

## Thari commuters sensitized on non-operation of the bus service

MAHIKENG MAIL - MAHIKENG; Communities around the Bojanala District receiving transport services from the Thari Bus Services have been informed that the services would be temporary disrupted in the provision of service.

The bus service reported on Tuesday that it was currently facing internal challenges which has resulted in thousands of commuters being left stranded as buses could not transport them to their different destinations.

"Thari bus service is a subsidized commuter transport operator, contracted by the Department of Community Safety and Transport Management, to ensure that communities are transported in safe and reliable transport to access work stations and other related areas of services. "The MEC for the Department, Dr Mpho Motlhabane apologizes for the inconvenience caused as a result of the service disruption and assures commuters that the Department endeavors speedy solution", said departmental spokesperson, Thabo Sematle. He said officials from my Department will be meeting with the Directors of Thari with the intention to bring back services.

"It is our duty as the Department to ensure that our people are transported in a safe, secured and reliable transport system on daily basis," said Motlhabane, who appealed to commuters of Thari to use other means of transport while the Department is intervening in working towards resolving issues at the bus company.

MAHIKENG MAIL - 07/02/18 - 09:11 - 05587M - Negative

## Bojanala area bus service put on hold

COMMUTERS in Bojanala district who rely on a government subsidised bus need to make alternative arrangements as services have been discontinued. Community safety and transport management MEC Dr Mpho Motlhabane said Thari Bus Services was facing internal challenges and its operations have been put on hold. Motlhabane apologised for the inconvenience but vowed the service would resume soon. - Eifas Torerai

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# Cash heists 'act of terrorism'

## Police minister says efforts have resulted in the arrest of 13 people involved in cash-in-transit attacks



KUTULLO MADISHA

THE spate of cash-in-transit heists are acts of terrorism that are claiming the lives of innocent victims while instilling fear in the nation.

This is according to Police Minister Bheki Cele, who said the criminals had declared war.

So far this year, 159 cash-in-transit heists have been reported, the South African Banking Risk Information Centre (Sabric) said during a press conference in Pretoria yesterday.

Cele said this week he visited the family of a victim of a fatal shooting following the cash-in-transit robbery last Friday evening when robbers shot at vehicles in close proximity to the crime scene.

He said major efforts had been made to deal with these heists.

"In the past 24 hours, we've arrested 13 of these guys. You can add your three in Vaal, we've arrested number two in the hierarchy. South Africans are going to be safe," he said.

He also said that while most of the people arrested were from KwaZulu-Natal, a number of foreign nationals had been involved in crime for some time.

"The head of police in Zimbabwe is a good friend of mine and we exchange a lot of information.

"Criminality is becoming SADC, we

We change our strategies depending on the modus operandi used," he said. Cele said for the past six years the police had been without a crime intelligence head.

"Now we have one. We also now have a permanent head of the Hawks. We are getting ready, we are beginning to turn the corner. From the Boleburg heist video that went viral, we have arrested five suspects.

"There is a foreign element in these heists. We won't mention nationalities because we'll be accused of xenophobia but we'll have to at some stage," he said.

Sabric's Kevin Twinn said of the 71 attacks this year, 49 resulted in the write-off of these specialised vehicles that cost between R1.1m and R1.4m each.

He said there were cross-pavement incidents, which were on the decrease but more vehicles on the move were being attacked.

There were 26 last year. "We do not reveal how much cash has been lost, but the cost of vehicle lost is about R67m so far this year he said.

The Federation of Unions of South Africa (Fedusa) has threatened to go on a march next week to highlight the safety of its members who work in security guards.

**NEWS TO THE GO-ROUND: Police Minister Bheki Cele and police commissioner Khehla Sitole during a media briefing on the spate of cash-in-transit heists in Centurion yesterday where they said the robbers were akin to acts of terrorism.**

National police commissioner Khehla Sitole said they had a modus operandi analysis centre used to track methods used by the criminals. "We are now doing this analysis permanently. We know some of them are inside jobs.

Police Minister Bheki Cele announced a nationwide strategy to focus on cash-in-transit robberies yesterday. Picture: Jacques Nelles



# Police in anti-heist war

## CKDOWN: MINISTER SAYS POLICE ARE GOING ALL OUT TO STOP IT

**We are beginning to turn the corner ... No one will stage a heist, kill police and go home.**

**Bheki Cele**  
Minister of Police

"Cash heist is terrorism. It's not only a heist. A few days back, we visited the family of Mathebu in Tembisa, who had nothing to do with the cash heist, but he was killed. Simply put, we are beginning to turn the corner ... No one will stage a heist, kill police and go home. No one will be able to do that ... This means we are arresting one criminal per hour."

"We intercepted another in Vosloorus and arrested six."

Heavily armed men have used rifles, AK-47s and explosives to stage several violent heists on vehicles carrying cash in recent months. School principal Christopher Mathebula was killed by a stray bullet when he was caught up in a heist on his way home in Oifantsfontein last week.

Some of the weapons retrieved have been linked to the police or on June 4 in Witbank.

