

Chief Albert Luthuli

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Mpumalanga government hands over 34 bakkies to traditional leaders



Premier Mandla Ndlovu.



The vehicles that were handed over to the Mpumalanga Traditional Leaders.

Kgabu Mahlatji

Traditional leaders across Mpumalanga are expected to respond more effectively to community needs after the provincial government handed over 34 operational vehicles to strengthen rural leadership and service delivery.

Mpumalanga Premier Mandla Ndlovu officially handed over the first batch of vehicles at Mbombela Stadium on October 16, accompanied by the MEC for Cooperative Governance, Human Settlements and Traditional Affairs (CoGHSTA), Speed Mashilo.

The vehicles, provided as tools of trade, will assist traditional leaders with resolving disputes, conducting community consultations, attending cultural ceremonies and engaging residents across rural communities.

Government said the remaining fleet would be procured in the coming

months.

Addressing traditional leaders and government representatives, Ndlovu emphasised their importance in promoting peace, preserving cultural heritage and advancing rural development.

“Traditional leaders are custodians of our customs, culture and heritage. They are also an important link between government and the communities we serve,” said Ndlovu.

He said government could not achieve inclusive rural development without the active participation of traditional leadership, adding that traditional leaders understood the challenges facing their communities and could help mobilise residents around development initiatives.

“Traditional leaders are strategic partners in our fight against poverty, unemployment and inequality. Their contribution is essential if we are to improve the lives of people in our rural communities,” he said.

Ndlovu highlighted government

investment in water infrastructure, road rehabilitation and support for small-scale farmers through equipment, seeds and access to reliable markets.

Improved roads, he said, would connect residents to schools, healthcare facilities and economic opportunities.

He also indicated that government would explore digital systems to improve communication, record-keeping and administrative processes in traditional council offices.

The Premier called for stronger cooperation between traditional leaders, ward councillors and municipal councillors, urging traditional leaders to use the vehicles to reach communities requiring assistance and development projects needing attention.

Chairperson of the Mpumalanga House of Traditional and Khoisan Leaders, Kgoshi Mathupa Mokoena, welcomed the provincial

government’s support, saying reliable transport would make a meaningful difference to the daily work of traditional councils.

“We appreciate the provincial government’s continued support for traditional leadership. Our work requires us to travel extensively to reach communities and assist people who need our intervention,” said Mokoena.

He said Mpumalanga was the first province to purchase operational vehicles, including bakkies, to support traditional authorities.

Mokoena explained that traditional council responsibilities frequently required long-distance travel, making access to reliable vehicles essential for community consultations, dispute resolution and cultural activities.

The provincial government said additional vehicles would be procured in the coming months to support the designated traditional councils across Mpumalanga.

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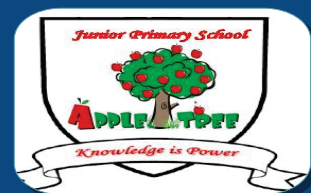
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MACRO-ECONOMIC REPORT 2026/27 QUARTER 2 - Summary

Executive Summary & Macro-Economic Outlook

• **GDP Performance:** Real GDP contracted by 0.2% quarter-on-quarter (qoq) in Q2 2026 (following a 0.4% expansion in Q1). Key contractions were recorded in trade (-1.9%), manufacturing (-1.8%), and mining (-3.0%). Agriculture, forestry, and fishing maintained positive growth at 0.3% qoq, supported by increased horticultural and field crop outputs.

• **Consumer Inflation (CPI):** Headline annual inflation rose slightly to 4.4% in August 2026 (up from 4.3% in July), staying close to the SARB target midpoint. Housing/utilities (+5.2%) and transport (+8.8%) were the largest drivers.

• **Producer Prices (PPI):** Annual final manufacturing producer price inflation slowed to 5.0% in August 2026 from 5.7% in July.

• **Interest Rates:** On September 23, 2026, the SARB MPC unanimously increased the repo rate by 25 basis points to 7.25% (prime rate at 10.75%) to address upward fuel price risks and protect inflation target alignment.

