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## KIDS, JUST LOVE MBOMBELA STADIUM

Buhlebuyeta Primary School pupils and their teachers at the Mbombela Stadium. Page 12.

## NEWS HEADLINES

### COPE CAN GO TO HELL - NKAMBULE

*COPE Regional leader, James Nkambule says his organisation can go to hell. This was after the party's youth wing complained about Nkambule's widely publicised link with self-confessed assassin.*

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### SCOPA GIVES HOD 'ONE LAST CHANCE'

*A senior official in Mpumalanga escaped criminal charges on Thursday after the select committee on public accounts (Scopa) gave him "one last chance" to get his department into order.*

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## Mbombela Stadium finally sees green

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# A difficult choice for Chiwayo

Stand up for the truth and die like Jimmy Mohlala, or cower and "aloota" continues - By Mzala

Ehlanzeni Regional Secretary of the African National Congress, Pat Ngomane must be thinking that the people of Mpumalanga are fools, or at least those who were listening to him on radio on Wednesday, following his announcement that the organisation's Regional General Council (RGC) took a resolution to "recall" Mbombela Mayor, Lassy Chiwayo.

The conduct of Ngomane reminds me of some stupid apartheid police who petrol-bombed our house, and a few minutes later they returned in marked police vehicles to "investigate" what could have caused the fire.

They were so stupid because they had forgotten that they had never before raided my home using marked police vehicles. They used to drive in white Ford Sierras and Nissan Skylines without number plates.

"We will investigate and bring whoever was responsible to book," they told my mother at the time.

More than 25 years later, she is still waiting for the outcome of their "investigation".

Ngomane is doing the same thing. He claims that last weekend's RGC took a decision to recall Chiwayo, but everyone knows that this decision was taken long ago by Ehlanzeni's Regional Executive Committee (REC), and that many people in the Provincial Executive Committee of the ANC are also behind that decision. This was after Chiwayo had refused to appoint the wife of a member of the REC into the Mayoral Committee.

Even the Provincial Chairperson of the ANC and current Premier of Mpumalanga, David "DD" Mabuza acknowledged early last year that there were comrades in the REC who wanted to fire Chiwayo and other councillors.

Just like the stupid apartheid police, Ngomane wants everyone to believe that the PEC will take an objective decision on Chiwayo. Who is he trying to fool? Most of the current PEC members contested and lobbied against Chiwayo during the 2008 Provincial Conference of the ANC, so how can they take a decision that is opposed to the "RGC" decision, which we now know that it was there more than a year before the RGC was even contemplated?

Mabuza has an opportunity to demonstrate that he is above factional politics and dismiss the REC proposal which is camouflaged as RGC proposal.

What was interesting during the radio interview, was the detail with which Ngomane presented the credentials of the organisation to the whole province, if not the whole country, where the radio is transmitted. You'd swear that you were listening to a Secretariat Report or a credentials report during a closed session of the Conference of the ANC, but Ngomane disclosed these to the whole country. How things have changed?

In the ANC that we know, you'd be subjected to disciplinary processes for disclosing such confidential information to the public, let alone the media.

It's such a difficult thing to tell a leader of the organisation, who is supposed to be the custodian of the policies, principles and practices of the organisation, that he is out of order, because he is the one who should be calling others to order.

If the ANC PEC is what it is supposed to be, it will begin by investigating if Ngomane did not transgress the principles of the organisation, before investigating the matter of Chiwayo's alleged transgressions.

I had expected that Ngomane would use the opportunity on radio to tell us and whoever was listening about the outcome of the conference and the vision of the REC.

Regrettably, he spent the entire free advertisement of 1 hour and 30 minutes on bashing Chiwayo. You'd swear that he was campaigning for the 2008 provincial conference through negative canvassing of support.

His argument that he was asked to participate in the programme is a lame excuse. The radio did not ask him to attack Chiwayo in public?

He should have refused to participate in the programme unless he was going to discuss politics, because the ANC is a political organisation, it is not an organisation about the removal or deployment of individuals, character assassination or hanging a dirty linen in the public.

During the entire programme, there was not even a single political statement that Ngomane made. This was even observed by a caller, who asked, why do you bring these matters to the public domain instead of dealing with them organizationally.

The caller was so brutal to the extent that he said, "COPE and DA are celebrating at our stupidity. Pat you are killing us, where are you taking this organisation?"

Even after such a sober intervention from an ordinary listener, Ngomane's response failed to provide a political and theoretical perspective of the current developments. It came as no surprise when listeners started accusing him of waging a personal vendetta than pursuing a political cause, because there was nothing political that he said.

I have always regarded Chiwayo as one of the remaining few highly trained and advanced revolutionaries of our time, who is still in the structures of the ANC. His outburst, however, did very little to convince me that my assumptions were correct.

Even Thabo Mbeki reacted more wiser than Chiwayo, when he was recalled, by accepting and moving out quietly, even in the face of the worst kind of humiliation. Not that Chiwayo was not humiliated by this action.

The only correct thing that Chiwayo did on the day, was to stay away from the radio talk show.

But as an advanced revolutionary, he should have visited his tools of analysis and applied these to analyse the current situation. He has, however, allowed his anger to bring him to the same level as that of his detractors.

Jimmy Mohlala was killed because he had emphasized dialectics at the expense of materialism, and Chiwayo is doing the same mistake. I am also mindful that I may in turn be accused of emphasizing materialism at the expense of dialectics, but I am convinced that I have adequately analysed the balance of forces in the region in particular, and my conclusion is that Mpumalanga province or even the country, cannot afford another death, not of the calibre of Chiwayo.

Ngomane alleges that Chiwayo only listens to the PEC and NEC.

If what Ngomane presented on Wednesday is what Chiwayo was supposed to listen to, then I am not surprised, because there is no way that one can spend 180 minutes and not utter a single political statement. Who would listen to strings and strings of statements that lack politics? The ANC is not a social organisation, but it is an organisation that is guided by a particular ideology and revolutionary theory.

Chiwayo has clearly outgrown the province, and one caller even said that Chiwayo does not have a branch. He obviously knows a lot about Chiwayo, even though he had introduced himself as an ordinary citizen, but he seems to know something about the ANC membership system. How convenient? But this statement shows that Chiwayo needs to be deployed at a very senior level than to die like Jimmy Mohlala trying to clean up a corrupt institution.

It is an open secret that in Mpumalanga, and Ehlanzeni in particular, the balance of forces is not in favour of people like Chiwayo, or any other progressive minded and highly political members of the organisation.

In Nkomazi, for example, it is a crime if you develop yourself politically, if you do succeed, they confer a label on you – COPE! Some of those who confer such labels were not even born when their "victims" joined the ANC.

That, however, should not suggest that we should sit back and suspend our political work. We should continue until we have convinced every citizen that our struggle was never about the replacement of greedy white capitalists with greedy black capitalists who accumulate wealth at the expense of the poor people.

Amandla

By Mzala



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# CHIWAYO HITS BACK, HARD

*For the first time, the Executive Mayor of Mbombela Local Municipality (MLM), Lassy Chiwayo gave a detailed account of the nature of the political interference that he was subjected to since he was assigned as the caretaker mayor for the embattled municipality.*

Addressing a press conference at the municipality's headquarters in Nelspruit yesterday, Chiwayo was reacting to the decision that was announced to the media by Regional Secretary of the African National Congress in Ehlanzeni, Pat Ngomane, that Chiwayo be removed as the mayor of the Mpumalanga capital.

Chiwayo labeled the decision a "pre-emptive strike" to thwart the outcome of the ANC's NEC Task Team that is investigating the problems engulfing the organisation in the province.

