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# MEC PROBES HIT LIST



Mpumalanga MEC for Community Safety, Sibongile Manana has asked police commissioner to investigate hit list allegations

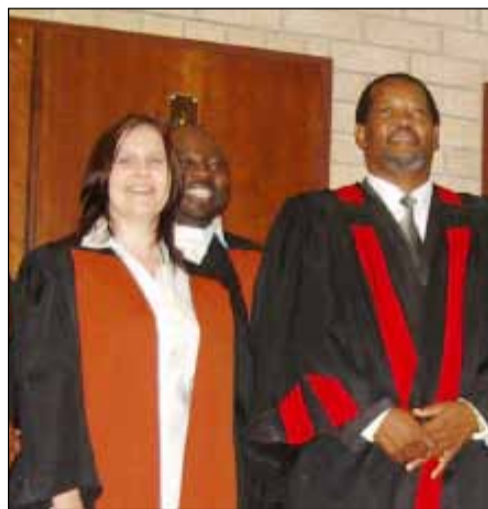
**MPUMALANGA POLITICIAN ENDS SILENCE ON ALLEGED HIT LIST • PAGE 2**



**SANEF NOT IMPRESSED WITH ANCYL • 3**



**MATAFFIN SCHOOLS PROGRESS • 8**



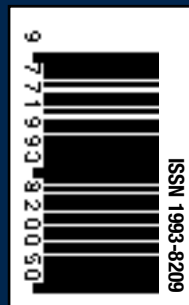
**CONSUMER COURT LAUNCHED • 10**



**LIFE SAVER • 11**

## IN THIS EDITION

- **SOCIAL** grants application within 24hrs • 6
- **ANCYL** Chairperson breaks silence • 7



**SOCIAL, CULTURE  
AND ARTS  
• BACK PAGE**



**Comrade Phinda Mzala is back**



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**ACTING EDITOR: COMRADE "PHINDA" MZALA**

3 Sneezewood Street  
Nelspruit,  
Mpumalanga Province  
P.O. Box 15564 • Nelspruit • 1200.

**Editorial and Advertising:**

Mpumi: 072 181 1554  
Fax: 086 607 8529  
Email: info@ziwaphi.com

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## Section 205 - embedded journalism of a special type

The South African security establishment last week thought that the free-to-air channel, Etv exceeded the acceptable limits of the freedom of the press, when the channel flighted the story of people who were brandishing guns and threatening to cause chaos during the FIFA 2010 World Cup by attacking and robbing visitors.

This triggered a chain of events which inevitably led to the resurrection of the debate on Section 205 of the Criminal Procedure Act. This legislation was inherited by our democratically elected government from the apartheid junta to force journalists, mainly from the progressive media, to testify against freedom fighters. Many progressive and brave journalists chose imprisonment than testify for the apartheid state.

Some may argue that we had an illegitimate government at the time, and that now we need "patriotic journalists" because we have a democratically elected and legitimate government. But then how would such brand of journalists be different from the "embedded journalists" who were enjoying the protection of the US army during the invasion of Iraq?

Whether Etv was correct or not to flight the news item, the row that has erupted exposed us that while we claim to have one of the most progressive constitutions in the world, some of us are far from behaving progressively. Probably this is one of the explanations why we still have many racists in our midst while racist legislation no longer exists in the statute books.

When the democratic movement campaigned for the abolishment of the death penalty, one of the difficult decisions we had to take was to accept that murderers such as Barend Strydom, who had been sentenced to death for shooting and killing seven black people in cold blood would also be reprieved. Today he is a free man, and difficult as this may be, that's unfortunately a principle does not work selectively.

Coming back to media freedom, it's either we have it or we don't. To expect a journalist to testify against criminals, merely because that journalist, justifiably or unjustifiably, decided to present information because he/ she thought it was in the public interest to do so, is an infringement of those freedoms. It will not only make journalists targets of those criminals, but in the process we will effectively be creating our own

brand of embedded journalists of the South African Police Services. Journalists should not be forced to choose sides.

What happened to the principle of "Don't kill the messenger"?

Since its inception, E-tv has unapologetically adopted an anti-ANC and anti-black government stance. This can be seen in many of their footage, such as their most recent e-news advert which sends subliminal messages that the whole country is in chaos except the Western Cape Province which is headed by the Democratic Alliance's Helen Zille who is shown dancing alongside her supporters. But that's what democracy is about – we have to live with institutions and ideas that irritate us.

Notwithstanding the ruling of the Constitutional Court which, in 1996, declared Section 205 to be constitutional, there is a need to find closure to prevent future skirmishes each time the media is deemed to have over stretched the limits of media freedom.

The Record of Understanding was undoubtedly an important intervention mechanism which provides a temporary reprieve for journalists. The new political climate presents us an opportunity to find a more permanent solution which is legally binding to all.

In conclusion I must add that it is shameful that 15 years after democracy our government is still lamenting about media bias and doing nothing it. In the current financial year, a paltry R26 million has been allocated to the Media Development and Diversity Agency, which is charged with developing media diversity in the country.

It should therefore come as no surprise that the dominant ideology in the mainstream media will always be that of the forces that are opposed to the transformation of our country.

### THE ANCYL

Over the past few editions, we have been publishing opinion pieces by members of the ANCYL on various matters affecting the organisation, particularly its Ehlanzeni Region. In this edition, we publish an intervention by the organisation's Chairperson, who believes that organisational matters of the YL must be discussed within its structures.

As the Commander In Chief of the

ANCYL in the province, Thabelang Maabane has the responsibility to provide direction and his intervention is praiseworthy.

We also agree that while Ziwaphi is a publication with a bias to the same constituency that is served by the ANCYL, it is not an Alliance or structure of the ANCYL.

We, however, wish to caution against pigeonholing the role that the newspaper plays in the current phase of the National Democratic Revolution.

Ziwaphi is produced by revolutionaries who believe that the NDR is a revolution of the whole people, and not only the elected leadership because we can't all be leaders, and may I add, members. There are also those who will vote for but will not register as members of the ANC either by choice or because they are prevented by regional organisers or through vote-buying by politicians who want to cling to power forever just like Robert Mugabe.

The issues raised by Cde Nevari have been existing in the structures of the democratic movement for a long time and the constitutional structures have proven to be either lacking the capacity or the will to address them.

Cde Thabelang, however, believes that the ANCYL is capable of and has the will of resolving these internally.

The Ziwaphi collective has decided that it will not publish the articles which are seen to be fueling the tensions, to give the provincial chairperson's intervention the chance.

We encourage our leadership to be open and honest about the foreign tendencies that are shaping the NDR and not confine these in the boardrooms, because they will have an impact on the whole of society.

As Ziwaphi we wish to know the outcome of the investigation, if any exists of the political hooliganism that is existing in Nkomazi which is perpetuated by former members of the National Party who run the ANC as though it is an organisation of warlords, who have reportedly assaulted a Provincial Executive Committee member of the ANCYL.

Our information is that no action has been taken against the former NP member because of his connections at the highest level.

Down with hooliganism. Forward with revolutionary discipline!

By Mzala

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# MANANA ORDERS PROBE INTO THE "HIT LIST"

BY MUNTU SIYAYA

*The MEC for Community Safety in Mpumalanga province has asked the Provincial Commissioner of police in Mpumalanga, Thulani Ntobela, to set up an investigation into the alleged hit-list that contains the names of people who are blowing the whistle against corruption.*

The allegations of a hit list first surfaced immediately after the murder of Mbombela Local Municipality Speaker, Jimmy Mohlala who was shot in cold blood in front of his son at his house in Kanyamazane in 2009, however, no hit-list was ever made public.

Earlier this month when another high profile Mpumalanga resident, Sammy Mpatlanyane was executed, almost in the same manner, rumours of the hit list once more surfaced.

Mohlala was killed just days before he testified against the former municipal manager of Mbombela Local Municipality, Jacob Dladla. The motive for the murder of Mpatlanyane is still unknown.