• **Fuel Adjustments (September 2026):** Significant price hikes were implemented across fuel categories due to rising global product prices and a negative slate balance (-R9.519 billion). Petrol 93/95 increased by 129.00 c/l, Diesel 0.05% by 293.90 c/l, and Diesel 0.005% by 314.90 c/l.

Climate Change Outlook & Farm Management: El Niño Outlook

• **Climate Outlook:** According to the South African Weather Service (SAWS Climate Watch, 31 August 2026), confirms that El Niño is active and will persist throughout the 2026/27 summer season, bringing high temperatures and below-normal rainfall across summer rainfall regions creating risks of dry conditions, heat stress, crop failures, and livestock mortality.

• **Agricultural Risks:** Increased risk of soil moisture depletion, heat stress, crop failures, livestock mortalities, and localized water restrictions.

• **Farmer Advisory & Mitigation Steps:**

- Crop Farmers: Adopt and Implement Climate-Smart and Conservation Agriculture practices to preserve soil moisture. Avoid unnecessary expansion of cultivated land,

adhere to recommended planting windows, and select heat- and drought-tolerant cultivars listed under the Plant Improvement Act, 2018. Use water-efficient irrigation (e.g., drip systems) during early morning or evening.

- **Livestock Farmers:** Align herd size with veld carrying capacity to prevent overstocking and overgrazing. Implement rotational grazing, secure supplementary feed/water, and maintain regular veterinary vaccination schedules to manage heat-related pests and diseases.

Commodity, Sector Prices & Input Market Trends

1. Horticulture, Field Crops & Fertiliser

- **Vegetables:**
 - Butternuts & Pumpkins: Supply shortages (market volumes down 28% yoy) drove sharp price increases. Butternuts are trading at R11.66/kg (+165% yoy) and pumpkins at R6.47/kg (+180% yoy).
 - Heavy Supply Commodities: Heavy market supply keeps prices under pressure for potatoes (R41.97/10kg), onions (R48.49/10kg), tomatoes (R5.35/kg), and cabbages (R1.64/kg).

- **Grains & Oilseeds:**
 - White maize spot prices stand at R3,917/ton and yellow maize at R3,601/ton, constrained by record global production in the US and Brazil. Soybeans spot traded at R7,360/ton and sunflower seed at R10,620/ton.

- **Fertilizer Prices:** Week of 21 September 2026
 - Urea (Nitrogen): Rose to R9,040.00/ton (bulk Ex-Durban) due to gas cost spikes and Strait of Hormuz supply disruptions.
 - MAP (Phosphate): Eased slightly to R15,293.00/ton (bulk Ex-Durban), with high global sulphur prices keeping the decline slow.
 - Potassium (MOP): Decreased to R7,730.00/ton (bulk Ex-Durban) on weak global demand.
 - AMS: Increased to R6,335.00/ton (bulk Ex-Durban) due to local supply shortages.

2. Livestock & Wool

- **Cattle:** Weaner calf prices averaged R36.95/kg, while slaughter carcas prices weakened (official A2/3 carcass at R73.42/kg; survey average at

R66.13/kg). Demand for pregnant commercial breeding females remained strong at auctions.

- **Sheep & Goats:** Slaughter lamb prices averaged R50.71/kg. Goats experienced a sharp price increase due to seasonal demand, with large goats reaching R53.72/kg (+20%) and small goats R78.80/kg (+20%).

- **Wool:** Local wool prices surged by over 6% (RWS 20 micron at R198/kg), driven by global supply deficits.

Farm Management & Marketing Opportunities

- **Calculating Profitability:** Farmers are reminded that profit is realized only when Total Income exceeds Total Costs. Production plans must evaluate input costs (seed, fertilizer, fuel, labour) against realistic market prices prior to planting.

