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IN BRIEF

Civil serpent

A woman in Newcastle, Australia, has been driving around with a venomous snake after it sneaked into her vehicle and made it home last month, *Newsweek* reports. Lisa Kournelis was packing boxes into her truck when she discovered the red-bellied black snake sitting on her back seat. Prior to that, she had noticed snake faeces in her vehicle for about three weeks. Despite calling on four different snake catchers to assist her, the slithery passenger has evaded all attempts of capture. Succumbing to defeat, Kournelis opted to continue riding with the snake in her car and has honoured it with the name "Fluffy". While travelling, Kournelis sports thick protective gear in case she encounters any bites from Fluffy. "I don't really have any other choice. It hasn't hurt me, but it potentially could one day," Kournelis says. Although red-bellied black snakes are venomous, bites from the reptile are rarely fatal. Usually, bites result in severe pain and bruising that require medical attention.

Portal to obscenity

A livestream portal connecting Dublin and New York was temporarily shut down after Dublin residents allegedly displayed inappropriate behaviour, *Sky News* reports. The Portals Organisation, which operates in Poland, Lithuania, United States and Ireland, gives people from different parts of the world an opportunity to see and interact with one another through an unfiltered 24/7 livestream portal in real-time. Although many interactions between people are reportedly positive and have involved people dancing and forming friendships, some exchanges have not been particularly pleasant. Dubliners, in particular, have reportedly flashed their body parts and displayed images of 9/11 and have sworn using their cellphones. A woman was also seen grinding against the portal before being dragged away by police officers, *Sky News* reports. On Monday, the Dublin city council said in a statement that "technical solutions" were being implemented to address the issue and that the portal would be shut down for 24 hours. "We will continue to monitor the situation over the coming days with our partners in New York to ensure that portals continue to deliver a positive experience for both cities and the world."

Tracking a smuggler

A man described as being one of the most notorious people smugglers in the world has been arrested following the release of a BBC podcast episode, *Arab News* reports. After being smuggled to England himself, Barzan Majeed reportedly acquired a people-smuggling business from his brother and moved thousands of migrants with unsafe boats and lorries from Europe to the United Kingdom. In 2022, he was convicted in absentia of running a people smuggling operation by a Belgian court. By that time Majeed was already at large and the UK's National Crime Agency issued a warrant for his arrest. The BBC tracked him down in Iraq and during the interview he admitting to various crimes. Security forces in Iraqi Kurdistan arrested him last Sunday morning. The UK's National Crime Agency highlighted the importance of the podcast, while a senior member of the Kurdistan regional government

NUMBERS OF THE WEEK

The number of years that Kuandyk Bishimbayev, a former Kazakh economy minister, will spend in prison for the torture and murder of his wife, Saltanat Nukenova, *Al Jazeera* reports. Bishimbayev beat Nukenova in the room of a relative's restaurant

24



113

The number of exotic birds that were thrown overboard from a boat by four Dominicans attempting to smuggle them back from the US territory of Puerto Rico to the Dominican Republic, *Associated Press* reports. The tropical birds were thrown into the ocean, north of Puerto Rico, as the US Coast Guard approached them



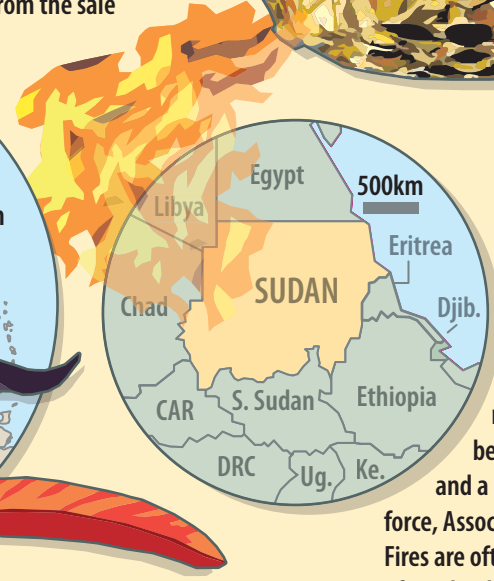
R113.5m

The estimated starting price for the auctioning of the Allnatt, a fancy yellow vivid Cartier diamond weighing 101.29 carats (20.258g) that is believed to have been mined from South Africa more than a hundred years ago, *Africanews* reports. Sotheby's was expected to host the auction in Geneva this week but the seller withdrew the diamond from the sale



72

The number of villages and settlements destroyed by fires in Sudan last month amid fighting between the military and a rival paramilitary force, *Associated Press* reports. Fires are often used as a weapon of war by the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces, the report states



Graphic: JOHN McCANN Compiled by: MAMAPUTLE BOIKANYO

credited the BBC for its role in aiding the arrest of Majeed. In 2022, Majeed was convicted of 121 counts of people smuggling and sentenced to 10 years in prison and a €968 000 fine.

Searching for Snowflake

A family in Vancouver, Canada, have announced a reward for the safe return of their stolen chicken, Snowflake, *CTV News* reports. Snowflake's keeper, Lindi Smith, told the media that she had predator-proofed her chicken coop against animals such as raccoons but was surprised when security cameras showed two young men stealing one of the four chickens inside the coop. The two thieves had covered their heads with T-shirts as they reached for Snowflake and fled with her. For the return of their feathered friend, Smith and her family have made an offer of C\$200 (R2 697). "Just like anybody would want a stolen cat or dog home, she's a family member," Smith says. The family has reported the matter to the North Vancouver Mounties and has released an email asking people to send any information on the whereabouts of Snowflake.

Shein's shame

Public Eye, the Swiss human rights advocacy group that exposed the unethical working practices of Shein's suppliers two years ago, has published a new report about the online retailer's suppliers and claims that little has

changed to improve the overtime excesses experienced by factory workers. In its report, the advocacy group interviewed seven women and six men from six factories in China. "I work every day from eight in the morning to 10.30 at night and take one day off each month. I can't afford any more days off because it costs too much," one of the workers said. According to *Public Eye*, "Illegal working hours and piecework wages remain a typical feature of the everyday lives of the workers interviewed." Employees allegedly worked an average of 12 hours a day excluding lunch and dinner breaks, six to seven days a week. The report also found they earned ¥2 400 (R6 110) monthly when overtime pay was deducted, significantly less than China's minimum wage. In response, Shein told CNN that the sample size did not represent the experience of workers in their supply chain and that it does "not recognise many of the allegations".

Avos smashed by climate change

The world may soon experience a shortage of avocados caused by the concerning phenomenon of climate change, a new report by *Christian Aid* states. According to the report, a single avocado requires 320 litres of water to grow, making it especially difficult to grow in a world affected by climate change. Some of the world's top avocado producers include South Africa, Burundi, Spain, Peru, Chile and Mexico. Avocado-growing regions are expected to decline by 14% and 41% by 2050, depending on society's approach to fight against climate change. "Producing an avocado is therefore becoming increasingly expensive and these costs will likely be passed on to the consumer, raising the price we pay for our guacamole," says Honor Eldridge, a sustainable food expert.

Australia jails whistleblower

David McBride, a former military lawyer, has been handed a sentence of five years and eight months in prison by an Australian court for "revealing information about alleged Australian war crimes in Afghanistan", *Al Jazeera* reports. McBride admitted to three charges, including theft and the dissemination of more than 200 classified documents about to special forces operations to the media, asserted that his actions were driven by a sense of national interest, *Reuters* reports. In 2020, the *Brereton* report found that Australian special forces were allegedly responsible for the unlawful killing of 39 unarmed prisoners and civilians in Afghanistan between 2005 and 2016.

Curator detained in Turkey

A curator from the American Museum of Natural History was detained in Istanbul, Turkey, on Monday after allegedly attempting to smuggle out spider and scorpion samples, *CBS* reports. According to an expert who spoke to *Reuters*, venom from scorpions can fetch up to \$10 million (R184.2 million). Lorenzo Prendini, an arachnids expert at the museum, was on his way out of the country at Istanbul Airport when police searched him and found 1 500 samples of dead scorpions, tarantulas and other spiders endemic to Turkey in his luggage. The state-run Anadolu news agency reported that the DNA from these samples could be used to produce medication. Prendini, however, denied the allegations and criticised the Turkish police for not following due process when they searched him. "The police have completely violated due process, and it appears they would like to find me guilty in the court of public opinion," said Prendini as quoted by the *Associated Press*. He added that he had the necessary research permits for the samples, but that the police ignored this fact while relying on a tip from an "expert" who has a conflict of interest with my collaborators".

Deep wounds reopened

Minister of Justice and Correctional Services Ronald Lamola has opened an inquest into the deaths of three anti-apartheid activists, a press release statement reads. The deaths of Chief Albert Luthuli, civil rights lawyer Mlungisi Griffiths Mxenge and civic leader Booi Mantyi will be investigated on recommendations made by the National Prosecuting Authority (NPA). "With these inquests, we open very real wounds which are more difficult to open 30 years into our democracy, but nonetheless, the interest of justice can never be bound by time the truth must prevail," the minister said. Although official records declare that Luthuli died after being struck by a train in 1967, an NPA report found that "certain mathematical and scientific principles" were not taken into account in the initial investigation into his death and that "it is highly unlikely" that Luthuli was struck by a train and died as a result. During the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, the commander of the clandestine Security Branch confessed to killing Mxenge but the NPA claims "critical information" was left out. Although Mantyi died in altercation with the police in 1985, no one was found responsible for his death. A new "eyewitness who has not previously testified" is significant in his case. — *Mamaputle Boikanyo*

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Mayor 'goes on ANC manifesto jol'

M&G
Investigation

The Eastern Cape delegation was invited by the deputy minister of agriculture to school activities in KwaZulu-Natal

Khaya Koko & Aarti Bhana

Senior executives of the dysfunctional King Sabata Dalindyebo local municipality — with the assistance of the deputy minister of agriculture, rural development and land reform, Nokuzola Capa — spent R183 997.82 to attend the ANC's February elections manifesto launch.

The municipal funds were used for party political work after a letter dated 25 January, which Capa wrote to the Eastern Cape municipality's mayor, Nyaniso Nelani, said the government identified schools every year to form part of its "back-to-school" programme.

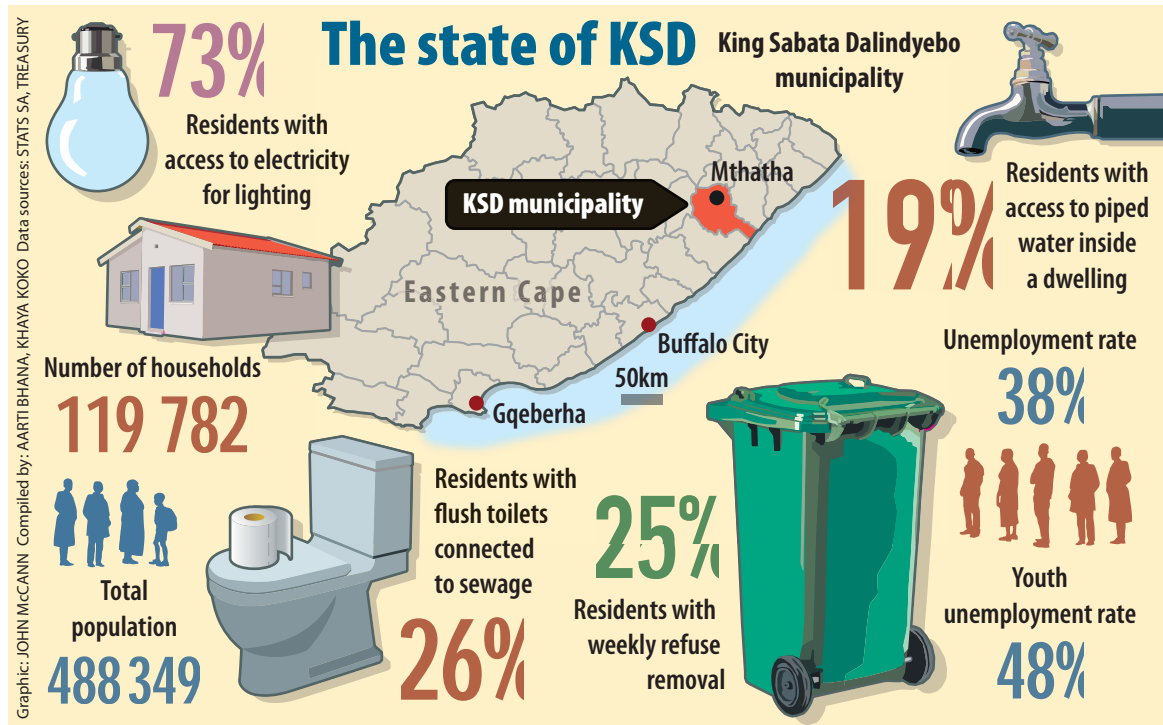
Capa said she was inviting Nelani and a delegation from the municipality to attend school programmes in eThekweni in KwaZulu-Natal "from 22 to 25 February 2024".

Three high-ranking officials in the municipality, who did not want to be named, said the agricultural department did not have a back-to-school activity that week, and that the invitation was a ruse for public money to be used to fund the mayor and two other members of Nelani's mayoral committee to travel to the ANC launch.

Nelani was accompanied by the member of the mayoral committee for infrastructure, Ziyanda Nokayi, and human settlements and disaster management MMC Nombulelo Sibeko, as well as four staff members from their respective offices, according to municipal documents.

The dates chosen for the alleged back-to-school programme fell within the ANC's manifesto weekend in KwaZulu-Natal, on 24 and 25 February.

A breakdown of spending from municipal records shows that the



budget for Nelani and the four staff members was R124 327.82, while R59 370.36 was set aside for Nokayi and Sibeko, bringing the expenditure to R183 997.82.

Ironically, President Cyril Ramaphosa, when delivering the election manifesto in his capacity as ANC leader, railed against what he called "mistakes" made by the party, and spoke of "some members and leaders undermining institutions of the democratic state and advancing selfish personal interests".

Capa had written that the school activity was to "plough back to [eThekweni] communities by assisting the learners and improving the conditions of the school environment".

The letter did not detail which schools would be assisted and how.

"The schools we visit as [the] government are those that are mostly in remote areas and very impoverished," wrote Capa.

She said the mayor had to respond to the invitation by 5 February.

What followed was a raft of approvals for the trip, which were signed by the mayor (Nelani) and Fudumele Jiholo, the municipality's chief financial officer. The services of Swift Travel and Tours were used to organise the trip.

The three high-ranking officials said the senior executives did not

attend any back-to-school activity, but wanted to use municipal money for the ANC jaunt.

"What kind of back-to-school activity happens in February when schools reopened in January?" asked the one official.

The *Mail & Guardian* sent questions to Capa on Tuesday but she had not responded by the time of publication, despite repeated calls and text messages requesting comment, including on Thursday.

King Sabata Dalindyebo council spokesperson Olwethu Mabovula, who also speaks for the mayor, acknowledged all questions on Tuesday and asked to respond on Thursday. But Mabovula had also not responded at the time of publication.

Another source said the mayor and municipal manager were avoiding Mabovula because they did not know how to respond.

"The municipality gets away with

a lot without media scrutiny. That is why they are bold enough to abuse state funds because they are not used to being accountable," the municipal insider added.

King Sabata Dalindyebo municipality is known for its poor auditor general reports, having repeatedly received bad audit findings in successive years.

This includes the irregular expenditure of R1.3 billion in the 2022-23 financial year.

"The accountability and consequence [management] has been ineffective as a result of [the] municipal public accounts committees' failure to investigate and close the irregular expenditure presented to them," according to the auditor general's report.

Moreover, in November last year the auditor general's office, in its Municipal Finance Management Act compliance findings for the Eastern Cape, flagged King Sabata Dalindyebo local municipality for an estimated loss of more than R39.1 million by the end of June 2023, being salaries for councillors who had not been reelected after the November 2021 local government elections.

The auditor general said certain municipal employees — without naming them or stating how many they were — had illegally used pub-

lic funds for their personal benefit without any consequences.

"Employees received both the housing and rental allowance from July 2019 to June 2022 in contravention of the municipal policy.

"Another MI [material irregularity] related to the municipality paying former councillors' salaries after their term of office had ended and were not reelected," the report noted.

"A legal consultation by the basic conditions committee with regard to the prospects or processes to recover the money is underway. The councillors who did not make arrangements to pay back the money were handed over to a debt collector."

Despite the many failures in the Eastern Cape, the ANC in the province is hoping to gain votes on election day, 29 May.

Buffalo City was the only metropolitan municipality in the country where the ANC's votes increased, going from 60% in 2016 to 61% in 2021.

This was while the province had the indignity of 12300 pit latrines, the second-highest number in the country after KwaZulu-Natal, according to data from Statistics South Africa.

The province's shambolic municipalities were further highlighted in an internal audit report dated January 2023 on the Alfred Nzo district municipality, which found that it incurred nearly R26 million in irregular expenditure for a water supply project in the Ntabankulu area.

It has not been confirmed whether the project was completed.

According to the report, Alfred Nzo district municipality awarded the tender to Nageni Civils.

But "characteristics of fraud" were found in the report submitted to the company.

It added that services bids from two companies that unsuccessfully tendered for the contract — SSR Security CC, trading as Mahlubi Transport and Plant Hire, and Imvu Construction Group — submitted lower bids prices during the open application of R22.4 million and R24.1 million, respectively.

"In the examination of the submitted report ... we noted characteristics of fraud," the internal audit report stated.

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The NHI and the risks of populism

The president is attempting to shift the election campaign focus away from the government's failures towards a promise to deliver more, although its track record suggests it cannot

NEWS ANALYSIS
Emsie Ferreira

As political surprises go, President Cyril Ramaphosa's decision to sign the contentious National Health Insurance Bill into law a fortnight before the toughest election his party has ever faced is far from seismic.

Ramaphosa and senior ANC leaders, past and present, have for weeks fanned across the country to remind voters that every right they enjoy was won by the party — and to deflect blame for service delivery failures.

In the process, history has been rewritten, as former president Thabo Mbeki revoked his apology for ignoring advice to build more power plants and cast load-shedding as a political conspiracy.

The apology many voters wanted from Mbeki — for refusing to provide anti-retroviral treatment on the public health system and allowing thousands of people to die preventable deaths around the turn of the century — never came.

By signing the NHI bill, Ramaphosa knowingly risked alienating a swathe of the electorate, the medical profession and the business community, but shifts the debate in the final two weeks of the election campaign to the promise of free universal healthcare, away from his government's dismal record on safety, electricity and education.

"It is a bold move for the ANC-led government to push ahead into the elections with this law, given the controversy it has generated," political analyst Ralph Mathekga said.

"It is a big gamble by the ANC and

shows how emboldened the government is shortly before elections.

"Either a blunder or major reward will follow this daring move. It is a very populist gamble, but a gamble nonetheless."

Mathekga said the ANC was well aware that a backlash would follow.

"The party is going to the election with an issue they can do without but I think this is where the party wants the battle to be — on the NHI and not about basic service delivery. On anything but basic service delivery."

The outcry on the promulgation of the law, without heeding calls from the healthcare profession to redraft it to accommodate proposals that could smoothe the edges of the legislation, has been immediate and legal challenges are being prepared.

Business Leadership South Africa flatly said "the law will never work" because the state did not have the capacity to implement it, before calling the president's decision populist and destructive.

"Public consultation cannot just be a matter of procedure but must include proper consideration of the input received, as spelled out in the Promotion of Administrative Justice Act," the organisation's chief executive Busi Mavuso said.

It was hard to believe, she added, that there had been proper consultation when a draft law was finalised without any substantial change after public comment was received.

"In this period of heightened electioneering, political campaigns are a distraction to the business of running the country, particularly at a crucial time for us to make progress on the major challenges facing our economy," Mavuso added.



Sick: Critics say the failing state of public hospitals is an impediment to the NHI system working. Photo: Sharon Seretlo/Getty Images

"The government is rushing populist policy through parliament, which can only be seen to be an electioneering ploy, as the significant and meaningful public input into the bill and its socio-economic ramifications have not been considered."

The Democratic Alliance (DA) said its lawyers had been preparing a constitutional challenge to the bill and would file court papers "without delay". Whether they will be ready to do so before 29 May remains to be seen.

"Our legal team was briefed months ago already," DA leader John Steenhuisen said.

