

# FOSSILISED

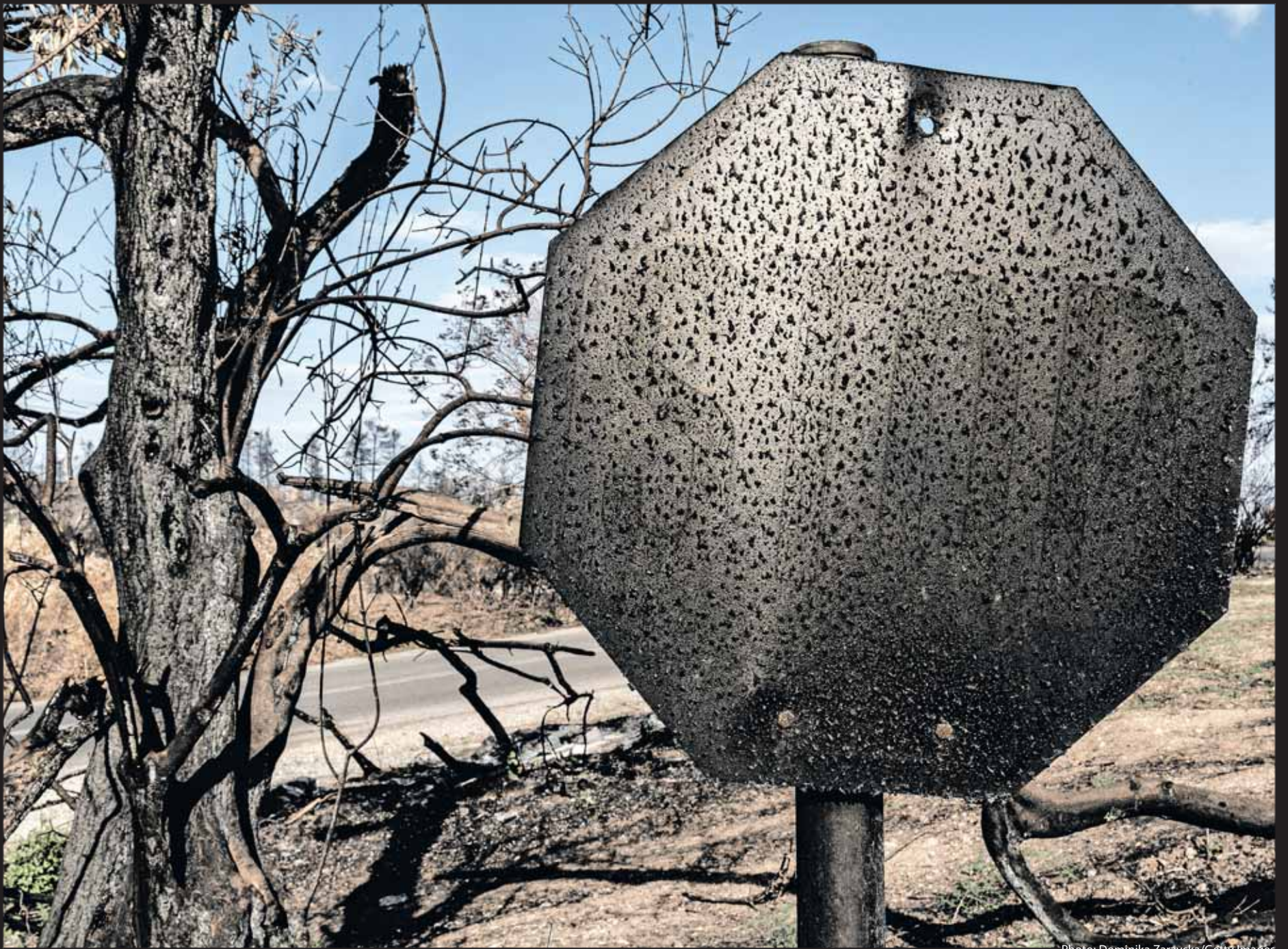


Photo: Dominika Zarzycka/Getty Images

**Negotiators at COP 28 faced an oil slick of fossil fuel lobbyists ... and as usual it was the vulnerable countries that fared the worst**

# IN BRIEF

## Spaced out over a tomato

What may arguably be the most important tomato in the universe was the centre of a controversy after an astronaut's colleagues accused him of eating it, *CNN* reports. In March, the International Space Station posted a video of astronaut Frank Rubio aboard the spacecraft while he harvested one of the first tomatoes ever grown in space. That tomato later went missing. "I put it in a little bag, and one of my crewmates was doing a [public] event with some schoolkids, and I thought it'd be kind of cool to show the kids — 'Hey guys, this is the first tomato harvested in space,'" said Rubio in October, after returning from his space mission. He said he spent 20 hours of his free time searching for it because his fellow astronauts accused him of eating it and he wanted to prove them wrong. Rubio was exonerated after his crew members said during a news conference last week that they had found it. After returning to Earth in September, Rubio set the record for the longest an American astronaut has ever spent in microgravity — 371 days.

## Zimbabwe has best finance minister

Zimbabweans are both shocked and amused by news of their finance minister being named the "Best African Finance Minister of the Year" over the weekend, BBC reports. Mthuli Ncube, Zimbabwe's finance minister since 2018, received the award from Reputation Poll International, an agency that specialises in "corporate reputation management", according to its website. Zimbabweans on X mocked the news with one person calling it "the greatest joke of the decade" and another likening it to "applauding a captain for steering a ship straight into an iceberg". Despite the criticism, Ncube graciously accepted the award and stated that it was evidence of how he and his team had "spearheaded the transformation of the economy."

## Chinese Aids activist dies

A renowned Chinese doctor and activist has died at the age of 95 in New York after years of speaking out against the Aids epidemic that plagued rural China in the 1980s and 1990s, VOA reports. While visiting Henan to learn more about HIV/Aids, gynaecologist Gao Yaojie noticed the link between blood transfusion patients and people infected with the virus. The BBC reports that "limited economic opportunities among farming communities left them with few other options to make a living — and blood-selling was often backed by local governments." Henan officials tried to cover up the illegal practice of selling blood. At the time, the Chinese government believed that HIV/Aids could only be transmitted through sexual intercourse and between pregnant mothers and their children, according to the BBC. Gao went into exile in 2009. Her attorney confirmed that Gao died at home of natural causes.

## Woman leaves Texas for abortion

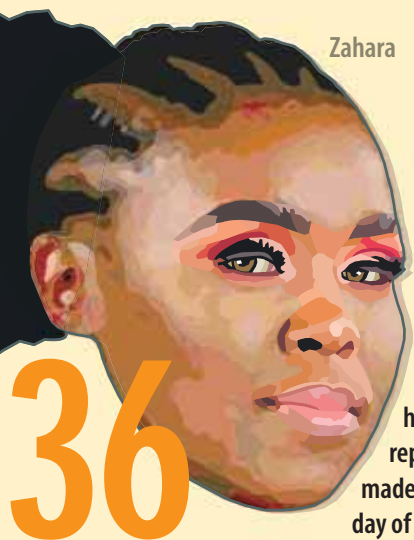
A pregnant woman in Texas in the United States had to leave her home state to get an abortion after the state's supreme court blocked her efforts to save herself from a potentially life-threatening pregnancy, *Washington Top News* reports. The 31-year-

## NUMBERS OF THE WEEK

The number of years since Kim Porter was born in Georgia, US. The American model and actress shares her birthday on 15 November with *Euphoria* actress Maude Apatow and *Gilmore Girls* actor Adam Brody

1150

The number of unique species of plants, animals and fungi discovered by three housemates in their suburban backyard of Brisbane, Australia. The trio, who are also scientists, made the discovery over a 12-month period during the Covid-19 lockdowns in 2020, *Sci News* reports



36

Zahara

The age at which musician Bulelwa Mkutukana, popularly known as Zahara, died after being hospitalised with liver complications, *Africa News* reports. The minister of culture, arts and sports made the announcement on Monday, on the day of her passing

Graphic: JOHN McCANN Compiled by: MAMAPUTLE BOIKANYO

old woman's foetus was diagnosed with a condition known as trisomy 18, a low-survival-rate condition where the unborn baby has an extra copy of chromosome 18. Kate Cox, the mother of two, spent nearly a week in and out of court in Texas asking permission to get an abortion and was granted one by a lower court judge. But the Texas supreme court temporarily halted that decision and Cox's lawyers said she would have to leave the state because she could not wait any longer to have an abortion. Reuters reported that her health was at risk if she continued the pregnancy to term, as was her ability to have more children in the future. According to the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists and the Society for Maternal-Fetal Medicine, there is no live birth in 70% of pregnancies involving trisomy 18 when the gestational age proceeds past 12 weeks. Nancy Northrup, president of the Center for Reproductive Rights, which is representing Cox, said: "Kate's case has shown the world that abortion bans are dangerous for pregnant people, and exceptions don't work."

## K-pop band joins military

Members of BTS, also known as the Bangtan Boys, a popular K-pop band, have commenced

their military duties in accordance with South Korean law, *Time* reports. Singers RM and V have officially begun their 18-month compulsory service, as announced by the band's management agency. They have reported to an army boot camp in Nonsan. It is expected that two other band members, Jimin and Jung Kook, will also fulfil their duties soon. Jin, J-Hope and Suga have been doing their military service for several months. The seven members have a collective plan to reunite as a group in 2025, once they have completed their military obligations. Prior to their assignments, RM and V will undergo five weeks of combat training. According to South Korean law, able-bodied men are required to serve 18 to 21 months in the military, with certain exemptions granted to athletes and classical artists who have achieved international recognition and contribute to national prestige. This doesn't seem to apply to BTS...

## 'Stolen' ring found in vacuum

A ring valued at more than \$800 000, which had disappeared from a hotel room at the Ritz Paris, was found in the sweepings of a vacuum bag, the *New York Post* reports. The owner of the ring, a Malaysian businesswoman, lodged a complaint with the police, accusing a hotel employee of theft. Ritz security guards investigated and then retrieved the ring from a vacuum bag on Sunday. According to the woman, she had left the ring on a table in her hotel room but couldn't find it upon her return. Following her complaint, the hotel said it would initiate an investigation and prosecutors were ready to press charges if the ring was indeed stolen by a staff member. But, by the time the ring was located, the businesswoman had already departed for London, although she was expected to return to claim it. The hotel expressed gratitude towards its staff members for their honesty and professionalism and offered the woman an additional three nights' stay as compensation for the inconvenience, which she declined.

## Opium takeover

Myanmar has emerged as the world's largest supplier of opium as a result of internal instability and a decrease in cultivation in Afghanistan, *Reuters* reports. The Taliban's prohibition on drugs in 2022 resulted in a

drop of 95% in opium cultivation to about 330 tonnes in the country, causing a shift in global supply towards Myanmar, according to a report by the United Nations. Myanmar produced about 1 080 tonnes of opium. The country's political, social and economic instability, triggered by a coup in 2021, has led to a surge in poppy farming. As a result, Myanmar farmers now earn about 75% more from cultivating opium poppies than they did from their conventional crops, with average prices reaching \$355 (R6 728) a kilogramme. The area under cultivation has also expanded by 18% annually, from 40 100 hectares to 47 000ha, leading to this year potentially having the highest yield since 2001. The ongoing conflict between Myanmar's military and armed ethnic minority groups is expected to further accelerate the growth of opium cultivation. This expansion of opium farming contributes to the flourishing illicit economy in Myanmar, which includes the production of synthetic drugs, trafficking, money laundering, and the operation of online scam centres by organised crime groups.

## Football league cut short

The Turkish Football Federation (TFF) has decided to suspend all leagues in Türkiye following an incident involving professional football club Ankaragücü's president, Faruk Koca, who assaulted referee Halil Umur Meler during their Super Lig home match against Rizespor. Koca approached Meler and struck him after the final whistle, following Rizespor's equalising goal of 1-1. The situation escalated further when Ankaragücü fans stormed the pitch, with Meler also being kicked while on the ground. In response, the TFF has issued a detention order for Koca, and two individuals have already been detained as part of a judicial investigation into the matter. Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan has condemned the attack, and the TFF promptly announced the suspension of all leagues. The TFF attributed "this despicable attack" to a toxic culture that has developed over the years, where referees have been subjected to mistreatment by players and club officials. Erdogan also expressed his condemnation of the assault on referee Meler after the match and wished him a speedy recovery. *Al Jazeera* reported that violent attacks on referees are rare. — Mamaputle Boikanyo

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# Zulu king's benefits still moot

No finding was made by the court on the validity of MisoZulu's claim to the throne

Paddy Harper

**T**he presidency says it is "premature" to speculate on whether King MisoZulu kaZwelithini's R70 million-a-year state benefits will be withdrawn in the wake of this week's high court ruling declaring his recognition by President Cyril Ramaphosa unlawful.

The court ruled in favour of the king's uncle, Prince Mbonisi, and his half-brother, Prince Simakade, who had asked that MisoZulu's recognition as the Isilo of the Zulu nation be set aside.

The court remitted the matter to Ramaphosa, ordering him to appoint an investigative panel to deal with allegations that the process of nominating MisoZulu as king had been flawed. It did not make a ruling on the legitimacy of MisoZulu's claim to the throne.

Presidency spokesperson Vincent Magwenya said in a statement that the president would appeal the ruling and that MisoZulu "remains the identified heir to the throne."

He told the *Mail & Guardian* that Ramaphosa's legal team was "carefully studying the judgment" delivered by judge Norman Davis in the Pretoria high court on Monday.

Asked what would happen to the king's benefits — which he receives as a result of his formal recognition by the state — Magwenya said the question was "premature".

"Wait until the president decides on the next steps," he said. This was the first indication the head of state might appeal the ruling, which ordered Ramaphosa to start afresh with the process once the investigative panel had done its work.

Bongi Gwala, spokesperson for KwaZulu-Natal premier Nomusa Dube-Ncube, said the provincial government was waiting for direction from the presidency, which was "dealing with the matter".

The province picks up the tab for the Zulu royal household and allocated R79 million for the monarch's upkeep for the current financial year.

It recently allocated R20 million



**Royal battle:** Zulu princes Mbonisi, Vulindlela and Mathobisizwe (above), are brothers of the late King Zwelithini kaBhekuzulu, while King MisoZulu kaZwelithini (below) was declared king after his father's death. Photos: Tebogo Letsie/Gallo Images and Darren Stewart/Gallo Images



for the king's legal fees in his battle for the throne.

MisoZulu's office said this week that it had "noted" the court ruling.

"His majesty, together with his legal team and the senior members of the Zulu royal family, are still studying the judgment and applying their minds to the correct course of action," spokesperson Prince Africa Zulu said.

"His majesty calls upon the royal family, amakhosi of the kingdom and the Zulu nation, to remain calm, focused and confident as the king

is still on the throne and continues with his day-to-day engagements as king of the Zulu nation."

In his judgment, Davis said that the recognition of MisoZulu as Isilo of the Zulu nation was "unlawful and invalid and is hereby set aside".

"The matter of the recognition of Isilo is remitted to the first respondent [Ramaphosa] who is directed to act in terms of Sections 8(4) and 8(5) of the Traditional and Khoi-San Leadership Act," the court ordered.

It further ordered Ramaphosa "to appoint an investigative committee as

contemplated in that Act to conduct an investigation and provide a report in respect of allegations that the identification of the second respondent (MisoZulu) was not done in terms of customary law and customs".

The court said it had not been asked to make a ruling on who should be king but on whether or not process had been followed in making the appointment of MisoZulu in March last year, which was later certificated that October.

Last year judge Mjabuliseni Madondo ruled that MisoZulu was the rightful heir to the throne, however, the decision has been taken on review at the supreme court of appeal by members of the royal family.

Davis found that, after a dispute had arisen over the Zulu throne, a mediation panel had been appointed, while three separate court applications were brought by various factions in the royal family.

The panel, led by former KwaZulu-Natal premier Willies Mchunu, had made recommendations which were "instructive", asking the president to delay the recognition of the king until the court processes were exhausted.

The panel had also recommended a medium-term mediation process — and the appointment of an act-

ing king acceptable to all parties — in order to avoid the court rulings causing long-term division and damage similar to that incurred by the Shembe Church.

It had further recommended that the Act be followed and the process of naming MisoZulu be investigated before any permanent recognition of the monarch be carried out by the head of state.

The court said that the presidency had considered this panel's report and made its decisions, instead of appointing an investigative committee in terms of the Act.

"The mediation panel was not such an investigative committee and the president did not claim that it was. The president therefore erred in law in not having followed the preemptive provisions of the Leadership Act," the court said.

"This renders his recognition decision susceptible to review."

The court said it could not substitute the president's decision but that, due to the allegations between the parties, it was necessary that it be remitted to the presidency with "the necessary direction".

MisoZulu is also facing a court challenge from Mbonisi to his authority over the Ingonyama Trust Board (ITB), which controls nearly three million hectares of land under traditional leaders on his behalf.

Mbonisi has asked the Pietermaritzburg high court to stop MisoZulu from taking decisions regarding the ITB and the Ingonyama Trust, of which he is the sole trustee.

The trust was set up on the eve of the 1994 elections to secure the participation of the king's father, Goodwill Zwelithini ka Bhekuzulu, in South Africa's first democratic vote.

It takes in millions of rand a year in lease fees from mines, commercial farms and other businesses operating on its land, a percentage of which is allocated to the king as both monarch and inkosi of the Usuthu Traditional Authority.

Mbonisi wants this funding — along with his nephew's state stipend — to be suspended immediately by both the ITB and provincial government.

He also wants the removal of former board chairperson Jerome Ngwenya by MisoZulu — and the appointment of a new board — to be set aside and reversed by the court.



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# Adaptation to climate change 'sacrificed' at COP28 –

Sheree Bega

As the United Nations climate change summit drew to a close in Dubai this week, with most of the focus on fossil fuels, another key priority was seemingly overshadowed: how vulnerable countries will adapt to damaging climate impacts now and in the future.

In 2015, the Paris Agreement established a Global Goal on Adaptation (GGA), aimed at enhancing adaptive capacity, strengthening resilience and reducing vulnerability to climate change.

The GGA is meant to serve as a unifying framework that can drive political action and finance for adaptation on the same scale as mitigation,

according to the World Resources Institute. This means setting specific, measurable targets and guidelines for global adaptation action as well as enhancing adaptation finance and support for developing countries.

The GGA is a playbook for how the world is going to adapt to the climate change that is already happening and will continue to happen, “even if we stopped using fossil fuels today”, Climate Action Network International said on Monday.

“The new text on the global goal on adaptation highlights serious gaps on securing a strong outcome on adaptation from COP28. Communities on the front line deserve far better.”

Adaptation is not optional. “The

most vulnerable cannot be made to choose between preventing dangerous climate change by delivering a phase-out of fossil fuels and dealing with the inevitable impact of climate change,” it said, noting how the new text falls short on what developing countries have been asking for.

The goal for 2023 was to raise \$300 million for the Adaptation Fund, but at COP28, “we’ve only seen \$169m in pledges, a mere 56% of the intended amount”, it stated.

Adaptation is a “matter of life and death for Africa”, said Collins Nzovu, the chair of the African group of negotiators on climate change, who called out the slow progress on adaptation, specifically on the GGA.

He told a briefing this week that a strong agreement on adaptation was the “most important outcome” for Africa at COP28.

“If we are serious about saving lives, livelihoods and protecting ecosystems, then the GGA framework must have ambitious, time-bound targets with clear means of support for implementation.”

This includes finance, capacity-building and technology transfer, which are a “cornerstone” of the GGA. African countries, he said, could not agree to an adaptation framework featuring “process-based targets” without specified outcomes.

Despite the strain on African budgets and the increasing debt burden,

governments have committed significant domestic resources on adaptation. “However, only scaled-up, adequate and predictable international public finance can close the widening gap. Means of implementation is therefore the cornerstone for realising the GGA and its framework.”

“Africa cannot accept a GGA framework without means of implementation from developed countries, especially on the targets.”

Last month, the United Nations Environment Programme’s Adaptation Gap report 2023 found that the adaptation finance needs of developing countries are 10 to 18 times as great as international pub-

## The future still fuelled by oil, coal

Despite the progress made at COP28, many gaps and loopholes must still be plugged

Sheree Bega & Mandisa Nyathi

It perhaps comes as no surprise that in a world where multilateralism is no longer in vogue, and political suicide in many of the democracies in the West, that there aren’t too many capitals raising their hands to host expensive summits, such as the recently ended COP28, that seek to bind nations to programmes not shaped by domestic politics. In their absence, there were “audible gasps” when the summit was awarded to a cash-flush and oil-rich Dubai, said Roland Ngam, and for him, “what played out confirmed most people’s fears at every turn.”

“Dubai tried to overwhelm the negotiators by packing the event with its lobbyist friends and then it did everything to water down the clauses on fossil phase-out in the final declaration,” said Ngam, the programme manager for climate justice and socio-ecological transformation at the nonprofit Rosa Luxemburg Foundation Southern Africa.

From an African perspective, his biggest disappointment is in its leaders who are helping countries such as Dubai and Kuwait “lock coal into the hegemonic colonial capitalist paradigm” by offering them vast hectares of land for carbon offset schemes.

Countries such as Tanzania, Kenya, Liberia and Zimbabwe are selling millions of hectares to Arab nations, with “zero consultation with local and indigenous communities”.

He had “zero confidence” going into COP28 and left with zero confidence in what is supposed to be the biggest win of COP28 – the loss and damage fund. This “fund that so far has been filled only with pledges is another waste of time, just like the \$100 billion that was promised to developing countries in Paris”.

At COP27 in Egypt last year, the announcement of the loss and damage fund was seen as groundbreak-

ing. Countries that face the worst effects of climate change have long called for a fund to deal with the devastating effects of these extreme weather events.

This year, the loss and damage fund was launched on the first day of the conference. With it came pledges exceeding \$420 million from countries in the European Union, America, the United Kingdom and the United Arab Emirates. It is one of the success stories of this year’s event, even though more funding will ultimately be needed.

Brandon Abdinor, a climate advocacy lawyer at the Centre for Environmental Rights, said although it’s great that the loss and damage fund has been established “it’s not going to mean anything without money in it. And we don’t even have a billion dollars in there and the needs are \$300 billion a year, so that’s not even scratching the surface.”

Ngam said: “The many problems that we face shall not be resolved in Azerbaijan [where COP29 will be held] or in any UNFCCC [United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change] structure. We urgently need an alternative.”

On Tuesday, negotiations overran a deadline set by Dubai after a backlash over a draft text that omitted the phase-out of fossil fuels took negotiators back to the drawing board.

South Africa’s chief negotiator, Maesela Kekana, said on Tuesday: “From our perspective, we are doing our best to come up with an ambitious outcome on the global stocktake and on the Global Goal on Adaptation.”

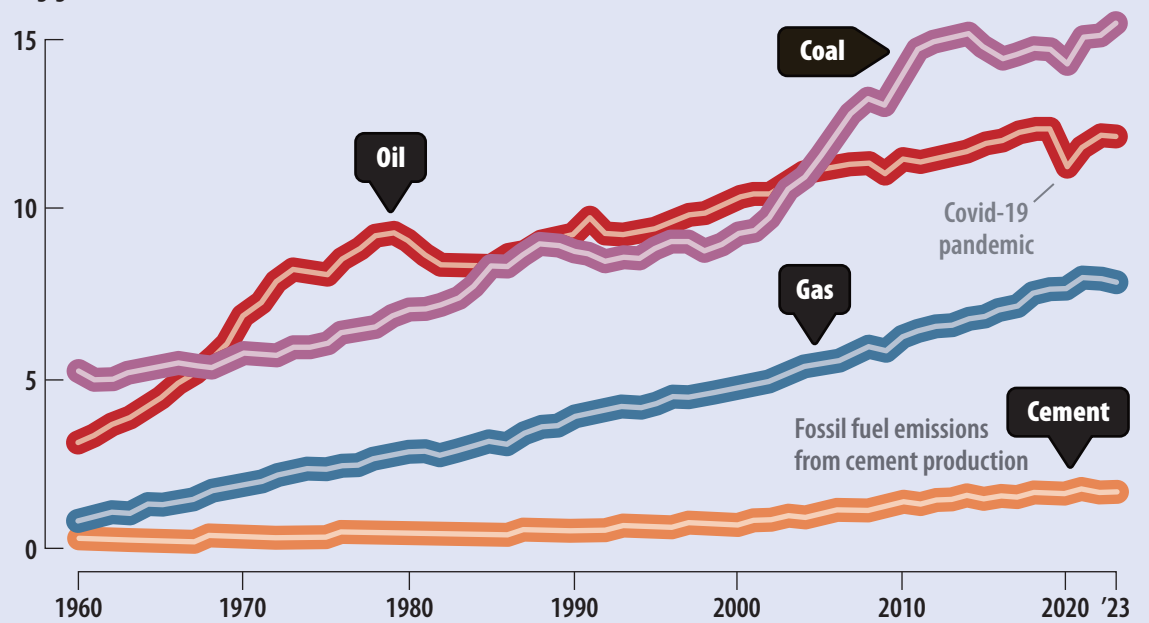
He cited the delivery of the loss and damage fund at the start of COP28 and “the many pledges made to that particular fund” as a win.

“We concluded the work on the just transition with outcomes on the way forward so everything so far worked out well. We are just trying to finalise these two outstanding issues on the

### The rise and rise of fossil fuel emissions

Annual global carbon emissions from burning fossil fuels

In gigatonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>, 1960 to 2023



**473** The number of carbon capture and storage lobbyists revealed to be present at COP28. “We are facing an onslaught of lobbyists trying to carve a massive loophole into the energy package,” said Lili Fuhr of the Centre for International Environmental Law

2023 figures are projections

Graphic: JOHN MCCANN  
Compiled by: SHEREE BEGA  
Data sources: FT (GLOBAL CARBON PROJECT), CIEL

global stocktake and the Global Goal on Adaptation.”

Despite reservations about the summit’s outcomes, Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment Minister Barbara Creecy welcomed decisions on the global goal for adaptation, the language for the global stocktake and the loss and damage fund. “For the first time we have language which calls for transitioning away from fossil fuels in energy systems in a just, orderly and equitable manner so as to achieve net zero by 2050 in keeping with the science.”

By Wednesday morning, the parties had agreed to the UAE Consensus, with no discussions or objections. It “sets out an ambitious climate agenda to keep 1.5°C within reach”, COP28 president Sultan Ahmed Al Jaber said in his closing speech. “The UAE Consensus calls on parties to transition away from fossil fuels to reach net zero, encourages them to submit economy-wide nationally determined contributions, includes a new specific target to triple renewables and double energy efficiency by 2030, and builds

momentum towards a new architecture for climate finance.”

The world needed to find a new way. “We have worked very hard to secure a better future for our people and our planet. We should be proud of our historic achievement.”

Alex Scott, the programme lead at climate think-tank E3G, said: “Countries have agreed a path to address the gaps in global climate action: transition away from fossil fuels, deliver on global targets on adaptation, and take new steps to scale up finance for climate action, critically setting up a new loss and damage fund.

“There are gaps – especially on finance for adaptation – and loopholes, but the ultimate direction of travel is clear: the fossil fuel era is ending.

“The proof will be in the delivery – in countries’ next climate plans due by 2025, and in the transformation of the wider finance system to deliver the economic shifts needed.”

On fossil fuels, Mohamed Adow, the director of Kenya-based think-tank Power Shift Africa, said: “For

the first time in three decades of climate negotiations, the words fossil fuels have ever made it into a COP outcome. We are finally naming the elephant in the room. The genie is never going back into the bottle and future COPs will only turn the screws even more on dirty energy.

“Although we’re sending a strong signal with one hand, there are still too many loopholes on unproven and expensive technologies like carbon capture and storage, which fossil fuel interests will try to use to keep dirty energy on life support.”

The text calls for a transition away from fossil fuels but “the transition is not funded or fair”, Adow said.

“We’re still missing enough finance to help developing countries decarbonise and there needs to be greater expectation on rich fossil fuel producers to phase out first.”

He said some people may have expected more from this summit, but this result would have been “unheard of two years ago, especially at a COP meeting in a petrostate. It shows that even oil and gas producers can see we’re heading for a fossil free world.”

# at the cost of the African continent

lic finance flows — more than 50% higher than previous estimates.

Public multilateral and bilateral adaptation finance flows to developing countries declined to about \$21 billion in 2021. The report said the updated costs of adaptation for developing countries are estimated to be in a plausible range of \$215 billion to \$387 billion a year this decade.

This yawning adaptation gap is “sadly the result of years of developed countries’ reluctance to fund adaptation”, Nzovu wrote this month.

“Over the years, we in the Global South have seen how developed countries are comfortable funding mitigation activities that reduce emissions but seem not to care much about the people already suffering the impacts of climate change. Could it be because the people who need adaptation are not their people?”

Because climate change is largely driven by fossil fuel burning by developed countries, it’s not only their moral obligation but their legally binding obligation under the climate convention to provide support to developing countries. “It’s an outrage that they haven’t done so,” noted Nzovu, who is Zambia’s minister of green economy and environment.

Citing the “grand promises” developed country partners have failed to fulfil, “in 2009, for instance, they made their now famous pledge to commit \$100 billion per year in climate finance by 2020, which long remained elusive. In 2021, they promised to double their adaptation



**Inertia: Collins Nzovu, chairperson of the African group of negotiators on climate change, criticised the limited progress on the crucial issue of adaptation at COP28.** Photo: Dominika Zarzycka/Getty Images

support, which they also have not delivered”.

Climate finance requires a minimum of \$2.4trillion of transformative grant-based investment and transfer of technology for climate adaptation and mitigation by 2030, said Fadhel Kaboub, an associate professor of economics and the president of the Global Institute for Sustainable Prosperity. “We are nowhere near that target at the end of COP28.”

Climate finance is a climate debt owed by the historic polluters of the Global North to Global South countries that are on the front lines of climate change. He said the Global North is refusing to pay its debt.

“If you owe me \$100, you are supposed to pay me. Instead, you give me a \$10 loan with conditionalities to control how I use my money. You give me another \$10 in exchange for having control over my forests (aka carbon markets). You invest another \$10 in green electricity that I must export to you on favourable terms. You out-source another \$10 worth of low value-added manufacturing to produce cheap consumer goods for you.” None of this should count as climate finance. “It is a climate debt default greenwashed with neocolonial debt traps,” Kaboub said.

The latest text on the GGA is “utterly disappointing” and an “injusti-

ce” to people on the front line of the climate crisis, said Amy Giliam Thorp, an adaptation and resilience policy adviser at Kenyan-based think-tank Power Shift Africa.

“Shockingly, the text is even weaker, more vague in many areas, and lacking in ambition to fast-track adaptation action,” she said. “There are no improvements in targets for thematic areas or the adaptation policy cycle, while concrete targets for an overarching global goal and means of implementation (like technology transfer, capacity building, and finance) are noticeably absent.”

The resilience of African people and countries is “hanging by a thread”, yet developed nations — the United States, United Kingdom and European Union — have continued to block the inclusion of adequate support and finance for developing countries to bolster adaptation efforts.

The negotiations and the latest iteration of the text is set to corrode trust between developed and developing nations. A framework focused on action without concrete targets, especially to support developing countries, is “pointless and toothless”.

Thorp said adaptation must be a priority for Africa because it is facing so many extreme weather events. “Without an ambitious GGA framework, particularly calling for finance, we’re not going to be able to address these issues. Our countries, our governments, and our people are having to deal with the consequences and the costs of those impacts already.”

That more than half of the finance the continent is receiving for adaptation is in the form of loans “is only making the debt situation of many African countries more onerous”.

Africa’s group of climate negotiators conceptualised the GGA in 2013 and it was enshrined in the Paris Agreement in 2015.

Thorp says this is something that’s often forgotten. “It’s actually the second goal of the Paris Agreement, which means it’s equally important. But what we’ve seen with COP28 is an emphasis on mitigation and a kind of sidelining of adaptation ... and moving straight to commitments and pledges on loss and damage.”

COP28 began with a historic agreement on a loss and damage fund to help developing countries cope with the effects of climate change and initial financial commitments worth millions of dollars were made.

Thorp said the failure to secure an ambitious GGA framework, which includes clear time-bound and measurable targets for the overarching global goal and clear strong language on the means of implementation, “would really mark this COP as a huge disappointment and failure for the Global South”.

While it’s “fantastic” that loss and damage was agreed to on the first day of COP28, “those commitments are still in the millions and not in the billions, which is what we need”.

“If we don’t have adaptation in place, losses and damages are only going to escalate.”