"I strongly believe that the action by the REC is a pre-emptive strike as they know for a fact that there will be no findings of wrong doing against me, instead the report will show that my tenure as Mayor has been marred by political interference and sabotage because of my resolve to fight corruption," he said.

Chiwayo admitted that he had refused to implement certain instructions he had been given by the REC, which included the reinstatement of Mbombela's former municipal manager, Jacob Dladla, after he had been suspended on charges of alleged



**Mbombela Executive Mayor, Lassy Chiwayo, yesterday**

corruption linked to the awarding of contracts for the construction of the 2010 FIFA World Cup soccer stadium.

"I received instructions from some of the members of the REC and PEC to reinstate Mr Dladla, an instruction which I vehemently refused to follow as I wanted the legal process to take its course and I also held the view that Mr Dladla had a lot to answer," said Chiwayo.

Dladla was found guilty of the charges and subsequently dismissed last year.

The Mbombela debacle is believed to have cost the life of former Speaker of the municipality, Jimmy Mohlala who was executed outside his KaNyamazane House on January 4, 2009, just days before he was due to testify against Dladla.

Chiwayo, however, also said that after Dladla's dismissal he continued to receive instructions from the REC to give Dladla a golden handshake, which he also refused and instead opted to terminate Dladla's employment with the municipality.

Chiwayo, undoubtedly created more enemies for himself when he recently fired the Head of Security for the 2010 Soccer World Cup in Mbombela, Welcome Nkuna, which many people believe propelled the REC to push for Chiwayo's removal. Nkuna is a well-known loyalist to Premier David Mabuza.

The Mbombela Mayor also revealed the decision to have him removed was also linked to his refusal to implement

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# COPE can go to hell - Nkambule

**BY TSHWARELO ESENG MOGAKANE**

NELSPRUIT

*The Congress of the People in Mpumalanga faces a dilemma over one of its high-profile members who have been caught in the middle of the so-called hit list saga.*

On Wednesday, provincial secretary Buks Mahlangu confirmed that there were concerns within COPE over its Ehlanzeni regional chairperson, James Nkambule, to whom a hit man allegedly confessed his involvement in several political killings and assassination attempts in the province.

"The matter of Nkambule's publicised involvement in the rumoured hit list was presented by COPE members during a recent interim leadership meeting that was held in the province," Mahlangu told African Eye News Service.

He said the party felt that the matter was "too sensitive to be ignored".

"As a party we believe that Nkambule has a right to report crime to the police and that he should be treated as a whistle-blower. However, we feel that he should confide in the provincial chairperson [John Nkuna] and explain the whole matter because it has caused

an unnecessary public stir," he said.

Mahlangu also acknowledged a letter that was written by the party's youth movement in which they asked the provincial leadership to "sanction" Nkambule over reports about his links to the alleged hit list.

In the letter, which was leaked to the media on Tuesday, the youth movement mentioned that it was "deeply saddened and concerned" about Nkambule's links to an alleged Mozambican hit man known as "Josh", who claimed in a sworn affidavit that he was hired by a senior ANC leader to assassinate senior government officials, politicians and businessmen.

"We find this relationship between comrade James and the alleged existence of this particular 'Josh' to be carrying possible political implications in that it could be detrimental to the life and image of the organisation," states the letter, which was signed by Murrel Zitha, regional secretary of the COPE Youth Movement.

"We are making this call because we feel that his organisational duties are being seriously compromised by his preoccupation with this so-called 'hit list' and the phantom 'Josh,'" the letter states.

The letter further mentions that Nkambule is "always reported to be in Mozambique in pursuit of 'Josh'" and that the police often fetch him from his office.

"James does not even consult with any of the organisational structures about his sustained media utterances, and he is constantly referred to as the 'former provincial secretary of the ANCYL' instead of his current position in COPE," the author laments.

Nkuna referred questions about the letter to Mahlangu, who said Nkambule was yet to speak to Nkuna about the matters that have been raised.

He also admitted that he had not seen Nkambule recently.

"I read in the papers that he was shot in an attempt to assassinate and silence him about the alleged hit list, but I've never seen him since. I can't confirm that he has been shot, but we will wait for him to confide in the leadership," said Mahlangu.

Sbusiso Shakwane, spokesperson for COPE's member of the provincial legislature, Zale Madonsela, said Nkambule has asked for leave from his official party duties.

"He wrote Madonsela a letter requesting leave but it has not yet been

approved. The problem is that since he told reporters that he had been shot, we have not seen any signs that it happened. He has no bandages or any wounds that reflect any physical attack," said Shakwane.

When contacted, Nkambule said COPE could "go to hell".

"Let me say this on record, I don't owe anyone any explanation. Nobody tells me what to do. Not even the president of the country can tell me what to do - only God can tell me what to do. They can all go to hell," said Nkambule.

"If they want to remove me, let them remove me. This matter [of a hit list] is of national interest, not narrow political interests. And the fact that I'm a former ANC Youth League secretary cannot change, I am and will always be that."

Nkambule insisted that he had been shot and said bullet marks at his home were testimony to the incident.

"Those people think I'm a comedian. None of them have ever visited my house since the incident. I have a window with bullet marks on it. They simply don't care."

He said the hit list investigation was being handled at a "high level" and he was satisfied that his "fight against crime" would soon yield results.

# Scopa gives HOD 'one last chance'

BY TSHWARELO ESENG MOGAKANE

NELSPRUIT

*A senior official in Mpumalanga escaped criminal charges on Thursday after the select committee on public accounts (Scopa) gave him "one last chance" to get his department into order.*

The provincial watchdog harshly warned Mathew Mohlasedi, the head of department of public works, roads and transport, that violating section 86 of the Public Finance Management Act could lead to a jail term.

"According to section 86 you, the accounting officer of the department, should either be jailed for a period not exceeding five years or pay a fine," said Scopa chairperson Fish Mahlalela during a sitting in Nelspruit.

"The act stipulates that the accounting officer is guilty if he fails to make sure effective and appropriate steps are taken to prevent unauthorised expenditure," he added.

Mohlasedi, who appeared before the committee with fellow officials from his department, had been called to answer questions about it overspending its 2008/2009 budget by R9-million.

The HOD explained that his department was under pressure to pay staff salaries when they had no budget to do so.

"Our department requested money from treasury but we were never given any cent. The option was to either overspend or not pay our staff," said Mohlasedi.

A furious Mahlalela rubbished the explanation, saying it was an insult to him as chairperson of the committee and a former MEC in the same department.

"I was not born yesterday. The explanation you are giving is for people who don't know better. You wilfully overrode an executive decision issued to all departments to cut costs and stop filling vacant posts. But you took it upon yourself to go ahead, hiring, knowing very well that you don't have money to pay those people. Now you want to blame treasury. That is not acceptable," said Mahlalela.

He said an accounting officer had not right to let officials in his finance sections spend money they did not have.

Lashing out, Mahlalela asked Mohlasedi and his officials to produce proof that they had taken effective steps to stop unauthorised expenditure from reoccurring.

"It is about time we set an example and make history in this province by sending you to jail. You are guilty because you took no steps to stop unauthorised expenditure from occurring. We cannot allow HODs to



**FURIOUS: SCOPA Chairperson, Fish Mahlalela**

continue to adopt a rotten culture of recklessly condoning unauthorised and irregular expenditure. You are warned to go fix the matter. This is your last chance," said Mahlalela.

He said he was "sick and tired" of officials playing games with Scopa and public funds.

"The only reason you won't be facing criminal charges is because our records

indicate that you are still new in this department. Some of the mess was created by your predecessors," said Mahlalela.

Scopa members Candith Mashego-Dlamini, Thandi Shongwe and Anthony Benadie all called for HODs to be criminally charged for violating the Public Finance Management Act.

