

# SAUL TO 'CUT THE FAT'

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THE NORTHERN Cape departments of Health and Education are in for a major overhaul as Premier Zamani Saul announces his new provincial cabinet today.

Delivering his inauguration speech in Lerato Park yesterday, Saul stated that the provincial cabinet would be leaner than before, where officials would be prevented from splurging from the public purse.

"We are going to cut the extra fat from the bone, we are not kings and queens. There will be no shopping sprees for Members of the Executive Council (MECs) to buy new cars. Elected leaders cannot continue indulging in luxury sedans and sport utility vehicles, while sickly people are struggling to access ambulances and the poor do not know where their next meal will be coming from," said Saul.

He stated that new cars would only be purchased for MECs if it was "an absolute necessity"; and upon his approval.

"All unused monies budgeted for new cars for MECs must be redirected to the Department of Health to assist in purchasing ambulances. All MECs appointed must understand that to serve our people, is an absolute honour, not a stepladder to riches and fame."

Saul indicated that the premier's state house would be sold, where the proceeds would be donated to the Premier's Bursary Fund to help educate and train youths in the Province.

"I also instructed the Premier's Office and the Department of Roads and Public Works to sell all other non-strategic assets and direct those proceeds to the same fund."

He did not mince his words in voicing his displeasure over the dismal performances of the provincial departments of Health and Education – as the two critical departments that received a 60 percent chunk out of the provincial budget.

Saul stated that he would set up satellite offices at these departments in order to get them back on the right path.

"I requested my office to purchase cheap office furniture to create a Premier's work corner at the reception area of the provincial office of the Department of Education and at the casualty section at



**INAUGURATION:** Over 5 000 community members attended the inauguration of Dr Zamani Saul in Lerato Park yesterday.

Robert Sobukwe Hospital. As from next week I will move out of the comfort of the Premier's Office and spend one or two days per week working from these two reception areas.

"Despite the difficulties, we are going to get our education system on track and be among the best performing provinces in the country, so that it is no longer the laughing stock of the country. We are going to improve the performance of the Department of Health and give dignity to our patients."

Saul promised to improve service delivery, fight corruption and laziness and build a "modern, growing and successful Province".

"Political leaders must be hard-working, they must pay attention to detail, be incorruptible and shun self-indulgence such as red carpets, blue lights, security upgrades and state houses."

Saul announced that the Office of the Premier had secured R3 million to train matriculants from Lerato Park to become artisans and equip them with voca-

tional skills.

"Together with volunteers we will comb this area to identify all unemployed young people that did Grade 12 and enrol them in different training programmes as from July this year. This programme will be jointly managed by the Premier's Bursary Fund and the Northern Cape Economic Development, Trade and Investment Promotion Agency."

He noted the conditions that under-developed communities in the Northern Cape were subjected to.

"In Lerato Park our people are confronted with major socio-economic challenges. We are angered by the living conditions of our people in Lerato Park and other similar areas in the Province. This time around, we have the courage to ensure that things do not remain as they are."

Saul stated that he chose to deliver his inauguration speech in Lerato Park to pay tribute to all the families in the Province who were experiencing similar hardships living in informal settlements.

"We have heard the cries of communities such as Snake Park and Ivory Coast here in Kimberley, Nkandla in Phokwane, Promised Land, Obama Hills and Thuli Madonsela settlement in Kuruman, Sonder Water in Barkly West and will prioritise their concerns."

He added that a team had been set up to investigate and assist in establishing a state-owned construction company that would build roads and low-cost houses for provincial government.

Saul believed that departments should be able to purchase basic necessities such as toilet paper and detergents from local stores, without having to undergo a tender process.

"We are dedicated to ensuring that we de-tenderise the state in our effort to cut costs of rendering services to our people."