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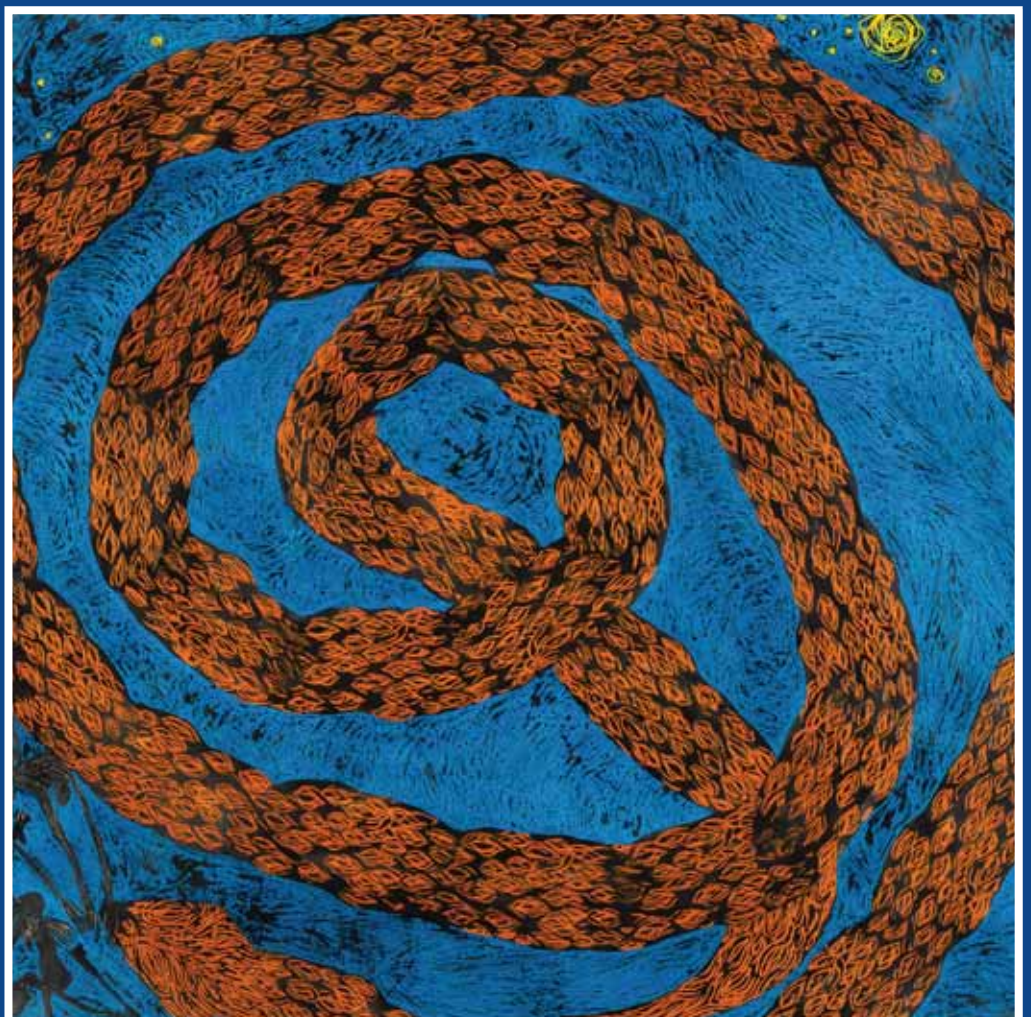
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# Nuclear power gets green light

The procurement market is to open next year, as minister says the tech is the ‘cheapest and cleanest’

Mandisa Nyathi

**E**lectricity Minister Kgosientsho Ramokgopa says there is a “compelling” case for expanding the use of nuclear power as there is a pressing need for additional generation capacity.

“There has to be an appreciation of the generation and demand challenges, and in that context, you can make a case on why you need to pro-

ceed with this 2500 megawatts,” he told journalists earlier this week.

“I think the case is compelling. Part of the reason why we are here with regards to the energy crisis is that the generation can’t meet demand and therefore you need to have additional generation capacity because we make the point all the time that the Eskom fleet is ageing and we need additional generation capacity to help us ensure we can secure the country’s energy’s future.”

The government is deliberating on whether to pursue the construction of large reactors, such as those found in traditional nuclear power stations, or opt for small, modular reactors, which have recently become commercially available. The construction time is 10 to 15 years.

Ramokgopa added that the department of mineral resources and energy plans to release a request for proposals to acquire 2500MW of nuclear power in March.

He said that nuclear energy is the “cheapest and cleanest” option, providing essential baseload power — the minimum amount of power

needed — for stabilising renewable energy sources.

“We are initiating a procurement process. We aim to secure an additional 2500MW of nuclear capacity to bolster energy security and sovereignty.

“This represents a significant milestone, solidifying our undisputed position as a continental leader in nuclear generation capacity.

“This will assist in determining the scale at which the country will need to procure additional generation capacity from various technologies, including nuclear,” he said.

As the government prepares to

release its long-term energy plan, called the Integrated Resource Plan (IRP) 2023, which has draft approval from cabinet, Ramokgopa said that the decision to pursue 2500MW of nuclear energy had already been made in the 2019 version of the IRP and had been carried forward into the latest edition.

The 2019 IRP document did not explicitly incorporate new nuclear power into the energy procurement plan until 2030.

Instead, it advised the department of mineral resources and energy to initiate preparations for a nuclear build programme, targeting 2500MW, at a pace and scale affordable for the country.

Addressing past challenges, Ramokgopa acknowledged that the attempt to procure nuclear energy during president Jacob Zuma’s administration had been controversial.

But he said that the government had established clarity in the procurement process through collaboration with the National Energy Regulator of South Africa (Nersa), receiving the necessary approval to proceed.

**Z**izamele Mbambo, the deputy director general of nuclear energy in the department of mineral resources and energy, said that the procurement process would adhere to constitutional principles, ensuring openness, transparency and cost-effectiveness.

Mbambo said, unlike the previous administration’s closed tender process, the approach aims to avoid exclusivity and foster fair competition.

He added that the attempt to forge an exclusive arrangement with the Russian state-owned nuclear power company Rosatom had been set aside by a court following legal challenges from environmental activists.

Ramokgopa said all the conditions to procure nuclear energy had been met, the programme had been given the go-ahead in September, and the government had started gazetting it.

He described Nersa’s approval on Tuesday as a “significant milestone”.

“We know that, historically, the process was mired in controversy. Now we have been able to iron out the issues related to how the procurement process needs to unfold.

“We have met the regulatory requirements and legal requirements, and also now that we have the concurrence of Nersa, we are able to proceed.”

Ramokgopa said acting now would ensure that South Africa had enough generation capacity in the future.

There is renewed interest in nuclear globally as a carbon dioxide-free power generation option but this technology’s significant initial capital expenses remain a major concern.

Environmental groups have criticised Ramokgopa’s actions, arguing that nuclear power is costly.

Makoma Lekalakala from Earthlife Africa said the timing of the announcement from Ramokgopa is against procedure because the minister and Nersa had not allowed the public to comment on the determination.

“The IRP is yet to be finalised, and comments are needed to ensure it goes into law. It doesn’t make sense because the IRP draft is not even public as yet, so the process is flawed,” she said.

## East African countries going for nuclear – why it’s a bad idea

Hartmut Winkler

The East African region has the fastest-growing population in Africa. Between 2013 and 2017, its growth rate was twice the continental average.

It is also experiencing strong economic growth. Its sub-Saharan share of GDP has risen from 14% in 2000 to 21% last year.

Such growth translates to higher electricity demand.

Among a variety of new energy proposals is building nuclear power plants.

Earlier this year, Uganda announced plans to construct a 2000-megawatt nuclear plant 150km north of Kampala, with the first 1000MW operational by 2031.

Rwanda also recently signed a deal to build a nuclear reactor, while Kenya and Tanzania have made similar announcements.

It is in many ways tempting for these countries to build nuclear power plants. Even a single large-scale nuclear reactor would typically double national electricity generation capacity.

In addition, it is technology that is — in theory at least — able to provide a constant electricity output, independent of weather, season or time of day.

Nuclear power has historically been perceived in many quarters as confirmation of high technological status and proof of national respectability, despite many of the world’s technologically and economically strongest nations having shut down their nuclear plants. Germany and Italy are examples.

But choosing the nuclear path carries several risks.

The costs of constructing, maintaining, and later decommissioning, a nuclear plant make this one of the most expensive forms of electricity generation. The actual cost is invariably a lot higher than originally announced.



**No to nukes:** Many countries in Africa are building nuclear power stations but factors such as the high costs and the risk of accidents mean it might not be the best choice. Photo: Foto24/Getty Images

Along with that, the construction period is usually many years longer than declared at the start.

In addition, safety issues can never be discounted when dealing with nuclear energy, as the 2011 Fukushima disaster in Japan amply illustrated.

There are two arguments against new nuclear as considered by East African countries.

The first is financial. The construction cost of a new nuclear plant typically stands at about \$5 billion per 1000MW. The cost of a 2000MW build in Uganda would be of the order of that country’s annual total tax revenue. As such, the project would rely on massive loans, which also come with considerable interest.

The second is the risk of complete political and economic dependence on the nuclear build sponsor country. France, South Korea and China are building a small number of nuclear plants outside their borders. China is now part of the Ugandan nuclear project.

But the country that has been by far the most aggressive in promoting itself as an international nuclear plant developer is Russia. In 2019 it had already secured nuclear co-operation agreements with 18 African countries, with several more concluded more recently.

To circumvent the prohibitive costs, Russian nuclear developers have offered to provide comparatively low-interest financing where repayments only kick in several

years after the start of construction and continue for several decades thereafter.

The drawback is the country develops a strong long-term dependence on Russia to meet one of its most basic needs — electricity provision.

The situation has been made more risky by the uncertainty of Russia’s full-scale war in Ukraine. The fallout from this war may well ruin, and lead to the complete overhaul of, the Russian state.

This would result in the disruption and ultimate termination of projects already in progress, with the loss of all funding and resources invested up to that point.

In view of the financial risk and high cost and because, as global experience has shown, it typically requires 10 or more years to set up a nuclear plant from project approval to electricity production, East African countries should pursue alternatives.

New medium-scale solar, wind and geothermal power-generating facilities will probably dominate the expansion of East African electricity generation capacity in the coming decade as they are cheap in comparison.

Typical construction time scales are also much lower than nuclear or hydro megaprojects.

Take hydropower generation, which uses the natural flow of moving water to produce electricity, for example. This source of power has been the most significant in East

Africa for decades.

Building more dams is both time consuming and, at times, controversial. Nevertheless, major projects using this technology are still being built. An example is the 2115MW Julius Nyerere hydro-power station in Tanzania.

Solar power — the conversion of energy from sunlight into electricity — has an extremely low footprint in the region at the moment. Yet it is now one of the cheapest forms of electricity generation. Most countries in the region have extensive areas suitable for harnessing this source.

Wind farms can be considered in regions and some are already in operation, such as in Kenya’s Lake Turkana region.

East Africa furthermore has the Rift Valley and its volcanic activity in places.

This offers the opportunity for geothermal power, a technology that converts the intense underground heat associated with cracks in the Earth’s crust to electricity.

This is already the leading electricity generation mode in Kenya and could be developed elsewhere.

Given all these factors, investing in a large and expensive nuclear build with uncertain completion time frames that could end up being way more expensive than projected is, ultimately, simply not worth it.

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# THE SINGLETON™



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# Parties in battle of the stadiums

Analysts believe the Economic Freedom Fighters' growth in KwaZulu-Natal will be marginal

Mandisa Nyathi

**A**nalysts say the Economic Freedom Fighters' (EFF) decision to launch its election manifesto at Moses Mabhida Stadium in Durban on 10 February is expected to bolster the party's national support base but that its growth in the coveted province of KwaZulu-Natal will be marginal.

This comes as the ANC announced on Wednesday it will be launching its election manifesto at the same venue on 24 February. The Electoral Commission of South Africa is expected to host its final registration weekend in that month.

The stadium can accommodate 56 000 people but its capacity can be increased to 85 000. The ANC used the venue for its election manifesto launch in 2019, filling it to capacity.

The so-called battle of the stadiums began in July when the EFF filled the 100 000-seater FNB Stadium in Johannesburg for its birthday celebration.

In previous years, both the EFF and the ANC have bussed in thousands of supporters and supplied them with food and free T-shirts in a bid to fill stadiums.

Speaking to the *Mail & Guardian*, political analyst Dr Ongama Mtimka said if the EFF manages to replicate its past success at packing venues, as seen at the FNB Stadium, it holds the potential to attract significant support.

"Moses Mabhida is important for the campaign craft of the EFF nationally, in general. It's part of the optics that help a party's election campaign do significantly by attracting significant support," he said.

He added that the party could also take advantage of the changing political environment, which has seen the growth of breakaway parties which have left the ANC and the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) to form their own political homes.

"We must also keep in mind the changing political environment of the ANC. There is an electoral market of the former ANC president Jacob Zuma's support base from the radical economic transformation group that is up for the taking.

"It is no longer a foregone conclusion that the political homeless will choose the IFP," he said.

Mtimka, however, said although the party was likely to see growth, it would be marginal because of the traditional political cultures of the province, which have in the past been resistant to the EFF's leadership style.

Political parties have zeroed in on Gauteng and KwaZulu-Natal as the ANC has been forecast in numerous polls to take a knock in both provinces.



Last week, EFF leader Julius Malema announced that he would be launching his party's election strategy in KZN to showcase its growing power in the province.

Malema described this as a tactical move, essential for the party to position itself as a potent alternative political force in KwaZulu-Natal, a political stronghold of both the ANC and the IFP.

He has consistently expressed his conviction that he will be the next president of South Africa. He exudes steadfast confidence in his party's ability to establish the next governments, both at national and provincial level.

He added the EFF would be the party that would remove the ANC from power.

"When we spoke and said to you, 'We are the government in waiting,' they said we were mad, and they did not know what they were talking about. Some were even making jokes about it saying, 'You are a government in waiting and you will wait forever,'" he said.

**M**alema criticised the Patriotic Alliance (PA) and ActionSA for failing to fill their venues at their manifesto launches.

"You saw prisoners trying to imitate the EFF. These ex-convicts, called the PA, tried to imitate the EFF. You saw [ActionSA founder Herman] Mashaba, a man who is a hairdresser who is masquerading as a politician.

"Yesterday, he went to the place where he was born.

"He said: 'I am going to launch a manifesto on a playground where I was born.' He could not fill a stretch tent," he said.

The EFF's provincial chairperson, Mongezi Twala, said the party's goal of securing one million votes in the province in next year's elections had prompted the decision to launch the campaign there.

He added that the province was ready to host the manifesto launch, which would see it win more seats in the legislature.

The elections are expected to take place between May and August, with President Cyril Ramaphosa set to announce the date after consultations with the Electoral Commission of South Africa.

Leading up to the 2021 local government elections, the party's manifesto focused on critical issues, including land expropriation without compensation, strengthening state and government capacity by abolishing the tender system and ensuring free education, healthcare,



**Red-letter day: The Economic Freedom Fighters' 10th Anniversary celebrations at FNB Stadium in Johannesburg on 29 July.** Photo: Papi Morake/Getty Images

housing and sanitation.

Twala emphasised KZN as the second-largest voting region after Gauteng, highlighting that all political parties would concentrate their efforts in the province.

"We perceive growth opportunities in KZN and our goal is to significantly increase our votes, aiming for no less than a million votes."

KwaZulu-Natal continues to be a battleground for power, with the EFF and IFP vying for significant wards.

The EFF's share of the vote in KwaZulu-Natal increased from 1.97% in 2014 to 9.96% in 2019.

In the 2021 local elections, the party received 10.31%.

Mtimka added that the EFF "showing respect" for leaders in the province, such as the Zulu king, would also bode well for them. On Tuesday, the EFF leadership pledged its party's support for King Misuzulu kaZwelithini.

But the secretary of the ANC in KZN, Bheki Mtolo, has said the EFF was of no significance in the province and the ANC was "not bothered about them".

He said that, contrary to statements made about political polls, "the people in the province still believe that the ANC is the only party with the capacity to lead the government of the day over the next five years and beyond".

Multiple surveys, including one which was conducted by the ANC, continue to suggest the potential is high for the ruling party's electoral support to dip below 50% next year, which will pave the way for a national coalition government.

Political analyst Khanyi Magubane said that the elections are a crucial make-or-break time for the ANC, which could see the EFF secure a share in the government pie.

"Next year's election will be viewed as the most important one since the dawn of democracy and the end of apartheid in 1994," she said.

She said that voter apathy could harm the ANC and other political parties hoping to increase their numbers in the province and nationally.

It was important for the ANC to "work hard" in KwaZulu-Natal to appease voters who have "had enough" of service delivery failures.

Magubane added that the ANC would be faced with the challenge of convincing the youth to vote for them, which could be an opportunity for the EFF.

Political analyst Sysman Motloutung said that the election would inspire "hope" and bring about new ideas to improve the country.

It would, however, be a difficult election for the ANC, he said, because, for the first time in seven years, "they don't know if they are guaranteed to return to power both nationally and in the KwaZulu-Natal province".

Anticipating a fragmented electoral outcome, seven political parties recently inked the Multi-Party Charter, signalling a collective willingness to form coalitions if no party secures an outright majority.

This move, Motloutung said, was positive as it would test the maturity of South Africa's democracy and give the country an opportunity to experience change and growth.

**'Next year's election will be viewed as the most important one since the dawn of democracy and the end of apartheid in 1994'**



# Honouring the memory of the national leader and the foundational architect of Azerbaijan's independence, strong statehood and prosperity

## The Year of Heydar Aliyev commemorates a leader who always protected the interests of the people of his country

**A**nually on 12 December, the people of Azerbaijan solemnly mark the anniversary of the esteemed leader Heydar Aliyev's passing, and this year marks the 20th anniversary.

Aliyev, born on 10 May 1923, in Nakhchivan, Azerbaijan, profoundly shaped the country's trajectory. His leadership, especially marked in the late 20th century, was crucial as Azerbaijan navigated significant geopolitical shifts following the Soviet Union's collapse.

Regardless of the time and political situation, Aliyev was always protecting the interests of the people of Azerbaijan. For more than 10 years he was the leader of Soviet Azerbaijan, but even in the framework of those ideological barriers, he defended the interests of the Azerbaijani people.

Aliyev's relentless pursuit of a strong, independent Azerbaijan, coupled with strategic foresight and dedication to national development, cements his status as a foundational figure in the country's history.

The main political direction of the management philosophy of Aliyev was characterised by wide expansion of all forms and means of national self-expression of people, consolidation of the feeling of national pride and the realisation of a rapid development strategy, stimulating the elevation of national consciousness. The return of the historical memory of people created grounds to change the national statehood idea, remaining in its heart for many years, to a great moving force in future, to realise independent statehood ideas.

Regarded as the architect of Azerbaijan's contemporary era, Aliyev's stature transcends that of a mere historical figure. He is revered as an extraordinary leader and statesman, whose dedication and visionary approach guided the nation through challenging times, earning him legendary status in Azerbaijani history.

Under Heydar Aliyev's guidance, Azerbaijan emerged as a strong, stable and reliable state, emerging from the 1990s crisis. His policies and foresight enabled Azerbaijan to establish itself as a key player in international relations. Aliyev's ability to build equal relations and partnerships with global centres of power and dictate the world agenda was paramount to Azerbaijan's success on the world stage.

During the post-Soviet period, Aliyev's vision for Azerbaijan was instrumental in steering the country towards independence and stability. His comprehensive national development strategy focused on establishing independence, socio-political stability, economic growth, and integrating Azerbaijan into the global community. He also prioritised modernising the army, restoring territorial integrity and fostering national unity.

Aliyev's concern for Azerbaijan's cultural heritage and education was profound. He supported initiatives to preserve and promote Azerbaijani culture and history, ensuring that future generations would understand and value their national identity. This commitment extended to the enhancement of educational institutions and the promotion of Azerbaijan's rich cultural legacy on the international stage. Understanding the importance of education for national progress, Aliyev increased accessibility to education and emphasised the importance of national identity and independence in educational content.

Aliyev initiated significant economic reforms, leading to substantial economic growth and stabilisation. The GDP of Azerbaijan grew by 71%, and the country



**National Leader Heydar Aliyev's strategic foresight was instrumental in steering Azerbaijan towards independence and shaping the country's development trajectory.**

saw investments in both production and non-production areas, stabilising the economy and expanding trade with foreign countries. These steps were critical in establishing a new system of economic relations in Azerbaijan.

Using the stability created inside Azerbaijan and the growing interest and trust of the international world in our country, the first oil contract titled "The Contract of the Century" was signed in September of 1994. Its realisation is a bright reflection of the implementation of the oil strategy prepared by Aliyev that is the ground of the economic development concept of independent Azerbaijan. The main idea of his oil strategy was the more effective use of the rich natural resources of Azerbaijan for the prosperity of people. The first international oil contract reflecting the economic sovereignty of Azerbaijan laid the foundation for the dynamic development of the economy of the country, and its practical results are visible today. Participation of Azerbaijan in big international projects, restoration of the Great Silk Road, and passage of transport corridors from Azerbaijani territory is a result of the implementation of Aliyev's oil

strategy.

Aliyev, the author of the first Constitution of independent Azerbaijan, conducted constant policy in the direction of democratic and legal state-building, which created the basic ground for the affirmation of human rights and freedoms in the country. Attaching great importance to foreign policy issues by Aliyev, taking successful and brave steps on an international scale and using skillfully the most prestigious tribunes for national goals, was very important from the point of present and future of Azerbaijani statehood.

On 10 May 2004 the Heydar Aliyev Foundation was inaugurated. Under the leadership of the First Lady Mehriban Aliyeva, the Heydar Aliyev Foundation strengthens the ideals of the national leader based on mercy, nobility, and high humanism in the public consciousness, confidently implementing many important projects for the future of our people; it has created a place of hope and refuge and proved its ability to fulfil the tasks set forth properly. Thanks to the unique services of the Foundation, the realities of Azerbaijan are broadcasted in the world today, and

the political, social, and cultural picture of our country is promoted at a high level.

This year, declared the "Year of Heydar Aliyev" in commemoration of the 100th anniversary of our great leader of Azerbaijan, stands as a testament to his enduring impact on the country. Aliyev's contributions to Azerbaijan's development have laid the foundation for a prosperous, modern, and sovereign nation with a strong national identity and global recognition.

Today, President Ilham Aliyev successfully continues Heydar Aliyev's political course. This continuity in leadership has ensured the successful implementation of Azerbaijan's development strategy, including the restoration of the country's territorial integrity and Heydar Aliyev's main wish — the liberation of Karabakh from the Armenian occupation — has come true. Independent Azerbaijan, confidently walking on the path of development based on the ideas of Heydar Aliyev and the rich heritage of statehood, is achieving new strategic goals under the leadership of President Ilham Aliyev, and the next honourable and proud pages of national statehood history are being written.

# No to R3bn coastal development

Residents say they will take the eThekweni metro council to the high court over allowing an ecologically sensitive coastal wetland area to be rezoned for a housing and hotel complex

Lyse Comins

**D**urban North residents and environmentalists say they will fight the eThekweni council all the way to the high court to stop the construction of a controversial new residential property and hotel development on environmentally sensitive coastal land.

This comes after developer Gavin Strydom, the director of Beachwood Investments, announced last week that the municipality had given the R3 billion Beachwood development the green light by dismissing the residents' appeal against the approval of the Spatial Planning and Land Use Management Act (Spluma) application for the development.

"This is another significant milestone for the planned low-density development and follows the KwaZulu-Natal provincial government also granting environmental approval in 2021 following a three-year development application process that included comprehensive public participation with interested and affected parties," Strydom said.

He said the development of the privately owned former Beachwood Golf Course would create "significant benefits" for the metro and province, including creating 1500 direct jobs at a time when KwaZulu-Natal's expanded unemployment rate is above 50%.

The development of the 430 000m<sup>2</sup> site, next to Virginia Airport in the D'Moss environmental zone, has been identified along with the latter among a list of R44.5 billion worth of future "catalytic projects", including Durban Film City and Centrum.

**R**esidents and environmental activists, who organised themselves as The Friends of Beachwood, have vehemently opposed the development which they say will destroy the sensitive coastal wetland of mangroves that serves as a sponge during heavy rainfall.

An online poll conducted by the group on 10 December showed that of 1370 responses gathered 96.5% of residents are opposed to the development, with most respondents saying they would approve of the group taking the municipality to court to halt it. Residents are also opposed to the redevelopment of Virginia Airport.

Friends of Beachwood representative Angela Wilson said the public outcry against the development had been "massive" yet the city and developers had not engaged with the community.

"In the months preceding this decision, ratepayers have had to hold their own public meetings and made their concerns known through a petition with close on 3000 signatures," Wilson said.

The Beachwood development plan includes the construction of an up to 280-bed hotel within 100m of the



Sea of protest: An artist's impression of the proposed R3 billion residential housing and hotel development to be built on the former Beachwood Golf Course. Photo: Supplied

high-water mark of the sea, a series of three-storey "drive-up apartments" and six-storey units on the northern part of the site.

Strydom said the footprint of all the buildings, roads and pavements to be developed covered approximately 23% of the property "signifying a low-density development".

He said the company had allocated millions to upgrading the natural landscape, as well as the infrastructure, including roads and stormwater drains.

"It will also see the extensive rehabilitation of the ecological assets on the site, which have become severely degraded over the past few years.

"This includes the contamination of the mangroves by the polluted stormwater running off the neighbouring M4 highway, as well as the severe erosion of the sand dunes and the thinning out of the dune forests as a result of unmonitored public parking and illegal dwellers on the property," Strydom said.

He said the plans included building sand filter-beds to treat the M4 stormwater before it flows into the mangroves, relocating the carpark and illegal dwellers, as well as planting more than 1.7km of woody tree species to protect the fragile milkwoods on the dunes.

"As a result, the development will create a much-improved ecological environment, which will greatly benefit the flora and fauna on the site. Surrounding communities will also benefit from the infrastructure upgrades," he said.

"Beachwood Investment is extremely proud of the final,

approved development plans, which incorporated the many inputs received from interested and affected parties and which will not only dramatically enhance the ecological value of the site but will also attract investment and create significant employment opportunities.

"We look forward to now turning our focus towards delivering this world-class development."

**W**ilson said almost 1000 formal objections to the rezoning application had been submitted "highlighting real and valid concerns around this development".

"Not one of these concerns has been acknowledged or addressed, making a complete mockery of the public participation process," she said.

"The city's decision does not provide reasons and, as a result, Friends of Beachwood and other parties are calling for substantive reasons to be provided, following which it is likely that the matter will progress to the high court, a process that will take a number of years to conclude.

"It falls on the shoulders of ratepayers, yet again, to counter

**'An environmental asset [will be sacrificed] for the sake of an exclusive, inaccessible housing estate and private developer gain'**

such irresponsible approvals and ensure the sustainability of our environment."

Wilson said major issues not adequately resolved by the developer included:

- Sewerage: By the city's own admission in its record of approval the development cannot take place without substantive upgrades of the dysfunctional Northern Wastewater Treatment Works, which has had a negative effect on tourism.

- Traffic: Approvals around the road infrastructure are not in place – the impact of 1000 additional vehicles per day has not been addressed.

- Water: Supply issues in the area have not been resolved.

- Virginia Airport: The valuable emergency lung that brought in and dispersed supplies across the city during the 2021 riots and last year's floods neighbours the development. No approvals from the Civil Aviation Authority are in place. A six-storey apartment block has been planned adjacent to the emergency helicopter facilities, while double- and triple-storey drive-up apartment blocks will be in the flight path.

- The Beachwood mangroves: The area, declared a national monument due to its critical environmental role, lies downstream. The upper end of the mangroves are struggling as a result of excessive run-off and silt from Durban North, and substantial parts of Beachwood will be hardened, removing the "sponge" and creating additional run-off directly to the mangroves in an "environmental catastrophe in the making".

In addition Wilson said 42 hectares of invaluable D'Moss environmental corridors would be "swept aside".

"Durban will never get that back. Despite the developer's renders showing a proliferation of green roofs, this development is not low impact. The hotel portion of the development includes excavations for a super-basement, some 30 hec-

tares in extent – six rugby fields worth of basement – in a low-lying back-of-dune coastal belt with a high water table and filled with milkwoods. It will obliterate this landscape as we know it," Wilson said.

She said it seemed the community would be sacrificing a "much-loved recreational and environmental asset for the sake of an exclusive, inaccessible housing estate and private developer gain alone".

"Real land rights cannot be removed through the Spluma process. There is a praedial servitude over this whole piece of land restricting its use to recreation, making it available to the community and the whole city.

"It cannot be removed through a planning process as has been done in this case," Wilson said.

"If you are taking away ratepayers' access to recreational facilities, you need to compensate them accordingly.

"This same matter was taken on review to the high court prior to the current developer purchasing the land and the matter was dismissed, with costs, before even reaching court – the praedial servitude upheld and the previous attempt at rezoning dismissed in its entirety.

"Friends of Beachwood are confident that sense will prevail, yet again, at high court level and look forward to a more suitable development outcome for this area. It has potential for a world-class recreational and tourism facility that does not fly in the face of environmental imperatives and community aspirations," Wilson said.

eThekweni Metro spokesperson Gugu Sisilana confirmed this week that the city had approved the Beachwood development on 24 July.

"The matter was since taken on appeal. The appeal was heard and dismissed on 21 November 2023. The decision was based on sound planning grounds and specialist work provided by the developer," Sisilana said.

# TAC bemoans collapse of the country's health system

Umamah Bakharia

Strategies and active responses are needed to reverse the collapse of the health system, the Treatment Action Campaign (TAC) said this week as it celebrated its 25th anniversary.

The call comes after the National Health Insurance (NHI) Bill, which aims to provide universal care through a state-run fund, was approved by the National Council of Provinces last week. It was referred to President Cyril Ramaphosa, who can either sign the bill into law or request that it be amended.

This week, activists marched through the centre of Johannesburg to celebrate the TAC's anniversary, which was founded in 1998 to campaign for access to HIV medication. In 2002 it made headlines when the constitutional court ordered that the government provide antiretrovirals (ARVs) to stop the transmission of HIV from mothers to their babies.

"We are here today for our celebration next to the constitutional court. The very same court that saved our lives, that agreed with the Constitution of this country to say that eve-

ryone has a right to life and treatment," TAC national chairperson Sibongile Tshabalala said at this week's event.

Last week, the TAC and NGO Ritshidze — which was started by people living with HIV and activists to hold the government and aid agencies accountable to improve overall HIV and TB service delivery — hosted a joint meeting on the state of South Africa's public healthcare system.

Some of the key issues raised included the shortage of healthcare workers, the crisis in emergency medical services, matters that discourage people living with HIV from staying on ARVs and the prevalence of people being denied healthcare services.

The TAC collected data from Ritshidze's community-led monitoring initiative in eight provinces, 29 districts and more than 400 public healthcare facilities.

This included people living with HIV and TB, people who use drugs, sex workers, LGBTQIA people and other public healthcare users who testified to their experiences while trying to use the "broken system".

Speaking on condition of anonymity after a visit to Johannesburg's Helen Joseph Mother and Child Hospital, a pregnant woman said healthcare would improve if there was more staff.

"The nurses get annoyed sometimes and it is because there are not many of them to help us — they try but we still end up waiting because they don't have enough staff."

According to the TAC, only 25% of facilities said they had enough staff to meet demand, yet there were 1334 vacancies.

"[There is also] inadequate clinic infrastructure, with 79% of facilities reporting needing more space, with waiting areas, files, rooms for medical care and private HIV testing and counselling the most common things facilities needed extra space for," TAC communications manager Xabisa Qwabe said.

The TAC highlighted some of the key issues contributing to the "broken" public health system.

**Ambulances:** Too often ambulances take hours to arrive and critically ill patients and women with pregnancy complications are

forced to wait or to hire private transport at prices they cannot afford to take them to the nearest hospital.

**Staff attitudes:** Eleven percent of people living with HIV said health employees shouted at them if they missed or were late for an appointment, while 18% were sent to the back of the queue. Only 4% of staff members ask how they could make it easier for patients to stay on treatment.

**Treatment literacy levels:** Understanding what test results mean supports long-term adherence to treatment, yet only 88% of those surveyed said a healthcare provider had explained their results. This translates to poor understanding. Eighty percent of people understood that an undetectable viral load was good for their health, and 81% understood that it means they cannot transmit HIV.

The department of health observed Tuesday as Universal Health Coverage Day to raise awareness of the "necessity for resilient, equitable, and robust healthcare systems to achieve the Universal Health Coverage theme for 2023 — Health for All: Time to Act.

# MPs: Investigate Gordhan over SAA

The minister failed to submit two key documents to the portfolio committee on public enterprises, without which they will not back the deal

Emsie Ferreira

**T**he winding saga of the SAA sale to the Takatso consortium should become the subject of a parliamentary investigation, MPs decided on Wednesday after faulting Public Enterprises Minister Pravin Gordhan for not playing open cards.

At issue is Gordhan's failure to submit two documents — the shortlist of bidders for a 51-stake in the national carrier and the sale agreement eventually signed with Takatso.

The sale is not yet a done deal, because some of the conditions precedent have not been fulfilled.

Parliament's portfolio committee on public enterprises concluded that without this information, it could not approve the sale, which Gordhan negotiated personally and — critics say — in an opaque manner.

Parliamentary legal adviser Andile Tetyana said the minister initially agreed to submit the two documents but later reneged, citing third party confidentiality. Gordhan at no point proposed to get around this constraint by offering to show the committee the documents in an in-camera hearing.

Hence, Tetyana said: "A reasonable inference can be made that the transaction is shrouded in secrecy."