• Direct Market Outlets:

Institution / Outlet	Contact Number	Focus Area
Sundra Chicken & Rabbit	065 681 1941	Poultry & Specialty Meat
Skeerport Pecans	082 555 9826	Pecan Nuts
Kleipeland Abattoir	(013) 932 1267	Red Meat Processing
Outspan Abattoir	(013) 661 1768	Red Meat Processing
Barberton Abattoir	084 300 7204	Red Meat Processing
Beefcor Feedlot	(013) 932 7000	Cattle / Feedlot Supply
Morgan Beef Abattoirs	(017) 688 9300	Beef Processing
Karan Beef Abattoirs	(017) 773 0352/8	Beef Processing
AFGRI Poultry Abattoirs	(013) 661 1064 / 0163	Poultry Processing
AFGRI Silo Eloff	(013) 667 9298	Grain Storage & Handling
Farmers Meat Market	(013) 661 1557	Livestock & Meat Sales
African Grain	082 338 1725	Grain Procurement
G 3 Abattoir	071 315 8909	Meat Processing
Government Nutrition Programme (DARDLEA)	082 432 7088	Food Items supply to Government Boarding Schools & Hospitals

Farmers urged to prepare for looming El Niño threat

Kgabu Mahlatji

Farmers in Chief Albert Luthuli Municipality have been urged to prepare for the possible return of the El Niño weather phenomenon, with officials advising them to adopt early planting practices, use short-term cultivars and reduce their livestock numbers to minimise potential losses. The warning was issued by the Department of Agriculture, Rural Development, Environmental Affairs and Land Administration (DARDLEA) Disaster Management Campaign held at Manzana BKB, attended by scores of farmers from eManzana and surrounding areas.

The department outlined its disaster response measures for weather-related emergencies, including floods, hailstorms and heatwaves, while raising awareness about the potential effects of El Niño on agricultural production.

Farmers were advised to take precautionary measures to protect their crops and livestock against the possible harsh conditions associated with the phenomenon.

These include planting early to make the most of available soil moisture, selecting short-term cultivars that mature faster and reducing livestock numbers to ease pressure on grazing resources when conditions become dry.

El Niño is a natural climate phenomenon associated with the warming of sea-surface temperatures in the central and eastern equatorial Pacific Ocean. It can influence weather patterns and contribute to drought conditions in parts of southern Africa. The campaign focused on promoting

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Directorate of Agricultural Economics Services acknowledges the use of information from ABSA, Statistics South Africa, Standard Bank, FNB, South African Reserve Bank, Country Economy Automobile Association of South Africa, AM Trends and Department of Agriculture.

sustainable land management and equipping farmers with information and support to improve their resilience to environmental challenges. The Masibuyele Esibayeni Programme also presented its purpose and processes, guiding farmers on how to apply for assistance and explaining the application requirements. The LandCare Programme outlined its interventions aimed at supporting sustainable farming and protecting natural resources. These include farming grants, farmer training, the rehabilitation of dongas and the clearing of invasive alien plant species. Farmers were also given guidance on application procedures for the

available interventions. Meanwhile, stakeholders including the South African Social Security Agency and the South African Police Service addressed challenges affecting farming communities. Issues discussed included stock theft, crop theft, illegal hunting and trespassing, which threaten farmers' livelihoods and agricultural productivity. The awareness campaign provided a platform for farmers to engage with government departments and other stakeholders on the challenges they face, while learning about available support programmes and practical measures to protect their farming operations.



Chief Albert Luthuli | NEWSPAPER

Magubane visits eMpuluzi infrastructure projects

Nompumelelo Mkhwanazi

The Gert Sibande District Municipality’s Executive Mayor, Cllr Mbuso Magubane, visited major infrastructure projects across Mpuluzi to assess progress. These projects focus on improved water supply, road upgrades and construction of a new stadium and would improve service delivery and access to essential facilities in communities within the Chief Albert Luthuli Local Municipality (CALM). Cllr Magubane and his delegation assessed Phase 1 of the eMpuluzi/ Methula Bulk Water Supply Scheme, the building of Mpuluzi Stadium, the Goba Collector Access Road in Ward 4, as well as the upgrading of Elukwatini C-Ring Road in Ward 10. The water scheme would increase capacity to existing communities and future settlements as demand grows. The upgraded roads would address current challenging conditions. The Goba Access Road would ensure improved access for residents, while the approximately 2.265km Elukwatini C-Ring Road, would be paved. The delegation inspected construction progress at the Mpuluzi Stadium to assess compliance with the South African Football Association’s (SAFA) standards.

