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Officials conducting an Inter-Provincial operation.



DPWRT spreading the message to taxi commuters.

MEC Thomo addressing law enforcement members during a parade.

MPUMALANGA LAUNCHES TRANSPORT MONTH

Lwazi Raul-Shongwe and Kopano Dibakwane

Mpumalanga MEC for DPWRT(Department of Public Works Roads and Transport), Thulasizwe Thomo, led the Inter-Provincial Law Enforcement Operation held at Grootvlei along the N3 Corridor, Dipaleseng Local Municipality, to officially launch the 2025 October Transport Month campaign.

The operation was reportedly a collaborative move involving the N3 Forum made up law enforcement stakeholders from the provinces of Gauteng, KwaZulu-Natal, and the Free State.

DPWRT said the collaboration highlights a shared commitment to strengthening road safety, ensuring compliance, as well as enhancing cross-border law enforcement efforts along one of South Africa’s busiest national routes.

MEC Thomo said the launch seeks to reflect part of the broader Transport Month Programme, which aims to raise awareness about road safety, promote responsible driving behaviour, and highlight the Department’s ongoing efforts to maintain and improve transport



Taxi association and DPWRT plant trees at a taxi rank in Bethal.

infrastructure across the province.

“October is Transport Month, a time to highlight the important role of transport in building a strong and inclusive society. I

am proud to announce that our Kubhunya Lutfuli Programme is delivering real progress.

“We are improving roads and enhancing

public transport and ensuring that our communities are safely and effectively connected.

Transport is a backbone of development. Let us use this October Transport Month to reflect, engage, and work together for a transport system that serves all,” said Thomo.

The Department also led other activities to officially welcome Transport Month, such as awareness campaigns held at Bethal taxi rank. This included joining forces with BTA(Bethal Taxi Association) to clean, paint and plant trees at the taxi rank.

The activities in Bethal were led by DPWRT Acting Chief Director for Transport Operations, Mojalefa Tsotetsi, and the BTA Chairperson, Moses Simelane, offering a free ride home to all commuters who voiced their dissatisfaction with taxi drivers, and assuring them better quality service in future.

According to the Department, a series of initiatives and campaigns will continue throughout the month, reinforcing the collective goal of creating a safer, more reliable, and efficient transport system for all residents of Mpumalanga.



A proud moment for learners and trainers.



Mpumalanga learners display their achievements.

Mpumalanga learners shine in Road Safety Debate

Lwazi Raul-Shongwe and Kopano Dibakwane

Mpumalanga learners put the province on the map by emerging victorious during



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the prize-giving function of the 2025 National Road Safety and Participatory Educational Techniques competition held at Time Square in Pretoria.

The learners competed with their counterparts from other provinces including Limpopo, KwaZulu-Natal, Eastern Cape, Western Cape, Northern Cape, Free State, North West provinces, and were honoured for demonstrating exceptional skills in debating and presenting road safety proposals, winning top spots in both urban and rural categories.

According to the spokesperson for Mpumalanga DCSSL (Department of Community Safety, Security, and Liaison), Moeti Mmusi, the National Road Safety Debate and PET competitions are held annually targeting Grade 10 and 11 learners. "The learners debate

on road safety motions whilst the PET encourages participants to do research and identify road safety challenges in their communities. They then come up with proposals and present them to panels of adjudicators at all levels of the competition," said Mmusi.

The Interim Chief Executive Officer for RTMC (Road Traffic Management Corporation), Refilwe Mongale, said the competition targets over 1000 learners from different provinces in various schools.

"This programme has a huge impact on learners as they research and acquire knowledge on road safety. Through this programme, the learners learn basic skills such as research and public speaking," said Mongale.

Mpumalanga MEC for DCSSL, Jackie Macie, encouraged participants to become

active road safety ambassadors in their communities, emphasising the importance of spreading the message to prevent needless loss of lives from road crashes.

"We want all the participants, past and present, to become active road safety ambassadors in their communities and everywhere they go. Every crash statistic represents a life lost. Therefore, the learners must help us spread the message," said Macie.