Recently, a journalist who writes for a national newspaper wrote in articles that a hit-list exists and that it contains the names of at least two Mpumalanga journalists. He also wrote that both Mohlala and Mpatlanyane were on the same hit list. The story even became a subject



**MEC Sbongile Manana wants hit list rumours to be investigated**

of discussion on a national radio talk show, where the same journalist headlined.

Ziwaphi's attempt to get the journalist proved fruitless and he also did not return messages left on his cell-phone.

"The information will assist the police during the investigation to find the root of these allegations," Manana was quoted as saying in a statement issued by the Department.

"We are unaware of the hit list, and as long as people are not coming out with information to the police, this matter will remain rumours until an official investigation is concluded" reads the statement.

Manana also appealed to the affected families to remain calm until the investigations have been finalized and called on people who have information on the hit list to assist the police by supplying the information to the police.

Ziwaphi has also learnt that following the murder of Mbombela Municipality Speaker, Jimmy Mohlala in January 2009 there are people who have been deliberately spreading wrong information to divert police investigations in this murder.

To date the police have not been able to apprehend his killers in spite of a R100 000 reward that the police have put forward for information that may lead to the arrest of Mohlala's assailants.

The spokesperson for the Provincial Commissioner, Sibongile Nkosi confirmed that the MEC has ordered an investigation into the allegations of a hit list, but that they do not have the hit list in their possession.

"The provincial commissioner has no hit-list, except what we read in the media. We, however view the allegations of the existence of a hit-list in a very serious light," she said.

She declined to comment if the police will be interviewing the journalist who first published the information.

Mpumalanga journalists have recently been in the spot light on allegations that some of them are in the payroll of Mpumalanga politicians to prevent them from writing damaging articles against leading provincial politicians.

In one media article there were allegations that one of the journalists is driving a vehicle that was bought for him by a politician.

Meanwhile, the journalist who first wrote the story of a hit-list in a the national newspaper is reportedly also not accessible to the police and the Mpumalanga Community Safety Department seems cautious and it seems unlikely that the police would invoke Section 205 of the Criminal Procedure Act to force him to disclose the information following the furore over etv's decision to flight the story of two hooligans who were threatening to cause havoc during the FIFA 2010 World cup to be held in the country.

"The intention of the investigation is to afford those who have knowledge of the alleged hit list an opportunity to come forward. We don't want to run after the media like it was the case with the etv story," said Mabuza.

## Sanef dismisses ANCYL's half-hearted retraction

BY TSHWARELO ESENG MOGAKANE

### MBOMBELA

The South African National Editors' Forum (Sanef) has rejected the African National Congress Youth League (ANCYL)'s semi-retraction of statements issued to intimidate whistle-blowers earlier this week.

On Friday, the ANCYL in Mpumalanga changed a threatening statement they issued on Monday, in which they warned whistle-blowers to "book an early grave".

"The youth league wants to make it clear that we don't have guns that are itching to kill people. When we said machine gun, we were talking about the same tool that these campaigners use to attack us – the media," said provincial secretary of the league, Isaac Mahlangu on Friday.

"There are people who are campaigning to destroy the youth league and



**Young lion without a cause? Isaac Mahlangu**

they attack us using the media. Our statements meant that we will attack

them exactly where they are. We do not intend to literally kill anybody," he said.

Mahlangu argued that he would not implicate himself in murder by going to the media before it happens.

"And it must be clear that we are not attacking journalists, but those who go to journalists with information meant to make the movement look corrupt and evil. We are merely defending our good name," said Mahlangu.

Mahlangu was responding to pressure from Sanef and media professionals who were calling for police to arrest him for intimidating whistle-blowers.

This is after he sent a statement containing threats to City Press newspaper on Monday, which he copied to other news editors on Tuesday.

However, Sanef has labelled the change of tone, a deception.

"For the ANCYL to turn around and

change their statement is sophistry of the highest order. They are also giving a false impression that media can be used to settle personal scores," said Sanef Media Freedom chairperson, Thabo Leshilo.

"It is totally false to make the media seem as if it is a platform for nothing else but the truth. We reject this insanity," he said.

The ANCYL statement was sent in response to two articles published in City Press on Sunday, which accused ANCYL deputy secretary general, Steven Ngubeni, of awarding tenders to friends in Delmas, where he had been employed as municipal manager until last year. Another article said Ngubeni had been involved in a hit-and-run accident in Delmas on New Year's Eve.

Ngubeni has been appointed chief executive of the National Youth Development Agency.

# Weak leadership at school with 28% matric pass rate

BY THABISILE KHOZA

**KOMATIPOORT** - *Few parents want to send their children to Mbudula High School.*

The school, situated in Mbuzini village near the borders of Swaziland and Mozambique in Mpumalanga, achieved a dismal pass rate of just 28% last year.

"The problem is not with Grade 12 pupils only, because those in the other grades are also failing," says one angry father, Elijah Mhlongo.

Mhlongo says both his sons attend the school, one of whom has failed Grade 10 three times.

He says he tried to put his son in another school, but that his application was rejected.

"I tried to enrol him at Samora Machel Comprehensive School but he was rejected after mentioning that he is coming from Mbudula," explains.

He says parents are given little say in the running of the school. He says a parent's meeting wasn't held last year, for example.

"We really don't know how the principal runs the school without informing parents of what is happening," he said.

Mhlongo is worried that one of his son is repeating grade 10 for the third time this year.

"The teachers work there just to get their salaries, not to educate their kids," he says. "Somebody out there had to do something about this school before it gets worse and has to be shut down."

One former school governing body member (SGB) who asked not to be named said members were not allowed to speak openly in meetings.

"Other teachers victimise you when you try tell the truth at meetings," he says.

Mbudula High School principal Piet

Thekwane repeatedly dodged calls this whole week, saying he was in meetings.

Regional director for the Ehlanzeni education district, Mfana Lushaba, confirmed that when he visited the school last week, he found poor management and a lack of decision-making by the principal.

On Wednesday last week, Lushaba paid a surprise visit, along with other government officials, to the school because of its poor matric pass rate.

It was found that the school lacked textbooks, curriculum management or functioning school policies.

"There was a lack of textbooks in the school, but no one had reported it to us. We found out that a geography teacher had one textbook of which he made copies to distribute to all the Grade 12 pupils," Lushaba said.

He confirmed the general lack of communication between parents,

pupils, teachers and the school principal.

Lushaba said the visitors could find no school policy to guide teachers on how to do their daily work.

"I was so upset when I checked their schedule and found that there is lots of absenteeism among everyone, including the principal," he added.

Lushaba added that some teachers did not seem committed to their work, especially "those who teach science and economic science subjects".

Lushaba said radical steps would be taken against the principal and heads of department if the situation did not improve.

The principal was given until Friday to present their school management policy, but hadn't done so by midday.

Lushaba said education officials would visit the school weekly to monitor the principals and teachers.

# Mpumalanga teachers feel "neglected" says PAC leader

BY ERIC MASHABA

**MBOMBELA** - *Teachers in Mpumalanga say they have lost interest in teaching because of "mismanagement" in the provincial department of education.*

The spokesperson for the Pan Africanist Congress in Nelspruit, Bernard Mashego, said the department had to uplift teachers' morale if the province wanted to produce better exam results.

"Invigilators from Machadodorp who have served during the writing of Grade 12 exams since 2000 have still not been paid. They are all teachers and they feel neglected and undervalued. Meanwhile, Grade-R educators have been paid quarterly only with

cheques and they often cannot cash them. They've been asking that their salaries be paid directly into their bank accounts, but when they complain to their principals they are threatened with dismissal," said Mashego.

He said situations like these had caused many teachers to lose interest in their profession.

"This mismanagement has contributed to the poor performance of schools in the province. Even when we try to follow up on educators' queries, we get sent from pillar to post by the department," Mashego said.

