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Empowering  
Youth  
through  
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### COMMUNITY

Provincial  
treasury to  
assist MTPA



### COMMUNITY

MTPA  
partners  
with SADC  
bikers in  
Mbombela



### SPORT

Bafana  
COSAFA Cup  
title dream  
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# MPUMALANGA COMMEMORATES YOUTH DAY IN NKOMAZI

Kopano Dibakwane

The community members of eMangweni and surrounding areas, in the Nkomazi Local Municipality, came out in large numbers to join the Mpumalanga Provincial Government in commemorating Youth Day at the local stadium on Monday 16 June 2025.

The day is observed annually across the country to pay homage and honour the memory of hundreds of young people who were ambushed by the Apartheid security forces during the infamous 1976 Soweto Uprising. The defiant students were protesting against the injustices which characterised the then system of learning called Bantu education.

The tragic events of the 16 June 1976 Uprising were exposed to the whole world, thanks to a legendary picture of Mbuyisa Makhubu carrying the lifeless body of the youngest victim on that fateful day, Hector Peterson, while running alongside Peterson's distraught sister Antoinette.

The iconic picture was taken by the late world acclaimed photographer, Sam Nzima, from Lillydale in Bushbuckridge, Mpumalanga Province.

In his keynote address, the Acting Premier of Mpumalanga, Speed Mashilo, said the fallen students paved the way for South Africa's journey towards freedom, and they should be celebrated for their selfless contribution in affording the



Acting Premier, Speed Mashilo with Nkomazi residents.

previously marginalised racial groups to finally feel at home in the land of their forebears.

Mashilo was speaking on behalf of Premier Mandla Ndlovu, who is currently leading a delegation on a visit to the People's Republic of China, to strengthen trade ties ahead of the official opening of the MIFPM (Mpumalanga International Fresh Produce Market) scheduled to take place in the coming weeks.

Mashilo highlighted some of the leading challenges faced by the youth of Mpumalanga, as well as the society as a whole, and the interventions that the provincial government is employing to remedy the situation.

These challenges include unemployment, poverty, inequality, GBVF (Gender-Based Violence and Femicide), and social exclusion, amongst others. Mashilo said the theme for this year's Youth Day celebrations is; 'Skills for a changing world-Empowering youth for meaningful economic participation'.

He said theme underscores the need to equip young people with the relevant skills to thrive in a dynamic global economy.

"Let us join hands and fight the challenges facing the youth, guided by the spirit of the 1976 generation. The generation that stood up against injustice, with nothing but their voices and their will.

Today it's almost five decades later, the struggle continues but its face has changed.

"As the government of Mpumalanga, we are committed to making provision for the youth to be stepping into new frontiers such as digital innovation, science, engineering, and entrepreneurship," said Mashilo.

He furthermore mentioned some of the programmes initiated by the provincial government towards youth empowerment, such as the handing over of Elijah Mango College to the Ehlanzeni TVET College, the PYDF (Premier's Youth Development Fund), the Enterprise Resource Planning by the NYDA (National Youth Development Agency), to name but a few.

Mashilo said the provincial government has identified objectives to fast-track the empowerment of the youth in Mpumalanga.

These objectives include; identify skills that are in demand, share youth success stories, facilitate young people's access to educational and skills developmental institutions, facilitate the

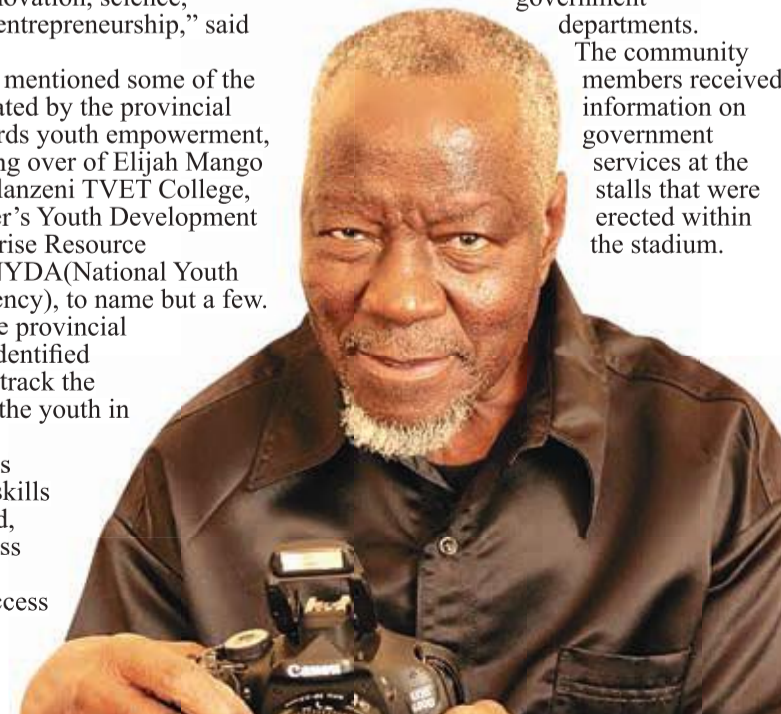
youth's entry into markets, develop and promote young talent, and promote healthy living by reducing risky behaviours.

