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STATE OF THE PROVINCE SPECIAL REPORT Premier David Mabuza presented his second State of the Province Address at the Mpumalanga Provincial Legislature last week. He is seen here accompanied by legislature Speaker, W. Lubisi - Page 12.

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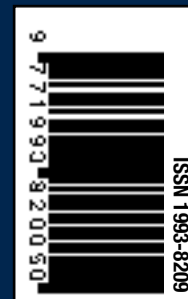
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PHOSA WITHDRAWS BURSARY



What about the state of the economy?

A CRITICAL LOOK AT PREMIER DAVID MABUZA'S 2010 STATE OF THE PROVINCE BY COMRADE SPIKIRI

The Premier's state of the Province Address has wholesomely been criticized by the opposition parties and independent political commentators for being among other "offences": shallow and making old promises that are tired.

Ziwaphi understates the philosophy that underpinned the speech. The Premier had to articulate a strong commitment on the Five priorities of government prioritized until 2014. These priorities by their design are deeply entrenched as tenets to advance the developmental state ideals.

If one looks at the Premier's speech in the light of the State of Nation address and more importantly the Budget Speech by Pravin Ghordan one begins to see a clear pattern of a drive by the government to move our economy towards welfarism.

He drew large cheers wherever he announced a milestone on education which clearly, judging by the substantial increase in its budget one would be excused to think that Education is priority number one in the big scheme of things.

The speech also announced exciting milestones on the issue of Comprehensive Rural Development Programme for poor beneficiary communities across the province. The problem with the Premier's speech was to assume that his audience including the opposition political parties understood the CDRP but judging by the unfounded comments the latter are making. It would have been advisable for the Premier to make an effort to distribute information that explains interventionist programmes designed to advance service delivery, CRDP for instead in a fantastic programme that targets the poor communities and design with each community project to uplift the standard of living.

The programme is done in partnership with the Ministry of Rural Development and Land Administration, State enterprises and private sector. This is phenomenon based in the esprit de corps prevalent within the members of the PPP arrangement. The results which we highlighted in the speech are just as important as the process and methodology followed in making the programme a success.

One observation in keeping with the equitable shares of government functional areas is that the state is steadily moving towards a welfare state. In Mpumalanga alone over a million of a population of 3 million is already receiving one or the other from of social grant. Many people have questioned this practice citing as reasons the dwindling tax base (numbers of active contributors to the income tax) and a growing number of welfare beneficiaries.

The speech was silent on mainstream economic development strategies, plans and projects except for a few projects extracted from the Economic Summit Resolutions of 2009. One would be forgiven for suspecting that the State of the Province address did not enjoy any support during the preparatory phases from the line function departments. This is backed up by clear silent on many line function priorities including the flagship programmes which

were decentralized from the Premier's office to the Department of Economic Development, Environment and Tourism.

One senior member of government confided, "there was nothing happening in that department, that's why the MEC had to get rid of that HOD, whose preoccupation was suspending his senior managers and awarding himself a Rolls Royce (R140 000 worth) bursary."

The lack of pointers on what the line function departments would have as priority areas from the State of the Province Address puts a huge burden on the MECs responsible for these portfolios.

Usually the State of the Province Address is used as a barometre to measure or even anticipate what the Budget Speeches of Departments would emphasize. But as things stand, the state of the province except in few incidents where it has highlighted a project or two has failed whether by design of unwittingly to assist break the elements of the soon-to-follow Budget speeches.

The Premier while having mentioned that he is tired of watching our province lampooned and made a laughing stock, he chose not to use this opportunity to address the issue of a hit list and counter accusation in the media about fellow ANC members orchestrating the violent uprisings that have be-dogged our municipalities in recent times.

His silence alone, however, is not enough. Any leader who is worth his salt must also have the courage to reprimand those who have helped him ascend the throne, when they engage in activities that are putting his name to shame.

It's only a matter of time before he soon discovers that the "pull him down syndrome" is actually closer to home than it is to Luthuli House.



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The NEC Task Team that brings panic

The Task Team that the ANC NEC instituted to investigate allegations of divisions and factionalism in Mpumalanga moved into gear last week.

According to information in Ziwaphi's possession, the task team, led by former Deputy Secretary General of the ANC, Thandi Modise, has already been to Gert Sibande Region and will this weekend be in Ehlanzeni. It is expected to release its report by the end of March 2010.

The formation of the Task Team has, understandably, placed the beneficiaries of Premier David Mabuza's administration in a state of panic, because a similar intervention in 1998, led to the recall of former Premier Mathews Phosa, and if the same fate were to befall the current incumbent, it could mean the end of access to their recently found privileges, tenders and a life of luxury.

This sparked a major war which spilled even to the media. The opponents of the current administration seem to have successfully used the media against their less-smarter components. Getting a negative full-page report in the Sunday Times cannot

compare to a fifteen minutes of fame in Ligwalagwala FM.

The beneficiaries of the current administration, however, made a smarter move by focusing on the ANC BECs on the ground, and these are the people that the Task Team will be listening to - not the Sunday Times.

Their mistake, however, was their inability to know who their enemy really is.

Some were pointing their finger at Mathews Phosa (without mentioning his name) at Luthuli House, accusing him of being the brains behind the violent service delivery protests. Phosa has since laid a R1 million civil suit against one of the supporters of the status quo. This may impact on their campaign.

Another flaw of their strategy was assaulting people who are perceived to be against the current administration and disbanding democratically established structures of the ANCYL to reduce their influence on the process.

Their strategy to exclude "hostile" branches from attending the sub-regional meetings may also backfire, once the Task Team gets

to know about it. By Thursday, some of the BECs were still unaware that there would be sub-regional meetings where the NEC would be starring.

Thandi Modise and her team have their work cut-out for them, and the wisdom of Solomon may not be enough to resolve this.

Whatever the outcome of this latest intervention, mistakes of the past should be avoided, namely removing one faction and replacing it with another.

The current factions have not only left the organisation in a "state of paralysis" as Jackson Mthembu says, but have alienated the very people they should be leading.

Those who fear that they may lose privileges should get comfort that our struggle was never, in the first place, about wealth accumulation for a tiny few.

It surely should be difficult to drive a luxurious German sedan surrounded by a sea of people who live in abject poverty.

After all these are the people who have cast their vote!

By Comrade Phinda Mzala

PHOSA WITHDRAWS BURSARY FOR DAUGHTER'S BOYFRIEND

NELSPRUIT,

By Tshwarelo eseng Mogakane

Mpumalanga finance MEC Pinky Phosa has capitulated and withdrawn a bursary her department awarded to the boyfriend of her daughter, Tshepiso.

After a week of failing to answer questions about why Bruno Vilane was given a bursary meant for poor students, Phosa has finally responded, sending a general reply to the media through the department of economic development, environment and tourism (Dedet).

"After careful consideration and the manner (sic) in which this matter has been handled, I have decided to withdraw the bursary unreservedly," said Phosa, who is the wife of ANC treasurer-general Mathews Phosa.