Once completed, it would accommodate approximately 4,120 spectators and provide a venue for other sporting activities and community events. These inspections allowed the delegation to understand implementation challenges and construction standards. CALM would continue monitoring these projects to ensure they meet all required standards and contribute to improved infrastructure and service delivery for residents.



Cllr Mbuso Magubane.



Cllr Mbuso Magubane with his entourage inspecting the map of the waterworks.

CALM mayor dismisses claims of delaying mall development

Gugu Mathebula

Chief Albert Luthuli Municipality’s (CALM) Executive Mayor, Mbuso Magubane, has dismissed allegations that he is refusing to meet with developers of a proposed new mall. He insists he has been facilitating engagements to advance this development. The mayor’s response comes after frustrated residents staged a protest near Elukwatini, blocking the R541 with stones and burning tyres over what they claim as meeting delays between CALM and the developers. The protesters also accused CALM of failing to communicate with the community about progress on the proposed mall and raised concerns about the lack of clarity surrounding the development. The Municipality rejected these claims while CALM’s spokesperson, Thapelo Phetla, said it was aware of the protest and subsequent road closure along the R541 near Elukwatini. “The suggestion that CALM is unwilling to engage with the developer is incorrect. Magubane has been actively facilitating engagements,” he said. According to Phetla, CALM respects the residents’ constitutional right to protest, but cannot not condone the illegal closure of public roads or actions disrupting public order. “The circumstances surrounding the R541 road closure are being attended to through the relevant structures.” He also appealed to residents to raise their concerns peacefully and avoid obstructing public roads, warning that such actions could endanger lives and disrupt essential services. The Municipality said it remained committed to transparently engage with the developer, the affected community and relevant government departments. Phetla stressed that a development of this size involves several regulatory processes and cannot be rushed. Residents were urged to allow the legal procedures to run their course while the Municipality facilitates the necessary engagements. “We urge all stakeholders to remain calm and allow the Municipality the opportunity to facilitate the necessary meetings. The spreading of false narratives only serves to create unnecessary tension and hinders the progress we are trying to achieve for the CALM community,” he said. This latest dispute highlights growing community frustration over the proposed mall and demands for clearer communication about its progress. While the Municipality maintains meeting are being facilitated, residents’ concerns over delays and the lack of updates show the importance of regular communication between CALM, the developers and the affected community.

Greener communities promoted in Mpuluzi

Gugu Mathebula

The Play Your Part – Love Your Street campaign promoted environmental care and improvement of community spaces with tree-planting events held at across Mpuluzi. The initiative aims to create a cleaner, greener and healthier environment for the elderly while encouraging community members and stakeholders to take collective responsibility for maintaining their surroundings. The Department of Cooperative Governance, Human Settlements and Traditional Affairs arranged for trees to be planted at four community centres: Zimeleni Disability and Stimulation Centre, Khuphukani Old Age Centre, Khanyisa Drop-In Centre and Bonisut-handó Day Care Centre. The trees were donated by the South African Forestry Company SOC Limited (SAFCOL). The Government Communication and Information System (GCIS) mobilised community stakeholders to participate in the tree-planting activity at Khuphukani Old Age Centre, highlighting the importance of partnerships in improving community facilities. The trees would provide cleaner air and as they grow, much-needed shade for elderly residents during Mpuluzi’s hot summer days. The new trees would also contribute to creating a more pleasant and welcoming environment for those using the centre. Various stakeholders joined hands in the initiative, demonstrating how

collaboration can improve public spaces and promote environmental awareness. Through the Play Your Part – Love Your Street campaign, communities

are encouraged to take an active role in caring for their surroundings and building cleaner, greener and more caring neighbourhoods.



Mokoena shooting raises alarm over traditional leaders safety

Freddy Mpangane

Concerns over the safety of traditional leaders increased after unknown gunmen opened fire at the residence of Kgoshi Mathupa Lameck Mokoena in Mkhuhlu on Thursday night, prompting calls for urgent action to protect kings, queens and their families.