The event was attended by various stakeholders and officials from various government departments.

The community members received information on government services at the stalls that were erected within the stadium.



Acting Premier, Speed Mashilo (middle), flanked by Ehlanzeni Executive Mayor, Terra Shabangu, and Social Development MEC, Khethiwe Moeketsi.



The late legendary photographer, Sam Nzima.



Far right: Sam Sam rubbing shoulders with the best in the world at the Hangar-7 event

# Sam Sam flies MP flag high in Austria

**Kopano Dibakwane**

Samkeliso Thubane, popularly known as “Sam Sam”, is living proof that passion and dedication can elevate anyone to the highest heights of personal achievement.

The 27-year-old Thubane, from Mbombela in Mpumalanga, showcased his extraordinary talent of effortless car-spinning at the grand re-opening of the Red Bull Hangar-7 event in Salzburg-Austria, where he exceptionally represented South Africa amongst his peers from other countries.

The Hangar-7 event entertains international audiences and serves as a platform for extreme motorsport

performers such as bikers, drifters, spinners, drag racers, as well as a display by F1 drivers such as Max Verstappen, to name by a few.

Prior to the Hangar-7, Thubane has mesmerised thousands of car enthusiasts in various local competitions, including the Red Bull “Shay’imoto” challenge where he walked away with the first prize on two successive occasions in 2021/2022.

He also took the first prize in the local tv show “So you think you can spin?” in 2017, beating a total of 300 contestants from across South Africa.

The MEC for Mpumalanga DCSR (Department of Culture, Sport and Recreation), Leah Mabuza, has congratulated Thubane for his

participation in the recent Red Bull Hangar-7 event.

Mabuza said Thubane has rightfully earned international recognition through the event, bringing pride to his community. According to Mabuza, Thubane has also positioned himself as a cultural ambassador for South Africa.

“Thubane has truly distinguished himself as an ambassador of Mzansi through his participation in the event. He joins the ranks of Mpumalanga citizens whose talents have been acknowledged beyond our borders.

Our province is rich in talent, and Sam Sam is a shining example of this fact.

“His success is a powerful reminder of the potential that lies in Mpumalanga’s

youth. The DCSR remain committed to supporting and nurturing local talent to reach even greater heights,” said MEC Mabuza.

Speaking during the Hangar-7 event, Thubane expressed gratitude for receiving such a rare opportunity to showcase his talent at an internationally acclaimed event. “I never imagined being all the way here, to showcase my talent of spinning cars. It feels great to be in Austria, and to show people what spinning is about. Spinning is a South African-born type of motorsport,” said Thubane.

The spinning legend also received praises from a number of South Africans, including the Minister of Sport, Arts and Culture, Gayton McKenzie.

# DARDLEA calls for collective action against plastic pollution

**Lwazi Raul-Shongwe**

The significant threat posed by plastic pollution on the environment, was extensively emphasised during World Environmental Day celebrations, led by Mpumalanga MEC for DARDLEA (Department of Agriculture, Rural Development, Land and Environmental Affairs), Nompumelelo Hlophe, alongside key stakeholders at the Simon Gondwe Sports Grounds in Botleng-Delmas, under the Victor Khanye Local Municipality.

DARDLEA said World Environmental Day is commemorated globally on 5 June, serving as an opportunity to raise environmental awareness and education on devastating issues such as Climate Change. In addition, DARDLEA stated

that over 430 million tons of plastic are produced globally each year, with only a small fraction recycled. The rest of the plastic reportedly ends up clogging rivers, contaminating the oceans and poisoning animals. It was also revealed that plastics are responsible for about 3.4% of global greenhouse gas emissions.

MEC Hlophe urged the people of Mpumalanga to take action in addressing plastic pollution, and to take responsibility for reducing plastic waste and prevent its disposal in their surroundings.

Hlophe said plastic pollution is a daunting reality that requires immediate attention and collective action.

“Today marks 53 years since the very first World Environmental Day launched at the 1972 Stockholm Conference. This year’s event is celebrated under the theme ‘Ending Plastic Pollution’, and it seeks to

mobilise for action.