She said that although Vilane "qualified" for the bursary, she decided to withdraw it after the "public outcry"



MEC for Finance, Pinky Phosa bowed to "public outcry"

that followed a newspaper report about the matter.

The Sowetan revealed that Vilane was the son of well-off parents. His

father, who shares the same name, is the former municipal manager of Mbombela Local Municipality, while his mother works in the provincial department of agriculture.

"Due to the circumstances that led to the public outcry and the perceived malpractice and nepotism, I have taken a decision to withdraw the bursary," said Phosa.

Since last Friday, Phosa's spokesperson, Nontsikelelo Gabela, has failed to answer questions regarding the bursary.

Her junior in the finance department, Blondie Legodi, said he had no authority to speak on the matter and that he had handed the questions to Gabela.

Among the questions Phosa was asked to answer was whether she would institute an investigation or disciplinary process against her head of department, Mandla Mazibuko, who is said to have

signed off on the bursary.

A communication officer from Dedet confirmed that Mazibuko had requested his department to send Phosa's memo on Wednesday.

He refused to be named, saying the matter was too sensitive and speaking to the media would "get us into trouble".

"We are one government. The reason the HOD requested us to send out the memo was because Phosa's communication section is in a total crisis due to incompetence," said the officer.

Phosa's letter concluded with a plea for the public to approach the public protector should they suspect foul play in the offering of government benefits.

"We assure you that in future such matters will be undertaken with more caution and absolute objectivity," Phosa said.

War of words as Legislators debate the Premier's State of the Province Address

NELSPRUIT

By Tshwarelo eseng Mogakane

On Wednesday afternoon in the Mpumalanga provincial legislature, provincial DA leader Anthony Benadie was the lone voice giving any criticism of premier David Mabuza's State of the Province address, which was delivered with pomp and ceremony at the government complex in Nelspruit on Friday.

With COPE member Prudence Zale Madonsela in hospital after an accident last week, Benadie was the only member of the legislature to debate the speech and not sing its praises, like all the ANC MPLs did.

He told Mabuza to "stop fooling the people".

"Your speech was a pendulum, swinging from the one extreme of unachievable outcomes to the other extreme of providing no direction, target or plan. In fact, never before have I heard someone take so long to say so little."

Benadie said Mabuza pretended to be building on the legacy of former President Nelson Mandela when evidence pointed to the contrary.

He said Mpumalanga had a nationally infamous "failed education system, a crippled healthcare system, a non-functioning local government system, [and] a provincial administration riddled with corruption".

"This is a province where those who walk the road of honesty fear the tornado who leads them. This is nothing more than a blatant insult to the character, integrity and the dreams of Nelson Mandela."

Benadie embarrassed Mabuza further when he accused him of "ignorantly" bragging about the number of social grants beneficiaries, which Mabuza said had gone up by 77% since 2004, representing more than a million people who depend on them.

"While government must support the poor, we should be crying about these statistics rather than parading them as a major achievement. These statistics confirm one fact only: people in Mpumalanga have become poorer under ANC rule," he said.

Benadie also accused Mabuza of being "totally clueless" about the scourge of crime in the province and ways in which to fight corruption.

He said Mabuza's failure to mention an alleged hit list targeted at whistle-blowers and top government officials was a sign that he cared little about fighting corruption.

Benadie, in turn, was attacked by ANC MPLs, who labelled him a grandson of "apartheid architects".

"The apartheid government was a government system that was inherently corrupt. It put our people in homelands and robbed them of all sorts of rights.

That was corruption at its worst," said ANC MPL Bonakele Majuba.

Majuba said Benadie would never be taken seriously because he was not helping the ANC in its leadership, but merely opposing everything the ANC does.

Deputy speaker in the legislature Violet Siwela also joined in the fray.

"You accuse the premier of saying too little in the speech; you have a hearing problem. The premier mentioned the building of a university in the province, while your forefathers failed to even build an FET college for our people," said Siwela.

Legislature chief whip Siphosizwe Masango had to withdraw an insult he had directed at Benadie.

"You people are die Dom Alliansie, you will never rule this province," said Masango.

Speaker William Lubisi asked him to withdraw the statement.

"I withdraw, kodwa bangizwile (but they heard me)," said a defiant Masango.

Mabuza thanked his ANC comrades for "coming to my defence".

"The DA will always be a minority and no minority can tell the majority what democracy is. Only the majority will tell us through the ballot what they think of our leadership," said Mabuza.

Exam paper leak suspect vanishes

NELSPRUIT

By Thobile Mlangeni

The court case against 19 suspects arrested in connection with the leaking of matric exam papers in Mpumalanga in October last year has been postponed again.

None of the 18 suspects who appeared in the Nelspruit Magistrate's Court on Wednesday was asked to plead to charges of either theft or contravening the Control of Access to Information Act.

The case was postponed to April 23 for a decision from the National Prosecution Authority on whether the prosecution would continue.

Zimbabwean teacher Milton Msimango (31), who has been charged with selling mathematics, physical science and accounting exam papers, failed to appear in court.

He last appeared in court on November 13 when he was granted R3 000 bail.

After failing to appear in January, a warrant for arrest was issued but he has not been found.

After 13 people in total were arrested last year, six more students were added in early January.

Mpumalanga's COPE leader undergoes surgery

BY SYDNEY MASINGA

NELSPRUIT

The leader of the Congress of the People (COPE) in Mpumalanga who was involved in a car accident last week underwent surgery in Nelspruit on Tuesday.

Prudence Zale Madonsela, the party's only representative in the Mpumalanga legislature, was injured last Wednesday evening after her car hit a pothole on the Badplaas road and overturned. She was returning from site visits in Piet Retief when the accident occurred.

Madonsela was transported to the Barberton Medi-Clinic before being transferred to the Nelspruit Medi-Clinic, where she is receiving treatment.

In an interview with African Eye News Service before the operation on Tuesday, Madonsela said her left hand was numb and one part of the operation was aimed at fixing nerve



MPL Zale Madonsela

damage to the hand. Doctors would also work on her damaged spinal chord, she said, adding that she was scared she might be paralysed.

"The doctors told me that this is a complicated operation, but they gave me hope when they informed me that they've had successes in all the similar operations that they've done before. They told me that I also need to pray for the operation to be successful," said Madonsela.

"I was told that I will be kept in hospital for another week after the operation. I also have to attend physiotherapy for a while before the doctors can give me the go-ahead to return to work," she said.

Madonsela's seat in the Mpumalanga legislature will remain vacant until she is fit enough to return.

The ANC chief whip in the Mpumalanga legislature, Siphosezwe Masango, wished Madonsela a speedy recovery.

"We hope she gets better and returns to work soon. We will send her flowers and a card to let her know that we are thinking about her and wish her the

best," said Masango.

After Madonsela's accident, the Democratic Alliance in the province challenged premier David Mabuza's government to repair all the potholes in the province.

The provincial department of public works, roads and transport said last week that it needed R2-billion to address the maintenance backlog in the province, with a further R850-million needed annually.

Spokesperson David Nkambule added that the department did not have enough money.

"However, with the limited funds and resources at our disposal we try to prevent the problem from escalating. We have dispatched 1 507 road workers throughout the province and also appointed extra contractors to fix the roads," he said.