"We have built up reams of correspondence, including with Ramaphosa himself, that we will enter into evidence to show that the process which led to the adoption of this bill by parliament disregarded public input and that the bill itself is flagrantly unconstitutional."

The Economic Freedom Fighters has described the promulgation of the law as "a catastrophic development".

It also underscores the ideological distance between the ANC and

the DA and makes the possibility of a post-election pact between the two parties smaller still.

The DA, whose voter support the latest Ipsos poll last month put at 21.9%, has seized on the NHI as a rallying cry, with alarmist rhetoric aplenty.

Steenhuisen described the bill as "more comprehensive in scope, more corrupt in intent, and more deadly in impact, than BEE [black economic empowerment], load-shedding, cadre deployment, land expropriation and nationalisation put together".

Economists expect implementation of the NHI to cost between R300 billion to R460 billion, though it will be phased, as Ramaphosa reiterated this week.

According to Nicholas Crisp, the deputy director general for the NHI in the health department, the initial phase will run until 2026 to cater for mothers and children. The next phase will run until 2028 and will see the introduction of new taxes to fund the scheme. Full implementation may take decades.

Steenhuisen said the sums involved

meant that the ANC was prepared to "tax to death" a country where 30 million people live in poverty.

Personal income tax was likely to be increased by almost a third, with the burden extending to the poor, with no benefit in return because it was a given that the money would be looted.

"NHI would empower the minister of health to be directly involved in the day-to-day management of the biggest pile of taxpayer money that has ever been accumulated in South Africa," he said.

"The looting that will take place is easy to imagine, yet too ghastly to contemplate.

"Just like ANC cadres looted Eskom to the point of collapsing our electricity supply ... so too will they loot this NHI fund while people die."

There have been warnings, including from those who hold no ideological objection to introducing national health insurance, that the country's public hospitals are in a state of decline and not fit to implement the proposed model.

One of these warnings came from Malegapuru Makgoba, the former ombud for health, just before he retired in May last year.

Beyond that still, there is real fear it lacks the institutional capacity to run successful state monopolies on electricity, logistics or water, and is feigning confidence it could provide quality healthcare for 60 million people.

For critics of the NHI as conceptualised in the law, it is insanity to effectively nationalise private healthcare rather than simply leveraging it to accommodate the poor, as the DA says it does in the Western Cape.

It also — and this is offensive to core DA voters and anybody who resists the limits the state places on individual agency — restricts choice in an intimate sphere.

The reason is that the drafters of the bill believed that because of South Africa's high levels of inequality, there was no alternative to total state control of healthcare.

They therefore ruled out the "Bismarck model" where citizens pay a fee to fund healthcare that can be provided either by the state or private facilities. Instead they borrowed from the "Beveridge model", which was rolled out in England 80 years ago and makes the state the single buyer of healthcare, funded by taxes.

Patients will register at a primary point of care close to home where treatment will be free and from where they will be referred to private or state hospitals and specialists, if need be. It will, Crisp has said, bring an end to wasteful, unnecessary referrals and procedures.

The legislation stipulates strict adherence to these referral pathways and it is not clear what will ensue if a patient wishes to consult specialists when their primary healthcare provider does not think it is necessary.

Nor is it clear what treatment the state will not cover but which patients can access if they are prepared to pay out of their own pockets.

Once the NHI is fully implemented, private medical aids will not be able to provide cover for services that are paid for by the state, relegating them to the field of complementary or vanity procedures.

Discovery Health, which holds more than half the open schemes market, recently equated this with barring South Africans from paying for private security or educating their children in private schools.

Majodina: Don't panic, NHI bill can be amended after signing into law

ANC parliamentary chief whip Pemmy Majodina has urged those opposed to the National Health Insurance (NHI) plan to give it a chance, saying that, if need be, the governing party could amend the law which will bring it into effect.

President Cyril Ramaphosa signed the NHI bill into law on Wednesday, having sat on it since last December, when parliament approved it. The legislation aims to ensure equitable access to quality healthcare.

In February, Finance Minister Enoch Godongwana allocated almost R1.4 billion for the NHI grant over the next three years. The health allocation includes R11.6 billion to address last year's public health sector wage agreement and R27.3 billion for infrastructure for the period, the minister said in his budget speech.

Godongwana said the allocation for the NHI was a demonstration of the ANC-led government's commitment to this policy.

While the government has insisted on the bill's readiness for implementation, its critics, including doctors, the business sector and non-profit organisations, are preparing to challenge it in court.

Among the criticisms are that it is unaffordable and is not in line



'It's not a ploy': Pemmy Majodina, the ANC parliamentary chief whip. Photo: Frennie Shivambu/Getty Images

with the Constitution. Business Unity South Africa has already stated that it is considering taking legal action.

But, speaking on the sidelines of the ANC's door-to-door campaign in Ekurhuleni on Tuesday in preparation for the general elections, a day before Ramaphosa signed the bill, Majodina said enough work had been done to ensure the new law would be effective.

"We conducted hearings as is provided by the bill. We went across

the country. We got those views. In a democratic country, you must also act based on the majority views.

"We passed the bill based on the majority and submissions during the public hearings," she said.

The NHI was important, especially for the poorest of the poor, arguing that the current healthcare system was too expensive for most and universal health coverage would assist the government and bring equality to all South Africans.

"And, therefore, those who still

doubt and ... panic, they must just calm down. This is their government. When the need arises, we can then amend, if there are certain things that make the Act not implementable. But, at the moment, let's start it," Majodina said.

She denied that Ramaphosa was using the NHI as a ploy to win votes for the ANC in the elections, saying his previous statements on it had been misinterpreted. Ramaphosa was criticised after he said he was still looking for a pen after journalists challenged his reasons for not signing the bill.

"When the president said he was finding a pen, the president was saying, 'I'm doing more consultation with other people who have raised concerns,'" Majodina said.

"I want to urge all South Africans, let's put it to the test then, if there are things that are not going correct, we are here in South Africa. We are not going anywhere — there is parliament that can still revisit [it], if there is something that is fundamentally flawed in the Act."

Democratic Alliance leader John Steenhuisen has vowed to take action against the bill all the way to the constitutional court, saying the president was signing it out of sheer political desperation. — *Lizeka Tandwa*

on the eve of a crucial election



No patience: Many fear that the ANC government does not have the capacity to make its national health insurance plan work. Photo: Felix Dlangamandla/Daily Maverick/Gallo Images via Getty Images

It cautioned that limiting the right of patients to purchase private healthcare, after they have contributed to the NHI, could see the legislation fall foul of the limitation clause in section 36 of the Constitution.

“Limiting people from purchasing the medical scheme coverage they seek will seriously curtail the healthcare they expect and demand,” the company further argued in a statement in February.

“Preventing those who can afford it from using their medical scheme and forcing them into the NHI system ... will also have the effect of increasing the burden on public funding which taxpayers need to cover.”

It appealed to Ramaphosa to send the bill, which was adopted by the National Council of Provinces in December, for constitutional review before signing it.

Business Leadership South Africa cautioned that lack of proper consultation itself was cause for legal challenge and said Ramaphosa could have saved much money and trouble by simply ensuring the bill was sound before making it law.

“When laws are ambiguous or unconstitutional, they will inevitably end up being challenged in court, requiring the government to pay for legal processes.

“Many of these lead to amendments. It could all be avoided by properly engaging with public input and getting the legislation right in the first place.”

Professor Saloshni Naidoo, the head of public health medicine at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, said the legislation was silent on key components of how the NHI will function and relied on doubtful assumptions on available human resources.

“What this bill speaks to is the funding mechanism but it does not speak to the other pillars of operating the system, including human resources, leadership and governance,” she said.

“For example, how are we going to

be able to track all the new patients that we need to care for in the public system? These details are not spelled out.”

Naidoo said the lack of legislative clarity was all the more concerning because of the problems in public health. “There is a need for far more detail in terms of the implementation, especially given the challenges we are sitting with in the public system.

“We don’t have enough doctors, and we don’t have enough nurses. Some public sector nurses moonlight in the private sector. So this idea that the private sector is going to make up the shortfall of the public sector is a bit misleading because I don’t think there are enough.”

Even the perception that there is a wealth of specialists in the private sector who could meet the demand of all South Africans under the NHI might not bear out, she added.

“The workload of private specialists is such that I don’t think there are enough to take over patients in the public sector.”

The risk that the country will lose more doctors because of the profession’s unease about the NHI may be real, Naidoo said.

“We are losing doctors for a variety of reasons, including the current state of the country. I won’t be surprised if some leave. I know there is a lot of uncertainty.”



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ANC is confident of Gauteng



In-house studies show that the party could still get over half of the vote in the elections

Lizeka Tandwa

Despite pollsters predicting the ANC will dip below half in Gauteng in this month's general elections, the party's internal research suggests it could win the province with a greater share of the vote than in 2019.

ANC insiders at its "boiler room" in Gauteng, where the party's election strategies are crafted, spoke to the *Mail & Guardian* about its recent research.

They said, with a change in its strategy, the ANC was aiming to get 2.6 million votes in Gauteng, which would translate to a 54% to 55% share. This would be achieved with a voter turnout of around 70%, the insiders, who did not want to be named, added.

"There are 6.5 million registered voters in the province. The 2.6 million votes will be mainly received from our strongholds which is why there has been a more targeted focus in the township areas of Gauteng these past weeks," one said.

Another senior party official, a member of the ANC's national executive committee (NEC) deployed in the province, added that the party's internal research suggested that, at minimum, it would receive 2.2 million votes in Gauteng.

"If the turnout is lower than 70%, which we think is a possibility, our research suggests we are likely to receive 52%," they said, adding that this number would be boosted in township areas including Soweto, Katlehong, Thembisa, Mamelodi, Kagiso and Sedibeng.

The ANC's share of the votes in Gauteng declined to 50.19% in the 2019 elections from 53.59% in 2014. Its support slid from 2.4 million votes in 2019 to just 958 000 in 2021 — a monumental drop even when taking into account that these were local government elections.

According to the Electoral Commission of South Africa, Gauteng has the largest registered voter block, accounting for 23.45% of the national tally, while KwaZulu-Natal comes a close second with 20.79%. The Eastern Cape has the third-largest voter registration numbers at 12.42%.

During a door-to-door campaign in Ekurhuleni this week, Gauteng provincial secretary TK Nciza told the *M&G* the party's campaign had previously not been strong, due to national issues.

"We have done so much in the past four years, especially how national has been focused on cleaning up, especially the renewal of the ANC ... In the province we have done so much in the last two years led by our chair, comrade Panyaza [Lesufi, Gauteng premier]."

Nciza said another reason for the upswing in support was dissatisfaction with the dysfunctional multi-party coalitions which had tried to govern Gauteng's three metros of Tshwane, Johannesburg and



Poll tactics: ANC veterans, such as Tokyo Sexwale (above, in the beret), have been campaigning in Soweto in a bid to boost support for the party. Gauteng provincial secretary TK Nciza on the campaign trail in Soweto this month (below). Photos: Sharon Seretlo/Gallo Images



Ekurhuleni after the ANC lost control in local government elections.

"Do you think Gauteng can afford that as they hold 35% of the country's GDP? I don't think that is possible but also they have seen that the ANC, [even] with its mistakes, has done so much and, [with] what has happened in the last few years, progress has stopped," he said.

"Service delivery stopped because they trusted people who have never been in government because they speak well ...," he added, saying the attitude of the people in Soweto towards the ANC had changed.

He said the party was confident that, unlike in previous elections, residents of Soweto — home to a considerable number of its supporters — would go to the 29 May polls to vote for the ANC in great numbers.

"They know the development that has happened in that township in the last year. So, we are very confident and we are happy," he said.

Denying that the party's internal research had previously pointed to a decline in support, Nciza said it was now pointing to an upward swing.

"What I know is that we are going up every day. We are doing weekly research and we are able to see that a lot of people are now saying, 'We will vote for the ANC,'" he said.

The research showed that at least 30% of voters were undecided. The

party planned to target them in the last week before the elections.

The ANC's national leaders have previously expressed concern over Tshwane, with its electoral head Mdumiseni Ntuli deploying party veterans and President Cyril Ramaphosa to campaign aggressively in an attempt to regain support in the metro.

Veterans including former deputy president David Mabuza and ex-presidents Kgalema Motlanthe and Thabo Mbeki have campaigned in Tshwane as part of the ANC's last push.

Nciza's deputy Tasneem Motara said that any party that didn't defend its base would be doing itself a disservice, adding that the ANC's research showed that voters were particularly angry over the country's electricity problems.

She said the Gauteng leadership had found that the electricity crisis in townships was not due to load-shedding, but a lack of transformers.

'Service delivery stopped because they trusted people who have never been in government'

"That is exactly why we put funding as provincial government; we got into a legal agreement with City Power to intervene in those communities to replace transformers," Motara said.

"Some of those communities had no electricity for three years [and] even five years.

"Understanding your community's needs and understanding that, using both the fiscus or money that we have available and the legal framework, we can intervene because the provincial government's responsibility is not electricity.

"We have found a way to address that. We work with Eskom, we work with City Power but also we work with communities. What this process has taught us is that the government cannot work in silos."

Last year, the ANC's internal research suggested it would dip below 50% and land below 45%, party insiders told the *M&G*. This was partly due to the government's failure to address the crime, unemployment and electricity problems, alienating its historical support base in the province.

In October, the *M&G* reported that, at an NEC meeting, Lesufi had called out Public Enterprises Minister Pravin Gordhan for failing to provide transformers in ANC strongholds to address the electricity crisis.

As the party stared at the prospect of losing this year's elections, the matter was immediately given priority by the ANC, with Ramaphosa announcing that the NEC had advised Gordhan to urgently attend to the overloading and sabotage of transformers in townships.

The ANC in Gauteng has suffered from collateral damage from the national government's mismanagement.

The interventions on electricity, the dysfunctional coalitions and Lesufi's programme to revive impoverished communities through the Nasi Ispani jobs initiative are all expected to boost the ANC's performance in Gauteng on 29 May, one

party leader said.

The ANC is targeting more than 11 million voters nationally and aiming to equal its 2019 electoral outcome of 57%. This would be done with a 70% voter turnout, elections head Ntuli said in a leaked recording of an NEC meeting last month.

He said in the last weeks of campaigning, the ANC would focus on its base and those disgruntled supporters who had opted not to vote, rather than voting for another party.

The party would also focus on attracting first-time voters while improving its election machinery in the Western Cape, Northern Cape and the North West.

Ntuli said the ANC would also need to ensure it increased its electoral margins in its strongest provinces of Eastern Cape, Limpopo and Mpumalanga to get 80% of the vote.

Meanwhile, the *M&G* reported last week that, in eThekweni, the ANC was aiming at mining high-density voter districts in a bid to shore up its support in the metro, where it hopes to gather 1.5 million votes.

The ANC knows winning the KwaZulu-Natal metro is the key to taking the province — about 40% of the total vote is located there — and to retaining its overall majority. It has calculated that 50% in eThekweni will translate into almost 15% when national ballots are counted.

KwaZulu-Natal and Gauteng account for the lion's share of the ANC's voters.

A Paternoster Group study indicated that, in 2021, the ruling party received 5.25 million votes, over 2 million of them coming from the two provinces. This translates to 37.7% of the ANC's national vote.

In 2019, the ANC received a little over 10 million votes, of which 4.44 million came from Gauteng and KwaZulu-Natal, the equivalent of 44.3% of the voter share.

The ANC's drop in those two provinces between 2019 and 2021 alone was significant and caused it to get a mere 45% of the national vote in the 2021 local government elections.

SIU manager accused of harassment

The complainant says the senior manager made romantic advances and told her that her employment future was in his hands

Mandisa Ndlovu

The Special Investigating Unit (SIU) has been rocked by allegations that it is protecting a senior manager accused of sexual harassment, concealing a report into the matter and of delaying a disciplinary hearing.

Palesa (not her real name) opened a case of sexual harassment and bullying against the manager in September — the month when her year-long tenure at the corruption-fighting unit ended.

The manager's name is known to the *Mail & Guardian*.

In documents seen by the *M&G*, the manager is accused of making unwanted romantic advances towards Palesa within the first few weeks of her fixed-term employment in October 2022. He allegedly switched to bullying when she eventually turned him down.

On 10 October, the Tshwane regional organiser for the National Education, Health and Allied Workers Union (Nehawu), Moses Rakolota, sent a letter to advocate Ntuthuzelo Vanara, the SIU's chief legal counsel, stating that the union was representing Palesa in the matter and wanted the investigation report compiled on the allegations she made.

"The ... request is informed by the fact that, on 22 September 2023, we were invited to a meeting between [Palesa] and the investigation panel, which was appointed by the SIU to investigate the matter that the member [complained] about.

"The panel promised us that once the report is available, it will be shared with the union and [our

member, including the audio recordings," Rakolota wrote.

He added in the letter that the investigative report was completed on 30 September but had not been shared with the complainant or the union. To date, the report has not been made available to them.

The *M&G* has established that the manager was not suspended pending the inquiry's outcome, in contravention of item 4 of schedule 8 of the Labour Relations Act, despite the alleged perpetrator being in proximity and senior standing to witnesses Palesa needed for her case.

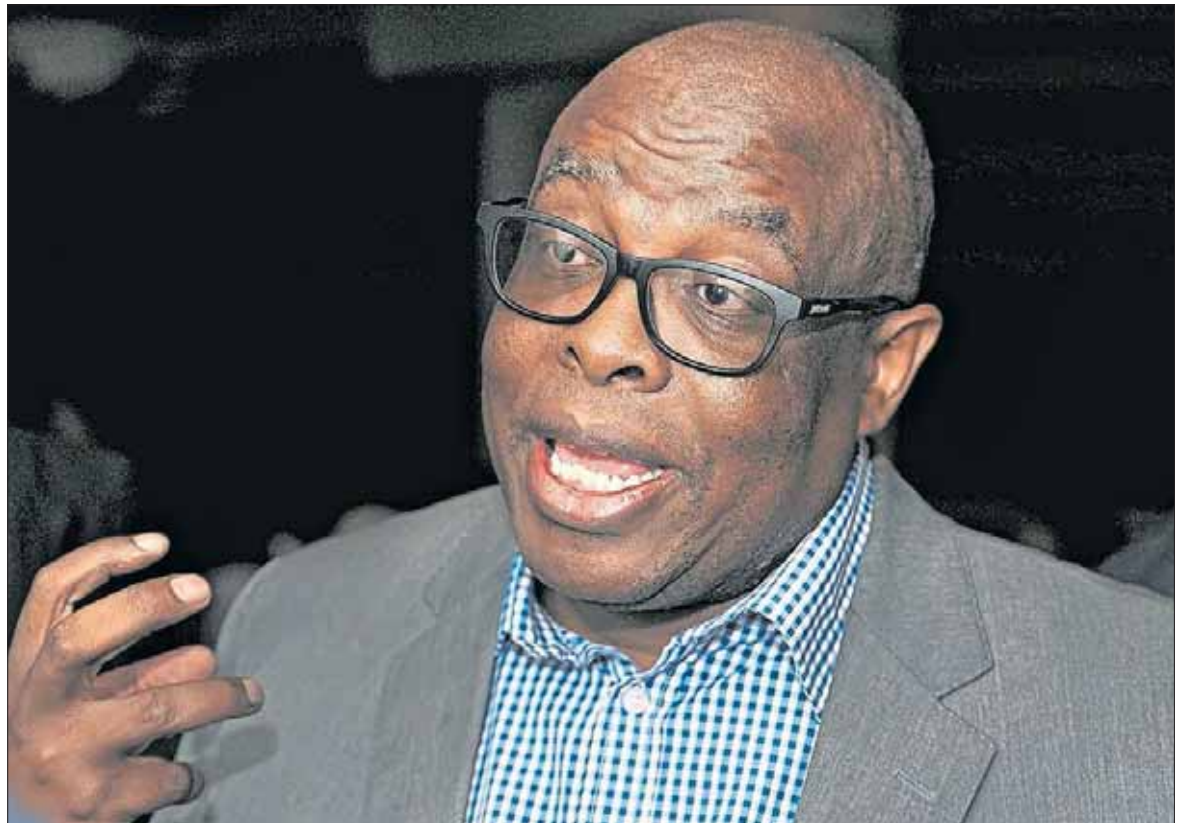
The *M&G* has also seen the complaint Palesa filed with the Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration (CCMA) about her contract not being renewed after she made the harassment allegations.