“As the people of Mpumalanga, we have the power to rethink our use of plastic. We can refuse, reduce, reuse and recycle plastic. We must address plastic pollution in our own spaces, including our homes, public spaces, taxi and bus stops, schools and clinics. No one will do it for us, we must do it ourselves,” said Hlophe.

The continued efforts and participation of ZIP (Zonda Insila Programme) warriors in tackling the spread of pollution in communities, as well as Waste Pickers, CBOs (Community Based

Organisations), NGOs (Non-Governmental Organisations), received acknowledgment from MEC Hlophe. A representative from the Eyethu-Yarona Child and Youth Development Centre, in Botleng, has thanked DARDLEA and the MEC for supporting the institution through various interventions.

“You are warmly welcome to our centre and we would like to thank the Department for providing us with JoJo water tanks, food parcels and other supportive measures,” said the representative.

Other activities that took place during the MEC’s visit included a clean-up campaign, visit to local schools to raise awareness

on plastic pollution, engaging with local community members, handing over of 40 Smart Agriculture Boxes, garden tools, food parcels, and the launch of a Climate Change booklet titled; ‘Extending a Helping Hand’. The key stakeholders who actively participated during the event included; Nkangala District Mayor, Victor Khanye Local Municipality Executive Mayor, Traditional Leaders, DFFE (Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment), Plastic Industry SA, Young In ZIP, to mention but a few.



The waste collected during the clean-up campaign. Top: MEC Hlophe and other stakeholders during the clean-up campaign.

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# SURVYMASH Empowering Youth through Tourism

**Lwazi Raul-Shongwe**

SURVYMASH Travel and Shuttles, founded by 32-year-old entrepreneur, Thhookomelo Survival Mashile, is a proudly youth-led travel and tourism company established in 2018, with the vision to make tourism more accessible and exciting for youth, families, and adventurers, while offering affordable, quality, and unforgettable experience. The company is headquartered in various locations within Mpumalanga Province, including the Blyde River Canyon Nature Reserve, Three Rondavel View Points, as well as Graskop, and it extends its operations throughout South Africa, as well as neighboring destinations such as Mozambique and The Kingdom of Eswatini.



Mash with a client in Durban.

**The exciting services provided by SURVYMASH Travel and Shuttles include;**

- Affordable group travel packages
- Shuttle and travel services across key tourist routes (especially the Mpumalanga Panorama Route) and airports
- Customised holiday experiences for individuals and corporate clients
- Tour coordination for both domestic and regional destinations (Mozambique, Eswatini, and more)
- Event and festival tourism packages, including Youth Day, Easter Getaways, and festive season holidays
- Sightseeing and guided tours
- Adventure tourism (boat cruises,

- nature walks, and cultural experiences)
- Accommodation coordination

The company also operates the Three Rondavel Coffee Shop, a scenic rest stop and eatery near the iconic Three Rondavel Viewpoint, serving tourists and tour guides along the Panorama Route.

Despite facing challenges in the early stages of the business, such as limited

funding, reliable transport vehicles, difficulty in accessing the formal tourism market, and building trust as a young entrepreneur in a highly competitive industry, Mashego persevered and built partnerships with local guides, accommodation providers, and tourism bodies.

Through resilience, networking, community support, and service excellence, Mashego has impressively managed to establish SURVYMASH Travel and Shuttles as a reputable player in the tourism industry.

“Growing up in a rural township of Lerero, Mpumalanga, I saw firsthand the untapped potential of our local tourism sector and how young people were often excluded from these opportunities. I wanted to create a platform that would both celebrate our landscapes and empower youth through travel, employment and entrepreneurship.

“I bootstrapped the business with personal savings, reinvested savings, and worked hard to deliver memorable experiences for every client.

By focusing on service excellence, digital marketing, and the support of satisfied clients who referred others, helped to build our credibility organically,” says Mashego.

He says the company scales its impact by continuously seeking partnerships with both the government and private sector.

In addition, Mashego has engaged with several tourism programs, including the Mpumalanga Tourism Expo and initiatives by the Department of Tourism.

He has also applied for support from the NYDA (National Youth Development Agency) Youth Tourism Fund, the

Mpumalanga Premier’s Youth Fund, and participated in pitching sessions to access resources for his company’s off-grid coffee shop.

Attending tourism-related events has played a fundamental role in shaping Mashego’s vision for his establishment.

He participated in the 2025 Africa’s Travel Indaba in Durban, which he has attended for the past three years, and credits the event as an eye-opening experience to network with global tourism stakeholders, learning about trends in sustainable tourism, and to see how technology is shaping the future of travel.

“The Africa Travel Indaba has reminded me of how much potential South Africa has to be a global tourism leader, especially when we empower young people and promote our hidden gems,” he says.

When asked about the significance of Youth Month to young entrepreneurs, Mashego said young people have the potential to change the South African narrative.