Each learner on all the categories received a medal, trophy and a cheque amounting to R6600. The province also scooped the Best Speaker in Debate Urban Category. Sasha Nkabinde, a Grade 11 learner from Jerusalem Secondary School near Hazyview, took the first place as best speaker. All four trainers of the categories won Best Trainer awards, medals and trophies.

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A memorable stay at Songimvelo Nature Reserve

Songimvelo Nature Reserve

Located in the southern part of Barberton town, and nestled against the north-western border of Eswatini, Songimvelo Nature Reserve is a hidden gem that offers a unique blend of natural beauty, wildlife, and rich history that Mpumalanga has to offer.

Songimvelo Nature Reserve covers an area of almost 50,000 hectares, making it the largest provincial reserve in Mpumalanga. It is home to 4 of the Big Five, with an additional 73 species of mammals, and serves as a breeding centre for white rhino. A picturesque picnic site, located alongside a small stream provides a convenient stay for visitors, and it's equipped with permanent braai facilities, running water as well as flushing toilets.

Avid sightseers can expect to catch a rare glimpse of the majestic Barberton Mountainlands, deep valleys and gorges leading into the Komati River valley.

This natural wonder has more than 1400 known species, ranging from several recently-discovered species, to the last wild population of the Woolly Cycad.

Whether you are looking for an intimate romantic getaway with your significant other, a family outing, inspiration to write that long-forgotten memoir, or a chance to unwind in the quiet wilderness, Songimvelo Nature Reserve is ready to welcome you.



Spend a night in the quite wildernesses.

Things to Do at Songimvelo Nature Reserve

- Hiking Trails: Explore the reserve's stunning landscapes on foot, with trails ranging from easy to challenging.
- Guided Game Drives: Encounter a

- variety of wildlife, including elephants, buffaloes, and rhinos, with experienced guides providing insights into animal behaviour and ecology.
- Birdwatching: Spot over 300 bird species, including raptors and waterfowl, in the reserve's varied habitats.



Wildlife sightings at Songimvelo Nature Reserve.

- Cultural Tours: Learn about the history and traditions of local communities, and visit archaeological sites featuring San rock art and Iron Age ruins.
- Photography: Capture breathtaking images of the reserve's diverse landscapes and wildlife.
- Fishing: Enjoy fishing in the reserve's rivers and wetlands, providing a relaxing experience amidst nature.

Kromdraai Camp

Kromdraai Camp is part of the Songimvelo Nature Reserve and offers self-catering accommodation options. Kromdraai Camp is fully operational in the reserve, offering 50 self-catering chalets. Each chalet features 3 bedrooms, a small kitchen and an ablution facility, with 10 additional chalets at Komati River lodge.

Things to Do at Kromdraai Camp

- Game Drives: Explore the reserve's wildlife on guided or self-drive game drives.
- Bush Walks: Take a leisurely walk along the Komati River, spotting wildlife and enjoying the scenery.
- Birding: Spot a variety of bird species in the reserve's diverse habitats.
- Picnicking: Enjoy a meal in the picturesque surroundings of the camp.





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Delegates and stakeholders attending the symposium.

NSSA Symposium Honours DARDLEA Officials



Officials who were honoured.

Lwazi Raul-Shongwe

The 25th NSSA (Nematological Society of Southern Africa) Symposium, held in Malelane, Nkomazi, recently came to a close, with officials from the Mpumalanga DARDLEA (Department of Agriculture, Rural Development, Land and Environmental Affairs) receiving prestigious accolades for their outstanding work.

According to DARDLEA, the 3-day event was attended by delegates from the USA (United States of America), Kenya, Czech Republic, Belgium, Netherlands, Zimbabwe, and Indonesia.

The symposium was also attended

by researchers, chemical companies, Extension Practitioners and students, who discussed Nematodes, its dangers on crops and progress made on research thus far.

"Nematodes are microscopic worms that pose a significant threat to crops by damaging plant roots, preventing nutrient intake, and reducing yields. The NSSA Symposium provided a platform for experts to discuss the dangers of nematodes and share research findings on managing these pests," said DARDLEA.

Accolades Received by DARDLEA Officials

- Nompumelelo Nobela: Nematode

Coordinator for Ehlanzeni District, scooped the George Martin Scholarship and achieved Second Best Oral Presentation.

