underway, and construction of the Limpopo Central Hospital is ongoing. She stressed that a capable state relies on skilled individuals, welcoming initiatives to strengthen TVET colleges. The Sekhukhune Mining Academy is set to equip youth with crucial skills for the sector, positioning them for future job opportunities.

Dr. Ramathuba proudly shared that Limpopo has seen significant improvements in education, jumping from last in Matric results to achieving an 85.01% pass rate, now ranking sixth nationally. She expressed determination to further improve outcomes in the coming years. Additionally, she reported that the province is in the final stages of eradicating pit latrines in schools, ensuring that no child suffers the tragedies experienced by young Michael Komape.

In reaffirming a commitment to building a capable, ethical, and developmental state, the Premier emphasized the importance of enhancing local government capacity and investing in infrastructure to effectively serve the people of Limpopo. In closing, she urged leaders to extend their branches like the marula tree to uplift those in need and ensure that every South African can reach for the fruits of opportunity, prosperity, and dignity. Ramathuba concluded her address with a rallying call for collective effort in realizing this vision for the country.

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JUSTICE MINISTER KUBAYI CELEBRATES SIU HEAD'S RE-ELECTION AS VICE PRESIDENT OF IAACA

By Thulane Madalane

Pretoria: The Minister of Justice and Constitutional Development, Mmamoloko Kubayi, has expressed her heartfelt congratulations to Advocate Andy Mothibi, the Head of the Special Investigating Unit (SIU), on his re-election as Vice President and African Regional Coordinator of the International Association of Anti-Corruption Authorities (IAACA). In her statement, Minister Kubayi highlighted that Advocate Mothibi's re-election is a significant acknowledgment of his tireless efforts and steadfast commitment to the global fight against corruption. She emphasized that his leadership in the SIU has not only enhanced South Africa's reputation but has also garnered the trust and confidence of the international community in the country's dedication to combating corruption.

"This achievement is a testament to the confidence that other nations place in South Africa's dedication to the global fight against corruption," Minister Kubayi stated. She conveyed her best wishes to Advocate Mothibi as he embarks on

his renewed term, which will run from 2025 to 2027, and expressed confidence that he will continue to make meaningful contributions toward creating a corruption-free world.

The IAACA is recognized as an independent, non-political organization that plays a crucial role in promoting cooperation and sharing best practices among its member states in the global combat against corruption. Its Executive Committee consists of a President, four Vice Presidents, thirteen members, two advisers, and one observer, all working collaboratively to strengthen anti-corruption efforts worldwide.

Advocate Mothibi's re-election underscores the importance of effective leadership in the ongoing battle against corruption, and his new role will enable him to continue influencing positive change on a broader scale. As he takes on this responsibility, the Minister remains optimistic about the contributions he will make to uphold integrity and transparency in governance both locally and internationally.

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Justice Minister Mmamoloko Kubayi Congratulates Advocate Andy Mothibi on His Re-Election as Vice President of the International Association of Anti-Corruption Authorities, Marking a Significant Achievement in the Global Fight Against Corruption. Picture Credit: Supplied

GREAT PROGRESS ON MUD HOUSES ERADICATION IN MPUMALANGA



MEC Speed Mashilo highlights the replacement of 210 mud houses in Mpumalanga with safe homes, marking a significant step in the commitment to eradicate unsafe housing. Let's join hands to uplift our communities and ensure dignity for all. INSET: The model of houses that has replaced the mud houses in Mpumalanga, 210 mud houses have been replaced with modern and dignified decent housing. Picture Credit: Supplied

By Thulane Madalane

Mkhondo: The eradication of mud houses remains a top priority for the Mpumalanga government as it strives to provide decent housing and foster a habitable environment for its residents. Mpumalanga MEC for Cooperative Governance, Human Settlements, and Traditional Affairs (CoGHSTA), Mr. Speed Mashilo, reaffirmed this commitment during the recent review of the Department's progress in tackling unsafe housing structures across the province. In his 2024/25 Policy and Budget Speech, MEC Mashilo announced the Department's ambitious plan to demolish and replace 261 mud houses with safe, durable homes through the Rural Housing Programme. This initiative aligns with resolutions from the Minister and Human Settlements MEC's (MinMEC) forum aimed at improving rural

housing conditions and ensuring a better quality of life for all residents. As of the end of the third quarter, a total of 210 mud houses have already been successfully replaced with proper housing, benefiting communities in Mkhondo, Bushbuckridge, and Chief Albert Luthuli Local Municipalities. These newly constructed homes stand as a testament to the Department's unwavering dedication to creating safe and dignified living environments for Mpumalanga's most vulnerable residents. Despite these commendable achievements, the project has faced several challenges. The scattered nature of rural settlements has resulted in logistical difficulties, while some beneficiaries have resisted the demolition of existing mud houses, causing delays in progress. Additionally, financial constraints have impacted timelines for housing delivery. In response to these

obstacles, the Department has increased community engagement, strengthened coordination with stakeholders, and is actively pursuing additional funding to ensure the programme's success. MEC Mashilo emphasized the importance of collective effort in overcoming these challenges, stating, "The eradication of mud houses is about more than meeting targets—it is about giving hope to families and ensuring that no one is left behind in our pursuit of a better future for all. We urge municipalities, community leaders, and stakeholders to join hands with us in this noble initiative." The municipality of Mkhondo is among those benefiting from this programme. Cllr Thembisile Khumalo, the Member of the Mayoral Committee (MMC) responsible for Planning and Economic Development, welcomed the intervention by the department, stating, "This will go a long way in improving people's lives as it marks

a critical step toward creating sustainable and resilient communities across the province, reaffirming the government's promise to uplift its people and build a brighter future for all." In addition to these efforts, Mpumalanga faces a significant housing backlog, with approximately 257,000 households currently on waiting lists for government-assisted housing. This statistic underscores the urgency of initiatives focused on eradicating mud houses and providing safe living conditions for all residents in the province. As the Department of Human Settlements continues to work tirelessly in this regard, it represents a beacon of hope for countless families who aspire to live in improved housing conditions and foster a sense of community and security.