Fed-up Nkomazi residents nab eight-member gang

BY THOBILE MLANGENI

KOMATIPOORT,

By Thabisile Khoza

Fed-up residents of living near the Mozambican border in Mpumalanga ambushed and beat a suspected gang of eight hijackers on Friday morning.

One of the suspects died while the other seven were taken to Tonga hospital for treatment.

A member of the community who didn't want to be named said a syndicate had been terrorising the

community for several months.

"We ambushed them after they were seen driving around a local shopping plaza in three Golf GTIs with Free State, Gauteng and North West registration plates on Thursday," he said.

He said the suspects parked their cars next to the taxi rank and were seen playing an indigenous game called ntjuba with some of taxi drivers.

"We got suspicious when we heard them receiving international calls and speaking Portuguese, Shangaan and Siswati about whether cars had landed

on not," he said.

He said the suspects were also overheard planning to rob a store at the Naas Plaza that night.

"We then ambushed them and arrested when they were trying to break into one of the retail stores at about 3am," said the source.

He said the suspects, who allegedly had tools to break into buildings, showed their ambushers the houses where they had stolen cars.

"They said the cars are already in Mozambique in Shokwe village outside Maputo," he said.

Police were called to scene to make a proper arrest after the suspects had been beaten.

Spokesperson for Tonga Police Station, Sergeant Mzwandile Nyambi said on Friday that when police arrived at the taxi rank, eight injured people were lying down on the ground.

"We called an ambulances to come and rescue them, unfortunately one of them was certified dead on the scene," said Nyambi.

Nyambi praised the community for apprehending the suspects, but criticised them for assaulting them.

"We don't encourage people to take the law into their hands because they will end up in jail," he said.

Nyambi said those responsible for killing the suspect would be arrested soon to face murder charges.

He said the suspects had confessed that they are responsible for a string of robberies in the broader Nkomazi area, which borders Swaziland and Mozambique.

"They also confessed to us that they are responsible for a recent house robbery in which a Volvo and a double cab were stolen from the house of a ward councillor in Schoemansdal," he said.

They were found in the possession of a hacksaw, hammer, cutting torch and other items used during the robberies.

They will appear in the Tonga Magistrate's Court for trial.

Three more suspected members were arrested on Sunday night, while one died during a shootout with the police. Police spokesperson Sergeant Mzwandile Nyambi said the suspects had confessed that they were responsible for a string of vehicle thefts and other robberies in the broader Nkomazi area, which borders Swaziland and Mozambique.

Suspended Nkomazi municipal manager out on bail

BY THOBILE MLANGENI

MALELANE

A suspended Mpumalanga municipal manager was released on R2 000 bail on Wednesday last week.

Nkomazi municipal manager Sabelo Shabangu (47) briefly appeared in the Malelane Magistrate's Court on charges of contravening Section 173 of the Municipal Finance Management Act of 2003.

According to Captain Leonard Hlathi, spokesperson of the Mpumalanga Organised Crime Unit, Shabangu was arrested on February 15 for allegedly awarding tenders without following proper procedures and failing to send inspectors to evaluate work that had supposedly been done.

"It is alleged that some of the tenders were awarded to companies but no work was done, yet the companies were paid," said Hlathi.

"Our investigations suggest that Shabangu could have been involved in



HAPPIER DAYS: Suspended Nkomazi Municipal Manager, Sabelo Shabangu (right) with Nkomazi Executive Mayor, Johan Mavuso.

the mismanagement of municipal funds worth more than R1-million," he said.

Hlathi disputed claims by Shabangu that the charges laid against him were politically motivated.

"We (the police) were led to him by the crimes he had allegedly committed. We will never let ourselves be used for political gain," he said.

Shabangu will appear in court again March 29.

Phosa accuser asks for donations

BY SYDNEY MASINGA

NELSPRUIT

The provincial treasurer of the South African National Civics Organisation (Sanco) in Mpumalanga, Raymond Makamo, has asked the public to help him hire a defence team for a lawsuit brought against him by ANC treasurer-general Mathews Phosa.

Phosa wants R1 million in damages and a public apology after Makamo allegedly accused the senior ANC leader of being behind political instability in the province.

A week ago, Makamo allegedly told SABC radio station Ligwalagwala FM that Phosa was paying journalists to write negative stories about Premier David Mabuza, as well as fuelling and funding service delivery protests in the province.

Makamo insists he did not mention Phosa's name in the interview.

"I am asking the community of Mpumalanga to donate at least R10 per household to help me raise money to pay for an advocate who will help me defend the lawsuit.

"The ANC Women's League in Ehlanzeni district and people close to

me have started the Friends of Makamo team, and they are fundraising to help me," said Makamo last week.

The Ehlanzeni chairwoman, Letta Shongwe, said the league would support Makamo because he was innocent.

"We will join Friends of Makamo and help to collect from people because we listened to the show and he never mentioned Phosa's name.

"We believe he needs all the help he can get from us," said Shongwe.

"I am 100 percent sure that he would not have decided to sue me if he had listened to the show.

"I don't remember mentioning his name. The person who mentioned Phosa's name was the journalist I was debating with," Makamo said.

The ANC Youth League in Mpumalanga's Gert Sibande district said it "wouldn't mind" supporting Makamo.

"Though our challenge is common (exposing those behind service delivery protests), we decided to approach it differently than he did. We will expose the people behind the service delivery protests through the relevant structures



Raymond Makamo at the State of the Province Address. He is asking the community to donate R10

of the ANC before we go public. "Maybe he should have also taken that approach before going to the radio.

"Otherwise we understand his current position and we won't mind supporting him," said regional league spokesman Themba Motlhankana.

Phosa's lawyer, Ian Small Smith of BDK Attorneys, said last week he was waiting for transcripts of the interview from Ligwalagwala FM before deciding how to continue with the lawsuit.

ACCORDING to information at Ziwaphi's disposal an account at the First National Bank has been opened at the Riverside branch under the name, Hands Off Makamo Foundation.

Neither Makamo nor the bank could disclose who the trustees of the foundation were.

Ziwaphi also could not establish if the foundation has been registered with either the Master of the High Court or as a Non Profit Organisation.

A legal expert told Ziwaphi that if all the legal requirements have not been complied with, the beneficiary of the funds raised may be subjected to heavy taxation by SARS.

Several ANC members have confirmed receiving SMSes with the banking details and requests for donations.



finance

Department: Finance
MPUMALANGA PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT



INVITATION!!

MPUMALANGA ANNUAL BUDGET 2010/11

I, Mrs Y.N Phosa, the MEC for the Department of Finance in Mpumalanga Province have the pleasure of inviting all the residents of the province to the tabling of the 2010-2011 Mpumalanga Annual Budget, scheduled to take place as follows:

DATE: Tuesday, 02 March 2010
VENUE: Mpumalanga Legislature Chamber, building No.1 Riverside Government Complex
TIME: 14H00

NB: YOU ARE REQUESTED TO BE SEATED BY 13H45



Blade Nzimande blasts the dominance of money

Minister of Higher Education, Blade Nzimande visited the province last week, in his capacity as the General Secretary of the South African Communist Party to help raise funds for the organisation's Phillip Radebe (Ehlanzeni) District.