Cele added: "We are taking every officer out of the barracks, especially the specialised unit and giving them the best equipment."

But again, the criminals tried to intercept those that were involved in another one.

Police Bheki Cele described the recent spate of robbers as Minister of turn on cash-in-transit heists about to be tables are about to involve use of explosives to access the vaults, Twinn said. In total, 91 people were injured during these heists and 67 of them were guards, who were either injured or fatally wounded, said Twinn.

**syndicate members, including Jim No 2.**

**Ng Kgama**



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## Mamco staff praised for going an extra mile in performing their duties



The Mafikeng Management company in the North West Airport was applauded by the tourists of Botswana, Ben and Andricka Vosloo after they managed to find their luggage that was lost when they were travelling to the OR Tambo international airport through the Mafikeng airport. "We were surprised by the efficiency of the staff of the Mahikeng airport. Especially the three members who went over and above their duty to assist us when our bag was damaged on the SA express plane from O.R Tambo to Mahikeng. Agnes Mboni, Geophrey Maboi and Neo Lesetedi and handled us very well after the terrifying incident that happened to us. They kept contact with us on regular bases by giving us feedback about our luggage," said Ben. We are thankful that they managed to secure our bag and we send our utmost gratitude to the empathy and dignity they used to help us", the tourists.

# Mahikeng Airport shows signs of "coming out of its deep sleep"

Following recent developments at the Mahikeng Airport which included the stalling of progress in the awarding of its international license and the grounding of the SA Express airline services, Mahikeng Mail had an in-depth and frank interview with Tshetsiso Letselela the CEO and Co-Owner of Mahikeng Airport Management Company (MAMCO) regarding the Mahikeng Airport Development and allegations facing their internal operations.

**Question:** There has been a long wait for the airport project to start considering the many public announcements made, what causes the delay?  
**Answer:** The Airport development project is very much on course but delayed by regulatory issues. The main challenge is the suspensive condition in the SLA that compels the Provincial Government to designate the Mahikeng Airport as a Port of Entry, a matter which they are currently ceased with. Under the current leadership of the Department we managed to get approval from the National Cabinet through National Department of Transport for the transfer of the international license from Pienarsberg Airport to Mahikeng Airport.  
 Other key processes have also kicked in led by the National Department of Home Affairs as a Ministry responsible for border and immigration control. To date, we have had no less than three meetings of the Border Management Agency (formerly Border Operation Control Council) attended by Immigration, SARS, Port Health, SAPS and other agencies required for border control. We have already started preparations to have all these agencies accommodated at the airport in anticipation of the Minister of Home Affairs' gazetting the international status in the next few weeks. We accept that the process has been long and rather frustrating but unfortunately there is no cutting of corners when it comes to aviation regulations.

**Questions:** For years there has been efforts to revive the airport with no success, what is going to be different this time?  
**Answer:** It is true that there have been attempts in the past, in fact, as early as 2004 whilst I was in the public services, I was involved in the attempts to turn the airport into a cargo hub with the Russians under Premier Poppo Molefe. All other subsequent attempts to revive the airport under other premiers are well documented including trying to establish a Special Economic Zone. The current approach takes into account all historical factors and reasons that inhibited the success of the project. Mainly, the problem in the past attempts was to think that the project should be government driven and funded, which is a tall order considering the limited skills and fiscal resources available within government.  
 Simplified, in the current arrangement, government pays no cent towards the development projects other than to concession the asset for use. Ourselves as concessionaires are responsible for business activation and ensuring economic opportunities and skills for local people businesses in the aviation logistics sector. In this regard, we have already signed agreements with turkish air logistics operators who will relocate their business to the Mahikeng Airport. We have adopted this approach because the current reality is that there is no manufacturing industry in Mahikeng to support a logistics hub and if we were to start from scratch, it will take us no less than 8 years before we start our first export. Relocating an existing air logistic business ensures operation from day one. Most importantly, the approach will help attract the manufacturers to establish their factories around the airport because of the existing value chain.  
 The immediate business value for the first phase is confirmed to be over R1,2 billion which will grow to about R5 billion in the next 15 years supported by secondary industries. A lot of effort have been put in the last 2 years by the Directors to ensure a winning strategy and most importantly to partner with the right international investors who will allow for the fruition of benefits to the local economy. In the near future, we will announce our international partners and development packages for the anchor business including how local businesses and people can participate.

**Question:** How are the local businesses and people going to participate in the project?  
**Answer:** We are currently finalizing an enterprise development plan and skills development database through which all interested local companies and individuals will access opportunities in the airport development. In this case, local means the entire province due to the global nature of the aviation industry. We will announce a program of workshops and accredited local businesses to prepare them for array of business opportunities and also offer free training for the youth and generally unemployed persons in areas such as Airport Familiarization, Aviation Security and Environmental Practices. Negotiations are at an advanced stage with a national agency to financially support the programs. We will also be kick-starting an engagement program with our traditional authorities to formally incorporate them in the project and help them to extract the best value for land use in relation to Mahikeng Mail - 07/06/19 - PG 3 - News 1



MAMCO CEO Tshetsiso Letselela said recent internal tensions at the airport had been resolved.