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ADDRESSING A GLOBAL HEALTH CRISIS DURING EPILEPSY WEEK



multi-faceted challenges posed by epilepsy. "The burden of epilepsy is particularly severe in poorer regions, where access to diagnosis and treatment remains limited," he explains. "By improving awareness and accessibility to treatment, we can significantly enhance the quality of life for those affected."

Research highlights a sobering reality: approximately 75% of epilepsy patients in low- and middle-income countries lack access to effective and low-cost antiseizure medications. This stark deficiency severely limits the success rate in preventing the recurrence of seizures, a critical component of managing the condition. The situation is compounded by a shortage of neurologists, inadequate research, and poor resource management, which significantly hinder a deeper understanding of epilepsy and often result in misdiagnosis or lack of treatment altogether. Beyond the medical challenges, epilepsy is surrounded by substantial social implications, including stigma, bullying, job discrimination, and difficulties in interpersonal relationships. "The stigma associated with epilepsy can be just as damaging as the seizures themselves," warns Prof Magazi. Many communities, both urban and rural, harbor misconceptions that link epilepsy to possession or witchcraft. This misinformation poses a barrier to individuals seeking medical assistance, often leading to isolation and abandonment by their communities and exclusion from educational and employment opportunities. Consequently, those afflicted may suffer from distress, depression, and feelings of helplessness and shame.

Prof Magazi elaborates on the complex nature of epilepsy, explaining how it arises from a delicate balance between electrical and chemical impulses in the brain. "When disrupted, this balance can lead to conditions like paralysis or seizures," he states. Not all seizures signify epilepsy; many can be triggered by immediate, reversible causes such as low blood sugar or infections. A single seizure does not necessarily equate to epilepsy; diagnosis requires the recurrence of seizures without an identifiable immediate

cause. The International League Against Epilepsy (ILAE) has refined diagnostic criteria, now allowing a single seizure to be classified as epilepsy if the risk of recurrence exceeds 60%. This determination relies on comprehensive clinical evaluations, brain imaging, and electroencephalograms (EEGs). The manifestation of epilepsy varies widely, categorized into four primary types: motor, sensory, psychic, and autonomic. Each type has distinct triggers, responses to treatment, and prognoses. Prof Magazi stresses that "epilepsy is not a one-size-fits-all condition. There are different types, different triggers, and different responses to treatment." This has led to the terminology shift from "epilepsy" to "epilepsies," reflecting the diverse nature of the condition. Specific childhood epilepsy syndromes, such as absence seizures—brief, frequent episodes of unconsciousness—are often misunderstood as simple daydreaming, which can adversely impact a child's academic performance. Fortunately, these are highly treatable and tend to resolve during adolescence, especially when diagnosed early through EEGs.

Causes of epilepsy are varied and can include head trauma, strokes, meningitis, and autoimmune disorders. Understanding these underlying factors is imperative for tailoring effective treatment strategies that improve patients' outcomes and quality of life. Medication adherence remains a pivotal aspect of managing epilepsy. Failure to take prescribed medication regularly can significantly increase the risk of status epilepticus—a prolonged seizure that necessitates emergency medical intervention and can be life-threatening. Prof Magazi cautions against the dangers of non-compliance, stating, "This can lead to intensive care needs."

For individuals who continue to experience seizures despite optimal treatment with two appropriately chosen medications, their condition is termed refractory epilepsy. In such cases, alternative interventions may include ketogenic diets for children, nerve stimulation, or even surgery. While epilepsy

surgery is an option available in South Africa, its accessibility is limited to a few specialized centers.

Several external factors, such as drug interactions, psychological stress, menstrual cycles, and infections, can also influence seizure frequency. "Awareness of these triggers is vital," advises Prof Magazi. "Patients and caregivers should collaborate closely with healthcare providers to identify and manage these factors effectively."

Prof Magazi also notes that psychogenic seizures may manifest as a cry for help. "Sometimes, what appears to be epilepsy can actually be psychological distress, linked to trauma or abuse." A compassionate evaluation is essential for accurate diagnosis, and recordings of seizures on mobile phones can provide invaluable insights for healthcare professionals. Community support programs are instrumental in reducing feelings of isolation and promoting inclusivity for those affected by epilepsy. Prof Magazi highlights the vital work of organizations like Epilepsy South Africa, which provide care and support, particularly for individuals facing additional mental health challenges. "Their emblem—a candle flame—is a powerful reminder that epilepsy does not have to overshadow a person's life." There are numerous inspiring examples of individuals who have thrived despite their epilepsy diagnosis. One notable case is that of Marion Clignet, who was diagnosed with epilepsy at the age of 22 and later went on to win five gold medals as a world cycling champion. Her story serves as a testament to the possibilities that arise with the right support and determination.