Interestingly, the SIU emailed her a subpoena, seen by the *M&G*, on 10 April to appear at the manager's disciplinary inquiry the next day. She received the email on the date of her first appearance at the CCMA.

"While I was being cross-examined [at the CCMA], I got an email from SIU subpoenaing me to appear for a hearing the following day," she said, claiming that the unit had sent the email as a ruse to show the CCMA that the harassment allegations were being addressed.

Palesa's next CCMA appearances will be on 5 and 6 June.

In her complaint filed with the commission, she said she was initially hired to work in a division in the human resources department under a different manager but was moved to the team of the man who allegedly harassed her shortly thereafter as he "needed someone



'No record': Special Investigating Unit spokesperson Kaizer Kganyago (above) denied that there had been previous complaints against a senior manager accused of sexual harassment. Photo: Jan Right

urgently" to handle a new project.

She added the sexual advances persisted to a point where the manager declared his love for her.

She claimed, during his overtures to her, the official would bring up the issue of her contract, saying her future employment was in his hands, so "you don't have to worry about anything, you must just date me".

Palesa said she was so traumatised, she had to be hospitalised due to the stress. When she returned to work, she was told that her contract would not be renewed because there was no place for her in the accused's department, despite the fact that she was involved in an ongoing project.

Speaking on behalf of the alleged perpetrator and the unit, SIU spokesperson Kaizer Kganyago told the *M&G* the complainant's contract had not been terminated but had rather come to an end.

He stressed that the disciplinary action was "between the employer and the employee".

"The SIU has started the process as previously acknowledged. Without understanding what the SIU is accused of, we request that both us and yourself [the *M&G*] allow the process to unfold without any interference," he said.

Palesa said she had made herself available for the hearing even though she was unprepared, due to the short notice she had been given.

"But, because months had already passed without this matter sitting

down, I had to go, knowing that I would be examined and cross-examined," she said in her complaint, adding that the delays had continued from then.

In addition, when she got to the hearing, the accused's representative requested a postponement because the alleged offender did not know that he was supposed to foot the bill for his representative to fly from East London to Pretoria.

The SIU supported the motion to postpone to Monday, 13 May, Palesa said.

"When I got to the hearing today [13 May], just before the matter was due to start, the chairperson, employee relations manager, the initiator and the respondent were already inside discussing the matter. "I opened the door and was told to wait outside and called in after 30 minutes to be told that the matter was postponed to 10 June," she said.

Palesa said she was told the matter had been postponed because the accused's representative had handed in a medical certificate showing that he was sick.

"All the witnesses, except for one executive who was called in as a witness, were hostile, telling the [Nehawu] observer straight that they will get to the CCMA and say they know nothing," she claimed.

"How can the SIU boldly state that the witnesses have not been influenced directly or indirectly by the [accused], since he was not sus-

pending for a fair investigation of such allegations?

"It is very clear from everything that they are protecting him."

Kganyago said the accused had not been not suspended because "there was no legal basis to support the suspension".

Palesa claimed the case at the CCMA was focused on her being unfairly dismissed. She believed the SIU planned to use the manager as a witness against her at the CCMA.

"He [the accused] was present ... at the coffee shop [near the CCMA], which means SIU plans to use him as a witness against me.

"The attorney who was cross-examining me actually confirmed this. So, he is going to be there on 5 and 6 June at the CCMA," Palesa said.

She said the SIU did not have a sexual harassment policy prior to her complaint and one was only implemented after her dismissal because she had filed the case.

When questioned on when the policy was implemented, Kganyago did not respond, saying only that there was a policy in place.

Moreover, Palesa alleged that hers was not the first sexual harassment case against the accused.

"There is another one that was filed a couple of years ago that they are trying to conceal," she said.

But Kganyago rubbished her claim, saying there was no record of previous complaints.



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'Midwife' sued after twins die

The parents have opened a criminal case against Caitlyn Collins, who they allege purported to be a midwife who could assist with a home birth

Lyse Comins

The parents who lost their twin babies, allegedly while in the care of unregistered midwife Caitlyn Collins, are suing her and the Western Cape health MEC Nomafrench Mbombo in the Western Cape high court for R4.46 million for emotional, psychological and financial damages.

The couple, Ernesta Chirwa and Chifundo Bingala, have also filed a criminal case against Collins, who previously ran a business with colleague Ruth Erhardt called The Circle of Elephants, which the Western Cape Department of Health ordered them to close in June 2021.

This was after a doctor at Mowbray Hospital reported Collins to the chief executive of the institution after another set of parents lost a baby earlier after allegedly being in her care during pregnancy and labour.

The *Mail & Guardian* broke the story about the complaints against Collins in 2022.

Western Cape police spokesperson Wesley Twigg said this week the case was still under investigation, adding: "There are no new developments to report at this stage."

However, Collins, who has filed her intention to oppose the civil matter, has denied in court papers that she ever purported to be, or advertised professional services as, a midwife, saying she presented herself as a "traditional pregnancy and birth care attendant/birth keeper".

She had only offered Chirwa and Bingala "emotional support, birthing education and physical support in the form of massages". However, the *M&G* has seen several adverts and documents in which Collins claims to offer midwifery services.

Collins admitted in court papers that there had been one other baby that was stillborn under her care but blamed its parents for not seeking medical treatment on her advice.

She also admitted she was not a qualified nurse and that she had obtained a practice number from a traditional healer and not from the South African Nursing Council.

Chirwa and Bingala told the *M&G* this week that apart from the emotional and psychological pain and loss of income they have endured after losing their twins Kweli and Kwesi on 15 February 2022, they are seeking justice to stop Collins from working with pregnant mothers to prevent further deaths of babies.

"The first thing I want is for her to be stopped.

"I want her to stop from doing whatever she is doing because, if she can't be stopped, more babies will be dying and more women will experience this type of traumatic labour like I experienced," Chirwa said.

She said Collins, under whose care

she had been during most of her pregnancy, failed to provide necessary medical care and advice.

Collins allegedly did not identify that Chirwa was having twins, despite the size of her abdomen and the fact she had a family history of twins.

She also allegedly advised the couple not to have ultrasounds, did not measure the pregnant woman's abdomen or regularly monitor the babies' heartbeats during labour.

Chirwa said she had notified Collins at 6pm on 14 February 2022 that she had gone into labour but the latter had only arrived at the couple's home with her "briefcase which had her midwifery materials" well after midnight.

"She asked me how I was doing and how the labour was progressing and I had to tell her how I was feeling. She gave me a massage on my tummy and that is when she said, 'I can feel the baby's head is down.' And then after that she went and sat on the couch and slept," Chirwa said.

She said her husband woke Collins at around 2am and she used a torch to examine her, which revealed the gestational sac was emerging.

She then allegedly fell asleep again, on the couple's bed, while Chirwa sat on the floor.

Chirwa said her husband, concerned that the gestational sac was still hanging out, awoke Collins at around 5am.

"He woke her up and said, 'I think we must go to the hospital because it seems like nothing is happening,' and that is when she woke up, switched the torch on and touched the sack and said, 'Oh no, this is breech labour because the foot is coming out with the sack as well. I have never delivered breech labour before.'

"And my husband said Ernie needs help, she needs to go to the hospital, and she said, 'We can wait a bit,'" Chirwa said.

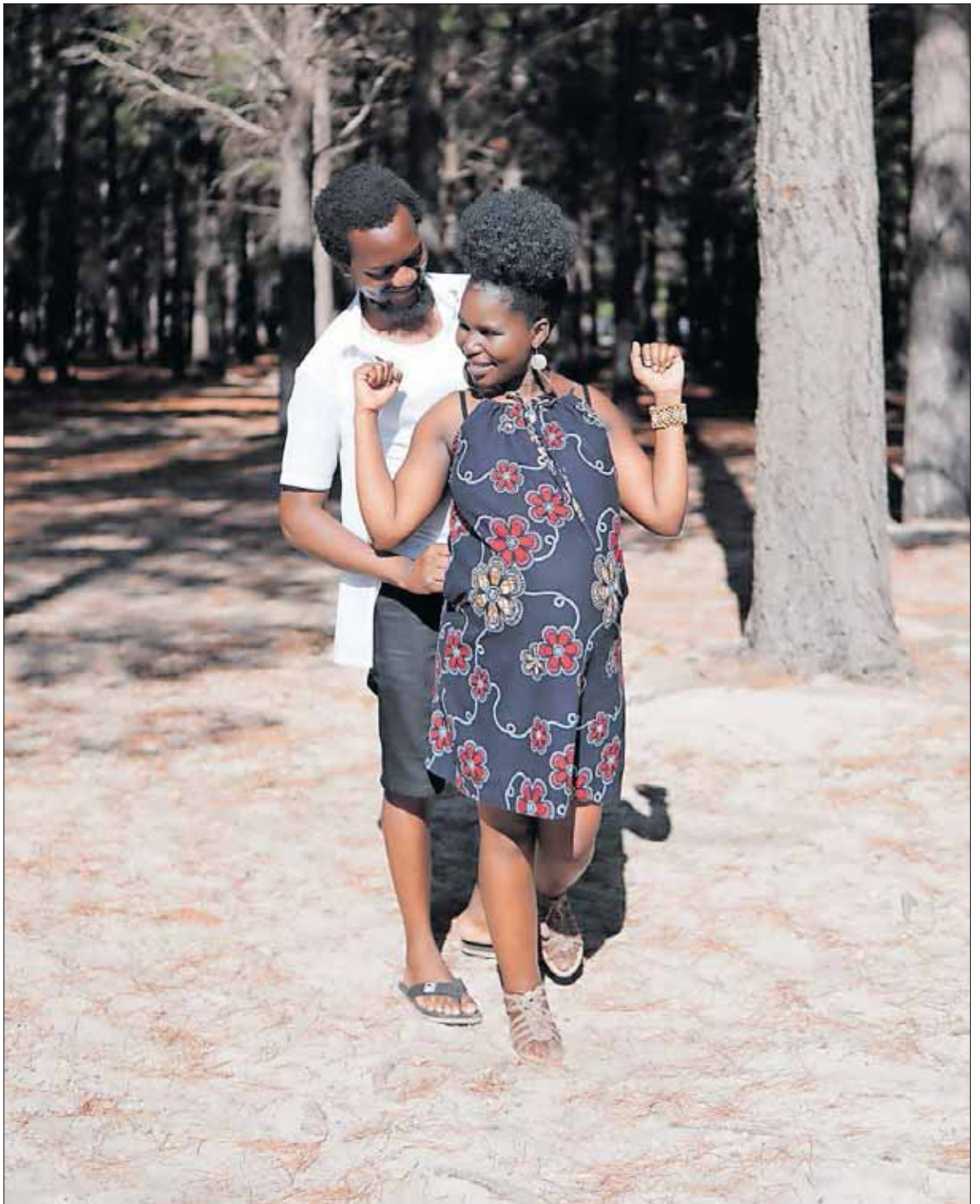
However, Bingala insisted that Collins take his wife to hospital, so she allegedly dropped them at the entrance of Retreat Day Hospital, in Cape Town, without saying a word to the staff on duty.

She also allegedly told the couple not to tell the staff that they had attempted a home delivery.

However, Retreat Day Hospital does not have facilities to perform a Caesarean section and the couple had to wait for an ambulance to take them to the Mowbray Maternity Hospital's obstetric unit, where the twins were stillborn.

Baby Kweli was still alive for at least 60 minutes while they were waiting for the ambulance.

Chirwa's attorney Wayne Coughlan alleged in court papers that Collins had "falsely held herself out to be a qualified and registered midwife who advertised and charged a fee for her midwifery services".



Grieving: Parents Ernesta Chirwa and Chifundo Bingala, whose twins were stillborn, are taking a woman they say claimed to be a midwife, and the Western Cape health MEC, to court. Photo: Supplied

Coughlan said at 14 weeks pregnant, Chirwa and Bingala had trusted Collins to manage her "pregnancy ante-natally, to provide medical advice and supervision and to render appropriate obstetric care throughout the ... pregnancy and through all stages of her labour, as well as during the post-partum period ... and to deliver the baby/ies safely and, if possible, by means of a midwife-led home birth".

He said by accepting Chirwa as a patient, and by virtue of the "doctor-patient relationship", Collins had "a legal duty to take reasonable care and to avoid the risk of harm" to the couple and their unborn babies.

Coughlan highlighted a slew of alleged medical failures on Collins' part which culminated in the twins being stillborn after a high-risk 43-week pregnancy.

"The first defendant failed to provide appropriate and quality medical and obstetric care and advice to the plaintiffs, and failed to act without negligence, and with the skill, care and diligence that could reasonably be expected from a caring, qualified and registered midwife in the circumstance," he said.

"The medical advice and obstetric care that was rendered ... was of a shockingly poor standard and she acted in such a reckless and grossly

incompetent, unprofessional, uncaring, and reprehensible manner, that the first plaintiff was denied almost all of the basic obstetric care which could and should have been rendered by a midwife in the circumstances."

Regarding the claim against MEC Mbombo, Coughlan said she should have been aware in 2020 and 2021 that Collins and Erhardt were running The Circle of Elephants midwifery practice.

Coughlan said apart from sending Collins a notice to shut down the business, Mbombo should have taken further steps to prevent her from practising as "an unqualified and unregistered midwife".

She should have opened a criminal case with the police, reported her to the South African Nursing Council, the Health Professions Council of South Africa and to the Office of Health Standards Compliance.

"The death of the plaintiff's unborn twins was as a direct result of the second defendant's breach of its legal duty and which resulted in the plaintiffs suffering the injuries as set out hereunder," Coughlan said.

However, in court papers, Collins denied the raft of allegations against her, claiming the couple had not wanted to seek medical care at a public facility during the pregnancy.

She had advised them "on numerous occasions to open a folder at a local clinic" where she "could receive medical care for her pregnancy".

Collins said at no stage had she purported to be "a registered doctor, a registered midwife or a registered nurse" or "provide any kind of medical, nursing or midwife care".

She had not undertaken any medical examinations, ultrasounds, blood

tests or any other medical, nursing or midwife-related tests.

Collins also denied running The Circle of Elephants as a midwifery practice.

She asked the court to dismiss the claims against her, with costs, and that judgment be entered in her favour, with costs.

Asked to comment on the case this week, Collins' attorney Jody Blount said "the nature of the allegations is one which requires sensitivity".

"Our client's response to the allegations is detailed in the plea document ... We encourage you to review this document for a comprehensive understanding of our client's position," Blount said.

Mbombo's spokesperson Luke Albert said the department could not comment on "ongoing legal matters".

South African Nursing Council registrar and chief executive Professor Ntombikile Mtshali said on Wednesday that midwives must be registered with the council to practise legally.

"Every midwife must be registered to practise in South Africa and maintain the licence to practise by paying the annual practice fee," Mtshali said.

She said Collins and Erhardt were not registered on the council's database "which could mean they are not registered with the [South African Nursing Council]."

She said she would need an identity number to verify this.

However, the *M&G* has seen earlier correspondence in which the council categorically states that the pair were not registered with it.

Mtshali said that the council had not received any complaints against Collins and Erhardt.

'If she can't be stopped, more babies will be dying and more women will experience this'

Mbeki seeks 80% in Eastern Cape

Elections 2024

The ANC's provincial secretary believes this target will be reached, boosting the party's chance of maintaining its majority nationally

Lizeka Tandwa

The ANC in the Eastern Cape wants to achieve the unimaginable and garner 80% of the vote to get the party over the line and retain its majority — with the help of its stalwarts, including former president Thabo Mbeki.

Eastern Cape secretary Lulama Ngcukayitobi told the *Mail & Guardian* this week that the possibility of the ANC achieving this in the province was “high”.

“We have been throughout the province; leaders have been going throughout and there is a demand for more leaders to go and address the traditional leaders. We have met the traditional healers, we have met all sectors of society because we have got that capacity and adequacy to address people,” he said.

The *M&G* previously reported that ANC president Cyril Ramaphosa had said in a leaked recording that the party would need 14 million votes to get a clear victory in the 29 May elections, and that it was hoping for high numbers from Limpopo, Mpumalanga and Eastern Cape.

The Eastern Cape has the third-largest electorate in the country, after KwaZulu-Natal and Gauteng. The province has been the party's historical stronghold, with some of its more prominent leaders including Oliver Tambo and Nelson Mandela.

Its voter share peaked at 79% in 2004, but declined over the next election cycles. In 2019, the party received its lowest result in the province since 1994, garnering just 68% of the votes.

Ngcukayitobi said the Eastern Cape was integral to the ANC's overall outcome on election day, and that the party was working to ensure that its supporters did not take for granted that it would win, and would go out in their numbers to vote.

“It's important that every citizen within our province goes out and vote. If it's possible to have a voter turnout at 100% that will be a huge contribution to the national electability and election prospects for the ANC. The Eastern Cape is very important, it has a history of struggle,” he said, adding that people in the province must rise to defend the gains of democracy.

The ANC believes the decline in support in past elections is a result of its supporters failing to turn out in their numbers. In 2019, the party's vote share nationally declined to 57% from 62% in 2014, a result pollsters and pundits believe signalled it will dip below 50% in the 2024 elections.

Ngcukayitobi said the different sectors of the ANC had a united voice against any paralysis of the government and that they were aware of the party's strengths and weaknesses and had expressed a willingness to assist it.

“People have got a package of things they think we should do



Big gun: Former president Thabo Mbeki campaigns for the ANC in Gauteng (below) and in the Eastern Cape with the province's secretary Lulama Ngcukayitobi (above, second from right). Photos: Felix Dlangamandla/Gallo Images & Per-Anders Pettersson/Getty Images



more,” he said.

Mbeki — who has become central in the ANC's campaign machinery, participating in door-to-door campaigns in KwaZulu-Natal and Gauteng — is expected to visit Nelson Mandela Bay this week. He is likely to visit the burial site of his father, struggle hero Goven Mbeki, and to participate in a programme with the Eastern Cape's business sector hosted by its progressive business forum.

Mbeki will speak alongside Mmamoloko Kubayi, the party's subcommittee chair on economic transformation, and Siphos Pityana, another former ANC leader who has been critical of the party in recent years and who formed the Save South Africa movement against the Jacob Zuma regime.

Ngcukayitobi said Mbeki was an asset to the ANC and had helped amplify the need for people to take the elections seriously.

“His visit is one of the central pillars of our campaign strategy to talk to disgruntled people because of the intra dynamics of the ANC of whether they are disgruntled because this element of doing more has not reached their areas,” he said, adding that Mbeki would send the ANC's message that it was on a renewal path and purging rogue elements in the organisation.

“His message has been amplifying the voice of the ANC in areas that

still seem to think that we have not done enough to change the circumstances of our people. We welcome that particular visit and we welcome that deployment but it should be seen in the context of amplifying the prospects of the ANC winning,” Ngcukayitobi said.

The ANC has also leaned on former president Kgalema Motlanthe, former deputy presidents David Mabuza and Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka and the former speaker of the national assembly, Baleka Mbete, to drive its election message.

The party is targeting 11 million voters nationally to achieve its 2019 electoral outcome of 57%, head of elections Mdmiseni Ntuli has previously said.

Ngcukayitobi said Nelson Mandela Bay was important for the ANC's prospects in the elections and that the party needed to do more to woo voters in the affluent areas of the metro.

“It is where the struggles were waged by the people of our area to take head-on the apartheid colonial regime. So his [Mbeki's] voice in that particular area is very important to the ANC, it's just that he is limited as a human being but we wish he could have visited even more of our areas,” he said.

The ANC suffered a humiliating defeat in the 2016 local government

elections when it lost its majority in Nelson Mandela Bay to a coalition led by the Democratic Alliance (DA). Unable to regain its position, the ANC then opted to support smaller parties to unseat the DA.

The party has also struggled to regain support in the predominantly coloured and Muslim areas in the metro. These numbers first went to the DA before later shifting to smaller parties, reflecting their frustration with the poor delivery of services.

Ngcukayitobi said there was a distortion that the ANC had lost its influence among coloured and Muslim people in Nelson Mandela Bay to the DA, arguing that it was the biggest loser in the 2021 elections, with the ANC's vote increasing by 2%.

“The biggest loser in the NMB [Nelson Mandela Bay] is the DA, which has been rejected by both the African communities that they hold, and they have lost elections with the coloured communities. That vote that was lost by the DA did not go to the ANC. It went to the Patriotic Alliance, it went to the Northern Alliance. The Northern Alliance is not contesting these elections. So the winners in the NMB were smaller parties,” he said.