The Scopa members were also shocked that the department had incurred R51-million in accruals for the 2008/2009 financial year.

They asked Mohlasedi to explain his understanding of accruals.

"At this point in time, my accounting is being challenged [sic]. I only did accounting twelve years ago," Mohlasedi said.

Provincial auditor-general Bryant Mdlongwa explained that departments were manipulating unauthorised expenditure by turning it into accruals.

"The framework is being abused because officials turn unauthorised expenditure into accruals, which are simply money owed to suppliers by the end of a financial year," said Mdlongwa.

He said while accruals represented money the department had in its budget but could not pay out due to the closure of a financial year, some departments registered accruals as money they owed because of a lack of budget in a current financial year.

# Scopa meeting reveals shocking corruption

BY TSHWARELO ESENG MOGAKANE

NELSPRUIT

*Service delivery in Mpumalanga has been crippled by greedy officials who loot their own departments and sabotage investigations into corruption.*

This was revealed during the grilling of senior officials who appeared before the province's Select Committee on Public Accounts (Scopa) in Nelspruit on Tuesday.

"It is obvious to me that there are many officials in government who are stealing millions and getting away with it. These officials pay money into the accounts of non-existent companies, get suspended and then win their cases and come back to work simply because they are protected," said provincial Scopa chairperson Fish Mahlalela.

The acting head and acting CFO in the provincial department of social development, Ningi Mlangeni and Phylis Morgan, appeared before Scopa to explain the unauthorised expenditure their department incurred during the 2008/2009 financial year.

Mlangeni could not explain how the department overpaid employees by R5.7-million and could not trace 68 of 215 assets in its register. An amount of R12.4-million registered for movable

assets could also not be traced.

Scopa also requested a progress report on a case involving department spokesperson Abie Ndlela, who was suspended only late last year in connection with alleged fraud of R560 000 that took place in the 2008/2009 financial year.

Mlangeni admitted that the department only realised the alleged fraud when bank officials alerted them about illegal payments made to the company.

The committee linked this to a lack of oversight, which resulted in assistant directors signing for the release of payments.

Committee member Candice Mashego-Dlamini wanted Mlangeni to explain why Ndlela was not in jail and why the money paid to the service provider had not yet been recovered.

When she replied that the matter was "under investigation", committee member Anthony Benadie demanded to know why department was still investigating a matter two years after it had happened, with no result in sight.

"As far as the department is concerned, the police are investigating the case and our internal disciplinary processes are ongoing," said Mlangeni.

Mahlalela dismissed her response, saying Scopa had asked the police about Ndlela's case and found that



**Acting HOD for Social Development, Ningi Mlangeni**

officials in the department were frustrating the investigation by giving incoherent information.

"You must understand that this case happened when I was still MEC and the things you reported to me at the time and those you reported to the auditor-general [later] and those you are reporting to the committee now are being reported totally differently. This is an attempt to sabotage the case," said

Mahlalela.

He said Ndlela was being paid for sitting at home while his case dragged on.

Mahlalela also expressed concern about officials who seemed to know that they were above the law.

"Ndlela sent me SMSes last week requesting to meet me. I totally ignored it because I have nothing to do with any officials. But for your information, there were two other officials that you suspended for stealing money and then you ended up bringing them back to the department. They told me that this would happen because there are senior managers and directors involved in these cases [protecting them]," he said.

Mahlalela said the two suspended officials approached him separately and told him to "watch and see what happens".

"I watched and saw – their cases never made it to a disciplinary hearing. Now they are working in the department again and I believe that more money is being stolen. They told me of the chain of top officials doing this."

Scopa ordered the department to produce a list of all companies that had been paid more than R500 000, along with proof that any of them rendered the services for which they were paid.

# Soko applies for dismissal of R30m corruption trial

BY ERIC MASHABA

NELSPRUIT

*Former Mpumalanga director-general Advocate Stanley Soko and axed chief executive of the then Mpumalanga Economic Empowerment Corporation Ernest Khosa applied for their case to be dismissed in the Nelspruit Regional Court on Thursday.*

The men are accused of soliciting a bribe of R1-million each from Rainbow Kwanda Communications in return for helping the company to win a R30-million tender to handle Mpumalanga province's marketing and branding in 2003.

They have pleaded not guilty to charges of corruption, fraud and contravening the Finance Management Act.

On Thursday, Advocate Gys Rautenbach told Magistrate Naomi Engelbrecht that no evidence has been brought before the court that indicated a corrupt deal was reached between Rainbow Kwanda director Kedibone Mashamaite and the accused.

He said there was "not a shred of evidence" that Khosa had accepted any money from Mashamaite in return for



Stanley Soko, right, and former chief executive of the MEEC Ernest Khosa outside court

the tender.

"Even Mashamaite testified he was shocked to learn that he owed them something, which means there was no corrupt deal reached ... Corruption against Khosa cannot be proved," Rautenbach said.

He said Soko, who had the power to authorise payments, did not make an

"upfront payment" of R3.6-million to Mashamaite but that it was paid for services rendered.

"There's no evidence it was irregular expenditure. Nothing proves he had interest implications when the amount was paid. He is also entitled to a discharge," said Rautenbach.

But state prosecutor Riegal du Toit

disputed the application for the dismissal, saying evidence proved that the men had agreed to get R1-million each from Mashamaite.

"Mashamaite testified he had contact with Khosa over the phone and was later informed the tender was awarded to him. He said when they met at Khosa's house to celebrate getting the tender, he knew he had to pay them something but was shocked to hear they demanded R1-million each."

He said the argument over the application was wrong and misleading and that none of the evidence given by witnesses was disputed by the accused.

"Payments [of R3.6-million] for the tender were made on a fictitious invoice and it was fruitless and wasteful because it was based on work not done. The accused also did not contest evidence that they wanted the money to be paid within four days. What has been presented before court against the accused cannot grant them a discharge. Their application should be dismissed."

Engelbrecht postponed the case to April 28 for ruling on the application. Soko is out on bail of R20 000 while Khosa's bail is R50 000.

## Taxi operators to meet over price increases

BY BONGEKILE MHLANGA

NELSPRUIT

*The increase of toll tariffs, which took effect on March 1, has had a negative impact on taxi owners whose vehicles service long-distance routes.*

In Mpumalanga, taxi owners using the N4 say the increases have hit them hard.

"This increase hits us in multiple ways, and the worse part is that we are not consulted when they take decisions like these," said the public relations officer of Topstar Taxi Association, Charles Mnisi.

Mnisi said taxi owners did not want to increase their prices, knowing that the community they transport consists of mostly poor people.

"How can you increase the fares, knowing very well that the people you're ferrying don't have money? Some of them are taking taxis to go look for jobs, while many are old people who rely on pensions for money," he added.

According to Mnisi, taxi owners are presently absorbing the tariff hikes and not making their customers pay.



Commuters at the Nelspruit Plaza Taxi Rank

"Just imagine how much a trip's cost would spiral if, every time there was a petrol or toll tariff hike, we also increased our taxi fares," said Mnisi.

Taxi drivers at the Nelspruit Plaza Taxi Rank said the increases were unfair to the industry.

John Mnisi, who drives from Nelspruit to Germiston every day, said he tried to take alternative routes around toll gates but sometimes it's not possible.

"Even if you want to, you cannot avoid the Machado or the Nkomazi toll plazas," he said. "You're forced to pay, and the Machado Plaza is so expensive!" he said.

At R58 per taxi, Machado is the most expensive toll plaza in the province, followed by Nkomazi at R44.

Another taxi driver, Joseph Sibande, also complained about the Machado Toll Plaza.

"They should remove it. It is too expensive and too near the Middelburg Plaza, where you already pay R39," said Sibande.

The bad news for taxi commuters is that all the taxi associations in the province are meeting on March 24 to discuss increasing their fares.