As Epilepsy Week brings awareness to this critical issue, it is imperative that we advocate for improved access to treatment and support for those living with epilepsy. By addressing the treatment gap, we can make strides in transforming the lives of millions affected by this condition, fostering a society that embraces inclusivity and understanding.

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Shining a Light on Epilepsy, advocating for Awareness, Understanding, and Accessible Treatment During Epilepsy Week. Picture Credit :Picture Today

By Linda Christensen

Cape Town :As we observe Epilepsy Week, running until February 16, the issue of the epilepsy treatment gap looms large. This term refers to the significant disparity between those who require treatment for epilepsy and those who actually receive it. Currently, estimates indicate that a staggering 80% to 90% of individuals in need globally are not receiving adequate care, with pronounced variations across different regions. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), nearly 50 million people worldwide live with epilepsy, the majority of whom are found in low-income areas, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa. Professor Dali Magazi, a member of the Neurological Association of South Africa, emphasizes the urgent need to tackle the



8-YEAR-OLD PAGEANT QUEEN FROM BURGERSFORT, LIMPOPO

This week on Timeless Beauty with Brains, we spoke with Lerato Napo, the mother of talented and bright Phagamiso "Miso" Napo, an 8-year-old pageant queen from Burgersfort, Limpopo, who has been crowned International Junior Miss South Africa Junior Pre-Teen 2024/2025. With six years in the pageant industry, Miso boasts over 36 titles at local and international levels. She is also a catwalk model and an ambassador for UDFashion House by Manyaku M. At the IJMSA competition finale on December 19, 2024, she won awards for Leadership and Best Interview. Miso will represent South Africa at the International Junior Miss pageant in the USA in 2026.

Thulane Madalane: Can you share what it means to you as a mother to have your daughter crowned as the IJMSA Jnr Pre-Teen queen?

Lerato Napo: This was not our first entry into IJMSA, so it was a proud moment. We set targets and goals for ourselves, and winning the crown validated that one should not give up after the first try. Instead, stand up, review what you did, rework your strategy, and try again.

TM: What qualities do you believe contributed to your daughter's success in the pageant?

LN: Persistence and hard work. She never gives up or gets disheartened by a loss; for her, it is always a lesson. She discusses the competition to figure out where she could improve. She gives her all in practice sessions and sacrifices time with friends to prepare for the next competition.

TM: How have you supported her on this journey, both emotionally and practically?

LN: Emotionally, I encourage her and manage her stress levels, allowing her breaks and rest. This experience should be fun for her. Practically, she attends coaching classes

once or twice a week, depending on her schedule, and does public speaking at school to become fluent. We also attend community events to help her socialize.

TM: What challenges have you faced as a parent during this pageant experience?

LN: The biggest challenge in most pageants is finances. Pageantry can be very expensive when all the costs are added up. Additionally, there was a 14-month gap between entry and finale, which dragged the process out.

TM: How do you and your daughter prepare for pageant events and appearances?

LN: Preparation depends on the event and her role. For speaking engagements, we prepare her speech by researching the topic and watching videos. She writes her speech, which I edit before we refine it together to suit her understanding. Then, we plan her outfit according to the theme. For appearances or crowning events, we focus on her outfit and ensure she has her sash and crown ready.

TM: What values or lessons have you instilled in her that you think are important for her role as queen?

LN: Be humble and listen more than you speak. Look at people when they talk to you; it's important to use all your senses since communication involves more than just words. Allow people to correct and contribute positively, and communicate clearly and respectfully. Remember, you represent more than just yourself; you are a brand that represents other brands as well.

TM: Can you describe a memorable moment from the pageant that stands out to both you and your daughter?

LN: There are many, but one special moment was when she didn't receive an award she had been eagerly anticipating. She was so disappointed she cried, and it was the first time she had cried so hard about not winning. I worried because the next day she had an on-stage competition, and this could affect her

performance. To cheer her up, we went for ice cream and dancing, which we both love. We had a wonderful time as mother and daughter. She went to bed happy and woke up ready to take on the world.

TM: How do you manage the balance between her responsibilities as queen and her everyday life, such as school and friends?

LN: Planning is essential. At the start of the year, we inform her teachers about her modeling commitments to ensure she stays on track. We minimize modeling during the week to focus on practice before a pageant. She has no friends over during the week and limited access to electronic devices unless for school or preparation—one hour a day at most. Most of her socializing occurs during school hours and weekends.

TM: In what ways do you think participating in pageants has impacted her personal growth?

LN: My daughter is very reserved and can come across as shy. However, through modeling, I've seen her confidence soar, and her social skills have greatly improved. She can hold conversations with children and adults without any problems.

TM: What advice would you give to other parents of children interested in pageants?

LN: Pageantry is not about fulfilling your own dreams; only enter your child if they have an interest. It's a lot of work and takes time away from other activities, requiring significant financial and emotional investment.

TM: How important is it for you to teach her about charity and community service through her role?

LN: Charity and community service are essential to me because they've always been a part of my life. Growing up, my mother was involved in these activities, and I continue this tradition with my daughter. It's more than just another activity; it's part of our family legacy. We also stress that not all charity work has to be public; some acts of kindness can be

private, and we must respect that others have different approaches.

TM: What kind of impact do you hope your daughter will make during her reign?

