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Endless battle for water leads to drowning incidents in Sterkfontein

Residents of Sterkfontein Village outside Groblersdal are blaming the district municipality for failure to provide running water, following two unfortunate drowning incidents of toddlers.

The victims drowned in the nearest streams where the community draws drinking water. The first incident occurred at Ramogwerane Section in Sterkfontein, where a toddler drowned in a stream while coming from school. A few days later, another drowning incident happened at Nkadameng Section in the same village where a two-year-old child lost his life after drowning in a drinking water source stream. The community, in Elias Motsoaledi Local Municipality Ward 29, said they have been pleading with government to provide them with water since the dawn of democracy without any success. This is despite millions of rands allocated by water authority, Sekhukhune District Municipality for the provision of water in the village. Community leader, Jimmy Nkadameng said the stream where the second drowning incident occurred has been providing water to residents since 1969. "We have been relying to the stream over the years because

the government fails. It is our main source and always full of water even in worst drought." Herbert Radingwane, a community leader in Sterkfontein added that he personally escalated the Sterkfontein water crisis issues to the Public Protector's office in Polokwane in April 2022. "According to the Public Protector, throughout their investigation, Sekhukhune District Municipality said water is provided through water tankers trucks to the village, despite the fact that we only see a water tanker when there is a funeral in the village," he said. Khomotso Ndlovu, Sekhukhune District Municipality Communications Manager, said the municipality supply the village though a water tanker as a temporary measure. "The municipality has drilled a borehole in the village and is currently not functional as the area is dry. We, however, are in the process of fixing the dry borehole," he said.

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Angry residents suspend road projects over jobs

A group of aggrieved community members in various villages of Elias Motsoaledi Municipality, Limpopo and Dr JS Moroka Local Municipality, Mpumalanga, took it to the streets to suspend a South African National Roads Agency Limited (SANRAL) construction project on the R573 Road since Monday 15 August. The villagers complain against nepotism of the main contractors, Rail Refurb and Raubex companies, also citing lack of employment among young people in the area. It is alleged by residents that people who were hired in the project are outsiders. Disgruntled residents, from villages say the project should benefit locals. The project started by Raubex around February this year for the upgrade

and the rehabilitation of the road between Moteti and Marble Hall. Rail Refurb was appointed by SANRAL earlier this month for the maintenance of the road. A community member who did not want to be named said people who were employed in the project were connected to senior management in the construction companies. "The contractors failed to properly introduce the project to the communities because they wanted to hire their friends and families," he said. He said local businesses are also not benefiting in terms of sub-constructions and the work is given to outsiders who are probably paying bribe to senior managers of the construction companies. At the time of going to print, both Raubex and Rail Refurb did not respond to the paper's comment requests.

Lack of sanitation disrupts classes at Aquaville Combined School

Teaching and learning have been disrupted at Aquaville Combined School in the Masakeneng settlement outside Groblersdal, following lack of appropriate sanitation provided for learners.

For the past three weeks, teachers and the School Governing Body (SGB) members are urged to send learners back home every morning around 10:00 because there are no toilets in the school. According to parents, the problem started earlier this month when a service provider who was providing temporary mobile toilets no longer provided the service after his contract lapsed last month. The school accommodates around 600 pupils from Grade R to Grade nine, coming from Masakaneng Settlement and farms in Elias Motsoaledi and Ephraim Mogale Local Municipalities. Limpopo Department of Education Spokesperson, Mike Maringa, said they are aware of the challenges at the school where the

contract of a service provider who was providing the school with toilets lapsed in July. "Our district offices are currently in the process of procuring chemical toilets for about 37 schools in the area that are in a dire need of ablution facilities while awaiting permanent structures," he said. Maringa said the department was looking for a delivery to be made on Thursday and latest by Friday 26 August for the toilets at the school and to other areas that are in need of the toilets.