A high school teacher, who did not want his name to be used, said he "hates working in this profession". He claimed he had not been paid for invigilating at exams for the past nine

years.

"I'm devastated. I came close to committing suicide. Imagine how it feels to wait for money for work you did almost 10 years ago. The manner our seniors display when it comes to dealing with our pay queries is sickening," he said.

"I've even thought of burning down one of the schools. But I didn't, because I thought of the future of innocent pupils," he added.

The regional director for the Ehlanzeni education district office, Mfana Lushaba, said the issue with Grade R teachers' salary payments was still under investigation.

"Grade R teachers were taken from the community and introduced into

schools. This was a new move and these educators are not fully trained as professional teachers. We are in the process of formally registering them in the department and then they will fall under its payroll. The process is ongoing and they will eventually get their salaries in the bank like other teachers," he said.

Lushaba said the unpaid invigilators in Machadodorp fell under the Nkangala district, which was outside his jurisdiction.

"The reason why they were not assisted is that they directed their problems to the wrong district offices. I advise them to direct their queries to the Nkangala district offices," said Lushaba.

# Mpumalanga police say business woman's death may be fake

BY TSHWARELO ESENG MOGAKANE

**HAZYVIEW** - *Mpumalanga police say they are hot on the heels of suspects who were possibly involved in staging a death to fraudulently claim insurance and avoid debts.*

According to provincial police spokesperson Captain Leonard Hlathi, the Organised Crime Unit is investigating two cases of fraud linked to "deceased" businesswoman Petronella Francom (49).

"We can confirm that the Organised Crime Unit is investigating a case of fraud related to a pyramid scheme and another of insurance fraud," said Hlathi.

He said the case was "too sensitive" to divulge the details of the investigation, but confirmed that the police were looking into the possibility that Francom's death had been staged.

"We are not saying she faked her death because we don't know whether the woman is dead or alive, but our investigation suggests that she might not be dead," he said.

Francom, a Hazyview resident, reportedly died on May 22 last year after an accident involving her Volkswagen Caravelle on the Long Tom Pass near Sabie.

The police initially thought the vehicle had overtuned and fell off a cliff, resulting in an explosion that left Francom dead.

The body discovered in the wreckage of the car had been burnt beyond recognition.

"There were no witnesses when the accident happened but the police are now investigating whether the accident was legit or not," Hlathi said.

He said that Francom had owned a business called Positive Publishing with her husband, Clint, but its ownership was transferred to Francom shortly before her "death".

"It seems as if the business was a pyramid scheme that had attracted R6-million from investors. When she died, she died with these investors' money. Immediately after her death we found out that she also had life cover for R10-million," said Hlathi.

"The situation raises many suspicions. It is a first of its kind in this province; we have never dealt with any fraud case as complicated as this one," he added.

Hlathi said Francom's husband had not been taken in for questioning, nor had he been charged with fraud.

"We will not divulge any further information to protect this investigation, but we are going to make

a series of busts soon," Hlathi said.

According to the business's website, Positive Attraction, Francom had lived "the law of attraction" for more than 12 years, recording a double CD that promotes "positive music".

The website, www.positive-attraction.com, indicates that she discovered "positive living" in 1996, after going through a traumatic divorce from her first husband.

"I had decided that I would write 20 songs based on the steps to attract good things into your life through using the Law of Attraction, which simply put is none other than 'thoughts are words that become reality - control your thoughts and you control your life'," says Francom on the site.

# 'SA media, PAC homophobic' - Gay and lesbian group

BY SYDNEY MASINGA

**MBOMBELA** - *The South African media have been accused of being as homophobic as the Pan Africanist Congress Youth league, which issued a statement declaring that "Africa is not home to gays and lesbians".*

Spokesperson for the Gay & Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation (GLAAD), Christina Engela, noted that while the media were quick to cover the youth league's utterances, they failed to cover the Mr Gay South Africa pageant in November.

"We saw plenty of mention of the Miss World pageant last month on the pages of various local community and national newspapers and of course, in TV coverage. Did we see any attention given Mr Gay South Africa, which the

gay community found to be of some import, in any mainstream newspapers or hear radio coverage or see any TV features? I certainly didn't," said Engela.

She noted that news from the gay community was not considered "newsworthy" in the mainstream media unless it was controversial in some way.

The PACYL has come under criticism from human rights organisations for their anti-gay statement last week.

In an interview, PACYL President Pitso Mphasha said: "We are saying to hell with the South African Constitution for giving rights to gays and lesbians. Homosexuality is totally immoral and there is no place for gays and lesbians here."

Mphasha accused gays and lesbians of being people who are confused and mentally colonised by the Western

imperialists who make them abandon their own cultures.

The PACYL statement drew criticism from organisations like Gay and Lesbian Memory in Action, the South African Human Rights Commission and the Treatment Action Campaign (TAC).

Gay and Lesbian Memory in Action activist, Kamohelo Malinga, said the PACYL was out of order.

"Across the African continent we find a wealth of evidence of same sex practices and relationships. These range from a 2000-year-old rock painting depicting male-male sex by the Bushmen, the original inhabitants of the region making up modern day Zimbabwe," she said.

She said history also reveals marriage-like ceremonies that took place

between Zulu men in Mkhumbane (Durban) in the 1940s and 1950s.

South African Human Rights Commission spokesperson Vincent Moaga said the PACYL's statement "should not be tolerated because it confuses and divides the nation".

"This is more like hate speech and it will be investigated if we receive a formal complaint," said Moaga.

Vuyiseka Dubula, general secretary of the HIV/Aids lobby group, the Treatment Action Campaign (TAC), said: "The constitution recognises that everyone must be treated equally. Gay men and women have the same right to live in a respectful and free society because Africa is home for everyone".

## When media freedom turns into media gangsterism

COMMENT BY COMRADE SPIKIRI

SPIKIRI BELIEVES THAT JOURNALISTS ARE HUMAN BEINGS BEFORE THEY ARE JOURNALISTS, THEREFORE THEY SHOULD REPORT CRIME

The case of Etv that took place last week has prompted me to write this thought provoking piece about the role of media in South Africa in present day geo-political frame of things.

The TV station flighted a news video which showed two self-confessed rascallions spewing bile about horrific criminal deeds they were promising to carry out on tourists who are expected to flock to South Africa before, during and after the FIFA World Cup Finals. They promised to rob and kill people. The two Bonny and Clyde wannabe's were hooded and had their faces covered.

Violent crime in South is way above acceptable levels. Innocent people are violated, killed, raped and robbed on a daily basis. This makes everybody jittery. The media together with the opposition political parties are always shouting at the government to release crime statistics for public scrutiny and when government does they dispute the validity and reliability of the statistics.

However, it is a bit confusing when the media wittingly or not participate in and thus become accomplices in acts or intentions of committing heinous crime. The media is vociferous about the freedom of expression and of the press, however, they are also guilty of casting aspersions on the freedom of expression and association of others.

Some relations are deemed to be "generally corrupt" in the eyes and pens of some journalists. They question everything that the government (especially the Presidency) does. In recent times they are shamelessly, trying to influence the President not to give a Presidential pardon to convicted criminals. In fact, they are insinuating that the President intends to give a pardon to De Kok, a self-confessed killer as a ruse to give a reprieve to Shabir Shaik.

The President has powers given to him by the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa to administer pardons in

favour of convicted criminals. For the media to compare De Kok, Prime Evil, to Shaik is mischievous and borders on hypocrisy. They are at the President's back for appointing Menzi Simelane to head the National Prosecution Authority and John Qwelane as the Ambassador to Gabon. The examples are endless.

When "Die Wit Wolf" Barend Strydom was released through the Presidential pardon scheme there was not even a half-hearted complaint from the media and interestingly even the most outspoken of the opposition parties were silent. Barend still continued to make stupid and offensive statements like "blacks are not human" and the media never made hullabaloo about this. Strangely even the Human Rights Commission never thought that Barend was perpetrating hate speeches. Perhaps they have their hands full with Julius Malema.