LN: Miso loves reading and writing, so we will focus on literacy during her reign. She has shown interest in local libraries and their services, so library visits, book fairs, and reading events for kids will be part of her initiatives.

TM: How do you celebrate her achievements and milestones throughout her pageant journey?

LN: She often has a gift in mind that she wants, but for this pageant, she was thrilled to be on the cruise and asked that if she wins, we not make excuses—she's going to the USA!

TM: What are your hopes and dreams for your daughter beyond her reign as queen?

LN: She aspires to be a doctor and to compete for the Miss SA title, with plans to bring home the Miss Universe crown. I hope to support her in achieving her dreams while allowing her to adapt and change them as needed. My wish is for her to always strive to be her best self and not settle for anything less. Most importantly, I want her to be happy and at peace with her life.

TM: Finally, what advice would you give to your daughter as she continues her journey in life and pageantry?

LN: Put God first, and everything else will follow. Present your dreams and hopes to God before discussing them with anyone else. Remember that you are who God says you are, and don't let anyone convince you otherwise. Life is what we make it, so aim to be happy and at peace with who you are and where you are. Follow Miso Napo's journey on Instagram: misonapo and Facebook: Miso Napo.

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SERMON BY THULANE



Beloved, tonight I want us to grapple with a question that has been troubling my spirit for days: Why is God so eager to save humanity? To begin our reflection, let us turn our hearts and minds to the book of Exodus, Chapter 3, verse 10: **“Come, I will send you to Pharaoh that you may bring my people, the children of Israel, out of Egypt.”**

In this passage, God responds to the passionate pleas and fervent prayers of the Israelites, who spent 430 years in Egypt, as noted in Exodus 12, verse 40. We are all familiar with the story of Moses, who was adopted by the princess of Egypt, the daughter of Pharaoh. This adoption placed Moses in close proximity to all the advantages and privileges of royal life. However, a turning point came when Moses killed an Egyptian and fled to Midian, where God revealed His divine purpose to him: to rescue the children of Israel. Now, I ask you, why would God put Moses in such a

challenging position by sending him back to Egypt, where he was a fugitive? The answer lies in God’s deep desire to save His people from the unbearable hardships that Pharaoh imposed upon them. The Bible tells us, **“And now, behold, the cry of the people of Israel has come to me, and I have also seen the oppression with which the Egyptians oppress them”** (Exodus 3:9). Throughout Scripture, we can see that God orchestrated the entire Levitical priesthood as part of His plan to redeem humanity. But what exactly are we being saved from? The answer comes from John the Revelator, who provides insight into the cosmic struggle at play: **“Now war arose in heaven, Michael and his angels fighting against the dragon. And the dragon and his angels fought back, but he was defeated, and there was no longer any place for them in heaven. And the great dragon was thrown down, that ancient serpent, who is called the devil and Satan, the deceiver**

of the whole world; he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him” (Revelation 12:7-10).

God understood the challenges humanity would face, especially knowing that the deceiver would mislead many, including the saints. The influence of the devil led God’s children to rebel against Him, for rebellion is a hallmark of fallen angels. Yet, God did not relent in His mission to save humanity. The Bible reminds us, **“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life”** (John 3:16).

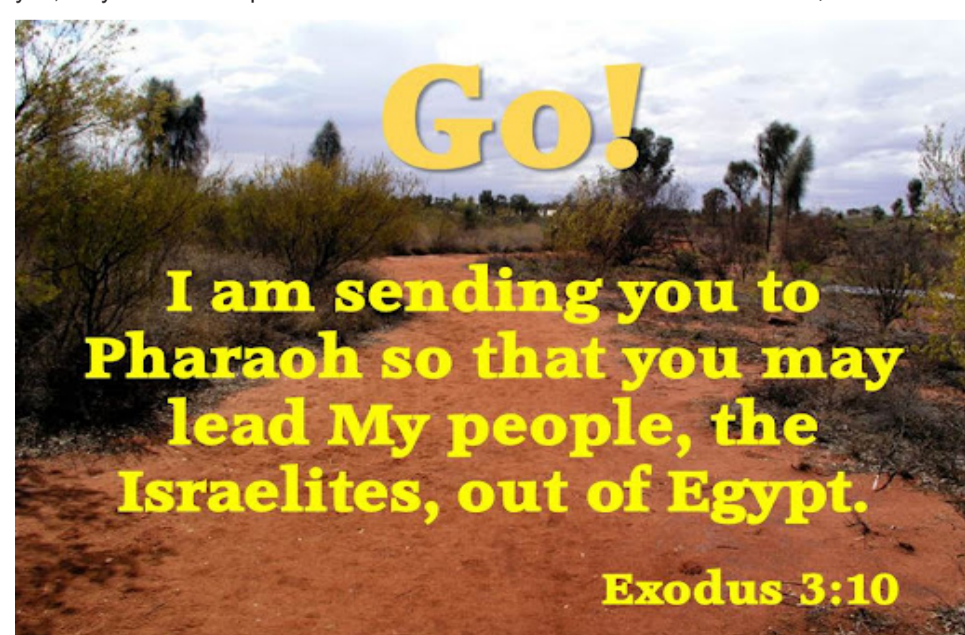
This is the highest expression of God’s love for us and His unwavering commitment to saving humanity from destruction. Our Lord Jesus Christ came into the world to reconcile humanity with God, offering us the gift of eternal life even beyond the mortality of our physical bodies. Scripture affirms that when His saints die, God sends angels to escort their spirits to paradise: **“One day**

poor Lazarus died, and the angels of God came and escorted his spirit into paradise” (Luke 16:22). We also see the Archangel Michael contending with the devil for the body of Moses, as noted in Jude 1:8. This serves as a powerful demonstration of God’s intention to save humanity, particularly those who profess and confess the Lordship of Jesus Christ in their lives.