Mpumalanga's Premier, Mandla Ndlovu, condemned the attack while visiting Mokoena's home on Friday morning. He promised government would work with law enforcement agencies to bring those responsible to justice.

"We shall leave no stone unturned in our quest to find the gunmen who attacked him. We strongly condemn this barbaric act," Ndlovu told Mpumalanga News.

The Premier urged anyone with information to assist police, warning that repeated gun-related incidents in the Mkhuhlu area would not be treated as business as usual. He also called for disputes to be resolved through dialogue rather than violence.

The shooting has heightened concerns about the security of traditional leaders as Mokoena said the attack occurred while they were demanding government protection for kings, queens and traditional leaders across the country.



Kgoshi Mathupa Mokoena.

Mokoena, president of the Congress of Traditional Leaders of South Africa (Contralesa) and chairperson of the Mpumalanga House of Traditional Leaders and Khoisan, said he was watching television in his bedroom at about 22:35 when he heard gunshots. Initially mistaking the first sound for a burst light bulb, he soon realised gunmen were firing at the house.

He said he fell to the floor as more shots were fired around the residence. His wife, Magdeline, was in the kitchen when the shooting occurred. The attack lasted approximately five minutes. No injuries were reported, but bullet holes were found in the bedroom, sitting room and garage windows. A bullet also struck a portrait inside the house.

Mokoena said he did not know who was responsible or what their motive

might have been. "I don't know why there was an attempt on my life and those of my family," he said, adding that he hoped police would make a breakthrough.

Mpumalanga's MEC for Community Safety, Security and Liaison, Jackie Macie, also condemned the shooting, calling for the swift arrest of those responsible. "No one is above the law and no one should feel unsafe in their own home," he said.

Police spokesperson, Colonel Mavela Masondo, confirmed an attempted murder investigation was underway.

The MEC for Co-operative Governance, Human Settlements and Traditional Affairs, Speedy Mashilo, also visited Mokoena on Monday. Anyone with information can contact Crime Stop on 086 001 0111 or submit information through the My SAPS app.

Brothers accused of raping 13-year-old granted bail

Samkelisiwe Mhlanga

The family of a young teenage rape victim is devastated that the Mayflower Magistrate's Court on Monday, October 12, granted bail to the alleged perpetrators.

The two brothers, accused of gang-raping the 13-year-old girl in Ndonga near Mayflower, appeared before the Mayflower Magistrate's Court and was granted bail of R3 000 each under strict conditions.

The brothers allegedly drive Avanza vehicles to transport learners in the Ndonga area, are accused of sexually assaulting the teenager, reportedly related to them.

The victim's family has revealed that the 13-year-old is suspected to be pregnant following the alleged rape, leading to increased concerns over her emotional health.

This has compounded the family's distress as they grapple with the young teenager's trauma. The family has expressed anger and disappointment over the court's decision to grant the men bail, saying they feel the justice system has failed the young victim.

The details of when the alleged incident occurred are withheld to protect the identity and privacy of the minor. The identity of the victim is also withheld to protect her in accordance with laws safeguarding children. The matter was postponed for further proceedings and the accused are presumed innocent until proven guilty in a court of law.

Barberton SAPS operation nabs various offenders

Freddy Mpangane

A multidisciplinary police operation in Barberton resulted in several arrests for various offences. This includes alleged possession of explosives, an illegal firearm and ammunition and gold-bearing material.

The operation was conducted in collaboration with various law enforcement stakeholders between Friday, October 9 and Saturday morning, October 10. It was run by Ehlanzeni's District Commissioner, Major General Dorah Xaba.

According to Mpumalanga police's spokesperson, Colonel Mavela Masondo, the operation was aimed at preventing and combatting crime while improving community safety.