**Question:** Finally, what about allegations of wrong doing regarding SA Express operation and its grounding?  
**Answer:** It is true that our company is contracted by SA Express for ground handling services at the Mahikeng Airport since about 14 months ago. This contract is separate from the Airport Development project but rather part of our business expansion strategy which I pursued, acquired and currently running for the benefit of more than 40 employees who are at the airport. I am aware of allegations of improperity regarding the company that was there before we were contracted but they have nothing to do with us. As you may be aware, the SA Express contract has been in operation for three years and we have also been part of it for a year as a substitute operator. For the period under review, we have operated and submitted our reports to our contracting authority being SA Express.  
 The current grounding of SA Express has no link to our contract but rather emanate from the condition of their fleet. Since the airline operation contract is between SA Express and the Provincial Government the matter can also be resolved at that level. We are all concerned and frustrated with the service offered but at this point, the matter is out of our hands. Our improvement plan includes introducing operations to other destinations such as Cape Town and Durban and also to increase the frequency of flights to cover all the days of the week.  
 Admittedly there are other challenges arising from people contesting this project with the main Airport Development. Others tend to think that MAMCO is a government owned entity and demand certain things from the company. Others are misled into believing that the company is being paid money for the Airport Development Projects and thereby demand us to account, whereas our is a self funded project with SA Express. All these challenges are not uncommon and will be addressed in a matured manner.



# Tackling hitchhiking

MEC LAUNCHES CAMPAIGN TO ERADICATE THUMBING FOR LIFTS IN URBAN CENTRES

HITCHHIKING remains a sore point in North West's major urban centres and efforts to eradicate it continues.

Community safety and transport management MEC Dr Mpho Motlhabane have launched the third phase of a campaign to tackle illegal hitchhiking spots in four areas. The campaign also targets unlicensed taxi operators in Wolmaras, Matsieng, Otsoedai, Lichtenburg and Matsieng.

Authorities keep their eyes on the N12, R504, R508 and N18 roads at dawn and in the afternoon. However, people can be seen along routes like Nelson Mandela Drive and Zeerust road, hitchhiking to different destinations.

"I want to go to Zeerust, and I can't stand the patience to wait for a taxi. It's far better when one catches a lift along the road," one person said.

A motorist who gave some people a lift said: "It's not like I'm doing this every day but when I'm on a trip alone, what is the use just cruising by myself when I can make a few bucks for fuel?"

One prominent North West politician said on condition of anonymity: "I personally feel there is too much regulation when it comes to movement. People should be allowed to choose what mode of transport to use.

"As for motorists, it's good when you arrive home with some paperbacks, the fairly regular because you would have made something from a service you offered. People should not be penalised for having an entrepreneurial spirit."

However, Motlhabane said there was a need to enforce laws governing the transport sector in the country. "Those who are operating public transport are expected to have made the necessary applications, registered their vehicles accordingly, have received relevant permits and are operating pub-



**THUMBS DOWN:** The authorities are looking to rid the province of illegal hitchhiking MEC for safety and transport Dr Mpho Motlhabane says. [efas@afriqone.co.za](mailto:efas@afriqone.co.za)

lic transport legally and lawfully. This process is not negotiable," he said. Part of the campaign includes encouraging commuters to refrain from hitchhiking and using private vehicles because of dangers associated with unregistered taxis. "Times were also issued to motorists for operating without required permits. Hitchhiking spots are a sore sight, a source of tensions and a cause for concern. The public needs to cooperate and work together with taxi operators in order to minimise conflict and save lives. It's only safe to use official taxi ranks. Communities must desist from using illegal taxi operators and avoid hitchhiking spots at all cost," the MEC said. Motlhabane said. "From here we are going to Bojanala district as we have already covered the other three districts. We will not hesitate to enforce the law. We will close down all illegal taxi ranks and we will be tough on pirates." [efas@afriqone.co.za](mailto:efas@afriqone.co.za)

# Provincial commissioner condemns killing of a two year-old baby

**MAHIKENG MAIL-MAHIKENG:** The North West Provincial Commissioner, Lieutenant General Baile Motswenyane condemned an incident in which a 25-year-old man allegedly killed his 2-year-old baby and hanged himself. The incident took place on Sunday may 3 in Moshawane village near Mahikeng.

This tragic incident came at the end of Child Protection Week with the theme 'Protect Children Against Themselves' with the call to all to ensure that our homes are filled with love, safe from violence and feelings of rejection. Reports suggest that the father took the child from the mother for a visit. It is alleged that the father allegedly stabbed the baby several times with a knife and hanged himself with a chain. They were both found dead on the scene.

The police were informed about the incident and a case of murder and inquest have been registered for investigation.

Lieutenant General Baile Motswenyane made an urgent appeal to the community and parents to avoid taking harsh decisions as well as to consult with professionals such as social workers for assistance. She further said that the safety and well-being of the children must always be prioritised.

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