Finally, beloved, the book of Genesis provides clarity regarding God’s motivation to save humanity. As it is written: **“Then God said, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness”** Genesis 1:26a. Ultimately, God is saving His own image within us, demonstrating His profound love and desire to restore what was lost.

So tonight, let us reflect on this beautiful truth: that our God, in His infinite wisdom and love, is not willing that any should perish but desires to bring all of us back into fellowship with Him. Amen.

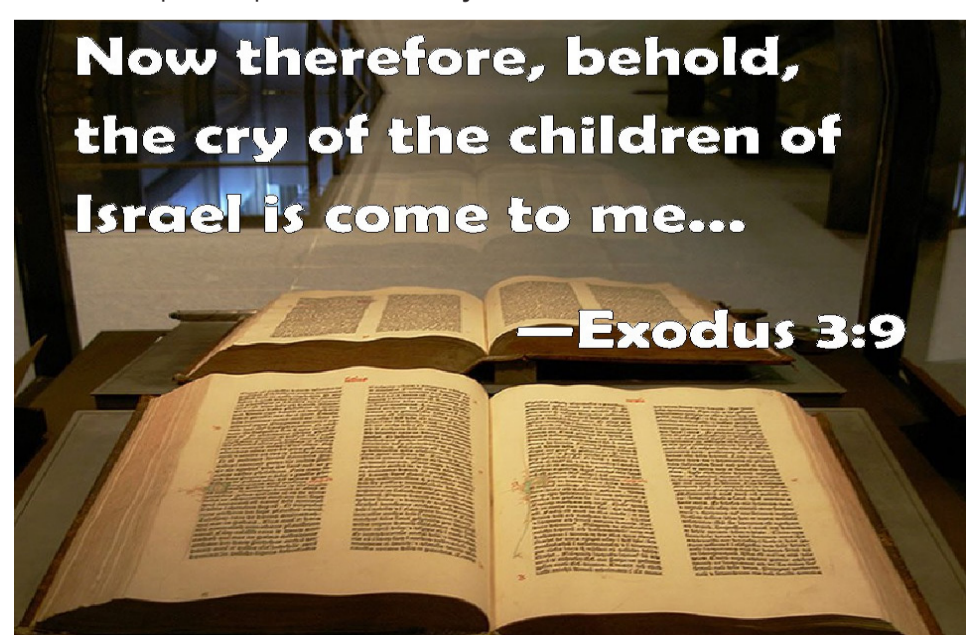
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Go!

I am sending you to Pharaoh so that you may lead My people, the Israelites, out of Egypt.

Exodus 3:10



Now therefore, behold, the cry of the children of Israel is come to me...

—Exodus 3:9

EXECUTIVE MAYOR CLLR MINAH BAHULA ENGAGES IN STRATEGIC SESSION FOR MUNICIPAL COUNCILLORS PENSION FUND



Empowering Councillors: Executive Mayor Cllr Minah Bahula actively engages in strategic planning for the Municipal Councillors Pension Fund to ensure a sustainable future for councillors in Limpopo. Picture Credit: Supplied

By Staff Reporter

Centurion: The Executive Mayor of Sekhukhune District Municipality, Councillor Minah Bahula, recently participated in a vital two-day strategic session for the Municipal Councillors Pension Fund (MCPF) Board of Trustees. This event, which took place at Irene Country Lodge in Centurion, Pretoria, served as a platform for discussing the strategic objectives and direction of the fund as it prepares for the upcoming local government elections. During the session, trustees engaged in critical discussions that included a comprehensive review of the Fund's rules and a workshop focused on governance and ethics related to retirement funds. These topics are essential in equipping trustees with the necessary knowledge

and skills to effectively advocate for the interests of municipal councillors. Cllr Bahula, as a dedicated board member of the MCPF Board of Trustees, remains steadfast in her commitment to representing the needs and aspirations of all councillors in Limpopo Province. She is particularly focused on promoting sound financial planning and ensuring sustainable management of the pension fund, reflecting her dedication to serving her constituents with honor and integrity. Through her active involvement in these strategic discussions, Cllr Bahula continues to demonstrate her leadership and commitment to the well-being of municipal councillors and their financial security.

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NEW LEDA BOARD CONDUCTS STRATEGIC PLANNING SESSION TO ENHANCE AGENCY OPERATIONS

By Staff Reporter

Polokwane - The Limpopo Economic Development Agency (LEDA), along with its subsidiaries, held its inaugural Strategic Planning and Review Session from February 10 to 11, 2025, at the Ranch Hotel. The session aimed to develop a Strategic Planning Framework that will guide LEDA and its subsidiaries over the next five years. During the strategic planning session, participants focused on the importance of enhancing strategies that align with LEDA's mandate to foster economic growth and development in the province. A significant area of discussion revolved around the need for the Limpopo Development Plan (LDP) to prioritize industrialization and beneficiation, which are critical to expanding the province's productive capacity. This meeting marked the first formal engagement between the new LEDA Board and its executive team since the Board's recent appointment, making it especially timely as they work towards establishing new strategic plans aimed at achieving self-sustainability for the agency. The session was officially opened by the Honorable MEC for Economic Development, Environment, and Tourism,