Ngcukayitobi added that the ANC had been working with people supporting Palestinians in their war with Israel, saying: “We wish that that particular message can

be amplified by [Mbeki's] visit to NMB. We have been working in that particular area. We have been working with the pro-Palestinian Muslim communities throughout the country.

“I've been deployed in the Western Cape. I met various Khoi-San communities that have been raising issues that relate to the conduct of the DA in so far as the support for Israel and they are being mum on fundamental atrocities meted against the people of Palestine by apartheid Israel.

“We think we are going to gain more votes because of this particular principled stance on matters of peace and justice throughout the world,” Ngcukayitobi said.

He conceded that there were areas of concern in the Eastern Cape regarding the ANC's service delivery records and that people had expressed frustration over the government's slow pace in addressing infrastructural problems.

But, he added, “There is a great appreciation that there is a lot of work that has been done over the past 30 years to create an environment of a better life for all and these are amplified by the ability to create jobs whilst there is still a huge demand for opportunities for the people who work in the Eastern Cape.”

The provincial government had dealt “decisively” with poverty, he claimed, and there were fewer cases where there was a threat of malnutrition, compared with the apartheid era.

“People think about the expansion of the economic opportunities particularly in the agricultural sector. There must be a deliberate investment in the agricultural sector. There are serious concerns about the security of our people given the extent of the problems around the main cities of gangsterism, people who will demand money for protection. People are demanding the ANC must do something about that,” Ngcukayitobi said.

But, in 2023, the South African Human Rights Commission said child malnutrition in the Eastern Cape should be declared a disaster to compel the government to intervene immediately and decisively.

The commission found that a substantial percentage of children in the province were suffering from various forms of malnutrition, the Daily Maverick reported at the time.

Africa set to lead in clean transport

Overhauling the transport system will improve the economy and reduce carbon emissions

Sheree Bega

A pioneering electric public transport project in Nairobi; electric minibus taxis developed by Stellenbosch University; a light rail train in Addis Ababa and electric motorcycles designed in Kenya and tailored for Africa. These are among the case studies cited in a new report assessing the problems and opportunities regarding the decarbonisation of transport in Africa.

Globally, transportation contributes about a quarter of all greenhouse gas emissions and the continent offers a “unique opportunity” to explore strategies to reduce these emissions, according to the report.

Despite low motorisation rates, Africa could emerge as a leader in decarbonising transport, the report said, noting how shifting away from fossil fuels offers economic, environmental, health and infrastructural advantages.

“Africa’s abundant renewable energy and youthful workforce make electrifying transport promising. Though some governments have taken steps to reduce fossil fuel use, coordinated efforts are needed to secure the continent’s energy future.”

The report was produced by the Network of African Scientific Academies and the InterAcademy Partnership (IAP), and sponsored by the ClimateWorks Foundation and the African Climate Foundation.

Transportation is regarded as important for Africa’s economic transformation and features in Africa’s Agenda 2063. “As climate change concerns continue to grow it is critical to decarbonise transportation in Africa, where future carbon emissions are expected to grow rapidly,” the report said.

Africa contributes 4% of global transport emissions, but these are projected to increase rapidly over the next 20 years. This is being driven by urbanisation, economic growth and rising motorisation rates.

“If you look at the transport sector specifically, there are variances across the different African countries, where we see that the leading economies of Kenya, Egypt, South Africa, Nigeria, Morocco and Ghana have the highest motorisation rates, which means they also have the highest emissions when it comes to the transport sector,” said Moses Ogutu, of the IAP and the study co-director.

These countries are responsible for 70% of the continent’s emissions in the transport sector.

As motorisation continues, “what we see then is the chronic traffic congestion and the high levels of pollution and that is what now creates the case for decarbonisation,” he added.

The shift from fossil fuel-dependent vehicles to cleaner alternatives



such as electric vehicles (EVs) powered by renewable energy like hydro-power, solar or wind, will reduce air pollution, diminish the reliance on imported fossil fuels and enhance Africa’s energy independence, the report found.

“Economically, decarbonised and sustainable transport solutions can spur economic development, alleviate poverty, and improve transport accessibility while reducing carbon emissions to safeguard the environment.

“Socially, sustainable transportation improves access to transport for all communities, promotes public health and creates new job opportunities,” it noted, adding that it also presents a strategy for countries to meet their targets in their nationally determined contributions, in other words their climate action plans.

With improvements in the availability and access to clean energy sources widespread adoption of electric mobility is a “viable alternative” to fossil fuel-based transport.

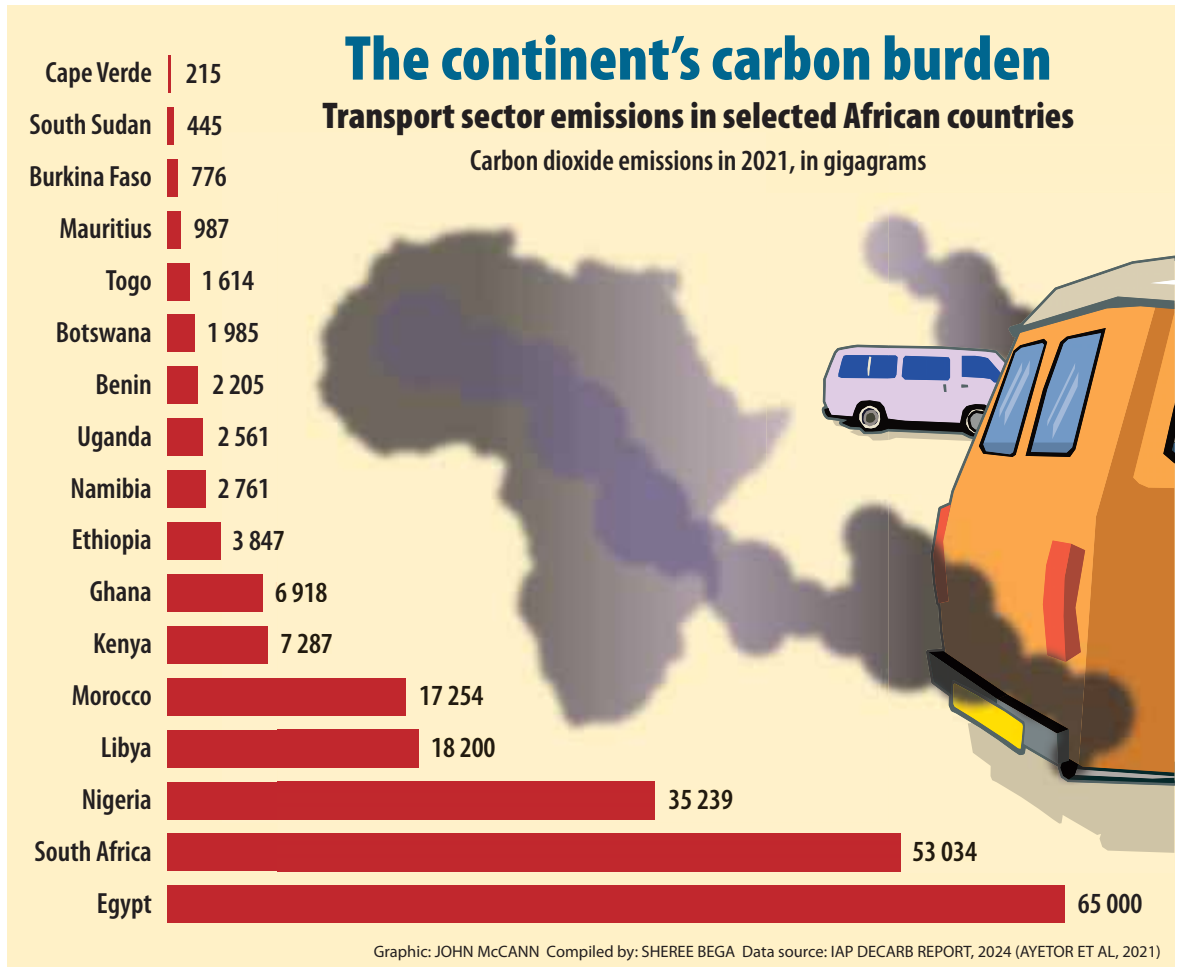
Africa’s developing transport infrastructure and rich renewable energy resources offer the chance to adopt low-emission technologies such as EVs without the overhaul required in “more entrenched” transport systems.

Among the report’s findings is that the decarbonisation of transport is already happening in Africa, with projects focused on adopting electric mobility solutions, bus rapid transit (BRT) systems and light rail transport.

Among these are enabling policies like the EV incentives in Morocco and Kenya, the shift towards sustainable modes such as Rwanda’s invest-



Clean up: Improvements in the freight sector will boost Africa’s economy and projects like Nairobi’s e-mobility initiative will improve transport at a local level. Photo: Andrew Kasuku/Anadolu Agency/Getty Images



ments in cycling infrastructure and South Africa’s push for biofuel use to improve fuel efficiency.

African governments are using a range of policy instruments to accelerate the decarbonisation of transport at continental and local levels. This includes subsidies for electric vehicle purchases in Morocco and carbon taxes in South Africa, which encourage cleaner transport options.

Regulatory measures, including emissions standards and vehicle import restrictions, have been implemented in Egypt and Kenya to curb pollution and encourage the use of cleaner vehicles. And Nigeria has campaigns promoting electric motorcycles. “These varied policy tools, backed by strategic planning and investments, are critical to boosting the effectiveness of decarbonisation efforts across the continent,” the report noted.

Decarbonisation could drive industrial growth and create green jobs, with the growing local assembly and manufacturing of EVs in Africa, and initiatives to convert petrol-powered vehicles, including Africa’s paratransit vehicles — these cars supplement fixed route transport by providing individual rides without fixed routes or timetables — to electric propulsion in countries including Kenya, South Africa and Nigeria.

The conversion of internal combustion engine (ICE) vehicles to EVs particularly presents “enormous potential” considering the vast number of used vehicles in Africa. “Meanwhile, with the necessary infrastructure already present, existing ICE vehicle manufacturers could pivot to EV

production, if properly incentivised.” The abundance of skilled mechanics, together with the “ingenuity and resourcefulness” that African innovators have, provide the groundwork for a sustainable, scalable model of EV development tailored to the needs and opportunities of the rapidly emerging EV market.

These opportunities extend to EV vehicle parts and battery manufacturing, using Africa’s mineral resources and innovative business models such as pay-as-you-go and solar charging stations, taking advantage of the continent’s sunlight, the report said.

But transport electrification in Africa will increase the demand for electricity, and the fragility of the electric grid is worrying with regard to the viability and sustainability of electric mobility.

Although EVs could play a role in stabilising the grid, for example through a vehicle-to-grid approach, understanding the state of power systems is key in evaluating the effect of EV use in African countries, because electricity is a “central pillar” of the continent’s energy infrastructure.

Increased demand from EVs requires robust and diverse generation facilities and power sources.

“Transmission networks will need to be upgraded to handle the increased load, especially during peak charging times, requiring a resilient infrastructure,” the report noted.

“The distribution system will face changes in load patterns, particularly in residential areas with home charging, demanding smarter and more responsive grid solutions.”

Professor Thinus Booyen, the chair of the Internet of Things at the faculty of engineering at Stellenbosch University, emphasised the importance of the report being “done in Africa, by Africans for Africa, especially given the electricity demand and the fragility of the grid”.

“What we found in a lot of our research in the African context, electricity makes up a very big part of mobility and the fragility of the grid is actually more important than what you would assume in developed countries,” he said.

“We also have to be very careful, from within Africa, to assume that other countries are the same as ours. So in the electricity perspective, the

thing to acknowledge is that our infrastructure is not necessarily set up to carry the extra burden of electric vehicles. But with that challenge comes the opportunity also to have additional investment in electricity production.”

He said the big opportunity is to ensure that the additional production of electricity is green.

“Electrification in Africa is not the same as decarbonisation. It’s crucial that any additional production of electricity and energy must be green,” Booyen said.

“The electrification of transport in Africa gives us the opportunity to locally produce vehicles but also to locally produce energy.”

Prioritising the electrification of transport for the less costly, higher mileage and used vehicles could streamline the adoption of EVs — and in this way maximise the environmental benefits and economic efficiency.

“Analysis indicates that two- and three-wheelers, along with passenger buses on high-use routes, are attractive candidates for the first stages of transport electrification efforts,” Booyen said.

“Similarly, four-wheelers, taxis, ride-sharing vehicles, and other commercial fleets are identified as more suitable for early electrification compared to less intensively used private family cars,” Booyen said.

“Another big thing that makes Africa different is that we have the two-wheelers and the three-wheelers.

“Looking at electricity fragility, it’s crucial to understand that especially for the informal transport sector in Africa, it’s very difficult to establish when electricity will be needed where — at what times will people charge and how will they charge?”

“These things will be different in the African environment than what they are in a scheduled and structured transport system.”

According to the report, an integrated sustainable transport strategy that includes mass rapid transport and non-motorised transport can enhance decarbonisation.

“In Africa, where urbanisation is rapidly increasing, the need for efficient and sustainable transportation systems is more pronounced than ever,” the report noted.

“The implementation of mass rapid transit systems, such as the BRT systems in Lagos and Dar es Salaam exemplifies proactive steps towards sustainable urban mobility.”

SA's tourism arrivals take off

Visa waiver schemes with other African nations are boosting growth in travel and tourism – to the tune of 1.8 million people so far this year

Lyse Comins

South Africa is increasing its market share of tourists from the rest of Africa because visa waiver schemes make it easier for visitors to travel to the country.

According to the latest Statistics South Africa data, the country welcomed 1.8 million tourists from the rest of Africa from January to March 2024, accounting for a significant 74.5% of all arrivals, Tourism Minister Patricia de Lille told delegates at the Africa Travel Indaba in Durban on Tuesday.

"International tourist arrivals from January to March 2024 totalled 2.4 million, representing a remarkable 15.4% increase compared with the same period in 2023," De Lille said.

Of the 8.5 million international tourists who visited in 2023, 6.4 million arrivals were from the rest of the African continent.

"Zimbabwe and Ghana stood out for their remarkable growth, with Zimbabwe experiencing a 21.8% increase in tourist arrivals to South Africa when compared to 2023, totalling more than 613 000 arrivals."

Ghana recorded a 249.4% surge when compared with 2023, reaching 7 904 arrivals from



Big indaba: Minister of Tourism Patricia de Lille addresses visitors to the event in Durban. Photo: OJ Koloti/Gallo Images

January to March 2024.

"Ghana's immense performance can be attributed to the fact that travellers between Ghana and South Africa no longer need visas for a period of up to 90 days within a calendar year, for purposes of business or tourism," De Lille said.

South Africa and Ghana announced a visa-waiver scheme on 1 November last year, allowing citizens to travel freely between the two countries.

South Africa has visa waivers for 132 countries and is in the process of negotiating to extend this to a further 10 countries. De Lille said her department was working closely with

the department of home affairs and the presidency on visa issues.

"Travellers from other parts of the world also continued to show their appreciation and love for South Africa. For the first three months of 2024, tourist arrivals from the Americas registered at more than 118 000, reflecting a 12.4% growth compared to the same period in 2023," she said.

South Africa received more than 420 000 tourists from Europe, an 8.6% increase on the same period in 2023. More than 125 000 tourists visited from the United Kingdom, marking 5.3% growth, while German arrivals rose 9.9% to 98 900.

Asian markets also grew significantly, with more than 49 000 arrivals from the region, an increase of 25.4%. This included 16 209 tourists from India and more than 11 000 from China.

De Lille said South Africans had also supported the recovery of the tourism sector during 2023, with the number of domestic trips rising to 130% of pre-pandemic 2019 levels, while domestic spending increased by more than 80%.

"South Africans have truly gone out for revenge tourism and have rediscovered their love for exploring their own country and we thank all our locals for supporting tourism businesses and job creation," the tourism minister said.

Travellers are seeking "more than just ordinary experiences" and the country's diversity presents this opportunity, she said.

"They yearn for new, unique, unforgettable experiences that will form the cornerstone of lasting memories. We call on all tourism sector

partners to work with us to support and market the tourism offerings in our townships, villages and dorps," De Lille said.

Tourism is a significant contributor to economic growth and job creation. According to the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC), the South African tourism sector created 1.3 million jobs in 2023, accounting for 8.7% of all jobs.

"Preliminary estimates according to the WTTC is that the tourism sector contributed 6.8% to the country's GDP, worth R458.9 billion. Furthermore, the direct contribution of the Africa's Travel Indaba in 2023 to the South African economy is projected at R408.6 million," De Lille said.

An additional R776.4 million is projected to be generated through indirect and induced stimulation, resulting in a total contribution of R1.2 billion to the economy.

De Lille said it was important to make it easier for travellers to reach tourism destinations on the continent.

"While our continent's tourism sector is looking really good and progressing we still need to work on certain areas that inhibit us from growing exponentially. Air access is one such critical area where a significant amount of work is needed urgently to improve air access in Africa and for the rest of the world to connect with us," she said.

More than 1200 exhibitors from 26 African countries and more than 11 000 buyers, including inbound tour operators, foreign travel agents, airlines and tourism companies representing 55 countries attended the three-day conference.



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Irregularities in stationery tenders

Links have been found between the procurement manager and beneficiaries of lucrative tenders

Mandisa Ndlovu

An investigation by the *Mail & Guardian* has uncovered a web of conflict of interest surrounding a lucrative educational material distribution tender in KwaZulu-Natal worth an annual R269.8 million.

The appointed management agent, Ndatabase Printing Solutions, has been found to have subcontracted companies linked to its owners, sparking allegations of impropriety.

The investigation found links between the director of Ndatabase Printing Solutions, Thandazani Nyide, and Imfundo Press and Printing, which has received sub-contracts from the management agent since the tender began in 2017.

Over the past seven years, the contract has amounted to R1.8 billion.

Ndatabase is tasked with sourcing manufacturers and distributors of stationery for the provincial education department, with a view to developing small and medium-sized companies among previously disadvantaged groups.

Amanda Swana, director of Imfundo, and Nyide, were directors of Powerpoint Lifestyle before Nyide's resignation in March last year.

The *M&G* investigation also found that Swana was part of the Ndatabase-appointed panel of representatives during the July 2019 site inspections of other learning material distributors, which were subsequently removed as sub-contractors, that previously supplied the province's schools in favour of companies linked to Nyide.

One of the companies, Freedom Stationery, quoted nearly R39 million to manufacture and distribute educational material to 379 000 learners – R25 million more than



the cheapest quotes of three companies, and double the amount of one other company, according to documents seen by the *M&G*.

Moreover, the jobs-for-pals investigation unearthed that Moosa Ntimba – the director of Matumaini Stationery Manufacturers, which received more than R37 million from Ndatabase to supply 317 000 learners – worked for Ndatabase as part of its executive management team.

This is not Ntimba's first run-in with controversy surrounding a provincial education department contract. In 2012, the education non-profit Section27 raised the alarm about the non-delivery of textbooks in Limpopo.

As reported by the *M&G*, what became known as the Limpopo textbook crisis spiralled into a month-long national story.

At the centre of the controversy was a company called Edu-Solutions, which allegedly secured its R320 million textbook distribution contract from the provincial department under dubious circumstances. Ntimba was a director at Edu-Solutions at the time.

Ntimba's involvement with Ndatabase is detailed in the company's 2013-14 bidding presentation document, prior to its appointment as the KwaZulu-Natal education department's management agent. Ntimba opened his company after Ndatabase received the 2017 contract.

The cost escalations contravene the Public Finance Management Act, which stipulates that departments should procure goods and services "in a manner that is cost-effective and efficient".



On paper: Thandazani Nyide (centre), director of Ndatabase Printing Solutions, has been linked to alleged wrongdoing involving tenders in KwaZulu-Natal. Photo: Supplied

Allegations of fronting have surfaced, with Imfundo accused of acting on behalf of larger suppliers, evident in the distribution boxes with Freedom Stationery's branding – of which the *M&G* has seen photographs – despite them being delivered by Imfundo.

Schools were allegedly forced to use Ndatabase-recommended companies, such as Freedom, for their material, failing which the department would not release funds for stationery procurement.

This was according to Mntomuhle Khawula, the Inkatha Freedom Party's (IFP) representative in the KwaZulu-Natal legislature's education portfolio committee, during a provincial sitting in 2022.