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MJDF picket to demand a return to Mpumalanga Province

Scores of community members, affiliated with the Mpumalanga Joint Demarcation Forum (MJDF), have staged picketing activities to dispute a move taken by government in 2006, incorporating Moutse and parts of Sehlakwane from Mpumalanga to Limpopo. The picketing started at Zaaiplaas Police Station with demonstrating residents holding placards chanting liberation songs. On Wednesday 17 August, the picketing proceeded to Dennilton Police Station and Moutse Mall in Dennilton with dozens of residents supporting the picketing. MJDF Chairperson, Zachariah Dube, said residents in the cross-border villages are tired of poor services from the Limpopo administration. Dube said that the forum demands the release of the referendum that was conducted in 2009, to determine if residents in the cross-border municipalities want to return to Mpumalanga or to remain in Limpopo. "The release of the referendum results were sabotaged by senior officials in Limpopo because they are benefiting from the move. We are calling for Minister of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (CoGTA) to immediately release the view testing votes," he said. Dube said the structure will be escalating the demarcation issues to the Office of the President in Union Buildings, Human Rights Commission and the Constitutional Court for their intervention. "We want the intervention of President Cyril Ramaphosa in the demarcation issues. Other demonstrations will be staged in the Limpopo and Mpumalanga Legislatures to hand-over memorandums for the resolution of our demarcations struggles that we have since started them in 2007," he said.



Some of the demonstrators picketing outside Moutse Mall in Dennilton with an aim to raise their concerns and pressure government to incorporate the area back to Mpumalanga Province.

EFF women raise GBV concerns

Dozens of women from the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF), staged a series of picketing activities at various police stations across Sekhukhune District Municipality. The picketing was held on Friday 19 August in line with commemoration of women's month, aiming to raise concerns about Gender Based Violence (GBV) incidents, which seems to be prevalent among women and children in the district. Picketing Coordinator, Nthatile Morotse, said: "We are calling for police investigating officers to go to courts and oppose bail for people who abuse women and children. We want the victims to be protected at all costs," she said. Morotse added that they are concerned that some of the victims are turned away when going to report

GBV cases and end up losing their lives in the hands of the perpetrators.



Scores of EFF women chanting outside Groblersdal Police Station to raise concerns on GBV incidents in Sekhukhune District Municipality.

Deputy Minister in the Presidency on a mission to feed the poor

The Deputy Minister in the Presidency, Thembi Siweya, has led a food parcel donation drive in Makhuduthamaga Local Municipality in Sekhukhune District. The drive intended to provide relief to vulnerable and poor communities in Sekhukhune District Municipality. Siweya kick-started the programme on Friday 19 August at Phokoane Community Hall in Makhuduthamaga. The programme was also planned for Seokodibeng Community Hall in Fetakgomo Tubatse Local Municipality on Monday 22 August, however, it was later postponed until further notice. Accompanied by MEC for Social Development in Limpopo, Namane Dickson Masemola, Siweya said the food parcel drive was part of commemorating the women's month while intensifying the campaign against Gender Based Violence (GBV). Deputy Minister Siweya also engages with citizens in a dialogue about GBV and encouraged them to report the incidents to the police. Siweya commended contributions



Deputy Minister in the Presidency, Thembi Siweya (Third from right), during the food donation drive at the Phokoane Community Hall outside Jane Furse in Makhuduthamaga Local Municipality.

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Foreign owned shops looted following teenager's murder

Foreign nationals in Schoonoord Village in Phase 4 Section outside Jane Furse have on Saturday 20 August, abandoned their shops for their safety after angry villagers looted them during violence in the area.

The unrest erupted after a foreign national shop owner allegedly assaulted a 14-year-old teenager to death at his shop on Friday 19 August. The victim was identified as Tokologo Letageng who was a resident of the village. According to residents, a tension between Tokologo and the shop owner started when the victim asked for matches to light a cigarette. It is alleged that the two had a disagreement and a scuffle ensued, where the shop owner assaulted the victim with a stick on the head until he lost his life. The shop owner allegedly fled the scene after the incident and he was later arrested at his hiding place not far from the village. The teenager's murder triggered violence in the area as the villagers started looting shops owned by foreign nationals, calling them to vacate the village. The violence spread to other nearby places and according to unconfirmed reports, a woman

was killed at Ga-Moretsele Village in relation to the community unrest, when the protesting villagers exchanged gun fire with security guards at one of the foreign owned shops. On Saturday afternoon, the police were deployed in the area to control the situation. The suspect briefly appeared before the Sekhukhune Magistrate's Court on Monday 22 August facing murder charges. The court postponed the case to arrange for an Arab interpreter for the suspect. Furthermore, seven suspects were arrested and charged with public violence.