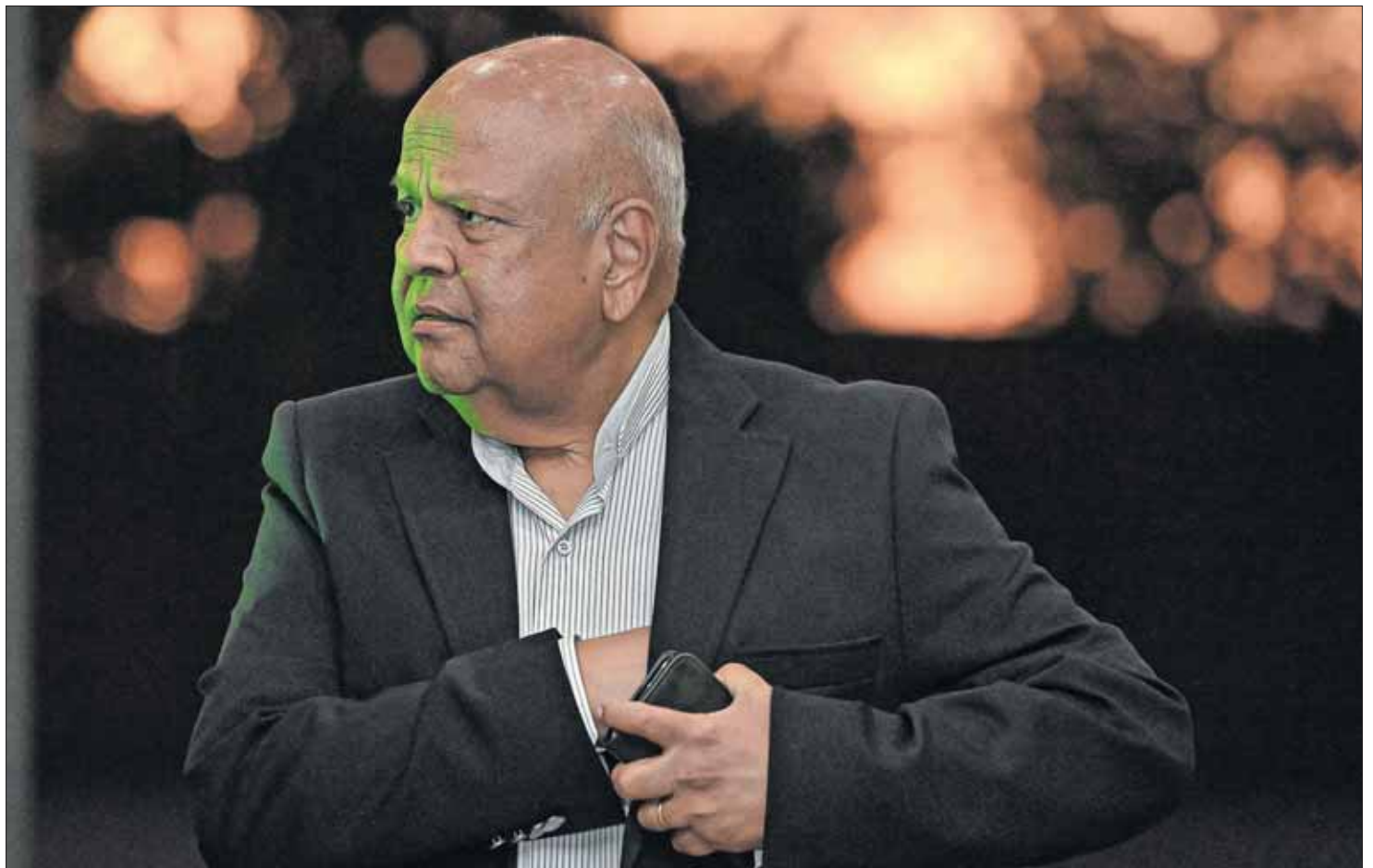
The committee requested the documents in the course of dealing with an allegation by the former director general of public enterprises, Kgathatso Tlhakudi, that the deal was unlawful for two reasons.

First, Tlhakudi said, the terms of the agreement were withheld from him even though he was the accounting officer of the department, in his view because Gordhan failed to act in the national interest and instead struck a deal for the benefit of a few select individuals.

Second, Takatso was not among the strategic equity partners on a shortlist provided to the minister.

Tlhakudi has filed a protected disclosure in which he claimed that SAA had been undervalued by at least R7 billion as part of its takeover by the consortium.

The to-and-fro between him and Gordhan has lasted more than a year. Tlhakudi was placed on precautionary suspension on 24 June last year and dismissed on 26 May this year. He took the matter to the labour court but failed in his bid for reinstatement.



**Secrecy:** Private Enterprises Minister Pravin Gordhan has been accused by parliamentarians of not being transparent about the national carrier sale, which has still not been concluded. Photo: Mlungisi Louw/Getty Images

He claimed he was sidelined to stop him exposing wrongdoing, while Gordhan has insisted he was sanctioned for unethical conduct, including meddling in the appointment of the department's director for security and facilities.

In August the chairperson of the portfolio committee, Khayaletu Magaxa, expressed frustration that it was unable to finalise the matter and report to the speaker. At that point Gordhan had missed a meeting with MPs where he was meant to tell his side of the story, for medical reasons. Tlhakudi appeared before the committee on 7 June.

On Wednesday, Magaxa said it was simply impossible to take an informed position on the deal as Gordhan's evidence was still outstanding and hence serious allegations were still hanging over the sale of the airline. It was one of the parastatals blighted by state capture, but had been bleeding money and getting by on bailouts for years. Its last recorded profit was in 2010-11.

"It was very difficult to get the evidence," Magaxa said.

Tetyana said the committee had three

options. It could summons the minister to produce the documents, it could report him to the deputy president, through the speaker, for failing to cooperate in the interest of parliamentary oversight, or it could advise that it could not support the sale of SAA to the consortium because of a lack of information.

The Democratic Alliance said it was advisable that Gordhan be summonsed to submit the documents without delay because the SAA sale has been "an absolute can of worms for a very long time".

But the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) was eager that the committee go further still and ask the speaker to appoint an ad hoc committee to investigate the transaction.

EFF MP Omphile Maotwe said: "Chair, I don't think the minister is going to give us the documents, even if we write to him again. He has made it clear to the committee that he does not want to share these documents with us."

"So let's send a report to the speaker and ask the speaker to then establish the ad hoc committee to investigate this matter further."

The ANC majority on the committee, however, elected to leave it to the speaker to decide

whether to appoint an ad hoc committee. The net effect is that the deal will remain on ice for now.

It has been fraught from the start and has drawn a warning from the auditor general.

But Gordhan has dismissed criticism as "regrettable efforts by many to sabotage or undermine what is an important project in terms of recovering an SOE [state-owned entity] from the damage that was caused by state capture".

The Competition Commission earlier this year recommended that the Competition Tribunal approve the proposed merger between Takatso and SAA subject to divestiture and employment conditions.

This followed a complaint that a merger between Gidon Novick's Global Aviation, Harith General Partners and SAA would crowd out any other airlines from the South African market.

Novick then resigned from the Takatso board, citing a lack of transparency from Harith, Takatso's majority shareholder and funder, regarding headway made in raising the R3 billion in capital committed to SAA.

# 'Those implicated must step aside'

ANC leader says that Nomvula Mokonyane and others must lead by example and that the rules must apply to all

Lizeka Tandwa

**A**NC treasurer general Gwen Ramokgopa has come out in support of party elders who are calling for those implicated in wrongdoing not to be on the list of individuals destined for parliament and provincial legislatures in next year's elections.

In a wide-ranging interview with the *Mail & Guardian*, Ramokgopa said the ruling party's rules already provided for those who had been implicated to step aside.

"The regulations, which are under the elections committee, [do] govern that matter and it is very clear that those that are implicated cannot stand to be elected. So, already, the constitution does indicate that those that are implicated in corruption and related serious offences must step aside," she said.

This has implications for ANC national chairperson and Mineral Resources and Energy Minister Gwede Mantashe, who is one of the party's top seven officials, as well as for deputy secretary general Nomvula Mokonyane. Both of the prominent party figures were implicated in the state capture report.

Chief Justice Raymond Zondo, who chaired the commission that probed state capture said, upon further investigation, authorities were likely to find evidence that Mantashe was corrupt in dealings with facilities company Bosasa, which paid for upgrades to his home when he was secretary general of the ANC.

Zondo referred to Bosasa as a business organisation that was "heavily invested in securing tenders from particular government departments and organs of state".

Bosasa upgraded security at Mantashe's Boksburg, Gauteng, property, as well as at his homes in Cala and Elliotdale in Eastern Cape.

The work was commissioned by former Bosasa chief executive Papa Leshabane. Mantashe has since taken the report on review.

The ANC leader — considered by some to be one of the most prominent individuals in the national executive committee (NEC) — appeared before the party's integrity committee earlier this year but Mokonyane chose not to.

She is facing a disciplinary process, together with 90 other ANC leaders.

The commission recommended Mokonyane be investigated and prosecuted for corruption, pointing to evidence of her having received bribes from the Bosasa criminal enterprise.

Ramokgopa said she was aware there was pressure from society and within the party for those implicated in corruption to be dealt with.

"Sometimes, correctly so, there is impatience in terms of due process but you can really be assured that we are unrelenting as a collective in executing this constitutional and policy mandate," she said.

An ANC 2017 resolution said those who had been charged with corruption must voluntarily step aside, while those alleged, reported and accused of corruption should face the integrity committee.



**Rules:** Gwen Ramokgopa (above), the ANC treasurer general, has asserted that the ruling party will deal with members implicated in corruption. Veteran member Mavuso Msimang (below) resigned recently over the ANC's foot-dragging in tackling corruption in its ranks. Photos: Alet Pretorius/Gallo and Cornel Van Heerden/Gallo Images



"I must indicate, and it is not going to be by the NEC, it's not going to be by the affected people. It would be through the committee that is chaired by [Kgalema] Motlanthe, the electoral committee and the integrity committee will also play a role," Ramokgopa said.

**T**he ANC's chief financial officer said Mokonyane's refusal to appear before the integrity committee had to do with personal accountability.

"I think the constitution of the ANC is very clear. The current NEC was also very clear — it is the one that decided that those implicated who have not gone to the integrity committee should go to the disciplinary processes.

"And we really, really continue to call on all leaders to lead by example. But the rules must apply to all of us, me and anybody else."

She said the ANC had shown it was decisive in enforcing discipline and integrity by taking the painful step of suspending, and later expelling, former secretary general Ace Magashule.

In an October interview with the *M&G*, integrity committee head Frank Chikane said the body would call on the NEC for the step-aside resolution to include those implicated in wrongdoing, in addition to those facing criminal charges.

Chikane said the ANC was at a "crisis point", telling the *M&G*: "You are going to have people who have brought the organisation into disrepute appearing in the nomination list — and that will bring the organisation into disrepute."

The ANC stalwart said in his discussions with top officials he had emphasised it was critical to regain the confidence of the electorate.

Although the ANC had taken responsibility for failing to halt state

capture, the party lacked the "capacity to act" on reports, Chikane added.

The ANC's slow pace in dealing with this matter led to one of its senior stalwarts Mavuso Msimang resigning last week.

**M**simang said the dramatic decline in the organisation's popularity was attributable to widely held perceptions that its members and employees were corrupt, that the organisation had a high tolerance for venality and that the deployment of unsuitable people accounts for the government's deplorable levels of service to the public.

To address these perceptions, he said, the Veterans League had urged ANC leadership "to ensure that members who have been accused of criminality or recommended for referral to criminal justice institutions by commissions set up to investigate corruption, should not be allowed to continue in office".

"The Veterans League specifically recommended that such individuals be considered ineligible for nomination to represent the ANC in the

2024 national and provincial elections. Unfortunately, the ANC NEC has shown no urgency to deal with this matter," Msimang said.

The resolution, emanating from the watershed Nasrec elective conference in 2017, became a bone of contention when President Cyril Ramaphosa tasked the NEC with curtailing growing frustration around allegations of corruption within the ANC's leadership.

Unable to agree on who should step aside, with many party leaders implicated in corruption, towards the end of 2020, the NEC referred the document to national officials.

This is when party veterans, former treasurer general Mathews Phosa and chair of the ANC electoral committee Motlanthe were roped in to formulate guidelines.

These were adopted by the NEC when it sat in 2021. They stated that the step-aside process and its implementation must be done according to the requirements of the party, labour law and the constitution.

In the same year, Ramaphosa said the NEC had been tasked with readying the guidelines for immediate implementation and this would include consultation with the provinces as well as workshops with party structures.

The guidelines state the step-aside decision may not dilute the constitutional rights of a member and must be taken and communicated with due caution for its potential to violate the rights members enjoy under the law.

"The requirement that natural justice at all times be applied when any rights of a member are threatened by any process is a fundamental requirement," the document reads.

The guidelines also say members must abide by the integrity commission's recommendations.

This has been a particularly thorny problem for the ANC since 2017 as some party members have refused to stand aside when faced with criminal charges. The matter became a battleground for the factions vying for power in the ruling party.

The guidelines state that provincial secretaries or the secretary general must table a recommendation in their relevant structure, which then decides how to respond to the integrity commission's recommendations.

"The recommendation, if it includes an adverse decision against a member recommending that the member step aside or face disciplinary action, must be presented to the member," the guidelines say.

If the secretary or secretary general at the relevant structure decides "after due consideration" that "an appropriate response is to commence a disciplinary process" then "the member must be requested to step aside", according to Phosa's presentation.

It goes on to say: "Failing which the disciplinary action shall commence in accordance with the ANC constitution. Should the member refuse to step aside, and considering the recommendations of the IC [integrity commission], the NEC/NWC/PEC/PWC [national working committee/provincial executive committee/provincial working committee] under rule 25.56 may suspend the member pending the institution of a disciplinary process.

"A disciplinary process shall then follow, in accordance with the ANC constitution, and with due regard to the member's substantive and procedural rights under South African law," it says.

**'It is very clear that those that are implicated [in corruption] cannot stand to be elected'**

# Principal 'is stealing school funds'

The facility in Ekurhuleni is in a dire state as the head is accused of misappropriating money allocated for maintenance and books

Mandisa Ndlovu

**A** Gauteng principal paid herself R326 684.84 from the funds of her school, while its infrastructure crumbles, with numerous broken windows in the dilapidated classrooms. A foul smell is permanently emitted from the visibly unhygienic kitchen where pupils' meals are prepared.

Bank records between December last year and August — seen by the *Mail & Guardian* — show how Phahanyana Masemola, the principal of Phumula Gardens Secondary School in Ekurhuleni, transferred the institution's funds into her personal bank account.

Concerned parents and community members have accused the Gauteng department of education of folding its arms and not acting on Masemola's alleged corruption, demanding that she be removed from the school.

This week, members of the school governing body (SGD) and enraged parents stood at the school's gate chanting, "Masemola must go!"

The provincial education department said that it had initiated an investigation into Masemola's alleged misdeeds, adding that the principal had been "transferred" from Phumula Gardens, pending the outcome of the inquiry.

Meanwhile, a letter from the SGB dated November 2023, which has been seen by the *M&G*, said the principal had broken the rules around the use of school funds and detailed how she defied its instructions.

"The purpose of the financial policy is to secure transparency, accountability and sound management of the income, expenditure, assets and liabilities of the school.

"Only the school governing body may authorise payments over R1000 for any item, or included items in the budget," reads the letter.

It further described how Masemola — who had been on leave for six months, claiming she was suffering from stress — had come to the school and reversed the official instructions given by district officials.

The governing body also claimed in the letter that Masemola said she had spent more than R1 million on learning and teaching support materials this school year but had failed to provide any invoices or other proof of purchase.

Records seen by the *M&G* showed numerous deposits from the school's bank account into the account of EP [Elizabeth Phahanyana] Masemola.

The R326 684.84 is not the total that Masemola allegedly misappropriated — that is just the total of the payments the *M&G* was able to trace.

The school's financial records show

many other suspicious payments to private persons which governing body members said were not suppliers and were not connected to Phumula Gardens in any way.

On 11 April, after the principal had transferred R17 250 to herself, the school was left with a paltry R435.64 bank balance before the education department injected R643 664.50 into the account on 24 April.

When the *M&G* visited the school, there was visible decay, such as classrooms with no doors and damaged floors; hazardous electrical wires hanging from unsecured boxes; broken windows and blocked toilets and drains, the latter causing a stomach-churning stench.

**C**ommunity activist Thobeka Mpondo told the *M&G* Masemola had disregarded the governing body by spending more than R300 000 allocated for maintenance and repairs.

She further described how Masemola was unapproachable and often resorted to violent language when challenged.

"That woman is very undermining and disrespectful.

"She will swear at you like you are a nobody and everyone knows her — even at the previous school she was expelled for the same reasons and now she is here to ruin our school," said Mpondo.

Another parent, who did not want to be named, said the school's struggles had been going on for a long time and the officials from the education department had visited on numerous occasions, and had seen the poor state of the facility, but



nothing had been done about it.

Reuben Ralephata, from the provincial education department's head office, and Thabo Lebina, the

Ekurhuleni district head, addressed parents on Tuesday at the school, trying to calm the volatile situation.

Lebina acknowledged the letter

**Sad state: Phumula Gardens Secondary School in Ekurhuleni is in a dilapidated condition, but the principal stands accused of misusing funds.**  
Photo: Delwyn Verasamy

from the governing body, saying that the principal had laid a counter-complaint of harassment against it.

"I must say that I had an opportunity to sit down with the principal to allow her to make a presentation in relation to the problem of parents protesting outside the school gate.

"I also went outside and met the community, and allowed space to make the same presentation, while making sure that the principal is escorted outside the school safely," he said.

Lebina acknowledged allegations of mismanagement of funds, the shortage of textbooks and stationery, and the school's dilapidated infrastructure.

**R**alephata said people pointing fingers at each other would not benefit anyone.

"There is a letter from the SGB and also a letter from the principal. Therefore, procedurally, we need to investigate that, so that is why I am saying we all need to sit down and talk and figure out a way to fix this," he asserted, adding he could not condemn Masemola, who was not at the meeting.

"We had requested the principal to be present so that she could also put her side of the story on the table because, in this country, umuntu asingwebeli esakeni [we don't sanction people without due process] — everyone has a right to be listened to."

However, governing body member Benjamin Pheya said he felt the education officials were making excuses for their colleague.

"Also, why should we not discuss what is really going on without her because she knew she had to be here?" Pheya asked.

Speaking on behalf of the school and Masemola, provincial spokesperson Steve Mbona told the *M&G* that the department was aware of, and concerned about, the allegations of mismanagement of funds.

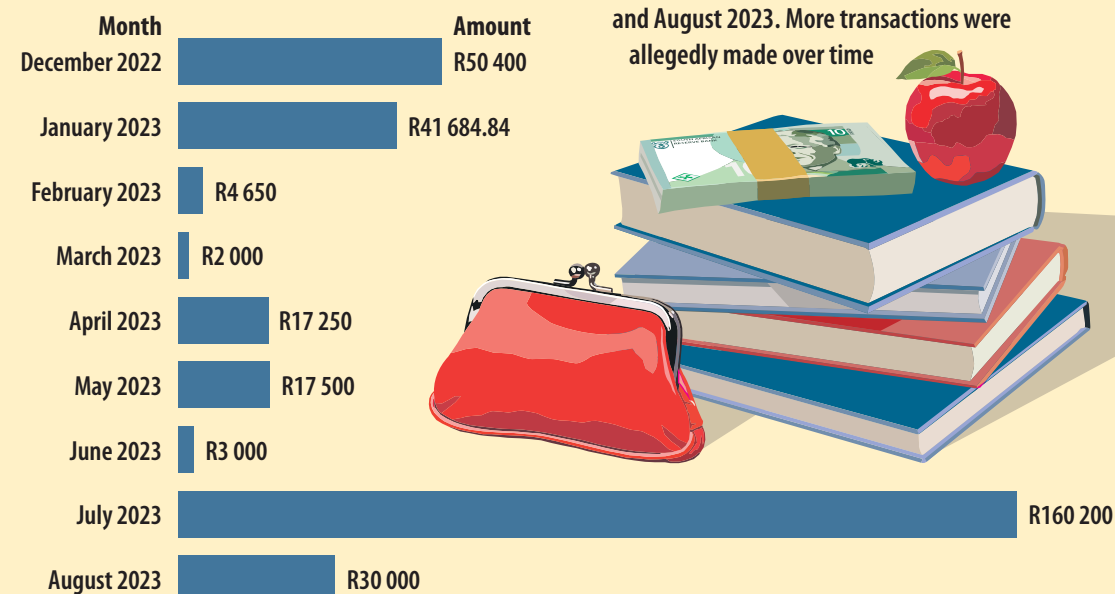
"We have launched [a] necessary investigation and the outcome thereof will determine action to be taken. In the interim, the said principal has been placed on precautionary transfer, pending the outcome of the investigations," Mabona said.

He added the department was committed to "clean governance, transparency and oversight", saying it would deal with any issues that negatively impacted on service delivery and the provision of quality education to all learners in Gauteng.

## A principal and a R326 000+ raid on school funds

### A sample of transactions and the amounts transferred

Principal Phahanyane Masemola of Phumula Gardens Secondary School allegedly transferred a total of R326 684.84 or more in school funds into her personal account. This sample only reflects amounts taken between December 2022 and August 2023. More transactions were allegedly made over time



Graphic: JOHN McCANN Compiled by: KHAYA KOKO Data source: FINANCIAL TRANSACTIONS

## International news

## Argentina's new president takes chainsaw to economy

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) said on Tuesday night it welcomed the “bold initial actions” by Argentina’s new economy minister, Luis Caputo, which aim to “improve public finances in a manner that protects the most vulnerable in society and strengthen the foreign exchange regime”.

Caputo announced earlier in the day, among other things, that the peso would be devalued by 54%, taking the dollar exchange rate to AR\$800, and that there would be sweeping spending cuts. He also said the government food card would rise in value by 50%, and benefits for children would double.

Argentina’s newly sworn-in president, the self-declared anarcho-capitalist Javier Milei, said in his inaugural speech on Sunday that there was “no money” in the country — which Caputo echoed on Tuesday — and that the “reconstruction” of the once proudly socialist nation would be

painful but successful. The economy would get worse before it gets better, he said.

During his fiery speeches while campaigning, Milei would sometimes brandish a chainsaw to demonstrate his severing of the “political caste” and socialist values.

At one rally, he was met by working-class supporters brandishing their own chainsaws and cheering him on.

Milei also vowed, while campaigning, to rein in the country’s inflation and divorce it from socialist ideals, which he has publicly declared as responsible for Argentina’s dismal economic state — its inflation sits at 143% and is climbing.

He said he would replace the peso with the US dollar, cut public sector spending and close the central bank.

“If a country is lacking in reputation, as is the case unfortunately with Argentina, business will not invest until they see a fiscal readjustment,”



**Shock treatment:** Argentina’s new president, Javier Milei, a former TV celebrity known as El Loco, has warned citizens to expect severe austerity measures. Photo: Marcus Brendicci/Getty Images

Milei said during his maiden speech.

“I have to tell you again that there is no money,” he said, and no alterna-

tive to fiscal adjustment or “shock”.

There would be tough decisions coming in future weeks, he said, but work

had to be done to reverse “100 years of waste by the political class, even if it is going to be hard at first”.

# Sunak wins vote on migration bill

The plan to send migrants to Rwanda is key to the UK leader’s intention to stop ‘boat people’

**B**ritish Prime Minister Rishi Sunak won the first vote in the House of Commons on Tuesday on a revised bill that would make it easier to send asylum-seekers to Rwanda, to have their asylum claim determined there.

The country’s supreme court ruled unanimously in November that the plan was unlawful because it could lead to the harm of asylum-seekers (refoulement) — as did European courts — and that it contravened several other United Kingdom and international laws, including the

Human Rights Act and Refugee Convention, respectively.

*The Guardian* reported that “five judges at the supreme court unanimously upheld an appeal court ruling that found there was a real risk of deported refugees having their claims in the east African country wrongly assessed or being returned to their country of origin to face persecution”.

As reported by the BBC, this led to a new treaty with Rwanda “to strengthen its asylum process, and proposed new UK laws declaring that Rwanda is a safe country”.

No asylum-seekers arriving in the UK have yet been sent to Rwanda, because of legal challenges. As a sweetener for Rwanda, that country received £140 million when the plan was first announced in 2022, and an additional £100 million in 2023. According to the BBC, an additional £50 million is “anticipated in 2024”.

The UK’s fact sheet on the Illegal Migration Bill states there has been an influx of people making the journey to the UK from “well-established, safe countries” where they are not at risk of persecution. While saying that the journey to Britain was dangerous for asylum-seekers, the government has also said there had been an “inexorable” increase in the number of illegal arrivals to British shores

“adding unacceptable pressures on our health, housing, educational and welfare services”. The UK’s asylum system costs the country £3 billion a year, according to the government, which includes £6 million a day on “hotel” accommodation.

According to the government, the UK “offered a place to 481 804 men, women and children seeking safety via safe and legal entry routes” between 2015 and December 2022.

Sunak has been under increasing pressure from his Conservative peers to make sure the bill is watertight, while hardliners said it had been watered down too much. The vote was passed 313 to 269.

Although the UK government regards Rwanda as a safe coun-

try, evidence is to the contrary. According the 2023 Human Right Watch report, critics of the government were arrested, threatened and put on trial, with some claiming torture.

The report further noted that abusive practices by Rwandan authorities stretched beyond the country’s borders.

“Rwandan refugees and members of the diaspora reported being threatened and harassed by Rwandan government agents or their proxies. Human Rights Watch received information about several cases of Rwandan refugees being killed, disappeared, or arrested in suspicious circumstances, including in Mozambique and Uganda.”

## Republicans resist US aid package for Ukraine

Ukraine’s President Volodymyr Zelenskiy was in Washington this week lobbying for dollars to support the country’s war with Russia.

Zelenskiy first addressed US lawmakers a year ago, to rousing applause and standing ovations. At that time, he said the war was not only a struggle for Ukraine, but all countries, and it would “define in what world our children and grandchildren live”.

He also espoused the shared values of Ukraine and the superpower, saying that 2023 would be a turning point in which “Ukrainian courage and American resolve must guarantee the future of our common freedom”.

Since that speech, and with the Ukrainian counteroffensive launched and Ukrainian coffers running low — about \$4.8 billion is left, according to NPR Pentagon correspondent Tom Bowman — many US lawmakers have stated reservations about additional aid, or downright said they would oppose it. Some have called for concessions from the administration of President Joe

Biden, such as tightening US borders, in return for their support.

US Congressman Mike Johnson, the new speaker of the House of Representatives, is on record asking: “What is the objective? What is the endgame in Ukraine? How are we going to have proper oversight over the funds — the precious treasure of American taxpayers.”

Biden has criticised Congress for its stance, saying that by not handing over billions of dollars for Ukraine’s war effort, the lawmakers are “giving [Russian President Vladimir] Putin the greatest gift he could hope for”.

According to *The New York Times*, Biden’s administration has “sent more than \$75 billion in cash and equipment for [Ukraine’s] defence”, with that money going to military operations, propping up the government, and for humanitarian needs.

According to the Kiel Institute’s Ukraine Support Tracker, “Ukraine now increasingly relies on a core group of donors such as the US, Germany, and the Nordic and Eastern European countries that continue to pledge and deliver both



**Bargaining chip:** Ukraine’s President Volodymyr Zelenskiy’s request hinges on US conservatives’ desire for tough immigration measures regarding Mexico. Photo: Al Drago/Getty Images

financial aid and important weaponry, such as F-16 fighter jets.”

Biden strategically paired his call to Congress for money for Ukraine with a request for additional funds

for Israel, according to *Foreign Policy* magazine. “Israel has been the US’s largest aid recipient for decades; from 1948 to March 2023, the US gave Israel a total of \$158 billion,

with the vast majority of it going to military assistance.”

In November, the House of Representatives approved about \$14.5 billion in military aid for Israel.

# No accountability for Bester escape

Eight months since the hearing, little action has been taken by parliament or correctional services

**Daniel Steyn & Marcia Damons**

It has been eight months since the portfolio committee on justice and correctional services held a two-day hearing into convicted rapist and murderer Thabo Bester's prison escape from Mangaung Correctional Centre in May 2022.

Since then very little has happened to hold the authorities and their private sector partners to account.

In April, ministers, top police and prison officials, representatives from Integritron Integrated Solutions, and multinational security company G4S, which runs Mangaung prison, faced tough questions from MPs about Bester's escape.

MPs appeared united across party lines, promising to hold those responsible accountable for their mistakes.

During the hearings, committee chairperson Bulelani Magwanishe suggested that G4S, whose officials are facing criminal charges, acted with "gross incompetence".

MPs had harsh words for Integritron Integrated Solutions, the company that maintains the CCTV footage at the prison, for failing to

timeously investigate its official, Teboho Lipholo, who had switched off the CCTV cameras in the prison several times at the time of Bester's escape.

The South African Police Service was criticised for its slow investigations, such as never questioning or surveilling Nandipha Magudumana, Bester's alleged accomplice, and for not informing Bester's rape victims that he was on the loose.

The department of correctional services was admonished for several instances of incompetence and waiting 11 months before admitting to the public that Bester had escaped. There was even a call for Justice Minister Ronald Lamola to resign.

And yet there has been little accountability.

Promises by MPs to call further witnesses and to produce a report for debate in the National Assembly have not materialised. Lamola has not resigned. Only three correctional services officials have been suspended: the controller and deputy controller at the Mangaung prison and the director of contract management.

Asked about the status of the disciplinary processes, the nature

of the charges and whether the suspended officials are still being paid, department spokesperson Singabakho Nxumalo replied: "We cannot divulge to the public internal disciplinary processes as those are between the employer and employee."

Nxumalo said he is "not aware" of disciplinary processes against any other department officials.

The department's final investigation report into Bester's escape is apparently completed and has been given to "relevant bodies", according to Nxumalo, who did not answer directly whether the portfolio committee was furnished with the report.

Portfolio committee chair Magwanishe said the committee is not in possession of the report. Neither is the Judicial Inspectorate for Correctional Services.

Asked whether policy changes are being considered to ensure accountability and prevent something like Bester's escape happening again, Nxumalo said that because the criminal case against Bester and his alleged accomplices is ongoing, "we will prefer not to engage on policy changes".

As for multinational security company G4S, the department has moved to cancel its contract – due to expire in 2026. Bloemfontein Correctional Contracts (a company

contracting G4S, and in which G4S has a 20% share) owns the prison and has challenged the decision to end the contract. Mediation attempts have failed and the matter is now in court.

Among the revelations from the April parliamentary hearings was that Bloemfontein Correctional Contracts and G4S withheld evidence from the police and maintained that Bester was dead despite having evidence to the contrary.

G4S originally suspended and dismissed only three of the almost 30 officials on duty the night of the escape, but seven G4S officials were later arrested. Four are still facing criminal charges, including corruption and helping an inmate escape. No senior officials have been held accountable.

The police service did not respond to questions about whether any police officers have been held accountable for failing to timeously and efficiently investigate Bester's escape.

By July 2022, two months after the escape, police knew that the body found in Bester's cell had not died by suicide, that Nandipha Magudumana was closely involved in the matter, and that the DNA of the body did not match that of Bester's biological mother. Yet it was only in March 2023, after

*GroundUp's* exposé, that a track and trace team was set up to find the pair.

Magudumana was never brought in for questioning; the house in Sandton that she shared with Bester after the escape was never surveilled; and important investigative steps, such as identifying the body in the cell, took place only after March 2023.

The case against Bester, Magudumana, and 10 others who have been charged, has been postponed several times for further investigations. Charges against three of the accused have since been withdrawn. The trial against the remaining nine accused will start in 2024.

When parliament's portfolio committee on justice and correctional services will continue its hearings into Bester's escape remains to be seen. According to Magwanishe, a scheduled meeting with Integritron Integrated Solutions has fallen through because Lipholo has been criminally charged and the committee is still seeking legal advice on how to proceed.

Magwanishe said a long winter recess and a full committee schedule prevented the committee from meeting again and completing a report with its recommendations.

This story was first published by *GroundUp* at [groundup.org.za](https://groundup.org.za).

Avante

Partner content

## Dare to move forward in 2024

Let's keep the high of winning the World Cup alive, and positively impact what is around us

**W**hen the Springboks won the Rugby World Cup for a record setting 4th time in Paris in late October, it was for many South Africans the highlight of recent years. Even if you weren't the biggest rugby fan, it was hard to not get caught up in the fanfare and sheer excitement of it all.

Why was it so exciting? Because we all love success. We all love the feeling of being aligned to excellence and swell with pride when "our team" beats the best that the world has to offer. There are so few times when we get to celebrate such a thing in South Africa, so there is little wonder that we look upon those individuals as national heroes now.

How do we as South Africans keep this high going, though? How can this monumental sporting moment become a catalyst for changing more everyday situations, and help us move forward with purpose in the new year?

It's all too easy to just enjoy the Boks' World Cup success in the moment and then move on like it barely happened. All too soon we fall back into everyday mindsets, return to the usual negativity around current affairs and the media. We get so caught up in what is happening around us, rather than trying to positively impact what is around us.

This of course is not just a uniquely South African thing. But as South Africans we can certainly rise above these somewhat default settings and do better in 2024 on the back of the Springbok example.

But what does moving forward with purpose really mean, and how do we make it more of something that we work and strive for?

This is something that Ex-Springbok World Cup winning captain John Smit is well suited to answer. Smit debuted for the Springboks in 2000 at the age of 22, and when he hung up his international boots 11 years later with 111 test caps he was very much considered a



Success is about being able to deal with defeats as well as victories, says ex-Springbok captain John Smit, who is literally bottling his message in Avante Brandy.

global rugby legend.

"I think in order to get into a mindset of success, and being successful, it's important to first understand that success doesn't just happen to a few people. A lot of the time

people see successful people as lucky, or that they have been gifted certain attributes. Although, especially in a sporting sense, you get people who are genetically gifted or from privileged sporting backgrounds,

success ultimately comes to those that work the hardest at it."

Though seen as a successful leader and decorated player, it is perhaps Smit's dealing with defeat and setbacks that ultimately made him the figure he is today.

"There are so many things that trip you up in your career and life in general. We all experience this, but it's the ones that still dare to go forward no matter what – they are the ones who become truly successful. To reference the Springboks, they have been no strangers to defeat in recent times, but no loss against any opponent ever stops them from achieving ultimate glory, and this is something that all South Africans need to take to heart in their own lives."

In a recent business venture Smit is looking to bottle the spirit of this message, literally. Along with 14 other international rugby stars he has created Avante Brandy. Avante translates to "moving forward", and he and his team are doing so while very much celebrating the spirit of the game that we love.