Khawula claimed that circuit and district KZN education department officials were lobbying for Ndatabase, urging schools to accept stationery orders from them.

The South African Schools Act allows section 21 schools – those that are financially self-managed – to order their own material from distributors they choose. It was the section 21 schools that Khawula alleged were forced to order from companies approved by Ndatabase.

"Some schools refused to accept these orders on the basis that they were still waiting for their legal orders from their legitimate suppliers," Khawula claimed, as quoted in an IOL article.

"As the IFP caucus in KwaZulu-Natal, we want to question the department; what is the big deal

with this Ndatabase? We are even aware that because of their resistance to order from this supplier, some schools were punished by being shortchanged in their norms and standards allocations for 2021-22," Khawula added.

His views were supported by a source who was present during Swana's site inspections at excluded distribution companies.

The source, who asked to remain anonymous, alleged Swana's presence at the inspections was part of "corporate espionage and antitrust behaviour" to favour Ndatabase's director and companies linked to him.

"The evidence shows how Ndatabase had abused the power of being the managing agent to make Freedom more powerful and allowing for the creation of the so-called 'enterprise development recipient,'" the source said, adding that Imfundo was one of the development beneficiaries.

Hamza Casim of Freedom Stationery dismissed the allegations and said there were no links between it, Ndatabase and Imfundo.

The Procurement Bill 2021, which is before parliament, seeks to legislate against persons involved in purchasing state goods and services being related to officials doling out tenders without disclosing a direct or indirect personal connection in a bid to crack down on the undue influencing of procurement.

According to documents, the KZN government began using a management agent to distribute learning material, instead of its previous cen-

tral system, in 2004.

From 1994 to 2004, the province had a tender system that allowed a number of bookshops and interested individuals to participate in the procurement process.

The provincial education department is notorious for the abuse of state funds, with a Special Investigating Unit report showing that a tender awarded to supply, deliver and install 41 000 water tanks with a 5 000-litre capacity cost R28 000 per tank. The tanks retailed for up to R5 000 at the time.

The SIU also investigated a personal protective equipment tender, looking at procurement issues, agreements between officials and service providers, fraud, overpricing and value for money on purchases. The contracts in question amounted to R183 262 489.

The unit found that service providers did not declare on their bid documents that they had conducted work with other state institutions in the last 12 months, which was a requirement; non-essential items were purchased by the department under Covid-19 emergency provisions; and fraud and forgery were committed by service providers in the submission of the bid documents.

On 30 April, the *M&G* sent detailed questions to the education department, Swana of Imfundo and Nyide of Ndatabase.

They all acknowledged receiving questions but did not answer them, despite repeated calls and text messages asking for responses.

Activist speaks out against horn stockpiles after arrest



Sheree Bega

The government's stockpiles of rhino horn "provide a level of temptation" for criminal syndicates that should not exist, according to Outraged South African Citizens Against Rhino Poaching (Oscap).

Kim da Ribeira, of Oscap, was reacting to last week's announcement by the Directorate for Priority Crime Investigation's (Hawks) Serious Organised Crime Investigation that it had arrested a North West Parks and Tourism Board security official in connection



Temptation: Rhino horn stockpiles must be got rid of, anti-poaching group says. Photo: Aaron Tam/AFP/Getty Images

with alleged involvement in the theft of 51 rhino horns from a facility in Mahikeng in June last year.

The horns have an estimated value of R9 million and were stolen from the headquarters of the North West Parks and Tourism Board.

"It's one of the reasons why we shouldn't have stockpiles of horn," said Da Ribeira. "It is vulnerable and is open to corruption because the officials know where the horns are stored and whether they're catalogued properly. The government believes that the ivory and rhino horn we've got are assets. They are not. They're liabilities and an enormous risk and provide a level of temptation that doesn't need to be there."

Edwin Thapelo Rangaka was arrested for his alleged involvement in the horn heist. He appeared briefly

in the Mmabatho magistrate's court on charges of business burglary and was granted bail. His accomplices, Elias Mangande and Lefa Mankgaba, were arrested in July.

Democratic Alliance MP Dave Bryant welcomed Rangaka's arrest.

"The DA was the first to raise this matter publicly when the theft took place in June 2023 and successfully requested that the MEC, the North West Parks Board, SAPS and the Hawks appear before the committee of forestry, fisheries and the environment on two occasions," he said.

"The DA's efforts have been vindicated and we commend the Hawks for their hard work."

Major general Patrick Mbotho, the North West provincial head of the Hawks, praised the "sterling investigative work by the members".

Mbete says Zuma 'has gone crazy ... don't vote for MK'

Lizeka Tandwa

Former ANC chairperson and past speaker of the National Assembly Baleka Mbete said former president Jacob Zuma "has gone crazy", taking issue with his forming a new party that will contest the 29 May elections.

On the sidelines of the ANC's door-to-door campaign in Ekurhuleni, east of Johannesburg on Wednesday afternoon, Mbete also denied having protected Zuma during her time as parliament's speaker.

"We are very, very clear that he has gone crazy, [he] has gone rogue and we are clear in saying people must not vote for uMkhonto weSizwe [MK] party. There is an MK that continues to exist, who are our [mili-



tary] veterans that we are proud of and we are out here saying whatever anybody else is saying that is now abusing the name of MK must not be listened to," she said.

In 2017, after a protracted court battle over payments for security upgrades to his private Nkandla home in KwaZulu-Natal, the constitutional court found that the National Assembly had failed to put in place mechanisms to hold Zuma accountable.

The Economic Freedom Fighters, Congress of the People and United

Democratic Movement then asked the highest court in the land to compel parliament to hold the then president to account.

Judge Chris Jafta, reading the orders, said the National Assembly must now urgently make those rules.

"The National Assembly must fulfil obligations without delay," Jafta said, further ordering Zuma and parliament to pay costs associated with this case.

This landmark judgment had a ripple effect on the ANC's election outcomes in the years following.

Mbete was seen by politicians and pundits as having protected the former president while she was speaker. Mbete was part of a powerful cohort in the ANC that assured Zuma's ascendancy to power and she was

elected as national chair of the ANC during his term as president.

But on Wednesday Mbete denied having protected Zuma, arguing that the media had driven this narrative.

"I did not protect him. My submission to Zondo [state capture commission], I put clearly the evidence that the media has been wrongly portraying an image of the speaker protecting the president," she said.

"What I did was to implement every decision I made on the basis of the rules before me that were guiding every action that I took. Even if it was FW de Klerk I would have taken the same decision."

Mbete added that she was no friend of Zuma, saying she had worked with him as a political leader of the ANC. She said she had no regrets about her

time as the speaker and had no reason to talk to Zuma now.

The ANC's prospects of retaining its majority on 29 May are on a knife edge, with polling predictions suggesting that the party's share of the vote will dip below 50%.

With the advent of the Zuma-led MK party, the ANC has roped in its veterans to aid its campaign efforts.

"Indeed, nobody can deny that there are mistakes that have been made by individuals. There are some wrong things that have been done. We publicly know about the investigations," Mbete said.

"We have acknowledged those mistakes ... but we are saying, overwhelmingly, that a lot more good, a lot more progress has been made than what we talk about."

We are fed up with graft – but we do it

Many respondents in a Corruption Watch study have given gifts to and done favours for police officers, prosecutors and other officials

Lyse Comins

South Africans are fed up with corruption, yet many admit that they are also guilty because they have offered gifts or favours to police officers, politicians, prosecutors and judges, a new Corruption Watch report says.

The report, released on Wednesday, highlights the profound effect of corruption on the lives of people; it is affecting the delivery of services at all levels from safety and security, access to quality education and the provision of housing and land to the administration of justice by the courts and food security.

Corruption Watch said the study, which involved face-to-face interviews with 1 500 people across the country, aimed to highlight perceptions, characteristics and experiences of corruption, and the prevalence of corrupt practices in the public and private sectors.

Most respondents (764) were from Gauteng, KwaZulu-Natal and the Western Cape; 51% identified as male; seven out of 10 were of African descent; 15% identified as coloured, 10% as white, 4% as Asian and 8% as "other". Most respondents were aged 35 to 40 (45%), while 38% were 16 to 35 years of age and 17% were aged 50 and older.

Respondents expressed significant concerns about the effects of corruption, with two-thirds being sceptical about law enforcement agencies because of a perceived lack of capacity to effectively combat corruption.

Regarding interactions with officials in relation to corruption, 24% of between 600 and 700 respondents admitted to giving a gift to or doing a favour for police officers, car licence officers (23%), and traffic manage-

ment officials (23%). About one in 10 gave gifts or favours to prosecutors (12%), elected government representatives (11%), prosecutors (10%) and judges or magistrates (9%).

This included giving some money (18%), food and drink (13%), providing another service of favour (5%) or giving valuables (3%) such as gold jewellery and cellphones to officials.

A small share of respondents (5%) reported an occasion when they were under duress to make a payment or gift.

The study showed that half of the respondents also believe that institutions prioritise issues affecting the affluent and influential and neglect the concerns of other citizens, while half of the respondents expressed less trust in elected and appointed officials.

Corruption in the provision of basic services was highlighted as a major concern, with 81% of respondents saying the government is not doing enough to tackle the problem, indicating a clear demand for stricter consequences for corrupt behaviour by government officials.

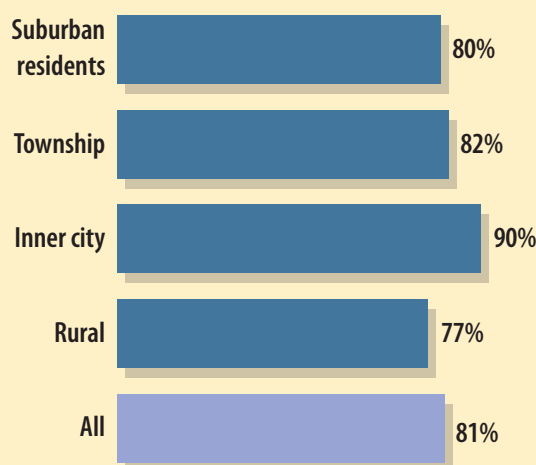
More than half of the respondents (73%) agreed that corruption mostly affects the provision of housing and land, safety and protection of communities (69%); the provision of quality education (68%); access to quality healthcare (67%); the administration of justice by courts (64%); and food security (62%).

Nearly half of the respondents (49%) exhibited low levels of confidence in the adequacy of anti-corruption legislation and policies, while a third expressed having no confidence and only a fifth said they had confidence in the country's anti-corruption framework.

Most respondents who were not confident in the adequacy of laws

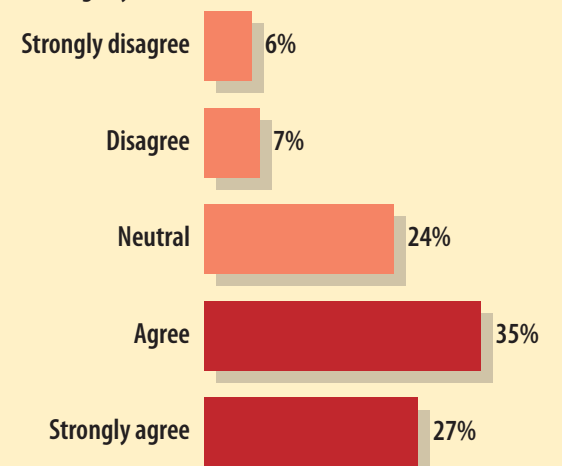
Addressing corruption

A majority of respondents (81%) do not believe that enough is being done to address corruption by government in the provision of public services



Perceptions of corruption on people's daily lives

Survey respondents who agree or disagree that corruption impedes fundamental human rights and dignity



and policies said they had limited (47%) or no (35%) knowledge of anti-corruption laws, while 67% of those with little confidence also had a limited understanding.

Interestingly, respondents expressed greater trust in media outlets, religious and spiritual institutions, and legal, investigative and accounting firms to effectively confront corruption, suggesting these organisations are perceived as "potentially more reliable", the study noted.

These organisations attained the highest mean scores out of a possible five.

The study also highlighted concerns regarding confidentiality and the safeguarding of whistleblowers who expose corruption in government institutions.

Most respondents agreed that whistleblowers are vulnerable to victimisation, violence and death, holding a widespread perception that officials in the public sector com-

promise whistleblower information. Only 50% of respondents believe that the whistleblowing channels in place allow for confidentiality, psychological support and the resolution of complaints.

Among the report's recommendations for combatting corruption were the implementation of education and awareness campaigns to inform the public of its damaging ramifications, the strengthening of legal frameworks to ensure rigorous enforcement and the protection of whistleblowers, ethics and values training for public officials, financial transparency training for officials and inclusive decision-making that involves citizens.

The findings of the study showed "it is no longer sufficient or appropriate to speak of good intentions" when dealing with graft, Corruption Watch's interim head of stakeholder relations and campaigns Melusi Ncala said.

"Without action the fight against corruption lacks meaning for those

afflicted by human rights violations and inadequate service delivery because the greed of the corrupt impacts them the most. As predicted and warned, the ordinary man and woman have not only lost trust in politicians, but they are distrusting state institutions which are the bedrock of our democracy," Ncala said.

He said the findings of the report were timely ahead of the upcoming general elections.

"The story of corruption is well documented and these citizens provide us with an indication of the country's mood. The trust deficit between the elected and the electorate is widening because elected representatives have mostly paid lip service to issues of transparency and accountability," Ncala said.

What remained was for the electorate to reflect on what the sixth administration had promised, its missed opportunities and corruption scandals, and to assess the promises of those now contesting power, he added.

Sasol ruling 'erodes' air pollution law

Life After Coal slams Minister Barbara Creecy's decision to allow the company further leniency

Sheree Bega

Samson Mokoena was in his late 20s when South Africa's first air pollution hotspot — the Vaal Triangle Airshed Priority Area — was declared in 2006.

Since then the Vaal Triangle has remained a "sacrifice zone" for its residents, who are subjected to dangerous levels of air pollution, said Mokoena, the coordinator of the Vaal Environmental Justice Alliance (Veja).

"The Vaal Triangle was one of the three declared priority areas and ... yet we see companies like Sasol, ArcelorMittal and Eskom not continuously investing in their operations, but who continuously want to bypass the legislation," he said. "There's been no action whatsoever to improve air quality since the declaration."

Veja is part of the Life After Coal campaign, which has condemned last month's decision by Barbara Creecy, the forestry, fisheries and environment minister, to allow Sasol "further leniency in relation to its toxic air pollution".

She granted Sasol's air quality-related appeal, allowing it to measure emissions of sulphur dioxide (SO₂) from the 17 coal-fired boilers at its Secunda operations "in the way that Sasol prefers — although with certain conditions", the campaign said.

Sasol's latest appeal was against the July 2023 decision of the National Air Quality Officer, which refused Sasol's application for "alternative limits" for its SO₂ emissions.

Creecy's decision will cause premature deaths and elevated illnesses in already heavily polluted areas of the Mpumalanga Highveld and the Vaal, when compared with compliance with the minimum emission standards (MES), the campaign said.

"The decision that the minister has taken to exempt these companies, especially Sasol, ArcelorMittal and Eskom, is unacceptable in terms of our democratic values," Mokoena added. "Section 24 of the Constitution guarantees that everyone has the right to an environment that is not harmful to our health and well-being."

The Life After Coal campaign consists of groundWork, Earthlife Africa, the Centre for Environmental Rights, Vukani Environmental Justice Movement and the South Durban Community Environmental Alliance.

They have also denounced the lack of transparency surrounding Creecy's decision, demanding the immediate release of all expert reports and legal advice taken into account by the National Environmental Consultative and Advisory Forum (Neca) in making its recommendation to the minister and by her in making her appeal decision.



"Sasol is a major polluter, emitting some 167 kilotonnes of sulphur dioxide from its industrial processes every year," according to the campaign.

"It emits several other dangerous pollutants and is a major contributor to the toxic air quality on the Mpumalanga Highveld, which has been held to violate the constitutional right to a healthy environment."

It has been well documented that exposure to excess SO₂ causes an increased risk of lower respiratory infections, increased risk of stroke and increased risk of death from diabetes. "Studies also show severe health impacts on children, the elderly, pregnant women, and those already suffering from asthma and heart and lung disease."

Mokoena further noted: "If you go to Sebokeng Hospital, especially in winter, you find elderly people and children flocking into public health institutions — clinics and hospitals — because of the high levels of air pollution in the region. And people live under poverty and inequality."

"We see the minister not enforcing the law but allowing these companies to be given these exemptions."

The minimum emission standards were promulgated in 2010 after a multi-year consultative process, which included major industrial emitters such as Sasol, under the Air Quality Act. They are intended to regulate activities that have a significantly detrimental effect on human health.

The campaign said that although it is better to have legislated standards than to not have them, the country's minimum emission standards for various pollutants are weaker than those even in other developing countries.

South Africa's sulphur dioxide MES are about 10 times weaker than the standards in India and about 28 times weaker than those in China.

Despite participating in the setting of the minimum emission standards for the five years preceding their promulgation in 2010, Sasol has "consistently acted to undermine these standards and to avoid MES compliance".

Just Share, the activist shareholder group, opposed the appeal. It provided expert evidence that MES compliance would reduce premature deaths and harm to health by 40% to 60%.

Sasol's proposed limit, even by April 2030, would reduce these effects by only 5% considering Sasol's 2022-23 emissions, Just Share said. Granting Sasol's appeal would result



Dire: Sasol has been allowed, for years, to exceed the minimum emission standards despite sulphur dioxide and other pollutants contributing to ill-health and death. Photo: Waldo Swiegers/Getty Images

in 50% to 130% higher harmful effects than MES compliance.

"This decision means that the government has permitted a private company to set its own pollution limits, making a mockery of pollution laws and constitutional rights, and of any claim by the government to take public health seriously," Just Share said.

According to the campaign, this "compliance avoidance trend" — through emitters repeatedly applying to postpone MES compliance and for weaker alternative emission limits, and the department of forestry, fisheries and the environment "granting this leniency" — have contributed to a failure to improve air quality, as well as the erosion of air quality laws.

Mafoko Phomane, a senior environmental health campaigner and public health specialist at groundWork, said: "The minister's decision allows for communities to continuously be exposed to excess sulphur dioxide and we know that it causes increased lower respiratory infections, and increased risk of stroke, as well as premature death."

"Realising that the minister's decision almost ignores what's happening on the ground is disheartening," she said, noting that Sasol has been consistently trying to evade compliance with the minimum emission standards.

'Studies show severe impacts on children, the elderly, pregnant women, and those suffering from asthma, heart and lung disease'

Creecy said in her decision, that she considered with "utmost seriousness" the potential negative health effects associated with Sasol's non-compliance with the MES. "I am aware that in the current economic climate, the country is plagued by high unemployment and poverty rates. It is not in dispute that the appellant [Sasol] provides strategic contributions to the country's economy."

"This does not mean that I condone that the appellant continues operating under a postponement of the MES new plant standards or corresponding limit. I concur with the Neca Forum's recommendation that the appellant must ensure that it plays an integral role in improving ambient air quality and decarbonising, in line with South Africa's commitments."

She said she shared the concerns of the National Air Quality Officer and Just Share that Sasol "has had many years within which to comply with the MES, which it has failed to do".

"Like the Neca Forum, I also share the concern raised by the National Air Quality Officer and the interested and affected party regarding the health risks associated with the occasional but very high exceedances of SO₂."

"To mitigate against the health risks, the Neca Forum has recommended the additional measure of an accompanying concentration limit of 1400mg/Nm³ [normal cubic metre] for the appellant's SO₂ emissions, which is substantially below existing plant standards, but still a feasible target according to the appellant's own projections."

Mokoena said the government has allowed itself to be bullied by these industries in terms of the minimum

emission standards that they must comply with because of the "jobs issue".

"One of the things that these companies are saying is that if they comply with the air quality standards, they will have to shut down and people will lose jobs. So they've been hiding around the whole question of jobs because they know people are desperate for jobs. Now, air quality can come secondary."

Sasol said it is committed to operate within legal requirements and "that Sasol complies with our atmospheric emission licences".

To ensure continued operations, within legal requirements from 1 April 2025, Sasol submitted an application in terms of Clause 12A of the minimum emission standards.

"Clause 12A does not seek to obtain leniency in air quality emissions compliance but rather to regulate our emissions on an alternative basis (load-based instead of concentration-based)."

