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# SOPA UNVAILS MPUMALANGA'S FUTURE

Lwazi Raul-Shongwe and Kopano Dibakwane

The Premier of Mpumalanga, Mandla Ndlovu, believes that the socio-economic conditions of the province's growing population can be improved by those who hold positions of responsibility.

Premier Ndlovu was speaking during a meeting with Members of the Executive Council (EXCO), in which the Medium Term Development Plan (MTDP) was approved.

The MTDP is viewed as a comprehensive guide to improve the lives of 5.3 million people in Mpumalanga.

EXCO spokesperson and MEC for Public Works, Roads and Transport, Thulasizwe Thomo, said Mpumalanga is currently listed as the fourth province in South Africa with a high poverty rate.

He said the implementation of job creation measures by the provincial government in agriculture, transport and communication sectors, as well as partnerships with the private sector, helped to drop the unemployment rate from 37.4% to 34.7%, as stated in the latest Labour Force Survey released by Statistics South Africa, despite the unfavourable economic conditions.

"The Premier told the session that the MTDP is an aggressive guide for all state institutions to work towards the achievement of the apex priorities namely; Drive

inclusive growth and job creation, reduce poverty and tackle the high cost of living and build a capable, ethical and developmental state," said Thomo.

• Drive inclusive growth and job creation: Increase domestic and FDI (Foreign Direct Investment) to R10 billion in various economic sectors mainly; agriculture, mining, and tourism.

• Reduce poverty and tackle the high cost of living: Implement indigent policies across all municipalities, Value Added Tax (VAT) exemptions for new basic foods, the review administered prices, and the construction of more than 11 000 individual units.

1.700 million beneficiaries to be supported through different social Grants, and the more than 200 000 Child Support Grant beneficiaries.

• Build a capable, ethical, and developmental state: Filling of critical vacancies to strengthen state capacity and implementation of Municipal Monitoring Systems (MMS) are integrated in the MTDP as targets for Priority 3.

EXCO is determined to support municipalities with financial challenges such as payment of the Eskom and Rand Water debts.

Clean audit outcomes are also included to support state institutions to achieve the targets with the ultimate improvement of public trust about the proper spending of public funds. According to Thomo, the implementation of the MTDP was outlined extensively during the State Of the Province Address (SOPA), which was delivered by Premier Ndlovu on 28 February 2025.

EXCO is determined to support municipalities with financial challenges such as payment of the Eskom and Rand Water debts

The Premier of Mpumalanga, Mandla Ndlovu.

ADVERTORIAL



# Siyabuswa community unites for recycling

The Mhlahlandlela Recycling Awareness and Clean-up Campaign took full effect when the community of Siyabuswa A, in the DR JS Moroka Local Municipality, came out in large numbers to support the initiative.

The Mpumalanga Department of Agriculture, Rural Development, Land and Environmental Affairs (DARDLEA) said the event was held in partnership with the National Department of Forestry, Fisheries and Environment, the local Municipality, PETCO, and other

stakeholders.

“The event aimed to raise awareness about the risks associated with environmental pollution and the benefits of recycling and circular as potential sources of wealth.

During the campaign, community members and waste pickers worked together to clean up various areas in Siyabuswa A that had been turned into illegal dumping sites.

The event highlighted the hazards associated with pollution, littering, and illegal dumping, as well as the benefits

of a healthy environment for humans and livestock,” said DARDLEA.

The also emphasised the potential economic benefits of recycling. By adopting these practices, communities can create jobs and stimulate local economic growth while also protecting the environment.

The success of the campaign was evident in the large turnout of community members, who demonstrated their commitment to protecting the environment.

The event also showcased the

power of collaboration between government, civil society, and the private sector in addressing environmental challenges.

As the world grapples with the challenges of climate change, environmental pollution, and waste management, initiatives like the Mhlahlandlela Recycling Awareness and Clean-up Campaign are crucial in promoting sustainable practices and raising awareness about the importance of environmental conservation.

# Another senior employee at Eskom nabbed for cable theft

Lwazi Raul-Shongwe and Kopano Dibakwane

The Hawks’ Serious Organised Crime Investigation team, in Secunda, have arrested a 40-year-old Security Supervisor attached to Eskom Tutuka Power Station on Wednesday 5 March 2025, after he was implicated as part of a copper cable-theft syndicate.

The suspect is reportedly the latest addition to a list of seven other suspects, including the Principal Inspector at Eskom Tutuka Power Station, Refilwe Motloug, her brother and brother-in-law, who were all arrested in October 2025 for the same crime.