One of the arrested suspects appeared before the Sekhukhune Magistrate's Court on Monday 22 August and his case was postponed for 9 September pending police investigations. The other eight suspects will appear before the same court soon on public violence charges.



Minister Motsoaledi conducts service delivery programme in Sekhukhune

The Minister of Home Affairs Dr Aaron Motsoaledi, has on Thursday 18 August, paid homage to Sekhukhune District Municipality for a service delivery visit as well as to hand-over birth certificates to parents of new born babies, as part of the department's campaign to register children within 30 days after birth. The minister was accompanied by the Executive Mayor of Sekhukhune District Municipality Cllr Julia Mathebe and other government entourage. Motsoaledi started the programme at Philadelphia Hospital in Dennilton and later monitored Home Affairs service delivery at Matlerekeng Village outside Marble Hall. According to the Home Affairs Department, the objective of the monitoring of Home Affairs service delivery programme is to register and affirm the identity and status of citizens and to regulate immigration efficiently and securely. "We want to help our people to not travel long distances to access Home Affairs Services," said Motsoaledi. He said the department has been using mobile offices to bring services closer to the people in the surrounding places.

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Over 1000 undocumented foreign nationals apprehended in Limpopo

According to the police, 1022 undocumented foreign nationals were apprehended during the ongoing operations in Limpopo Province. Brigadier Motlafela Mojapelo, Limpopo Provincial Police Spokesperson, said the arrests were made in an effort to deal with the scourge of crime across the province and also enforce the Immigration laws. "The one thousand and twenty-two undocumented foreign nationals were arrested for contravening the Immigration laws and a further 1130 suspects were arrested for various crimes," he said. He added that during the arrests, police seized firearms and ammunition, stolen motor vehicles, drugs such as crystal meth and CAT, grams of dagga, nyaope, illicit cigarettes and 18 plants of dagga. "The operational teams included, the Limpopo Highway Patrol (LHP), Tactical Response Team, Crime Intelligence, Provincial Organized Crime, Detectives from Provincial Office, District and Station level as well as members attached to police stations across the province," he said. Mojapelo said the suspects, aged between 19 and 61, have already started to appear in different magistrate courts around the province and the operations are continuing. "As we are in the women's month, policewomen at all levels of command are also busy with Operation Basadi, which are simultaneously conducted alongside the ongoing operations and some of these arrests and confiscations are attributable to the women in blue," she said.

Nebo Man arrested for stoning girlfriend to death

The police in Nebo outside Jane Furse have arrested a 23-year-old suspect, named Confidence Masemola, for the alleged murder of a 17-year-old victim believed to be his girlfriend. The incident occurred on Saturday 20 August after allegedly the suspect accused the victim of cheating. Lieutenant colonel Mamphaswa Seabi, Limpopo Provincial Police Spokesperson, said according to police preliminary investigation, the suspect was walking with the victim at Kome Village under Nebo policing area when she allegedly received a call from a certain person. "The suspect then accused the victim of cheating on him and he then stoned her to death. The police were called and on arrival at the scene, the victim was found lying with fatal injuries. The deceased was identified as Promise Tjatji," he said. Seabi said the case was allocated to the Police Family Violence, Child Protection and Sexual Offences Unit for further investigations. He said the suspect will appear before the Nebo Magistrate's Court soon facing a charge of murder.



The 17-year-old victim, Promise Tjatji, was murdered by a 23-year-old suspect believed to be her boyfriend after accusing her of cheating.

Seven nabbed with suspected stolen properties

The police in Mmamethlake outside Siyabuswa arrested seven suspects in connection with a string of house breakings that occurred in the area recently.