"We will also investigate and introduce phased in-sourcing of security guards, gardening, catering, cleaning services and maintenance of state buildings. We must use the employment opportunities derived

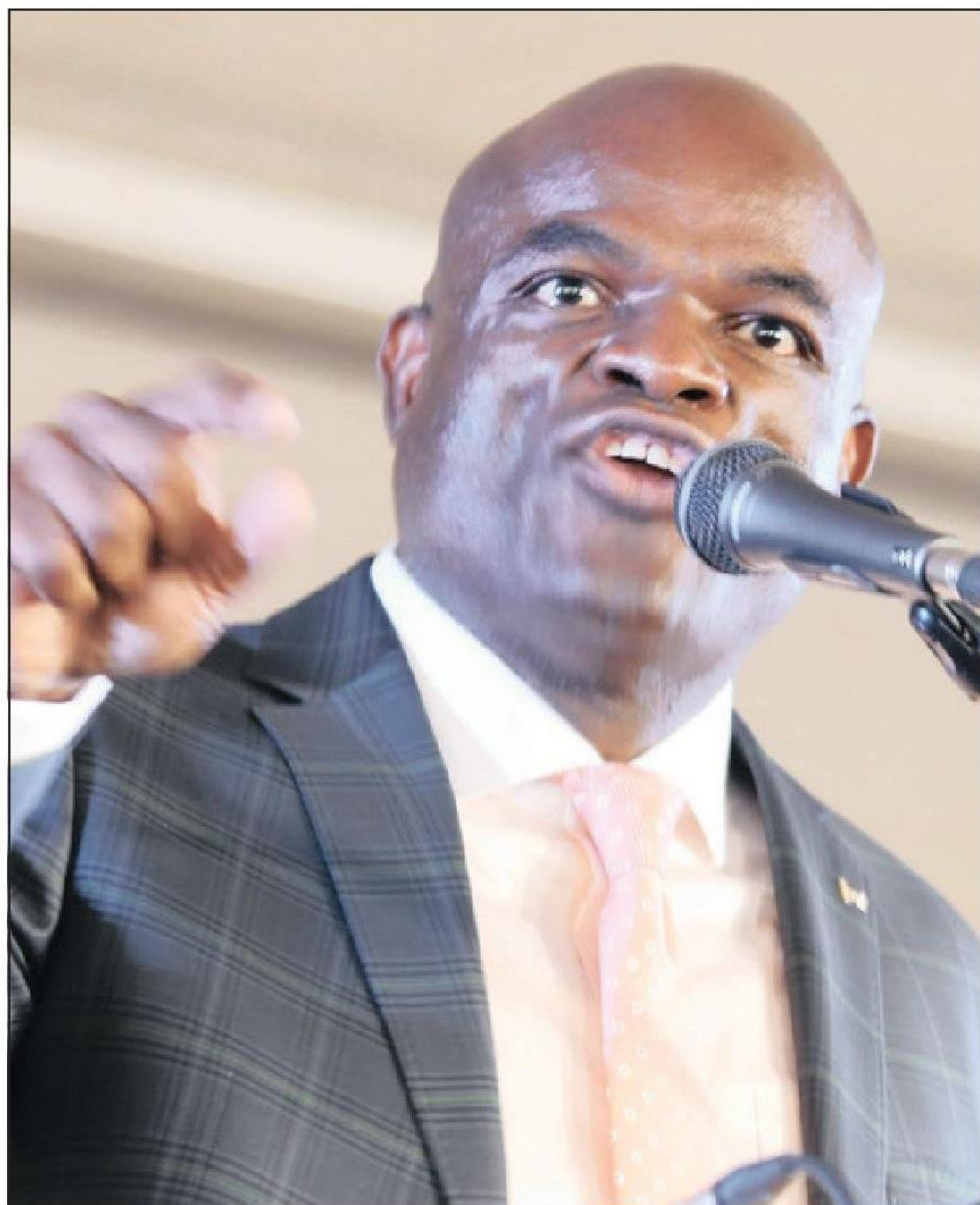
from these support functions to create decent work."

He said a war room had been established to address the high unemployment rate in the Northern Cape.

"I will chair both the war room and the Northern Cape Growth and Investment Council that will be constituted out of experts, labour and business people, to attract investment and boost the local economy. I cannot allow the continuing degeneration and deterioration of Kimberley, the capital town of our Province. Kimberley must serve as the epicentre of a modern, growing economy. This all starts with cleaning our city and encouraging our people not to litter."

Saul believed that the establishment of a Northern Cape state mining company would fast track prospecting, process applications for mining licenses, beneficiation and attract investment.

He called for a Premier Soccer League team to be set up, to expose talent in the Province and create opportunities for young players.



**SPEECH:** Dr Zamani Saul during his inauguration speech in Lerato Park.

Pictures: Soraya Crowie