As part of his activities, Nzimande visited communities within the Mbombela Municipality, establishing street committees and handing over houses to poor families.

The houses were constructed by communists in Mbombela as part of the organisation's Red October Campaign.

The Spokesperson of the SACP in the district, Sizwe Motha, told Ziwaphi that the organisation has declared the month of February as the "Che Guevara Month, and the party was focussing on honouring "heroes and stalwarts who contributed towards the emancipation of the masses from oppression."

"We have declared the month in honour of Che Guevara - a revolutionary internationalist who took part in the struggles of the toiling masses across the globe including in the African soil. Cde Che was driven by the fundamental revolutionary



principle of unselfishness and sacrifice which saw him move from his native Argentine," said Motha.

The sentiments were also echoed by Nzimande when he presented his keynote address.

"Cdes must preserve the revolutionary

principles of selfless service to our people without expectation of material rewards, loyalty to the organization and the revolution and not to specific individuals no matter the positions those people hold, revolutionary discipline and adherence to internal democracy of our organizations," Nzimande said.

Nzimande also spoke out against "the emerging culture of dominance of money which manifests itself in different ways such as the buying of members as voting foddors as well as the conspicuous consumption which lead to the decay to our societal moral value fibre."

An estimated 150 patrons, including Mbombela Local Municipality Executive Mayor, Lassy Chiwayo and Speaker Rev Micah Nthali who is also the convenor of the Moral Regeneration Movement in Mpumalanga, attended.

Premier wants action than “Scamtho”

Mpumalanga Premier David Dabede Mabuza wants less talk and more action by government, and he also appealed for an end to the “pull-down syndrome”.

Mabuza was presenting his second State of the Province Address (SOPA) since his election as the province's fourth democratically elected Premier.

The event was not held at the usual Legislature chamber. The Dome's public galleries can only seat about 300 patrons. The spacious government car park was instead chosen and converted to a chamber in order to accommodate the estimated 1400 guests. A special legislature resolution, however, had to be passed to allow the sitting to be held outside the legislature precinct.

This year's occasion, which is traditionally held in the month of February, coincided with the 20th anniversary of the release of Nelson Mandela from the apartheid prison after 27 years. Throughout his imprisonment, successive apartheid governments projected him as a man who was committed to the violent overthrow of government, but on his release, Mandela preached reconciliation and tirelessly worked for a peaceful resolution of the country's problems.

Mabuza used the occasion to pay tribute to this remarkable leader of the South African revolution by quoting from Mandela's speech during his inauguration as the country's first democratically elected President.

“We must therefore act together as a united people, for national reconciliation, for nation building, for the birth of a new world. Let there be



Premier David Mabuza and Speaker of the Legislature, William Lubisi on the red carpet

justice for all. Let there be peace for all. Let there be work, bread water and salt for all.”

“Never, never and never again shall it be that this beautiful land will again experience the oppression of one another and suffer the indignity of being the skunk of the world. Let freedom reign.

“The sun shall never set on so glorious a human achievement.”

Quoting the five key priorities from the 2009 election manifesto of the African National Congress, Mabuza told the gathering that the Mpumalanga

Provincial Government was committed to the organisation's election promises.

“We remain committed towards speeding economic growth that creates decent work and sustainable livelihood for our people in the Province, particularly the poor and working class.”

“Our commitment continues to be unwavering with respect to dealing with challenges affecting our rural masses on a daily basis, especially matters involving access and ownership of land – land that should be utilized for subsistence and food security for the country as a whole.”

“Yes we remain committed towards ensuring that the challenges relating to creation of decent work, education, health, fighting crime and corruption do not escape our radar,” said Mabuza.

Premier Mabuza also issued an earnest appeal to the people of the province to work together with government and to end the “pull-down” syndrome.

“Sekwanele bakithi. Let's stop the pull down syndrome. We are calling for less *scamtho* (talk) but more action, action and action,” he said.

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

ONE MILLION PEOPLE GET GOVERNMENT AID

More than one million residents of Mpumalanga are beneficiaries of the government social grants. This is according to the Premier of Mpumalanga Province, Mr David Mabuza when he presented second State of the Province Address (SOPA), at the Provincial Legislature sitting on Friday last week.

Mabuza said that the increase in the number of recipients of government social grants was part of the province's efforts to alleviate the impact of the global economic crisis which shed approximately 53 000 jobs in Mpumalanga Province alone.

He said that the major economic sectors that were affected by the economic crisis in the province included agriculture, mining, manufacturing, construction and trade.

“The people who are hardest hit by this unfavourable situation are the poorest of the poor,” he said.

Mabuza thanked the companies that did not lay off their workers in the face of the worst economic crisis in recent years and declared that the government has a significant role to provide safety

nets that can mitigate the effects of the economic crisis.

“Providing a safety net in the form of social grants continues to be critical in government's efforts to alleviate poverty among the poor and vulnerable sectors of society,” he said.

“In Mpumalanga the total number of social grant beneficiaries has grown by 77%, that is from 579,907 in 2004 to 1030,095 as of the 15th February 2010). The number of children accessing social grants has grown by 110% from 368 500 in 2004 to 774,176 as of 15 February 2010. This attests to the commitment of government in addressing the challenges of poverty,” said Mabuza.

Mabuza also extended his appreciation to the Minister of Finance, Pravin Gordhan who, earlier in the week, had announced an increase in the different social grants.

“This increase will go a long way in cushioning the hardship faced by our people,” said Mabuza.

EDUCATION

THOROUGHGOING TRANSFORMATION OF EDUCATION IN THE PROVINCE

Mabuza announced the following measures aimed at improving the provision of basic education in Mpumalanga:

- Creation of a new Examination Centre
- Reconstituting the Examination Unit
- Improving learner outcomes in key learning areas to 60% in Grades 3,6,9 and 12
- Doubling the number of candidates attaining university entrance requirement from 6552 to 13,112 by 2014
- Addressing infrastructure backlogs
- Eradicate all mud and shack schools
- Building boarding facilities for farm schools
- Capacity building for principals
- Introduce Saturday and Winter school classes in all schools with a pass rate below 50%; Transport will



No “red carpet treatment” for mud schools in the next financial year.

be provided for legitimate learners; Recruited teachers will be paid a stipend.

- School Governing Bodies to run scholar transport and nutrition programmes

Mabuza also announced that the National Government has granted Mpumalanga permission to establish a fully-fledged multi campus university in the province.

He was also quoted as saying that the main campus would be located in Mbombela.

A lot expected from State of the Province

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

TOURISM - MPUMALANGA'S RANKING IMPROVES

Mpumalanga tourism experienced a fair increase in both domestic and international visits to the province over the past year in spite of the global economic recession. The announcement was made by Mpumalanga Premier, David Mabuza during his 2010 State of the Province Address on Friday.

Mabuza said that the province had moved from the low 8th position to 6th in domestic visits while international visitors have moved the province from position 6 to position 3.

