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Empty seats and the ...

Glitz & Glam of Sopa 2018

A LARGE part of the gallery as well many of the chairs set out for guests at the State of the Province address (Sopa) at the Mittah Seperepere Convention Centre in Kimberley yesterday, remained empty despite the Northern Cape Provincial Legislature catering for 1 300 guests. Over R2 million was spent on the red carpet affair, where hundreds of starters, consisting of sticky mini-chicken drumsticks sprinkled with sesame seeds and shavings of carrots, were left untouched. Many tables were unoccupied while other tables were only half filled.

A smiling Premier Sylvia Lucas walked in triumphantly in a yellow gold off the shoulder, long-sleeved, self-belted, to the ankle dress. This year she was minus her signature church hat.

The MEC for Sports, Arts and Culture, Bongiwe Gigaba-Mbingo, wore a dreamy soft peach chiffon and lace dress, while DA member of the Provincial Legislature and party leader hopeful, Safiya Stanley, was dressed in a flowing cyan dress. Northern Cape High Court Judge President Pule Tlaletsi donned a "Bheki Cele" hat, while the MEC for Roads and Public Works, Mxolisi Sokatsha, pranced in "Kenny Kunene" style - sporting dark sunglasses long after he had entered the building.

Many other men followed suit, posing for pictures with their teardrop shades.

The suit with cropped shorts made a comeback, with one attendee wearing a floral jacket coupled with navy velvet moccasins.

Former Minister of Energy Dipuo Peters arrived in a cool steel silver two-piece, that could double up nicely as a mother-of-the-bride outfit. The EFF boycotted the event, with MPL Shadrack Tlhaole indicating that Sopa was a "repeat" of what was said every year.

"We, instead, decided to picket at all regional hospitals yesterday to highlight challenges facing the ordinary man on the street. Our hospitals being run under the influence of corruption. How do you appoint an MEC at the Department of Health, with no medical training or expertise?"

Tlhaole added that the EFF would attend the Sopa debate as well as the premier's reply.

"They will accuse us of not attending Sopa, as if we are too lazy to read. We are in the legislature to hold government accountable."