“As a young entrepreneur, it’s about pushing boundaries, creating opportunities, and using innovation to uplift our communities. It’s a time to reflect, but more importantly, to act boldly. Start where you are, use what you have, and believe in the impact of your dream.

“Entrepreneurship is not easy, but it’s worth it. Don’t wait for perfect conditions, take that first step, and surround yourself with mentors and fellow entrepreneurs.

Do not sleep on AI (Artificial Intelligence) tools, continue to learn, never underestimate the power of social media and word-of-mouth in growing your brand.” Mashego concludes.



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## ADVERTORIAL



# MEC Hlophe Launches Climate Change Booklet

The MEC for Agriculture, Rural Development, Land and Environmental Affairs, Ms Nompumelelo Hlophe, has launched a new booklet that provides a practical and relatable guide to understanding and addressing climate change.

Titled "Climate Change – Extending a Helping Hand," this 83-page publication that was launched during World Environmental Day held on 5 June 2025 in Delmas, is designed to educate, engage, and empower individuals to take action against climate change. The booklet was produced by DARDLEA's Chief Directorate for Environmental Planning, Policy and Climate Change.

## The "Three H's" Framework

The booklet uses a unique approach called the "Three H's" framework, which invites readers to embark on an informative and

transformative journey. The "Three H's" are:

- The Head: Learn and understand the science and facts behind climate change.
- The Heart: Develop a personal and emotional connection to the environment.
- The Hands: Take meaningful, practical action at home, work, and in your community.

## A Call to Action

MEC Hlophe emphasised that climate change is no longer a distant concern, but a reality that Mpumalanga is already experiencing.

The booklet is a call to action, inviting everyone to join the movement and support their communities, ecosystems, and future.

"Climate change is no longer a distant concern, it is here. From rising temperatures to erratic rainfall,

Mpumalanga, like the rest of the world, is already feeling the effects of climate change. But alongside these challenges, we came up with this powerful tool to equip and inspire action.

"It has been made especially for those in the front lines such as environmental practitioners, educators, community leaders, students, and active citizens. This is more than just a publication, it is an invitation to rise together, support our communities and our future. Everyone must join the movement," said MEC Hlophe.

## Key Insights and Projections

The booklet provides local and global insights into the causes and consequences of climate change, as well as clear projections for Mpumalanga's future climate patterns. It also highlights the challenges to agriculture, water, and human health, and offers simple and effective ways to take action and educate others.

## Empowering Action

The publication aims to empower individuals and communities to take action against climate change. By

providing knowledge and encouraging action, the booklet hopes to inspire a sense of hope, empowerment, and shared responsibility.

## Mpumalanga's Climate Change Efforts

Mpumalanga has taken significant steps to address climate change, including developing a Climate Change Adaptation Strategy, a Mitigation and Implementation Strategy, and a Just Transition Strategy. These strategies aim to build resilience, protect livelihoods, and safeguard future generations.

## Get Involved

Join the movement and take action against climate change. Read the booklet, share it with others, and get involved in your community. Together, we can make a difference and create a more sustainable future.



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# Mpumalanga Premier Signs MOU with Longnan Municipality in China

Lwazi Raul-Shongwe and Kopano Dibakwane

Mpumalanga Premier, Mandla Ndlovu, has signed a five-year memorandum of understanding (MOU) with Longnan Municipality in China, marking a significant step towards strengthening economic ties between the two regions.

The MOU comes after a week-long visit to China by Premier Ndlovu and his delegation comprising the MEC for DARDLEA (Department of Agriculture, Rural Development, Land and Environmental Affairs), Nompumelelo Hlophe, DARDLEA HOD (Head of Department), Cain Chunda, the Director General in the Office of the Premier, Maggie Skosana, as well as other senior officials from Mpumalanga Treasury.

The MOU reportedly focuses on industrial collaboration, agricultural cooperation, infrastructure development, cultural and tourism exchange, talent identification and development, amongst others.

According to the spokesperson in the Office of the Premier, Zibonele Mncwango, the agreement includes bilateral trade and market access, aiming to expand and diversify trade between South Africa and China.



Delegates from both countries after the MOU was successfully signed.

Mncwango also said the agreement will involve facilitating market access for South African agricultural products into China, reducing non-tariff barriers, and promoting agri-processing and logistics collaboration.

Premier Ndlovu emphasised that the MOU aligns with the vision of South African President, Cyril Ramaphosa, defining a series of action plans to accelerate trade between Mpumalanga and

Longnan Municipality.

He said the forthcoming operationalisation of the MIFPM (Mpumalanga International Fresh Produce Market) is geared towards benefiting farmers from previously disadvantaged communities and the local people.