RECOMMITMENT TO THE RESOLUTIONS OF THE ECONOMIC SUMMIT

Mpumalanga Premier also recommitted his government to the resolutions of the Provincial Economic Summit to:

- provide support to SMMEs and co-operatives
- empower the youth, women and people with disabilities

JOB CREATION

The Premier announced that government created 32,943 job opportunities, exceeding the Province's target of 28,378.

He also announced that the government would be improving tourism products and services as well as co-operating with the province's two neighbouring countries

"To further enhance the growing tourism industry in Mpumalanga, in the next financial year we will focus on infrastructure rehabilitation to improve our tourism products and services; and positioning of Mozambique, Swaziland and Mpumalanga as the Regional destination of choice in the SADC region for international market," Mabuza said.

- promote trade and investment
- promote and transform the tourism industry
- develop strategic massive socio-economic infrastructure, namely the coal haulage network, university, tertiary hospital and International Convention Centre.

HEALTH

INCREASING ACCESS TO ARV TREATMENT

Mpumalanga province aims to increase the number of patients accessing Anti-Retro Viral (ARV) treatment from the current 65,090 to 102,000 patients and intensify HIV and AIDS education and awareness campaigns. Premier Mabuza said during his State of the Province in Nelspruit last Friday.

The province, with a population of just over 3 million people has the second highest HIV prevalence in South Africa, 35%, after KwaZulu-Natal province.

Mabuza referred to statistics by Stats SA, which indicate that 26,7% of the people living with HIV are the youth of between 15 and 25 years.

He also said that Tuberculosis, an opportunistic disease for people infected with HIV, was ranked as the number one killer of the youth between the ages of 15 and 24 years.

"These statistics paint a bleak future," Mabuza said.

The Premier bemoaned the shortage of medical and other health care professionals in Mpumalanga province and the delays in procuring and supplying drugs.

"We will strengthen the institutional

capacity at all levels to ensure the delivery of quality health care. In this regard, we will ensure that we continue to attract and retain medical and health care professionals to address the shortage of skills."

"We will accelerate the implementation of the Comprehensive HIV and AIDS Plan and significantly reduce the mortality rate related to TB and opportunistic disease. In this regard, we will accredit more primary health care facilities to provide Anti-Retroviral treatment as part of expanding access, Mabuza said.

Mabuza said that the government will be strengthening its HIV and AIDS education and awareness programmes to prevent new infections but also called for the cooperation of everyone in the campaign.

"We call upon every citizen to take personal responsibility, to save this nation from the devastating impact of HIV and AIDS," Mabuza said.

OTHER PROJECTS

- Finalise the revitalization of Themba, Rob Ferreira and Ermelo hospitals
- Commence revitalisation of Barberton and Lydenburg hospitals

RURAL DEVELOPMENT & AGRARIAN REFORM

LINKING RURAL DEVELOPMENT AND LAND AND AGRARIAN REFORM

Premier David Mabuza announced during his State of the Province Address that his government's comprehensive rural development strategy was linked to the province's programme on land and agrarian reform and food security.

Mabuza announced that as part of the anti-poverty campaign, the provincial government has profiled up to 6526 poor households in six municipalities, Sikhwahlane (Nkomazi); Hlabekisa,

Hluvukani, Alandale and Sorty (Bushbuckridge); Marapyane (Dr JS Moroka); Verena (Thembisile Hani); Bejeka (Albert Luthuli); Perdekop and Daggakraal (Pixley Isaka Ka Seme) and Mkhondo Municipality.

He reported that government was co-operating with the private sector and other stakeholders in implementing a pilot project on the Comprehensive Rural Development Programme in Mkhondo Municipality.

He said the programme had already led to the construction of 550 new housing units which will be handed to the beneficiaries before the end of the current financial year.

Mabuza also announced some of the major achievements of the Masibuyele Emasimini programme - a government initiative that was launched in 2004 to encourage poor communities to produce their own food on unused land by providing them with farming

implements and other inputs as well as skills.

"In the current production season of 2009/10 alone, the province has managed, through mechanization, to bring 33 000 hectares of arable land into production, bringing relief to 37,210 poor households and in the process created decent jobs," Mabuza said.

SCENES FROM MPUMALANGA'S OWN BRAND OF THE RED CARPET



Former Bafana stars, Phill Masinga and Mark Williams were there.



MEC Vusi Shongwe (Right) and wife Charmaine



MPLs Nomsa Mtsheni and Thandi Shongwe



Prof John Shongwe and daughter Buyi Shongwe

MEC deals with Pilgrims Rest hawker problem

BY BONGKILE MHLANGA

PILGRIMS' REST

Mpumalanga's MEC for economic development, environment and tourism, Jabu Mahlangu, has handed over 11 newly built stalls to hawkers in Pilgrims Rest.

According to the provincial spokesperson of the department of economic development, environment and tourism, Mohau Ramodibe, it decided to build the stalls after a 40% decline in tourists in the area because of the unruly behaviour of car washers in the tiny town's streets.

"They would wash cars without the owners' consent and threaten visitors who would not pay up. The tourists started feeling it was unsafe to go there," said Ramodibe.

"Hawkers would also mob the visitors and try to sell them things they didn't want to buy, which also added to the decline in tourists."

He said the lack of stalls also

contributed to the town becoming unsightly and run down.

The handover of the stalls took place at an event in Pilgrims Rest community hall on Friday.

Mahlangu told the hawkers that a positive attitude towards their surroundings and tourists would encourage investment in the area which, in turn, will rekindle the economy of this famous Mpumalanga landmark.

He encouraged the hawkers to take pride in restoring their town.

"As a heritage site and an historical mining town that attracts many tourists, archaeologists and historians from across the globe, Pilgrims Rest should be protected against degradation at all cost," said Mahlangu.

He also told to hawkers to do their business honestly.

"I should warn you against being tempted to overprice your goods in an attempt to make quick money. You risk chasing your potential customers away,"



MEC JL Mahlangu cutting the ribbon

said Mahlangu.

"Let us show visitors that we are honest people who believe in fair trade."

He told the hawkers that the improvement of the local economy rested in their hands.

The stalls were a joint project of the provincial and national departments of tourism, the Thaba Chweu Local Municipality and Simmer and Jack Mines Limited.

Mobile training centre to boost finance skills among rural SMMEs

BY SYDNEY MASINGA

MIDDELBURG

The Banking Sector Training Authority (Bankseta) has launched its first mobile training centre to help small, medium and micro-enterprises (SMMEs) in South Africa.

The project was launched in Middelburg, Mpumalanga, on Wednesday.

Bankseta CEO Max Makhubalo said the project was started as part of the authority's ongoing efforts to provide much-needed skills training to people in rural areas.

"Our efforts will focus on the training and development needs of SMMEs in rural and remote areas," said Makhubalo on Wednesday.

"We have budgeted R1.4-million to run the project in Mpumalanga and then Limpopo before taking it to other provinces."

Called a "mobile training solution", the centre is essentially a converted bus fitted with computers in which skills training classes are held.



The "mobile training solution"

Training is offered in computer skills, the National Credit Act, credit management and micro-finance skills.