According to Mpumalanga police spokesperson, Brigadier Donald Mdhlu, the investigation emanates from an

incident that occurred on 30 September 2024, in which the Hawks in Secunda arrested three African males who were caught allegedly transporting copper cables in a Toyota Hilux double-cab.

The suspects were reportedly unable to account for the copper cables found inside the bakkie and this led to the further arrest of another 40-year-old suspect.

“The multidisciplinary team followed up information which led them to a farm where an Eskom truck dropped a consignment of copper cables.

During the investigation, it was discovered that copper cables were stripped and burnt. Upon searching, more copper cables were recovered,” said Brigadier Mdhlu.

The law enforcement team reportedly proceeded to Tutuka Power Station, where the cables were allegedly stolen.

“The bakkie and exhibits were seized. Further investigation revealed that the Principal Inspector at Tutuka Power Station (Refilwe Motloug) was also involved,” said Mdhlu.



Hawks members arresting a senior Eskom official for alleged theft of copper cables.

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# New DG appointed in the Office of the Premier

Lwazi Raul-Shongwe and Kopano Dibakwane

Mpumalanga Premier, Mandla Ndlovu, has officially welcomed the newly appointed Director General, Maggie Skhosana, as she assumed her duties on Monday 3 March 2025.

Skhosana is lauded for her impressive track record as an administrator and for securing clean audit outcomes during her tenure as the Municipal Manager of Nkangala District Municipality in Middleburg, where she served until her recent appointment.

The new DG is expected to be instrumental in guiding the two spheres of government in Mpumalanga towards achieving their targets.

The Premier expressed his confidence in Skhosana's ability to drive government efficiency and accountability.

"Ms Skhosana's achievements are well-documented. She has set a record of achieving clean audits at the District.

This experience will work in our favour in our determination to increase the number of departments and municipalities with similar achievements in the province," said Ndlovu.



The newly appointed Mpumalanga DG, Maggie Skhosana.

Skhosana said her ideology of doing more and talking less will be the anchor point of her commitment.

She furthermore called for teamwork

and support in order to guide the 7th Administration towards achieving its key priorities, namely; Driving inclusive growth and job creation, Tackling the high

cost of living and poverty, as well as Building a capable, ethical, and developmental state.

"We will strive our best to ensure that we don't fail you, and to ensure that we achieve the three priorities of the province which I believe the colleagues know, they are very clear on the Medium Term Development Plan(MTDP) of what the province seeks to achieve in this 7th Administration.

Secondly, we will strive with the team to ensure that you receive the clean audit. As far as I'm concerned, it should be easier for the Office of the Premier to attain the clean audit.

I believe that we will work together as a team. I do not possess the monopoly of wisdom, and I need your support," said Skhosana.

Premier Ndlovu has applauded the work of Deputy Director General for Institutional Development, Peter Nyoni, during his tenure as the Acting Director General. He appreciated Nyoni's leadership experience during the transition period.

"You brought the much-needed stability in a space that is complex, and guided the entire Provincial Government towards a good performance," said the Premier.

## The OTP commended for Youth Development Fund progress

Kopano Dibakwane

The Office of the Premier (OTP), led by Premier Mandla Ndlovu, appeared before the Portfolio Committee of the Mpumalanga Provincial Legislature on Tuesday 4 March 2025 to present second and third quarter reports for the 2024/25 financial year.

The OTP was praised for its notable progress in economically empowering the youth in the province through the Premier's Youth Development Fund.

According to George Mthethwa, spokesperson in the Office of the Premier, the Youth Fund is an initiative by the Mpumalanga Provincial Government to support the youth as part of job creation, supporting youth-owned businesses, and promoting youth empowerment.

"Since its inception, 29 youth-owned businesses across the 17 municipalities have been supported to the tune of R49 million.

The government further assigned business advisors and mentors, as part of the support," said Mthethwa.

The low percentages of beneficiaries from designated groups, such as people living with disabilities and women, came under scrutiny by the Committee as it called for the situation to be rectified urgently.

"The Newly appointed Director-General, Maggie Skhosana, assured the Committee that a post-funding plan will be put in place and in addition, a clear output of the appointed business advisors will also be submitted to the Committee to derive value for money, in support of the businesses," said Mthethwa.



Premier Mandla Ndlovu.