- Hamilton Pharasi: From Producer Support Services, secured Third Best Oral Presentation.

- Sweetness Seema and Noyise Masilela: Both received an Art of an Animal in a Kruger Park Quiz award.

The NSSA reportedly aims to promote the science of nematology in Southern Africa through knowledge sharing, symposia, and research promotion.

HOUSEHOLD BACKYARD GARDENS KEY TO FOOD SECURITY

October is commemorated as Food Security Month in South Africa since in 2014, providing an opportunity to highlight the plight of millions of undernourished people and heightens public awareness on issues pertaining to food security.

Most of the affected people live in rural areas, with their source of income and survival in agriculture.

World Food Day, celebrated annually on 16 October, was proclaimed at the Conference of the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) of the United Nations in 1979, which was ultimately endorsed by the General Assembly in 1980.

The objectives of World Food Day is to strengthen solidarity in the struggle against hunger, malnutrition and poverty, but most importantly to promote food production, encourage research and technology development for food production systems, but also enhance the participation of rural people, in particular women and the underprivileged, on government's programmes that are aimed at halving hunger in South Africa.

It is against this background that the Mpumalanga Department of Agriculture, Rural Development, Land and Environmental Affairs (DARDLEA) encourages everyone to play a part in fighting hunger during this Food Security

Month by establishing food gardens and produce their own nutritious vegetables in their backyards.

DARDLEA MEC Khethiwe Moeketsi announced during her 2025/26 Policy and Budget speech in July, that her Department will prioritise supporting about 13 000 households, establish 690 backyard food gardens, and cultivate 18 000 hectares, in the effort to fight against hunger.

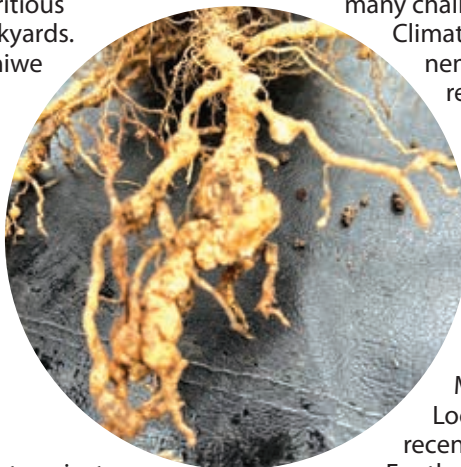
"Let's unite in the fight against hunger by actively participating in food production. Whether it's starting a backyard garden, establishing community food gardens, or supporting local agriculture, every effort counts.

In this way, we will be able to increase food production, which will result in bringing the food process down, making it more accessible to all. Together, we can enhance food security, improve nutrition, and create sustainable livelihoods for our communities. Let's take this Planting Season as an opportunity to sow seeds of hope and nourishment for all," said MEC Moeketsi. However, smallholder farmers, are

facing production challenges due to many challenges, that include Climate Change effects, and nematode infestations, resulting in significant yield losses thereby exacerbating food insecurity concerns.

This was discussed during the 25th Symposium of the Nematological Society of Southern Africa (NSSA) held in Malelane in Nkomazi Local Municipality recently.

For three days, Researchers, Extension Practitioners, Students and delegates from as far as USA, Kenya,



Czech Republic, Belgium, Netherlands, Zimbabwe, and Indonesia, met to discuss and engage on the dangers posed by Nematode on crops, including progress made to date on the continuous research on Nematode, amongst others.

Nematode are microscopic worm-like creatures which inhibit the soil and damage the roots of a plant, impairing them to take up water and nutrients, excessively reducing yields.

They affect all kinds of crops, with tomatoes, Bambara groundnut, sweet potato and potatoes being the most susceptible.

The NSSA and advisors are working closely with farmers to find effective solutions that will help them overcome these challenges and ensure a stable food supply.



Market Agents engage farmers ahead of MIF

Kopano Dibakwane

The MIF (Mpumalanga International Food Market) is taking significant strides in preparing for its much-anticipated launch, with Market Agents engaging farmers across the province.

The agents, including MabFresh, Phambili Ngombono, Aluhlaza Fresh, and Colette H Holdings, have been meeting with farmers in Ehlanzeni, Nkangala, and Gert Sibande Districts to discuss expectations and requirements for supplying produce to the MIF.