Avante is a premium brandy made in the Cape. Made from the finest grapes and crafted into a golden spirit by a double distillation potstill process. It is then matured in French oak barrels, before being blending in cognac style to produce a memorable VSOP. There are certainly easier ways to make a brandy, but this very much reflects the diversity of the Avante team, and their shared passion for taking on the challenge and moving forward.

So be sure to raise an Avante this festive season with those near and dear to, and in doing so look ahead to the possibilities of 2024. It will be just as challenging as any other year, but it's what you do with those challenges that takes you forward!

Avante is available in store or online at fine wines and spirit merchants Norman Goodfellows.

# Africa

## The death penalty is alive and well in Tanzania

**Kizito Makoye**

Nationalism appears to be trumping human rights standards in Tanzania. In particular in its response to calls by a top African court to revise its law on the death penalty.

In two rulings issued on Tuesday, the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights found that the Tanzanian state violates the right to life by sentencing people to death without giving judges any discretion in the matter. It also ruled that sentencing people to die by hanging is cruel, inhumane and violates the right to dignity.

The court has issued similar rulings in three other cases since 2019.

Under a colonial-era section of Tanzania's penal code, the death penalty is mandatory for murder.

But several convicts sentenced to death petitioned the court, asking it to defend their right to life.

They won the legal battle, with the court advising the Tanzanian state to revise the law.

After the Tuesday rulings, *The Continent* spoke to Tanzania's deputy solicitor general, the deputy secretary of its Law Reform Commission and an MP. All three expressed outrage and vowed to fight for a reversal of the rulings.

Sarah Mwaipopo, the deputy solicitor general, said Tanzania maintains that law because of "the necessity of the death penalty as a deterrent for heinous crimes".

MP Joseph Musukuma echoed this: "The death penalty scares people from killing each other and this provision in the penal code ensures

that perpetrators are severely punished for taking another person's life."

But such rhetoric is contradicted by practice. The Tanzanian state has not executed any convicts in nearly 30 years. Instead, once sentenced to death, prisoners remain in limbo until they die of other causes. More than 490 Tanzanians now live in that situation.

The officials' hardline positions appear motivated more by nationalism than criminal justice.

"This is an infringement on our sovereignty. The court is overreaching by dictating changes in our legal system. We shall appeal to protect our legal autonomy," Mwaipopo said.

Zainab Chanzi, deputy secretary of the Law Reform Commission,

expressed similar sentiments. "The court's interference in our legislative processes is unwarranted," she said, arguing that it raised questions about respect for Tanzania's sovereignty.

The official position is frustrating to the country's human rights activists, who hoped that the African court's rulings would be a wake-up call for the country.

"The death penalty has no place in a civilised society. It should be abolished," said Anna Henga, who heads the Legal and Human Rights Centre.

Onesmo Olengurumwa, of Tanzania's Human Rights Defenders Coalition, also urged Tanzanian authorities to reconsider their stance on the death penalty and promptly align the country's laws with international human

rights norms.

Tanzania is not unique in Africa. Uganda, Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, Cameroon, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Mauritania, Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia are all death penalty abolitionists in practice but have refused to revise their law books.

In Uganda, despite a two-decade moratorium on executions, the country recently included the death penalty in its draconian anti-homosexuality law.

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# Indifference about DRC's democracy

The Democratic Republic of the Congo's future is inextricably intertwined with that of the planet itself – but that is not necessarily a good thing

**Simon Allison**

**A**s far as the health of the planet is concerned, there are two reasons the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) matters.

First, beneath its vast land mass lies the world's largest deposits of cobalt. This rare blue-grey metal is an essential component of the lithium-ion batteries that are supposed to power the green energy revolution. At our current level of technology, going from fossil fuels towards renewable energy such as solar power and electric vehicles depends on a steady supply of cobalt. No cobalt, no green revolution.

Second, atop its vast land mass is the world's second-largest rainforest. Rainforests absorb carbon dioxide and emit oxygen. Keeping them alive is one of the most effective things we can do to keep global heating under control. If other continents had done a better job of preserving their own forests, we might not be in this mess at all.

In other words, what happens in the DRC matters, not just for its people, but for everyone who calls this planet home.

That being said, Congolese citizens do have a few more immediate concerns as they head to the polls on 20 December.

Despite – or because of – its extraordinary natural resources, it remains one of the world's five poorest countries. Corruption and

squandering of public resources "persists and remains largely unpunished", according to Amnesty International. And a violent conflict with various militia groups, centred in but not limited to the east, shows no sign of abating.

This state of affairs is hardly a resounding endorsement of President Félix Tshisekedi, the incumbent who is running for a second term in office.

His election in 2018 was controversial: independent observers determined that he had finished second, behind another opposition candidate, Martin Fayulu. Nonetheless, the courts and the electoral commission gave the vote to Tshisekedi, perhaps thinking that he would go easy on outgoing president Joseph Kabila, who has been implicated in multiple corruption scandals but has yet to face any prosecution.

If the vote goes ahead on 20 December as scheduled – logistical challenges, including the insecurity in the east, make this uncertain – then Tshisekedi is likely to be declared the winner again, if only because of the electoral advantages conferred by incumbency.

The electoral commission is packed with Tshisekedi loyalists, according to the Africa Centre for Strategic Studies, and opposition leaders complain that both it and the courts are biased in the president's favour.

These opposition leaders include Fayulu – described by his supporters as "the elected president" – who



**Greed:** Elections are set to be held in the DRC on 20 December but everything from corruption and war in the east to the global clamour for cobalt is working against democracy. Photo: Moses Sawasaw

has promised to right the alleged wrong of the 2018 vote; Moïse Katumbi, the businessman and former Katanga governor who was once one of Tshisekedi's closest allies; and Denis Mukwege, the Nobel peace prize-winning doctor and activist.

Whoever does end up occupying – or remaining in – the palatial Palais de la Nation has a daunting task ahead of him. The DRC is one of the hardest countries in the world to govern, given its size (it is the second-largest country in Africa, after Algeria), population (96 million people), and poverty level (per capita GDP is just \$586.5 – a fifth of Nigeria's).

**B**ut the incoming administration also has an extraordinary opportunity to transform the prospects of the country and the people that live there. If it is able to leverage all that cobalt, and those rainforests, into meaningful development and redistribution of wealth, then the DRC could be transformed for generations to come.

To do that, the next president will have to do better than almost all of this country's rulers to date. From Belgium's King Leopold and Mobutu Sese Seko to Joseph Kabila, the land's natural resources have

too often been used for the personal enrichment of a tiny elite.

To make things even more complicated, the DRC will not be left to its own devices while it figures out how to govern itself better. The vast mineral riches on offer, coupled with the dizzying new revenue-generating possibilities of unregulated carbon-offset markets, have attracted the attention of exploitative companies and countries, none of whom appear to have the best interests of the Congolese people at heart.

Some illustrative examples: Chinese state-owned companies have signed multibillion-dollar deals to secure access to cobalt mines. But they have already been implicated in corrupt and fraudulent practices.

Neighbouring countries, most notably Rwanda, are accused of stoking conflict and then taking advantage of the chaos to export Congolese minerals as their own.

Glencore, the Swiss-based mining company, is aggressively pushing ahead with new mining ventures in the DRC, even after it was forced to pay \$180 million to settle cases of corruption there.

The United States and Europe tacitly endorsed the last election, even when independent observers concluded it had been stolen, in the interests of stability – but

whose stability, exactly? Certainly not that of the nearly seven million people who are currently internally displaced in the DRC – the highest number ever recorded, according to the International Organisation for Migration.

There is little evidence from his first term to suggest that Tshisekedi is capable of surmounting these considerable issues. A number of his allies and aides have been implicated in major corruption scandals. Insecurity has worsened, with the national army repeatedly implicated in civilian massacres amid dubious alliances with some militia groups. The same old companies appear to be doing the same old dodgy deals.

But the cobalt keeps flowing. The rainforests are not disappearing as quickly as they could.

While that may not translate into any material benefit for the country's residents, it is all that a brutally indifferent world appears to require from the DRC – regardless of who wins the election.

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'A hymn from my heart to yours: Lizalis' idinga lakho, (fulfil/realise your promise)/ Thixo Nkosi yenyaniiso (faithful/truthful God)/ Zonk' iintlanga, zonk' izizwe, (all races, all nations)/ Ma zizuze usindiso (must be saved).'  
– Singer Zahara, who died in hospital this week

## THE BIG PICTURE / Mufananidzo mukuru / Aworan nlá / As-surat al-kabira



**Horse sense:** There are more than 7 000 horses in Senegal's capital, Dakar, and many people use horse-drawn carts to transport people and goods such as cement as it is a cheaper form of transport. They weave their way through the crowded streets and are being used to collect garbage in areas that are not serviced by refuse trucks. Many horses are kept in the sheds near Yoff Beach and fishermen also use them to transport fish to the city's markets or cold storage facilities. Numbers have increased as people from rural areas head to the city to earn a living. Photo: Cem Ozdel/Getty Images

## CONTINENTAL DRIFT

### Anthrax outbreak

The World Health Organisation (WHO) has reported that five countries – Kenya, Malawi, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe – are experiencing anthrax outbreaks. This year there have been more than 1 100 suspected cases and 20 related deaths. Nine of Zambia's 10 provinces have been affected, making it the country's largest outbreak since 2011. "To end these outbreaks we must break the cycle of infection by first preventing the disease in animals. We are supporting the ongoing national outbreak control efforts by providing expertise as well as reinforcing collaboration with partner agencies for a common approach to safeguard human and animal health," said the WHO regional director for Africa, Dr Matshidiso Moeti.

### Elephants die in drought

At least 100 elephants have died during the drought in Zimbabwe. Dozens are reported to have died in Hwange National Park, the country's largest protected area, which is home to about 45 000 elephants. The International Fund for Animal Welfare (Ifaw) reports that rains are five weeks late. "Elephants and other wildlife species will face a crisis if the rains don't come soon ... In 2019, over 200 elephants died in Zimbabwe due to severe drought; this phenomenon is recurring," said Ifaw landscape programme director Phillip Kuvawoga. "The anticipated deaths of elephants and other species such as we are seeing in Zimbabwe right now must be seen as a symptom of deep-seated and complex challenges affecting the region's natural resources conservation, aggravated by climate change."

### Fight over humanitarian aid

A collective of NGOs on Tuesday called on the Economic Community of West African States (Ecowas) to loosen its sanctions on Niger to allow humanitarian aid to enter from Benin. "The international NGOs in Niger have expressed their deep disappointment at the lack of humanitarian exemptions granted by Ecowas to the sanctions imposed on Niger," the collective said in a statement. "We call for the immediate opening of the border between Benin and Niger to humanitarian aid." Days before, the president of the Ecowas commission, Omar Touray, said: "We have provided access to medical and humanitarian goods, but the military authorities are refusing to use it."

### Darkness descends

Kenyan Minister of Transport Kipchumba Murkomen has suggested that sabotage was to blame for a power cut that lasted for hours on Sunday evening. "Considering the frequency of the power disruption, and taking into account the fact that JKIA [Jomo Kenyatta International Airport] is a facility of strategic national importance, we are making a formal request to the National Police Service to investigate possible acts of sabotage and cover-up," he said. Two terminals were without power. Minister of Energy Davis Chirchir attributed the outage to overload that collapsed the country's network, alluding to load-shedding in high-demand areas. It is Kenya's third national outage in three months. — *AfricaNews, BBC, International Fund for Animal Welfare, WHO Regional Office for Africa and X*

# Kenya scraps Cuban doctor plan

ANALYSIS  
Charles Ebikeme

**T**o much fanfare, 100 Cuban doctors arrived in Nairobi in 2017.

They were part of an exchange programme between Cuba and Kenya. Cuban doctors were sent to fill some of the gaps in the Kenyan healthcare system and Kenyan doctors would get training in Cuba. Now, six years later, Kenyan health authorities have decided to cancel the arrangement.

Kenya's healthcare system suffers from a mismatch between patient needs and the care that its ill-equipped workforce can provide. A 2017 study found there were not enough chest specialists, physicians and emergency-care nurses in Kenya.

A 2018 assessment of health facilities reported that just 12% of all doctors in the country had the standard items needed to prevent infections such as gloves, infectious waste storage and disinfectant.

Cuban doctors were billed as the answer to this malaise. The plan was for each Kenyan county to get at least two specialist Cuban doctors – including family physicians, oncologists and surgeons in plastic, orthopaedic, neuro and other specialities.

"Medical diplomacy" has been an essential component of Cuba's foreign policy for close to 60 years. It routinely sends its health workforce to other countries and receives foreign workers to train. To date, more than 130 000 Cuban doctors have taken part in international missions in more than 100 countries.

In South Africa, an agreement was



**Doctor swap:** South Africa welcomed doctors from Cuba in 2020, to help bolster efforts to manage Covid-19. Photo: Misha Jordaan/Getty Images

signed with Cuba that saw more than 450 Cuban doctors and medical lecturers sent there from 1995 to 2005. And more than 700 South African medical students enrolled at Cuba's Latin American Medical School.

Kenya sought to follow the same approach. Soon after the announcement of the exchange programme, Samson Misango, a doctor working for the government, filed a lawsuit to bar the Cuban doctors.

He argued that the Kenyan government had lied about a shortage of specialised medical practitioners and that there were many unemployed Kenyan doctors. The suit was eventually dismissed.

The programme also proved unpopular with Kenya's doctors' union, partly because Cuban doctors received double the salary of their Kenyan counterparts.

Then, in 2019, Dr Hamisi Ali Juma, a Kenyan doctor on the exchange programme to Cuba, was found dead in his hostel in Havana. This exposed the poor living conditions of doctors sent to Cuba for specialist training.

Kenya's medical union and parliamentarians called for the programme to be cancelled.

In October, the cabinet secretary for health, Nakhumicha Wafula, announced that the ministry would not renew the agreement with Cuba, saying "our own healthcare professionals are committed to the cause".

But the sudden withdrawal of 100 specialist doctors from the health system is bound to have consequences.

When Brazilian strongman Jair Bolsonaro said during his presidency that Cuban doctors in his country could only stay if they took an exam

to validate their medical credentials, Havana withdrew them.

Health experts said that millions of Brazilians, most of whom live in remote, vulnerable areas, were subsequently left without healthcare.

After Wafula's announcement, Kisumu Governor Anyang Nyong'o asked the national government to rescind the decision. "Where will we find replacements for these doctors?"

It's a good question but the exchange programme with Cuba might not be the right answer.

As of 2021, with 13 376 registered medical doctors, Kenya had 26 doctors for every 100 000 residents. The World Health Organisation recommends a ratio of 100 doctors per 100 000 people.

After six years, the exchange programme had added 100 doctors (for the price of at least 200 local ones) and sent 50 Kenyans for specialist training in Cuba, hardly denting the problem. The union of Kenyan medics has suggested that the money for the exchange programme should instead be used for scholarships at local medical schools. This is probably a more sustainable solution.

Given that African doctors are leaving the continent in their tens of thousands to find better working conditions overseas, perhaps more needs to be done to keep domestic health workers happy.

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# On the road



It's electrifying: The new EV Macan is sleeker and more streamlined than the older models, and has eye-catching lights.

## A first look at the electric Macan

The model is set to take centre stage in Porsche's bid to embrace new tech

Muhammad Bhyat

**P**orsche has ingeniously revamped its immensely popular Macan, ushering it into the realm of electric vehicles (EV), setting a new benchmark.

After a successful foray into the electric landscape with the Taycan, the logical progression involved electrifying its most popular model, in line with the marque's aim of achieving 80% EV sales by 2030.

Porsche's second home, the state-of-the-art Leipzig factory in Germany, where the new fully electric Macan is assembled in tandem with its petrol-powered Panamera counterpart, has made huge strides towards achieving net carbon neutrality.

The EV versions of the 718 and Cayenne are set to be introduced by 2025, while the Panamera is cited to launch in 2026.

There is also an all-new flagship seven-seater electric SUV, earmarked for launch before 2030.

Porsche has strategically acquired high-performance battery manufacturer Cellforce Group. This enables it to produce batteries at scale, propelling its electric agenda forward.

The Macan EV, slated for debut next year, will come in the Turbo and Macan 4 variants.

Both versions will be equipped with a 100 kilowatt-hour lithium-ion battery, balancing range and per-



Performance: The Macan is equipped with a 100 kilowatt-hour lithium-ion battery and will have a range of about 500km on a single charge. Inside it has Porsche's latest infotainment centre.

formance. While the official range remains undisclosed, Porsche has confirmed a minimum of 500km on a single charge for both variants.

Charging efficiency has also been optimised, with a remarkable 100km of range achievable in just 4 minutes, using high-voltage chargers.

Antoon Janssen, Porsche's Macan powertrain manager, claims the Macan is set to claim the title of the sportiest car in its segment.

Although the power figures have not been officially confirmed, Janssen is adamant that the flagship will boast a minimum of 450kW and 1000Nm of torque.

The development journey of the electric Macan has been unparalleled, with rigorous testing spanning about three million kilometres in climates ranging from -30°C to 50°C.

The revamped Macan's design is unmistakable. Departing from the familiar bulbous shape, it adopts a

sleeker, more streamlined profile that aligns with the contemporary aesthetics of EVs.

The distinctive lights echo the design language seen in the latest Cayenne and Panamera models.

Inside, the Macan boasts Porsche's latest infotainment system, featuring three screens with new software allowing integrated Google or Apple Maps in the infotainment screen.

The passenger display doubles as an entertainment hub, enabling video streaming and social media browsing. Equipped with a privacy coating, the screen is discreetly out of the driver's line of sight.

Downloadable apps, such as Spotify, further enhance the in-car entertainment experience.

Additional features, such as the augmented-reality heads-up display, project a virtual 87-inch display 10m in front of the driver, aiding navigation through the integrated Apple or



Google Maps.

Skilfully manoeuvred by a Porsche test driver on the Leipzig test track, which is an amalgamation of famous corners from racetracks around the world, the Turbo model of the Macan exhibits performance that defies comprehension.

It showcases its low centre of gravity and the 48:52 front-to-rear bias weight distribution, delivering impressive four-wheel drifts up the cloned corkscrew corner and exceptional straight-line speed and braking.

Transitioning to the Macan 4 on an off-road track at the facility, the vehicle shows its prowess, effortlessly tackling challenging terrain with impressive wading capability and adept handling on steep angles.

The Macan's capabilities extend beyond initial impressions, demonstrating a versatility that surpasses expectations.

The new Macan emerges as Porsche's pinnacle blend of performance and off-road performance, defying the constraints of physics on the track while demonstrating the physical prowess to venture where others hesitate to go off it.

These near-production models present a tantalising glimpse of what Porsche will unveil to the world in the early months of next year.

Porsche remains Porsche because it is not averse to change. Embracing EVs, the brand remains steadfast in building on its driver-centric ethos.

Just as the company delivers some of the most exhilarating combustion-powered cars, the transition to electric propulsion signals a continuation of high standards.

For EV enthusiasts, it's a taste of Porsche's ability to innovate, while Porsche enthusiasts can savour the brand's excellence in a brand-new realm of motoring.



'And suddenly I realised that I was no longer driving the car consciously. I was driving it by a kind of instinct, only I was in a different dimension.' — **Ayrton Senna**



**Sporty:** The second-generation Tiguan has chrome accents on the front grille and bumper and a leather-wrapped steering wheel.

# Outgoing Tiguan is still a charmer

We spent time with the outgoing model as the third generation waits in the wings

**Lerato Matebese**

**V**olkswagen's second-generation Tiguan has been successful, not only for the brand, but for the entire Volkswagen Group, as it has remained its bestselling model since 2018.

Last year alone, the model saw 458 000 units sold and it continues to sell well. The current model will be phased out next year to be replaced by the third generation of the Tiguan.

The second-generation model was given a makeover in 2020 and, to remind ourselves why it continued to be the VW Group's best seller, we welcomed the model into our long-term garage.

Our first of six months with it has been a reacquaintance with the product to see how it has fared in the wake of newer models.

When this model launched in 2016, it was a great departure from the first iteration and a masterstroke for VW, as the first-generation model never quite struck the right chord on the design front.

It's a bit like a sophomore artist — rarely does the second album supersede the first — except the opposite may be true in the automotive space.

As such, the current model seems to be the most popular yet of the Tiguan lineage, and I am not quite convinced of the forthcoming, third-generation model, which seems to have matured in its design to the point of not being exciting.

Of course, we will have to wait until we have had a much more intimate look at the vehicle to conclusively form our opinion.

Our long-termer boasts a white lick of paint and is finished off with the sporty-looking R-Line package that includes chrome accents on the front grille and bumper, a boot spoiler and 20-inch Suzuka alloy wheels.

The cabin, too, has R-Line hints,



with the leather-wrapped steering wheel and seats, while the foot pedals have a brushed aluminium finish.

The infotainment system remains intuitive to use and has the latest mobile pairing facilities, such as Android Auto and Apple CarPlay.

Still, it must be said that the haptic "buttons" for the climate control and those on the steering wheel are annoying to use, particularly while on the move. You find yourself inadvertently pressing them at inopportune moments. Hopefully, the

**Standing the test of time: Our first of six months with the outgoing Tiguan shows it offers good performance and a comfortable ride.**

next-generation Tiguan will revert to physical buttons.

That aside, the model is running in nicely and we are averaging 10 litres of fuel per 100km, which is not great, but far from unbearably high.

A towbar has also been installed on our unit and we will soon put this to the test to ascertain the vehicle's towing prowess — or lack thereof.

Ride quality, even on the low-profile tyres, is quite good, but we are mindful of the state of our roads and the infinite potholes.

The 4Motion, a part-time four-wheel drive system, offers prodigious grip levels and we have no qualms about traction. We will, of course, venture slightly onto the gravel at

## Specification

### Engine

2.0-litre, turbo 4-cyl

### Power & torque

162kW & 350Nm

### Transmission

Seven-speed auto

### Top speed

225km/h

### Fuel consumption

8.3l/100km

### MILEAGE AT START:

1594km

### MILEAGE NOW: 4339km

### PRICE: R843 000 (R958 749 as tested)

**GOOD STUFF:** Design. Standard equipment. Space.

**BAD STUFF:** Getting a little long in the tooth. Pricing has gone further north in recent years.

some point and report back on how the vehicle fares.

Being a popular offering in the mid-sized SUV segment, family escapades will be part of the Tiguan's duties, and will see how it fits into the role of ferrying a family of five.

That 2.0 TSI engine with 162kW and 350Nm offers good performance but we are still of the view that the 2.0 TDI derivative is more suitable in this application, thanks to its inherent low-down torque engine characteristics and better fuel economy.

Do you own this model range of Tiguan? Please get in touch with us and share your ownership experience. And, if you are in the market for this outgoing model, do keep an eye out for our monthly reviews on what to expect.

As it stands, though, the Tiguan is proving to be a competent and polished product, despite its age.

# Business

## Web 'warriors' connect SA to Starlink

Icasa rules have prevented Elon Musk's company from officially launching in the country but thousands of people are using the service illegally

Lyse Comins

South Africans have been left out when it comes to the roll-out of Elon Musk's Starlink low Earth orbit satellite internet services that could make cellphone network service providers obsolete.

Business owners and social activists who believe all locals have a right to access the internet at affordable rates are helping consumers get the hardware needed to connect to Starlink's internet service.

SpaceX's Starlink describes itself as "the world's first and largest satellite constellation using a low Earth orbit to deliver broadband internet capable of supporting streaming, online gaming, video calls and more".

The service was to be launched in South Africa in 2022 but attempts to sign up through the company's website to order the service shows an "unknown" start-up date. Yet it is available elsewhere in Africa and around the world with about 4 000 satellites providing high-speed internet to more than one million locations.

Companies such as IcasaSePush, which describes itself as a business and "social activists and warriors fighting for equitable access to the internet for all", are helping consumers connect to Starlink's satellite services despite it not yet being legally available in South Africa. Neither are they charging a monthly internet subscription fee.

Once connected, consumers deal directly with Starlink as their internet service provider, leaving IcasaSePush in the clear.

The Independent Communications Authority of South Africa (Icasa) warned in a notice published in the *Government Gazette* on 28 November that using or providing access to SpaceX's Starlink services in the country is illegal.

Icasa said it had "noted recent developments on the alleged provision of satellite internet services through Starlink terminals in South Africa, and of some entities distributing Starlink products in South Africa from within the country and from the neighbouring countries".

"The authority has indicated previously, through numerous media engagements, that Starlink does not hold any licence issued by the authority to provide electronic communications, electronic communications network or broadcasting services in South Africa," it added.

For operators to offer services legally, they need Individual Electronic Communications Service and Individual Electronic Network Service licences, Icasa said.

It warned that any person providing a service without a licence or without registering as required by law is guilty of an offence and liable to a fine not exceeding the greater of R5 million or 10% of the person or licensee's annual turnover.

IcasaSePush spokesperson Alan Bush said the gazette notice "undoubtedly targeted companies like ours ... and others involved in distributing Starlink terminals in South Africa".

"While we primarily focus on distributing and setting up these devices, we categorically deny receiving any financial benefit from the subscription service. Our actions are driven by a deep-seated desire to bridge the digital divide and empower South Africans left stranded without reliable connectivity," Bush said.

In many cases people are cut off from the global information and communication landscape, which is "unacceptable in modern society", he said.

"We at IcasaSePush are not merely business owners; we consider ourselves social activists and warriors fighting for equitable access to the internet for all. This commitment extends beyond just providing the hardware.

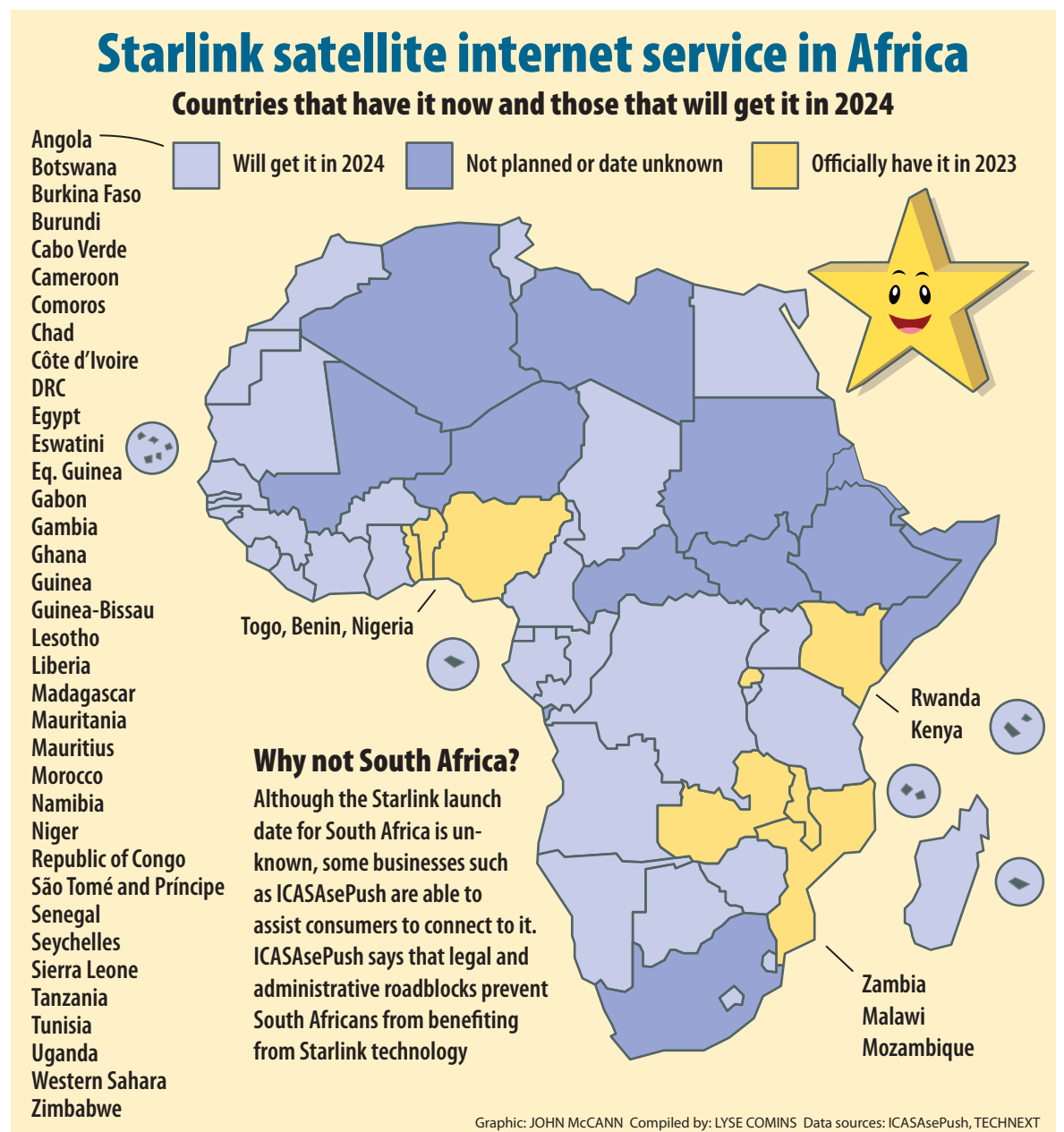
"We actively participate in the #internetforall movement, giving back to the community through various initiatives."

Bush said technology such as Starlink had the potential to revolutionise communication and development in South Africa.

Demand for Starlink in South Africa has been "nothing short of phenomenal" and was leading the demand in the Southern African Development Community (SADC) because of its limited internet infrastructure, high costs of existing providers and growing awareness of the potential, Bush said.

"This is further evidenced by more

**'Starlink has for some reason decided not to finalise its service here in South Africa ... and no one knows why, except Elon'**



than 12 400 South Africans using Starlink through roaming subscriptions despite its official unavailability," he said. "Our customer base cuts across all cultural, ethnic, socio-economic, and industry sectors — from schools and charities to farms, broadcasting producers, tour operators, and beyond."

Out of South Africa's 62 million people, about 42 million people have some form of internet access, leaving about a third out of the loop.

"That's a major concern for IcasaSePush because the ability to communicate is a necessity. Given how fast the world is changing, those without access to the internet are being left behind," Bush said.

"This technology offers an unparalleled solution, requiring two elements for high-speed, reliable internet: a power source and clear skies. Even during load-shedding, those with Starlink can maintain their communication channels.

"For many South Africans living outside of cellphone range or lacking access to fibre connectivity, Starlink ... offers a dependable and high-quality internet solution where no other comparable options exist."

Botswana and Mozambique offer Starlink, while Namibia and Angola have plans to provide it in the near future. How long it will be before Starlink is officially available in South Africa is not known.

"While there have been discussions and developments, legal hurdles prevent its immediate entry into the market," Bush said. These include:

- Historically disadvantaged groups (HDG) shareholding requirement: Icasa regulations mandate a 30% HDG shareholding for companies operating within its jurisdic-

tion. While respecting this mandate, a pragmatic approach is necessary for this specific case. As a non-public American company, SpaceX owns the technology and services, not founded under South African black economic empowerment rules.

Replicating this technology within the next 15 years, even with resources and approvals, is unlikely for South Africans. Using this advanced technology requires either an exemption from the rule or a complete amendment to accommodate capabilities beyond current capacity.

- Hardware approval process: The Icasa process has partially been completed, with 50% of the standard kit receiving clearance. But the remaining 50% related to the dish, typically associated with a broadcasting licence, is facing delays and difficulties.

- Broadcasting licence: Obtaining this remains the biggest hurdle. Icasa has not issued these licences in 13 years, and applications require a ministerial invitation, which has not been extended to Starlink. Technological advancements have been made but legal and administrative roadblocks remain. Addressing these hurdles through potential exemptions, rule amendments and licensing considerations is crucial to facilitate access.

Internet Service Providers Association regulatory adviser Dominic Cull said no one should be offering the Starlink service in South Africa.

"What they are doing is getting it in a neighbouring country, in Mozambique and roaming it in South Africa. But is it a loophole or is it just the technical nature of the service?"

He said Icasa's rules were not exceptional because most countries have a requirement that compa-

nies must establish a local presence to offer internet services to be accountable. But, he said, although the use of Starlink equipment in South Africa is not legal if it is not "type approved" for use here, it was unlikely consumers would face legal action for possession.

"Starlink has for some reason decided not to finalise its service here in South Africa. They are aware of what needs to be done and have taken certain steps to be able to operate but they have not taken the final steps, and no one knows why, except Elon [Musk]," Cull said.

He said Starlink's business model was to deal directly with consumers whereas to operate locally it would need to comply with the historically disadvantaged groups rule and partner with a local entity.

Ultimately the service, albeit still "a long time away", would eradicate the need for cellphone network service providers because it had indicated that it would provide voice services by 2025, Cull said.

Starlink's competitors include the likes of Amazon and OneWeb.

"It is going to mimic the mobile network operators. They [mobile network operators] are not worried but are very much aware. GSM [global system for mobile operators] is a \$1 trillion-a-year economy whereas satellite is a tenth of that but Vodacom is working with Amazon and MTN is also working with satellite solutions," Cull said.

"I don't think it is a case of Vodacom and MTN going anywhere fast. These are very efficient capitalist machines and they are spending a lot of time and effort looking at where direct to mobile satellite technology is going."

Starlink had not responded to questions from the *Mail & Guardian* by the time of publication.



'What we know about nuclear is [that it is the] cheapest, safest and most reliable and we are going this route.' — **Electricity Minister Kgosientsho Ramokgopa, announcing the start of a bidding process for the procurement of an additional 2 500 megawatts of nuclear energy**

# Tongaat vote delayed amid bias claims

Rival bidder RGS says the delays are aimed at enabling Vision to raise money to fund the deal

**Paddy Harper**

**T**he vote by creditors of sugar giant Tongaat Hulett has been postponed again, with bidder RGS Sugar claiming in court that the process was being delayed to give ANC funder Robert Gumede's Vision group time to raise money to fund the deal.

