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Sekhukhune Covid-19 District Command Council monitor compliance at Nakgwadi Secondary

The Sekhukhune District Municipality Covid-19 Monitoring and Awareness team paid homage to Nakgwadi Secondary School at Ga-Maroga Village outside Jane Furse. The team, led by the Executive Mayor of Sekhukhune District Municipality Cllr Keamotseng Stanley Ramaila together with political principals, visited the school during schools reopening day on Monday 8 June. The visit formed part of the district municipality's schools compliance monitoring and readiness assessment, following a nearly three month closure after the outbreak of Covid-19. The delegation found the school to be armed with necessary equipment and complying with all safety procedures to fight the spread of Covid-19. At the entrance, 1,5 metre markings were clearly visible compelling everyone who enters the school premises to comply with social distance regulations. Every individual, who enters the school's premises was screened and sanitized. Seating arrangements were in order in the classrooms and everybody who was in the school premises including teachers, learners and general workers were wearing face masks. According to Ramaila, the programme was guided by a call from the Covid-19 National Command Council (NCC), instructing the Provincial Command Council (PCC) and the District Command Council (DCC) to monitor schools on the first day after reopening during the Coronavirus outbreak. "We are here as part of the NCC's decision that PCC and DCC must embark on an intensive programme to monitor schools reopening," he said. Ramaila added that together with the Mayor of Fetakgomo Tubatse Local Municipality Cllr Mamekoa, they have chosen the mining area of Dilokong Platinum belt, as the area has reported the first case of Covid-19 in the district. "Our aim is to make sure that we play our part to fight Covid-19 pandemic. And of course we are very happy with all measures the school is undertaking to prevent the spread of the virus," he said.

The School Principal, Dingaan Mabawa, applauded both the Department of Education and Modikwa Platinum Mine for ensuring readiness ahead of the schools reopening day. "To date, the school has enough masks and sanitizers. All classrooms, administration block, abolition facilities and premises have been fumigated. It's relatively all systems go," he said. The Executive Mayor made a call to all schools and public places in the district to abide by the Covid-19 regulations.



The Executive Mayor of Sekhukhune District Municipality being screened at Nakgwadi Secondary School during the compliance monitoring and readiness awareness.

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Learners of Nakgwadi Secondary School sitting in order to apply social distancing during the schools reopening day on 8 June.

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Armed robbery foiled as suspects target Post Office

The Acting Provincial Commissioner of SAPS in Limpopo General Jan Petrus Scheepers, has highly commended members of Crime Intelligence and the Tactical Response Team (TRT) Unit, for successfully foiling an armed robbery that was to take place at a Post Office which is used as social grant pay point in Atok outside Jane Furse. Brigadier Motlafela Mojapelo, Limpopo Provincial Police Spokesperson, said the police received information about a planned robbery at Atok in Bogalatladi



The police apprehending suspects travelling in a Toyota Quantum who were about to rob a post office which is used as a social grant pay point at Atok outside Jane Furse.

area. "The members immediately conducted a snap operation with the help of a police helicopter. A suspicious Ford Ranger with four occupants was spotted along the D4180 Road between Atok and Ga-Selepe. Soon after stopping, the driver suddenly got out and pointed the police members with a firearm. The suspect was then shot and the firearm was taken. He was rushed to hospital and was admitted under police guard," he said. Mojapelo indicated that the police continued with the operation and spotted another suspicious vehicle, a Toyota Quantum with five occupants along the D4190 Road. "The driver was ordered to stop and the vehicle was searched. The police recovered a firearm and all five suspects were apprehended. The suspects ranging between the ages of 24 and 40 before the Sekhukhune Magistrate's Court on Friday 5 June facing charges of conspiracy to commit armed robbery and possession of illegal firearm and ammunition. They were remanded in custody and will appear again soon," he said.

Suspect shot dead in foiled armed robbery

One suspect was fatally wounded and two were arrested during a foiled armed robbery around Marble Hall on Saturday 6 June. According to the police, the planned armed robbery, that was including a farm attack foiled after a tip-off by community members. "Our members including the Tactical Response Team (TRT), Crime Intelligence Unit (CIU) assisted by members of the South African National Defense Force (SANDF) succeeded in foiling a planned armed robbery by arresting two suspects and fatally wounding the other one," said Brigadier Motlafela Mojapelo, Limpopo Provincial Police Spokesperson.