"Sasol's proposal involves emissions reductions in an integrated manner, which will achieve double the reductions in SO₂ emissions (load-based) than would have been achieved when compared to, and the equivalent mass reduction associated with, the MES concentration limit. In addition, there will be further reductions in particulate matter and nitrogen oxides on a load-basis."

Sasol said these further reductions will result in an improvement of ambient air quality in the Vaal Triangle above minimum emission standards compliance. "This solution is aligned with Sasol's stated ambition to decarbonise and transition to sustainable feedstocks. Sasol believes that the minister acknowledged these aspects in her decision of 5 April 2024."

'Firm working with the authorities'

The contractor says that it is cooperating in probes into the collapse of a George building

Umamah Bakharria

The main contractor involved in the construction of the George building that collapsed last week, Liatel Developments, claims it is following "protocol" in various investigations to determine the cause of the disaster.

"At this time, Liatel makes the firm commitment that it will cooperate, and is currently cooperating, with the ongoing search-and-rescue and recovery operations," Liatel Developments director Theuns Kruger told the *Mail & Guardian*.

Employment and Labour Minister Thulas Nxesi said last week the department had failed to make contact with the building's developers, Neo Victoria. Liatel was contracted by Neo Victoria to carry out the construction of the five-storey building, which collapsed on 6 May.

The George municipality confirmed that, as of Wednesday afternoon, 61 construction workers had been retrieved from the site, 33 of whom had died.

In videos circulated by the local authorities, rescue workers can be seen drilling through the rubble searching for the remaining workers.

According to the department of

employment and labour, there were 81 construction workers on site at the time of the collapse.

"Rescue workers are now drilling through what would have been the first floor of the building and the basement, so we are hoping in the coming days that we will rescue each and every unaccounted body," George's mayor Leon van Wyk said.

The Construction Industry Development Board (CIDB) — a public entity that regulates the industry — confirmed that Liatel was not registered as a contractor. "The company mentioned, Liatel Construction, is not on the CIDB register of contractors," CEO Bongani Dladla said.

Preliminary findings from an investigation conducted by government entities revealed regulatory and compliance gaps in the construction of the building. "Generally, building failures of this nature are a result of a combination of factors ranging from poor designs [and] site investigations or poor construction," Dladla said.

Liatel Developments did not respond to the *M&G's* questions about not being registered with any legal construction body.

It did say Liatel was aware of a video being circulated showing what seems to be a cleaner mixing cement during the building's construction.



Tragedy: Officials at the building in George which collapsed on 6 May. Teams are still digging for the bodies of missing workers. Photo: Willie van Tonder/AFP

"Liatel was made aware of a video clip ... regarding an allegation that a cleaner was used to mix cement at the site, while she was employed differently," Kruger said.

"All information and allegations will form part of the investigations underway," he added.

On Monday, Public Works and Infrastructure Minister Sihle Zikalala said the Engineering Council of South Africa (ECSA) had confirmed an investigator had visited the site after the collapse to determine the possibility of improper construction.

"The investigator's mandate included a comprehensive examination of any factors of the engineering professionals associated with the development and implementation of the design of this project, according to ECSA's section 14 responsibilities," Zikalala said.

Liatel told the *M&G* that representatives of the company had attended meetings with the disaster-management authorities and the labour department. The labour department was "working tirelessly to investigate the causes of the tragedy but there

are not enough answers at this stage for all the questions that surround this tragedy", Kruger said.

When asked about allegations that Liatel had employed undocumented workers, Kruger said: "It is regrettable that the answers will take some time to address as it is dependent on what the investigations reveal."

The George municipality said it had received assistance from the Forensic Pathology Service and police to expedite the identification of the dead. The pathology team announced on Wednesday that it had completed the formal identification process of the victims. So far, 18 victims — 14 men and four women — have been identified. Of these, seven were South African, three Zimbabwean, five Malawian, one Mozambican and one person was from Lesotho. One other person's nationality has not been disclosed.

George municipality confirmed that psycho-social support practitioners, fluent in Chewa, Portuguese, and Shona, were available to bridge the language gap between authorities and the families of the victims.

Patriotic Alliance leader Gayton McKenzie, who has long been vocal about foreign workers being employed in South Africa, criticised the Western Cape government for hiring translators.

"They should go get trauma counselling in their own countries," McKenzie said in a Facebook post.

The department of employment and labour said it would work with the department of international relations and cooperation to discuss the way forward.

President Cyril Ramaphosa during his visit to the site on Thursday expressed his condolences to the families of the victims and hailed the quick response by government entities in dealing with the disaster.

"Our focus is on saving lives, caring for the injured and making sure that the remains of those that lost their lives are well put together," Ramaphosa told a packed George City Hall. The president also welcomed the efforts by the consulates of Zimbabwe, Malawi, Lesotho and Mozambique to engage with the government authorities.

ANC will dismantle the EFF in Limpopo, says turncoat



Mandisa Nyathi

Former Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) Limpopo chairperson Jossey Buthane, who defected to the ANC, asserts that his departure has weakened the Julius Malema-led party by drawing its supporters to the governing party.

In an interview with the *Mail & Guardian* on Wednesday, Buthane said the EFF was "bleeding support", which will affect the party's performance in the 29 May polls.

Buthane left the ANC with Malema after Malema's expulsion from the ruling party. Once a staunch Malema loyalist, he is credited with establishing a robust EFF base in Limpopo.

Buthane now claims to have motivated more than 2500 EFF members to join the ANC, which he says was pivotal in reclaiming a ward in Polokwane from the EFF during a recent election.

Dominated by the EFF in three successive by-elections, the ward saw the ANC triumph this time, securing 1811 votes against the EFF's 1474.

"The EFF is bitter, and will continue to be bitter, because the ANC



Red alert: Ex-EFF Limpopo chairperson Jossey Buthane, who left the party for the ANC, claims he has lured many members away from it. Photo: Thapelo Maphakela/Gallo Images

will dismantle them.

"I have been instrumental in helping the ruling party get the ward we took from the ANC in 2022 back.

"The only party that has relevance in the province is the ANC.

"The EFF has lost its touch and the end of the month [election day] will prove my point. They are shaking in

that province," Buthane said.

"Even if they [EFF] fill up Peter Mokaba Stadium [in Polokwane], we know that they will be calling on all provinces to help them because there is no unity left in the party.

"We are pulling people daily because their national leadership created the opportunity," he said.

ANC provincial spokesperson Jimmy Machaka said that the ANC had been signing up new members from the EFF ever since Buthane joined the party.

"The role played by Comrade Jossey has been significant and what we have seen on the ground is that EFF is limping in the province.

"The numbers speak for themselves. We have signed more than 1000 members in Sekhukhune, in Mopani more than 100, in Venda more than 500 and in Peter Mokaba in the Capricorn region we have signed more than 200 members."

Last month, Malema dismissed Buthane's claims of mobilising members to join the ANC.

He said those who had defected with Buthane were former EFF councillors who had been expelled for failing to provide buses for the party's 10th anniversary rally last year.

The EFF expelled 62 members, including three from Limpopo. This led to the loss of prominent members, including KwaZulu-Natal provincial chairperson Vusi Khoza.

Despite the internal divisions, Malema is aiming to position the EFF as the official opposition by unseating the Democratic Alliance in the national elections.

The EFF has seen varying levels of support in Limpopo over the years. The party, which is the leading opposition in the province, increased its voter share from 10.74% in 2014 to 14.3% in 2019.

Tension between Malema and Buthane was evident when the EFF disbanded its Limpopo provincial leadership in 2022, after an electoral decline that saw the party lose 25 council seats.

Africa

Media deal opens door to far right

If it goes through, a French billionaire who uses his media to promote far-right ideologies will have access to tens of millions of African homes

Simon Allison

Vincent Bolloré is no stranger to controversy. Described by Bloomberg as “the French Rupert Murdoch” who is in the process of “building his own right-wing media empire”, he has been implicated in at least one corruption scandal in West Africa.

A successful businessman, Bolloré has used his money to buy media companies. His family company, the Bolloré Group, owns a controlling stake in Vivendi, which owns the French television giant Canal+.

It is the largest satellite television provider in Francophone Africa. And it wants to buy the continent’s other big provider, South Africa-based MultiChoice, which owns brands that include DSTv, SuperSport and Showmax.

This de facto monopoly could give the group and the Bolloré family extraordinary influence over what appears, or doesn’t, on some 30 million African television screens.

Reporters Without Borders (RSF), a journalism defence organisation, says there is such a thing as the “Bolloré system” when it comes to

how the billionaire — who it says “systematically sues journalists investigating his business dealings” — manages his media assets.

Although the 72-year-old officially retired in 2022, a *Le Monde* investigation found that “in practice, he continues to manage everything, including the media”.

The clearest example of the “Bolloré system” is the recent history of what is now CNews, a French television channel owned by Canal+.

In an investigation, Nieman Reports — a media watchdog based at Harvard University — tracked how news there was replaced with often extreme opinion, creating what it dubbed the “Fox News of France”.

These stories “routinely make derogatory statements about migrants and have called on Muslims to renounce their faith”, playing a role in “mainstreaming far-right ideas about immigrants overtaking the French population”.

Operation Stop Bolloré — a coalition of prominent French journalists, academics and activists — claims this ideological stance is reflected across the media empire and is “unprecedented in our history”.

In a 2022 statement, the group said: “The channel [CNews] becomes



Media baron: Vincent Bolloré owns a large share of Vivendi, which owns television giant Canal+, broadcasts to Francophone African countries and now plans to buy MultiChoice. Photo: Alain Jocard/AFP

the place for the broadcast of hateful, racist, homophobic, sexist speech, that of the promotion of identity entrepreneurs, of incitement to violence, that of the trivialisation of conspiracy, of climate denialism.”

In a 2021 documentary, RSF described Bolloré’s approach as “a real danger to both press freedom and democracy”.

The Bolloré Group’s controversies are not limited to France or the media. In West Africa it has been accused of breaching journalistic ethics on at least two occasions to favour incumbent leaders.

Most recently, in December, “Canal+ quickly cut the signal of three channels critical of [junta leader] Mamady Doumbouya from its offerings, at the request of the Guinean authorities,” according to The Africa Report.

Another controversy was reported by RSF in 2021 — an example of how Bolloré allegedly influences his media assets to further his own business interests.

“Bolloré, who has many business interests in Togo, got Canal+ to include a puff piece about Togo and its president in its current affairs programming, as if it was regular journalistic reporting,” it said.

Bolloré is on trial in France, where prosecutors accused him and two Bolloré Group associates of bribing the president of Togo, Faure Gnassingbé, to obtain a lucrative port operating licence.

The trio deny all wrongdoing (although they did plead guilty in an earlier settlement deal, which was thrown out by a French judge — on the basis that the charges were too serious to be settled out of court, and potentially undermined the sovereignty of Togo).

Representatives of Vivendi and Canal+ dismissed concerns that the proposed takeover could threaten press freedom and democracy in Africa, saying that MultiChoice does not produce news.

They also said Vivendi owns numerous media outlets around the

world that cover a diverse range of genres and views. On Bolloré’s influence, they directed *The Continent* to his appearance before a French parliamentary committee earlier this year when he said he has “no ideological project” and he considers himself a Christian Democrat and “very gentle and good natured”.

The Bolloré Group’s press contact could not be reached for comment.

South Africa’s Competition Commission is looking at the proposed takeover, which values MultiChoice at \$2.9 billion. Vivendi argues that the merger is necessary because of the changing nature of broadcasting: it must compete not just with satellite TV operators, but also with Netflix and Disney+.

This article first appeared in *The Continent*, the pan-African weekly newspaper produced in partnership with the *Mail & Guardian*. It’s designed to be read and shared on WhatsApp. Download your free copy at thecontinent.org.

Lake Malawi’s lake is rising, flooding its beaches

Jack McBrams

When orange rays gently kiss Lake Malawi’s wavy waters, it is a sight that ordinarily attracts both local and international tourists for the obligatory “I woke up in an exotic place” vacation picture.

But today, at Sigele Beach Resort in the town of Salima, the beach is deserted, save for a few locals. The usually animated John Banana, a curio seller who has been plying his trade here for five years, looks downcast as he arranges his wares.

“This is bad,” he says, gesturing at the waves hitting the shore. “If the water comes any higher, there won’t be any beach left.”

Next door, at the Blue Waters Lake Resort, manager Don Samaraseka is supervising workers as they pile rocks to shield buildings from the waves.

“We’ve packed in about 100 tonnes of rocks along the waterfront and we are still fighting the waves,” he says.

When he started working at the resort in 2014, the lake waters were almost 150 metres away from where the shoreline is now, he says.



Washed away: Holiday resorts and homes along the lake’s shore are being damaged. Photo: Jack McBrams

Along the stretch of the lake, as far as the eye can see, sandbags now line the shore, a frail barrier against the relentless advance of the waters. Some resorts try to pump the water away from their premises.

In the lakeshore resort districts of Mangochi, Nkhata Bay and Nkhotakota, sandy expanses have been swallowed by the lake.

“The water’s advance knows no bounds,” says George Zibophe, the

disaster preparedness official for Nkhotakota.

He says the lake began to swell in February, and talks about submerged resorts and flooded houses on the edges of the lake.

“We’re still assessing,” he says. “But the damage is clear. So many buildings and structures.”

Malawi’s agency for disaster management says the rising waters have affected 1500 households in Nkhotakota alone, and 800 of them have been displaced.

The National Water Resources Authority says Lake Malawi’s waters have risen to their highest level in more than a decade: 52 centimetres higher than last year.

As the lake swells, people living in an area defined by its beauty must battle the elements or watch their fortunes nosedive.

But their battles might prove too feeble against nature. As the disaster management agency’s Charles Kalemba acknowledges, this calamity for human beings is nature reclaiming its dominion.

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'[Egypt's decision to support South Africa's genocide case in the ICJ] comes in light of the worsening severity and scope of Israeli attacks against Palestinian civilians in the Gaza Strip, and the continued perpetration of systematic practices against the Palestinian people.' — **Egypt's Foreign Minister Sameh Shoukry**

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



Ravaged: Pupils in Kenya head back to school after schools were closed in March, when heavy rains and floods began. More than 270 people have been killed and infrastructure damaged, including more than 2 000 schools. Some schools remain occupied by people displaced by the floods. Although the schools have opened, more rain is forecast. Photo: Donwilson Odhiambo/Getty Images

Rwanda opposition leader barred from elections

A Rwandan court on Tuesday rejected an appeal by a prominent opposition figure to have his previous convictions removed, disqualifying him from challenging President Paul Kagame in July elections.

Bernard Ntaganda, a fierce critic of Rwanda's iron-fisted ruler, had petitioned the high court in Kigali in February in a bid to set aside convictions dating back more than a decade.

He is the second opposition figure to be prevented from running in the 15 July election against Kagame.

A three-judge panel ruled against Ntaganda, based on what it said was his failure to pay court fees of almost 106 000 Rwandan francs (about \$82) related to the previous case against him. "The high court finds that Ntaganda did not abide by the laws that require individuals to request their conviction to be removed, and therefore rejects his appeal."

Ntaganda, a lawyer and founder of the PS-Imberakuri party, said he had proof he had paid the fees but that the court decision "was not a surprising outcome".

"The ruling RPF [Rwandan Patriotic Front] cannot allow the courts to be independent," he said.

Ntaganda had also planned to stand against Kagame in 2010, but was arrested before the vote. He served a four-year prison term on charges of threatening state security and stoking ethnic divisions before being released in 2014.

Under Rwandan law, a person convicted and sentenced to more than six months in prison is barred from holding public office.

In March, a court also refused to remove previous convictions against staunch Kagame opponent Victoire Ingabire, rendering her ineligible to run in July.

Kagame has led Rwanda since the 1994 genocide, formally becoming president of a transitional government in 2000. Since then he won elections in 2003, 2010 and 2017, each time with more than 90% of the vote.

He presided over controversial constitutional changes in 2015 that reduced a presidential mandate — from the 2024 vote onwards — to five years from seven but also allowed him to run for two more terms and potentially stay in power until 2034.

Last week, Diane Rwigara, another Kagame critic, announced she would stand this year after being barred from the 2017 race over accusations that she forged the signatures of supporters for her application. She was arrested and charged with forgery and inciting insurrection, and held behind bars for more than a year.

Two other people have thrown their hats into the ring this year — Frank Habineza of the Green Party and independent candidate Philippe Mpayimana.

Kagame has been praised for putting Rwanda on the path of economic transformation after the genocide, but he faces frequent criticism over rights abuses and repression of the opposition and free speech.

Rwanda will hold presidential and parliamentary elections on 15 July. — AFP

'Living in fear' in battle for east DRC

The conflict has raged between rebels of the March 23 Movement and Congolese armed forces since late 2021

Alexis Huguet

Innocent Kasereka sits in a run-down hospital in the war-torn east of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), his neck bandaged where he was slashed with a knife.

He recounts how he became caught in the middle of the conflict raging between rebels of the M23 (March 23 Movement) and Congolese armed forces (FARDC) since late 2021.

The attack on Kasereka took place at a coffee plantation in the agricultural town of Kibirizi in North Kivu province at the start of May. It had been seized two months earlier by the M23 and the Rwandan army, which has been fighting alongside the rebel group.

"When the M23 arrived in Kibirizi they held a meeting and assured us that we were safe," Kasereka said.

Instead, he said he was attacked by people "in M23 uniform". Bloodied and traumatised, he managed to climb a hill to safety in a government-held part of the town.

The Congolese army, backed by a rag-tag collection of armed groups known as Wazalendo — Swahili for Patriots — launched an offensive to retake Kibirizi from the M23 at the end of April.

Fighting raged in the centre of town and FARDC mortar shells destroyed houses and killed those



Casualty: Innocent Kasereka had his neck slashed by members of the March 23 Movement. Photo: Alexis Huguet/AFP

living there, said a Congolese army colonel.

But the army failed to retake Kibirizi, leaving its inhabitants at the mercy of the M23, who began to "attack the population" when the Congolese army left, Kasereka said.

The men who cut Kasereka's neck, and sliced the throat of his friend Germain, who died, accused them of belonging to a group of militia who had ambushed them.

"They suspected us of being traitors and of having facilitated the entry of the Wazalendo into the town," Kasereka said.

In 2022, more than 100 people were killed for the same reason in Kishishe, a town some 10km from Kibirizi. The United Nations later found that the M23 was responsible for the massacre.

Kasereka has been recovering for about 10 days at a hospital in the town of Kanyabayonga, about 10km

from where he was attacked. In the bed next to him, an 18-year-old fighter, also named Germain, lies in dirty bed sheets with bandages around his wounded arm.

Germain has been fighting for four years with the Front of Patriots for Peace/People's Army (FPP/AP), one of the largest armed groups in the area that is part of the Wazalendo. But he was wounded by rocket shrapnel during the failed bid by the Congolese army and its allies to regain control of Kibirizi.

For almost two years, the FARDC and Wazalendo have not seen a single victory as the M23 continues its advance in North Kivu province.

Augustin Darwin, FPP/AP spokesperson, said he had no confidence in the FARDC, saying it failed to respect agreements with armed groups. He accused the Congolese army of "withdrawal after withdrawal" and "fleeing before the enemy".

His soldiers have "no boots, no uniforms [and] do not receive rations", Darwin said, speaking from the group's headquarters in Mbavinwa, a small village about 10km from Kanyabayonga.

"They are demoralised," he added.

If there were less embezzlement in the army, "the FARDC wouldn't even need the Wazalendo", he said.

Kanyabayonga has become a refuge for tens of thousands of displaced people who have fled the fighting and abuse by M23 rebels.

But the town's mayor, Chrisostome Kasereka, worries the area could be bombed. "We are living in fear," he said.

In recent weeks, three mortar shells have fallen around Kanyabayonga, the mayor said, as his secretary showed the remnants of a projectile missile found in a field.

Civil society leaders from Kibirizi, Kanyabayonga and Kishishe also say certain FARDC officers have "facilitated passage to the rebels".

The FARDC officers were summoned to the capital Kinshasa as part of an inquiry in mid-March, but some of them have already returned to Kanyabayonga.

"Impunity is what makes things not work in our republic," Kasereka said.

Congo army forces and Wazalendo fighters have launched a fresh offensive in Kibirizi.

"Every day, trucks full of soldiers arrive here," one of the town's civil society leaders said.