# STATE OF THE PROVINCE ADDRESS

# 2025



Mpumalanga Premier, Mandla Ndlovu during the tabling of the SOPA in the Legislature

## MPUMALANGA TO CREATE 300,000 JOBS, BOOST INVESTMENT, AND IMPROVE WATER ACCESS

The Mpumalanga Premier, Mr Mandla Ndlovu delivered his inaugural State of the Province Address (SOPA) on Friday, 28 February 2025, at the Mpumalanga Legislature Chamber in Mbombela. This marked a crucial moment as he outlined his vision for addressing the various socio-economic challenges faced by Mpumalanga's growing population of 5.3 million.

The SOPA also marked a significant milestone in Premier Ndlovu's tenure, as he committed to working tirelessly to improve the lives of the people by delivering sustainable and high-quality services. He highlighted the government's achievements and key focus areas from the Medium-Term Development Plan (MTDP), which include increasing access to social intervention programs such as housing, clean running water, improved sanitation, quality education, expanding scholar transport, school nutrition programs, enhancing access to

healthcare services, infrastructure development, among the priorities.

*The Premier reflected on the key priorities of the 7<sup>th</sup> administration of driving inclusive economic growth and job creation, reducing poverty and the high cost of living, and building a capable, ethical, and developmental state.*

He emphasised the importance of public-private partnerships as a strategy to accelerate service delivery. "We have expanded access to basic services, housing, education and skills development, healthcare, food security, safety and security, social and economic infrastructure, and economic growth," he asserted.



The government continues to provide decent housing for the citizens of the province, delivering a total of 575 houses since the last financial year to date.

## ECONOMIC GROWTH AND JOBS CREATION

Premier Ndlovu assured Mpumalanga citizens that the focus remains steadfast on driving economic growth and job creation to uplift communities. The following targets were outlined in line with the three key priorities:

- Driving inclusive economic growth and creating over 60,000 jobs annually, bringing the total to 300 000 sustainable jobs in 5 years.
- Reducing the unemployment rate to 25% and the poverty rate to below 35%.
- Attracting R50 billion in domestic and foreign investments.
- Launching the Mpumalanga International Fresh Produce Market by April 2025, creating 156 direct jobs and supporting 150,000 subsistence farmers.
- Developing the Mariepskop Cable Car and Barberton Makhonjwa World Heritage site to boost tourism's GDP contribution from 5.8% to 8%.
- Leveraging Mpumalanga's coal reserves, which contribute

80% of South Africa's coal production, while exploring carbon capture technologies for sustainability.

- Investing in roads, bridges, and logistics hubs to improve connectivity and attract investors.
- Supporting 1,600 SMMEs to trade with the market (four per ward) to stimulate local economies.



The Mpumalanga International Fresh Produce Market is set to be launched in April 2025 and is expected to create 156 jobs on the market floor.

## HEALTH AND NHI READINESS



Health MEC Sasekani Manzini during the launch of the electronic medical record (EMR) Mpumalanga Beta implementation system, an initiative aimed at ensuring that patient's records are kept safe and easy to locate

Focusing on health and readiness for the implementation of National Health Insurance (NHI), Premier Ndlovu highlighted the importance of healthcare through significant investment. *"We want our people to be healthy wherever they are, which is why we are investing heavily in overall healthcare" he emphasized.*

The signing of the NHI Bill by President Cyril Ramaphosa in 2024, as Ndlovu stated, is aimed at ensuring universal access to quality healthcare. To date, 287 out of 292 clinics have achieved ideal clinic status, meeting national healthcare standards, with 160 fully certified by the Office of Health Standards and Compliance. He referred to the following health infrastructure as landmark projects in the health sector:

- The state-of-the-art Middelburg Hospital, with 220 beds, which will be officially opened by President Ramaphosa.
- Construction of the Rob Ferreira Radiation Oncology Centre which will enable the province to treat cancer patients locally, reducing reliance on Gauteng.

- Construction of the Linah Malatjie Hospital to enhance tertiary health services, and a Mpumalanga Mental Health Hospital to address mental health needs.
- Implementation of telemedicine, which is set to modernise healthcare delivery, maximising the use of available resources.

Premier Ndlovu further emphasised the province's commitment to achieving the 95/95/95 UNAIDS targets for people living with HIV. "Our plans are already in motion to sustain HIV/AIDS programmes, and we will tap into other social partners to augment our efforts".