Police posted a roadblock along the R40 while other law enforcers targeted shopping malls, banks, ATMs, business premises and spaza shops. Health facilities, residential areas,

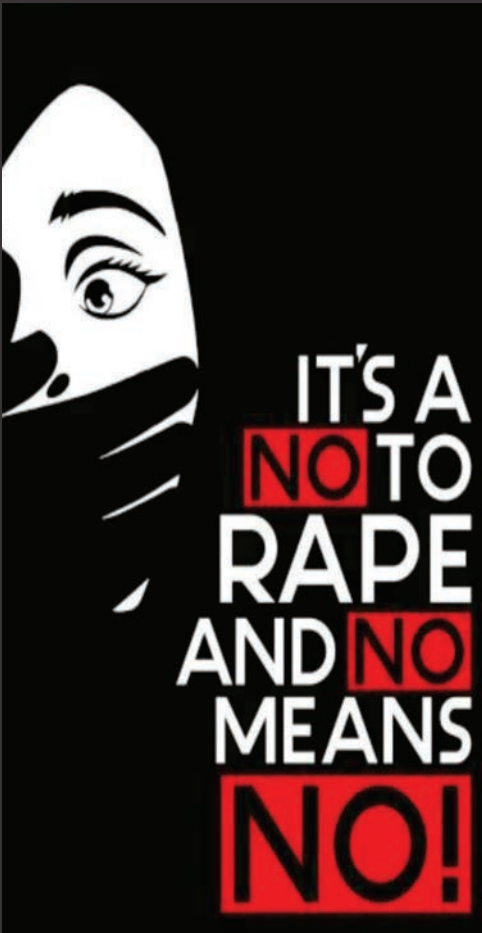
liquor outlets, taxi ranks, bus terminals and identified crime hotspots were also on the radar.

A 47-year-old suspect was arrested for alleged possession of gold-bearing material and operating an illegal shebeen. Another 41-year-old was nabbed for alleged possession of explosives, while a 28-year-old was arrested for the alleged unlawful possession of a firearm and live ammunition. A 25-year-old suspect was arrested for allegedly driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs. In addition, six suspects aged between 30 and 58, were cuffed for alleged immigration-related offences.

As part of these crime prevention efforts, police patrolled identified areas across Extensions 7, 9, 10, 11, 12 and 14, as well as Verolum, Barberton town and Emjindini. Three taverns were also closed during the operation.

Suspects were expected to appear in the Barberton Magistrate's Court on

Monday, October 12. Masondo said police would continue conducting high-intensity and intelligence-driven operations across the province to prevent and combat crime. This operation formed part of ongoing efforts by law enforcement agencies and community safety structures to enforce the law and enhance community safety across Mpumalanga.



Temvelo Climate Change Awards celebrate green initiatives across Mpumalanga

Freddy Mpangane

The 2026 Temvelo Climate Change Symposium, Expo and Awards took place in Secunda on Thursday, October 15, bringing together stakeholders to advance climate action and environmental sustainability.



MEC Khethiwe Moeketsi.

The event provided a platform to translate the National Climate Change Act into action while strengthening partnerships between government, businesses and civil society. The awards were honoured by Agriculture, Rural Development, Land and Environmental Affairs MEC Khethiwe Moeketsi. Held under the theme “South Africa’s Future is Green. Will Your Brand Lead It?”, discussions focused on green finance, environmental investments, illegal mining, environ-



The 2026 winners of the Temvelo Climate Change Awards.

mental crime, land rehabilitation, waste management, conservation, green jobs and water security. Other topics included climate negotiations involving children, youth and persons with disabilities, as well as opportunities presented by a just transition. St Anne’s Eco-Ubuntu Green Club received the Green High School Award, while Vulamasango Primary School and Gert Sibande TVET College were recognised for their eco-initiatives. Ehlanzeni and Gert Sibande district municipalities received Green Municipality Awards. Barberton Mines won the Outstanding Land Rehabilitation Award, while Umphakatsi Peace EcoVillage was recognised for Best Community Natural Resource Management. Other winners included KM Waste



Some of the winners of the Temvelo Climate Change Awards.