"If they [the FARDC soldiers] do the 'strategic withdrawal' thing again, we will see a fight between the Wazalendo and the FARDC ... and we ourselves will take up arms," he warned. — AFP

On the road

The SA Car of the Year is crowned

The BMW 7 Series drove off with the overall trophy in this year's edition

Lerato Matebese

Now in its 38th year, the SA Car of the Year is the country's oldest and most prestigious automotive competition. It honours the vehicles that have represented excellence in their respective segments.

In a nutshell, those that represent progress and have moved the proverbial goalposts within various disciplines and perimeters. These include market relevance about volume share, and the value for money of the product, relative to its closest competitors.

This year's competition comprised 18 finalists judged by a jury of 28 jurors from the South African Guild of Mobility Journalists, including yours truly.

After two days of rigorous testing in March, and the tallying of audited scores from the jurors, detailed market share statistics and customer feedback from Lightstone Auto, the official automotive industry data aggregator, the results are finally in.

The latest BMW 7 Series emerged as the victor, taking not only the Luxury and Juror Excellence Award categories but also the overall title.

This year's competition featured Budget/Compact, Compact Family, Family, Premium, Adventure SUV, 4x4 Double Cab, Luxury and Performance categories.

With the greater representation of EVs across the different categories, the New Energy category was dropped for this year's competition.

BMW's 7 Series is a tour de force in its luxury segment, showing a clean pair of heels to the Mercedes-Benz S-Class that was a contender in last year's competition.

Now, there has been outcry from some corners regarding the BMW 7 Series' win.

The fact that it costs upwards of R2 million, which makes it unattainable for the average person, was among the criticisms.

But here is the crux — one of the fundamentals of the competition is to recognise automotive excellence where the vehicle is way ahead of anything else in its segment and the BMW 7 Series has unequivocally, thoroughly, licked that aspect.

This was BMW's seventh win in the competition, with the first in 1988 with, incidentally, the 735i. So, yes, this marks the second outright win for the 7 Series.

That said, the 7 Series might not have charted on my voting sheets but the results are the outcome of the collective jury's voting data.

Facts are facts and it would be outright irresponsible for us to discount a vehicle's excellence, simply because its price puts it out of the reach of the majority of people.

Aspiration value is something that remains a large part of the automotive space, so reading up on a vehicle that you cannot own, but would like to, plants that seed.

Suzuki's Fronx came in a com-



Double victory: The BMW 7 series (above) clinched the Car of the Year title and the German marque's M2 (below) was victorious in the Performance category of the competition.



Category winners of this year's competition

Luxury:
BMW 7 Series

Performance:
BMW M2

Family:
BMW X1

Adventure SUV:
Mahindra Scorpio-N

Premium:
Mercedes-Benz GLC

Budget:
Suzuki Fronx

Compact Family:
Toyota Urban Cruiser

4x4 Double Cab:
Volkswagen Amarok

mendable second spot in the competition. The fact that it was only a few points behind the 7 Series is testament to the breadth of its talents.

If there's any criticism of the package, it is of the normally aspirated powertrain, which is behind the curve of the segment standard's turbo-charged offerings that give superior performance, particularly at the rarified altitude of Gauteng and the like.

Another noteworthy category win-

ner was the Mahindra Scorpio N, which came out trumps in the Adventure SUV category and is a far cry from the Scorpio model that made windfall here around 2006.

This is a display of the progress that the Indian manufacturer continues to show.

BMW's M2 won the Performance category, and while my bets were on the Honda Civic Type R, based on its capabilities, practicality and value for money, the M2 is a unique

proposition of a rear-wheel drive sports coupé with immense power and dynamics.

The fact that it is wrapped in an eye-catching package means it has a great deal of appeal.

Not stopping there, BMW also won the Family category with the X1, which remains a stellar offering at a starting price of R780 000.

Meanwhile, Mercedes-Benz took the Premium category with its accomplished GLC.

Compact Family went to the Toyota Urban Cruiser, while the 4x4 Double Cab trophy was bestowed on the Volkswagen Amarok.

While the overall result might seem strange, considering the depressed economic climate, the competition's audited outcome tracks true to awarding automotive excellence as voted by the jurors of the guild of mobility journalists.

Congratulations to all the winners. Well deserved!



'I love fast cars ... and to go too fast in them.' — **Lara Flynn Boyle**

Mustang: A raw, classic muscle car

Ford's Shelby GT350 still provokes the excitement that greeted it in the 1960s

Jordan Schmidt

Mustangs have been objects of desire among those passionate about cars all over the world for generations.

This car has gained a reputation for a powerful roar, tough appearance and rebellious character, which has made it a popular choice in films and TV shows over the decades.

The current generation of Mustangs continues to record promising sales figures and fans around the globe can't seem to get enough of the cars.

The legendary Carroll Shelby took the popular sports car and worked his magic to create a vehicle that embodies American muscle in the truest sense.

We had the opportunity to spend some time with arguably one of the most iconic models, the Mustang Shelby GT350.

Shelby's tale has been extensively covered. It's one of an impoverished kid with a desire for speed, and it was the foundation for the thrilling film *Ford v Ferrari*, but we're going to focus on the car in this article.

The Mustang was introduced in 1964 at the New York World Fair and it was an immediate hit. The first batch of Mustangs to arrive in showrooms consisted of 22 000 units, which were immediately sold out.

The brand had anticipated success but not the level of public interest. It was a more affordable sports car than most, which looked and sounded the part, and the public became obsessed. So much so that 400 000 units were sold in its first year of production, which greatly exceeded expectations.

Side note — more than nine million Mustangs have been sold globally, partly thanks to this model's contribution, since Ford wanted it to be a Mustang that would offer more.

So, there was no better man for the job than the creator of the Cobra, Daytona and GT40, Carroll Shelby.

Less than a year after the Mustang's 1964 debut, Shelby created and sold the first GT350, offering a more refined and powerful option for Mustang enthusiasts with deeper pockets.

The GT350's naturally aspirated V8 produced 228kW and the roar was addictive. It was a racing car for the road, with an estimated 0 to 100km/h time of 5.4 seconds, helping to define Ford's racing pedigree.

It was more aggressively styled, featuring a functional bonnet scoop and racing lines, which made it stand out from standard Mustangs.

It was so daring that it became a



Hear me roar: The Ford Mustang Shelby GT350, which I had the pleasure of driving, has a body which is in top condition and an impressive engine bay, despite being 60 years old. Photos: Niki Louw



popular target for police at the time.

Besides the Shelby-tampered engine, the steering was improved, and 15-inch wheels were added with improved tyres to ensure the GT350 would outperform the standard Mustang in every way.

It also became a reasonably successful track racing car and the

famed Ken Miles spoke highly of it. It won the Class-B championship for three years in a row after its debut.

The car pictured here is a 1965 Shelby Mustang GT350 — one that is tearing up our roads with American noise and savagery.

Immediately upon entering the GT350, you get a sense that this

car could have got you into some serious trouble at the time of its introduction.

Its Mustang-branded seats, although soft, have a rather supportive structure, but once the key turns, you instantly realise what all the fuss is about.

The overwhelming roar of the naturally aspirated V8 comes to life, leaving no smile upside down. It's a truly glorious noise that is only improved by a throttle blip or three.

The ride quality reminds you that this car is 60 years old, with noticeable bumps and a ridged chassis that yearns for smooth, paved corners.

This Shelby sports a three-speed automatic gearbox, which allows you to make noise for longer within the rev range. Because of the low number of gears, the ratios are long, allowing you to sit in the optimum torque band for longer.

Add a naturally aspirated V8 to the equation and you find the power in the higher revs — but it does take a few seconds to get there.

However, the noise it produces beneath you will provide entertain-

ment at any speed.

The British V8 has undergone a slight detune, transforming it into a more sensible daily driver. As is, it produces 171kW and 300Nm and, considering its weight, it still moves like you can't believe for a 60-year-old.

Despite its age, its brilliant body condition and impressive engine bay leave you in awe.

If the Shelby GT350 was on the posters in your room growing up, and you fancy owning one, this car is available at Vintage Cars South Africa for R1350 000. Considering a new BMW M2 will set you back R300k more, this legend becomes that much more tempting.

I have spent my fair share of time in classic cars but the Mustangs of old encapsulate the rawness of classic muscle cars.

The vibration and shaking the motor produces, paired with the roar of the exhaust, is an experience you won't find in modern sports cars.

It's a car that remains an icon and it's an experience that I'll cherish for years to come.

Business

What Amazon's entry means for

The e-commerce giant will shake up the online retail sector – but it might take some time

Aarti Bhana

When Takealot.com was launched in South Africa in 2011, it had one objective in mind: “to be the largest, simplest, most customer-centric online shopping destination in Africa”.

But after 13 years of dominating the online retail space, the platform is bracing for a shake-up and a battle for customers, with the entrance of Amazon into the South African market.

Takealot.com assumed command of the online retail sector in South Africa through major acquisitions and mergers over the years, notably purchasing Mr Delivery in 2014, which enabled it to have its own logistics network.

In the same year, Takealot.com acquired the fashion website, Superbalist.com, and later merged with Kalahari.com. In 2018, multinational technology company Naspers

increased its stake in Takealot.com to 96%, which gave it a significant presence in the South African retail market.

It has more than 21 departments, which include electronics, lifestyle, media and gaming and fashion.

According to Ecommerce Insights, Takealot.com ranks second when it comes to online fashion stores, after Superbalist, which it owns.

Amazon, owned by one of the world's richest men, Jeff Bezos, launched its e-commerce website in South Africa earlier this month. Its main objective, much like Takealot's, is to “have a local Amazon store providing more choice and a convenient, reliable shopping experience”, said Robert Koen, the company's managing director for sub-Saharan Africa.

“The Amazon.co.za store launch was a milestone on our journey in South Africa, but it was just the first step as we develop our offer to customers. It is still early days for Amazon.co.za and we are adding

more products all the time,” he said.

Amazon.co.za has more than 20 departments, which include electronics, books, toys, household items and beauty products.

What the entrance of this e-commerce giant mean for the cash-strapped consumer in a tight economy?

Alec Abraham, a senior equity analyst at Sasfin Bank, said it's not always good news when a new player enters the market because there has not been any real value in growth in the market because of a sluggish economy.

South Africa's real GDP increased very slightly in the last quarter of 2023, bringing the total value to R1.158 trillion. Although this is above the levels before the Covid-19 pandemic, Statistics South Africa said, it is still below the peak of R1.161 trillion recorded in the third quarter of 2022, indicating that economic growth has been muted.

The retail sector has been in the red for a while. In February this year, retail trade shrank by 0.8% year-on-year, following a 2% decline in the previous month. In March, it increased by 2.3% year-on-year, with

general dealers being the largest contributor. But economists project there will be sustained weakness in the sector as high interest rates and deteriorating sentiment rock the financial boat and hurt consumers' wallets.

“That's the big issue here. It's sad that our economy or our retail market simply has not grown and consumer incomes haven't grown and it just makes it very difficult for new operators to come into the market, because they have got to take market share from somebody, or maybe a bit from everybody, but it just makes it very, very difficult,” Abraham said.

Although while retail sales overall remain weak, online sales have been on an upward trajectory. A report by World Wide Worx in partnership with Mastercard, Peach Payment and Ask Afrika showed that online retail sales increased by 29% in 2023 to R71 billion, and will probably break the R100 billion mark by 2026.

The surge in online sales was set off by the pandemic, when demand for home deliveries increased sharply,

the report noted. Competitive e-commerce strategies implemented by major brick and mortar retailers seeking to move their traditional shopping to the online sphere also helped drive the rise.

But, noted Koen, South Africa's online retail sales remain lower than in other countries, saying there was “significant room for growth”.

“Customers in South Africa can now shop on Amazon.co.za in their local currency. In terms of our selection, in addition to the international brands we know South Africans love, we offer a wide variety of locally made products, many of which are being sold online for the first time through Amazon,” he said.

World Wide Worx chief executive Arthur Goldstuck said that overall, a new competitor is good for the online retail market.

“Competition is always good for consumers, especially when you see big players going neck and neck against each other. Then you realise the consumer has to benefit because, to compete for customers, they have to give customers two things: one is exceptional service and the other is exceptional value,” he said.

Understanding mergers and acquisitions

Anathi Madubela

Shell's recent announcement that it is leaving the country is likely to set off mergers and acquisitions (M&A) activity as the oil and gas company sells its refinery and service stations during the divestiture.

Shell's 2024 energy transition strategy – under which it plans to reduce carbon emissions and focus on its more profitable upstream businesses – is one of the reasons it is leaving South Africa.

The announcement also came after media reports of a dispute between Shell and its black economic empowerment partner, Thebe Investment Corporation.

Reacting to the pending move, Mineral Resources and Energy Minister Gwede Mantashe sounded a defiant note last week, saying that other companies would be waiting in the wings to take over Shell's operations. “Engen left, Vitol took that over. Caltex left and that is why Caltex garages are written Astron now. Shell is going to leave and I can tell you with my eyes closed, there will be a company or a consortium that will take over that business.”

Another corporate story that has recently made headlines is a second unsolicited bid from Australian mining giant BHP for the operations of South African industry peer Anglo American. The first unsolicited bid was last month. BHP thought that if it teamed up with Anglo, the combined entity could generate more value.

The conditions for the transaction from BHP were that Anglo had to let go of its subsidiaries Anglo American Platinum and Kumba Iron Ore.

But Anglo rejected the offer, saying the proposal significantly undervalued the company and its future prospects, and that it would deliver significant value for its shareholders on its own.

Why do companies merge? And why do potential mergers sometimes fall through?

Ian Hayes, the head of corporate and commercial practice at Cliffe Dekker Hofmeyr, singled out four primary reasons for corporate mergers and acquisitions: synergies, economies of scale, diversification and strategic alignment.

“One of the reasons companies merge is because of synergies and this is where they think that the combined entity can generate more value than the two entities can generate separately,” Hayes said.

Another is economies of scale, where entities see an opportunity to reduce costs per unit and improve efficiencies in production or distribution. The third is diversification, where companies look to vary their revenue streams, products and reduce reliance on a single product or market by merging with a company that has coverage in other areas.

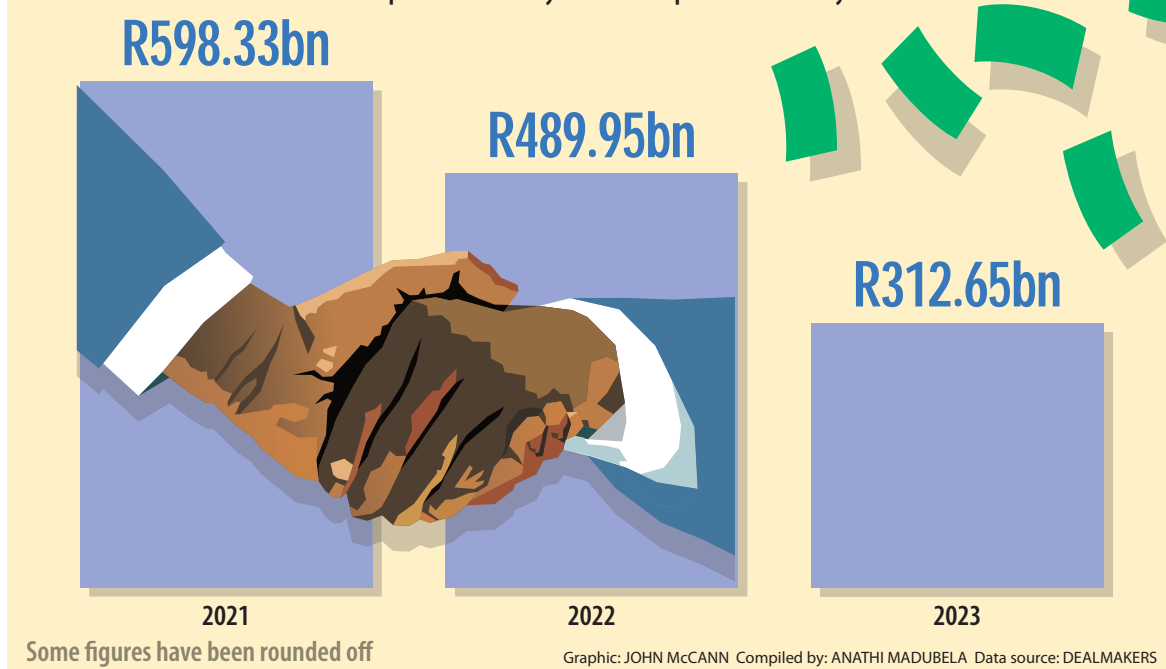
In the miners' case, BHP said it was after Anglo American's copper assets, which it could not obtain without acquiring the company.

On Tuesday, Canal+ announced

Worth of M&As almost halved over three years

Value of mergers and acquisitions in South Africa

Total for period of January to end of September in each year



it has now acquired 45.2% of MultiChoice's equity through both on-market and off-market transactions. The French-based media giant, which already has investments in Swedish player Viaplay and Hong Kong-based streamer Viu, wants to penetrate new markets.

The fourth reason companies merge is for strategic alignment, said Hayes. This is when the merger makes sense based on the strategic goals and the challenges for the two corporations to merge.

Last year, Impala Platinum obtained a controlling stake of Royal Bafokeng Platinum. Analysts said Impala wanted Royal Bafokeng, which has mechanised and shallower mines, adjacent to its own ageing, costly and deep-level shafts in the Rustenburg platinum belt.

“Corporations can expand and grow themselves organically, but

sometimes it's a lot quicker and makes more sense to merge with a company or acquire a company or an asset to get into those strategic areas rather than starting from scratch,” Hayes said.

There are a number of aspects to a successful merger, including careful planning and due diligence, he noted, adding that many mergers have failed because of poor integration, cultural differences or policies.

In 2021, for example, the Competition Commission blocked the acquisition of Burger King South Africa by private equity fund Emerging Capital Partners Africa. The commission found the merger would lead to a significant reduction in the shareholding of historically disadvantaged people in the target firm, from more than 68% to zero.

A few months later, the Competition Tribunal gave the

green light to the acquisition after Emerging Capital Partners Africa agreed to meet several requirements.

Mergers and acquisitions activity in Africa experienced a sharp decline in 2023 compared with 2022. In South Africa, completed M&A deals collapsed almost 90% to \$1.9 billion (R34 billion) in 2023 from the previous 12 months, according to data compiled by Bloomberg.

While 2023 was one of the worst years for M&A activity, this year is not expected to be any different, especially with the uncertainty linked to elections, law firm Norton Rose Fulbright said in a report.

Hayes agreed, saying: “People are sitting back and waiting to see what will happen with the elections. There are some signs of recovery in the M&A space this year but I don't think we'll really know until after the elections.”



'What is especially troubling is that the president is proceeding with the [National Health Insurance] bill despite extensive constructive inputs made by a wide range of stakeholders, including doctors and healthcare professionals, civil society, public sector unions, academics and business.' — **Business Unity SA chief executive Cas Coovadia**

South Africa

"So once you have major players like that competing on both service and value then the consumer benefits massively."

Goldstuck said platforms such as Takealot.com, as well as traditional stores like Game and Makro, which have a similar offering, will need to up their online retail game.

"The companies that compete directly with Amazon like Take-a-lot are obviously going to find themselves seriously challenged, and not just for market share but also for customer share, because a lot of people want to consolidate their spending and they are going to look for where the best place is to consolidate that spending."

Consumers can now decide whether they want to shop at the different e-commerce platforms and physical stores.

Aside from bringing international brands into the South African market, Amazon.co.za offers some local brands including Amanda-Jayne, King Kong Leather, Masodi and Tiger Lily.

"We're enthusiastic about collaborating with South African retailers, independent sellers and brand owners to ensure customers enjoy a great

shopping experience defined by competitive pricing, a wide variety of local and international product choice, and reliable delivery," Koen said.

"For independent sellers, Amazon provides support and scalability, enabling them to concentrate on their products while we manage logistics and customer service."

Abraham said a new player could also help create much needed jobs.