"As Mpumalanga, we are responding to the vision of our President, Cyril Ramaphosa, when he signed this

agreement, in that, through the MOU we have entered into, we are defining a series of action plans and interventions to bring to life the accelerated access of trade to and from Mpumalanga to Longnan.

"This will be realised through the operationalisation of the Mpumalanga International Fresh Produce Market," said Ndlovu.

The week-long visit to China, embarked upon by Premier Ndlovu, reportedly aims to explore economic activities that will improve the economy of Mpumalanga and reduce unemployment.

Mncwango said the agreement is in line with the outcome of the 2024 FOCAC Summit and the bilateral deliberations between South Africa and China, held in Beijing in September.

Longnan City Executive Vice Mayor, Li Rong, expressed hope that the MOU will set a new example for bilateral cooperation, creating shared value and complementary advantages between the two regions.

"Longnan will henceforth be your second home in China. The relationship between China and South Africa is not just a win-win situation, but one of complementary advantages to create shared value together," said Rong.

# Provincial treasury to assist MTPA

Lwazi Raul-Shongwe

The Portfolio Committee on Economic Development and Tourism recently conducted an oversight visit at the Manyeleti Nature Reserve, which also served as a strategic meeting with a delegation from Mpumalanga DEDT(Department of Economic Development and Tourism) led by MEC Makhosazane Masilela, as well as the MTPA(Mpumalanga Tourism and Parks Agency).

According to DEDT, the oversight visit sought to engage the Committee on operational matters at MTPA, which included; the status of tourism products in the province, status of tourism investment steered by MTPA, status of nature reserves, and plans to improve, market tourism products, as well as investments.

MEC Masilela acknowledged the challenges faced by MTPA, including financial constraints that hinder the agency's optimal performance and revenue generation.

Masilela assured the Committee that the situation is not all doom-and-gloom.

"The Committee will be comforted to learn that the Provincial Treasury is coming on board to assist the entity to

The Committee will be comforted to learn that the Provincial Treasury is coming on board to assist the entity to improve its financial situation



MEC Masilela during a meeting with the Portfolio Committee on Economic Development and Tourism.

improve its financial situation. Furthermore, I have instructed the entity, as part of its strategy, to improve

the financial situation in the short-term, to improve revenue collection through the upgrading of the revenue collection

system, and upgrade the official website to include an online booking system," said MEC Masilela.

# Mpumalanga Agricultural Show set to showcase farmers potential and growth

Lwazi Raul-Shongwe

The Mpumalanga Agricultural Show is an exciting event, showcasing the province's agricultural prowess and providing opportunities for growth and development.

As the show gears up for its 2025 instalment, scheduled to be held from 4-6 September at Mbombela Stadium, the Mpumalanga DARDLEA(Department of Agriculture, Rural Development, Land and Environmental Affairs) is collaborating with stakeholders to build excitement for the event.

According to DARDLEA, the build-up started with a Farmers Roadshow held at the Thulamahashe Community Hall in the Local Municipality of Bushbuckridge, whereby an impressive number of farmers

from Thulamahashe and surrounding villages were in attendance.

The engagement with farmers reportedly highlighted the importance of attending the Mpumalanga Agricultural Show, as well as building hype ahead of the long-awaited official opening of the MIFPM(Mpumalanga International Fresh Produce Market).

DARDLEA said the MIFPM will play a pivotal role as the primary farmers market in Mpumalanga.

"The Mpumalanga Show is the mother of all exhibitions, highlighting the tourism, forestry, mining, wildlife, and agricultural significance in the province.

It is beneficial to farmers, agri-businesses and agricultural enthusiasts, serving as a platform for local businesses and industries to showcase their products and services, creating opportunities

for networking, trade and business development, thereby promoting economic growth," said DARDLEA.

The Farmers Roadshow in Thulamahashe was reportedly attended by the Bushbuckridge Executive Mayor, Lydia Moroane, Traditional Leadership, and representatives from other key stakeholders such as NAFU(National African Farmers Union), AFASA(African

Farmers Association of South Africa), Agri-Mpumalanga, Mpumalanga Union for Black Farmers, and Bushbuckridge Local Economic Development, share insight on how to advance the agricultural sector in the province.

DARDLEA said the Farmers Roadshow will continue in Mbombela (18 June), Nkomazi (26 June), Nkangala District(3 July), and Gert Sibande District(10 July).



Mpumalanga cultural diversity on full display ahead of the Agricultural Show.



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Former President Thabo Mbeki planting a tree during his visit.