According to the chairperson of the Ulta Long Distance Transport Service in eMalahleni, Solomon Moropane, they have no choice.

"If we don't increase the fares, then we'll be working to pay for the toll gates, and we won't get any profit," said Moropane.

"All the associations will meet on March 24 to discuss how much the fares will increase, and when it must be implemented."

Commuter Thulisile Sibozza, who frequently goes to eMalahleni from Nelspruit to see her children, said it would mean she would no longer have any extra money to spend on her family.

"I go to Witbank on a weekly basis, and if they increase the fare I would no longer be able to buy things such as meat for my children."

# Hold government accountable says minister of Public Administration

BY SYDNEY MASINGA

NELSPRUIT

*The people of Mpumalanga have been told to understand and utilise their roles as citizens by providing input towards achieving good governance.*

Speaking during the provincial consultative African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) summit held in Nelspruit this week, minister of public service and administration Richard Baloyi said the process of peer review was about giving citizens the opportunity to hold the government accountable.

“Our understanding of the separation of powers is crucial; we need to understand the role of parliament; the role of the executive as an organ of the state; as well as the role of the judiciary. In our democratic system, power belongs to the people and whoever makes decisions in the country derives

their authority from the people and is accountable to them. So we urge the people of Mpumalanga to hold their government accountable,” said Baloyi.

He said the APRM as a participatory democracy measure gave ordinary people an opportunity to direct, discuss or participate in national and local matters, as well as public policies.

“We need to start being proactive and we need to know at what stage the community holds parliament, the executive and the judiciary accountable. We are saying for the country to fully develop, business and civil society need to be actively involved,” added Baloyi.

The APRM was introduced by the African Union in 2003 to help countries improve their governance. The system has a number of stages, which include the development of a country self-assessment report and a programme of action based on a questionnaire that looks at four themes: democracy and political governance, economic



Reginah Mhaule - MEC for Education

management, corporate governance and socioeconomic development.

Speaking at the summit, chairperson of the provincial governing council and MEC for education Regina Mhaule said Mpumalanga's programme was established in 2006 when workshops were convened with the youth, people living with disabilities, business, faith and traditional leaders, as well as representatives from NGOs.

“Our provincial findings were included as input into the national self-assessment report that highlighted 18 best practices, which included public participation through programmes such as izimbizos. In our dialogue, we also picked on challenges such as inequality and poverty, unemployment and violence against women and children,” said Mhaule.

South Africa is expected to present its programme of action at the African Union Summit that will be held in Ghana in July.

## North West, Mpumalanga honour World TB Day

BY SYDNEY MASINGA

TAUNG

*The more than 30 000 patients receiving tuberculosis treatment in North West have been urged to complete their treatment to avoid developing the MDR and XDR strains of the disease.*

Addressing a World TB Day commemoration on Wednesday in Pudumoeng township near Taung, North-West MEC for health and social development Rebecca Kasiyane said TB, a curable condition, continued to kill millions of people around the world.

“We urge the community of North West to fight TB together and take a lead in ensuring that we reach all our

targets, such as our TB cure rate. TB is curable but many patients fail to complete their treatment. Because they default, many of them become victims of severe TB like (multidrug-resistant) MDR and (extreme drug-resistant) XDR,” warned Kasiyane.

“The province has 77 patients with MDR-TB in its facilities and 401 are treated as outpatients, while 14 are on XDR-TB treatment. TB accounts for 8.2% of the deaths in the province,” she added.

Kasiyane said the defaulter rate was a cause for concern in the department because non-compliance with treatment is the major contributing factor to patients getting MDR- and XDR-TB.

“Treating these strains of TB is very

costly as compared to treating ordinary TB. This puts a huge strain on the department's resources.”

She highlighted that the province had “turned the corner” in the management of TB by having all its health facilities accredited to provide TB treatment.

“On top of that, we have a functional MDR- and XDR-TB unit in Klerksdorp Hospital, and we have also opened a new MDR-TB unit in Greater Taung Hospital for the down referral of stable patients,” she said.

In Mpumalanga, MEC for health and social development Dikeledi Mahlangu commemorated the day at Ga Moroe Stadium near Siyabuswa in the Dr. JS Moroka local municipality.

“Our province has the second-highest

incidence of TB and a low cure rate. This situation requires continued vigilance and the harnessing of all available resources in public, private and civil society,” said Mahlangu.

She added that it was critical to remove all forms of stigma associated with the disease.

The theme for this year's World TB Day commemoration was “On the move to kick TB out”. “The theme epitomises the new phase in the fight against TB, which is informed by the fact that more and more people now know about the disease because of improved and accelerated public awareness campaigns. Financing for TB control continues to grow as well,” Mahlangu said.

## Mpumalanga's health services ready for World Cup

BY SYDNEY MASINGA

NELSPRUIT

*The national department of health and the local organising committee (LOC) have declared Mpumalanga ready for emergencies during the Fifa World Cup.*

Leading a delegation that inspected health facilities around Nelspruit on Wednesday, national 2010 health coordinator Pumzile Kedama said the delegation was satisfied with the province's health facilities, equipment and staff readiness. “The province has bought 50 new ambulances and their emergency medical centre and other medical vehicles are ready for the

World Cup. The delegation is happy with what we have seen,” said Kedama.

The delegation included LOC general medical officer Victor Ramathesele, Dr. Confidence Moloko, adviser to minister of health Aaron Motsoaledi, as well as provincial government officials, who included five MECs.

The delegation inspected Barberton Hospital, Rob Ferreira Hospital in Nelspruit and Themba Hospital in White River, as well as the VIP, spectators' and players' medical centres and the doping centre at Mbombela Stadium.

“We are also impressed by the progress made at the stadium, where the medical rooms are currently being equipped. We have no doubt that this province

will host a successful tournament,” Kedama said.

The spokesperson for the provincial department of health and social development, Mpho Gabashane, said extra support staff and equipment have been deployed to the Mbombela Stadium, including 11 doctors, 13 nurses, 10 advance life-support personnel, 30 intermediate life-support personnel, 29 basic life-support personnel, 30 first aiders, 15 ambulances, two primary response vehicles, one disaster bus, two golf carts, two motorbikes and one all-terrain vehicle.

“We have also not forgotten that there are people who will be watching the games in the Fan Park that is

currently under construction, so we have deployed the following staff to look after them: two doctors, four nurses, two intermediate life-support personnel, two basic life-support personnel and three ambulances,” added Gabashane.

A number of public and private hospitals in the province have been designated for treatment of patients during the World Cup. In addition to the hospitals inspected on Wednesday, they are Middelburg, Witbank and Evander public hospitals, while in the private sector Nelspruit Medi-Clinic, Barberton Medi-Clinic, Midmed Hospital (Middelburg), Cosmos Hospital (Witbank) and the Higgeld Medi-Clinic in Trichard near Secunda have been earmarked.

# Sadtu: Reinstate Mpumalanga exams unit

BY TSHWARELO ESENG MOGAKANE

NELSPRUIT

The stink of the matric exam scandal that hit Mpumalanga last year has left national education department officials at loggerheads with the South African Democratic Teachers Union (Sadtu).

The union's Mpumalanga branch has accused minister of basic education Angie Motshekga of illegally disbanding the provincial exams unit.

In January, Motshekga announced that the unit would cease to exist and the administration of exams taken over by the national education department, after five papers were leaked in October last year.

"We are calling for the reinstatement of the 60 employees of the provincial examination directorate, pending a formal inquiry into the leaking of matric exam papers," said Sadtu

provincial secretary Walter Hlayise.