Mojapelo said the police received information about a group of suspects traveling in a white Mazda bakkie, who planned to commit armed robberies in Dennilton and Marble Hall policing areas. "A team was then swiftly assembled and made a follow-up. A vehicle matching the description given was spotted at Lusaka Village in Dennilton at around 22:00. Police ordered the driver to stop, the suspects allegedly started shooting at the police members who returned fire. In the process, one suspect was shot dead, two were injured and taken to hospital, the fourth suspect managed to evade arrest," Mojapelo added. He said the police recovered one firearm, police bulletproof vest, police reflector jacket and a police cap and their vehicle was also seized. "The suspects, aged 33 and 39 will appear before the Moutse Magistrate's Court soon, facing charges of conspiracy to commit robbery and attempted murder. The hunt for the remaining suspect is continuing. Anyone



The blood stained Mazda bakkie that was travelling by the suspects who were planning to commit armed robberies in Dennilton and Marble Hall farms.

with information regarding the incident is requested to contact Detective Warrant Officer Michael Seopa on 066 269 8337 or the Crime Stop number on 08600 10111 or the nearest police station," he said.

Moutse Drought Relief Projects unleashed

The Moutse Drought Relief projects are now underway. The announcement was made during the Moutse Drought Relief Multi-Stakeholder engagement during the Steering Committee Progress Report, that was held successfully at the district municipality offices in Groblersdal on Thursday 4 June. The meeting was as a result of long toiling years of water shortage in many parts of Moutse. This was aggravated in 2019 when Mkhombo Dam, a water source for the area started silting and could not provide water supply to Moutse and other parts of Dr JS Moroka Local Municipality in Mpumalanga. Moutse was later declared 'Day Zero' and saw an intervention by Water and Sanitation Minister Ms Lindiwe Sisulu in February 2020. It was then that Minister Sisulu announced this multipronged approach to alleviate water scarcity situation. Therefore, Sekhukhune District Municipality, Lepelle Northern Water and DWS were mandated to unleash the Drought Relief Project. "Our mandate is very clear, to look at temporary and long term relief measures. Progress to date is that 2000 x 10 000 liter Jojo tanks have been procured and 300 have been delivered already. Twenty new water trucks have been procured, to date 5 trucks are on the ground waiting for drivers to start delivering water to Moutse East, Central and West. The 15 remaining trucks will be delivered before August 2020. Hundred and twenty SMMEs will be appointed to install 14 stands each. Ground water development is underway and already 107 boreholes have been identified for refurbishment. It is a critical point in history as we balance the need for water provisioning and opportunity cost factor," said Executive Mayor of Sekhukhune District Municipality Cllr Keamotseng Stanley Ramaila. The mayor said the project will run concurrently with the multi-million rand Moutse Bulk Water Supply project, which has since been unlocked after delays resulting from legal disputes. The Drought Relief Project is empowered by professionals ranging from project management specialists, private sector and blessed by political leadership of Executive Mayor Ramaila, Mayor of Elias Motsoaledi and Ephraim Mogale Local Municipalities.

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Moutse residents fed up with overflowing sewer plant

Five Morgan residents at Dennilton in Moutse, are confronted with a horrible smell because of the unmaintained sewerage plant in the area. According to residents, poor maintenance by Sekhukhune District Municipality appears to have been the cause of a sewerage spill, causing a stench of smell to the entire village. Now the community living next to the sewer plant is intending to shut down the plant because of splurge that is making their environment a living mess. The sewer plant was meant to store raw waste from Philadelphia Hospital and later accommodated Moutse Mall. Adding the mall is the cause of the overflowing due to inadequate capacity and poor planning. A community member Joseph Vilakazi, who is a plot owner at Five Morgan described the horrible conditions his family has to undergo on a daily basis because of the smell coming from the overflowing sewer plant. "The whole area stinks, it is becoming worse in the evening when we are about to sleep. Our health is compromised as well as our children's safety. We can't even have visitors anymore because they are all scared of getting diseases. It has been over ten years now since we are living under this condition," he said. Vilakazi indicated that to make matters worse, a service provider, who was appointed by the district municipality has dug a trench depositing raw waste from other villages. Vilakazi added that they have tried in vain to get responsible authorities from Sekhukhune District Municipality but they turned a blind eye to the problem. "After the matter was reported, the municipality workers came to have a look at the drainage systems and promised to come back and fix it but they have disappeared without a trace. We have raised the problem over and over again but we have to face the same problem, seemingly, without any solution in sight," he said. Moutse Residents Committee (MRC) Chairperson, Ali ka Maloba said investigation conducted by their structure, has shown that poor operation and maintenance of sewage treatment plant have a great impact on both environmental and human health. Maloba indicated that despite the serious environmental and health concerns, municipality has done nothing to resolve the problem that exposes people to potential diseases outbreak. "The plant was designed only to cater for a hospital with not more than 500 beds. Now a shopping center with more than 50 tenants compounded the problem. After construction of the mall, the district municipality promised to upgrade the plant in order to accommodate the new developments. Unfortunately this never happened except minor upgrades to allow connection of a new sewer pipe from the mall to the treatment plant," he said. Moutse has been hard hit by draught and was declared 'Day Zero'. Many communities rely on ground water to survive. But the community living next to the plant was restricted from drilling boreholes, whereas, the district municipality is doing nothing to assist them with potable water. Sekhukhune District Municipality Communications Manager, Moloko Moloto said the municipality is aware about the problem and engagement are in place to find a resolution. Moloto added that the municipality is aware that a service provider is illegally depositing waste in a trench at the village. "She was given 30 days to correct the problem and failure to do so her contract will be immediately terminated. People's lives are a priority. We apologize for the inconvenience caused and promise that the problems will be resolved soon," he said.