National Human Papillomavirus (HPV) vaccination school campaign



**FROM LEFT:** Education MEC Cathy Dlamini, Premier Mandla Ndlovu, 2024 Matric Top Achiever Gugu Lebambo, Contralesa President Kgoshi Lameck Mokoena, Education Deputy Minister Dr. Reginah Mhaule, and Mpumalanga Speaker Lindi Masina

## EDUCATION

Premier Ndlovu highlighted the significant progress in education, focusing on tangible achievements and infrastructure development. Mpumalanga is currently ranked third best province in the country, with learners who entered Grade 10 and completed Grade 12 in record time.

**“The province is investing in the development of our children. We have now completed the building of six boarding schools which enrolled 6 438 learners from farm schools. Mkhondo boarding school will be operational in the second school term.”**



The newly constructed, state-of-the-art Ndindindi Primary School in Nkomazi Local Municipality aligns with the Provincial Government's commitment to improving learning and teaching conditions. The school also boasts world-class sports facilities to keep learners active and focused.

He tabled the following milestone achievements, to improve access to education:

- Finalised plan for the school learners with special needs.
- Prioritised the eradication of 53 old schools built by communities and the re-roofing of 81 asbestos schools.
- Support of 999 685 learners in Mpumalanga through the school nutrition programme.
- Provision of school transport for 73 723 learners, ferried to 353 schools daily.



## CUMMUNITY SAFETY AND FIGHT AGAINST GBVF

Crime, especially Gender-Based Violence and Femicide (GBVF) remains the biggest threat to the lives of many communities in Mpumalanga. Premier Ndlovu devoted part of his address on crime and safety. He stated the following:

- Establish victim friendly rooms (VFR) and GBVF desks in 85 police stations.
- 15 well-resourced units located in

the three districts and linked to 90 police stations to tackle family violence, child abuse, and sexual offences.

- Collaborate with civil society organisations to educate communities on reporting GBVF crimes and the implications of withdrawing cases.
- Deploy Traffic Officers for 24 hours.
- Introduce Highway Patrol with focus on N4, N17, and N12.



Premier Mandla Ndlovu conducting an inspection of the provincial security cluster before delivering the State of the Province Address.

## MINING

In acknowledging the decline in the mining sector's GDP contribution, Premier Ndlovu highlighted the critical role of coal in Mpumalanga's economy. While supporting the Just Energy Transition, he emphasised the need for carbon capture research to mitigate emissions while maintaining coal production.

**“80% of the country's coal production comes from Mpumalanga. We are home to 11 of the country's 14 coal fired power**

**plants which account for 70% of Eskom's operating capacity, critical in enhancing energy stability in our country.” Premier Ndlovu stated**

Additionally, the Premier stressed the importance of responsible mining practices and urged mining companies to invest in local infrastructure and community development. He reaffirmed the government's commitment to ensuring that mining remains a key driver of economic growth, while gradually integrating



Coal mining operation: Coal still remains the biggest contributor to the province's GDP, as Mpumalanga depends heavily on coal as a source of economic value, employment, and energy.

## ROADS AND ACCESS TO WATER

The SOPA has revealed that 40% of Mpumalanga's 13 387km of road is surfaced, while 60% is gravel. Two teams were established per district for the 'Kubhunya Luthuli' programme, which involves patching potholes, regravelling, and cleaning drainage structures.

**“We are constructing a bridge over a railway line in eMalahleni. We have requested the Department of Transport, through PRASA, to consider Mpumalanga's rail corridors when restoring metro rail corridors in other provinces.”**

Other major road infrastructure projects include more than five recently constructed major interchanges in Karino and Montros and widening of Moloto Road, upgrading of the R40 and N2.

Premier Ndlovu further highlighted the strides made by government in providing access to basic services, such as water. He said a budget of R585.992 million is allocated for the Water and Sanitation Infrastructure Grant (WSIG) for the 2025/26 financial year. Some of the strides include:



- 87% of the population has access to reliable water.
- Water releases authorised from Jericho Dam to Mkhondo Municipality.
- 20 mega litres of water reliably supplied to Thembisile Hani Municipality per day.
- Bulk water to be supplied to villages within Thembisile Hani Local Municipality through the construction of the Loskop Regional Bulk Water Supply Scheme, at a cost of R2 billion, expected to be completed in the 2025/26 financial year.
- The Amsterdam and Sheepmore Bulk Water Supply Scheme at Mkhondo Local Municipality is progressing well, with over 40% of the construction completed, and is planned to be finished by June 2026, at a total project cost of R550 million.