"A proper inquiry into the nature and source of the problems was never conducted but the national department nevertheless decided that a takeover was the best course of action. We are calling upon the minister to halt the activities of the national team and recall [national exams chief director Nkosi] Sishi and his team," Hlayise said.

Sadtu also claimed that it had the support of provincial head of department Mahlasedi Mhlabane.

"This arbitrary decision was arrived at without due consideration of the legal framework that was supposed to guide the processes. The Mpumalanga department, through [Mhlabane], conceded that the move by [the] national [department] was illegal," said provincial Sadtu chairperson Solwako Mahlangu.

He said Sadtu was angered that

a team from Motshekga's office was running the unit without any proper infrastructure, accusing it of conducting supplementary exams from the "boots of their vehicles and hotel rooms".

"The manner in which the supplementary examinations were run was a disgrace. For example, learners wrote a geography paper without maps. It is a clear indication that the demobilisation of the employees in [the] examinations [unit] was a mistake," Mahlangu said.

"Since the arrival of the national team, the 60 employees are paid to do nothing. These employees have gained skills and experience while working in examinations ... skills and experience that will now go to waste," Mahlangu added.

He called it "wasteful expenditure" that the national exam team would have to

employ new people who will have to undergo training at additional costs.

Sadtu has also accused some members of the national team of seeking retribution after being previously employed in the province but failing to make it to the higher ranks of the provincial department.

Provincial department spokesperson Jasper Zwane would not deny or confirm that Sadtu had Mhlabane's support.

"We have noted the statement that Sadtu has issued but the matter involving exams is already before court and therefore it is not advisable for us to comment," he said.

Spokesperson for the national department Granville Whittle failed to respond to written questions sent to him on Friday. Sishi was also not available for comment as he was in a meeting.

# Mpumalanga municipal manager suspended

BY SYDNEY MASINGA

EMALAHLENI

The Emalahleni local municipality in Mpumalanga has suspended its municipal manager, Ananias Langa, with immediate effect after allegations of tender irregularities.

Municipal spokesperson Lebohlang Mofokeng said the decision to suspend Langa was taken in a council meeting on March 18 after investigations of tender irregularities that started two years ago.

"After a number of investigations into allegations of tender irregularities, council met on March 4 and took a

resolution to give Mr. Langa seven days to show cause why he should not be suspended. Mr. Langa failed to comply with this resolution and hence the decision to suspend him immediately," said Mofokeng on Wednesday.

He said Langa would face disciplinary action from the municipality, but declined to disclose the nature of the charges against him, saying it was still an "internal matter".

"The municipality is also investigating a number of councillors and municipal employees also implicated in tender irregularities. Council has further resolved that the companies of implicated officials be removed from the list of approved service providers,

and all work in terms of tenders and contracts awarded to those companies implicated, and which are currently active, be put on hold until the investigations are complete," he said.

Mofokeng said as the investigations continued criminal charges would be laid against individuals if necessary, and that all monies lost by the council because of misconduct would be recouped and used for service delivery.

"Letters will be sent to the implicated councillors to give them an opportunity to respond in writing to the allegations against them. These responses will be given to the council's ethics committee, which will recommend what further action, if any, must be taken against the

implicated councillors," said Mofokeng.

He added that Adam Engelbrecht had been appointed as acting municipal manager.

"Mr. Engelbrecht was appointed from the internal staff, after looking at his extraordinary experience in local government. In 1986 he worked as a chief community service officer. In 1988 council appointed him as the town clerk of the city council of Kwa-Guqa. He was the second town clerk of Kwa-Guqa since the establishment of the then Black Local Authority in 1982."

Langa could not be reached for comment on Wednesday.

## CHIWAYO Hits back, very hard

FROM PAGE 3

an instruction from REC members, Pat Ngomane, Peter Nyoni (Deputy Chairperson) and Bheki Zulu (RWC member) to change the Mayoral Committee by removing Deputy Mayor Naki Ndlovu and replace her with Jester Sidel. Sidel is the wife of REC member Peter Nyoni.

Chiwayo told the media conference that he resisted this instruction because he could not implement a decision that was taken "between the sheets".

The outspoken Mbombela mayor did admit to the media that he feared for his life, but that he would not be deterred.

"I fear for my life, particularly after we the killing of the Speaker of the municipality, Jimmy Mohlala, but why should we surrender our streets to the criminals?" he said.

During a radio interview with a local radio station on Wednesday, Ngomane said that the REC had already written to the Provincial Executive Committee (PEC) of the ANC to decide on the removal of Chiwayo. The PEC

is chaired by Mabuza, who won a fiercely contested leadership battle with Chiwayo in 2008. Most of the PEC members are loyalists of Mabuza, and it may pass through without any difficulty, given the animosity between Mabuza and Chiwayo which started before, during and after the leadership contest.

The final decision, however, has to be made by the National Executive Committee (NEC).

Sources within the ANC told Ziwaphi that branches of the ANC in Nkangala have resorted to retaliation tactic and are lobbying Ehlzenzi branches to support them in their move to call for the recall of Premier David Mabuza.

ANC Spokesperson, Paul Mbenyane declined to comment of these claims, but said that the organisation regretted the public spat that has been going on since the decision of the Ehlzenzi REC to recommend the recall of Chiwayo.

"We have noted the public exchanges with serious regret, but the ANC will pronounce itself on the matter soon," he said.

## Heavy hailstorm leaves Nkomazi villagers homeless

MALALANE

By Bongekile Mhlanga

*The Nkomazi local municipality in Mpumalanga is assessing the extent of damage done by a hailstorm that hit the area late Wednesday afternoon.*

Spokesperson Cyril Ripinga (Right) said six villages have been affected seriously by the storm.

"To be honest with you, the storm has done major damage to the villages. At this stage, we're still going from village to village to determine the extent of the damage. It will take a while because the villages are far apart



from each other," he said.

Ripinga said most houses lost window panes while the roofs of some have been blown off completely, leaving many people without any shelter. "At a house in Sibange village we found two orphans with no shelter because the roof of their house was gone," said Ripinga, adding that people who had lost everything have been

given tents, blankets and food parcels.

The hail storm hit the Nkomazi area at about 3:30pm and lasted more than an hour.

# Mpumalanga SGBs take functions over from government

BY TSHWARELO ESENG MOGAKANE

NELSPRUIT

*The Mpumalanga department of education has set aside R1.8-million to train school governing bodies (SGBs) to take over, among other things, scholar transport and the school nutrition programme from the provincial government.*

This comes after costs for the scholar transport programme escalated from R8.2-million in 2001 to a staggering R176.9-million in 2006.

Despite this 2 055% increase, the programme was still dysfunctional at the beginning of this year, even though it had been moved from education to public works, roads and transport.

Provincial education department spokesperson Jasper Zwane said 12 901 SGB members, who were elected between May and June last year, were attending weekend training sessions that would last until March 31. "These members attended an orientation programme last year to familiarise them with how SGBs operate. The orientation programme took place between August and September. Now they are on a new level of training," he said.

The training focuses on democratic school governance and financial management and is attended by the SGB chairperson, deputy chairperson, secretary, deputy secretary and two additional members per school. "At the end of it, the SGB members are expected to grasp their roles and

responsibilities, develop a school constitution, and motivate parents to be involved in school matters and volunteer in school activities.

They are also expected to develop a clear understanding of financial management, school budgets and the Public Finance Management Act, and they should be able to manage school finances and raise funds for their schools.

"The training is taking place in 213 centres and facilitation is done by community-based facilitators who were duly appointed by the department," said Zwane.

The South African Democratic Teachers Union in Mpumalanga has welcomed the training of SGB

members.

"We welcome the initiative because it will go a long way in assisting SGB members to be fully functional and therefore improve the schooling system in this province," said provincial Sadt secretary Walter Hlaise.