Mr. Tshitereke Matibe, who emphasized the necessity of implementing best practices within the economic development sector. He provided a comprehensive overview of the Group's performance and pointed out some major challenges that the Agency faces. Matibe urged the new Board to proactively seek workable solutions to enhance the Group's performance. "The enhancement of LEDA's relevance is a collective effort," MEC Matibe stated. He stressed the importance of setting realistic key performance indicators and emphasized the priority of creating employment opportunities and improving the economic conditions of Limpopo's residents. Significant discussions during the planning session revolved around the Group's priorities, the contextual issues faced by subsidiaries, resource considerations, and analyses of past performance. The meeting also served as a platform for board members to reflect on ongoing initiatives while planning for the future in line with LEDA's vision for economic growth. The first day featured presentations from each subsidiary regarding their operational status and achievements, including Corridor Mining Resources (CMR), Great North Transport (GNT), Limpopo Connexion,

SCOPA HOLDS FIRST MEETING WITH MUNICIPAL PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEES TO ADDRESS CHALLENGES IN LOCAL GOVERNANCE



SCOPA Chairperson Mr. Desmond Moela leads a crucial meeting with MPACs and key stakeholders to strengthen accountability and enhance service delivery within local governance in the Nkangala District. Picture Credit: Supplied

By staff Reporter

On Tuesday, the Select Committee on Public Accounts (SCOPA), chaired by Mr. Desmond Moela, convened its first meeting with the Municipal Public Accounts Committees (MPAC) and various stakeholders, including the Special Investigative Unit (SIU), the Hawks, the Public Service Commission (PSC), the South African Police Service (SAPS), and the Auditor General (AG). The meeting took place at the Nkangala District Council Chambers in Middelburg, aiming to strengthen collaboration and address pressing challenges in local governance. Each stakeholder had the opportunity to present the support they provide to MPACs. The Department of Cooperative Governance, Human Settlements and Traditional Affairs reported that it has successfully established the Municipal Finance Directorate. However, the department also highlighted several challenges facing MPACs, including a lack of resources, inadequate capacity, absence of office space, and limited financial support. Other issues included insufficient assistance from municipal administrations, reluctance from executive members to account to MPACs, and attendance problems among MPAC members.

To mitigate these challenges, the department concluded its presentation by advocating for the implementation of Unauthorised, Irregular, Fruitless, and Wasteful (UIFW) expenditure reduction strategies and adherence to standard operating procedures as effective approaches for municipalities to enhance accountability and transparency. The AG's office pledged ongoing collaboration with oversight structures and called for deployment of infrastructure experts to evaluate municipal projects and track service delivery progress. They stressed the need for urgent action to eliminate UIFWs while insisting on timely attendance and implementation of AG recommendations.

The AG also expressed concern about the slow progress in monitoring the implementation of these recommendations, citing persistent increases in UIFWs, the adoption of unfunded mandates by municipalities, and outstanding debts from municipal service users. The PSC emphasized that strengthened collaboration among stakeholders is essential for effective service delivery. They reiterated the importance of professionalizing the public service to achieve meaningful results. The SIU described their work as a multidisciplinary team focusing on high-profile cases, highlighting the need for regular meetings with MPAC chairpersons to ensure a shared understanding of the SIU's mandate and how to appropriately utilize public resources. The Hawks echoed this call, emphasizing diligent work from MPAC members and the importance of providing witness testimonies when required in court. They also raised concerns about money laundering, which jeopardizes South Africa's standing in the global arena. MPAC members raised several issues during the discussions, notably the need for dedicated researchers for each MPAC and greater assistance in holding executives accountable for noncompliance with AG recommendations. They also stressed the importance of recovering costs for services rendered, standardizing MPAC office operations, and enhancing investigative capacity regarding political interference. Concerns were voiced about the prolonged timeframes for addressing serious corruption cases and the necessity of serious collaboration with SCOPA. In closing the meeting, Chairperson Desmond Moela assured all participants that their concerns would be taken seriously. He reiterated SCOPA's commitment to ongoing engagement with MPACs and regular meetings to support the improvement and development of municipalities throughout the province.

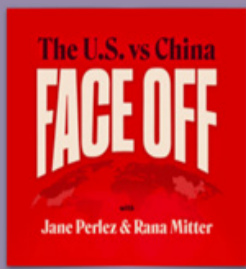
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Musina-Makhado SEZ (MMSEZ), Fetakgomo-Tubatse Industrial Park (FTIP), Risima Housing Finance, and New ERA. Chairman of the Board, Mr. Chris Lithole, highlighted the importance of collaboration among all stakeholders to fulfill LEDA's mandate. He stated, "We are expected to become self-sustainable in the near future, and we can only achieve that when we work together." The strategic planning session not only focused on immediate plans but also facilitated in-depth discussions aimed at fostering greater collaboration with internal and external stakeholders. The

intensive two-day event culminated in the endorsement of resolutions by the Board and a call for the executive team, led by Group Chief Executive Officer Mr. Thakhani Makhuvha, to intensify efforts to implement these resolutions. In conclusion, the gathering highlighted a collective commitment to enhance economic development in Limpopo, with a renewed focus on collaboration and strategic planning for the agency's sustained success.