Management Solutions, Womech Mechanical Works, UNTUM Recycling, TNK Greenhouse Technology, NAPO Projects and Mediclinic Highveld for contributions to waste management, the circular economy, sustainable construction and water efficiency. Agricultural startups Baatseba Agri-Solutions and Kudu Horn Projects were also recognised. Media houses and journalists

received awards for environmental reporting, highlighting the role of the media in raising awareness about climate change and conservation. In the special MEC Awards, Bethuel Mashele received the Environmental Hero of the Year Award, while Muziwakhe Khumalo was named Young Eco Hero. Hendrina Recycling and Eco-Roots received Game Changer Awards, and Mr Linda Khoza received the Lifetime Achievement Award.

Lungile Bongekile Sihlongonyane was recognised for community land restoration and soil and water conservation, while Karabo Ngobeni was named Women Champion of the Environment. The awards celebrated learners, municipalities, businesses, journalists and community champions contributing to South Africa’s green transition.

Mpumalanga Cultural Xperience sees 11th Event

Freddy Mpangane

Mpumalanga is getting ready for its 11th annual Cultural Xperience, with provincial government aiming to turn this popular festival into an even bigger driver of tourism, job creation and opportunities for emerging artists. The 2026 programme was officially launched by Culture, Sport and Recreation’s (CSR) MEC, Leah Mabuza, at Emnotweni Arena in Mbombela on October 13. This year’s theme is “Reawakening the Xperience.” Established in 2015, the festival has grown into a major provincial event celebrating Mpumalanga’s diverse cultural heritage through music, dance, food, fashion and traditional performances. Mabuza said this milestone reflected years of consistency and commitment to place culture at the centre of the provincial identity. “The Cultural Xperience is more than a festival. It is a celebration of who we are, where we come from and the cultural heritage connecting

us as a people beyond provincial and national boundaries. It continues to be a platform for strengthening social cohesion by bringing communities together through shared cultural experiences.” The CSR wants the festival to generate income for local businesses such as transport operators, accommodation establishments, restaurants, event organisers and artists. Mabuza said culture should be recognised as an economic driver supporting sustainable livelihoods, while also promoting Mpumalanga as a tourism destination offering more than its wildlife, waterfalls and scenic landscapes. She highlighted the province’s music, traditions, food and hospitality as important parts of its tourism offerings. Emerging Artists in the Spotlight The festival also aims to provide young people with opportunities to showcase their talents and explore creative careers. Mabuza named Phumla Music and Mlingani Soul Child as examples of successful artists who had grown out of this



MEC Leah Mabuza

event, demonstrating its potential to nurture local talent. She said preserving cultural identity, while embracing contemporary expression, was essential to ensure younger generations remain connected to their heritage. This year’s festival will run from November 11 to December 6, featuring nine events across Mpumalanga and would open with a Creative Music Workshop at Mbombela Stadium from November 11 to 13. The Comedy Xperience follows on November 26 at the Arena, Emnotweni, followed by the Carnival Xperience at Mbombe-

la’s Promenade Centre on November 27. On November 28, the Choral Music Xperience would take place at El Ella De Bruin Hall in Ermelo, alongside the 013 Summer Blaze at Mbombela Stadium. The Soul Session Xperience is scheduled for November 29 in Mbombela. The Traditional and Sport and Recreation Xperiences would be respectively held on December 5 at Mhlaba Traditional Council in Nkomazi and Gamorwe Stadium in Nkangala District. The programme would conclude with the Gospel Awards at the Communio Auditorium in Mbombela on December 6. Mabuza urged residents and visitors to support local artists and cultural practitioners, saying the festival belonged to everyone, from rural communities to established performers. As the province prepares for the 11th festival, the CSR hopes the programme would renew public interest in local culture while expanding opportunities for artists and businesses.

11th Annual Mpumalanga Cultural Xperience

Fashion and glamour took centre stage at the 11th Annual Mpumalanga Cultural

Xperience, held at The Arena at Emnotweni in Mbombela in October 2026. Guests embraced the

“Golden Hour” dress theme, turning heads with their stylish outfits, while MEC for Culture, Sport

and Recreation Leah Mabuza outlined this year’s festival programme at the launch.