"The curriculum incorporates all the important elements to compliment the skills mix of business owners and employees that is necessary for SMMEs to succeed," Makhubalo said.

He added that the training would improve the level of professionalism in SMMEs, ensuring improved customer service that will lead to better business performance.



"We will implement an impact evaluation of the project after training a business to measure the return on investment achieved as a result of the training, and we will also measure the levels of professionalism a business achieves," he said.

The mobile training centre will visit various towns in Mpumalanga and Limpopo over the next month.

In Mpumalanga, the bus will be stationed in Middelburg from February 17 to 21, in Belfast from February 22 to 26, and in Hendrina from March 1 to 5.

In Limpopo, it will be stationed in Tzaneen from March 8 to 12, in Mokopane from March 15 to 19, and in Thohoyandou from March 23 to 26.

Makhubalo said Microfinance South Africa would help the authority to identify SMMEs for training.

Elliot Marokoane from Umlazi township near Middelburg, who runs a small printing business, said: "I am part of the lucky ones who were given a chance to attend this project. I will use the skills gained in the course to expand my printing business."

Police volunteers get whistles to fight crime

BY THABISILE KHOZA

KOMATIPOORT

Mpumalanga's MEC for community safety, security and liaison, Sibongile Manana, has handed over whistles and reflector jackets to community patrol teams from two deep-rural police stations.

The handover event was held in Sibhejane village, north of Komatipoort, on Sunday, for members

of teams attached to Tonga and Schoemansdal police stations.

The teams consist of volunteers from the community who patrol their areas each night to combat crime.

Manana warned them not to misuse their whistles and jackets.

"These items are meant to make you visible to the community while you patrol, not to commit crimes," she said. She also praised the volunteers for their role in protecting their

communities.

"I know that it's difficult to sacrifice your sleep, walking throughout the night, and yet you don't get paid at the end of the month."

She said patrol team involvement led to the recent arrest of 12 members of a suspected car theft syndicate that was terrorising the Nkomazi community.

"Without the valuable information that you provided to the police, these cars would not have been found," she

said.

Stanley Madonsela, chairperson of the Tonga Community Policing Forum, welcomed the whistles and jackets.

"We are very happy that she is an MEC who hates crime. With the whistles we will be able to alert other members when we find criminals, and the jackets will help to identify us to the community," he said.

Women's empowerment firm a roaring success

NELSPRUIT

By Eric Mashaba

Not wanting to be dependent on their husbands for money, 12 women from Mpumalanga have worked extra hard to ensure their brick-making and paving company is a thriving success.

Tfutfukani Brick Making Co-operative was formed in 2005 by Winnie Morare, Monica Mdaka and 10 other women from KaNyamazane near Nelspruit.

"As soon as we realised that many people were building homes, we came up with the idea to supply them with bricks," said Morare.

"We started small, in a field near Thandulwazi Primary School. We bought cement with our own money and began making block bricks. We mixed the cement with shovels and, no matter how hard it was, we never gave up."

As the community's demand for bricks grew, the women moved their business to a member's home in KaNyamazane to continue with production on a bigger scale.



Winnie Morare and Sibongile Nkosi at their brick-making firm

Again, the space became too small and the women approached the Mbombela local municipality to help them get a site. In 2008, the municipality offered them one-and-a-half hectares of land at Karino near Nelspruit and a five-year renewable contract.

A local company, Manganese Metal, donated a brick-making machine worth R950 000 and pallets for stacking the bricks. It also allowed them to collect ash for the factory.

"We were so excited. The machine helped us and we no longer struggled.

Currently we produce between 800 and 900 bricks a day," said Morare.

In addition to the 12 women, the factory also employs four adult men and four youths, who matriculated last year.

"We want to hire 10 more people," said administrator Hleziphi Mavuso. "We plan to purchase another brick-making machine to increase our production even more."

The project now produces various types of bricks that are all approved by the South African Bureau of Standards.

Project manager Sibongile Nkosi said they had benefited greatly from training by the Small Enterprise Development Agency, which the department of trade and industry uses to support small businesses.

"We are now qualified brick makers. Our customers are satisfied with our quality products and we look forward to getting more contracts," she said.

"We want to pave schools, hospitals, government complexes, petrol stations and malls," added Nkosi.

Hard work pays off for FET students in Mpumalanga



Vincent gets the laptop from Marthinus Loots, CFO of Gert Sibande FET College, while his mother, Florence Nkonde, looks on

STANDERTON

By Bongekile Mhlanga

A 20-year-old student at the Ermelo campus of the Gert Sibande FET College has scored himself a laptop by getting outstanding results in his national certificate (vocational) exams last year.

Vincent Vilane scored an average of 83% - with six distinctions - in his second year of office administration studies.

An overjoyed Vilane said he tried to do well in everything he does.

"It's just my principle that everything I do, I do wholeheartedly. I like to leave a mark. And this time round, the reward came in the form of a laptop. I'm so pleased that my efforts have paid off."

According to the college's CEO, Nick Balkrishen, prizes like these motivate

the students to strive for excellence.

"This year, more students will want to outdo each other to get rewards. In this way, the pass rate increases, and this aids our college's good name," said Balkrishen.

Three other top students, respectively from the college's Sibanesetfu campus in Piet Retief, and the Standerton and Evander campuses, will be getting their laptops on Thursday and Friday. Jabu Mhlabane, the college's chief communication officer, said the practice to reward outstanding students started in 2008 and has yielded good results.

"The pass rate of the college has improved from 68% in 2008 to 72% in 2009. Overall, the FET colleges in Mpumalanga have been doing very well because, when you look at results countrywide, the province came in second after the Western Cape last year," said Mhlabane.



the DCSSL
Department: Safety, Security and Liaison
MPUMALANGA PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT



**"Awulethe Umshini Wakho"
- MEC Manana**

The Firearm Amnesty window period is still open.

Mpumalanga Community Safety, Security and Liaison MEC Sibongile Manana calls on citizens in our beautiful province to hand over illegal, unwanted licensed firearms and ammunition to any police station during this period.

The Firearm Amnesty window period will close on 11 April 2010 and people should take advantage of this opportunity.

Choose amnesty or face arrest.

Act Now, Awulethe Umshini Wakho - [Surrender Your Firearm]



"Together let's fight crime"

Cleaner by day, architect by night!

BY THOBILE MLANGENI

MALALANE

A cleaner from Mpumalanga has a special hobby - he designs beautiful homes for people in various rural areas in the province.

Bongani Limane (26), who lives in Boschfontein village outside Malalane, has been drawing houses for as long as he can remember.

"I've always loved drawing and my dream was to become a full-time professional architect," he says.

However, after completing matric in 2003, Limane had no one to pay for his studies because both his parents were dead.

So, in his spare time, he began copying homes that he liked, and soon bricklayers in the area were

complementing him on his excellent house plans.