Etv has knowingly consorted with criminals who made their intention clear instead of going to the police, the lure of a sensational scoop overwhelmed the Etv reporters. They really needed something to attract viewership since they cannot televise the biggest attraction soccer and to a limited extent rugby and cricket.

The reporters and their supporters and protectors are shouting on top of their voices against being served with a subpoena to reveal the identity of the scumbags who promised to maim people during the World period. They claim it is not their responsibility to inform the police of looming criminal acts. In fact one might argue that the media always wishes for tragedies to happen so their reporters could earn a living.

An undertaker makes money out of death, a dentist make money out of bad teeth, a hangman makes a living out of hanging people who commit certain kinds of criminal acts decreed to warrant death penalties (thank God not anymore in SA). Could it be a far-

etched theory to suggest that some people within certain industries do not wait for things to happen but they orchestrate for things to happen?

I remember in my youth reading a novel by Irvin Wallace called the almighty in which a certain ambitious media house owner would hire mercenaries, arsonists, hitmen, warped scientist to create sensational disasters. Obviously his newspaper would always be the first to break the news to the public. Frankly most of the news would be written before they even happen

Could it be that some among the media are perpetrating political and criminal agendas to remain on the cutting edge of their industries? This is conspiracy theory but one that's worth exploring. When the USA and its friends decided to attack Iraq, the media played a vital role in spreading propaganda to the public to justify the war on Iraq. The voices of those who believed that the Iraq war was a war for oil and not about weapons of mass destruction were drowned by repeated messages from media houses such as CNN until people were tenderized to believing and justifying the war.

When COPE was established in SA, certain media houses played an active role of supporting it. This group was led by Radio 702 and many complained that Etv had stopped being impartial and that their coverage of political parties was biased towards COPE. Whether this is true or not is immaterial at this point. The fact is that many viewers believe that Etv has stopped reporting facts by repeatedly spinning issues and passing on their own opinions as hard core news.

Before I am accused of bashing the media let me tell you that I am acutely aware of the role the media played during the struggle for freedom in South Africa, there were those that were the propaganda machinery of the then regime. But again we had those that at the risk of losing their lives, stoically stuck to telling the truth. The

latter group is not emulated by the majority of the current crop of media personnel.

Most of the reporters today use their profession for self aggrandizement and glorification. If the state is serious about creating safety nets for the people, they are then justified to round up all suspects and in case of ETV I would argue that the journalists who covered the story of the two culprits are also suspects. Who knows if the reporters involved did not pay the infamous two to go on camera and promise sh\*t?

So, the police will live no stone unturned. In fact I think the police were lenient by choosing to subpoena the gentlemen from Etv. They could easily have chosen to detain them as suspects.

Press freedom must go with responsibility. It is the function of all self respecting members of a society, including journalists, to report criminal acts or intentions thereof when we come across such. Journalists are not exonerated from the rules that govern all of us. Doctors, psychologists etc. are called upon to give evidence in court of law when the prosecutors feel their knowledge could assist in bringing the truth out and assisting a case. These professionals are bound by a pledge that demands confidentiality between them and their patients. Why should journalists be treated differently?

Press freedom is vital for any democracy but my worry is that the freedom is abused by those that enjoy it. They are using it against the public good. Certain media houses are operating like gangsters. They have their own sign of ometa. It is not every day that the state would invoke a section 205 on the media. In fact to my knowledge since 1994 this could be the first time this has happened (I stand to be corrected)

I support unreservedly the decision to call the journalists from Etv to shed some light on this issue.

# Social grant applications reduced from 21 days to 24 hours

BY SYDNEY MASINGA

NELSPRUIT,

*Applications for social grants will no longer take 21 days to be processed, but only one day.*

The South African Social Security Agency (SASSA) in Mpumalanga reported on Friday that a pilot project called the Improved Grants Application Process (IGAP) project had been successfully implemented in the province.

"(IGAP) involves shortening the steps of the application process from five to

three while drastically reducing the waiting period and to improve the grants administration," said SASSA spokesperson, Senzeni Ngubeni.

He said the one-day turn-around time would not compromise quality assurance.

The first step in the IGAP process is screening, whereby the system prompts the screening official as to which questions to ask and in relation to specific grants.

"Should the applicant not meet the requirements or have missing documents for the type of grant he

or she intends getting, it is during the screening stage that an official prints out a letter advising him or her on the correct action required, followed by attesting and capturing of an application, and lastly manual and system verification," Ngubeni explained.

He said the process may later include biometric enrollment directly linked to the Department of Home Affairs, which will help validate identities before an application is made.

The pilot project is currently being implemented at the local municipalities of Msukaligwa in Ermelo, Pixley ka Seme in Carolina, Dipaleseng in

Balfour, Emalahleni in Emalahleni, Middelburg and Thaba Chweu in Mashishing (formerly Lydenburg).

"By the 2010/11 financial year the IGAP pilot project will be implemented throughout all SASSA offices in the province," said Ngubeni.

There are currently eight types of grants provided by SASSA; grants for elder persons, disability grants, war veteran's grants, care dependency grants, foster child grants, child support grants, grants-in-aid, and social relief of distress.

## Board to tackle gambling among pupils and the elderly

BY SYDNEY MASINGA

NELSPRUIT

*The Mpumalanga Gambling Board wants to warn the province's youth and senior citizens about problem gambling and myths related to gambling.*

Spokesperson Christabel Hlatshwayo said the board was responsible for ensuring that the integrity of gambling is upheld.

"Our campaigns are directed at the youth and senior citizens because they are considered to be particularly vulnerable to problem gambling. There is a perception that many beneficiaries of social grants and old-age pensions are gambling away what little they have in the hopes of doubling their money or getting rich quickly."

Hlatshwayo said the school campaign would comprise "a lively and educational" industrial theatre show that illustrates the pitfalls of problem gambling among the youth. It will also provide learners with valuable



**Mpumalanga Gaming Board CEO Bheki Mlambo: The gaming board is taking the message of responsible gambling to the people.**

information on how to deal with problem gambling within their families or communities.

"Trained facilitators will visit schools and all the pension pay-points in the

province to distribute leaflets which debunk gambling myths and present the facts about problem gambling," said Hlatshwayo. She said the board was concerned that money that should

be allocated for household expenses such as groceries was spent on Lotto tickets, card games and other forms of gambling.

"We have decided to intervene and send a team to hand out educational leaflets on gambling. The leaflets are in local languages and they spell out the myths and facts relating to various gambling scenarios, rituals and superstitions," Hlatshwayo said.

Some of the myths include that luck favours those who are optimistic, that previous results can determine future outcomes and that a system exists for always coming out ahead in gambling.

Hlatshwayo said signs of problem gambling included spending more time on gambling than intended, borrowing or stealing money to fund gambling, missing work or school or other commitments to gamble, and the breaking down of family relationships because of debt and dishonesty.

The campaign was launched on January 22 at Sbhulo Secondary School in Bhuga outside White River.

## If it sounds too good to be true, it is!

BY THABISILE KHOZA

KOMATIPOORT

*A pensioner and tavern owner from Mpumalanga has lost R11 000 in an elaborate scam involving fake money.*

Mhlupheki Masondo (75), of Mananga village outside Komatipoort near the Mozambique and Swaziland border, was conned out of R11 000 on December 28 when a man came to his tavern at about 10am and said he wanted to buy large amounts of expensive alcohol.

When the man realised Masondo did not have that much alcohol for sale, he said he was a government official whose job it was to help entrepreneurs to grow their businesses.

"He told Masondo the department would give him R50 000 for expanding

the business, but that he needed a R15 000 deposit," said Constable Selby Simelane, spokesperson for the Mbuzini police.

The con man said he would wait a few days for Masondo to get the deposit ready.

"The man phoned a couple of days later and Masondo told him he only had R11 000, which the man collected that night. The R50 000 in the bag he left behind turned out to be poor fakes," Simelane said.