## Former President Mbeki plants a tree at the Lowveld National Botanical Garden

Kopano Dibakwane

The Mpumalanga Provincial Government gave a warm welcome to former South African President, Thabo Mbeki, during his recent visit to the enchanting and serene Lowveld National Botanical Garden, which is one of the internationally revered tourist attractions in the province. The spokesperson in the OTP (Office of the Premier) Zibonele

Mncwango, said Mbeki was welcomed by the Mpumalanga Acting Director-General, Peter Nyoni, and went on to plant a tree as part of adding on to the magnificent beauty that describes the venue.

Speaking during the guided tour, President Mbeki has heaped praises on the workers at the Lowveld National Botanical Garden for the excellent job of diligently preserving the natural flora as a national heritage, and for giving the public access to the place.

“This is a very important place, and it’s very exciting to see what is happening here, not only the preservation of the medicinal plants, cycads and so forth. You can’t say you know South Africa without having been here.

The nature here at the Lowveld Botanical Garden is part of what makes us. I think the fact that even people from outside of South Africa have noticed it, talks about the importance of this place,” said Mbeki.

## One alleged poacher killed, another injured in the KNP

Lwazi Raul-Shongwe and Kopano Dibakwane

One hunting rifle, 5 rounds of ammunition, an axe, a knife, and two cellphones, were recovered when 3 alleged poachers, who are said to be illegal immigrants from Mozambique, were intercepted by police in the KNP (Kruger National Park), in the early hours of Saturday 14 June 2025.

Mpumalanga police spokesperson, Lt-Col Jabu Ndubane, said the suspects were spotted by KNP rangers during a patrol near Ngotso Dam in the Satara section of the park, at around 00:45.

The suspects were reportedly ordered to stop, but one was carrying a rifle and opened fire towards the rangers when he was ordered to put down the weapon, leading to a shootout that resulted in two of the suspects sustaining serious gunshot injuries, while one suspect managed to flee from the scene. Two of the suspects were reportedly carrying backpacks.

“Police and emergency services, including medical personnel from Skukuza, were called to the scene. While the injured suspects were being attended to, one of them succumbed to his injuries. The surviving suspect was transported to a nearby hospital, where he remains under police guard.

“A case has been opened, and charges of possession of unlicensed firearm and ammunition, trespassing, and attempted murder were laid.

Police have not ruled out the possibility of more charges being added,” said Lt-Col Ndubane.

The injured suspect will reportedly appear in court once discharged from hospital. The third suspect is said to be still at large.

Mpumalanga Acting Provincial Police Commissioner, Major-General (Dr) Zeph Mkhwanazi, has issued a strong warning against poachers who take chances inside the park. He said the police and rangers will work tirelessly to ensure that the KNP is safe from poachers.

“The Kruger National Park is a vital part of our heritage, a source of learning for future generations, and an important contributor to our economy through tourism. We will not allow anyone to destroy what we treasure,” said Major-General Mkhwanazi.



Mpumalanga delegation displaying products made from an olive farm in China.

## MP Premier explores investment opportunities in China

Lwazi Raul-Shongwe

The Premier of Mpumalanga, Mandla Ndlovu, alongside his delegation, embarked on a week-long mission in China to engage various businesses to foster partnerships with the province, particularly ahead of the approaching long-awaited opening of the MIFPM (Mpumalanga International Fresh Produce Market).

The delegation reportedly visited a 1

million hectare olive farm that focuses on the entire value chain of olive production, from research to agro-processing of olives for consumption.

Olive produces various products including whisky, cosmetics, as well as pharmaceuticals to treat diseases such as cancer and diabetes.

Mpumalanga spokesperson in the OTP (Office of the Premier), Zibonele Mncwango, said the visit carries the potential to strengthen the province’s economy by introducing new industries,

stimulating agro-entrepreneurship, and creating jobs.

“The delegation also visited the Zhenjiang University’s Integrated Industry-academia-research Institute in Tianjin.

They conduct research on various industries, leading in chronic research for treatment of cancer, as well as early detection and prevention. They use traditional medicine, some of which is plant-based, and turn it into “western” medicine,” said Mncwango.



Police officer assessing the items found after the incident.



Some of the food parcels donated by Gift of the Givers.



Bikers preparing for a mass ride around Mbombela.

# MTPA partners with SADC bikers in Mbombela

**Lwazi Raul-Shongwe**

In a noble bid to promote tourism and maintain Mpumalanga’s uncontested image as the destination of choice in South Africa, the MTPA (Mpumalanga Tourism and Parks Agency) extended its support towards the 11th annual Sunriders MCC Bikers Rally that took place at the iconic Mbombela Stadium, on Saturday 14 June 2025.

More than 500 bikers and enthusiasts from the province, also from across the country, as well as a number of SADC countries, brought a memorable vibe that echoed throughout Mbombela, signaling yet another successful event that solidified Mpumalanga’s capability of hosting successful events, and cordiality towards visitors from all walks of life.