According to the police report, the suspects, aged between 28 and 48, were arrested in the village following the house robbery incidents. "During the arrests, the police nabbed an alleged housebreaking kingpin and his six accomplices. The 45-year-old suspect is alleged to be a leader of the gang, which has been giving local residents sleepless nights. He was found hiding behind the wardrobe after police rounded up six of his members in his residence at Mmamethlake," said Brigadier Selvy Mohlala, Mpumalanga Provincial Police Spokesperson. Mohlala added that police preliminary investigation indicates that the suspects used to target schools and foreign nationals' businesses. "A number of suspected stolen properties include five different types of household electrical appliances, three music systems, seven laptops, grinders and eight live ammunition in addition to four pieces of the local security company's uniform, of which the kingpin is believed to have been previously employed at. The recovered items are estimated at about R150 000," he said.

Mohlala said the suspects will appear before the Mbibana Magistrate's Court soon facing charges of possession of suspected stolen property, possession of ammunition. "More charges might be added as the carcass of a hyena was also found in the house," he said.



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Embhokodweni School refurbishment project in the pipeline

The Limpopo Department of Education, says it has plans in place to execute refurbishment for the dilapidated Embhokodweni Combined School in Saaiplaas Village outside Hlogotlou.

This is after parents complained about safety of their children in the schools. Embhokodweni, that offers tuition for learners from Grade R up to Grade 9, is in dire state of despair with its roof falling apart, posing serious danger to learners. Limpopo Department of Education Spokesperson, Mike Maringa, said the department has since allocated the school to the Development Bank of Southern Africa (DBSA), as an implementing Agent. This was done after the school principal reported to the Sekhukhune South Education District's Infrastructure unit.

They responded by visiting the school to conduct a condition assessment of the whole school infrastructure around June 2021 and they discovered that the roof trusses of most of the buildings at the school were rotten due to water leakages and requested the department for intervention," he said. "The existing twenty-four waterborne toilets needed refurbishment and the existing wire mesh fence was in poor condition. Grade R learners did not have age-appropriate toilet seats," he said. He indicated that if things go according to plan, the execution of the refurbishment work should commence during the current financial year, 2022/2023 and hopefully be completed in the first half of the next financial year.

Six in Limpopo Cross Country team

Ben Viljoen High School is very proud to announce that all their cross country athletes have been included in the Limpopo team that will participate at the South African Cross Country Championships! They will take part in Rustenburg on 17 September.



Vanessa da Silva



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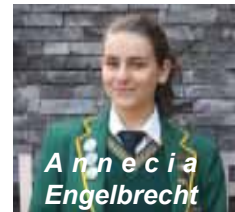
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Makhuduthamaga Sports Confederation successfully launched

After months of reviving sport structures in Makhuduthamaga Local Municipality in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic, the Sport Arts and Culture Division, under the Municipality's Community Services Department directed by Elizabeth Marishane, the Makhuduthamaga Municipal Sports Confederation was finally launched on Thursday 18 August. The launch has taken place at the newly renamed Kgaola Mafiri Building attended by representatives of different sporting codes played in the 31 Wards of the local municipality. The newly elected executive members of the Makhuduthamaga Sports Confederation were Samuel Rantho (Chairperson), Melca Nkadimeng (Deputy Chairperson), Motsake Nelson Matime (Secretary), Partia Mosehlana (Deputy Secretary) and Frans Ramaila (Treasurer). The confederation elected additional members as follows: Pheladi Mmadi, Dimakatšo Kgwete and Mandla Matšomane. The launch event was



The newly elected Makhuduthamaga Sports Confederation has promised to take sporting activities in the local municipality to new heights.

concluded with the acceptance speech by the newly elected Chairperson, Samuel Rantho, who urged representatives of sport structures and federations that were not elected to rally behind the elected leadership.

Laughs on stage at Ben Viljoen

Ben Viljoen High School Culture Festival took place during the week of August 15 and the acting groups made the audience laugh with their witty sayings on Tuesday, August 16. The gala night took place on August 18 and the scenes that made it through were Cell Block Tango (junior play) and Krisis of Noodgeval? (senior play). Congratulations to the learners who were named best actor in their respective plays during Tuesday's performances.



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