Simelane has warned the community that syndicates are targeting business people in the area and that no one should fall for get-rich-quick scams.

"If it sounds too good to be true, it is," he said.

Anyone with information about the scam can contact the Mbuzini police.

## Businessman's attackers still at large

BARBERTON

By Thabisile Khoza

Mpumalanga police are searching for three men who shot and injured a prominent Barberton businessman.

Chain store and construction business owner Mvori David Mathebula (51) was shot outside a friend's house in Mjindini Extension 11 at about 9:45pm on November 15, 2009.

"He was shot with several bullets, two hit him in the head, two hit his left shoulder, two hit his right thigh and one hit him in the buttock," said Mpumalanga police spokesperson Captain Leonard Hlathi on Tuesday.

He said one bullet was still in Mathebula's buttock.

"It is suspected that the suspects had followed Mathebula from work to his friend's house because they had enough time to dig a hole under the fence to gain entrance and exit to the house," he said.

They did not try to rob Mathebula nor steal his car.

Police have opened an attempted murder docket and asked anyone with information about the case to call investigating officer Captain Alfred Manana on 083 366 3649 or Captain Leonard Hlathi on 082 462 0804.

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# Debate in structures, not the media

PROVINCIAL CHAIRPERSON OF THE ANCYL

THABANG MAABANE WARNS AGAINST USING THE MEDIA TO DEBATE ORGANISATIONAL ISSUES OF THE ANCYL

*During the struggle against apartheid, the ANC led alliance and the broad democratic movement represented unity of purpose among the broadest range of social forces that fought to end apartheid and replace it with a non-sexist and a united democratic South Africa. It is the movement's ability to unite this broadest range of forces behind a common vision and a fighting programme of action that finally led to the defeat of the apartheid regime in 1994. Today our movement and the democratic states it leads stands out as a trusted and reliable partner in the struggle for a better Africa and the World.*

Without a united and a cohesive movement, the vision of a better life for all our people in our country and continent will not be realized. While the imperative of the unity of our movement is perennial, the nature of the challenges around this issue will vary, depending on the prevailing conditions. The post 1994 conditions present particular challenges to the entire mass democratic movement. All of us as members of both the ANCYL and the ANC have a responsibility to work for a cohesive organization.

As a political head of the ANCYL in Mpumalanga Province, I have read with shock the opinion article you published on the 4-17th December 2009 edition of your newspaper by our member Gary Nevari. We were shocked because Mr Nevari's article as a member of the ANCYL does nothing to advance the interest of the Youth league. I was therefore mandated by the PEC to respond and clarify any obscurity that might have been caused by this misinformed article as it was pregnant with factual inaccuracies. We are doing so because if these inaccuracies are not clarified, society might accept them as the truth whereas they are a concoction of untruths manufactured with the aim to mislead society and position the youth league as an organization of thugs. Lord Wilberforce says: "The views of an urban legend if left unchallenged might assume the status of conventional wisdom"

The ANCYL is a militant youth wing of the ANC that was formed with one of its purposes being to mobilize and champion the interest of the Youth in this Country. Although we are an independent youth wing of the ANC, we are linked by an umbilical cord which even Mr Nevari and his Cope friends cannot cut.

We were mandated by the last conference of the ANCYL to ensure that the long standing resolution of the ANCYL to fight for the establishment of a University in Mpumalanga is realized and achieved during our term of office. We therefore made it our responsibility that this resolution is a



**Cde Thabelang Maabane, Provincial Secretary of the ANCYL responds to Cde Gary Nevari**

National conference resolution of the ANCYL. It was further submitted as a PYA submission into the MANIFESTO committee of the ANC. As I write this piece, the Mpumalanga Provincial Cabinet has taken a resolution to support and nurture the process of the establishment of the University of Mpumalanga considering the fact that the Provincial Government does not have the competency to do so.

The Minister of higher education, Cde Blade Nzimande visited the Province and clearly stated that there is political will at the National Cabinet for the establishment of an institution of higher learning in Mpumalanga and the Northern Cape. What we are now called upon to discuss is to how the institution can be established. We would have appreciated if Mr Nevari directed his energy towards this necessary debate. It is unfortunate that Mr Nevari who is our member, has deliberately shut his eyes for him not to see what is perfectly obvious to advance his narrow political interest. We have also made an immense contribution in the formation of the National Youth Development Agency, an organization that is aimed at advancing the interest of the youth in all corners of the Country. We are indeed an organization at work.

If Mr Nevari, my fellow Comrade is a well principled member and well schooled in the culture of the Youth league as he claims to be, surely he would have written his concerns to the PEC and if he did not find

joy or an ear with the PEC, then he should have approached the NEC and not ZIWAPHI. ZIWAPHI is a newspaper that continues to publish developmental and ideological articles and should not at any date be mistaken as a structure or an alliance of the Youth League. Mr Nevari has indeed misdirected himself by publicly speaking organizational issues in the media. Mr Nevari has been on political life support for some time now, it is up to him to chose the recovery path or gradual disappearance.

In the ANC Today volume 10 NO 1 comrade Jacob Zuma said: "We have consolidated our rich traditions of internal democracy. The ANC belongs to its membership; and throughout its history it has sought to uphold the practice of democracy by its membership. Out of hundreds of thousands of our members, we seek constantly to develop cadres of high quality with high level of revolutionary consciousness, organizational discipline, and moral and political integrity."

The Youth league and the ANC belongs to its members and the membership of the ANC is vigilant to the extend that it cannot allow anyone to divert this liberation movement to be something else rather than what it is supposed to be. To insinuate that the ANC has become something else is to undermine the political clarity that exists in the branches of the ANC. These insinuations resonate clearly

with the views of those who defected to COPE before elections. Therefore MR Nevari will have to pardon the Youth League members who are accusing his friends to be COPE members as they speak exactly like Mr Lekota just like his opinion paper. The only thing that differentiates him from Lekota is that he did not serve divorce papers in public. The public will also have to pardon us for thinking that he is one of those who was assigned to destroy the ANC from within after they have realized that they cannot do so from outside.

Che Guevara said this about revolutionaries: "At the risk of seeming ridiculous, let me say that the true revolutionary is guided by a great feeling of love...We must strive everyday so that this love of living humanity will be transformed into actual deeds, into acts that serve as examples, as a moving force." The insults Mr Nevari uttered against his fellow comrades reflect to all of us that he lacks the basic instincts of revolutionaries.

We therefore call upon all our members to stand up and be vigilant in defense of the unity of the ANCYL. It is a revolutionary duty that we must all of us carry with zeal to defend the youth of this country. In us the ANCYL is in good hands and we will continue to direct it towards the betterment of the lives of the youth of this Province.

**visit our website - [www.ziwaphi.com](http://www.ziwaphi.com)  
write to us - [info@ziwaphi.com](mailto:info@ziwaphi.com)**

# Mataffin schools to be ready by April 2010

BY ERIC MASHABA

## MBOMBELA

The construction of two new schools to replace those that had to be vacated for the 2010 soccer stadium in Mpumalanga is expected to be completed by March 31.

Mpumalanga education MEC Rejinah Mhaule toured the construction sites of the John Mdluli primary and Cyril Clark secondary schools in Mataffin outside Mbombela on Monday.

“Since we commenced work on December 4, about 85% of the first phase for John Mdluli primary has been completed. We have begun with phase two and have done 65% of the work,” said spokesperson for construction company Clear Choice Builders, Joe Manonga.

Construction of the computer lab, library, kitchen and most of the classrooms was going smoothly, he added.

He said the company was still waiting for structural engineers to forward plans so that construction could begin on the soccer field and hall.

Spokesperson for Mpfumelelo Business Enterprise, which is building Cyril Clark secondary school, Susan Nyathi, said the project was almost complete.