The section 151 vote on rescue plans by Vision and RGS was meant to have taken place on Thursday 14 December, but will now happen on 11 January next year, in terms of an order issued in the Durban high court on Wednesday.

Tongaat entered voluntary business rescue in November last year, and the creditors' vote has been postponed several times while negotiations between a group of banks it owes R8 billion, Vision and the Public Investment Corporation take place.

The business rescue has received funding from the Industrial Development Corporation (IDC), which wants security from the successful bidder before it makes any further funding available.

The South African Sugar Association (Sasa) and RCL Foods

had both gone to court for an interdict to have the business rescue plans declared unlawful because they did not make provision for R1.5 billion Tongaat Hulett owed in unpaid industry levies.

The levies are part of the Sugar Industry Agreement and subsidises smaller growers and other industry participants to give them an equitable share of the profits generated.

Business rescue practitioners Metis had gone to court to try to avoid paying them, but failed, with the court ordering that the debt to Sasa and the industry needed to be honoured.

RGS had also approached the court for an order compelling Metis to hold the creditors' vote, while Metis and Vision had both asked the court to delay the process until January.

In his order, Judge Rashid Vahed ruled that the creditors' vote be postponed until no later than 11 January.

Vahed also ordered that the business rescue plans published by the two bidders would not be voted on at the meeting.

This will allow for amended plans to be presented by Vision and RGS when the meeting convenes.

The interdict applications by Sasa,



**Soured: The Tongaat Hulett business rescue deal has still not been finalised amid numerous postponements due to negotiations with banks and other parties.** Photo: Getty Images

RCL and RGS were all postponed indefinitely, with the proviso that any of the parties could have them placed back on the court roll at a future date.

In papers filed in court in their interdict application, RGS said it was seeking an order compelling the business rescue practitioners (BRPs) to allow the creditors' meeting to proceed on Thursday — and for it to vote on its amended rescue plan.

RGS head of strategic development, Shashikant Mangali, said in an affidavit that they were ready for the vote to go ahead and that they had the funds to back up their bid.

Mangali said Metis' support of "yet another adjournment" was "bizarre in circumstances where the RGS plan is fully funded and capable of adoption at the meeting on 14 December 2023, and immediate implementation".

Metis' proposal to postpone again was "irrational, unjustifiable and directly at odds with the contents of

the affidavit filed by the IDC to intervene" in the application.

The IDC has funded the Tongaat business rescue, and has indicated in papers that it will provide further funding for the process, but provided that the vote go ahead and a rescue plan be adopted.

Mangali said there was no reason to adjourn the meeting to accommodate negotiations between Vision and Sasa because Vision had failed to secure the necessary funding to purchase the lender group's debt.

"The Vision plan is therefore invalid and cannot be adopted," Mangali said in his affidavit.

Vision had already failed twice to secure funding for the deal with the banks and there was no certainty that the company would be able to raise the money, even if another postponement was granted.

The business rescue practitioners were unlawfully promoting and favouring the Vision plan to accommodate the banks' desire to "escape

their exposure" to Tongaat Hulett and avoid risk in relation to the business resource process, he said.

Mangali said the RGS proposal was acceptable to both RCL and Sasa and that the amended rescue plan would not affect the other creditors and could be voted on at the creditors' meeting with no further delays to the process.

The plan for a pre-meeting proxy vote was "neither appropriate nor lawful" because creditors could not be asked to determine the sequence in which voting on the plans should take place, Mangali said.

Metis' conduct had "created a reasonable impression that they are conducting the [Tongaat Hulett] business rescue solely for the benefit of the Vision parties and or the lender group," Mangali said.

"There is little evidence that the BRPs are discharging their duties with [Tongaat Hulett]'s best interests as their paramount consideration," he said.

# Cabinet finally gets to approve Gwede's electricity plan

**Mandisa Nyathi**

Mineral Resources and Energy Minister Gwede Mantashe's long-awaited Integrated Resource Plan (IRP) update has finally received the green light from the cabinet.

Minister in the Presidency Khumbudzo Ntshavheni announced this week that, although the draft has not been gazetted, it will be released for public comment. The IRP is the electricity infrastructure plan that looks at power demand and how it will be supplied.

"The draft IRP 2023 reviews the approved IRP 2019 and covers two time horizons, namely the 2030 and 2050 time horizons," Ntshavheni told a media briefing.

"Several key assumptions used in the IRP 2019 have significantly changed, including the electricity demand projection, Eskom's energy availability factor, Eskom's coal-fired power plants shutdown plan and the cost of new power-generation technologies."

The intention was to update the plan every two years but, to date, only two versions exist — the initial 2010 plan and the amended version enacted in 2019.



**Short: Energy Minister Gwede Mantashe has been criticised for not updating the 2019 energy plan.** Photo: Deaan Vivier/Gallo Images

This updating process is a key performance target for Mantashe, who is in charge of developing the IRP, and has received criticism for his failure to table an amended plan.

The IRP is a long-term blueprint for the country's electricity infrastructure, detailing the anticipated electricity demand, its means of supply and how much it would cost.

The update of the IRP comes after the 2019 document was criticised for being outdated because it needed to address solutions for South Africa's pressing need for more electricity by securing enough new generation capacity.

The 2019 IRP proposed the addition of about 29 000 megawatts of extra generation capacity by 2030,

including 20 000MW from solar and wind sources.

But this falls significantly short of the 60 000MW of renewable generation capacity Eskom and the Presidential Climate Commission have said the country needs over the next 10 years.

This additional capacity is crucial to compensate for decommissioning ageing coal plants.

Under the administration of former president Jacob Zuma, the IRP encountered many delays as a result of his support for an extensive 9 600MW nuclear project.

The 2019 IRP document called for the closure of five coal-fired plants (including Komati, which was decommissioned last year) by 2030. But Minister of Electricity Kgosientsho Ramokgopa has previously argued that it needs to be re-examined to enable South Africa to stabilise the energy grid before moving away from coal.

Ntshavheni explained that the 2023 IRP "has two horizons".

The first shows the planning guidance up to 2030 — it looks at the proposed decommissioning dates for Eskom's ageing coal-fired power stations. There are five scenarios,

containing a baseline case and one simulating the possible enhancements in coal plant efficiency aligned with Eskom's generation recovery strategy.

The second horizon explores the evolution of South Africa's energy mix from 2030 to 2050. This section looks at new energy sources and the country's capacity to harness its renewable energy resources.

"Essentially, it is [about] issues that have to do with our ability to exploit our renewable energy endowments. Of course, there are linkages to the availability of transmission," Ramokgopa said in a recent media briefing.

He added that one of those horizons "does anticipate that for you to meet the crisis that is confronting us, there is a need for you to rethink the schedule for the decommissioning of power stations".

"It articulates how it arrives at that using some Plexos modelling [the world's most powerful energy market simulation], which is a tried-and-tested, universally accepted modelling on how you model investment in energy demand and all of that. That has been the basis of how the modelling was done," he said.



New track: Recent law reforms could transform the way state-owned enterprises, such as Transnet, operate. Photo: Guillem Sartorio/Getty Images

# SOEs: Mission-led or mission impossible?

Reforming governance has proved to be a Sisyphean task. If done right, a new state holding company could be the final push

**T**his week marks three months since the National State Enterprises Bill was approved by the cabinet and released for public comment.

If given the nod by parliament, the legislation — which sets out the establishment of a holding company for the country's beleaguered state-owned entities (SOEs) — will be a coup for Public Enterprises Minister Pravin Gordhan, who has spent the past five years struggling to reform governance at parastatals.

There is some consensus that the holding company, which has been mooted for well over a decade now, has merit. But state capture's legacy has left some fearing that its promise of better governance is an empty one.

Since the bill was published, we've received details here and there about the government's thinking about the holding company.

Last month, for example, we learnt, through a written response to a question by Democratic Alliance MP Farhat Essack, that the department of public enterprises is refining the bill to address its biggest possible pitfall — that it will fail to insulate SOEs from political meddling.

In its current form, the legislation envisages that the president will be the sole representative of the holding company. The president will thus also appoint its board.

At about the time the bill was published, associate professor at the Wits School of Governance William Gumede said in an interview with the *Mail & Guardian*: "If it's just going to be another state-owned company, with the people running the company appointed by the state,



Sarah Smit

it is going to cause even more chaos."

A month later, asset manager Futuregrowth expressed a similar concern, noting that the bill confers "limitless powers to the president".

In response to Essack's question, the department said it "aspires to codify a board appointment process that embodies the principles of transparency, equity and fairness".

"By emphasising these core values, the department aims to instil a robust and accountable mechanism that stands as a testament to the commitment to good governance and stakeholder inclusivity," the department added.

The department further noted that the envisaged processes for appointing board members are expected to be comprehensive and designed to uphold transparency, fairness and meritocracy.

"The government maintains vigilance in refining and improving existing processes to address challenges and enhance efficiency. Continuous efforts are made to draw lessons from experiences, both domestic and international, adapting best practices in governance."

You'd be forgiven for thinking that this still sounds pretty vague. I suppose time will tell whether the department's refinements will satisfy the bill's critics.

For now, we have another glimpse into how the holding company might work, this time through a policy brief authored by celebrated economist Mariana Mazzucato and her col-

league at University College London, Simone Gasperin, whose expertise lies in policy governing SOEs.

In 2019, Mazzucato was appointed by President Cyril Ramaphosa to serve on his Economic Advisory Council.

Writing about Mazzucato in 2020, Gumede noted that her connection to South Africa had been forged by Gordhan, who tracked her down after reading her 2013 book *The Entrepreneurial State: Debunking Public vs Private Sector Myths*.

Minister of Trade and Industry Ebrahim Patel was another early convert, according to Gumede.

Mazzucato's influence comes through in other recent efforts to drive structural transformation. She is quoted, for example, in the draft version of the Freight Logistics Roadmap, which envisages Transnet's future.

**I**n their policy brief, published late last month, Mazzucato and Gasperin write that by creating "a mission-oriented state holding company ... the South African government can realise the full potential of its SOE portfolio".

They distinguish between two theoretical models for the relation between the state and SOEs.

One is the state shareholding model, in which the government is a passive financial shareholder and through which SOEs operate separately from one another.

The other is the public entrepreneurship model, in which the public shareholder is active in defining the policy mandate and business strategies of individual SOEs, which also interact to create industrial synergies.

A transformational, mission-oriented state holding company should lean towards the latter model, according to the policy brief.

Contrary to an earlier view held by

the South African government, the pair note that privatising the country's SOEs "would deprive the South African state ... of a key policy instrument for driving and orienting economic and technological change".

"Without a patient long-term owner, these companies could eventually disappear or continue to exist under a self-defeating governance that favours the short-term financial interests of the new shareholders over the general public purpose of other stakeholders in the economy," the policy brief reads.

A holding company has the potential to better insulate SOEs against political interference, while also having certain economic advantages, according to the policy brief.

For instance, a holding company could retain financial surpluses generated by profitable state-owned entities and reinvest them within the portfolio of SOEs.

The policy brief goes one step further by outlining a possible governance structure for the holding company, with the caveat that this does not necessarily reflect the government's plans.

A compelling suggestion is that, while the holding company is to be managed by the board — which would interact directly with the management of the SOEs under its control — it would also have a stakeholders' council.

The council, which would include SOE executives; academics; labour and civil society representatives and senior civil servants, would play a supervisory role and have the power to veto the board on certain matters.

By bringing the likes of labour and civil society into the fold, this model could go a long way towards creating greater accountability and transparency among SOEs. In doing so, we could ensure they work in the interests of the public and not a parasitic political and economic elite.

## Big tech stumbles in Google's Epic defeat

Google's defeat against Fortnite-maker Epic Games in court could be an important blow against big tech's decades of supremacy on antitrust matters in the US.

With lawmaking gridlocked and pro-business judges dominant in federal courts, US tech giants have survived unscathed for years against accusations of wielding illegal monopoly power.

While Europe, Britain, India and others enforce regulations that at least try to keep big tech in check, Google, Apple, Meta and Amazon have yet to suffer a significant setback on their home turf.

But a jury of nine on Monday possibly changed that equation, setting an important precedent.

"Big tech is not above the law. This loss isn't just the first antitrust failure for Google, it's the first antitrust loss for any big tech firm," said Matt Stoller, director of research at the American Economic Liberties Project.

The jury on Monday decided that Epic Games was slighted by Google's refusal to let outside apps take payments on Android phones, other than through its app store.

After a three-year battle, Epic Games was vindicated after seeming to be on the back foot when a different judge largely decided against the video game maker in a case involving Apple.

But Epic's CEO Tim Sweeney refused to back down and when other developers settled with Google, he stuck to his guns, repeating his demand that Google open up Android smartphones to other modes of payment, and without charging a hefty commission.

John Lopatka, from Penn State University's law school, said it was predictable that juries side with plaintiffs in monopoly cases "where the defendant will be painted as a greedy behemoth."

Apple's case, decided by a judge, avoided that fate — but not so for Google.

Now two questions remain: what will happen on Google's appeal, and how will the judge order Google to fulfill the jury's decision?

This litigation "has some distance to go before we know the final resolution," warned Lopatka. But the remedy could very likely have a huge impact, with Apple's behaviour regarding its own app store potentially affected.

Big tech's longtime critics point to Google's other major case, where the US Department of Justice is suing Google over its online search.

In both cases, Apple looms large — and many wonder whether the iPhone maker will be able to avoid being dragged back to court.

"Apple is next over the barrel," said Luther Lowe, head of public policy at Y Combinator, the startup hub.

Court documents showed in both cases that Google made huge payments to smartphone makers to ensure that its products kept a predominant place on devices, crushing rivals before they can emerge.

"Google and Apple both treat developers as adversaries," Epic CEO Sweeney told *The Verge*. "We're going to do absolutely everything we can, as quickly as we can, to start changing the world," he added. — *AFP*

# Thought Leader

Comment and analysis from the Mail & Guardian



## Cyril's smallanyana skeleton here to stay

The president remains vulnerable to the many unanswered questions that continue to stalk him

One precarious day almost exactly a year ago, we were expecting Cyril Ramaphosa to resign over the Phala Phala scandal at any moment.

The president held on and routed his foes in the ANC at the December 2022 elective conference. But investigations into the case have continued, bringing to light new information about the burglary and its subsequent cover-up. Phala Phala has become a smallanyana skeleton that will probably hang around to haunt Ramaphosa in the 2024 elections and beyond.

Phala Phala has returned with a vengeance as a focus of media attention over the past month. In my online database of 129 top daily news articles from *IOL*, *News24* and *TimesLive* for November, the name of the president's farm appeared 69 times. Out of the 15 words showing the strongest association with "Ramaphosa" in November's news, only three were not directly related to Phala Phala, and two of those were the title "president" and the name "Cyril".

The word most strongly associated with Ramaphosa's name in November's news was "cleared", referring to the fact that then acting public protector Kholeka Gcaleka declared the president innocent of wrongdoing concerning Phala Phala in June. Ahe "nailed his presidential protectors", in Karyn Maughan and Jan Gerber's words, finding that Presidential Protection Services head Wally Rhoode carried out an "improper" off-the-books investigation into the theft.

Both the words "presidential" and "protector" were closely associated



**NewsWords**  
Ian Siebörger

with the president in November's news, the former because of references to the Presidential Protection Services and the latter because of mentions of the public protector who cleared Ramaphosa.

The African Transformation Movement (ATM) is challenging the public protector's ruling in court. Statements filed in the court challenge in November showed that Rhoode ate a meal with the theft suspects and interviewed them but did not charge them. They also revealed that Rhoode accompanied Ramaphosa's adviser, Bejani Chauke, to Windhoek for a secret meeting with Namibia's President Hage Geingob 10 days after the chief suspect, Imanuwela David, was arrested in that country in June 2020. But Chauke maintains that the meeting was not related to Phala Phala at all.

Ntaba Nyoni Estate, the name of Ramaphosa's business that received \$580 000 for the sale of "sub-standard" Phala Phala buffaloes from Sudanese businessman Hazim Mustafa, was strongly associated with Ramaphosa's name.

This is because, in August, the South African Reserve Bank announced that it found that the money was a deposit, and so "there was no legal obligation on Ramaphosa or Ntaba Nyoni to have declared the foreign currency under exchange control regulations because that transaction was not 'perfected'".

In November, the Reserve Bank's full report came into the public domain, revealing, among other things, that the bank accepted Ramaphosa's description of the transaction but found inconsistencies in Mustafa's story about it.

A last reason Phala Phala came back into the public eye in November was the arrest of the three suspects in the theft of the money from the farm: Namibian-born David, domestic worker Froliana Joseph and her brother Ndilinasho Joseph. From their case, we have learned that Froliana has a newborn baby and that, according to the state, David first broke into the wrong farm before stealing the money from Phala Phala. As the case unfolds, more information about the crime will probably draw public attention.

Another theme that emerges from November's coverage of Phala Phala is the perception that the president has been given more of the benefit of the doubt than other citizens would in the same situation.

The word "special" was strongly associated with the president's name, with ActionSA leader Herman Mashaba saying, "Ramaphosa cannot receive special treatment simply because he is the president of the country, and we will, therefore, keep working to ensure he is held accountable."

The term "VIP" was also strongly associated with Ramaphosa's name because of his VIP Presidential Protection Services who apparently investigated the Phala Phala theft in secret. The National Prosecuting Authority (NPA) could not mount a successful case against former Eskom chief executive Matshela Koko, call-

ing attention to the effect of budget cuts on its work.

As Maughan put it, "This is particularly hard to swallow when contrasted with the ease of government spending on VIP protection for President Cyril Ramaphosa and his high-level cohorts in government.

"The Institute [for] Security Studies previously pointed out that the budget for this protection – which is available to only 200 people – is 74% of the total budget allocated to the NPA and 167% of the Hawks budget."

The name of Arthur Fraser, the man who broke the story of Phala Phala by laying charges against Ramaphosa in June last year, was also associated with the president's name in November's news. Every time Fraser's name is mentioned in conjunction with Ramaphosa's, he is pointedly called a "Zuma administration spy boss", calling attention to possible ulterior motives for waiting until two years after the theft to report it.

The one word closely associated with Ramaphosa that was not linked to Phala Phala in November's news is "appointment". This refers to Ramaphosa's appointment of Thembisile Majola in March 2022 as a long-awaited successor to Arthur Fraser as head of the State Security Agency (SSA).

Majola has now resigned after just 20 months on the job. The *Sunday World* reported that "Majola not only felt overlooked and her contribution under-valued, but she also found her lack of access to Ramaphosa frustrating and disruptive to her ability to implement the vision she had for the SSA." And so the president and the country remain without someone to restore this once-captured agency.

Fraser's charges seemed carefully timed to weaken Ramaphosa's

chances of being re-elected ANC president in the party's December 2022 elective conference. This failed, and the party threw its weight firmly behind Ramaphosa.

Now that this has happened, other parties are queuing up to use Phala Phala to damage the ANC ahead of South Africa's 2024 general elections. In addition to the ATM's challenge against the public protector's report, the Democratic Alliance has challenged the Reserve Bank report in court. ActionSA also says it is considering legal action.

Ramaphosa has made himself vulnerable to this because there are still more questions than answers about what happened at Phala Phala and why it was covered up. The term "smallanyana skeletons", a unique SA coinage, describes troublesome, dirty little secrets that just won't go away.

While Bathabile Dlamini had less-than-pure motives for first saying that we all have smallanyana skeletons, she was right. Ramaphosa may have smallanyana skeletons tucked away in Phala Phala, but these should also serve as a cautionary tale for the rest of us, politicians and citizens alike.

Almost all of us have played fast and loose with the law from time to time and rationalised our actions, fooling ourselves into thinking that no one will be hurt. Those skeletons eventually do come to light, and in the meantime, they rot away, destroying trust and creating gaping holes in our social fabric. When will we bring out these smallanyana skeletons and deal with them?

**Ian Siebörger is a senior lecturer in the department of linguistics and applied language studies in the faculty of humanities at Rhodes University.**

## Thought Leader

Mail &amp; Guardian

## COP28 a compromise we'll pay for

Every year the United Nations hosts a climate summit known as the Conference of Parties (COP). The aim of it is to find solutions for the climate crisis the world is in.

The major cause of climate change is fossil fuels — coal, oil and gas. These cause about 75% of global greenhouse gas emissions, which blanket the Earth and trap the sun's heat causing global warming and climate change.

The solution seems simple: get rid of fossil fuels, which will result in far fewer emissions, reducing climate change.

This year the United Arab Emirates — a major fossil fuel-based nation — hosted the Conference of the Parties.

The president of COP28, Sultan Ahmed Al Jaber, is also the chief executive of the state-owned Abu Dhabi National Oil Company.

During the conference he declared “no science out there, or no scenario out there, that says that the phase-out of fossil fuel is what's going to achieve 1.5°C”.

It gets worse. *The Guardian* reported that this year a record number of fossil fuel lobbyists attended COP28. That number reached 2 456 people. To put it into context, more people from the fossil fuel industry had passes to the summit than delegates from nations particularly vulnerable to climate change.

If the fossil fuel industry is a key contributor to this problem the world faces, why do they have a voice and a seat at a summit where the removal of fossil fuels is crucial?

The credibility of this event must be called into question.

There was drama on the penultimate day of the summit.

As discussions were taking place on the final text, threats to withdraw from the summit reverberated through the media. Why? Because the phasing out of fossil fuels was absent from the final text of the first draft.

Seemingly the push by countries such as major oil producer Saudi Arabia to not have the phasing out of fossil fuels in this text was working.

But the fact that early versions of the final text was devoid of language saying fossil fuels must be phased out reeks of capture.

Al Jaber had his work cut out for him; he needed to herd the cats and ensure a resolution and compromise was reached before COP28 was declared an abject failure.

In the end, fossil fuels did feature in the final text, something that has never happened before — but the agreement was for “a transition” away from fossil fuels. Al Jaber avoided upsetting the oil bloc by not reaching an agreement on a phase-out of fossil fuels.

Meanwhile, our planet and its people will continue to suffer from climate change.

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Choose one lump.  
You can't have both.

(a) A habitable planet



(b) Fossil fuels

Carlos  
NEW  
FRAME  
2.11.21

Carlos is on leave. This is a previously published cartoon

## Judge calls VAR on slow Cyril



Paddy Harper

Will the president be shocked and surprised by the court's ruling?

Tuesday.

Am I the only one who sees the irony in our head of state, Cyril Matamela Ramaphosa, being censured by the Pretoria high court for rushing the goalie in recognising Misuzulu kaZwelithini as Isilo of the Zulu nation in March 2022?

Ramaphosa, whose snail pace in decision-making is legendary, got nailed by the court for pushing ahead with the process of recognising Misuzulu as king while three court challenges to his legitimacy were being heard.

Not only did the president preempt the court's findings, but he also failed to appoint an investigative panel into allegations that the process of naming Misuzulu had been flawed.

So much for slow-motion Cyril.

Instead of appointing the panel, Ramaphosa instead consulted one that had been appointed by the then cooperative governance and traditional affairs minister, Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma, to mediate among the factions in the royal family.

But Ramaphosa ignored the recommendations of the mediation panel, headed by former KwaZulu-Natal premier Willies Mchunu, which said he should hold back on recognising the king until after the court cases were concluded.

Mchunu's panel also recommended an acting appointment, along with a medium-term mediation process to prevent the court cases doing long-term damage to the royal house.

Mchunu also recommended that



To crown it all: President Cyril Ramaphosa attends the coronation ceremony of King Misuzulu kaZwelithini. Photo: Getty Images

the president consult the core royal family.

Ramaphosa didn't and instead recognised Misuzulu, with a huge certification ceremony taking place in Durban at the Moses Mabhida Stadium in October last year.

On Monday, the royal chickens came home to roost and the court ruled in favour of Misuzulu's paternal uncle, Prince Mbonisi Zulu, and his half-brother, Prince — and would-be king — Simakade.

Judge Norman Davis called VAR and declared Ramaphosa offside in his decision to recognise Misuzulu before appointing — and consulting — the investigative panel, as laid

**The royal chickens came home to roost and the court ruled in favour of Misuzulu's paternal uncle, Prince Mbonisi Zulu**

down in the Traditional Leadership and Khoi-San Act.

The judge didn't rule on who should be king — he wasn't asked to — but he reminded the matter to Ramaphosa, ordering him to start the process afresh after appointing the investigative panel he should have put in place before recognising Misuzulu.

Not the anticipated outcome for a president known for his suspended-animation decision-making, but what the court ordered, nonetheless.

Thus far there's been an embarrassed silence from the presidency about the matter — I would also be taking cover — but the head of state is likely to appeal the ruling.

There's little chance of the sheriff making a detour from Luthuli House and confiscating Misuzulu's royal regalia — or turfing him out of the palace — but Ramaphosa's uncharacteristic turn of speed has left us all in a right royal mess.

Speaking of messes, it was fortunate that eThekweni metro managed to finally give the long-dormant pad-

dling pools along the city's Golden Mile a coat of paint ahead of the extra day's holiday the president gave us to celebrate the Springboks winning the Rugby World Cup.

They're going to be needed.

The city's beaches are all closed again, so there will at least be somewhere for those who flock to the ocean to cool off, given that they can't do it there because of the dangerously high *E. coli* levels.

Provided, of course, that the city finds a way to fill the saltwater pools with fresh water, now that the seawater that is normally pumped into them is full of poo and not fit for swimming, paddling or anything else.

Not exactly what the hundreds of thousands who will (hopefully) come to the city this December were hoping to be paying for — days before the jolly season kicks off.

If the municipality uses hose pipes, they'll still be at it next December, so a fleet of city water tankers will have to be diverted from one of eThekweni's water-deprived suburbs or townships to fill the pools daily.

It's that or the pools will have to remain dry, another useless facility to taunt year-end beachgoers: close enough to see but offering no relief from the December heat and humidity.

The city blames the rise in *E. coli* levels on heavy rains and not its failure to repair all of eThekweni's pump stations, 18 months after the floods that wiped out the sewerage system.

It says a few rain-free days — not a really strong likelihood at this time of year — will render Durban's beaches swimmable.

They hopefully will be by the time the bulk of the holidaymakers get here.

If they're not, mayor Mxolisi Kaunda, our City Hall wedding singer, may have to step in and entertain the punters sweating furiously on the promenade.

We are — as always — led.



## Thought Leader



Heritage: Young activists at COP28 in the United Arab Emirates call for the end of fossil fuel use, financing for the loss and damage fund and a secure future for them and the generations to come. Photo: Dominika Zarzycka/Getty Images

# Teeny steps taken at COP28 to move away from fossil fuel

From a promising start to a timid end, this year's Conference of the Parties hasn't delivered enough

**T**he COP28 climate conference taking place in Dubai started with promise. The loss and damage fund came to fruition. This fund will help countries vulnerable to climate change to cope with it. The fund received pledges exceeding \$420 million from wealthy nations like we've all been calling for over several years.

But many have said the funds pledged were not nearly enough to deal with the loss and damages countries face already or are set to face. There have been calls for billions to be pledged instead of millions. Yet, it was a start. It opened the mind up to the possibility that, maybe, this time, developed nations responsible for the climate crisis will pay up.

There were also several agreements on financing and this year days were dedicated to health and food. These did not take place before and were hailed by many as success stories.

It seemed to be on track for a successful Conference of the Parties, one in which the right deals would be struck and although the funding would not be enough, it would at least be the start of something. But it didn't take long for that to unravel, and quickly.

The fossil fuel lobby reared its head. The fact that they had a seat at the table is shocking but not surprising.



Ozayr Patel

The negotiations entered into the final days and things started to get a bit thorny. Language issues, opposition to fossil fuel phasing out, the global stocktake and problems with the final text all left a sour taste in people's mouths. These problems drain confidence in the ability of these events to make a real difference in the crisis we face.

On Monday, a draft deal by the summit presidency to cut out fossil fuel use was presented. It was received with full-on hostility. The deal had groups threatening to walk out as others called it incomprehensible. In short, it was received terribly.

What drew people's ire was that it was woefully short when it came to discussing the requirement for a full phase-out of fossil fuels. The term phase out means the complete ending of fossil fuels, whereas a phase-down refers to a structured reduction in fossil fuel usage.

These terms are incredibly polarising. They insinuate that the world is serious about slowing climate change and keeping global warming to a manageable level. It is something that fossil fuel-reliant countries are opposed to.

For example, Saudi Arabia is vehemently opposed to the phase-out

or phase-down of fossil fuels. Saudi Arabia and Iran have been reported to apply pressure to remove these terms from any agreement, leading to negotiations stalling.

There have also been reports of The Organisation of the Petroleum Exporting Countries asking its member nations to reject any wording for the phasing out of fossil fuels. In a world where fossil fuels are the major contributor to the climate crisis we face, the fact that these voices have a platform at this event calls its credibility into question.

COP28 president Sultan Ahmed Al Jaber, who is the chief executive of the state-owned Abu Dhabi National Oil Company, has previously said there is no science that fossil fuels will lead the world to the target of 1.5°C.

He has since amended his statements saying that a phase-down and a phase-out is inevitable.

The global goal for adaptation is another contentious issue. Driven by the African group of negotiators, of which South Africa is a part, there have been calls for adaptation funds to increase.

The negotiators are unhappy that it hasn't yielded anything tangible in that there are no funds committed to this cause. They argue the money is desperately needed and without it, countries will have to deal with the consequences of climate change from their own pockets.

Without this funding being agreed, the summit will seem like a failure for African countries, which are set to suffer the harshest impacts of the unfolding climate crisis. The funding

for adaptation is sorely lacking and will no doubt leave people feeling as though the summit has once again not delivered on the funding that is needed.

There is criticism for countries like the United States, which is dragging its feet when it comes to funding for adaptation, according to Mohamed Adow, founder and director of Power Shift Africa.

But it is not yet too late for the event to be a success. The final text is confirmed, and fossil fuels and phasing them out have made an appearance.

On adaptation, the positive sign is that a text on the global goal for adaptation is written. It needs strengthening.

More funding for adaptation must be achieved in a way that doesn't put countries more in debt. The funding that is needed for adaptation is estimated to be about \$160 billion to \$340 billion by the end of the decade. The estimate for current funding received sits at about \$29.5 billion in climate finance committed to Africa in 2019 and 2020. This is far below what is needed to deal with climate change.

Adow recently explained it the following way: phasing out fossil fuels deals with climate change in the future and adaptation finance deals with the impacts that are happening now.

At this critical juncture, COP28 feels like another failure. The words are there but they are thin. They need to be robust in calls for the end of fossil fuels and for the funding of adaptation.

25 YEARS AGO

The National Party (NP) in the Western Cape looks set to lose several key politicians to the Democratic Party (DP). The big prize is former education MEC Martha Olckers, set to leave after first being deposed as a provincial cabinet minister.

A number of other senior NP politicians, most of them associated with moves to give the party a more "coloured" face and push female candidates, have been looking for a new political home after the party finalised its candidate lists for 1999 elections.

According to sources, other NP politicians on the verge of quitting to join the DP include:

- National Assembly MP Glen Carlese;
- Antoinette Versfeld, who commands considerable support on the West Coast;
- Provincial economics committee chair Charles Redcliffe;
- Nic Isaacs, whose constituency lies in Bonteheuwel and who is being wooed by both the DP and the ANC.

NP member Hendry Cupido defected this week to the DP.

While Peter Marais is number two, his support base has fared less well. — *Mail & Guardian*, 16 to 23 December 1998

## VERBATIM

● "[We want] coalitions that centre communities on their struggles and their voices. Our campaign is not just a political movement. It's a call to unite, to come together with others to form the broadest and most diverse coalition in our country's history. Our campaign aims to transform the South African land landscape for the better." — Roger Jardine, who launched the Change Starts Now party ahead of the 2024 elections.

● "2024 is our 2024. We are going to defend freedom and we will defeat our enemies. They are forming a lot of political parties to defeat the ANC. They put in a lot of money to support this project. Roger Jardine is a project and that project will be defeated." — ANC secretary general Fikile Mbalula.

● "If the UN Security Council fails to adopt the resolution that is simply calling for humanitarian pauses, that is giving Israel a license to continue its massacre against civilians in Gaza ... We have not seen the world yet come to the place we should come to — an unequivocal demand for ending this war, a war that is within the legal definition of genocide." — Jordan's Foreign Minister Ayman Safadi, speaking at the Doha Forum in Qatar after the United States blocked the UN Security Council resolution demanding an immediate humanitarian ceasefire.

● "Maybe I'll see her in 30 or 40 years, but I think I won't see her again. But that doesn't matter because my mother will always live on in my heart, values that are worth fighting for." — Kiana Rahmani, 17, accepting the Nobel peace prize with her twin brother Ali on behalf of their mother Narges Mohammadi, who was recognised for her fight against the oppression of Iranian women and who is serving a 10-year jail sentence in the country's capital, Tehran.

# Democracy sold down the river

**The Change Starts Now project, which is backed by billionaires and fronted by former banker Roger Jardine, is a top-down attempt by powerful people to win political clout**

OPINION

Richard Pithouse

**T**his year, two important political anniversaries were marked. The first, in January, was the 50th anniversary of the Durban strikes. The second, in August, was the 40th anniversary of the founding of the United Democratic Front (UDF).

The trade union movement that was built after the Durban strikes and the UDF became important spaces for popular participation in politics and, at their best, popular democracy.