Attempts to get details of the provincial SGB leadership were unsuccessful because the department failed to provide the information, despite being given two full days.

"We are still trying to locate the officials who work with the SGBs. As soon as we do we will provide details," said a provincial communication officer, Mandisa Ndlovu.

## Mozambique improves cargo security

BY SYDNEY MASINGA

NELSPRUIT

*A security company has been appointed in Mozambique to inspect all goods travelling through the port of Maputo to prevent the trafficking of drugs and dangerous cargo.*

The CEO of the Maputo Corridor Logistics Initiative (MCLI), Brenda Horne-Ferreira, confirmed on Monday that Kudumba Investments Lda was appointed last week by the government of Mozambique to operate the inspections.

"The non-intrusive inspection of goods was introduced in Mozambique in 2006, with the aim of improving the mechanism of control and prevention of trafficking of drugs and dangerous goods that enter or leave the country. Kudumba has now been appointed to increase the reliability of the inspection services," said Horne-Ferreira.

She said Kudumba provided a full range of cargo and baggage screening services, which meant all goods in transit through the port of Maputo would be subjected to non-invasive inspection in future.

The director-general of Kudumba, Kevin Davies, said the company used an X-ray system that makes it possible for customs officials to identify and differentiate organic and non-organic materials, such as drugs and weapons, from normal goods.

"The whole inspection process takes a maximum of six or seven minutes and the X-ray of the containers takes just 40 seconds to complete," said Davies.

Horne-Ferreira said the programme was part of fiscal reforms underway in Mozambique and complied with recommendations from the World Customs Organisation.

"One of the strategies adopted by Mozambique as part of these

recommendations is cooperation with the customs services of other countries, and between these services and the business community, to allow for a regular exchange of information about customs operations, as well as to improve the process of unloading goods, ensuring their safety throughout their international sales network," she said.

She added that the Mozambican government was considering introducing this strategy at all points of entry and transit to speed up the process of inspection, which would help to improve trade.

"A number of meetings have also taken place since February 5 during which the Mozambique revenue authority has agreed to engage with interested operators around the matter of transit agent accreditation to reduce the cost of doing business along the Maputo corridor," she said.

## Saving water starts at home

BY SIPHIWE NYATHI

WATERVALBOVEN

*Residents of Waterval Boven in Mpumalanga have been urged to fix their leaking taps and ensure that their streams are clean to save water.*

Addressing community members during a National Water Week celebration on Friday, the executive mayor of Emakhazeni Local Municipality, Linky Mohlala, said lots of water could be saved by simply fixing leaking taps, cleaning streams and harvesting rainwater.

"Report any sewer blockages to the municipality immediately to prevent the pollution of our water resources. A clean environment is essential for having clean water, so please do not dump rubbish anywhere. Let us save water every day," said Mohlala.

She led the community to a nearby stream, where she demonstrated how communities can "adopt" streams to promote a clean environment.

"We must stop dumping rubbish in it to ensure that we have a healthy river," she said, pointing at the scores of trash lying around.

The regional director of institutional establishment in the department of water affairs, Johan van Aswegen, said South Africa was a dry country and water a scarce resource, and everybody needed to work together to save it.

"Water conservation is everybody's business and all of us must ensure that we protect our rivers, stream and wetlands. Protecting our water resources will also ensure that we fight waterborne diseases," he said.

He added that the community should report water crimes.

## Agriculture interns warned against scam

BY SIPHIWE NYATHI

NELSPRUIT

*Limpopo's department of agriculture has warned people who applied for its internship programme to be aware of a scam that tries to defraud potential interns.*

"A person will call identified candidates, tell them that they are fortunate to have won an internship program from the department and ask them to deposit money into a Shoprite

account. The money is said to be for airtime and transport," said department spokesperson Kenny Mathivha.

The internship programme assists those who have finished their tertiary education by giving them on-the-job training.

In the past few weeks, the department has been recruiting and interviewing successful candidates for the programme.

Mathivha warned interns that the department would not call them asking

for money.

"Anyone who extorts money from a potential employee on behalf of this department will be treated as a fraudster and immediately reported to the police," said Mathivha.

He added that there were "many scams" doing the rounds.

"Please guard your IDs, bank accounts, personal details and everything else that might compromise your security. And please also note that these scamsters may change their tactics," he said.

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# World Cup: Kids to be protected

BY BONGEKILE MHLANGA

NELSPRUIT

Childline in Mpumalanga is raising funds to ensure children's safety during the Fifa World Cup.

Nelspruit will host four first-round matches at the Mbombela Stadium, while an influx of tourists visiting various destinations such as the Kruger National Park is also expected.

According to the financial officer at Childline Mpumalanga, Jannéne Smith, a number of potential problems involving children have been identified, including sex tourism, child labour and displaced or lost children.

"In response to the right of children to protection during this time, Childline Mpumalanga has developed an action plan to promote the protection of vulnerable children and those at risk," said Smith.

"Our objectives are to provide a safe, supervised environment in which vulnerable children and those at risk can access temporary care, as well as specialised child protection services and referrals for children identified as affected by abuse, neglect, violence or exploitation."

Smith said a special "child-friendly

space" would be created at the Fan Park at Bergvlam Hoërskool, where children can get psychological support through counselling with social workers, as well as food and clothing, if necessary.

The space will also have extra-mural activities including art, sport, games and movies.

"The child-friendly space was born from the concept of developing an area

within, yet separate from, the ongoing activities within the Fan Fest area. This will provide a safe haven for vulnerable children during the festivities within the Fan Park. Key role players within the child protection sector will provide care and support to child victims of abuse, as well as displaced children, which will include meeting basic needs for food, warmth and shelter, as well as the provision of psychosocial care and support," Smith explained.

Smith added that social workers would be present to provide immediate trauma assistance, statutory intervention and the placement of children in safe care, when necessary.

In Mpumalanga's rural areas, Childline will intensify its ongoing life-skills programmes in Daantjie, DunDonald, Nkomazi and Elandshoek, where more than 4 800 vulnerable children have been registered with the organisation's community development programme.

"All these activities will put a strain on our budget because most of them were not budgeted for," said Smith.

To raise funds, Childline will host a fundraising ball at the Lowveld Conference Centre in Nelspruit tomorrow (March 27).

## Nigerians charged with human trafficking

BY THOBILE MLANGENI

ERMELO

*Nine Nigerian nationals have appeared in court in Mpumalanga after they were arrested in Ermelo on Friday in connection with charges of human trafficking.*

"The suspects are alleged to have been drugging women and forcing them into prostitution," said Captain Leonard Hlathi, spokesperson of the organised crime unit. Hlathi said 12 women aged between 17 and 32 had been rescued from the alleged gang after a half-naked woman was found dead last week behind a house she had been renting in the town.

"The women were taken to a place of safety," Hlathi said.

A source at the Ermelo Magistrate's Court, where the suspects appeared on Tuesday, said the women were from various towns in South Africa.

He added that officials from the Department of Home Affairs had confirmed that the suspects had previously applied for asylum to remain in the country, but according to their application forms they did not qualify.

The men were not asked to plead and their case was postponed to April 16, when they will apply for bail.