“We are also almost complete. We



**Spokesperson for Clear Choice Builders, Joe Manonga talks to Mpumalanga education MEC Rejinah Mhaule on Monday about the rebuilding of two schools that were demolished to make way for a parking lot at the 2010 soccer stadium in Nelspruit.**

are now busy fitting the roof on the classrooms and we are left with the soccer and netball fields,” said Nyathi.

MEC Mhaule and her delegation commended the builders for the pace of their work, as they were not expected to complete phase two of their projects

until after the 2010 FIFA World Cup in June.

“But I’m surprised to see they have already started with phase two and are a step ahead,” said Mhaule. “I am indeed encouraged by what I see here, this is work in progress and if the construction

continues to unfold at this pace we will meet our deadlines.”

The classes, administration blocks and toilets of the two schools are expected to be completed by the end of March.

Teachers and pupils are expected to move in by April 1, ending nearly four years of learning in stuffy prefabricated buildings that were provided when they were moved from their original brick and mortar schools in late 2006.

The community was promised two new schools in 2007, and pupils rioted violently against the delays, most recently in October last year. Some were injured when police were forced to fire rubber bullets at them.

Their old schools now serve as offices for resident engineer Leon Botha and hostels for workers who live far.

Cyril Clarke secondary school will have 20 classrooms, a state-of-the-art laboratory, administration block, library, assembly hall, computer centre, kitchen, soccer field and three netball fields.

The new John Mdluli Primary will have 16 classrooms, 20 toilets and similar facilities to those of Cyril Clark Secondary. -

# Deputy Minister - Gigaba warns pupils against teen sex

BY ORIS MNISI

## BUSHBUCKRIDGE,

*Deputy minister of home affairs Malusi Gigaba has told pupils in Mpumalanga to abstain from sex.*

Gigaba was speaking to about 1 700 pupils at Orhovelani High School in Thulamahashe, Bushbuckridge, on Tuesday as part of the province’s Unite Against Child Pornography and Back To School campaigns.

“There is no diplomatic way to say it. Boys and girls, stay away from sex and protect yourselves because, if you don’t, it will harm your future,” warned Gigaba.

“Girls, when you fall pregnant you will have to miss class to deliver those babies or to take them to clinics for check-ups. Meanwhile, your lover boy will continue coming to school. And he’ll forget about you when he’s at university,” said Gigaba.

Orhovelani High School is rated the second-best in Bushbuckridge and the best in Thulamahashe, having produced a 69.8% matric pass rate last year.

“Today we are here to thank you as a very successful school. [ANC treasurer] Mathews Phosa and many other professionals are from this school. Out of 245 pupils who sat for matric exams last year, 175 passed and 44 of them got



**Deputy minister of home affairs Malusi Gigaba addresses pupils at Orhovelani High School in Thulamahashe**

university entrances,” Gigaba said.

He warned pupils not to watch “inappropriate” TV programmes and to refrain from taking “nude pictures” on their cellphones.

Abiot Tjempe, an Internet content analyst from the Film and Publication Board, said the board was concerned

about pupils bringing pornography to school or using computers and cellphones to access pornography at school.

“Our [Films and Publications] Act says no one is allowed to have photos of a nude child who is younger than 18,” he told the pupils. \_He urged them to report child pornographers via the

board’s toll-free hotline, 0800 148 148.

Gigaba proceeded to Machayi High School in Newington village, where only 9.6% of matrics passed last year.

All its pupils repeated Grade 12 after the school produced a 0% pass rate in 2008.

# Nelspruit tests its rescue services for 2010

BY ERIC MASHABA

## NELSPRUIT

Mpumalanga police's bomb and dog units, as well as the province's fire, rescue and emergency medical services say they are ready for the 2010 Fifa World Cup.

This comes after the various units performed evaluation exercises in the provincial capital of Nelspruit and on the road between Sabie and Lydenburg. "Various exercises were aimed at evaluating the provincial disaster management teams to see whether they are equipped to handle any emergency situation or accidents during the World Cup," said Nelspruit police spokesperson Inspector Dawie Pretorius.

Outside Lydenburg, the police staged a bus accident, while in Nelspruit businesses in the Promenade Centre in the city centre were evacuated after a "bomb scare" in which a man was hurt.

Centre manager Vanda Lutz said it took mere minutes to evacuate all the tenants from their offices.

"The police and other emergency services like the fire department and the bomb squad arrived within five minutes. I was unhappy about ambulances only coming after 20 minutes, which was a bit long," Lutz said.



**Emergency medical services and police in action during the "bomb scare" exercise at the Promenade Centre in Nelspruit on Wednesday**

"But we are happy that everybody was evacuated in time, which indicates lives could be saved if a real bomb was found," said Lutz.

The spokesperson for Mbombela Fire

and Rescue, Johan Von Weidts, said his service benefited from the simulation exercise.

"We were there quickly after being alerted and we activated many different

resources. We will be able to handle any similar incidents during the World Cup Soccer games. We will try, by all means, to act as fast as we can and the exercises have helped to evaluate our capabilities," he said.

## R7m spent on mobile classes for damaged schools

BY ERIC MASHABA

## NELSPRUIT

The Mpumalanga department of education has spent R7 million on mobile classroom for schools damaged during storms in 2009.

Education MEC Rejinah Mhaule said the department has bought 45 mobile classrooms.

"The first set of mobile classes was delivered at Amersfoort primary school in the Gert Sibande on Friday," she said. "We expect the rest of the classes to be delivered within the next two weeks and will be distributed in all the four regions."

Meanwhile, the department is currently resolving a dispute between the Mathibela tribal authority and Mwale tribal authority in Bushbuckridge regarding Badlangaye primary school in Waterval village.

The two tribal authorities are in an ongoing dispute over whose jurisdiction the school should fall under.

When schools reopened this year, classes were disrupted at the school as a result of the conflict between the traditional leaders.

"This matter has created a problem for the parents who only want their children to learn," Mhaule said.

The parents and the school governing body (SGB) complained to the department.

"We met with the local community, the SGB and representatives from the two tribal offices and members from the traditional council to discuss about the matter," she said.

"We told the two tribal office representatives and the community that the land in question belonged to government and that the two chiefs were not supposed to be at loggerheads about the matter. Parents said they wanted their children to continue with learning and we agreed that classes should continue as normal until a solution is reached," Mhaule said.

**RIGHT: MEC for Basic Education in Mpumalanga Province, Rejinah Mhaule**



# Mpumalanga gets own consumer court

BY ERIC MASHABA

## NELSPRUIT

*Six members of the Mpumalanga Consumer Affairs Court took a sworn oath on Tuesday to help protect consumers from unfair business practices.*

The swearing in ceremony was conducted in the Nelspruit regional court by MEC for economic development, environment and tourism, Jabu Mahlangu, and the Nelspruit chief magistrate, David Ngobeni.

“The consumer court will preside over consumer cases that will be investigated by the office of the consumer protector and accordingly processed to ensure that consumer rights become a legislative reality,” said Mahlangu.