Water supply restored at Philadelphia Hospital following land dispute

The dispute that led to the temporary cut of water supply to Philadelphia Hospital has been amicably resolved and water supply to the hospital is restored.

This is after a misunderstanding emanated during the Moutse Draught Relief meeting, where a group of individuals claiming to be plot owners interrupted the water supply. The owners of the plots, which supply water to the hospital were demanding payment of around R24 000 per month from the district municipality, in order to continue providing water to Philadelphia Hospital.

A high level meeting was convened on Friday 5 June attended by hospital CEO, members of hospital Board and a delegation from Sekhukhune District Municipality led by Executive Mayor Stanley Ramaila. Moloko Moloto, Sekhukhune District Municipality Communications Manager, said the meeting was held with the spirit of goodwill to resolve the differences.

"Understanding and common good for the people was the order of the engagement aimed at resolving water challenges affecting Philadelphia Hospital, Moutse area.

Cllr Keamotseng Stanley Ramaila said he was happy that the meeting was fruitful and water supply is restored in the hospital. "We are pleased that we have found each other with the leadership of the hospital board, hospital CEO and members of the structures that were unhappy. Among others, we resolved that meetings of the Project Steering Committee will be attended by PSC members only, that interruptions to water supply to the hospital will be halted henceforth, that community issues and projects will not be mixed with hospital livelihood. Communications lines will be opened and all legal issues regarding Memorandum of Understanding between owners of plots which supply water to Philadelphia Hospital and Sekhukhune District should be fast tracked," said Ramaila.



Water was restored in Philadelphia Hospital following a high level meeting after a dispute between plot owners and Sekhukhune District Municipality, suspended water supply to the hospital.



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Motetema residents concerned about poor readiness at local schools

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Residents of Motetema Township in Elias Motsoaledi Local Municipality Ward 31 are worried about the state of safety at Refiloe High School and Ikageng Primary School. According to community members, the schools are being challenged by a serious sanitation problem, exposing pupils and staff members to contract Covid-19. The schools reopened on 8 June for grades 7 and 12 to resume with their 2020 academic year. But disgruntled parents are threatening to shut-down both schools as they don't comply with health and safety standards of Covid-19. Booysen Mahlangu, a community leader in the township said the state of schools readiness regulation is been contravened in both schools. "After we conducted a considerable assessment joined by parents, we did find out that there is no water and toilets are not working in both schools. There is no readiness at all and the schools should not have opened, they are not adhering to Covid-19 preventative measures. The only complying local school is Mmaphato Primary," he said. According to Mahlangu, broken toilets and water shortages have marred the schools for the past two years and the government is doing nothing about the problem. "It is worrisome to see children and teachers risking their lives in those schools. The situation there still remains the same, no compliance with health, safety protocols pronounced by the Department of Health," he said. Mahlangu indicated that the situation is worse at Refiloe as the entire school building is in the verge of collapsing. "The double storey building is very old and has cracks everywhere. The ceiling is already falling down and we are afraid that the entire building will soon collapse and cause serious injuries and even death. There is tall grass everywhere turning the school yard into a snake park. The five general workers who were working at the school have retired three years ago and the vacant positions were never filled," he said. Mahlangu said they directed their complaints to the Motetema Circuit management where they were told a complaint about broken toilets and water shortages was lodged two years back. "The management can't do anything if the government is doing nothing to resolve the problem," he said. He said they will have to close the two schools if the situation remains unchanged. "We are worried



Toilets at Refiloe High School have since broken two years ago leading the school to not adhering with the Covid-19 health and safety standards.

about the education of our children but we will have to stop children from attending if nothing is done to ensure safety in both schools," he said. Limpopo Department of Education spokesperson Tidimalo Chuene said they will investigate the allegations and respond soon.