Nkangala District Municipality councillors, led by Executive Mayor Thomas Ngwenya (LEFT), handing over the newly completed bulk water supply and storage project in eMalahleni Local Municipality, which is set to provide clean water to over 19,000 community members.

# Tonga hospital restores vision to patients

Lwazi Raul-Shongwe and Kopano Dibakwane



Eye care patients from other areas of Mpumalanga visiting Tonga Hospital for treatment.

The Department of Health in Mpumalanga, under the stewardship of MEC Sasekani Manzini, received praises for prioritising everyone, young and old, to enjoy adequate access to health care services in the province.

This came from 134 satisfied patients who recently underwent cataract operations at Tonga Hospital.

The patients furthermore expressed gratitude towards the staff at the health institution for the excellent treatment they received, which included food and successful operations.

The Department of Health said the first 67 successful surgeries were conducted on patients from Ehlanzeni District, followed by another group of Eye Care patients from Nkangala District, Delmas and Witbank Hospitals.

The Department also said the operations were marking the end of February 2025.

“Tonga Hospital has consistently demonstrated its capacity and capabilities as a provincial eye care centre and will continue to conduct this cataract operations campaign throughout the year to restore vision to visually impaired patients caused by cataract.

“Some patients who had been visually impaired, returned home extremely happy, following the operation.

They expressed how they felt like they had undergone a transformation and have been reborn like babies,” said the Department.

## Finance MEC delivers Second Provincial Adjustments Budget Speech

Lwazi Raul-Shongwe and Kopano Dibakwane

In a bid to address the economic and fiscal constraints, including high inflation rates, low GDP growth, and tax revenue, the MEC for Finance in Mpumalanga-Bonakele Majuba, tabled the second Adjustment Budget for the provincial administration, in which he revealed that the total provincial budget for the year ending 31 March 2025 is increased from R62.9 billion to R63.1 billion.

In his address, Majuba said the adjustments budget is a demonstration of the provincial government’s adaptability in navigating changing circumstances, to ensure that government spending carries a legal mandate and enforces accounting on the use of public resources.

He said the MTDP (Medium-Term Development Plan) is the will be used as a guideline to assist the provincial government in addressing economic and fiscal constraints.

“Addressing these issues is essential for fostering sustainable development and improving the overall quality of life for residents across the province,” said Majuba.

According to the MEC, R13.6 billion was allocated to the HSDG (Human Settlements Development Grant) by the Ministry of Human Settlements, for 2024/25, with the provincial share amounting to R910 million.



Photo: Sourced

He said that the Provincial Department of Human Settlements has consistently spent well, resulting in funds being reallocated to accelerate housing projects and related structures.

### Key Changes to the Provincial Fiscal Framework:

- Department of Human Settlements: Receives R250 million from the

National Government’s HSDG, increasing the budget from R1 billion 529 million 558 thousand to R1 billion 777 million 704 thousand.

- Department of Economic Development and Tourism: Budget reduced from R1 billion 467 million 518 thousand to R1 billion 460 million 518 thousand.
- Department of Community Safety, Security and Liaison: Budget

reduced from R1 billion 956 million 900 thousand to R1 billion 934 million 700 thousand.

According to Majuba, the total provincial budget increases from R62 billion 945 million 282 thousand to R63 billion 173 million 228 thousand.

He made an appeal to all departments to ensure that every rand and cent is accounted for at the end of this financial year.

“We have already issued a circular to all departments to ensure that all valid invoices for services rendered this year must be processed before the end of this month.

The support of this Bill will go a long way in ensuring that this administration builds on the progress made, most of which was highlighted by the Honourable Premier (Mandla Ndlovu) in his first State of the Province Address last week,” said Majuba.

### The MEC tabled the following documents for consideration;

- Mpumalanga Second Adjustments Appropriation Bill, 2025.
- Second Adjusted Estimates of Provincial Revenue and Expenditure for 2024/25.
- Introductory speech on the Mpumalanga Second Adjustments Budget for 2024/25.



Mining executives also in attendance.



The DG in the Office of the Premier, Maggie Skhosana.

# A Call for Sustainable Economic Growth

**Lwazi Raul-Shongwe and Kopano Dibakwane**

Mpumalanga Premier has emphasised the importance of sustainable economic growth and an inclusive energy transition in the province.

Speaking at a gathering of stakeholders in Emalahleni, the Premier highlighted the need for a balanced approach to addressing climate change while protecting the livelihoods of workers in the coal mining industry.