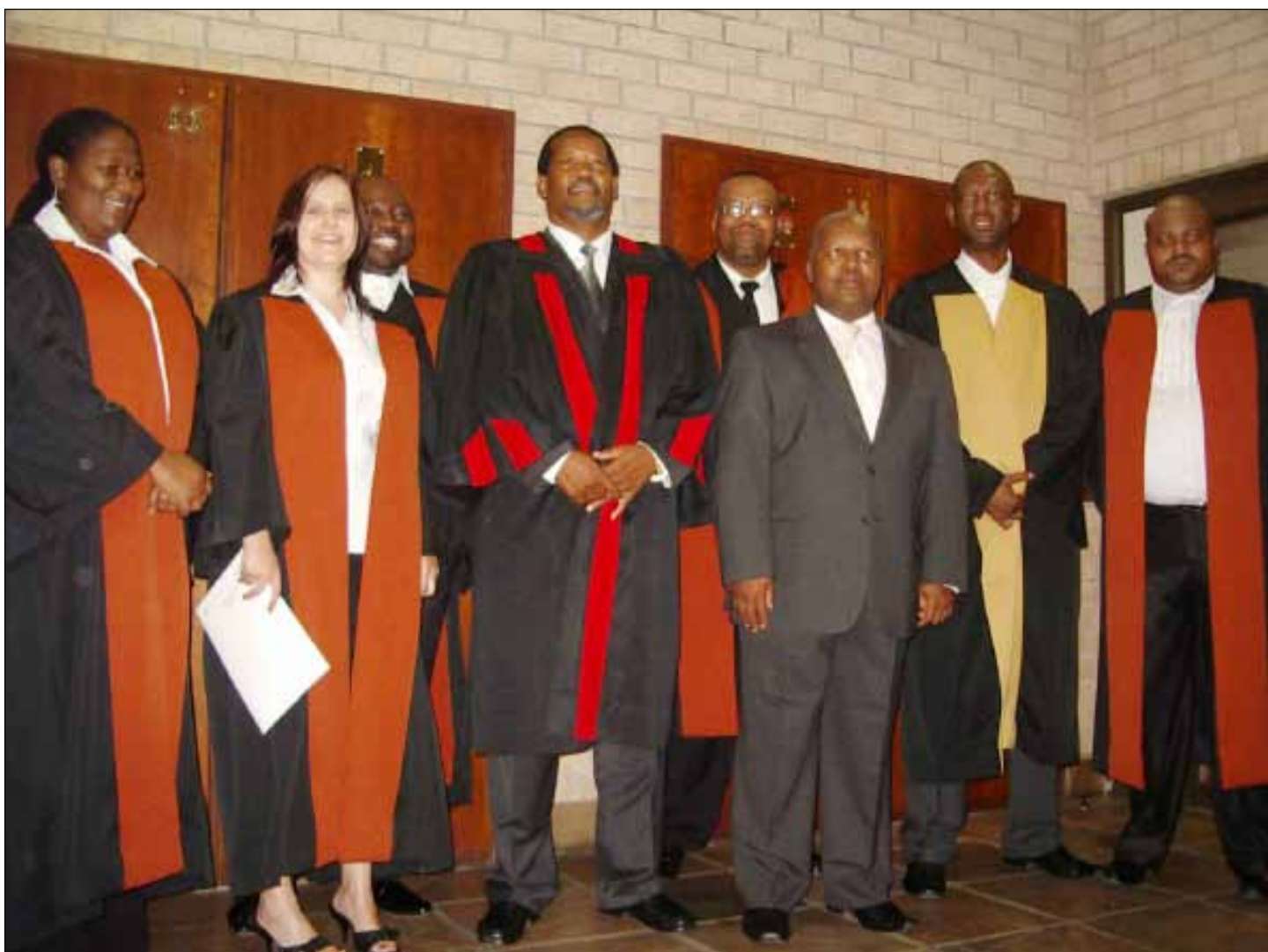
The six members, two of whom are women, were appointed in April last year in terms of the Mpumalanga Consumer Affairs Act 6 of 1998.

Chief magistrate Ngobeni said the office of the consumer court may also negotiate and conclude arrangements to discontinue and avoid any unfair business practice.

“This may include the reimbursement with interest to affected consumers,” Ngobeni said.

Consumer protection law regulates private law relationships between individual consumers and the businesses that sell goods and services.

This protection ranges from product liability to private rights, unfair business practices, fraud, misrepresentation and other consumer



**CONSUMERS' HEROES:** Members of the new Mpumalanga consumer affairs court are, from left: Nomaswazi Shabangu, Mariette Swart, Bongani Matsane, chief magistrate David Ngobeni, professor Joseph Maseko, MEC for economic development, environment and tourism Jabu Mahlangu, Sinky Nkosi and Mandla Ncongwane.

or business interactions.

It also deals with credit repair, debt repair, product safety, service and sales contracts, bill collector regulation, pricing, utility turn-offs, consolidation and personal loans that may lead to bankruptcy.

In some situations where customer complaints occur, consumers do not know the procedures to follow, while some companies do not take complaints seriously, or deal with them dishonestly, said Ngobeni.

Ngobeni said the newly appointed

Mpumalanga consumer court will provide consumers with cheaper and quicker redress to their complaints and unfair treatment on the part of unscrupulous businesses.

## Border communities threaten to disrupt World Cup

### MOUTSE

By Sydney Masinga

Residents of Moutse and Matatiel have threatened to disrupt the FIFA World Cup in June if their areas are not reincorporated into Mpumalanga and KwaZulu-Natal respectively.

They also intend sending representatives to the opening of Parliament on February 2 to demand that the demarcation matter be discussed at the sitting, said co-ordinator of the South African Communist Party (SACP) in Matatiel, Zamicedo Mjobe, on Friday.

He said it was "unfortunate that the people of Moutse and Matatiel are forced to resort to drastic measures of threats".

“As the nation prepares to host the World Cup tournament, we shall embark on a massive protest marches, we shall deal the country a cruelest blow by disrupting any activity

associated with the event. We have been taken for granted for too long and it is about time to demonstrate to the stubborn ANC leaders that we can also do what others in the same situation do,” said Mjobe.

Moutse and Matatiel were demarcated to fall into Limpopo and Eastern Cape respectively following the municipal elections in March 2006. Both areas claimed that government had not consulted them.

The Moutse Demarcation Forum took the government to the Constitutional Court in November 2008, because of the lack of consultation when the area was incorporated into Limpopo.

The court then referred the matter to Cabinet for discussion.

In April 2009, Cabinet ordered the Department of Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs to hold public consultations, which were held in Moutse and Matatiel in October

and November last year.

Spokesperson of the Moutse Demarcation Forum, Seun Mogotji said after several consultations, the majority of the Matatiel and Moutse communities clearly indicated that Mpumalanga and KwaZulu-Natal are their preferred provinces, but the matter was delayed.

“We are aware that the results of the October and November 2009 consultation processes went against some powers within the ANC structures, who then shifted the goal post when it was clear that people wanted to be returned to their provinces of their choice. We shall fight until the bitter end to see our democratic rights respected and protected,” said Mogotji on Friday.

Mogotji said he suspects that “the deliberate delay in resolving the demarcation matter of Moutse is a calculated move by some members of the ANC in Limpopo who will

lose business if Moutse is returned to Mpumalanga”.

Nhlakanipho Nkotwana, special advisor to co-operative and traditional governance minister Sicelo Shiceka, apologised to the people of Moutse and Matatiel on Friday for the delay.

He said a report on the Moutse and Matatiel demarcation matter had been finalised and submitted to Cabinet for a decision.

“Our challenge is the Dipaliseng local municipality in Mpumalanga. They also want to be redemarcated back to Gauteng, so we want to consolidate the whole demarcation issue and deal with it as one,” said Nkotwana.

The Dipaliseng local municipality is based in Balfour. Nkotwana said a separate report on Dipaliseng would be submitted to Cabinet once it is finalised. Cabinet is then expected to review all three matters together.

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# Scholar patrol officers keep pupils safe

BY THOBILE MLANGENI

NELSPRUIT

*At the age of 12, Innocent Shongwe is saving lives.*

The Grade 6 Mpumalanga pupil is a scholar patrol officer who ensures that his schoolmates safely cross the busy road to and from school each day.

"I love doing this and I love all motorists who adhere to our instructions to stop and give way to pupils," says Shongwe, who wants to be traffic officer when he grows up. "It's like I am experiencing the real life of a traffic cop."

Shongwe wakes up around 5:30am in the morning to get ready for scholar patrol duty.

He is one of seven Grade 6 scholar patrol officers at Tiphembeleni primary school in KaNyamazane outside Nelspruit who diligently report for duty at 6am.

Four of them use Stop and Go signs to control vehicles at the pedestrian crossing.

Armed with a whistle, another scholar patrol officer gives instructions as to when the stop and go signs must be changed.

All seven wear bright safety aprons over their uniforms, and caps donated by the department of public works, roads and transport.