In his speech from the dock in 1962, Nelson Mandela had spoken of a revolutionary democracy understood to be participatory and committed to ensuring that “poverty, want and insecurity shall be no more”. But it was in the 1970s and 1980s that popular democracy and popular power came to be widely seen as both modes of struggle and an aspiration for the future.

Official commemoration of both anniversaries elided this commitment to building popular democratic power and simultaneously incorporated the trade union movement and the UDF into the authority of the ANC.

The UDF was presented in the contemporary language of “civil society” with its limited “role” of oversight in the interests of accountability and participation via official channels.

The potentially emancipatory ideas and practices of the politics of the past were eviscerated to incorporate it into the failed politics of the present. The same people who spoke the language of the UDF in the 1980s now spoke the language of contemporary liberalism, a language in which both popular power and its wider social and economic projects were forgotten.

It has been common for national liberation movements to open political contestation to popular participation when elite strategies are failing and then, after victory against colonialism, “send the people back to their caves”. The phrase comes from Frantz Fanon, whose scathing attack on the national bourgeoisie that came to power after colonialism was political as well as economic.

In South Africa, this process of restoring elite control over politics took a very different form to other African countries.

Here, the reduction of political contestation to intra-elite competition was, in part, mediated through the “democracy promotion” project backed by US funders such as the US Agency for International Development, the National Endowment for Democracy, the Ford Foundation and so on.

Similar work had been carried out in countries such as Haiti and the Philippines where, as in South Africa, the US moved from supporting dictatorships to encouraging and supporting liberal opposition.

The aim was to reduce demands for deep transformation of political



**Bet your bottom dollar: Businessman Roger Jardine is the leader of the new political party Change Starts Now, which is allegedly funded by a small group of very rich people.** Photo: Supplied

and economic power to limited liberal transitions that posed no challenge to economic elites.

In South Africa, the Institute for a Democratic Alternative was a key actor in this project.

Building and supporting “civil society” was central to the strategy of ensuring liberal outcomes during transitions from authoritarian societies. “Civil society” was presented as a popular and democratic voice but was, in most cases, a network of donor-funded and professionally staffed NGOs with no democratic mandate or constituency.

NGO directors are not elected and account to boards that, in turn, account to funders.

**T**o accept the idea that they have some sort of democratically authorised claim to represent society, or a constituency within society, is to abandon any serious commitment to democratic practices and ideals.

Despite the scale and intensity of the experiments in popular democracy in the 1970s and 1980s, the substitution of popular democratic power for “civil society” was largely accepted.

But, although the once expansive ideas of democracy were rapidly contained during the transition from apartheid, elections were still taken seriously and it was understood that the ANC was a popular movement with a mass constituency and a clear and legitimate claim to represent it.

The credibility of the ANC and the process through which it came to power also meant that the state was generally seen as a credible actor

with democratic legitimacy.

That is no longer the case in the elite public sphere. The ANC’s collapse into a violently predatory force has not only delegitimated the party, it has also delegitimated the idea that the state can play a productive role in society. There has been a simultaneous slide away from basic democratic principles.

We see this delegitimation of the state when opposition to the way in which the shift to renewable energy is mediated through the privatisation of energy is automatically dismissed as a mask for corruption or the coal lobby. We see it when it is argued that “civil society” should take on state functions, such as providing healthcare.

The idea that the elected governors of the state should give way to unelected “civil society” is also a retreat from democracy.

This delegitimation of the state and turn from basic democratic principles has been actively driven by the monomaniacal focus of much media reporting and analysis on corruption that often presents a serious problem in a way that crowds out other important concerns.

Corruption is theft from the people and must be vigorously exposed

**When a group of wealthy people fund a banker to be a political candidate questions need to be asked**

Party leader John Steenhuisen as the presidential candidate for the Multi-Party Charter, had chosen Roger Jardine to take on that role and had invested R1 billion to back their project to win political influence.

These reports should be seen as provisional and more detail will emerge.

Jardine has denied there is R1 billion backing him. Hopefully, ongoing reporting will reveal who these “funders” are, what their political histories, ideas and aspirations are, what the process of forming the project has been and how its policy positions will be prepared and by whom.

But the general lack of critique in much of the initial coverage of the idea that a group of “funders” — rumoured to be a set of very rich white men — can decide who should lead a political project is a disturbing indication of the ongoing retreat from democratic commitments.

This is, after all, a brazen attempt by a small group of very rich people to buy political influence. When a group of wealthy people fund a banker to be a political candidate questions need to be asked about the character of the economic and political influence they are seeking to buy.

Jardine kicked off his campaign by declaring an intention to “centre communities on [sic] their struggles and their voices”. That sounds like UDF-lite but Jardine has moved from banking to politics, and is a former chairman of the economically right-wing think-tank the Centre for Development and Enterprise (CDE).

Anthony Ball, rumoured to be among his funders, is a board member and funder of the CDE. Its executive director, Ann Bernstein, is also rumoured to be part of the Jardine project. Murphy Morobe, a former UDF militant, sits on its board and is a confirmed part of the project.

No firm conclusions can yet be drawn about what this may or may not mean but it does raise questions that require clear answers.

If, as rumoured, the funders are all white, another set of urgent questions arise. Moreover, it may be noted that Bernstein has held a position on the board of The Brenthurst Foundation, which includes Richard Myers the former chairman: joint chiefs of staff, US, who led the invasion of Iraq in 2003, a war crime that cost more than a million lives.

It is difficult to see people not outraged by this being motivated by anything other than the racist assumption that Arab lives are disposable.

A credible alternative to the ANC, one that could enrich our democracy, would have to be built from below, via democratic processes, and be owned and directed by its members.

It would have to link vigorous opposition to corruption to issues such as political repression and develop a social programme in the interests of the impoverished and working-class majority. It would have to build relations with trade unions and popular organisations grounded in mutuality and respect for their autonomy.

The project in which Jardine has accepted the lead role will have to test itself in the election next year. In that sense it has a democratic aspect. But in other respects it and its reception in much of the media is one more step in our ongoing retreat from democratic commitments.

**Pithouse is a research associate in the philosophy department at the University of Connecticut in the US.**

and opposed. But a politics that has no real content beyond opposition to corruption can open the way for dangerous forces promising to “drain the swamp”. In Brazil, relentless, and often bogus, allegations of corruption against the Workers’ Party opened the way for the election of Jair Bolsonaro.

**I**t is frequently the right, with its desire to shrink the state and roll back its social commitments, that benefits from the sort of hysteria about corruption that centres it as the fundamental or exclusive problem, overlooks the parts of the state that work well and ignores both the struggle to make the state work better and discussions on how to achieve this.

Reductive forms of anti-corruption politics, without any sort of positive social programme or links to progressive popular organisations, do not only risk enabling hard-right buffoons like Bolsonaro. They can also be effective at winning legitimacy for technocratic forms of rule and the neoliberal fantasy of an effective end to meaningful political disputation as technocratic authority and the rule of the market are normalised.

These kinds of assumptions are now very common in the liberal public sphere in South Africa, a public sphere in which many former activists have been incorporated into an elite common sense via business, “civil society” or both.

The entry of Roger Jardine onto the political stage has turbo-charged the retreat from democratic ideals.

Initial reports said “funders”, who were unhappy with Democratic

## Thought Leader

# Localise the just energy transition for Africans

We should prioritise adopting practical and binding measures that reflect the realities and perceptions of people living on the continent

**Busisipho Siyobi & Mmabatho Mongae**

The conclusion of the 28th iteration of the United Nations Climate Change Conference further cemented the need to bolster institutional quality and build strong resource governance mechanisms to adapt to the climate crisis and ensure energy justice for all.

For this to be fully realised, an adoption of simplified approaches must be considered to deliver inclusive climate action.

For a just energy transition (JET) to successfully materialise, concentration should be on localising JET. Understanding public perceptions and affording people greater climate awareness while learning from those on the front line will be essential for a realistic transition. But what does it mean to have a JET that fully integrates public perceptions to ensure it delivers on its objectives?

Ongoing debates about what a just energy transition means, and who it is “just” for, have percolated discussions at the various Conferences of the Parties and continue to gain traction as the world shifts to greener sources of energy provision. Globally the movement is multi-layered, with varied understandings and approaches that are driven by various actors and institutions.

Africa’s position on the transition is no different — multi-layered and complex. In July last year, the African Union adopted a common position on energy access and a just transition that provides a “comprehensive approach for Africa’s short, medium and long-term energy pathways to accelerate universal energy access and transition without compromising its development imperatives”.

The common position stipulates that Africa will continue to use all forms of its abundant energy resources including renewable and non-renewable energy to address its needs.

With this understanding, definitional clarity and transition pathways should be provided and owned by respective countries — in developed and developing contexts.

Access to energy is significantly lower in Africa compared with other regions.

About 567 million people are without electricity (the lowest access in the world) where, according to the

2021 ND-GAIN Country Index, seven out of 10 most vulnerable countries are in Africa.

And although Africa only emits about 4% of global carbon emissions, it loses \$7 billion to \$15 billion a year because of the effects of climate change. By contrast, 23 developed countries such as Canada, Germany, Japan, the United States and large parts of Europe have contributed about 50% of global greenhouse gas emissions over the past century.

China alone is responsible for nearly 14% of the global greenhouse gases, making it the world’s single largest emitter.

Although there is a vast gap between carbon emission contributions, the effects and consequences are more severe in Africa. These realities are indicative of an unjust international system.

COP28 had the potential to effectively address climate change consequences but the aim is to actualise commitments made and to decentralise decisions and agreements. One way of doing this is by not only mapping out practical ways of achieving targets but by also adopting people-centred policies that reflect domestic understanding of and commitments to climate change.

In taking public perceptions of climate change into consideration, we can assess an underexplored measurement of the effectiveness of the Conferences of the Parties — public perceptions.

World leaders gather annually, at great cost (climate-wise and monetarily) to make important decisions, but to what extent are these decisions and agreements relevant and beneficial to the people of Africa? On acknowledging that the “just” in the JET is largely about the people, how do they understand climate change? Do agreed decisions translate to a greater sense of agency and awareness?

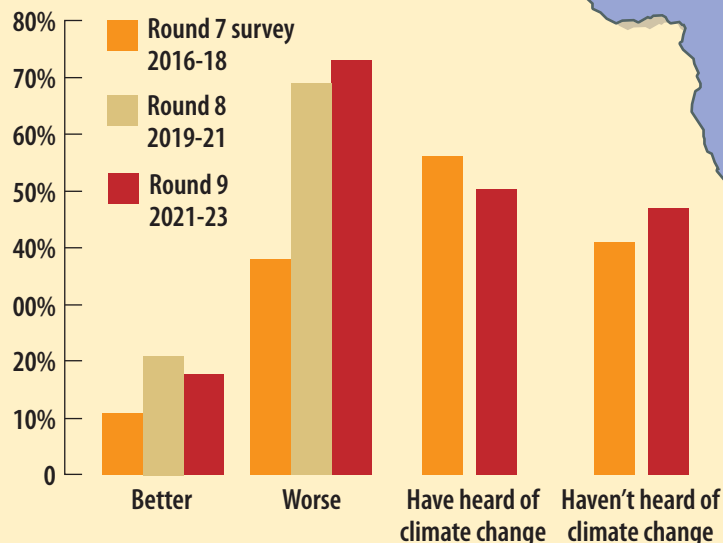
Climate change has devastating effects on people’s lives, and the human cost is expected to rise in the coming decades. Therefore, it is critical to adopt coordinated interventions from businesses, governments, civil society and the public.

Global agreements made at COP28 need to translate to increased domestic capabilities, and the buy-in of the people and political leaders — but this depends on their awareness of climate change, a sense of

## What Africa thinks about climate change

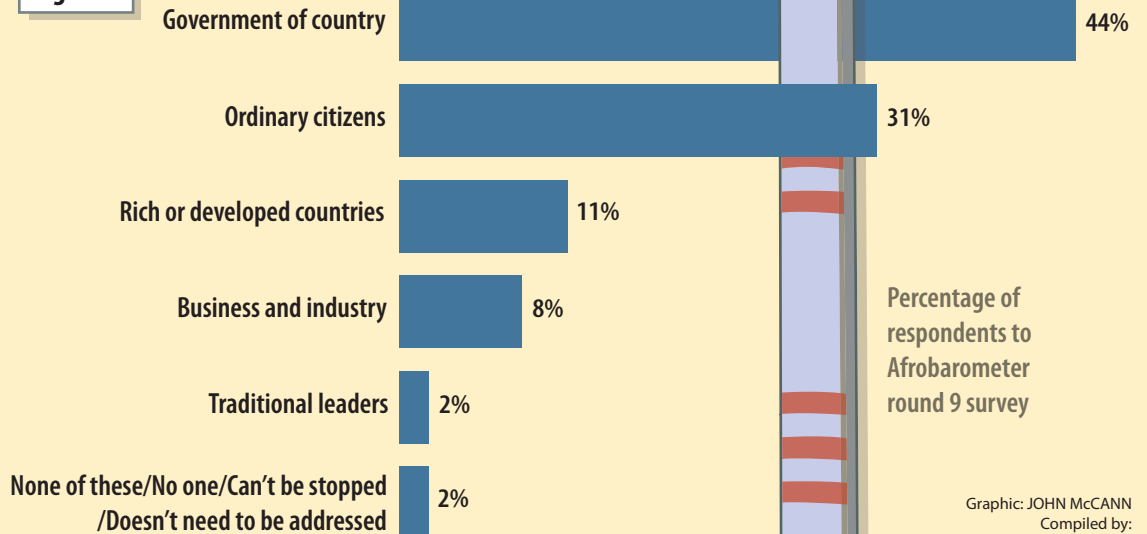
Public perceptions on whether climate change is making life better or worse

Figure 1



Public perceptions on who is primarily responsible for limiting climate change

Figure 2



Percentage of respondents to Afrobarometer round 9 survey

Graphic: JOHN McCANN  
Compiled by: MMABATHO MONGAE (GGA)  
Data source: AFROBAROMETER

agency, and public understanding of climate risk.

According to the Afrobarometer round 9 survey, more Africans say that over the past 10 years, droughts and floods have been more severe. When asked if they have heard about climate change, 50% of African respondents say they have heard of it.

Surprisingly, from 2016 (round 7) to 2023 (round 9) there is a six-point decrease in the number of Africans who have heard of climate change.

This decrease may be indicative of several factors which include a language barrier, the decrease in the percentage of respondents surveyed or population growth. On the converse, there is a six-point increase in those that have not heard of climate change.

Although there is a decrease in those that have heard of climate change, more Africans perceive climate change to be getting worse. From 2016 to 2023 there has been a 35 percentage-point increase in those that perceive climate change to be getting worse.

Of perhaps greater interest is those who perceive climate change to be getting better. From 2016 to

2018, 11% of Africans said climate is improving; this increased to 21% from 2019 to 2021, and slightly decreased to 18% from 2021 to 2023. This perception is particularly high in Sudan (25%), Mozambique (17%), Sao Tome and Principe (16%) and Namibia (13%).

The Afrobarometer rounds 7, 8 and 9 coincided with COP22 (2016) to COP28 (2023). Within this eight-year period important and groundbreaking decisions were made but there appears to be a gap between these decisions and the decentralisation of knowledge.

These trends indicate several factors that may include language barriers and the lack of education and initiatives on climate change. For the former, people may not be aware of the term “climate change” but may be able to describe what it is, nonetheless.

These are complexities that should be considered at COP28. Buzz words at COP28 (and previous Conferences of the Parties) include: climate adaptation, loss and damage fund, climate resilience, and renewable energy, but how will world leaders make this language intelligible at the ground level?

Climate change is a global issue and requires a coordinated global response — including a greater sense of agency from people.

Despite decreases in the number of Africans who have heard of climate change and an increase in those who say climate change is making life better in their country, there is a significant sense of agency

from Africans. When asked: Who is primarily responsible for limiting climate change, 44% of Africans say that it is primarily the government’s responsibility to limit climate change. This is followed by 31% of Africans who say they are primarily responsible for limiting climate change.

This coincides with 86% of Africans who think that people need to do more to limit climate change. This finding is encouraging and suggests that African residents are willing to do something about climate change.

Interestingly, only 11% of Africans say that rich or developed countries are primarily responsible and fewer say that business and industry is responsible. This is indicative of a sense of ownership and agency among Africa’s citizens.

In dealing with climate change, the focus should be less on processes and rather prioritise agreeing and adopting practical and binding measures that reflect the realities and perceptions of Africans.

COP28 and future Conferences of the Parties long-term effectiveness will be in the ability to simplify decisions and agreements that bridge the gap between high-level decision-makers and people’s understanding.

**Busisipho Siyobi is the lead researcher in the natural resource governance programme at Good Governance Africa. Mmabatho Mongae is a data analyst in the Governance Insights and Analytics Programme at Good Governance Africa.**

**Only 11% of Africans say that rich or developed countries are primarily responsible for climate change**

# Getting a sense: The issues blind women

We must recognise the intersectional issues that different communities face if we are to address gender-based violence adequately

OPINION  
Aarti Bhana

For 16 days in November and December we spotlight an issue that's rife for 365 days: gender-based violence against women and girls. The campaign is observed around the world, and seeks to address and eliminate gender-based violence, and create a safe space for women and girls.

Global figures estimate that at least one in three women have faced abuse in the form physical and/or sexual intimate partner violence or non-partner sexual violence, while studies suggest that the rate at which women in South Africa are killed by intimate partners is five times higher

than the global average, and women with disabilities may face up to 10 times more violence than women and girls without disabilities.

These numbers provide a broad picture of the rate and scale at which women and girls face abuse or are killed, but to understand and actually deal with gender-based violence against women and girls, we need to pay attention to the intersectional issues that women in certain communities face and the stories that they tell. One of these communities is women with disabilities, especially blind women.

Bongiwe Nondo, chief executive at Hlanganisa Community Fund, highlighted these pertinent issues at the launch of its book, *Mhare*, which relays the stories of six blind

women who survived abuse. The organisation conducted research and discovered some horrific realities faced by these women survivors with disabilities.

The risk that blind women face is much higher than women without disabilities, because often, if they are living with their perpetrator, they cannot perceive risk or protect themselves from their perpetrator. They don't have access to information relating to gender-based violence, or access to police and hospital services, and this hinders their chances of getting help, and in cases where they do get help, their stories are invalidated simply on the basis of being blind.

The research showed that blind women also face difficulties in society, and are either ostracised or perceived as weak and not able to care for their home, children and family. In addition to this, the research found that women's sexual rights are also violated; they had heard

instances of women being sterilised without their consent out of fear of them giving birth to a disabled child.

Nondo pointed out that although men perpetrated the violence, women such as mothers-in-law did little to support them.

Every year, campaigns are launched to find ways to combat gender-based violence: policies and frameworks are developed, strategies are devised and funds are funnelled to organisations that seek to fight gender-based violence.

The government, for instance, developed the National Strategic Plan on gender-based violence and femicide (GBVF) in 2020 to tackle all forms of violence and abuse against women and children. Some of the key interventions mentioned in the plan include extensive legal reform, support for survivors through the provision of evidence kits at police stations, psychological and social

services and support for Thuthuzela and Khuseleka Care Centres, which provide vital services for GBV survivors.

According to the government website, about R21 billion was budgeted for the implementation of these interventions, including the economic empowerment of women.

The government subsequently set up a response fund in February 2021 to address the high levels of GBVF. It has so far pledged R150 million to the fund, distributed R69 million and supported at least 110 organisations.

The thoughts behind the actions are noble, but the argument about nipping the problem in the bud still stands: this means different things for different organisations. For some it's about educating men and boys about consent and sensitising them to the violations that women face, or working with a number of stakeholders to advance critical conversations around GBV.

## Motsoaledi on refugee protection is anti-African

OPINION  
Amanuel Isak Tewolde

Through its White Paper, the department of home affairs is proposing that South Africa should withdraw from major international refugee protection regimes — the 1951 United Nations Refugee Convention, the 1967 Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees and the 1969 Organisation of African Union Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa.

The department is suggesting that after withdrawal from these international conventions, South Africa should re-accede with reservations and exceptions, the result of which will disproportionately negatively affect black African refugees in the country, as a large percentage of refugee communities in South Africa are black Africans.

Many African nations and the African Union (AU) are proposing that an economically and politically united African continent is a viable alternative for Africa's socio-economic advancement and developmental progress.

One of the most powerful ways Africa can realise her developmental aspirations is, as the AU and pan-Africanists are suggesting, through implementing free movement of people or visa-free schemes across the continent.

Some African countries such as Benin, Gambia, Seychelles, Kenya and Rwanda, have already initiated their visa-free entry positioning, setting an example for other African countries to follow suit. And it is expected that many other African countries will abolish their respective visa requirements for Africans



**Retrospective: Black Africans fleeing violence as well as political and social upheaval already struggle to find refuge in South Africa and it is likely this situation will worsen, a move that flies in the face of the African Union and pan-Africanists. Photo: Ihsaan Haffjee/Getty Images**

and pave a way for a future united, amalgamated and consolidated Africa.

The AU's Agenda 2063 — which envisions the implementation of free movement of goods and people to enhance economic development, social relations, cultural exchanges, skills transfers, trade and investment and ultimately a unified and consolidate political integration of the continent — aims for the relaxation and irrelevance of colonially created political-physical boundaries.

The AU, inspired and driven by the spirit and principle of pan-Africanism and African Renaissance, is envisioning a united, integrated and consolidated African community of nations and ethnicities across the continent.

An exemplary expression milestone in the practical realisation of a borderless united Africa is the introduction of an African pass-

port, which was initiated in 2016 in Kigali, Rwanda. The main intention of the passport is to realise the 2063 African Union vision of unhindered, visa-free movements of Africans across the traditional borders of members of the AU.

It seems, contained within the progressive assumptions of free movement of Africans within the African continent, is unhampered African refugee movements who flee various political and social adversities and upheavals in their own respective countries and their right to seek refuge and residence in relatively safer countries and regions of the continent.

In other words, all member states of the AU will have the social obligation and moral responsibility to receive and settle refugee communities of African origin without restrictions on their movements and settlements across Africa's political borders.

The large percentage of refugee communities across the continent — including South Africa — are black Africans and any restrictive measures pertaining to refugees in South Africa and elsewhere in Africa affects black Africans disproportionately. The department's White Paper relating to the revision of South Africa's refugee protection policy, therefore, pointedly targets black African refugees in the country.

At a time when South Africa is supposed to spearhead a borderless Africa in line with AU's vision, the recent White Paper by Home Affairs Minister Aaron Motsoaledi to revise South Africa's progressive refugee protection policy is discouraging and anti-Africanist in its spirit and intentions.

Many Africans — including heads of state, scholars, academics, activists, analysts and lay people — are calling for the erasure and usurpa-

tion of colonially invented political borders and the integration of the African continent through free movements of people.

But South Africa appears to be riding against this tide of pan-Africanism and visa-free initiatives that are gaining momentum across much of the continent — particularly among Africa's young generation.

If the White Paper is approved and South Africa's refugee protection policy is revised, it will be a major blow to the African Union's progressive vision of a people-centered integrated Africa and to the vision of the African passport because it is black African refugees who will be greatly affected.

**Dr Amanuel Isak Tewolde is a postdoctoral research fellow at the Centre for Social Development in Africa at the University of Johannesburg.**

# and girls face

The plans are strategic, but they need to translate to meaningful change. As of the 2022-23 fiscal year, 67 358 women in South Africa were reported as victims of selected contact crimes; this is a decrease compared with the 162 957 cases of GBV cases reported in the 2021-22 fiscal year, according to Statista.

Again, we can use the statistics to inform the scale of the situation, but there need to be more solutions and structures in place which ensure that above all, women and girls are safe, and survivors of GBV are healing and getting justice, which they rightfully deserve.

Hlanganisa empowered survivors to tell their stories to support their healing journey. Their stories were of hope and healing, but they were laden with grief and pain, and called for more action.

Thandile Butana, an activist and development officer at BlindSA, and who is also blind, said blind women living in rural areas are faced with

unique problems, and their experiences of abuse are ignored, justified or stigmatised — often by other women. Butana said blind women also struggle to access services because they don't have transport and, just like any other woman with disabilities, their stories are not believed and they can't get the help they need.

"Unfortunately, we will never be able to combat this social ill or scourge of GBV if the women themselves don't see us as equal to men. That's very unfortunate. And government is allowing it unfortunately. We can shout as loud as we can because we are a minority in society — but our voice is not being heard," she said.

They asked for more targeted and deliberate action for women with disabilities who survived abuse. This could mean more funding for organisations that tackle GBV, providing more accessible services and ways for survivors to get help, and finally,



**Stop killing us: Five times as many South African women are killed by intimate partners than the global average; women with disabilities are 10 times more vulnerable.** Photo Sharon Seretlo/Getty Images

instilling a culture in society where they feel accepted, safe and heard. If we want to contribute to change,

this is where we can come in to contribute — and not just in these 16 days, but every day.

**Aarti Bhana is at frayintermedia. She is the Canon Collins Trust 2023 Mail & Guardian Scholar.**

## If we want change, we must be willing to feel uncomfortable

**Arthi Rabikrisson**

In writing a recent book chapter on how to bring about greater equity in South Africa through greater self-awareness, I decided to start my reflection with a moment in time when humans are not really known for being too aware of who they are or what they believe: childhood.

I was about six or seven when I first met Nandi (not her real name). It was circa 1988 and although apartheid was approaching its official expiration date, it was still very much an everyday reality. Nandi was the first African girl who had joined my pre-school of overwhelmingly Indian make-up ("Indian" being misleading shorthand for a broad assembly of creeds and languages).

She was teary-eyed on this first day as an outsider in a strange world. I approached her with the innocence of a six-year-old, and we would become firm friends.

But more than just becoming my friend, Nandi would change how I looked at the world. Years later in high school, I would watch the proceedings of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) with both anger and despair as I began to understand what divisions had been wrought among people. I also began to interpret the words and actions of my schoolmates and community through a new lens — the language we used to describe our African compatriots, for instance.

Nandi would make me appreciate how privileged I'd been. My two-parent family with an adult breadwinner, food, shelter, water and education within reach — these were far removed from the realities of many other children in South Africa.

The more things change, the wider the gap grows.

The divide between South Africans seems to widen by the day. Less than half (46%) claim to have personally experienced reconciliation since the end of apartheid, reports the 2021 SA Reconciliation Barometer, a public-opinion survey conducted regularly by the Institute for Justice and Reconciliation for what the organisation says is the longest-running reconciliation barometer anywhere in the world.



**Divisions: People like apartheid South Africa's foreign affairs minister Pik Botha testified at the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. But the country still has much to reconcile.** Photo: Gallo Images/Oryx Media Archive

There is among respondents a strong yearning for a unified national identity. However, only a small majority (52%) believe that South Africans have made progress in reconciling. Overall, 72% believe that South Africans still need reconciliation.

What's worrying is that nearly 30 years after the first democratic election and the birth of the rainbow nation, South Africans still do not trust each other. Only about a third of respondents say they have trust in people from other languages (33%) and other race groups (31%).

The most common sources of division, says the report, are those between rich and poor, and the division between South Africans of different race groups.

The results of the report suggest that there is popular support for a united national identity, but that there are material and historical divisions to overcome before this vision can be realised.

How can knowing yourself aid reconciliation — and equity?

The TRC was, despite the criticism levelled at it, an attempt to get the country to do the inner work that was necessary to deal with the trauma, pain and suffering inflicted by apartheid. Many resisted that call to reflection then, and I would argue that many resist it still.

If we had equality after 1994, we sadly still fall short of equity. Which, for our purposes here, means the necessary levelling of the opportunities that allow us to compete fairly and on equal standing — best

represented I think by the famous diagram of the adult man and two young (shorter) children trying to watch a baseball match over a fence.

Equality means everyone gets a box to stand on, but that leaves some unable to see over the fence. Equity means that some get boxes, while others who no longer need them don't get any, but in this way, all can look over the fence.

It's a conversation South Africans remain uncomfortable with. We have a knee-jerk reaction to the idea of giving others what we have, even if we don't need it. We need to question why we respond like this.

I recall the fears and doubts I had to overcome, with the help of amazing businesspeople, when I first entered the corporate world. I had to dig deep as well when I started my MBA at Henley Business School, a programme that uniquely demands greater self-awareness alongside elevation of thinking and capacity to lead organisations.

**The TRC was an attempt to ... deal with the trauma, pain and suffering inflicted by apartheid. Many resisted that call**

This is something I see every day as I coach MBA students at Henley Business School Africa, too. You have to understand how you respond to triggers and situations, and why you respond the way you do. I was aided in improving my self-awareness through the programme and readings I did on what happens at the neurological level — right there in the brain — when we feel uncomfortable, when our most sacred and ingrained beliefs and truths are being challenged.

But it is in this process of inner work that we develop the ability to embrace equity meaningfully. It is only through this greater knowledge of self that we can begin to relate to others. Through this process we can dismantle the "built-in" biases we walk around with and become aware of our blind spots.

It is then that we begin to understand how our choices are shaped by the mental models and narratives that built the lens through which we see the world and others.

Meeting and befriending Nandi was only the beginning of a process that would take me decades to make sense of. By speaking to her — and later watching the painful proceedings of the TRC — I became aware of a world beyond my own home and community.

In time, I became more aware of our faults, the language we used for and towards other racial groups, and our part in continuing the inequities inflicted on so many.

This is not always a pain-free exercise. I had to question myself daily and was on the opposing side in many instances with family and my community. But in the light of the troubles our country still faces, the deep inequities and the deeper divides, it may be the only way to set our nation right.

**Arthi Rabikrisson is the author of *Redefining the Rules: Incredible Women On How to Embrace Equity*. She is the founder of Prerna Advisory, a coaching, consulting and capital introduction firm. Arthi has an MBA and post-graduate certificate in coaching and behavioural change, and tutors MBA candidates at Henley Business School Africa.**

# Careers

Mail & Guardian

To advertise in this section please contact:  
 Vanessa 083 458 8155  
 Ilizma 063 026 7450  
 Elsie 076 556 8777

## Jobs, Tenders & Notices



### Consulting Services to provide technical support and facilitate private sector engagement within the Orange-Senqu River Basin

The Orange-Senqu River Commission (ORASECOM) secured funding from the Global Environment Fund (GEF) through the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to implement a project which seeks to strengthen joint management capacity for the basin-wide Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) implementation and demonstrating environmental and socio-economic the implementation of Strategic Action Programme (SAP) priority actions in the Orange-Senqu River.

ORASECOM SAP project is supporting ORASECOM in identifying, developing and implementing models of engaging the private sector in addressing the environmental threats as outlined in the Strategic Action Programme

- ORASECOM seeks to recruit a consulting team to undertake the following:
  - Facilitate identification of relevant private sector stakeholders who would contribute towards addressing water and environmental threats in the basin.
  - Review existing private sector engagement models in the four basin states e.g. water stewardship programmes and develop appropriate model(s) at basin level.
  - Facilitate implementation of the basin-wide private sector engagement model(s).
- The Terms of References (ToRs) for the above consultancy can be downloaded from the ORASECOM Website ([www.orasecom.org/Oppotunities](http://www.orasecom.org/Oppotunities)). Queries relating to the ToRs may be addressed through writing to Mr. Boniface Mabeo, [boniface.mabeo@orasecom.org](mailto:boniface.mabeo@orasecom.org) with a copy to [mike.ramaano@orasecom.org](mailto:mike.ramaano@orasecom.org) and [bbmabeo@gmail.com](mailto:bbmabeo@gmail.com) no later than **1600hrs on 22 January 2024**.
- Proposals and/or Expression of Interest must be received by emails: [boniface.mabeo@orasecom.org](mailto:boniface.mabeo@orasecom.org) with a copy to [lusia.kalipi@orasecom.org](mailto:lusia.kalipi@orasecom.org) and [bbmabeo@gmail.com](mailto:bbmabeo@gmail.com) not later than **31st January 2024 before 16:00 hours, Pretoria, RSA, Local Time**.

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# AFFORDABLE, RENEWABLE ENERGY

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[givempower@redrocket.energy](mailto:givempower@redrocket.energy)

T&Cs Apply.



Nexia SAB&T seeks to appoint a dynamic individual on fixed term contract to be seconded in the following position at the National Department of Health, located in Pretoria:

### Administrative Clerk (Ref No.: 01/12/2023)

Suitable candidates wishing to apply for the above position are kindly requested to visit the **SANGONET** website ([www.ngopulse.net](http://www.ngopulse.net)) for details regarding the roles and responsibilities as well as the specific qualification, competency and requirements for the position. Candidates, meeting the requirements, can then follow the link to apply for the respective position.

**Closing Date for Submissions:  
12 January 2024**

Applicants who do not receive a response within 6 weeks of the closing date must regard their application as unsuccessful, as communicate would only be conducted with shortlisted candidates. Nexia SAB&T reserves the right not to appoint.

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### Senior Field Guide SABI SAND, SOUTH AFRICA

#### Key Responsibilities

The main role of the Senior Field Guide is to provide an all-encompassing wildlife experience to every guest with a focus on catering to the specific needs of each individual guest.

- Reports to the Head Guide • Ensure the highest quality of game experience for the guests. • Hosting of guests in line with the Singita Standard of Excellence; as well as ensuring guests' preferences and dietaries are respected. • Clearing off-road tracks, fallen trees, and overhanging branches from roads. • Communication with departmental teams to ensure that guest needs are met, and operations run effectively. • Conscientious maintenance, tidiness and care of vehicles and other equipment. • Undertake administrative duties as allocated. • Undertake ongoing process of self-improvement and knowledge enhancement; and that of their tracker. • Active participation in and effective communication and support of Singita's conservation message and purpose. • All roles at Singita may be required to perform other tasks as reasonably requested from time to time and as required by the business and/or operation. Singita fosters a culture of collaboration, and with this support of the multi-skilling of staff.