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3 PODCASTS TO LISTEN TO IN FEBRUARY



By Thulane Madalane

Crook County

In our round-up of the best British podcasts you should be listening to right now, I recommended a show called Ghost Story that captivated me for a curious reason. The host, Tristan, didn't merely report this spooky true crime story; his own family became involved. Ghost Story's twist made a saturated genre feel novel. At last, fresh material for true crime fans and weary podcast journalists alike. I

was immediately reminded of Tristan's tale when I heard the trailer for Crook County, a new co-production from iHeartPodcasts and TenderfootTV, but not because of any supernatural elements. This true crime podcast is about a hitman for the Chicago mafia, Ken "The Kid" Tekiela. Crook County isn't just an eight-part series about Ken's rise through the ranks of organized crime while living a double life as a firefighter. It is also hosted by Kyle Tekiela, his son. The first episode was recorded on the Tuesday February 11.

Middlebrow

You may have seen Dan Rosen or Brian Park on one of your social media apps. The pair have made their names doing comedy skits about modern dating, the "culture", and why big brands spell their names so weird. But deep down, Rosen and Park have slightly higher ambitions than taking constant swipes at the guys incapable of asking women questions on dates. No, they also want to talk about art. And fast-casual dining. And other "middlebrow" things that have become status symbols for younger millennials, like Aesop handwash and Sally Rooney novels.

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Currently festering in my late twenties, I am the target market for this "pseudo-intellectual" podcast, and can thoroughly

recommend it to other pretentious city-dwellers. We who audibly lament the Enlightenment split that forever separated high- and low-brow culture, though secretly thank the stars that it did, for what would we do without the chilled natural wine and Paul Mescal movies that fill the void in the middle? Middlebrow is a podcast for people like me. If this review made you feel seen, it's probably a podcast for you, too.

Face-Off

History podcast Face-Off returns with a timely series about U.S./China relations, including how these two world leaders came to develop such a fraught relationship. This eight-part series is hosted by Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist Jane Perlez, a former New York Times Beijing bureau chief. With her co-host Rana Mitter of the Harvard Kennedy School, Perlez explores the cultural shifts taking place in both countries, and tries to predict the outcome of growing tensions between President Trump and President Xi Jinping. Face-Off will appeal to fans of quality journalism without sensationalism, the type of in-depth news stories reported by BBC World Service and PBS. The first episode was launched on February 11.

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NEW CARS COMING TO SOUTH AFRICA IN 2025

Car Review by Aisha Zardad

We list some of the new cars coming to South Africa in 2025! What cars are you looking forward to most? See the list below!

Aston Martin

Aston Martin Vanquish Volante & Vantage Roadster – 2025, TBC

We anticipate the arrival of no less than 2 Aston Martin convertibles during 2025. The Vanquish Volante is powered by a 5.2-litre V12 engine with 614 kW and 100 Nm and is claimed to accelerate from zero to 100kph in around 3.2 seconds before reaching a top speed of 344 kph.

In addition, the Aston Martin Vantage Roadster brings V8 power with a 4.0-litre bi-turbocahrged V8 under the bonnet with 375 kW and 685 Nm of torque resulting in a zero to 100 kph sprint time of just 3.6 seconds before reaching a top speed of 305 kph.

Pricing will be available upon launch.



Audi

New Audi Q5 – Q4 2025

Built on Audi's Premium Platform Combustion (PPC) architecture, the new third-generation Q5 SUV is due to arrive in South Africa in the fourth quarter of 2025 with a bold and sporty design language. The new Q5 Sportback is due to arrive locally in 2026.

The new Audi Q5 will initially be offered with a 48V mild-hybrid turbopetrol and -diesel powertrains, with PHEV derivatives to be added later. Although the SA lineup has yet to be finalised, the new Q5 will feature one or more of the following mild-hybrid (MHEV) powerplants, each of which will be mated with a 7-speed dual-clutch automatic transmission.

Powertrain options include a 150 kW/340

Nm 2.0-litre 4-cylinder turbopetrol engine in either front-wheel-drive or all-wheel-drive quattro guise.

A 150 kW/400 Nm 2.0-litre 4-cylinder turbodiesel with quattro all-wheel drive is likely as well as a 270 kW/550 Nm 3.0-litre V6 turbopetrol engine which will power the SQ5 quattro flagship.

Local specification and pricing details will be confirmed closer to launch.



BMW

New BMW 2 Series Gran Coupe – Q2 2025

It's expected to be a quiet 2025 for BMW as the German firm has only confirmed the new second-generation 2 Series Gran Coupe for local introduction in the second quarter.

The new BMW 2 Series Gran Coupe has a larger footprint than the model it replaces. Note the the 'i' has now been omitted from the badging and BMW will offer the front-wheel drive 218 with a 115 kW/230 Nm 1.5-litre turbocharged, 3-cylinder petrol engine and an all-paw M235 xDrive with 233 kW and 400 Nm.

A 7-speed dual-clutch automatic transmission is standard. Local specifications and pricing details will be confirmed closer to launch.



Chery

Chery Tiggo 9 – Q3 2025 (ICE + PHEV)

The Chery Tiggo 9 is the largest vehicle in the Chinese carmaker's lineup and the firm's local arm has confirmed its arrival in the third quarter of 2025.

The Tiggo 9 will be offered with 2

powertrain options including a combustion engine and a PHEV option.

