

Finances halt TV station's launch

VEE TV wannabe viewers will have to wait another three weeks before the channel kicks off.



The Limpopo-based channel was supposed to launch on 5 May on e.tv's Open View HD platform.

Dr Wanga Ramakhanya, who heads the operation, promised that Limpopo's first commercial TV station would go live on 2 June and its broadcasting footprint would extend to Limpopo, Mpumalanga and North West.

Sources at the channel, who asked not to be named for fear of victimisation, said staff had not been paid for two months.

They claimed financial difficulties as the prime reason for the hiccup in the project.

"The station was started three months back. The directors recruited staff and some people left their jobs ... looking for greener pastures," one said.

Another well-placed insider said: "It was recently said that the reason we did not get our money is that the investors did not put [in] the money as planned. The money is just not there at the moment."

Big names have been linked to the channel, and include veteran TV presenter Hulisani "CC" Ravele, singer and actress Maduvha Madima, and multi award-winning gospel singer Winnie Mashaba.

Mashaba, who could not be reached for comment at the time of writing this report, was to co-present a show called The Makoya Gospel Show with fellow gospel musician Lufuno "Buda" Mudau on Sundays.

She confirmed her appointment to Sowetan earlier this year, and promised viewers "a show like no other on TV at the moment".

Yesterday, Ravele said she was approached and the negotiation process fell through.

Maduvha also clarified that she was approached by the station, but declined the offer on the basis that it would require her

to be a full-time staff member, which would be "difficult" with everything else she was doing.

Ramakhanya said the channel is yet to go live because of technical difficulties related to a shortage of fibre optics experienced by their suppliers in Cape Town.

Asked if staff members were not paid, Ramakhanye said: "They will be paid this week."

Source: *Sowetan*, via I-Net Bridge

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