The day kicked-off with various fun activities which included a mass ride by the bikers moving around the City of Mbombela, fun zone for the kids, biker games such as tug of war, competitions, prize giving, and spectacular stunts

performed by the bikers, to entertain the rally attendees.

The bikers also showed their compassionate side by donating packages such as blankets and food parcels geared towards drop-in centres, rehab centres, schools, and various charity organisations as part of giving back to the community.

MTPA said its partnership with Sunriders MCC, a non-profit organisation, has yielded positive results.

The rally goes beyond entertainment, as it carries numerous economic spin-offs that benefit accommodation establishments and eateries around Mbombela and surrounding areas. In this regard, the economy of the province receives a tremendous boost, and the tourism industry blossoms.

“Bike lovers from SADC countries such as the Kingdom of Lesotho, Republic of Mozambique, Botswana, Zimbabwe, the Kingdom of Eswatini and all other provinces, have travelled to the Place of the Rising Sun to enjoy this highly anticipated event,” said MTPA CEO.

Sunriders MCC President, Bheki Mafuwane, said bikers are all about charity and the event was also held in commemoration of Youth Month, as a result, books were donated to schools to empower young people, also to remind them of those who sacrificed for the country to achieve freedom and democracy.

Mpumalanga MEC for DCSSL (Department of Community Safety,

Security and Liaison) Jackie Macie was also present to spread the message of safety and tolerance on the roads. He said the Sunriders MCC Rally is one of the biggest events on the social calendar of Mpumalanga.

The evening leg of the event kept revelers on their feet with a music festival that featured leading local and national entertainers such as Zee Nxumalo, Dj Kabza Da Small, to mention but a few.



Happy recipients who got some food parcels.

# Bogus initiation schools will not be tolerated in Mpumalanga

**Kopano Dibakwane**

With the initiation school period starting from 21 June to 21 July 2025, Mpumalanga MEC for COGHSTA (Cooperate Governance, Human Settlements and Traditional Affairs), Speed Mashilo, has declared zero tolerance towards bogus traditional surgeons intending to run initiation schools without legal permits in the province.

COGHSTA says it has received 405 applications to conduct initiation schools this year, and 403 were approved. Two, out of the 405 applications, were reportedly declined due to non-compliance.

Mashilo stated that parents must take full responsibility for their children during the initiation ritual to passage period, by taking them for medical screening before enrolling them at approved initiation schools.

He said despite efforts by the department to educate everyone about adherence to proper procedures, some initiation schools continue to operate without proper authorisation.

“All senior traditional leaders are made aware of all the approved schools



within their jurisdictions, and a list of those schools is shared with the Traditional Council. Circumcisions must be performed by either a medical practitioner or a person trained to perform

circumcision, and who has knowledge of the child’s social and cultural practice,” said Mashilo.

Furthermore, the MEC stated that the department is working closely with

relevant stakeholders such as Senior Traditional Leaders, Ingoma Forum, Ingoma Task Team, Department of Health, and SAPS (South African Police Service), to ensure zero tolerance.

COGHSTA Acting Head, Samkele Ngubane, said taking a child to an initiation school without the consent of the parent is illegal, and those who forcefully drag young boys to these schools, will be dealt with harshly.

“Initiation is a voluntary customary practice and no person may be forced into attending initiation school or undergo any initiation practice.

Starting such school before the set date or continue with initiation activities beyond 21 July will render the institution illegal and police will deal with offender,” said Ngubane.

Mashilo has urged communities to report any suspicious activities or illegal initiation schools to the relevant authorities.

“Initiation, as a rite of passage, is not an exclusive monopoly of households, but a shared tradition and cultural practice by the entire nation, thus cooperation between parents and community to ensure a safer winter customary initiation and zero death is paramount,” said MEC Mashilo.