The MIF is set to revolutionise the agricultural sector in Mpumalanga, providing a platform for farmers to access local, regional, and international markets. With its comprehensive infrastructure and commitment to transparency and inclusivity, the MIF is poised to make a significant impact on the province's economy.

According to DARDLEA, the farmers were informed about the Mpumalanga Government Nutrition Sourcing Bill B-2025, which seeks to support

emerging farmers, revitalise land reform farms, create jobs and enhance market access.

The bill, which is still open for public input, is said to align with the MIF's objectives of promoting agricultural development and economic inclusion in the province.

In addition, DARDLEA said farmers were also advised to register for FBO Codes to prepare for supplying the MIF, providing them with a range of options to choose from.

"They emphasise the importance of good quality products, SAGAP (South African Good Agricultural Practices) and HACCP (Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points) certification, and adherence to the buyer's code.

They assured farmers of a good working relationship, transparency, and the obvious common goal; to make money.

"The agents will sell the produce on behalf of the farmers, who will receive payment within 5 days after supplying their produce, while a commission will be charged by the agent for their services," said DARDLEA.



DEDT MEC praises Mpumalanga energy

Lwazi Raul-Shongwe

A Ministerial visit to the Kinetiko Energy LTD Gas Project located at Brakfontein Farm, near Amersfoort, in Dr Pixley Ka Isaka Seme Local Municipality, was recently conducted by Mpumalanga MEC for DEDT (Department of Economic Development and Tourism), Jesta Sidell, alongside other senior government officials including the Minister of Minerals and Petroleum Resources, Gwede Mantashe, and his Deputy, Phumzile Mgcina.

The Kinetiko Energy LTD Gas Project is said to be a significant step towards enhancing South Africa's energy supply and supporting the country's just energy transition. According to DEDT, the project underlines government's commitment to renewable energy as a vital part of the national strategy to transition to cleaner energy sources and reduce

the carbon footprint.

Furthermore, DEDT said the project is anticipated to attract substantial investment to the Mpumalanga economy and forms part of the province's economic recovery plan. Speaking during the visit, MEC Sidell said the project is a game-changer and a testament that Mpumalanga is not just adapting to the just energy transition, but it is actively leading it.

"This onshore gas initiative, in partnership with the IDC (Industrial Development Corporation), is set to unlock significant domestic energy security and powering the industrial growth of this district and the entire province.

"This project is more than just infrastructure; it is an investment in our people. It promises job creation, skills development, and the stimulation of local economic activity in communities that deserve to be at the forefront of this new economic chapter," said MEC Sidell.



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St.Marks Academy crowned national champions in the Kay Motsepe Championship.

MP SCHOOLS DOMINATE IN SOCCER TOURNAMENT

Kopano Dibakwane

Mpumalanga school, St.Marks Academy from the Mbombela Circuit in the Ehlanzeni District, stood head above the rest during the highly competitive 2025 Kay Motsepe Schools' Soccer Tournament held at Giant Stadium in Soshanguve.

The Under-19 boys team were crowned National Champions after defeating Fumani Secondary School from

Katlehong(Gauteng Province) in the exhilarating final match, and claimed the coveted top prize of R3million.

The Mpumalanga champions faced tough competitors on the way to the final match, such as tournament favourites, Clapham High School, but their determination and teamwork played a pivotal role in motivating the boys to stand their ground against all odds.

The St.Marks Under-19 girls' team also left a mark in the competition and walked away with R400 000 after

securing the second place in a penalty shootout against St.Anne's from the Free State.

The Mpumalanga girls were defeated 5-4 in the penalty shootout, but the prize money was a comforting reward for all their hard work.

The Department of Education in Mpumalanga congratulated St.Marks Academy for their heartfelt effort in representing the province well at a national platform.

"The Department salutes all our schools

for their outstanding performances. Once again, Ehlanzeni District has proven to be the home of champions!

Congratulations to all our learners, coaches, and educators for flying the Mpumalanga flag high," said the Department of Education.

The Kay Motsepe Schools Championship is reportedly one of South Africa's most prestigious and prominent annual school football tournaments, offering over R11 million in prize money, with about 13000 schools taking part.