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# Don't burn libraries, MEC tells Mpumalanga community

BY ERIC MASHABA

NELSPRUIT

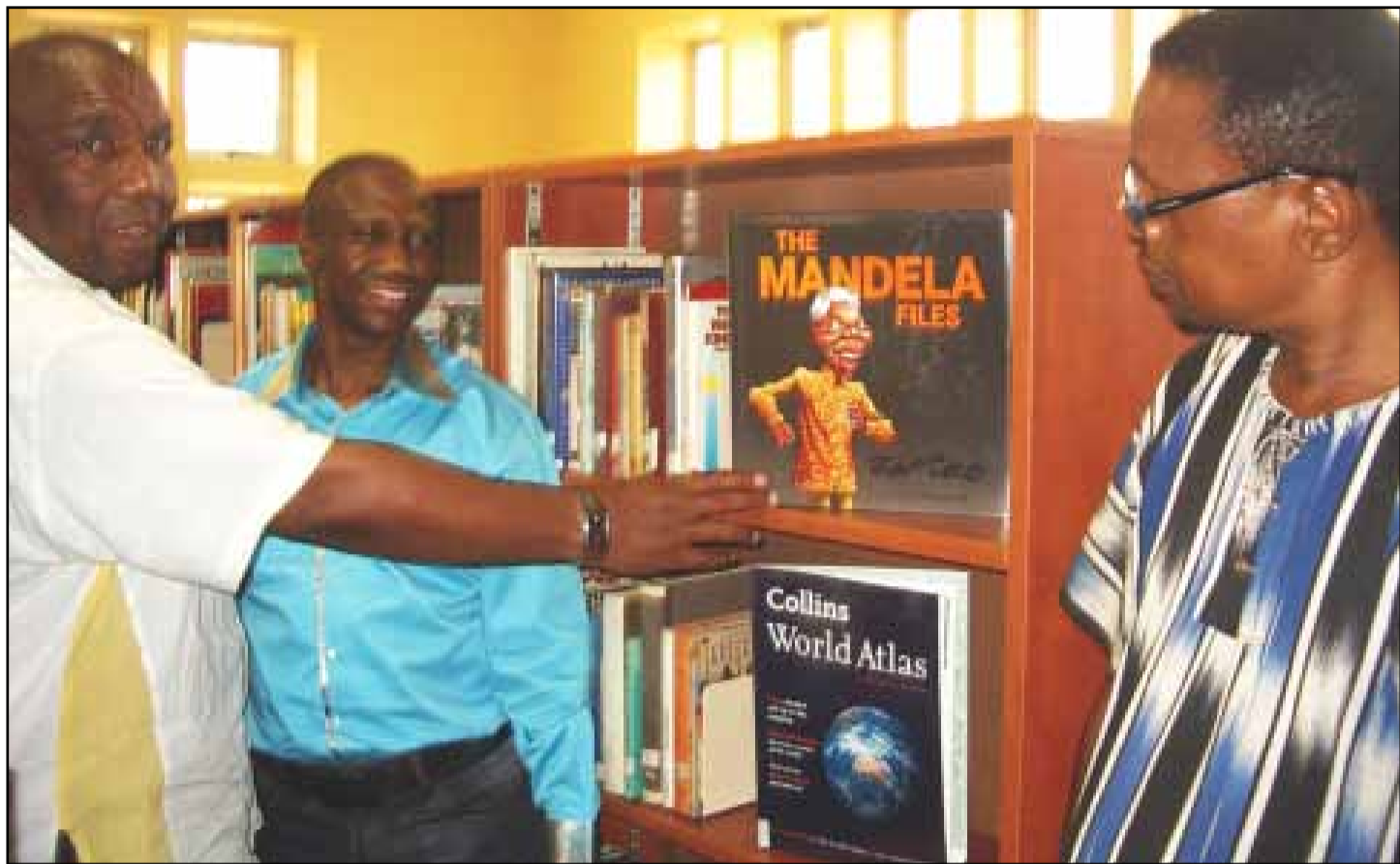
*The rural community of Msogwaba in Mpumalanga has received a brand-new public library. It was officially opened on Tuesday by MEC for culture, sport and recreation Vusi Shongwe.*

Flanked by Msogwaba Chief Hlungu Nkosi and his wife, Ethel, Shongwe said the library would bring positive change to the lives of the people in Msogwaba.

"As the government, we listened to the people when they told us they wanted a library to improve the education of their children. We built it so that our children no longer have to walk long distances to access information," he said.

In a clear reference to the public library that was burnt down during recent protests in Balfour, Shongwe appealed to the community to jealously guard it as their property.

"There is this uncalled-for behaviour by some of our people who destroy government property. We condemn these acts and call upon communities to identify and expose those who are behind these cowardly acts so they can be brought before the law. We don't want to come back here a few months down the line and hear that this newly built library has been torched. While we know people have a right to protest, this right should not be abused to destroy property meant to improve



**Mpumalanga MEC for culture, sport and recreation Vusi Shongwe, Mbombela local municipality executive mayor Lassy Chiwayo and Msogwaba chief Hlungu Nkosi inspect books in the new Msogwaba Public Library**

their lives," he said.

Shongwe, who told the community that five libraries have already been torched and "burnt to ashes" in the province, said these "barbaric acts" had denied children reference centres they could have used in their studies.

"Today they are the poorer, because

libraries are an important source of community development," he said.

Msogwaba ward councillor Sam Dube said a security company had been hired to protect the library against vandalism.

"We spoke to the community, including school pupils and parents, to safeguard the library. We will also work together

with other stakeholders like the South African National Civic Organisation to ensure it is protected at all costs," he said.

Dube added that the library would provide services to the communities of Pienaar, Daantjie, Mpakeni, Luphisa, Phakane and Zwelishana.

## Professional DJ school opens in Nelspruit

BY SIPHIWE NYATHI

BARBERTON

*Popular Barberton Community Radio DJ Christopher Mathebula has ambitious plans to help aspiring DJs in Mpumalanga.*

Mathebula (25), who is popularly known as DJ Chrizo among his fans, officially opened a DJ school called Chrizo DJ Academy at Sonpark in Nelspruit on Monday.

"I got many complements from the people I worked with about the way in which I mix tracks. It planted a seed about sharing my skills with up-and-coming DJs," said Mathebula.

"This is a dream come true for me. I have been planning this for two years and I am happy that it is finally off the ground."

Mathebula has already registered 40 students but expects to teach at least 100 and, once he receives his Seta accreditation, the graduates will get recognised certificates for the training they have received.

His biggest idol is DJ Fresh, who started



**DJ Chrizo mixes music for his fans**

mixing music at a young age and worked hard to become famous.

"He is a true role model to whom young

people can look up because of his discipline and success," said Mathebula.

Mathebula believes Mpumalanga is

potentially rich in DJ talent but lacks the means of supporting and training them.

As such he will be launching the academy across the province next month, choosing one student from 10 different towns each to attend the course for free. The training, which focuses on mixing and sound engineering, will take place over two months.

"Since this is something that has never been done before in the province, I think it will have a positive impact on the youth and bear fruit by producing the best DJs," he said. According to Mathebula, his students will be able to become professional club DJs or sound mixers.

He hopes some may even be able to join radio stations as on-air DJs. Mathebula will be working with Jonathan Loram of Sound Systems in Nelspruit, who will teach the sound engineering component of the course.

# Stokvel cash keeps money-lenders at bay

BY SIPHIWE NYATHI

NGODWANA

*Since last year, the 20 members of Mmogo re ka kgona (together we can) stokvel have been buying furniture with cash instead of on credit or with loans.*

The women, who all live in Mbhokodo in Ngodwana, Mpumalanga, got the idea for their furniture stokvel from another group of women who had started a similar and very successful stokvel in the area.

"We were inspired and immediately started our own savings club. The 20 members came together as one and decided to focus on buying furniture with cash because credit is too expensive and we don't want to take out back-door loans from moneylenders," said chairperson Beauty Malele, who was this month's host.

The stokvel also helps the women to buy building material and save for Christmas groceries.

"As women, we must take care of our families; we cannot rely on men all the time. Our husbands get excited when they see furniture being delivered that was bought with cash," Malele added.