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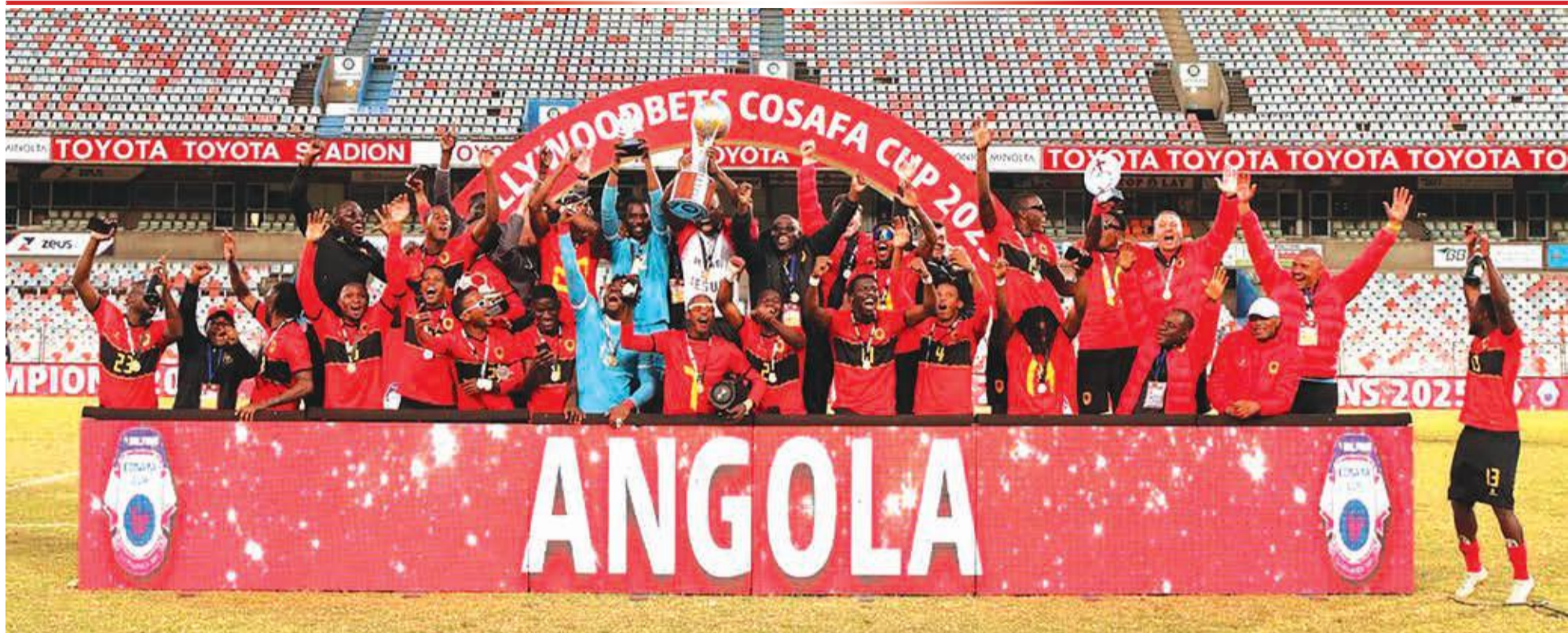
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Angola celebrates its 5th COSAFA Cup title.

# BAFANA COSAFA CUP TITLE DREAM DASHED

Kopano Dibakwane

Angola has successfully defended its COSAFA Cup title, defeating South Africa 3-0 in the final match played at the Free State Stadium on Sunday 15 June 2025.

The first half was a cautious affair, with both teams closing ranks and treading carefully while studying each other's intentions. The back-and-forth tussle somehow slowed the tempo of the game, and fans from both sides were biting their nails in anxiety.

Angola's experience and skill ultimately told, as they took the lead just before half-time, in the 42nd minute, thanks to a header from Laurindo Aurèlio, leaving Bafana goalkeeper Thakasani Mbanjwa completely stunned.

Bafana kicked-off the second half with a clear mandate to destabilise the opponent with an offensive approach, but their attempts to push harder for an equaliser backfired when they were caught on the counter-attack, allowing Aurèlio to clinch his brace in the 61st minute, which was also his 8th goal of the tournament.

Despite creating some promising chances, South Africa struggled to find the back of the net. Kabelo Sebelebele and Boitumelo Radiopane came close, but



Bafana player trying to penetrate Angolan defence.

Angolan goalkeeper, Neblu, made crucial saves to deny them.

Bafana's dream of lifting the cup were

annihilated when Felício Joao clinically executed a stunning free-kick in the 80th minute, which sealed the victory for

Angola.

The Angolans controlled the game in the closing stages, by moving the ball around with ease and winning down the clock until the final whistle. This victory marks Angola's 5th COSAFA Cup title overall and 2nd consecutive win.

The South African coach, Vela Khumalo, kept Mduduzi Shabalala on the bench and re-introduced Mpumalanga-born, Vuyo Letlapa, in the starting lineup. Bafana might have lost the cup, but they displayed the most outstanding performance throughout the tournament, with a total of 13 goals scored in 10 matches.

Coach Khumalo was visibly disheartened following the loss, but he commended his team for showing resilience against the tough Angolan team.

"We really tried our best, but we were playing against a very solid opposition. It was Angola's first team. We wanted to be more offensive, but the energy was somehow depleted. It's one of those things. We just have to accept and move on," said Khumalo.

South Africa will look to regroup and prepare for the CHAN tournament starting in August this year, where they are in Group C alongside highly competitive opponents such as Algeria, Guinea, Uganda and Niger.