The Premier noted that the mining sector is a significant contributor to the province's economy, accounting for around 20% of the GDP and employing over 70,000 workers.

“According to a 2024 DMRE(Department of Mineral Resources and Energy)Report, there are 262 operating mines and quarries in Mpumalanga, of which 173 are coal mine related. Many of these mines are in municipal areas such as Emalahleni, Steve Tshwete, Thaba Chweu, Msukaligwa,

Victor Khanye, Govan Mbeki, as well as Emakhazeni, and other areas,” said Premier Ndlovu.

He added that Mpumalanga achieved export sales of primary minerals valued at R177.6 billion and local sales amounting to R97.8 billion in 2022.

However, the industry is facing significant challenges, including the transition to renewable energy sources and the need to reduce carbon emissions.

The Premier emphasized the importance of protecting workers in the coal mining industry during this transition period. “Nobody must be left behind with the Just Energy Transition,” the Premier said. “Relevant projects at these power stations and re-skilling programs should play a vital role in this regard.”

The Premier also highlighted the need for inclusive economic growth, noting that the province's economic

development plan, the Mpumalanga Economic Growth and Development Path (MEGDP), aims to create jobs, reduce poverty, and minimise inequality.

The gathering of stakeholders, which included representatives from the mining industry, government, and civil society, aimed to explore strategies for mitigating the risks associated with the energy transition while leveraging opportunities for job creation and economic development.

The Premier's call for sustainable economic growth and an inclusive energy transition comes as the province prepares to host a Mpumalanga Mining Indaba, which will bring together stakeholders to discuss the future of the mining industry in the province.

Other speakers at the event include the newly-appointed Director-General in the Office of the Premier, Maggie Skhosana, to name but a few.



Premier Ndlovu addressing the guests.



MEC for DEDT, Makhosazane Masilela.

# SPORT

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Bafana player, Jamie Webber, equalised for his team.

## COACH BROOS NAMES BAFANA PRELIMINARY

**Kopano Dibakwane**

The Bafana Bafana 37-member preliminary squad for the 2026 FIFA World Cup qualifiers, to square-up against Lesotho and Benin this month, was announced by coach Hugo Broos last week.

According to the South African Football Association(SAFA), the team will report for camp in Johannesburg on Monday 17 March 2025 and then travel to Polokwane to host their first match against Lesotho at the Peter Mokaba stadium in Polokwane, on 21 March.

After the Lesotho encounter, the team will reportedly travel to Côte d'Ivoire to face Benin in a match scheduled for 25 March. SAFA said the Bafana vs Benin game will be played in Côte d'Ivoire due after the Beninese home ground was deemed unsuitable for international matches.

“ The preliminary squad will be trimmed

to 23 players in the coming days when coach Broos announces his final list for the two matches,” said SAFA.

The preliminary squad consists of players such as Ronwen Williams(Mamelodi Sundowns), Nkosinathi Sibisi(Orlando Pirates), Devin Titus(Stellenbosch FC), Khulumani Ndamani(TS Galaxy), Relebohile Mofokeng(Orlando Pirates), to name but a few.

Meanwhile, the Bafana team shared the spoils with Egypt in the CHAN(African Nations Championship) qualifier played at Free State stadium last week.

Bafana striker, Jamie Webber, scored a thunderous long-range strike to equalise and keep his team in the competition. The Egyptians took the lead in the 66th minute following a stunning goal from Mohamed Hassan Hashem.

The match also saw the return of dribbling-maestro, Monnapule Saleng, whose contractual issues with his team(Orlando Pirates) has kept him out of play for many weeks.

The Bafana team was under the leadership of Coach Molefi Ntseki, who expressed contentment for the manner in which his squad played on the day.

“ The structure for me is everything because when you have the structure, it means everybody understands their roles and functions within the game, whether in possession or out of possession.

The boys did very well in terms of performance, but the final result was not that pleasing knowing very well that we still have to go to Egypt in the second leg,” said Ntseki. Egyptian Coach, Wael Reyad said most of his players were absent for the match due to problems with passports and travelling papers.

“ We played with 15 or 16 players only. I told my players after the match, it was a very tough game because it was the first time for them to play for the national team,” said Rayed.

The victorious team in the two-legged contest will qualify for the 2nd round to be in May 2025.



Bafana coach, Hugo Broos, ready for FIFA World Cup qualifiers.