Sekhukhune launches Corona Virus Surge Plan

After it was declared the Limpopo Covid-19 Epicentre, the Sekhukhune District Municipality have launched a Provincial Corona Virus Surge Plan, a community based approach hot-spots eradication strategy. The initiative, that is aiming to fight the widespread infections of Covid-19 in the province, was launched at Gama Masha Ngwaabe outside Jane Furse recently. The Premier of Limpopo Province Chupu Stanley Mathabatha, MEC for Health Department Dr Phophi Ramathuba and Sekhukhune District Municipality Executive Mayor Cllr

Keamotseng Stanley Ramaila officially rolled-out the programme. Cllr Keamotseng Stanley Ramaila, said the District Command Council will intensify awareness campaigns in the area to curb the spread of the pandemic. The Premier of Limpopo Province Chupu Stanley Mathabatha said the plan was aiming to defeat the spread of Covid-19 focusing on the provincial epicentre. Mathabatha advised people to continue to adhere with the Covid-19 regulations and wash their hands regularly. Health MEC, Dr Phophi Ramathuba said as part of the strategy, a team of varied healthcare workers will go into communities to intensify Covid-19 testing. She added that, armed with several testing kits, the team will also test comorbidities such as diabetes, HIV, TB and that they will also check blood pressure.

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TUPS Sport introduces COVID-19 Stay-home version

To ensure safety to its participants, Sekhukhune invented sporting code, TUPS, has introduced a stay-home version designed to be enjoyed by family members in their respective homes. According to the sporting code inventor, Puleng Mmotla, the stay-home version will be played without a TUPS crown to make the sport convenient to be played inside the yard. "Most importantly is the safety in your yard. It's easier and more fun because your family members are all the team mates you need. You don't even need to buy anything new. All you need is a size 5 ball, draw 3 circles that resemble the TUPS pitch and two buckets resembling each side the TUPS crown," he said. Mmotla added that the Covid-19 Stay-home version of the game is part of ensuring that families enjoy the TUPS experience without the actual pitch and equipment, at the safety and convenience of their home. "The foundation of our sporting code promotes family connections, fun, fitness and friendship. This founding ethos of our sport are even much more relevant now that children and parents have more time in their hands. We want them to forget about television and opening fridges from time to time and go into their yard to sweat a bit. For those who never cleaned their yard, it could be a chance to do so as they make way for the family-only sporting experience. TUPS sport knew it is not always possible for families to have their own equipment because it is expensive and not accessible at the moment. This is the reason we encourage them to have a size 5 ball as it is more convenient than the TUPS crown," he said. Outlining the requirement of the playing area, Mmotla explained: "The play area for TUPS Sport is called TUPS Pitch. The pitch is in a ring form and can be put in any area of 30m radius in any open and even surface. To draw the TUPS pitch, identify a level surface ground in your yard. Mark the centre of the pitch with a line, and put empty buckets, each on both sides on the centre line. Take 15m to the left and mark the edge as the boundary. Do the



Sekhukhune invented sporting code, TUPS has now introduced a Stay-home Version to ensure people stay safe from contracting Covid-19.

same going to the right, it will be a total of 30m. Divide the 15m on each side into 5m steps and mark the end of each fifth metres as a lane. This will produce 3 circles once marked with the colour lime. The circles are the Inner-Circle, Mid-Circle and Outer-Circle. The Inner-Circle will have a line that divides it into two half-moon shaped pieces, that where you put the buckets on each side. Scoring will occur when two players playing in the inner circle throw the ball into the bucket on the opponent's side after crossing the line that divides the inner circle." Mmotla encouraged people to stay at home and abide with the Covid-19 regulations while enjoying their sporting code in their respective places. "In the fight against Covid-19 and taking further the message of social distancing. This is our humble effort to keep children at home and bring families together because it is easy to set up the pitch for families to enjoy," concluded Mmotla.

New house for elderly citizen

The saying that 'good things come to those who wait' was materialized when the Executive Mayor of Sekhukhune District Municipality, Cllr Keamotseng Stanley Ramaila, hand-over a house to the destitute family.

The 109-year-old Legadi Maroga from Ga-Maroga Village in Mooihoek outside Jane Furse was the beneficiary of the brand new house donated by the district executive mayor. The house was officially handed-over to the disadvantaged family on Monday 8 June. The elderly woman was living in an old muddled house with her four orphaned grandchildren, after their parents died years ago. The granny is depending on social grants to feed her and the orphaned grandchildren. The elderly citizen's plight was brought to the attention of the executive mayor who acted immediately and started building the family a magnificent house. The house is consisting 3 bedrooms, a kitchen and a sitting room.

The house is also fully furnished with the courtesy of Executive Mayor Ramaila. "We wish to thank the contractor who has spent enormous time building this beautiful house on my behalf. I am very grateful that I can restore the dignity of Mme Maroga, after long tolling



The Executive Mayor of Sekhukhune District Municipality Cllr Keamotseng Stanley Ramaila handing-over the keys to the new house to Legadi Maroga.

years without a proper shelter. God be praised," said Ramaila. The elderly woman, who was over the moon could not hold back her tears. She praised Ramaila's efforts and thanked him for building her family a proper shelter.

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