#### Skills & Experience

- Five or more years of experience in a similar lodge environment. • FGASA Level 3 • Valid registration with DEAT. • Valid First Aid Certificate. • Valid Advanced Rifle Handling certificate; SAPS competency. • Valid Driver's license and PDP. • Basic Firefighting skills. • 4x4 Driving skills. • Good knowledge of photography, astronomy, botany, birding, and tracking is essential • Computer literacy and reporting skills • Excellent interpersonal and communication skills (verbal and written). • Snake Handler • European Languages (French, Spanish)

Closing Date: 16 January 2024. To apply email your CV to [SSScareers@singita.com](mailto:SSScareers@singita.com) or visit: [www.singita.com/about/careers](http://www.singita.com/about/careers)

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# Jobs, Tenders & Notices



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Joint Venture

## CAREER OPPORTUNITIES!

WRES Senqu Bridge JV is a joint venture constituted for the execution of the Senqu Bridge project on behalf of the Lesotho Highlands Development Authority (LHDA). The project will be based on the A1 Road, at approximately 10km from Mokhotlong. The main works consist of the construction of a 16-span, continuous box girder deck constructed by the incrementally launched method, with a length of 825 meters, plus the related access roads. The expected duration of the project is 3 years.

Position	No. of positions required	Qualification/s required	Main roles and Responsibilities	Construction sector work experience
Deputy HSSE Manager	1	- Diploma in Occupational Health & Safety, or NEBOSH Construction Diploma and/or other recognized higher health & safety qualification. - Proven experience in management of H&S in major construction projects (minimum of 8 years); Sound knowledge of OSH Legislation and Construction Safety Regulations; HIRAC; Incident Investigation (RCAT/ICAM etc.); Auditing etc. - SACPCMP registration.	- Assist in the development and implementation of health & safety policies and procedures with the national laws and international standards as well as the client's requirements. - Conduct regular inspections and audits to identify potential hazards and ensure adherence to safety standards. - Verifying that all accidents are documented, investigated and recommendations made for improvements to be implemented as precautions.	8 years
Batch Plant Operator	2	- Diploma in Industrial Engineering plus Concrete Technology Certificate	- Ensuring that the concrete produced meets the required specifications. - Maintaining accurate records of production activities, including materials used, batch numbers, and production output. - Ensuring that all equipment and machinery are properly maintained and operated safely.	5 years
Batch Plant Mechanic	4	- Diploma in Industrial Engineering plus Concrete Technology Certificate	- Responsible for maintaining the plant equipment in good conditions. - Perform the appropriate plant, equipment inspections, repairs, and preventative a routine maintenance. - Conducts routine inspections of plant and mobile equipment and reports findings to supervisor.	5 years
Batch Plant Supervisor	1	- Diploma in Industrial Engineering plus Concrete Technology Certificate	- Supervising and managing the operation of the batch plant, including scheduling, staffing, and production activities. - Ensuring that all equipment and machinery are properly maintained and operated safely. - Monitoring the quality of the raw materials and finished products, including testing and inspection. - Maintaining accurate records of production activities, including materials used, batch numbers, and production output.	8 years
Planning Engineer	1	- Diploma in Civil Engineering - Extensive PRIMAVERA Software experience is a must.	- Preparation of weekly and monthly reports, up-dating of work schedule and forecast to completion, time impact analysis, resources planning and coordination, work activities tracking. - Extensive experience in planning in large project sites with the utilization of Primavera Planning Software. - General contractual knowledge is also required.	3 years
AutoCAD Operator	1	Certificate in Advanced AutoCAD training and knowledge of civil 3D are mandatory	- Create 2D and 3D technical drawings and models using AutoCAD software based on the instructions provided by senior engineers and Senior AutoCAD Operator. - Revise existing drawings and models as necessary to incorporate feedback or design changes. - Ensure that all drawings and models adhere to industry standards and specifications, including those related to dimensions, tolerances, and materials. - Collaborate with other team members and ensure that drawings and models are accurate and complete.	8 Years

Applications comprising Application letter for a specific position, Curriculum Vitae with not more than 5 pages, Certified Educational Certificates, and ID copy, must be hand delivered to the place/s mentioned below or emailed to [wres.recruitment@wresjv.com](mailto:wres.recruitment@wresjv.com) in read only PDF (ONE DOCUMENT, if not it will be disqualified). Applicants must list work related references with contact details of referees (one should be from current/previous supervisor or employer). **Candidates can apply only for the advertised position, otherwise they will be disqualified for any other positions they apply for.** Submission of applications for employment must be on or before **8<sup>th</sup> January 2024 @ 5 pm.** Only Shortlisted Candidates will be contacted.

WRES JV Office, Bishops Place, Tona-Kholo Road Unit B1 in Maseru West, Lesotho

**NB: POTENTIAL EMPLOYEES WILL BE SUBJECTED TO A PRE-MEDICAL ENTRY CHECK UP AND MAY ONLY BE HIRED UPON FITNESS CONFIRMED BY A MEDICAL PRACTITIONER. WRES JV IS ZERO TOLERANT TO ALCOHOL AND DRUG ABUSE.**

14439M&G



AUDITOR-GENERAL  
SOUTH AFRICA

Auditing to build public confidence

## ERRATUM

**NB: In respect of RFQ - RFQ:01/24/25/Postbank, the AGSA gives notice of amendment to details of a non-compulsory briefing session and an extension of the closing date as stated in the revised RFQ.**

All other conditions of the RFQ remain the same. Bidders that downloaded the RFQ by **13 December 2023** are kindly requested to download the updated versions of the RFQ document.



**USAID**  
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE



## TERMS OF REFERENCE CONSULTANT FOR ESWATINI 3RD INTEGRATED BIO-BEHAVIORAL SURVEILLANCE SURVEY AND POPULATION SIZE ESTIMATION AMONG KEY POPULATION (KP)

### Background

FHI 360 is a nonprofit human development organization dedicated in improving lives in lasting ways by advancing integrated, locally driven solutions. FHI 360 serves more than 70 countries and all U.S. states and territories. FHI 360 Eswatini is implementing, The Meeting Targets and Maintaining Epidemic Control (EpiC) project, designed to break through persistent barriers to the 95-95-95 goals and promote self-reliant management of national HIV programs. EpiC Eswatini works with local partners, including KP-led organizations and supports the Ministry of Health (MOH) to coordinate KP interventions. EpiC is providing support to MOH and its partners to implement the third Integrated Bio-Behavioral Surveillance Study (IBSS) and size estimation among KP (MSM, FSW, TG, and PWID) to generate updated data to guide future program planning. This will be done through funding support from USAID\_PEPFAR.

### Scope of Work

To conduct the IBSS and Size Estimation in Eswatini, EpiC Eswatini seeks to engage a consultancy firm to provide overall technical support in the implementation of the study, including finalization of the study protocol, development of study tools, oversight of study implementation, data analysis and final study report. The consultancy firm will work with a locally based organization that is conversant with the local environment and has a study team based in Eswatini to support study implementation.

Primary IBSS and Size Estimate Study Objectives:

Primary objectives:

- To estimate progress towards 95-95-95 targets among KP in Eswatini
- To identify behavioral and structural factors associated with HIV and STIs among KP.
- To estimate the population size of KP living in Eswatini.
- To measure the recency of HIV infections among KP in Eswatini

Secondary objectives:

- To estimate health service uptake and reasons for non-engagement in HIV services among KP
- To characterize the prevalence and kinds of stigma experienced
- To estimate the prevalence of HIV and STIs among KP in Eswatini
- To assess the extent of injecting drug use and HIV risk behavior among PWIDs in Mbabane and Manzini corridor through a formative assessment.

Detailed Description of Tasks to be Performed:

- Receive orientation on the KP program and the status of the current protocol development process from the study core team.
- Coordinate with FHI 360 EpiC Technical Team and the study core team to conduct the following activities:
  - Review and lead the finalization of all study documents, including IBSS and Size Estimation protocol, informed consent forms, and study guides.
  - Support submission to FHI 360 and local ethics committees and follow-on reviews.
  - Develop and/or review standard operation procedures (SOPs) for the study.
  - Engage and support a local implementing organization which will be responsible for logistics of field implementation.
  - Conduct regular (to be finalized upon award of local organization and identification of local study lead) study implementation reviews, including data quality reviews.
  - Support in the engagement of key stakeholders including implementers, MOH/ENAP
  - Attend study core team and study advisory team meetings as needed to provide update on implementation progress.
  - Develop, or adapt, all required training materials for study implementation and lead training of the study teams.
  - Provide technical support to the study team and stakeholders involved in the study.
  - Provide overall oversight of the study implementation and ensure adherence to the approved protocol.
  - Develop and share a study analysis plan.
  - Conduct study data analysis including planning a data analysis workshop, leading and facilitating workshop, and integrate stakeholder inputs into the analysis and report.
  - Draft preliminary and final study report.
  - Disseminate the study report to the study core team and stakeholders for validation.
  - Complete a final report of consultancy support provided to the program.

**Duration of Exercise is February 2024 – July 2024**

### Location of Work

The study will take place in Eswatini (both in Mbabane and with daily travel nationally as required).

### Timetable and Address for Submission

All proposals should be submitted to [eswatini.recruitment@fhi360.org](mailto:eswatini.recruitment@fhi360.org) by **5 pm UTC+2 December 22nd, 2023.**

### Experience

- Knowledge in designing and implementing IBSS and Size Estimation studies.
- Significant and proven experience, at least five years, in supporting relevant IBSS and Size Estimate study methodologies.
- A consultancy firm with the relevant professional experts in research, public health, epidemiology etc.
- 8+ years of experience
- Relevant experience in the Southern Africa context.
- Excellent analytical and bio-statistical skills including various sampling methodologies used in IBSS studies.
- The consultant should have qualitative and quantitative data collection, analysis, interpreting, and report writing skills.
- Strong communication skills, able to effectively present information clearly and respond appropriately to questions from stakeholders and study core team.
- Strong supervisory and organizational skills
- Ability to meet deadlines.
- Advanced proficiency in the use of relevant statistical software to support the proposed study.
- Fluent in written and spoken English

### Required Documentation

Interested applicants who meet the required profile are invited to submit their CV (including references to relevant studies and reports and updated no less than 3 months prior to date of submission).

### Compensation and Payment Schedule

Compensation will be at an agreed daily rate, based on LOE provided. Payment will be made based on receipt and acceptance of the deliverables and schedule outlined in each individual consultancy award



CIVIL AVIATION AUTHORITY OF BOTSWANA

## INVITATION TO TENDER

The **Civil Aviation Authority of Botswana (CAAB)** is a statutory body mandated to provide safe, regular, secure and efficient use and development of civil aviation in Botswana. **CAAB** invites companies with relevant experience in similar work to tender for the following service:

### Tender Reference No. CAAB 29/23-24/GEN

- Sealed Tender offers are invited for the provision of Services for **TENDER FOR SUPPLY AND INSTALLATION OF AIR TRAFFIC SERVICES MESSAGE HANDLING, AERONAUTICAL INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND BILLING SYSTEMS AT CIVIL AVIATION AUTHORITY OF BOTSWANA**
- The Procuring Entity is Civil Aviation Authority of Botswana, Directorate of Air Navigation Services.
- Procurement Method is: **Open International Bidding**
- Tenderers who are domiciled in Botswana must, in order to be considered for the award of the contract, be registered with the Public Procurement and Asset Disposal Board in the following categories: **Code: 118** (Telecommunication Services)  
**Sub code(s): 05** (Installation and maintenance of Telecommunications equipment and Systems) **AND Code: 15** (Civil Aviation / Meteorological Electronics Works)  
**Sub code(s): 01** (Navigational aids) and **02** (Aeronautical communications)  
**Grade: E**
- Foreign Companies must be in possession of documentation defining the constitution or legal status, place of registration and principal place of business.
- Preference margins will be applied to qualifying bidders in line with the Economic Diversification Drive (EDD) as per EDD certificate. Eligible bidders must submit the relevant and valid EDD Certificate (Local Contractors).
- The physical address for collection of tender documents is: **Sir Seretse Khama International Airport, Terminal Building, Office 1001, 1<sup>st</sup> floor.**
- Documents may be collected during working hours between **08:00hs** and **16:00hrs** from **14<sup>th</sup> December 2023**.
- A non-refundable fee of **BWP 2000.00** or **BWP 1000.00** for youth registered companies (domiciled locally) upon production of identity cards and company documents of Shareholders, payable by cash or Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT) made out in favor of the Civil Aviation Authority of Botswana is required on collection of the tender documents.
- Queries or clarifications relating to the Tender document may be addressed in writing not later than **22<sup>nd</sup> January 2024** to **Chief Procurement Officer, Tel No.+267 3688200, Email address: tenders@caab.co.bw**
- A compulsory site visit and pre-tender meeting with representatives of the Procuring Entity will take place at Terminal Building, Sir Seretse Khama International Airport on **16<sup>th</sup> January 2024** starting at **1000 hrs, CAT**.
- The closing date and time for receipt of sealed tender offers is **1000 hours, CAT**, on **09<sup>th</sup> February 2024**. Tender opening is **1030 hours** on **09<sup>th</sup> February 2024**.
- Late tender offers will not be accepted.
- The Bid Submission Method is: **Two Envelope Submission Method in which the original and all copies of the Technical Offer are placed in one separate sealed envelope, whilst the original and all copies of the Financial Offer are enclosed in another separate sealed envelope. The two sealed envelopes are then placed in one outer securely sealed envelope. Failure to do so will lead to disqualification of the bid.**
- Securely sealed outer envelope clearly marked "**Tender Reference No. CAAB 29/23-24/GEN TENDER FOR SUPPLY AND INSTALLATION OF AIR TRAFFIC SERVICES MESSAGE HANDLING, AERONAUTICAL INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND BILLING SYSTEMS AT CIVIL AVIATION AUTHORITY OF BOTSWANA**" shall be delivered to: **The Chief Procurement Officer, Civil Aviation Authority of Botswana, Sir Seretse Khama International Airport, Terminal Building, Office 1001, 1<sup>st</sup> Floor, Gaborone, Botswana.**
- The name and address of the bidder should be clearly marked on the envelope.
- The Public Procurement and Asset Disposal Board's Standardised Conditions of Tender for Services apply to this procurement, for which all the applicable Tender Data is contained in the tender documents.

**(Notwithstanding anything in the foregoing, the Government of Botswana is not bound to accept the lowest or any tender offer.)**

Vision  
To be a world class provider of safe, secure and sustainable aviation services

Mission  
To effectively and efficiently regulate and promote a safe, secure and sustainable aviation industry in line with international standards and norms

Values  
Integrity | Accountability | Collaboration | Customers Focus | Continuous Improvement

#### Legal Notice

##### DEPARTMENT VAN ENERIE

Kennisgewing ten opsigte van 'n lisensie aansoek ingevolge die **Wet op Petroleumprodukte, 1977 (Wet nr. 120 van 1977)** Hierdie kennisgewing dien om partye wat belangstel / geaffekteer word in te lig dat **HIGH VALUE TRADING (Edms) Bpk** hierna genoem die aansoeker, 'n aansoek

ingedien het vir 'n **GROOTHANDEL** lisensie met aansoek nommer **E/2023/12/05/0004**

**35 BURKLEIGH CRESCENT, DURBAN**

Die doel van hierdie aansoek is dat 'n lisensie aan die aansoeker toegeken word petroleum groothandel aktiwiteite te onderneem soos uiteengesit in die aansoek. Reëlins kan getref word om die aansoek dokumentasie te besigtig deur die Kontroleur van

Petroleum produkte te skakel by:

\*Tel: (031) 335 9635  
\* Faks: of  
\* E-pos: **Mapholisa. Thisikhawe@dmre.gov.za**

Enige beswaar teen die uitreik van 'n lisensie ten opsigte van hierdie aansoek, wat duidelik die aansoek nommer hierbo moet aanhaal, moet ingedien word by die Kontroleur van Petroleumprodukte binne 'n tydperk van twintig

(20) werksdae by die ondergenoemde fisieke op posadres

##### Fisiese adres

Die Kontroleur van Petroleumprodukte Departement van Energie 333 Anton Lembede Straat, Durban Bay House Durban

##### Posadres

Die Kontroleur van Petroleumprodukte Departement van Energie Privaatsak X 54375 Durban 4000

#### Legal Notice

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ingedien het vir 'n **GROOTHANDEL** lisensie met aansoek nommer **E/2023/12/05/0005**

**21 GRACE AVENUE WESTVILLE DURBAN**

Die doel van hierdie aansoek is dat 'n lisensie aan die aansoeker toegeken word petroleum groothandel aktiwiteite te onderneem soos uiteengesit in die aansoek. Reëlins kan getref word om die aansoek dokumentasie te besigtig deur die Kontroleur

van Petroleum produkte te skakel by:

\*Tel: (031) 335 9635  
\* Faks: of  
\* E-pos: **Mapholisa. Thisikhawe@dmre.gov.za**

Enige beswaar teen die uitreik van 'n lisensie ten opsigte van hierdie aansoek, wat duidelik die aansoek nommer hierbo moet aanhaal, moet ingedien word by die Kontroleur van Petroleumprodukte binne 'n tydperk van twintig

(20) werksdae by die ondergenoemde fisieke op posadres

##### Fisiese adres

Die Kontroleur van Petroleumprodukte Departement van Energie 333 Anton Lembede Straat, Durban Bay House, Durban

##### Posadres

Die Kontroleur van Petroleumprodukte Departement van Energie Privaatsak X 54375 Durban 4000



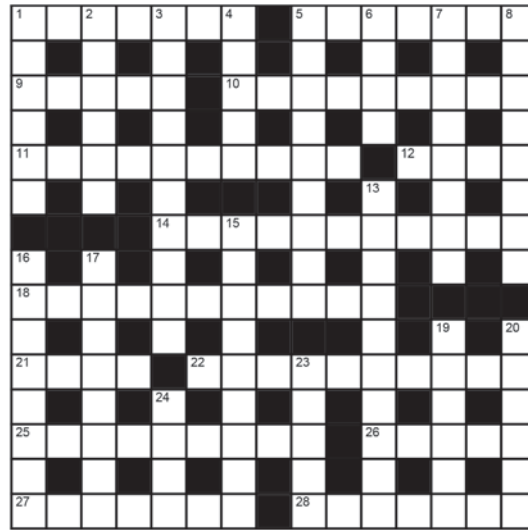
# Puzzles

## THE ORIGINAL SOUTH AFRICAN CRYPTIC CROSSWORD

JDE 409  
by George Euvrard

- World class — and from our perspective, not that of the UK or USA
- Multilingual — every crossword has one Afrikaans (marked <sup>a</sup>) and one isiXhosa (marked <sup>x</sup>) word
- Fresh & unique — compiled the previous week especially for the *Mail & Guardian*

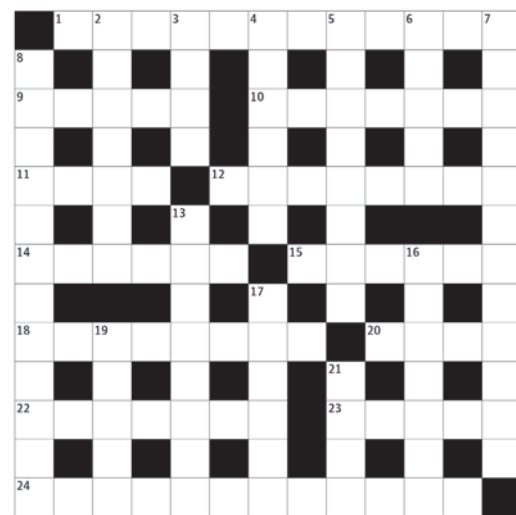
- Across**
- 1 All the money at once PLUS Mum — that's a rip-off! (4,3)  
5 Cost of flying is excellent, right? Sounds reasonable (7)  
9 Eventually feed a horse with a weed (5)  
10 Making refined phone which limits nervous fear and the unknown (9)  
11 Go quiet behind car part (10)  
12 Rant about mountain lake (4)  
14 Romeo loses face in silly duel about greed, starting to eat too much (11)  
18 Choose desperately to rely on substance to combat dehydration (11)  
21 Louts destroy sofa (4)  
22 He finds capital relaxation with medic, a surprising rise (10)  
25 Rebellious denial of mine follows, dupes, changes assumed name (9)  
26 Force one politician to East London (5)  
27 Quick return can tear toes apart (7)  
28 Take it before muse flies away (7)
- Down**
- 1 Ballad I daringly covered was pretentious (2-2-2)  
2<sup>a</sup> Blimey, glossy tights are half off (6)  
3 Unfairly blames Garden Route animals (10)  
4 Edge up to the endless merriment (5)  
5 Fanciful song *Years going around Blonde* (4-5)  
6 Heap of boats that can't start (4)  
7 Friendly but can I take lead in conversation? (8)



- 8 Produce English bid having lost time (8)  
13 A geek sets up a queue in this rush (10)  
15 Queen Cole was lost in flow of words (9)  
16 Feel depressed and raise blame poorly (5,3)  
17 Flesh out real spy regularly with guide-book (4-4)  
19<sup>x</sup> Soap one's kept in deep humility (6)  
20 Screen/Stream in final broadcasting privilege (6)  
23 Mad block? (3,2)  
24 Tots and dotty Dads (4)

## QUICK CROSSWORD

- Across**
- 1 Contract (a disease) (4,4,4)  
9 Thespian (5)  
10 Tract of land (7)  
11 Small island (4)  
12 Where to pay before you leave (4,4)  
14 Intensely passionate (6)  
15 Container for burning incense (6)  
18 Appealing to others (8)  
20 Affirmative response (informal) (4)  
22 Wipe out (7)  
23 North-easterly US state (5)  
24 Lethargy (12)
- Down**
- 2 In the open air (7)  
3 Makes mistakes (4)  
4 Relating to bone — so late (anag) (6)  
5 Water between the UK and mainland Europe (5,3)  
6 Representation (5)  
7 Nose wiper (12)  
8 Becomes a nun (5,3,4)  
13 Untouched — spinet (8)  
16 Taxonomic group whose members can interbreed (7)  
17 Buries (6)  
19 Opens wide (5)  
21 Gulf sultanate (4)



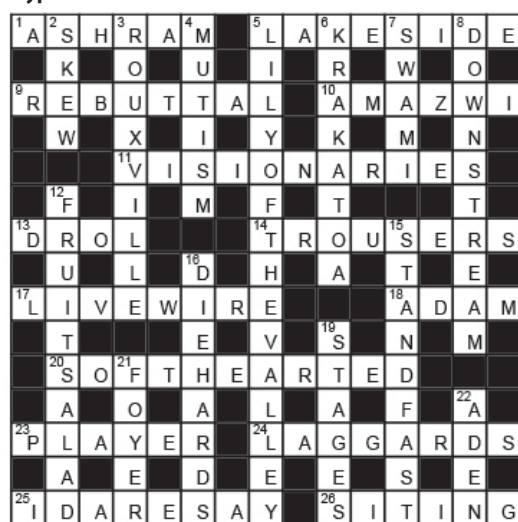
14 892

## LAST WEEK'S SOLUTIONS

Quick Crossword 14 891

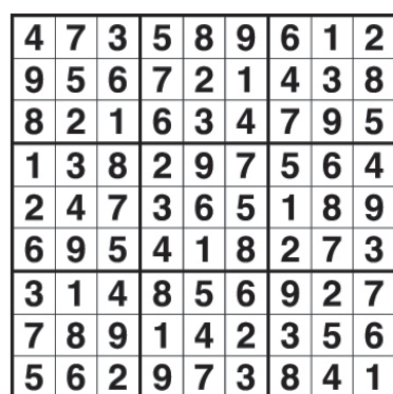


Cryptic Crossword 408

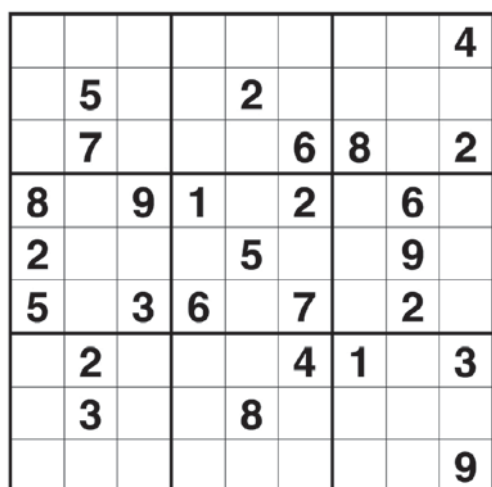


**How to play Sudoku:** Place a number from 1 to 9 in each empty cell so that each row, each column and each 3x3 block contains all the numbers from 1 to 9.

## LAST WEEK'S SOLUTION



## SUDOKU



# Books

## Negotiating the AI galaxy

This is an edited extract from Arthur Goldstuck's new book *The Hitchhiker's Guide to AI*

And now for something completely differentiated. At least, from a geographical perspective. One of the most convenient AI tools for business is a platform called MobileGPT. Bear in mind that most AI text models as well as images are trained on content produced largely in the Western world, and the biases of the northern hemisphere dominate — whether cultural or seasonal. Little wonder that, across the African continent, the platforms, services and possibilities that are emerging around the technology seem distant and almost irrelevant.

It was a delight, then, to discover a significant breakthrough in its use emerging from South Africa. Bertha Kgekong, a Johannesburg-based self-taught developer, founded a company called Tati and built MobileGPT as an AI assistant for WhatsApp users. She told me it was aimed at anyone across the globe who wanted to use ChatGPT and other generative AI platforms on their handsets.

I contacted MobileGPT via WhatsApp, and it immediately offered me a menu with a wide range of options, from having a normal conversation with ChatGPT and generating an AI image using Stable Diffusion to generating a formal document like a lawyer's letter or conducting live research via LiveData.

Producing useable AI images proved challenging. Anyone who has used DALL-E, an image generator from ChatGPT creator OpenAI, will know initial results from such tools can be underwhelming. One must finetune the MobileGPT prompt several times to get usable images.

MobileGPT offers a free trial for only 24 hours, after which it requires a \$20 monthly subscription fee. That's not expensive — it's the same cost as the Pro version of ChatGPT, but it adds multiple services on top of the chatbot.

The chat option works as well as ChatGPT, since one is not using WhatsApp capabilities but using messaging as an interface to ChatGPT. I asked it to write a news article about itself, and it told me: "MobileGPT, a revolutionary new AI assistant for WhatsApp users, has just been launched, promising to provide unparalleled support and assistance to users from around the world."

"This new assistant is programmed to detect the language of each individual user and respond accordingly, making communication clear and effortless. Its knowledge of a wide range of topics makes MobileGPT a valuable resource for anyone who could use a little extra help."

"MobileGPT provides casual, friendly replies with emojis, making its interactions with users welcoming and relaxed. It is always ready to assist users with any task or answer any questions they may have. While MobileGPT has limitations like any AI, it will always direct users to the resources or suggest alternative solutions to meet their needs."

"Overall, MobileGPT is already mak-

ing significant waves in the WhatsApp community, and it is easy to see why. Its ease of use and expansive knowledge make it an invaluable resource for users from all over the world."

Of course, a human could have written that with more nuance and creativity, but it does the basic work, much as users have experienced with ChatGPT itself. It's not there to do the job for you but to provide the basic framework or information from which you can build your own work.

Its biggest strength may well turn out to be the access it gives to an AI-powered document generator that produces industry-standard documents like invoices, letters and CVs.

I signed on to the paid version and asked it to provide an introductory article on a business topic for a research project we were about to begin. It produced a highly competent document, which I could use, not in the report, but to brief my team on elements that needed to be included.

It clearly still has some way to go, as it is limited by the capabilities, permissions and functionality of the AI services on which it draws. However, it is a wonderful example of how the world of AI for business can be leveraged by anyone, and from anywhere.

### Made better in South Africa

In September 2023, one of South Africa's "challenger" banks — newcomers taking on the established giants of banking — entered the AI space in earnest.

TymeBank, through a division called Retail Capital, launched the country's first homegrown large language model (LLM) called ChatSME.

Intended to help entrepreneurs grow their businesses, the AI model aimed to provide easy access to knowledge and resources.

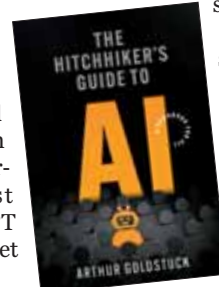
I asked Retail Capital brand and HR executive Erin Louw whether this was merely an interface to ChatGPT, since it also drew on OpenAI's LLM.

She acknowledged ChatSME uses the LLM built by OpenAI, but with a local edge: "This is Retail Capital's own LLM-powered application that leverages OpenAI's LLMs. ChatSME distinguishes itself by integrating all the content Retail Capital has created and curated over its 12 years — drawing from an extensive library of blogs, white papers, books, survey results, press releases and emails — and that is why it is authentic."

In short, it would unlock the benefits offered by ChatGPT, Bard and similar technologies, but with more up-to-date information — and more relevance.

"We know that while business owners are idea-rich, they often find themselves time-, resource- and expertise-poor," said Louw. "This means they spend their time in their businesses as opposed to on their businesses. These are the people who stand to gain the most from productivity tools like ChatSME for content generation, handling of routine tasks and, importantly, data analysis for making well-informed business decisions."

*The Hitchhiker's Guide to AI* is published by Pan Macmillan.



# Scratch that: Unkindest cuts

Researcher delves into SABC censors' logic – and lack thereof – during apartheid

Charles Leonard

Each SABC censor had their own weapon of choice in the bad old days. They used whatever was sharp, or available, for as long as it took to properly scratch vinyl records to make them unplayable.

John Pepper, an American visual historian and specialist in modern African art and photography, has just published *Notes on Cuts*.

There have been several in-depth studies on censorship in South Africa during apartheid but this one is unique. It is a vinyl record and book project that researches the complexity of censorship by exploring records that were physically damaged by state broadcasters at the SABC to prevent them being heard.

“One used a pair of tweezers, another a razor, and some used a pen, others a china marker,” he writes in the fascinating, detailed and informative book which accompanies the vinyl, released by Nothing to Commit Records.

The actual record is a stark reflection of the madness of the apartheid era, with re-recordings of selected songs which were brutalised and/or censored, scratches and all.

It consists of 16 “short cuts” on side A, and on side B, which is titled “Longer Grooves”, four longer damaged tracks.

Pepper continues: “One former staff member described to me that when he started his job in 1980, he was given a long nail, a stack of records, and a list of items to cut on each album. But this nail hurt his hand, he said, especially on days when there was a tall stack of records to scratch. So, he devised a softer handle by wrapping rubber bands at the top. That did the job.”

The scratching job was mainly done at lunchtime and mostly by secretaries, Pepper told me in an interview via Zoom.

It wasn't systematic at all, he said. “And maybe they weren't paying attention so much, so they cut the wrong ones by mistake.”

The idea for *Notes on Cuts* had its roots in 1995 when Pepper was living in Johannesburg, doing research on South African black modernist artists for his dissertation. He went crate-digging at a second-hand record store across from the Market Theatre in Newtown, Johannesburg.

There were thousands of albums for sale with markings such as “SABC Bantu Diskoteek” and “SABC Cancelled” on them. It indicated they had been de-accessioned by the SABC, as the corporation was throwing out lots of albums.

Many others eventually ended up in dumpsters, where people would melt down the plastic and send it to Zimbabwe, where there was still a record-pressing plant.

Pepper looked through those SABC-stamped records, including the transcription discs that the broadcaster produced in its own studios.

“I also started to notice that some of them had the titles scratched out on the discs or they had a sticker that said, ‘Avoid,’” he tells me. “And I would open it up.

“And sometimes they had also scored the record, the vinyl, with



**The first cut is the deepest: *Notes on Cuts* is a vinyl record and book project by US historian John Pepper which looks at censorship during the apartheid era by way of records that were physically damaged by censors at the SABC.**

a sharp object of some sort. So, I bought some of those just to think, puzzle about them. And I had heard that those were the internal censorship marks.”

Occasionally, as an arts professor, he would hold up these broken records in his classes saying: “See, this is what censorship looks like.”

In 2014 and 2015, Pepper was living in South Africa again, doing research. He brought his scratched records along, just in case, even though he thought “these and similar items relating to the internal management of apartheid” would have been “tossed into the garbage as that regime fell out of power and its personnel sought to hide their tracks”. Fortunately, he was wrong.

The SABC had centralised everything and kept only single copies of the originals – including the censored ones – in the record library. Pepper got permission to methodically sift through these shelves. He tells me: “And I thought, ‘Oh,

I see.’ You threw out the extras and you kept the originals, even the ones that were scratched, so you couldn't play them. So, then I thought, ‘What the fuck?’

“Like, ‘Oh my God, this is weirder than I had thought. Let me look at all of these.’”

He went in once or twice a week for months and looked at every single record. And every time one had a scratch, Pepper would make a note.

He wrote: “First, I had to submerge myself in the dust of this huge propaganda bureaucracy.

“I wanted to attempt to understand it against itself, in some kind of more fully visceral or sensorial way. I wanted to use my senses against the censor, to exorcise the cuts by holding them close, rubbing up against them and feeling their contours.

“In response, I wanted to get under the skin of this archive, to do more than recite the numbers and the institutional history, and find a way to have these silenced surfaces speak

again,” he says.

“Unlike most earlier researchers, I was able to spend significant time handling and examining the vinyl disks. I came to consider them as archives of inscriptions – as worthy of consideration as a collection of paper records.”

After looking at thousands of records, it became clear what “initially had seemed to me to be a monolithic and highly controlled enterprise appeared, on closer inspection, to have played out in an ad-hoc, or sometimes even sloppy, manner.