A 2.0-litre turbocharged 4-cylinder petrol engine with 187 kW and 390 Nm of torque and paired with a 7-speed dual-clutch transmission is expected. In addition, the Tiggo 9 range will be headlined with a Plug-in Hybrid (PHEV) powertrain that pairs a 175 kW 1.5-litre, 4-cylinder turbopetrol engine with a 165 kW electric motor to offer a total system output of around 230 kW.

An 8-speed automatic transmission is standard for the Tiggo 9 PHEV. All-electric range is claimed at 100km with a total range of around 1400 km.

Exact specification and pricing details will be confirmed closer to arrival.



Ferrari

Ferrari 12 Cilindri – Q1 2025

Ferrari will unleash its new 12Cilindri in both Coupe and Spider forms in the first quarter of 2025.

Powering the 12Cilindri is Ferrari's stellar front-mounted 6.5-litre naturally aspirated 12-cylinder petrol engine with peak outputs of 610 kW and 678 Nm. An 8-speed dual-clutch transmission lights up the rear wheels and the 12 Cilindri is capable of sprinting from zero to 100kph in just 2.9 seconds before reaching 200 kph in 7.9 seconds and topping out at 340 kph.

Order books for the Ferrari 12Cilindri are open with pricing starting from R9 995 000.



GWM

Updated GWM P-Series (P300) – Q1 2025

The P-Series has been a success for GWM in South Africa and the new year will usher in an updated version that will wear a P300 badge to set it apart from its predecessor.

The P300 will slot in below the recently-launched P500.

Apart from featuring revised styling, the passenger-spec P300 will gain a new 2.4-litre turbodiesel engine with 135 kW and 480 Nm and come paired with a 9-speed automatic transmission. Meanwhile the familiar 120 kW / 400 Nm 2.0-litre turbodiesel engine will soldier on in the commercial spec offerings with an 8-speed automatic transmission.



Hyundai

Hyundai Alcazar – Q2 2025 (April/May)

Hyundai will expand its local SUV offering with the addition of the Indian-built Alcazar 6/7-seater that's based on the Creta. The Alcazar will be offered with either a 1.5-litre turbodiesel engine with 85 kW and 250 Nm and paired with a 6-speed manual or automatic transmission or a 1.5-litre turbopetrol engine with 118 kW and 253 Nm and paired with either a 6-speed manual or 7-speed dual-clutch transmission.

The interior of the Alcazar features a tech-forward design approach with a large 10.25-inch infotainment system and a 10.25-inch digital instrument cluster combined with the dashboard with a third control panel positioned in the lower dashboard. As a 6-seater, the second row can be had with 2 captain chairs for extra comfort.

Local specification and pricing will be confirmed closer to launch.

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TIMELESS SPORT

LINDA ZWANE RE-ELECTED TO PROPEL MPUMALANGA SPORT CONFEDERATION TO NEW HEIGHTS



Experienced sports administrator Mr Linda Zwane exchanging pleasantries with DCSR MEC Ms Leah Mabuza, has been entrusted with a renewed mandate as president of the Mpumalanga Sport Confederation for another four years, aiming to elevate the province's sporting achievements on national and international platforms

By Thulane Madalane

Middelburg- Experienced sports administrator Linda Zwane has been re-elected as president of the Mpumalanga Sport Confederation (MSC) for another four-year term. The announcement was made this past weekend at the Middelburg Regional Library, marking a significant moment for both Zwane and the future of sports in Mpumalanga. With a clear vision and renewed mandate, Zwane aims to take sports development in the province to new heights, ensuring that Mpumalanga athletes shine on both national and international stages. "I am humbled by the confidence the membership of MSC has shown in me. I don't take their support for granted. This

is a sign of confidence in the work I have been doing," Zwane expressed following his re-election.

As several high-profile international events like the 2026 FIFA World Cup, 2027 Rugby World Cup, 2027 AFCON, and 2027 Cricket World Cup approach, MSC is keen to ensure that Mpumalanga is well represented in the squads and teams that will compete on national duty, provided qualification for these tournaments is achieved. "To us, the first thing we want to do right is athlete support so that we can make a meaningful contribution to our target for the LA 2028 Summer Olympics. We also want to ensure that federations are supported in their development programmes," Zwane emphasized. Zwane's vision for the future is bolstered by the firm backing of the provincial

government. At the Congress, Culture, Sport and Recreation MEC Leah Mabuza voiced the department's support for Zwane and his committee. "The Department has the responsibility for the development of sport throughout the province, and our work is made much easier with formidable structures like the Mpumalanga Sport Confederation. We also wish to extend our profound thanks to all affiliates who play a key role in delivering sport programmes in the province," stated the MEC. Zwane's extensive background in sports includes a history as a footballer for Botleng Classic FC and a brief stint in coaching before transitioning into sports administration in 1996. Over the years, he has held several notable positions, including vice-president of SAFA, president of SAFA Nkangala, and board member of

the South African Sports Confederation and Olympic Committee, among others.

The newly formed MSC committee comprises of :

- President: Linda Zwane
- First Vice-President: Sergeant Skosana
- Second Vice-President: Christel van Wetten
- Additional Members: Jabu Nzima, Xolani Gumede, Eunice Sibeko, Melony Degenaar, Cylvia Pieterse, MS Maribe, Emile van Veenhuyzen, Oupa Zitha, and George Stanton. With this strong leadership team in place, the Mpumalanga Sport Confederation is poised for a vibrant future, ready to take on new challenges and celebrate the successes of its athletes.