"Unlike when the money is being saved under the mattress, whereby you can use it any time, when you play our stokvel the money is given to the host to use it. And when it is your turn to be the host, you use it for good purposes," she added, admiring the stainless steel



**The host of the stokvel, Beauty Malele, left, and member Lucy Makofane get ready for the stokvel gathering**

fridge she bought recently.

The members contribute at least R150 each at every monthly meeting, depending on their finances - some are career women and can afford to pay a bit more. R50 of the contribution is for meals.

Malele's deputy, Lucy Makofane, said: "Joining the stokvel was the best move I ever made. It has helped me to save

money."

She added that the stokvel gatherings were not spent idly chatting.

"Although women are known for being the best gossipers, we don't entertain gossip in our stokvel. We share ideas and discuss the challenges women face as parents and wives."

Makofane said the stokvel also served as a networking session to help each

other search for jobs or to share advice on starting businesses. Female motivational speakers are also invited to address their meetings.

"When women share their thoughts, they come up with interesting ideas that become productive. Many men have wished to join us but we advise them to start their own stokvel because here we are doing it in a woman's way," she said.

# In her hands, beautiful memories are made

BY THOBILE MLANGENI

NELSPRUIT

*A passion for fashion design that started when she was just a little girl is behind the success of Doris Mlangeni's bridal and evening wear company.*

Mlangeni (40) founded Trinity Dressmaking in Nelspruit in 2004 and did so well as dressmaker and designer that she was soon able to offer a complete wedding planner package to her clients. "I've loved sewing since I was a young girl," she says. "I would watch while my aunt was sewing and then copy the designs for clothes for my dolls. Unfortunately she died before I could learn all her skills and my dreams seemed to be shattered, mostly because my parents had no money to pay for further studies for me," she says. "But then she got married to Ezekiel Mlangeni and told him about her desire to become a designer. "He supported me and helped me to enrol for a course at a sewing school in Mamelodi, and paid my fees," she says.

Mlangeni's passion and hard work was recognised by the school, which



**BLUSHING BRIDE AND GROOM: Doris Mlangeni with models Doreen Lubambo and Bheki Methule**

allowed her to graduate within eight months, instead of the usual 12.

She then started sewing clothes for her family from her home in Clau Clau outside White River.

"People, especially from my church, would ask me where I had bought the outfits they saw me and my children

wearing, and so I began receiving orders from them," she explains.

By 2004 she had saved enough money to establish her business in Nelspruit. "From then on I specialised in weddings, helping my clients to plan memorable ceremonies. But I also do other special celebrations such as matric dances or Valentine's Day

parties," she says.

Mlangeni designs and sews bridal and evening wear, and even bakes wedding and other anniversary cakes.

"When someone wants a special cake I prefer them to notify me at least four months in advance to give me enough preparation time," she says.

And all this does not have to come at a high price.

"A wedding is not as expensive as some people think. If you are creative and plan well, you can have a beautiful wedding on a low budget."

Her busiest months are November, December and February, when many people get married, hold end-of-year parties or unveil tombstones. "As her way of helping her community, Mlangeni makes clothes and uniforms for poor children who cannot afford to pay. She also teaches young girls how to make earrings and necklaces from beads, and how to do manicures and makeup. She has had created jobs for three women.

"It's amazing. I can pay monthly wages to my employees and myself," she says.

# Mbombela Stadium finally sees green

BY ERIC MASHABA

NELSPRUIT

*Barely two weeks after a Fifa delegation was met by massive sand pits, the Mbombela Stadium in Nelspruit now boasts a lush green pitch.*

When a Fifa delegation and local and international journalists visited the stadium two weeks ago as part of the 100 days countdown to the World Cup, they were stunned to see mountains of sand inside the stadium, which will host four first-round matches in barely three months' time.

"But this week it's a different story, with the stadium sporting lush green turf that would be the envy of any stadium around the world," said Mbombela municipality's 2010 coordinator, Differ Mogale.

"We laid the new pitch on Friday March 5, using rye grass all over, and by the following Wednesday it was germinating well. We've had our challenges, but we're delighted that we now have a great pitch that, come the tournament, will be amongst the best in the world," he said.

He said the municipality and stadium authorities appreciated the efforts of Fifa pitch consultant Richard Hayden, who had personally overseen the most recent effort to iron out the stadium's pitch problems.

"In the past we relied on pitch consultants as well, but rather than simply making recommendations Richard Hayden and his team have been personally on-site with us every day over the last few weeks, getting onto tractors and showing our team



The Mbombela Stadium with a lush green world-class pitch

just what needed to be done," said Mogale.

"We're very happy with the results. We'll now give the pitch a few weeks to strengthen and while it should be fine to play on in the next six weeks, we will wait until after the first week of May to stage our first high-level test event at the stadium," Mogale added.

Ronny Moyo, 2010 marketing and events manager for the Mbombela local municipality, echoed Mogale's optimism.

"It took less than 10 days after seeding to have the whole pitch covered with evergreen grass. We will

be trimming it sometime this week and reseed it again. Word is that other host cities are yet to do that, which means we are ahead of some of them with this move," said Moyo.

He promised that the municipality's preparations were on track 86 days [on Tuesday] before the all-important tournament and said a mass prayer meeting would be held on March 27 as a "simulation event" to ascertain whether certain operational functions were properly in place.

"A couple of dry-run events have also been planned for May," Moyo said.

About the state of the roads to the stadium, which still leaves much to be

desired, Moyo said the municipality expected all "major work" to have been completed by the end of April.

"That excludes the N4 bypass, which was never linked to the protocol routes as per the 2010 transport plan," he said.

Moyo was unable to say how many tickets had been sold for matches in Nelspruit.

"About 43 600 tickets are on sale. As from April 15, the Fifa LOC [local organising committee] and host cities are going for over-the-counter sales, which is the usual practice with our local football lovers," was all he would say.

## School kids just love Mbombela Stadium!

NELSPRUIT

BY SIPHIWE NYATHI

*Pupils from Buhlebuyeta Primary school in KaNyamazane near Nelspruit became the first children to feel just how comfortable the seats are in the newly built Mbombela World Cup Stadium. The pupils, all in grades 1 and 2, braved the hot Lowveld weather on Friday to witness the final touch-ups being done to the stadium and to bless Bafana Bafana's run in the famous soccer tournament.*

Seven-year-old Nolwazi Ntuli (7) said she was going to tell her parents to buy tickets so that they could also see how beautiful the stadium is. "I am so excited to be at the stadium, I feel like I am cheering my national team. Our stadium represents the wilderness of our province and it's one of the best," she said, referring to the orange giraffe-like structures that support the stadium on the outside, which she correctly identified.



Buhlebuyeta Primary School pupils at the Mbombela Stadium

"I believe in Bafana Bafana. Teko Modise and Simphiwe Tsabalala will do wonders and take the team to the semifinals," said Nolwazi, who's also a big Kaizer Chiefs fan.

What excited her the most was the smart VIP section and the area where

President Jacob Zuma will parade when he comes to watch games at the stadium.

"Even if I don't get to come here during the World Cup, I will at least watch TV at home and say 'I was there,'" she added.

This clever little girl, who won an award for public speaking at her school last year, said she was happy that different nations would learn about South African culture and languages.

"Imagine when someone from Germany struggles to say 'sawubona' while eating mopani worms - it will be a wonderful experience!" she laughed.

Her school is busy practicing the Diski Dance so that they can all get a taste of soccer fever and gear up for the historic event. "Soccer is not just a sport for us. It's a universal language that enables us to join together and say 'laduma,'" explained Nolwazi.

The school's sport organiser, Walter Zulu, said most of the pupils came from poor families and they would not be able to afford to attend matches.

"Many of them will not have the opportunity to visit the stadium during the World Cup, but at least they will be able to say they were there. It is a huge achievement for them," he said.