“Some say ‘krap’ (scratch), others ‘nie goed nie’ (no good), others ‘afgekeur’ (declined) or ‘banned’. Still others were marked ‘avoid’, ‘not available’, ‘restricted’ or ‘not suitable’.

“Yes, even those transcription disks, paid for by the SABC, recorded in SABC studios by, in some cases, the SABC's own orchestras, and pressed and packed at the SABC record factory. These, too, fell under

the scribbly pen and the knife,” Pepper says.

It is important to note that, during the apartheid era, not many records were banned or, as they termed it at the SABC, “gazetted”. The formal government-appointed censorship body, the Directorate of Publications, only responded to complaints – and took decisions about banning material that was submitted to it.

Fewer than 150 music records were officially banned between 1963 and 1992. It wasn't necessary because the SABC did the job for the regime, preventing “undesirable” songs from being played.

Artists were required to submit their music for scrutiny by an SABC body, called the Central Record Acceptance Committee, which interpreted the Publications Act of 1974 strenuously and with vigour.

They met weekly to review all the music intended for airplay for evidence of anything that failed to comply with government policies. They censored thousands of songs.

The official, internal no-no list cited sex, drugs, blasphemy, indecent speech and political lyrics – also songs suggesting interracial mixing of any sort.

The committee was spooked by slang and the mixing of what they considered “national languages”.

“You know, a lot of the stuff was not political,” Pepper tells me from going through thousands of records on the SABC shelves. “It was more about sex and drugs. Immorality stuff, anti-Christian things.

“So, lots of rock 'n roll records obviously were cut. But then, [boeremusiek artist] Nico Carstens' records were cut because sometimes the titles were a little ‘risky’.

“They couldn't say the word ‘witch doctor’, as in his song, *Witchdoctor*. So, they cut that song, even though it's instrumental. Instrumental jazz pieces would be cut because maybe the song title was ... ‘suggestive’.

“They didn't want to have to say the word ‘moaning’ on air. So, they would have to cut that song.”

Their decisions to scratch weren't consistent. “And they were kind of just making it up as they went along,” says Pepper, and as he writes: “Some raunchy disco records were cut, but many were not cut. Christian choral music was cut, some square country music cut ...”

Also, many of the prohibited records could be bought in shops, for example, Stevie Wonder's. He became persona non grata after he received an Oscar for the song *I Just Called To say I Love You*, which he dedicated to Nelson Mandela.

A former head of the approval committee, who headed the committee during a time of political upheaval and intense paranoia in the SABC's corridors, told Pepper: “But, remember, that was my job. And my cock was on the block.

“For example, we got this song in – ‘We don't need no education’ [Pink Floyd's 1979 *Another Brick in the Wall*]. I really didn't know what it meant, and it was ‘passed’ by mistake and played on air. I was almost fired the next day. I get a call from upper management saying: ‘We are not allowed to incite the people.’”

Pepper quotes former SABC record library staffer who told him: “Some of the sounds were so beautiful, so interesting, it hurts you to scratch. But those were the instructions, you cannot ignore that. It was terrible the way that apartheid got into our skin, into our bodies.”

## Music

# Inside the minds of the censors

Decisions about what music to ban at the SABC were inconsistent, and – what’s worse – random

Charles Leonard

**N**otes on Cuts is not an easy listen. This book-plus-record project, written and recorded by art historian and scholar John Pepper, researched music censorship by the SABC during apartheid. The record has 20 recordings – 16 short and four long – of these censored vinyl and shellac records.

There is a range of genres: boeremusiek, jazz, marrabena from Mozambique, mbaqanga, country, famo from Lesotho, jive, reggae, choral and Afrock.

It hurts a record collector to hear these damaged songs. The photographs in the book illustrate Pepper’s explanation that the cutting and marking – Xs, straight lines, wavy lines, thick ones, daisy chains, loops, flowery scribbles across the grooves – “appear as arbitrary as the choices of the records to be censored”.

Pepper’s entertaining sleeve notes

come with background info, image analysis of the scratches and other signage, and his researched, insightful and subjective commentary on “the look and feel of censorship”.

Included are two songs by American country singer Jim Reeves, whom Pepper describes as “a treacherous baritone with milquetoast phrasing”. He toured apartheid South Africa in 1962 and 1963, was adored by conservative audiences, recorded two albums in Afrikaans, and starred in the local film *Kimberley Jim*.

Reeves was one of the highest-selling artists in SA, yet censors scratched his album *The International Jim Reeves*, making the songs *Auf Wiederseh’n Sweetheart* and *The Old Kalahari* unplayable.

“Perhaps the way he mixed languages (German and English, Afrikaans and English) was frowned upon by the apartheid ideologues for whom separateness was everything.”

The Elite Swingsters’ *Bophelong* is an upbeat instrumental single from

1961. Its enthusiastic scratches “look less like a dance chart and more like characters in a runic alphabet, or chromosomes, or maybe whiplashes”, reckons Pepper.

But why was it scratched? The song is a shoutout to the Vaal township Bophelong (place of life), near Sharpeville and Boipatong. A year before its release, the area was a site of mass protests against passbooks, leading to the Sharpeville massacre.

Pepper speculates: “Perhaps it was deemed ‘too soon’ to even read on air the names of places that had recently been the sites of violence by police?”

Calling the censorship inconsistent is an understatement. One of the longer tracks Pepper included on *Notes on Cuts* is The Oscar Peterson Trio’s *Misty* from their LP *Eloquence*. This jazz standard could have fallen foul of the censor’s sharp object because it was a sad song – that has happened to other sad ones.

“When I asked about songs like this, I was told by a former review-committee member that it ‘depended on the mood’ at the time,” Pepper wrote. “Meaning when the political climate was hot, the committee was



Off air: Count Basie appeared on the BBC in 1968, but that’s unlikely to have been allowed at the SABC. Photo: David Redfern/Getty Images

more paranoid. It might also mean that someone might be in a sour mood one day and that could affect their judgment. Could even personal things like a love gone wrong mean they’d cut the sad songs?”

But Pepper is an upbeat listener, even though “with their cuts, the censor has taken over the beats. Only at the end is there little respite. The cuts quiet down, the piano opens out like a rainbow, and the cymbals splash like sunshine after a tempest.”

Still, knowing these irreplaceable records were damaged because of the perverse beliefs of apartheid mandarins makes me sad. I was most upset about the last two tracks.

*La La* and *Bayeza* are off Assagai’s 1972 release, *Zimbabwe*. It’s a record I have been eyeing for a long time, but it sells for an eye-watering R5700 for

a near mint used copy on the global vinyl marketplace Discogs.

Assagai were a short-lived jazz-rock group of South African musicians living in exile in the UK: Dudu Pukwana (alto sax), Louis Moholo (drums), Mongezi Feza (trumpet), Bizo Mngqikana (tenor sax), Martha Mdenge (vocals), and Terri Quaye and Smiley de Jonnes (percussion).

The band must have really scared the censors. Pepper writes: “At the SABC Record Library, this record is wrapped like contraband, incognito in only a brown paper sleeve.”

While both the band and title are blacked out, and those two songs defaced, the record was still kept on the shelf. Pepper asks: “Does that mean the other songs could still be played on air, without even mentioning the band’s name?”

## Uniq Brows

Partner content

## Sculpt, shine, sizzle: UniQBrows’ guide to effortless summer beauty

Embrace an elevated standard of beauty this festive season

**T**ime is a precious commodity, and self-care is not just a luxury but a necessity. UniQBrows invites every woman who recognises the value of grooming as an essential act of self-love to delve into these must-try summertime treatments. Our efficient and effective beauty solutions are designed for the modern woman who refuses to compromise on sophistication in her quest for timeless radiance. UniQ gives us some summer beauty tips that are efficient, effective and embody the ultimate act of self-care.

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Immerse yourself in sophistication with permanent makeup. From flawlessly applied eyeliner to enduringly luscious lips, these enhancements deliver a polished look that withstands the elements, providing you with an immaculate appearance without needing constant touch-ups. Elevate your aesthetic to unparalleled grace.

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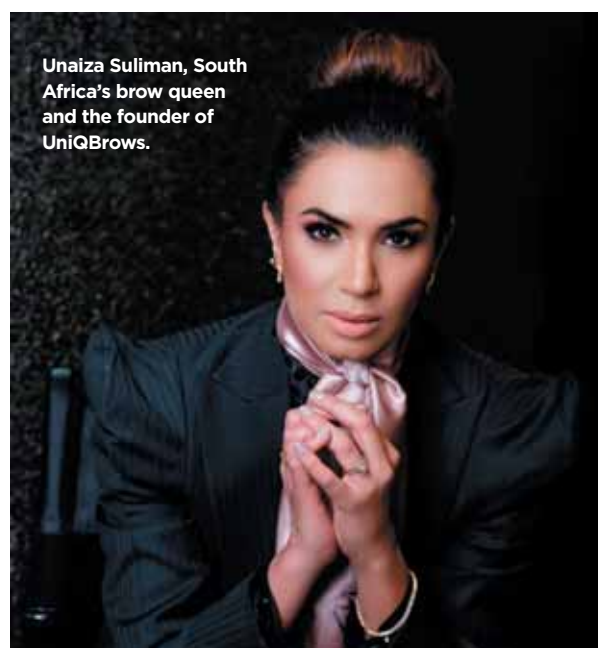
Our DMK MediPedi is the only advanced foot treatment for you. It’s 100% anti-bacterial and 100% anti-fungal, and removes the rough, dry, hard skin build-up for fabulous feet all summer long.

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UniQ introduces a curated collection of stunning piercings that seamlessly meld tradition with contemporary flair. From delicate ear cuffs to bold nose rings, each piece is a testament to artistry in adornment, reflecting the strength and sophistication of African heritage. Allow your piercings to be a curated expression of your refined aesthetic. To embrace all the summertime fun you’ve already planned, book your piercings a couple of weeks before you leave for your holiday.

### UniQ Brows magic: Precision enhancement for a timeless appeal

Embrace the transformative power of UniQBrows’ eyebrow solutions. A quick fix, our precision ensures that your eyebrows remain an exquisite frame for your countenance, impervious to the effects of the summer sun. For a beautiful, quick fix with lasting



Unaiza Suliman, South Africa’s brow queen and the founder of UniQBrows.

results, the popular brow lamination is a must for full, beautifully designed brows. Elevate your facial symmetry and define your presence with brows that stand as a timeless work of art.

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UniQ redefines the pursuit of radiance with meticulously crafted bronzers and highlighters as the sole distributors of Sameer Khouzami. Achieve a sun-kissed glow that captivates the eye with a few brush strokes.



It’s December, the time for summertime treatments and some self-care.

### Lash extensions and brow laminations: Effortless glamour with every blink

Elevate your gaze further with UniQBrows’ exquisite lash extensions and brow laminations. Revel in the allure of long, luscious lashes that frame your eyes with natural elegance, and indulge in the sculpted perfection of laminated brows that stay impeccably in place.

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UniQ introduces the latest innovation in body contouring with cool sculpting fat freezing. Bid farewell to stubborn pockets of fat as this non-invasive procedure sculpts your physique, revealing the contours you desire. Enjoy the benefits of a toned silhouette without the downtime of traditional procedures, ensuring you step into summer with confidence and grace.

Embrace an elevated standard of beauty this summer that means no downtime at all. From enduring elegance to refined relaxation, timeless adornments, masterful radiance, and innovative body sculpting, enjoy summer 2023 your way with UniQBrows.



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# Under international skies

The spirit of the original group formed in the 1960s is still present today

Lesego Chopape

**T**he a capella masters Ladysmith Black Mambazo could easily have just basked in the ample and deserved glory of their monumental *South African Legacy Tour*. This musical journey began in May at the Joburg Theatre and ends at the State Theatre in Pretoria on 15 December.

This ahead of yet another tour to the US next year.

The isicathamiya nine-piece has a long and glorious career that started in December 1960, when it was founded by the late Joseph Shabalala, that first incarnation as “Ezimnyama” (“The Black Ones”).

In 1964, they became Ladysmith Black Mambazo, named after Shabalala’s KwaZulu-Natal hometown. Black is a reference to oxen, the strongest of all farm animals, and Mambazo is the Zulu word for “axe”, a symbol of the group’s ability to “chop down” any singing rival who might challenge them.

Their collective voices were so tight, and their harmonies so polished, that by the end of the 1960s they were banned from competitions – although they were welcome to participate as entertainers.

A radio broadcast in 1970 opened the door to their first record contract. It was the beginning of an ambitious discography that includes more than 50 recordings. Their debut album in 1973, *Amabutho*, brought the hugely popular group their first of countless gold records.

But, as the *Rough Guide to World Music* wrote, by the mid-1980s the boom was over, with many urban black South Africans dismissing their sound as “hick”.

Just in time, in the mid-1980s, Paul Simon heard their music and was blown away.

He visited South Africa and incorporated the group’s rich harmonies into his famous *Graceland* album. He recorded two tracks he composed with Shabalala, *Homeless* and *Diamonds on the Soles of her Shoes*, which became two of the greatest



**National treasure:** Ladysmith Black Mambazo performs at the Joburg Theatre on 25 May as part of their *South African Legacy Tour*. Photo: Oupa Bopape/Gallo Images via Getty Images

hits off the album.

This 1986 release was Simon’s most successful album and his highest-charting album in over a decade. It is estimated to have sold more than 16 million copies worldwide. It exposed the world to Ladysmith Black Mambazo.

Their talent has been rewarded with multiple awards, including five Grammys, and attracted millions of fans around the world.

In addition to their work with Simon, Ladysmith Black Mambazo

have recorded with numerous artists, including Stevie Wonder, Dolly Parton, Sarah McLachlan, Josh Groban, Emmylou Harris, Melissa Etheridge and even Burna Boy.

Their music has also featured in several films.

Nelson Mandela designated the group “South Africa’s cultural ambassadors to the world”.

The nonet, including four of Shabalala’s sons, are not resting on their laurels and are ploughing back into the industry through the

in the middle of our set. Our hope is to expose them to South Africa and our audiences abroad.”

Shabalala says the academy was the brainchild of his dad, Joseph, who had the wish of mentoring young groups.

The academy was taking way too long to come to fruition, so Shabalala says instead of waiting, they would go to people instead, hence the mobile academy.

There have been challenges, says Shabalala, that they came across along the way as they were touring the country, affording mentorship to a capella groups.

“You find that some are unable to use microphones and, of course, there are those group dynamics, such as time management and maybe the attitude of others.

“But we took on those challenges by teaching the groups some of the values that bab’Shabalala taught us.

“Also teaching them discipline and understanding that their voices are a gift from God, and they have to respect that,” he says.

Shabalala says what has kept Ladysmith Black Mambazo together for so long is its founding members’ vision of taking this indigenous music to the world.

“They left Ladysmith and went to Durban, where they rented a room which they shared among the 10 of them. Imagine that.

“And when a song would come to one member in the middle of the night, they would all wake up and participate. That is the kind of dedication and camaraderie we are trying to build in these groups.”

This programme, supported by the national department of sports, arts and culture, has unearthed and developed young groups, breathing new life into isicathamiya and indigenous music.

“The outcome of the *Legacy Tour* is to etch the memory of Joseph Shabalala into the hearts of South Africans, so they can remember him always. We hope that the music academy can be built as part of his wishes,” Shabalala says.

As the curtains close on the *Legacy Tour* in Pretoria, Ladysmith Black Mambazo invite their fans to join them for a musical journey through time, culture and the indomitable spirit of South Africa.

Joseph Shabalala would have approved.

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## Books

# Notes from the Body

Writers' stories about illness and healing are transformative for readers

Derek Davey

**T**he body is a site of struggle in South Africa. Not *the* struggle, as fought by activists against apartheid, although elements of this still comprise a good deal of the battles fought over and within the bodies of this country.

*Notes from the Body*, a collection of 23 short stories and poems, details another struggle, fought on many fronts against illness, trauma and disability, against rape, incest and Covid-19, and how the authors deal or dealt with these arduous challenges. Part of the healing lies in the authors' relating of their stories and can be used by readers as tools in their own battles.

The book came to me via one of the authors at a time when I am undergoing a series of kidney operations and thus has particular poignancy for me.

We tend to locate ourselves in the mind and regard our bodies as obedient carriages that perform its bidding but illness reminds us how false this notion is; it humbles us profoundly and starkly reminds us of our mortality.

We are our bodies but our relationship to them is a complex mixture of our history, cultures and experience.

The struggle with any physical condition is also compounded by the attitude of our colleagues and broader society that somehow one is weak and to blame if afflicted; there is a turning away, lest they "catch" this from you. This makes the journey to health more lonely but becoming ill can also open our eyes to the illness and trauma that is always present around us, that we may have, when healthy, previously turned away from ourselves.

*Notes* resonated with my own recent experiences in so many ways. When my condition was first detected, I had, like most South Africans, no hospital plan and began the journey of what became several operations at Helen Joseph, a public hospital in Johannesburg.

It was as the Covid-19 pandemic began, I was not allowed visitors, and the bleak experience was not one I would care to repeat.

In the foreword, Margie Orford argues that illness, pain and trauma can dissolve the border between thought and feeling and that the role of "spirit" is essential in helping the body to recover from illness, as Nondwe Mpuma reminds us with "akulahlwa mbeleko ngkufelwa" (you do not throw away the womb because of a death) — meaning, one should never despair when faced with hardships. Without the "will" to live, or at least a positive attitude, as I discovered, it is almost impossible to heal.

Author and poet Vonina Bila is filled with this will, this fighting spirit. He relates in *Staring Death in the Eye* how he is shot several times, the nightmare of his trip to hospital, and how, when he finally gets there, the conditions of Elim Hospital in Makhado, Limpopo, include broken boilers, dysfunctional and obsolete equipment and an intermittent power and water supply.

"Flies, fleas, bugs and beetles of all kinds were having a feast — breeding and spreading strange bacteria and viruses."

But despite his immense pain and discomfort, he forms relationships with patients and staff and is worried about what a beautiful

nurse thinks of his underwear.

"I laughed at myself without an ounce of self-pity in order to stay alive, to be liberated from pain and indignity."

There's more fighting spirit evident in Samuel Njenga's brilliant *The Darkness of Covid-Death*, the first story in the book.

After his beloved brother dies, he is struck down by the virus, so badly that pipes are forced into practically every orifice in his body to keep him alive. When even this fails, Njenga is put on an ECMO — extracorporeal membrane oxygenation — machine, which oxygenates the blood, as a desperate last resort.

Unable to literally lift a finger, he is at the mercy of the staff, who enable him to see his family via phone videos. The family is overcome with joy when he is able to smile in response for the first time. As he claws his way back to health, flirtations with the nurses occur and they form a guard of honour for him when he is finally well enough to leave.

Not every story in *Notes* concerns the body in distress. Bronwyn Law-Viljoen's *Notes from an Archive of the Body in Movement* is a series of observations and memories concerning physical movement and training, starting with dancing and progressing to netball, cycling and boxing. She explores the relationship between body and mind, thought and action, subject and object, object and object, time and space, thinking and doing, which change with repetition, until, for highly trained athletes, "action seems to be thought itself" — or, I surmised as a

drummer, perhaps also vice versa.

Law-Viljoen's is an academic treatise, as is my favourite story in the book, Warrick Swinney's *Between Substance and Shadow*, concerning how musician Gary Herselman transformed into a dog on the *Voëlvy* concert tour in 1989. The change was so complete he not only barked and bit ankles but spent a night in a dog basket with an aggressive rottweiler.

**S**winney explores multiple factors that might have led to Herselman's cynanthropy (man-dog transformation), which included him growing up in an orphanage with 19 children and his mongrel English-Afrikaans roots. The story explores other authors, such as Franz Kafka, who touch on similar topics and this is where the story, although academically written and referenced, also tilts and dips into the realm of fiction.

It is precisely this mix of art and academia that makes *Notes* so unique and powerful and how the authors sometimes heal themselves.

In *Finding the Words in Ten Movements*, Phillippa Yaa de Villiers examines the twin themes of finding out that she was adopted and the fact that she is not of the same race as the couple who adopted her.

This discovery was made in 1985 during PW Botha's state of emergency, at the height of apartheid. She relates how "skin has an accent, a vocabulary, power and presence in our country" and how "I watched my skin riding past me in a different bus".

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Duncan Brown,  
Kobus Moolman and  
Nkosinathi Sithole

NOTES FROM THE BODY  
Health, Illness, Trauma

Foreword by Margie Orford

With theatre, and then with poetry, she worked to "reclaim the identity of my life from the identity I'd been assigned", as being adopted gives you a double life and makes you, as she quotes in poet Jackie Kay's words, "part fable, part porridge".

Intertwined with this journey to her truth is the fact that Yaa de Villiers was raped multiple times as she grew up: "I was raped at 6, 11, at 13, at 17 and 19" and how she didn't even know she was violated because "where I came from, love was forced and sometimes hurt". She finds redemption: "I am healed now, but I no longer look the same" but in other stories, the pain and anger seems to still burn savagely.

*Lights Out!* Is a tale of incest by Gaireyah Fredericks that rages against both the father who climbs onto the tiny body of his child at night and the mother who knows but maintains her silence. There is also the Muslim community that doesn't want to accept her grisly truth and instead projects her as a rebellious teen seeking attention. "Fok daai kak. Hoe de fok!"

*Notes from the Body* is not a light read, but for the majority of South Africans, life is no fairy tale, and the body is often the site where class, gender and other battles are fought. Trauma can be worked with, but as trauma researcher Bessel van der Kolk reminds us, the body keeps the score, and is profoundly altered by it.

Those who digest *Notes* will also not be who they were before. Orford begins her foreword with: "This intimate body of work changes the reader — me and now you." She's not kidding.

## Friday

# Something's up down in Sandton

Pop star and food influencer J'Something is taking nightlife in Joburg to a new level – or three – with a venture called Artistry

Carlos Amato

**W**hen you grow up around a small town restaurant, you know about customer psychology. Ask J'Something, whose career is devoted to serving a large number of customers happily and often – whether the product is a sugary hook with his band Mi Casa, a steak at his Artistry restaurant or a reel on his Instagram feed.

Born Joao Carlos Lisa Botelho da Fonseca in Portugal 33 years ago, J'Something came to South Africa at the age of seven with his family. Let's just call him J.

The Foncescas landed in the Eastern Cape resort town of Port Alfred, where his dad worked for Sun International and his mother Maria opened a restaurant called Butler's.

"She had a chalkboard menu," says J. "She'd write a new menu every day. Like, 'This is what I have today!'"

"You had the fishermen in the harbour, the surrounding farms and butchers, so you were able to really tap into community. She did the classics. A good oxtail, sole, ribs. Bistro style, with a Portuguese touch."

"I learnt from her you serve peo-

ple humbly because they're in your house, because they're at your table.

"But she also taught me to be, like, 'This is your house, so you don't need to take shit from people.' Like, 'Man, if you don't like it, I'm really sorry that you don't like it. We like it. And if you don't like it, there's many other places that you can go to. But if you do like it, I'm so glad.'"

J has poured that sauce of old-school hospitality into his new venture, a three-storey food and entertainment venue in Sandton called Artistry. J's restaurant is on the third floor, with a rooftop-garden bar.

One floor down is a 100-seat theatre, while a "listening bar" anchors the first floor. Patrons can also stay the night – or the month. Artistry adjoins the BlackBrick Hotel, part of the BlackBrick group, which has backed the project.

Artistry's website describes it as "the perfect trilogy operating in one ecosystem and igniting all the senses", which might be somewhat overstating its mystical potential.

But, for a city and a neighbourhood that sorely lack creative spaces on an intimate scale, it's a shot in the arm.

"The 'why' behind Artistry was more to be a platform to share, to celebrate, and to showcase art," says J.



The art of entertainment: Musician and foodie J Something at Artistry, his new venture, in Sandton, Johannesburg. Photo: Delwyn Verasamy

He's a marketing graduate and a deft partner with big companies – J the foetus probably arranged for his own birth to be a pop-up collab with Huggies. (J's next cookbook is sponsored by the liqueur Amarula and co-created with fellow celeb chef The Lazy Makoti. So, his natural habitat is the clean streets of Sandton.

"I come to Sandton and I feel like there's an element of premium," he says. "Of ambition. Like, man, I'm somewhere important now, where important people are!"

"And then you come to Artistry and feel at home. I feel like I can take my shoes off and lie back and have a nice little scrambled egg."

The menu is dominated by classics and comfort meals. Says J: "It's so easy to be caught up in trying to be revolutionary, which is sometimes unnecessary. Because you don't need to do anything to a Benedict, man. Just let the Benedict be the Benedict."

"You don't need to do anything to a good curry and rice. Just make it flavourful. And steak and potatoes,

just a great quality piece of meat, a lekker sauce. Cut the chips yourself, double fry them and make your own chip spice."

Last week he created a menu to pair with Singleton whisky at an event co-hosted with the *Mail & Guardian*. But he doesn't theorise about why flavours work together.

"It's like an outfit or eating a breakfast at night – it just needs to make sense. It's a personal thing."

"But we understood Singleton as a whisky that wants to be enjoyed by ordinary people in ordinary moments, with no rules. So I played around with the smokiness of the whisky and other smoky flavours – barbecue flavours."

"My philosophy with food is that I'm not a chef – I've never professed to be a chef. I've got a lot of respect for chefs but, for me, it's always been about having respect for food and respect for people's time."

He doesn't have time to waste. Along with gigging and Artistry, he has two kids with his wife Cordelia

Fonseca, a kitchen influencer in her own right (@CocoDaFonseca).

The couple cook together on her Instagram feed, bantering over the blender. Their foodie life began a decade back, as a distraction from the stress of his sudden musical fame.

"I said I need to find a day every week to come home and do nothing. So we started buying cookbooks and bottles of wine and getting together once a week. It was the era of hashtags. Ours was #somethings-cooking. So we started to post."

People liked the posts. Lots of people. Cue a TV show, a cookbook, a restaurant called Something's Cooking – and now another restaurant.

Many of the Artistry kitchen staff were hired via Instagram – digital natives who dream about dishes.

And J helps out in the kitchen when needed. "I'm a worker, not a poster boy," he says. "When I'm here, I work, because I saw my mother take the plates and get into the scullery. If you need to clean the floor, clean the floor."

# Zahara's light 'shone brighter than most'

Lesego Chopape

On Monday, 11 December, the music world mourned the loss of beloved songstress Bulelwa Mkutukana, better known as Zahara.

At the age of just 36, Zahara left an indelible mark on the South African music scene, captivating hearts with her soulful voice and poignant lyrics.

The founder and managing director of The Bassline club in Johannesburg, Brad Holmes, expressed the feelings of many fans and collaborators: "We get exposed to these amazing artists – and Zahara's light was definitely brighter than most. She had an edge."

While her family is yet to release an official statement regarding the cause of her untimely death at the time of writing, reports suggest she might have succumbed to complications related to liver failure.

Zahara's death leaves a void in the industry but her legacy as a musical icon and advocate for change will continue to resonate.

Her journey to stardom began in 2011 with the release of her debut album *Loliwe*. Its strong melodies and moving lyrics made it the soundtrack to various life events – from weddings and graduations to times of reflection on personal journeys – for many.



Deep emotions: Award-winning singer-songwriter Zahara, who died this week at the age of 35, leaves behind a strong portfolio of music. Photo: Getty Images

After the success of *Loliwe*, Zahara continued to gift the world with her musical prowess, releasing four more albums: *Phendula*, *Country*

*Girl*, *Mgodi* and *Nqaba Yam*.

Her ability to convey deep emotions through her music made her a beloved figure, not only in South

Africa, but globally.

Zahara achieved recognition for her music, securing 17 South African Music Awards, three Metro

FM Awards, as well as a Nigeria Entertainment Award.

In 2020, she earned a place on the BBC's 100 Women list.

She collaborated with artists such as Ladysmith Black Mambazo, Tresor Riziki from the Democratic Republic of the Congo, singer-songwriter 2Face Idibia, Mzwakhe Mbuli and the late Robbie Malinga.

Industry veteran Holmes, who hosted Zahara at his Bassline venue and witnessed her performances firsthand, said, "She was a singer-songwriter extraordinaire. She has a catalogue that will live long in the South African music world."

Holmes lamented that "her passing came way too early".

Beyond her musical contributions, Zahara used her platform to address social issues, particularly gender-based violence. She courageously spoke out against the pervasive problem plaguing South Africa, sharing her personal experiences to shed light on the harsh realities faced by many.

The musician's advocacy work made her not just a singer but a voice for change, inspiring others to speak out against injustice.

As fans and the music community mourn Zahara's death, her legacy will live on through the timeless melodies and meaningful messages she left behind.

## Music

# Crafting a creative journey

Standard Bank Young Artist Angel Ho goes beyond boundaries in their work

Lesego Chopape

**T**his Joburg heatwave is letting us know what hell must feel like. I'm sweating like a devil, snaking through snail-paced traffic on my way to meet a person called Angel.

Everyone with a car or a truck seems to be on the baking M1 North. And they are making me late for my interview with Angel Ho who, just a few days ago, was announced the 2023 winner of the prestigious Standard Bank Young Artist for Performing Art Award.

Arriving slightly behind schedule at the Courtyard Hotel in Rosebank, I see them standing at the hotel gate. Ho is wearing a black dress and a shawl covering their shoulders. They have soft make-up on, contrasted with a striking burgundy lipstick.

Apologising profusely, I join Ho in the sun, desperate for some shade.

Officially, on the award press release, the 29-year-old is "a multidisciplinary artist whose practice extends across musical production and performance, DJ work, performance art, costuming, artistic direction and film".

"Being a feminine gender-nonconforming queer African body, Ho combines performance, drag and the digital space to blur and deconstruct contemporary culture."

It doesn't mention their wicked wit. I ask Ho about their experience in Johannesburg. With a casual puff of a cigarette, they deadpan, "It's been okay; I have been eating a whole lot of Woolworths food."

Last year, the prolific Ho released four full-length albums over a four-month period. The opening track on *Skitzo Ritual*, described by *The Wire* magazine as a "state of her own nation monologue", has the line, "Why are you laughing? Jokes weren't made."

Slightly nervous, with that in mind, I quip about their imagined post-award glamorous lifestyle but Ho says: "I am not complaining; I love it and I also love the space I am in."

Born to a single mother in Cape Town, and moving around the city while growing up, Ho's perspective on home is unconventional. I probe about where home is for them.

"I think the foundation stays with your body; it is not a physical thing," they explain. "It's like your soul — your soul can't be left in one place, it comes with you everywhere you go."

"So, I just hold my memories dear to me, I don't own places — I just own the memories I make in these places."

Smoke break over, we settle in a boardroom. Water and aircon never felt so welcome.

They share about where it all began.



**Bank on it:** The winners of the Standard Bank Young Artist Award with Angel Ho (performance art) on the far right. The others are Darren English (jazz), Lorin Sookool (dance), Stephané Conradie (visual art), Zoe Modiga (music) and Kgomotso 'MoMo' Matsunyane (theatre).

"I was in preschool. We had a concert and I literally sang the loudest — I was that kid who sang the loudest," they share with a mischievous smile. "I had this unrivalled confidence. I outperformed and knew that, when I was on stage, I had to give a show."

Ho says they were part of the arts throughout primary school.

"When I got to high school, I wanted to join the rugby team and my drama teacher stopped me a day before trying it out. She said, 'You are making a big mistake; you need to join theatre and drama.'"

"Good thing, because the only reason I wanted to join the rugby club was because I wanted to be around hot guys," they say with their ever-ready wit.

Then they really thrived, even beyond high school. In 2013, Angel Ho started experimenting with making music after getting into DJing. They wanted to learn how to produce their own music and not just DJ other people's songs.

"So, I made my own music and the first song I made was called *3D Print My Shade*."

There is a moment of silence before we both burst into laughter at the title.

"I don't know what that even means but I wanted to make it. It was a house track."

They start playing the beat on the brown boardroom table we are seated at. It's an interesting beat, but I am still stuck on the title.

Ho says as they learnt to make beats, they started thinking about the lyrical content, most of which came from activities that were happening around them at the time, especially at the University of Cape Town where Ho was studying fine art.

"Things were heated at university and it was quite traumatic. I did not grow up experiencing racism and it was a shock to the system because, in my world, I treat everyone equally. My family protected me from racism to some degree."

They say they started making music about experiencing racism to heal their trauma and the release of their first record *Ascension* marked a turning point.

"Interesting story about *Ascension* is that I manifested that Kanye West's producer Arca would master my music — and she did."

The Venezuelan musician and record producer was credited for her production contributions on Kanye West's 2013 *Yeezus*, rated his last great record.

Ho started travelling the world and performing at festivals but life threw in a challenge.

"I am battling a pre-diagnosis of a spiritual

gift that people consider to be schizophrenia and that took my confidence away from me," they say.

A lot of the pain from that journey was poured into a project titled *Death Becomes Her*, which did fairly well. It was named the best experimental album of 2019 by hipsters' bible, *Pitchfork*.

Ho says that a lot of people vanished when they were going through this but their mom has been there to support them.

"I am in a space where I am still retraining my brain but what healed me was music, performance and making art costumes," Ho says. "Anything creative and being around authentic and creative people healed me. Being with my mother and family also helped."

"I am finally ready to speak about this because I know that someone out there can relate to my journey."

Now, in a space of healing, Ho is creating a show and music with a purpose. Describing an upcoming show centred on "finding your inner cunt", musically, with a blend of jazz, conceptual soundscapes, pop, hip-hop, and house music.

When I ask about the show's readiness, a giggle follows.

"I am going to be honest with you — everything is done — I am just waiting for funding."

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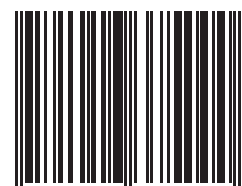
# Friday

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