The scholar patrol officers were trained by traffic officers and are always supervised by one or two teachers.

Shongwe has never experienced any accidents when he's been on duty and



**LIFE SAVER: Innocent Shongwe from Tiphembeleni Primary School performs scholar patrol duty on the busy road in front of his school.**

says he doesn't intend any to happen on his watch.

"That is why we are trying by all means to make sure our school mates are always safe on the road," he says.

He says motorists do try ignore them if they are in a hurry, and urges them to respect the lives of the children.

"Children are the future of the nation and have a right to life, not to be killed by reckless drivers," he says.

School principal Vinisher Khoza says that since she joined the school in 2006, there had been no accidents on the pedestrian crossing. She attributes the safety record to the scholar patrols.

Spokesperson for the provincial department of public works, roads and transport, David Nkambule, urges parents to teach their children the importance of obeying the rules of the road.

"Road safety is everybody's responsibility," he says.

## No bail for grenade attack accused

BY ERIC MASHABA

NELSPRUIT

*Mohamed Ismail Khan, who has been implicated in a grenade attack on a suburban house in which a child and her grandmother were killed, was denied bail by the Nelspruit Regional Court on Tuesday.*

The 38-year-old Khan and his co-accused, businessman Zamuk Amod Khan (49), both from Durban, appeared before Magistrate Anna-Marie van der Merwe on two murder charges and one of attempted murder.

Van der Merwe said Mohamed would not be granted bail after his attorneys in Durban sent an instruction that financial matters with regards to his representation had not been settled.

"He will be remanded in custody until the matters between him and his lawyers have been finalised," she said.

The two accused were arrested following an attack on a home in Valencia, Nelspruit, in December 2006.

Nine-year-old Yetska Pillay and her grandmother, Patricia Pillay (53), died when a hand grenade was thrown through their bedroom window at about 3am.

Another girl who was also in the bedroom was injured. \_Zamuk was arrested by Inspector Percy Sibanyoni in Pine Town in Durban in July 2007. \_He was released on R1000 bail last year on condition that he did not intimidate witnesses or visit Nelspruit except to appear in court.

The court has previously heard that the grenade attack followed an incident in which Khan was accused of threatening his former girlfriend, Shaolin Govender, when she would not let him see his child. She was living in the house that was attacked, but had been in another room that night.

Govender testified that on August 13 2006 she was refuelling at a filling station in Nelspruit, where she lived, when Khan approached her and threatened to break the car window if she did not open it. \_She said he had wanted to see their child, who was inside the car, but she sped off.

She then received threatening SMSes and, in January 2007, got one which read: "Two died in December and another two will die on Valentine's Day." She reported Khan to the police, who arrested him on intimidation charges in Durban the next day. \_The trial has been transferred to the high court and postponed to March 24.

## Three police officials implicated in fake matric certificate scam

BY THABISILE KHOZA

MBOMBELA

*Three police administration clerks have been arrested in Mpumalanga in connection with a fake matric certificate scam.*

Police arrested them on Friday, bringing to eight the number of arrests related to fake matric certificates this month. On January 7, five men from Nelspruit and Barberton were arrested on charges of being in possession fake matric certificates.

The three clerks who were arrested on Friday were immediately taken to the Nelspruit magistrate's court.

They were not asked to plead to charges of fraud.

They are Maurine Sibulelani (40) and Phetheni Annah Ngwenya (35) who works at the provincial

police offices, and Nelly Zulu (41), who is attached to the Nelspruit police station.

Zulu is accused of organising the fake matric certificates for Sibulelani and Ngwenya, so that they could apply for their jobs at the provincial police office.

They were granted R1 000 bail each and will appear again on February 3.

On Monday, provincial police spokesperson, Captain Leonard Hlathi, urged all individuals who used fake matric certificates to turn themselves in.

"We are currently verifying the authenticity of a number of matric certificates and expect to make more arrests," he said.

Mpumalanga scored the lowest matric pass rate in the country for 2009.

At 47.9%, its rate is well below the national average of 60.7%.

# 'Treat us with respect' - Sphiwe

BY ERIC MASHABA

NELSPRUIT

*As a woman living with albinism, Sphiwe Nkosi (27) from Mpumalanga is only too aware of discrimination against people who are different from others.*

That is why she has made it her mission to fight against the abuse of people with albinism, disabilities and epilepsy.

"Nobody chooses to be born with albinism or any form of disability. God did not make a mistake when he created us and it is also not our parents' fault," she said. Nkosi decided to speak out after she learnt about an incident in Bushbuckridge in which a boy with albinism dropped out of school because his classmates had laughed at him.

"It hurt me so bad that I decided to stand up and fight for our rights. The boy refused to leave home after the incident and stayed in his room for days. He stopped playing with other kids and his future was shattered," she said.

The boy's story moved Nkosi so much that she went to see him personally to encourage him to live a normal life and, since then, she has become a campaigner for people with disabilities.

Nkosi, who lives in Nelspruit, has been used by the Mpumalanga premier's office as well as the



**Proud and beautiful: Sphiwe Nkosi highlights the plight of people with albinism, epilepsy and disabilities**

national department of human settlements as a motivational speaker at community events and schools, where she teaches the

audience to respect those with albinism and disability.

She hates any form of discrimination.

"People with disabilities, albinos and

those with epilepsy are not welcome or employed. We are always the last in the employment line. At hospitals and police stations there are no interpreters to assist the deaf and the blind. Although epilepsy patients get medicines at state hospitals, they need grants to study or buy the things they need. Without proper care and money, life is hard for them," she said.

Nkosi says her heart breaks each time she hears about parents or guardians who abuse their children's disability grants.

"I condemn parents who collect their children's grants and use them for personal gain. It means people like me cannot further our education or buy medicines to treat our skins. The heat from the sun affects us badly and medicines are expensive," she said.

Despite all their problems, people with disabilities do not want others' sympathy, Nkosi stresses.

"No one should feel pity for us. What we need is respect and equal rights," she said.

Nkosi became a well-known face on TV when she presented the first season of "Ses'khona" on SABC1 between October 2006 and April 2007.

Her Mpumalanga fans can look forward to seeing her in March, when she will be the MC of the Super Jazz Festival to be held in Nelspruit on March 7.

## Patience and focus beats poverty, says artist

BY ERIC MASHABA

MBOMBELA

One man's waste is another man's bread, and Zimbabwean artist Noah Nyika is living proof of that.

Nyika (36), originally from Harare, said he came to South Africa 10 years ago with hopes of finding employment. Instead he found himself among thousands of jobless people and realised he would have to think creatively and become self-employed.

"In Zimbabwe we were taught at school that waste materials can be recycled into many different kinds of items. We also learned skills like drawing, sculpting and sewing. So I decided to use these skills to make a living," he said.

Nyika and a fellow Zimbabwean, Shingi Mutsatsa (42), decided to approach local companies in Nelspruit to ask permission to collect leftover or unwanted



**Noah Nyika with some of his art works - PHOTO BY: Eric Mashaba /AENS**

materials such as wood, cardboards, wire and metal.

"The managers of the companies were happy because we cleaned their yards while collecting the waste. We also went to the veld to cut grass and reeds. And so we began making art

products," Nyika said.

The two men focus on furniture and clay flower pots, as well as bird sculptures from scrap metal, which they varnish to make them shiny and long-lasting.

"We began selling next to the road in Nelspruit in 2000, and we've been here ever since. Sometimes we make R2 000 per week, which is good money. We can send money to our families back home in Zimbabwe," said Mutsatsa.

He added that locals and tourists buy their products.

"The support we get from both black and white South Africans in Mpumalanga makes us feel at home," he said. Mutsatsa believes the problem with many local artists is that they think they will make lots of money immediately.

"We tried to teach some local people our skills but it was too much for them. Art needs patience and you must know exactly what you want do. Most of the people who approached us and asked to learn our skills did not return the next day. If artists can first figure out what customers need the most and then target those items, they can make money," said Mutsatsa.