Phindile Mashabane.



DJ Mnyasa and Kede Mkhabela.

Credit: Supplied/DCSR



Billy Brown.



Innomash Mashaba.



Mahlatse Malibe.

Malaza calls for unity and cultural pride at Ummemo Celebration

Basetsana Mreku

Inkhosi Malaza called on communities to unite in preserving their cultural heritage to ensure younger generations remain connected to their roots during the Ummemo Celebration on October 5. Hosted by the Mandlamakhulu Traditional Council at the Mandlamakhulu Royal Kraal in Tjakastad, it brought together community members and traditional leadership to celebrate customs, traditions and cultural identity. It also reinforced the role of traditional institutions in preserving cultural practices and bringing people together. Malaza emphasised the importance of embracing culture to ensure people understand their origins and traditions shaping their identity. He urged community mem-



Inkhosi Malaza with aMabutho. bers to take pride in their heritage, saying cultural practices should be preserved and passed on to future generations. He also called for unity among community members, highlighting the need for all to work together to strengthen social cohesion and build stronger communities. The Inkozi also extended his best wishes to all Grade 12 learners preparing to write their final exams, wishing them good luck and encouraging them to remain focused during this important stage of their



Inkhosi Malaza. education. His message highlighted education’s importance alongside cultural preservation, encouraging young people to pursue their academic goals while maintaining an understanding of their heritage. The Ummemo Celebration served as reminder of the importance of traditional gatherings to keep customs alive and strengthen relationships between traditional leadership and communities they serve. During this event, the Mandlamakhulu Traditional Council reaffirmed the importance of preserving cultural



Some of the traditional dance group who entertained the guests. Kgoshi Mathupa Mokoena with his entourage. identity, while encouraging unity and supporting the younger generation’s aspirations.

SPORT

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Fernie Battalions FC emerges as CALM's footie hope

Freddy Mpangane

Fernie Battalions FC is giving Chief Albert Luthuli Municipality (CALM) football supporters something to celebrate.



Mpho Nkosi receiving a yellow card from Referee Jabu Ngobe.

Their victorious start to the ABC Motsepe League Mpumalanga Stream B, with a hard-fought 2-1 victory over Dankie Son FC at KaBokweni Stadium on October 10, continued. The team collected 15 points over five matches to remain at the top of the leader board, raising hopes that CALM could be a strong contender in the provincial football competition.

First-half goals from Doloxolo Masina and Amukelani Nkosi secured the victory for Fernie Battalions despite Dankie Son putting pressure on the league leaders. This win proved Fernie

Battalions' determination to maintain their success this season.

Head coach, Andrew Nkosi, acknowledged his players had to dig deep to secure the three points against a determined opponent. "I

have to be honest; the match was not easy.

Our opponents really gave us a hard time. My team had to work hard to secure a victory. I am really glad we have been able to collect 15 points over five games," he said. For a team, carrying the hopes of its supporters, the early results provide encouraging signs, although maintaining their drive would be crucial as competition intensifies.

Dankie Son FC's coach, Luyanda Maseko, said his team lost its way during the second half after following the game plan before the break. "The team played well and during the first half we seemed to be on track, but in the second half we lost our plot. We allowed our opponents to defeat us," he said.

Meanwhile, Oriental Spurs FC moved into second place on the log with 11 points after defeating Luthuli Brigades FC 1-0 during another match of the double-header.

Fernie Battalions FC is primed to extend their unbeaten run when they host Zebra FC at Coreline



Thabiso Mthembu and Surprise Mhlabane.



Njabulo Mbuyisa and Mpho Nkosi.
Pictures: King Movic Snap

Stadium on Saturday. Kick-off is at 15:00. The league leaders would then face a potentially decisive test against Oriental Spurs at KaBokweni Stadium on October 24 at 15:00. This clash could have significant



implications for those at the top.

With five victories already secured, Fernie Battalions had made a strong statement during the opening stages of the season. Their challenge now is to turn a promising start into a sustained push for honours and keep the hopes of CALM football supporters alive.

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