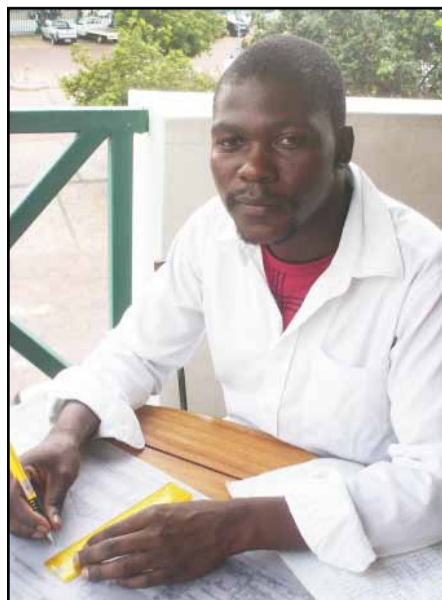
Eventually he became friends with Muzi Khoza, a professional architect from eMgobodzi, who helped him to improve his skills step by step.

Limane specialises in home design, decorating and interior design, and he also does garden landscaping.

"I also provide home improvement tips and tricks for better modern living inspiration when necessary," he says.

"For example, sometimes people feel their houses are outdated and need a new look. I will then improve either the roofing or add some extra rooms and change the garden to give the house a modern appearance."

With a technique called isometric projection, he can give clients a perfect representation of what their new home will look like.



Bongani Limane shows how he draughts his house plans

"It helps the client to view and understand the outcome of the house," he says.

The price for his house plans depends on the type and size of the house, and the work he is required to do.

Despite the fact that Limane does not have any professional training, he has become a mentor to two technikon students who are studying architecture.

"It is my deepest wish to obtain an architecture qualification and start my own draughting business in the province," says Limane.

"I hope one day my savings will be enough to allow me to enrol for an architectural course at a recognised technikon."

Limane is not only a draughtsman and cleaner - he's also a gospel artist!

He released his first album in December last year. It's called "Money" and teaches the youth how to control and manage their finances.

These shoes are no retreads!

BY SIPHIWE NYATHI

HAZYVIEW

Denis Silauzi (22) is turning old tyres into stylish sandals for women.

Silauzi, who comes from Game Trust near Hazyview in Mpumalanga, learnt the art from his friend, Joe Makamo, who lives in Soweto.

"It was a blessing to work with him and I have learnt many things," says Silauzi.

After working with Makamo for five years, Silauzi decided to return home and work for himself.

"Women are my target market and they always tell me exactly what design they want," he says.

Silauzi says he's been passionate about designing shoes since he was child, when he would use boxes to make shoes.



Denis Silauzi showing off his self made tire shoes

Today, Silauzi is based in Nelspruit and his shoes have become hot sellers.

Young women wear the shoes with tight-fitting jeans while older women wear them with traditional outfits.

Like every entrepreneur, Silauzi is looking forward to showcasing his shoes to 2010 tourists.

Besides shoes, he also designs belts for men.

His shoes cost from R90 for adults and R60 for children, depending on the design.

One of his customers, Merlin Ngomane, says Silauzi's shoes are comfortable and go well with both skirts and jeans.

"I always tell him what I want and he makes my shoes exactly to my specifications," she says.

Sangomas have also been seen wearing his designs.

Watch out, here I come!

BY SIPHIWE NYATHI

EMALAHLENI

Nine-year-old Saneliso Skhosana from Mpumalanga kicks butt!

And when she is a little bit older, she hopes to do so representing South Africa in karate championships.

Saneliso, who lives in eMalahleni (formerly Witbank), says she was motivated by her parents to take up karate.

"My parents are both karate instructors and I have always been inspired by seeing them working together and developing youth through this sport," says Saneliso.

She practises under the watchful eye of her father, Shihan (term for senior instructor) Humphrey Skosana, who teaches traditional Japanese Goju Ryu karate.

The Grade 4 pupil from Panorama Primary School has big dreams for her karate career.

"I want to follow in my parents' footsteps and run my own karate school one day," she says.

"I see myself lifting my country's flag in front of a cheering crowd," she adds hopefully.

Saneliso currently holds a purple belt in her karate style, which means she has successfully progressed to the next level six times already.



TAKE NO PRISONERS: Saneliso Skhosana means serious karate business

She says karate teaches children discipline, and to avoid trouble by being humble and respecting each other.

"It keeps you off the streets too," she says.

Her father, Humphrey, says Saneliso shows growth with each lesson.

"I treat her just like the other children and she respects everyone when we practice. She is determined to take the sport further and I am glad that the family's karate legacy will continue."

Saneliso adds: "Young girls must try this sport and show the world that girls can kick!"

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Praise singer writes song for Caster

BY ERIC MASHABA

NELSPRUIT

Well-known Mpumalanga praise singer Musa Ntimane has released an album with a special song for beleaguered athlete Caster Semenya.

The song, "Human Dignity", is on Ntimane's new album, "Secret of Survival."

Ntimane, who lives in KaNyamazane outside Nelspruit, became a popular praise singer in the late '90s when he recited poems for former Mpumalanga premier Mathews Phosa during public meetings.

When Semenya's gender-testing controversy began last year, it touched Ntimane's heart so much that he composed a song about her ordeal.

"The whole thing happened at a very

bad time for her, because she had to write her exams. I was also deeply hurt when it became likely that this 800m world champion would be stripped of her Berlin medal. I sat down and wrote a poem, which I finally decided to turn into a song," he said.

"She must know that many South Africans like me fully support and admire her for her talent. She should forget the past and look forward to a brighter future. I hope she will continue running."

Ntimane said he started writing poems when he was still in primary school.

"I watched how people coped with daily events in their lives and wrote about them," Ntimane said.

"I discovered that people live differently - Christians are faithful to God and criminals enjoy evil ways. I also wrote



Mpumalanga's praise poet, Musa Ntimane.

about the fat cats in the government who benefit from corruption."

Ntimane made his first album, titled

"Secret is Pain", in 2008.

"My original aim was to establish myself as a praise singer. I discovered that breaking into the music industry was not easy. It's a dog-eats-dog industry and piracy also demoralises musicians," he said.

Ntimane has performed at countless government events, weddings and parties.

Music producer and songwriter Mxolisi "Nesty Boy" Nkosi of KaMhushwa in Nkomazi said Mpumalanga had few artists of Ntimane's calibre.

"He is one of a kind because he sings about real life. I love the way he sings about the humiliation of our heroine Semenya. He is the only one who came up with the idea of singing about her and we hope her family will listen to the song," said Nkosi.

Capitalism and corruption in the house of God

BY MAVIYO NDINISA

The church has been part of the development of the society from the early ages. It has transformed itself in relation to the human development, their economical, technological and social relations. The church has faced contradictions like any organisation or grouping that exists in particular space at a particular epoch.

It has been dominated by the ruling class from inception as an institution with the poor forming the majority of the congregation.

But, who is the motive force in the congregation? What does the church represent? This is one contradiction that has lived with the church from early centuries up today. In the last century the church has been on the side of the colonial rulers, in suppressing and colonising the countries mainly in Africa and in the Latin American countries. Moreover it has been instrumental in the establishment and the strengthening of capitalism.

THE CHURCH AND CAPITALISM

As the colonisers were busy depriving the colonised masses of their land and raw material and wealth accumulation, churches became empires and the source for the development of state capitalism in the Latin American countries.

