

Heavy traffic at plazas and border

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■ André Bakkes and Henry Lazenby

NELSPRUIT - Even though Mpumalanga's roads were jam-packed this long weekend there was only one fatality on the N4.

Spokesman for Trac, Mr Hannes van Wyk, said thousands of motorists took to the road this weekend and despite the few accidents that were reported, only one of them was fatal.

Vehicles were queued up for kilometres at the Middelburg Plaza and according to Van Wyk they had to open all the booms twice on Thursday in order to relieve the congestion.

"About 1 700 vehicles passed through the

Middelburg Plaza in an easterly direction and 1 200 in a westerly direction on Thursday," said Van Wyk.

The Hartlam Festival in the Middelburg area was just one of the many reasons for the long queues at the plaza.

The one fatality resulted from a head-on collision near the Blomme Plaza at Machadodorp.

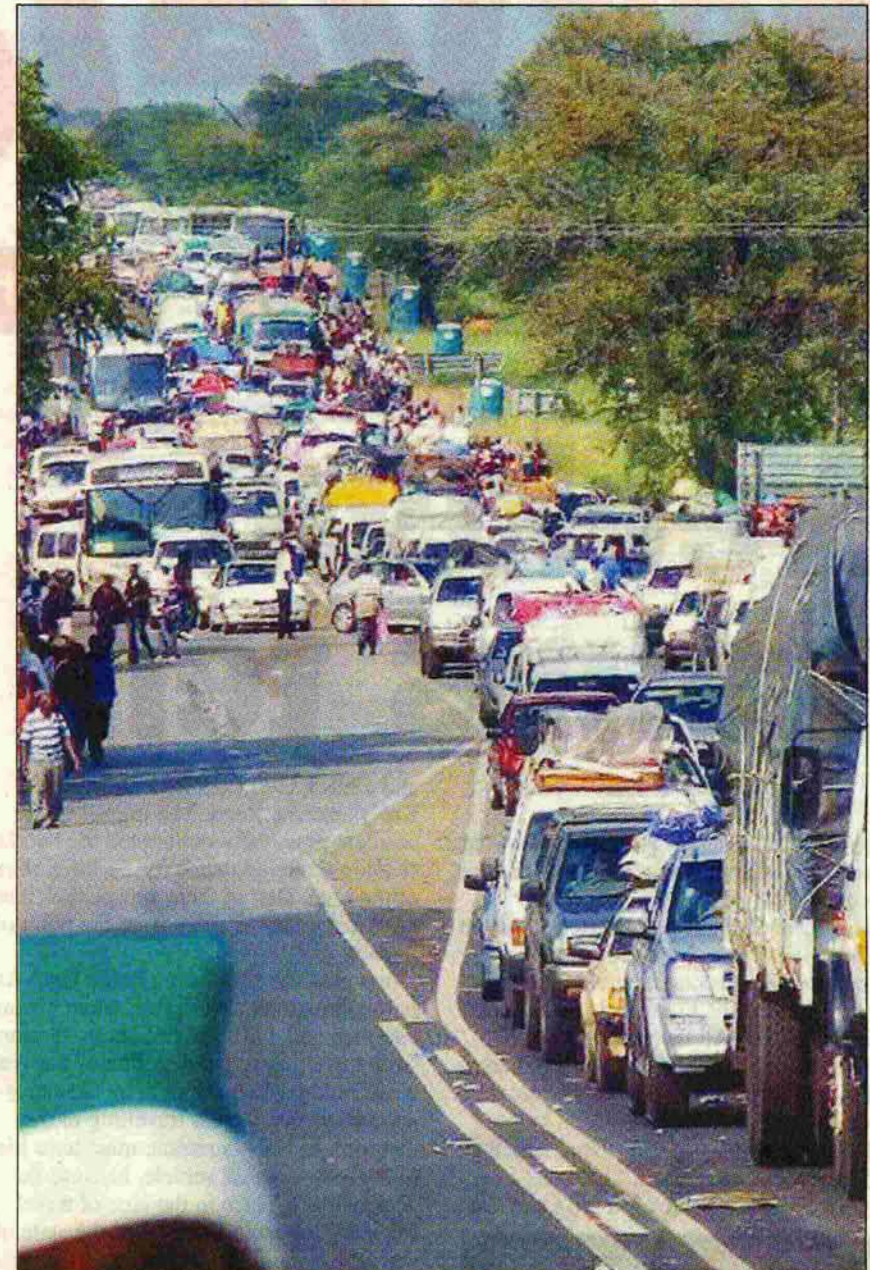
Nelspruit was completely gridlocked on Thursday afternoon and frustrated commuters were left amazed at the sheer volume of traffic, so it was surprising that there were so few accidents on the road.

Van Wyk compared the recent fatality figures to those of the Easter weekend during which only three people died on the road. "It is great to know that people seem to be obeying the rules more these days. I was on the road observing traffic during Easter and was extremely pleased with what I saw. These figures are impressive."

He reminds everyone that the long weekend isn't over yet and that road users must keep their wits about them, especially on Tuesday.

The Lebombo Border Post reported a marked increase in the number of vehicles that passed through the gates to Mozambique over that of last year. They said that 39 560 people crossed into Mozambique from Friday, up by 9 306 as compared with last year. The border post was open 24 hours from last Thursday and will remain open until Wednesday evening to accommodate returning road users.

In addition, extra staff members were brought in to speed up passage through customs. Long queues were reported on Friday, but with the extra capacity at the gate, motorists were assisted without any serious delay.



The Lebombo Border Post recorded an increase of 9 306 people crossing into Mozambique this weekend, compared with the figure of last year in the same period.