In South Africa the church was used by the apartheid regime to inculcate racism and to strengthen white monopoly capitalist. Some Black churches were established as a form of resistance against the white rule domination, the likes of ZCC and ZION (APOSTOLE) but continued to be the instruments of capitalism and tribalism, Sotho's (ZCC); ZULUS (SHEMBE); SWAZIS (JERICHO); XHOSAS (METHODIST) but all of them continued the same path of accumulation and self enrichment of the bishops like their European counter



parts and that is why the churches were never a threat to the regime even during the state of emergency.

In principle the church's stance against exploitation and poverty contradicts with capitalism which survives on exploitation and by reproducing poverty, however, America has grasped the opportunity of globalisation by making sure that the prosperity of the American church capitalism reaches every corner of the globe.

On the field of the ideological battle the CIA has won because it was its programme of ensuring that Americans develop the human to human relation in order to market the American glory and the success of the church capitalism is paramount.

The church in South Africa has been Americanised, through, among others, the way of worshiping and even through their operation. The church is being privatised and is managed by sowing disunity and creating conglomerates. Each priest or group of friends own and control individual ministries which are founded on the



principle of accumulation. The poor are usually excluded due to their material conditions; they cannot provide the ten percent (tith) and the bling of presents given to the pastors. Therefore they are not a motive force for this mission, because capitalism is making sure that they are economically and spiritually excluded.

THE CHURCH AND CORRUPTION

The church has been and is still in the centre of socialisation of our nation, it has proclaimed itself as the custodian of morality. The new political dispensation has brought many opportunities for many people in this country including the church. In the first ten years of our democratic government we have seen rapid development of our communities which was clearly in line with the NDR, informed by the FREEDOM CHARTER but soon after our NDR has been characterised by corruption which is embedded in society in general, self enrichment and material accumulation has put everybody under pressure including the church.

The new church of AYOKA operates like a neoliberal state which survives on taxes which are paid by the citizens and mostly by the business sector. The church relies on the ten percent of the congregants' salaries and wages and the contributions by the congregation.

The pastors are living an expensive bling bling life style and pressure is increasing every day to maintain their life style, therefore they need a pool of affording individual in their churches to sustain their life style and this pressure is eventually transferred to the congregation and the individuals.

Competition for the attention is intentionally promoted, front seats are associated with your contribution. This pressure pushes people to higher limits; usually accumulation goes with corruption, bribing and exploitation. The centre of recruitment is around the BEE TENDERPRENEURS, GOVERNMENT SENIOR OFFICIAL AND POLITICIANS, lastly the middle class.

Distribution of spoils top jobs and jobs in general is done in the church, and the distribution of tenders. People who have robbed the poor on the RDP houses, poor roads even including the deadly 2010 FIFA Soccer World Cup projects have all their monies channeled to the church and there are no questions asked, no criticism of corruption. This money from bribes and other sorts of capitalist accumulation has built the whole place, the GOD place.

We pray and dance while the poor have been roped. Morality is a question if you are giving to GOD. I wonder whether our prayers do reach GOD. In fact DEPLOYMENT is carried out by the church. Corruption has been a concern for this nation but I never heard the church coming out against it, never organised a prayer against corruption.

This is a woman's world too!

NELSPRUIT

By Siphwe Nyathi

Popular Ligwalagwala FM presenter Thembelihle Dladla, who hosts Temidlalo (sports news) just after the 7pm news on weekdays and on Saturdays from 2pm to 6pm, believes women can make their mark in this traditionally male domain.

"The women who came before us in this industry, like SABC1's Carol Manana, have paved the way for us. They proved that women can be great sport presenters if they are given the opportunity," says Dladla, who joined the station in 2006.

A few years down the line, 31-year-old Dladla has built a solid reputation as a top female sports presenter, ensuring that the station's almost 1.5 million listeners always get the latest sports news and updates.

"With so many challenges facing the fairer sex in this industry, I ensure that I am always ahead of my male counterparts -more informed, more outspoken, more focused and, of course, I do all this while looking fabulously female," she laughs. "Born in Mataffin outside Nelspruit, Mpumalanga, Dladla never thought she would end up in radio. "I used to always play around with the boys and I fought a lot with them, so at



KEEPING HER EYE ON THE BALL: Thembelihle Dladla is soccer mad and has even started her own team

first I thought I would do something 'rough' like become a policeman," she says.

Dladla believes female sporting codes can become just as popular as men's.

"To improve the state of women's sport in South Africa, we need greater passion and support from the fans. That is crucial in driving the popularity of any sport. Once this is achieved, sponsorship will follow." "Because of her love for soccer, Dladla has formed a ladies soccer team called TK Stars Ladies FC.

"It is an achievement and, if everything goes according to plan, one day I will have my own sports academy where I will help young girls from Mbombela to make it into the national team," says the former farm girl.

Fan Mercy Maile (23) says Dladla is an inspiration to the many young girls who want to enter the media industry.

"She is a role model to many ladies who are interested in sport. She has shown that women can excel at anything they really want to do in their lives," says Maile, who plays soccer herself.

Mpumalanga launches World Cup road shows

NELSPRUIT

By Eric Mashaba

Mpumalanga will host three roadshows to encourage residents to attend the 2010 FIFA World Cup soccer games that will be held at the newly built Mbombela Stadium in Nelspruit.

"We aim to inspire and motivate the province's communities to host and welcome all the people who will be flocking to the province during the World Cup. We also want to encourage the locals to rally behind the World Cup by buying tickets and attending all the matches," said spokesperson for the provincial department of culture, sport and recreation, Sechaba sa Mphahlele.

The city will play host to four matches, namely Italy versus New Zealand, Ivory Coast versus North Korea, Australia versus Serbia, and Chile versus Honduras.

Mphahlele said the road shows would also encourage those without tickets to watch games at the official fan park at Hoërskool Bergvlam in Nelspruit, and the public viewing areas in the three districts: Thulamahashe Stadium in Ehlanzeni, Themba Senamela Stadium in Nkangala and eMbalenhle Stadium in Gert Sibande.

"During the roadshows we will also encourage people to ... show outsiders that Bafana Bafana is well supported," said Mphahlele.



Mbombela Stadium - the venue for some of the FIFA 2010 World Cup games, including champions Italy

He said SAFA, LoveLife, the National Youth Development Agency, Coca-Cola, McDonalds, provincial municipalities, SABC, MTN, the Athletics Federation and the 2010 FIFA World Cup Organising Committee will join the road shows.

The first road show will be on March 5 at the Driekoppies Stadium in

Nkomazi, followed by one at the Perdekop Siyazenzela Sports Ground in Msukaliswa near Ermelo on March 6, while the final one will take place at the Metsimadiba Open Grounds in Siyabuswa on March 7.

"Fifa ambassadors as well as the Diski Dancers will come on board to support the roadshows. The minister

of sport and recreation, Makhenkesi Stofile, will deliver the keynote address during the events," he said.

All activities will start at 8:30am and will feature street football, wheelchair races, coaching clinics and entertainment.