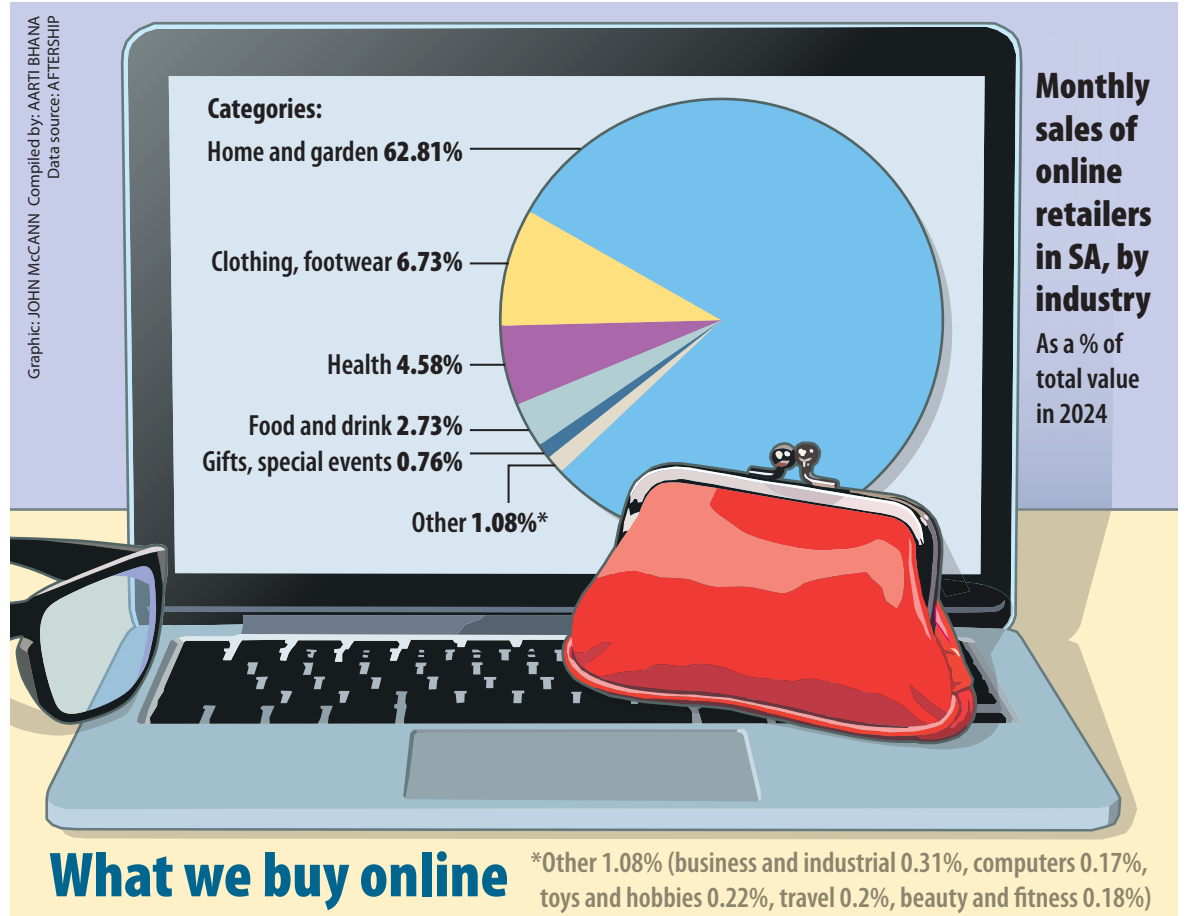
On Tuesday, Statistics South Africa reported that the unemployment rate increased to 32.9% in the first quarter of 2024 from 32.1% in the fourth quarter of 2023, as more people of working-age entered the labour market.

Goldstuck agreed, saying that with the growth in online retail, there will be opportunities for expansion of the logistics sector and the number of courier drivers and delivery drivers.

Koen pointed out that Amazon provides additional employment opportunities through its third-party business model, which enables independent sellers, small and large, to reach more customers, grow their businesses, and subsequently employ more people.

Goldstuck said: "In terms of their openness to suppliers from the small

Graphic: JOHN MCCANN Compiled by: AARTI BHANA Data source: AFTERSHIP



business environment, you're going to see Amazon making it possible for a lot of new small businesses to emerge and that will also be a boost for employment."

This is likely to force Takealot.com to tweak its model as well, he added, boosting both businesses, although Amazon.co.za is likely to gain the upper hand.

"Possibly within the next two to three years they will be one of the biggest online retailers in the country," Goldstuck predicted. "But it takes time to reach that level."

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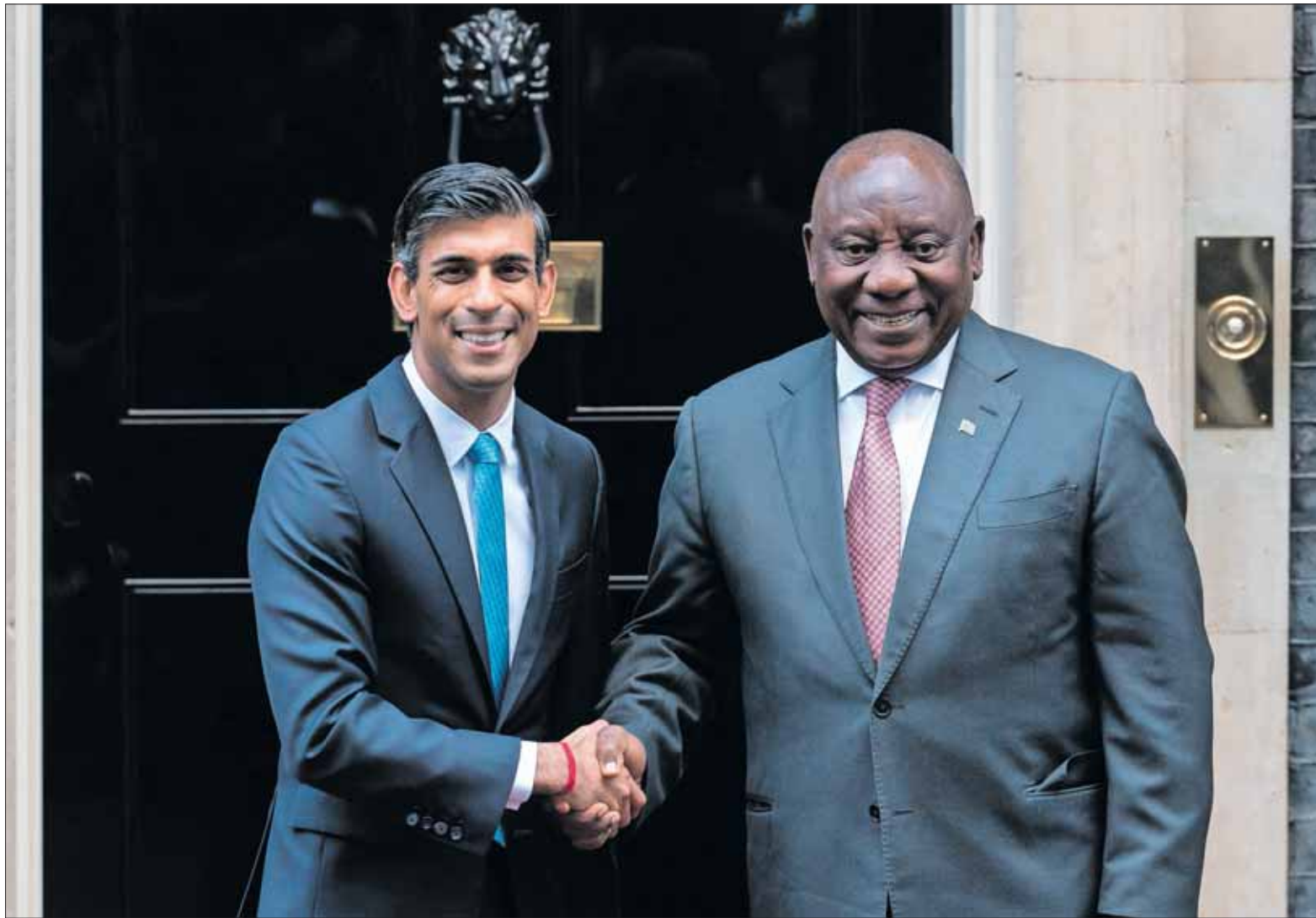


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The same but different: British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak welcomes President Cyril Ramaphosa outside 10 Downing Street ahead of bilateral talks in London in November 2022. Photo: Wiktor Szymanowicz/Getty Images

BIZ BRIEFS

Reseller one of Africa's fastest-growing firms

Luxury items reseller Luxity has been ranked as one of Africa's fastest-growing companies by the *Financial Times*. It was named as the speediest-scaling e-commerce player in South Africa for the second year running. This achievement is underscored by Luxity's strong showing within the broader African landscape, securing the 43rd position out of 125 companies. "South Africa's economic climate has been a challenge since we started the business in 2016," Luxity co-founder Michael Zahariev said. "But this accolade proves that, despite this, young businesses in the country can still thrive. We believe this ranking serves as a ray of hope for other entrepreneurs, showing that growth is possible even in the face of adversity." One of the greatest testaments to the company's growth has been the change in consumers' perception of the pre-owned luxury market, Zahariev said. "We have seen a shift away from the stigma that once surrounded the sector. Today, pre-owned luxury is embraced for its sustainability and affordability, promoting more conscious consumption with positive knock-on effects for the environment." Other South African companies on the list include TymeBank at 21 and IT and software company Aura at 27.

New strategy is on the cards for De Beers

Parent Anglo company announced on Tuesday that it would demerge from De Beers and Anglo American Platinum (Amplats) by the end of next year, at the latest. The mining company said the demergers are part of the restructure it embarked on last year and were not as a result of the BHP Billiton unsolicited takeover offer. The company has received two offers for a takeover from the Australian mining giant but only if Anglo lets go of De Beers and Amplats. After that announcement, De Beers said it remained focused on delivering its strategy and creating value. "The announcement from Anglo American opens up new possibilities under new ownership. But some things will not change. We will continue to deliver value for all our stakeholders, including our partners in Botswana, South Africa, Namibia, Canada, Angola and other countries," Al Cook, the chief executive of De Beers, said. The company would present a new strategy for De Beers later this month because diamonds remain one of the most desired products around the world. "With the ongoing recovery in rough diamond demand, and such a positive outlook for the sector, I feel very confident in our future."

Mining output continues on steady decline

Data released by Statistics SA on Tuesday showed that mining production fell by 5.8% year-on-year in March. The largest negative contributors were manganese ore, which decreased by 12.2%; coal, which decreased by 9.1%, iron ore with a 6.8% decrease and platinum group metals with a 3.6% decline. On an annual basis, mining production plunged the most in March since the highest contraction rate in February last year. Mineral sales have also seen little to no growth. Mineral sales at current prices decreased by 14.9% year-on-year in March. The largest negative contributor was platinum group metals which fell by 29.4%. But gold, being a safe haven, was the only positive contributor with growth of 29.6%.

What the ANC can learn from the Tory meltdown

If South Africa's governing party does end up losing its majority in future elections, it might never get it back, the British experience shows

In most ways, the UK's Prime Minister Rishi Sunak and South Africa's President Cyril Ramaphosa couldn't be more different.



Sarah Smit

While Sunak's rise up the ranks of the Conservative Party was a swift one — the fastest in modern history — Ramaphosa bided his time. There is also a large generational gap between the leaders.

But the two men do have some things in common.

Both represent a sort of unattainable wealth, which ought to be far more politically damaging than it actually has been.

They also both lead political parties that look to suffer election losses as voters punish them for presiding over economies in decline.

A truly devastating Conservative Party defeat might be more of a foregone conclusion than an ANC knockout. And so South Africa's governing party probably still has the benefit of learning from the Tories what not to do if it wants to hold on to its last bit of power.

According to the *Financial Times's* UK poll tracker, if the country's general election had been held on 10 May, the Conservative Party would have won only 23.5% of the vote. This would be a sharp decline from the 43.6% the party managed to muster in 2019.

Some might attribute the Conservative Party's fall from grace to the effects of Boris Johnson's

short, but damaging, time in power and the internal ructions he inspired. But it is more likely that the outcome of the upcoming elections will be the culmination of something a lot more structural.

In 2022, Phil Burton-Cartledge — the author of *Falling Down: The Conservative Party and the Decline of Tory Britain* — had this to say about the UK's prime minister: "He has a reputation for being smooth and relatively charismatic, but he is politically flat-footed and his rise to the top quite sudden. If a master of bullshit and skulduggery like Johnson could not bring the Tory party to heel, the chances of Sunak doing so must range from slim to nonexistent."

But what has precipitated the decline of a party considered the most successful in the history of Western democracy — and why can't Sunak stop it?

Burton-Cartledge links Tory failures to the fact that fewer people are benefitting from the party's policies, as well as its growing reliance on the fears of older voters for support.

In an earlier article for *Jacobin*, titled *The Tories Are Literally Dying Off*, he wrote that relying on older voters is a good enough strategy, provided that the party has created

a like-minded cohort of younger old people.

"The problem for the Tories is that in Britain, the conservatising effects of old age are breaking down," Burton-Cartledge adds.

He goes on to note that, under Margaret Thatcher, home ownership became a central philosophy of the Conservative Party government.

During Thatcher's time as prime minister from 1979 to 1990, home ownership grew from 55% to 67% of the population, thanks to the so-called "right to buy" scheme, which allowed social housing tenants to purchase those properties at a discount.

But the properties lost through this scheme were never replaced and, instead, government investment in social housing was consistently slashed, contributing to the UK's housing crisis.

According to analysis by asset manager Schroders last year, UK house prices have risen from about four times average earnings in the mid-1990s to more than eight times in the 2020s, locking first-time buyers out of the market.

In a much more recent article, published last week, European studies lecturer Alexander Clarkson writes that with the dogged imple-

Relying on older voters is a good enough strategy, provided that the party has created a like-minded cohort of younger old people

mentation of Thatcherist policies — which have shrunk the state and unleashed markets — the Tories have created profound economic instability. Clarkson accuses the party of "a dogmatic unwillingness to adapt its methods of governance to a changing world".

In the lead-up to South Africa's general elections later this month, the ANC has, rather predictably, relied on celebrating its early wins, while brushing over its less-than-stellar overall track record.

This comes as older voters, who are seemingly more loyal to the ANC, are replaced by a younger crowd for whom these victories are dwarfed by what feels like an insurmountable economic crisis.

Thirty years into democracy, members of this latter cohort — even if they have managed to make it into the middle class — will struggle to start a new business, buy a home or save for their retirement.

And now, if they want it, they can find a political home in the Economic Freedom Fighters or newcomer Rise Mzansi.

All the while the government has doubled down on policies that erode the state and buoy private capital, despite their consequences for socio-economic stability — which the Thatcherist Growth, Employment and Redistribution plan (Gear) was supposed to deliver.

If, as some assume, the ANC will continue to lead in a coalition government, the party will have to do everything it can to avoid a deeper loss in 2029.

Because, if the ANC does end up losing its majority, it might never regain its political foothold.

Thought Leader

Comment and analysis from the Mail & Guardian

Political parties ignore universal basic income

With 12 million unemployed and no government able to create these jobs soon, their failure to punt this grant in party manifestos is a worrying sign

OPINION
Isobel Frye

South Africa is a formal egalitarian democracy. Elections are less than a month away. For the first time ever, a very real possibility exists that the ANC will not be returned as the ruling party either nationally or provincially.

It is surprising that in all this contestation, the idea of a universal basic income is not more of a vote-catcher.

This failure can be attributed to one of three things. Either parties don't understand the very sticky nature of the economic and employment crisis that we are in, or parties have a far more successful policy solution to the affordable elegance of a universal basic income, or simply that parties have concluded that solving the grinding daily poverty that is the reality for more than half the electorate does not interest them as a policy priority for the next five years.

The seventh administration will inherit poverty levels of more than 55% and a real unemployment rate of 41% – 12 million people, 77% of whom are permanently unemployed. For people under the age of 24 the unemployment rate is 69%.

But this dysfunction is housed in an even more stark dynamic: South Africa is the most unequal country in the world both in terms of wealth and income. Quite incredibly, this income inequality is not driven by the wage dilution caused by unemployment, but rather by the unsustainable wage gap among the employed.

The income inequalities are so extreme that the notion of two nations living in one country coined by former president Thabo Mbeki seems to have bled away and been replaced by two very separate countries. The rules and the values and the protections of state embodied by democratic freedoms do not pertain in the second, lesser country.

Data on poverty levels, inequality and unemployment are freely available. One would expect the policy pundits of aspirant governments-in-waiting to have worked these key numbers to inform the policies they are punting in their manifestos. We would expect them to have looked to comparative countries to see what has worked and what has not. No country has been able to create 12 million jobs in any short or medium term.

When these parties promise to fix the unemployment numbers by creating decent jobs for all, that is not a

bankable promise. Either those politicians who promise this know their promise is not possible, or they don't. Neither of these options signifies a great voting choice.

"Social security" is the system designed to balance the front end of the economy and corrects the cycles of supply and demand required for a circular flow of the economy when the market fails to do so. Through "tax and transfer" mechanisms, excess is reduced and need is addressed.

In industrialised nations of high or full employment, every worker contributes a fair portion of their salary to tax each month. This pays for the running of the state: the civil service, the schools, police, licensing departments and traffic cops. A second mandatory payment is made into a national insurance fund. This fund insures against poverty and provides income when people need it.

Many countries pay universal child benefits as an investment in the future, and pensions for older people for the good each person has done in their lives. To those who are disabled, have become too sick to work or who lose their jobs, a monthly income is paid from this same fund that meets their basic needs.

That is a system built to care for the nation. To keep people fed, shops and traders selling and factories producing. But in South Africa we started under apartheid; the social security system was built on with a privatised system of pension fund contributions, and unemployment for white men was rare because of job reservation.

Now we have a democracy where each person counts equal value, but we have 12 million people out of work, and for more than two thirds of the unemployed, this is permanent. And there is no permanent income stream to enable people to eat, supply customers to shops and traders, and thus no suppliers for factories to sell to.

Advocates for a decent universal basic income grant – one that is value-indexed to the upper-bound poverty line of R1 500 a month – have argued that such a grant should be paid to everyone legally resident

After elections, coalition governments often tend towards conservative policy compromises to promote coherence



Graphic: JOHN McCANN

in South Africa. Paid to all, but taxed back from income taxpayers who will be neither better or worse off. This will provide the level of stimulus needed to rescue the economy.

The GDP growth rate is forecast at 0.9%. At lower than the population growth rate, this is negative economic growth. "Helicopter money" has rescued many other economies, which is what a universal basic income would, in effect, be to begin with.

Given that factories are running at 20% below capacity largely because of limited demand, inflation is not going to be an immediate problem and it can be controlled by policy instruments as the economy starts to turn.

So, turning back to the contesting parties who promise to save South Africa, what do they say about a universal basic income grant in their manifestos to a country with more than 55% of the population living below the poverty line?

The ANC has affirmed its commitment to existing grants. These grants are paid to about 18 million – children, older people and people with disabilities. The child grants are R530 a month and the pension is R2 180.

The ANC has repeated its intention to upgrade the R370 monthly social relief of distress that is budgeted for just over nine million people to a better system in future, but no further detail is provided.

Oddly, the idea in its purity of universal access and decent value has had little traction with most parties.

The Democratic Alliance (DA) targets the 14 million child support grants for its primary election upgrade promise, vowing to increase

the monthly R530 to the food poverty relief of R760. But it appears to be even more uncertain about the adult social relief of distress grant than the ANC.

Although it, too, says it will keep the grant and convert it to a "jobseekers' grant" with various conditions, it then qualifies the promise by saying that this will only be done if there is enough economic growth to pay for it. True to its liberal ideological orientation the DA will not introduce a jobseekers' grant if this would mean an increase in tax from the employed to pay for the grant for the unemployed.

Rise Mzansi is less keen on social grants in general. It does promise to ensure that everybody has enough food through a combination of grants, food vouchers, own grown food and access to cheap food markets.

The Economic Freedom Fighters says it will double the value of existing grants for older people, children and people with disabilities. With regard to the 12 million unemployed, it promises to introduce a "graduates' grant". This seems to be an even more targeted relief than the DA version of a "jobseekers' grant".

The Good party is much more upbeat about social security and appears to be far more social democratic in its ideological alignment than other parties. Its promise is for a means-tested unconditional basic income grant of R999 a month for those earning under R1 000 a month.

ActionSA is the only party that sees the economic stimulus idea in the universal basic income grant proposals. It promises to introduce a universal basic income stimulus, taxed back from the rich, for an initial three years. The value will rise in keeping with the poverty lines. It claims the effect of

this will create a 2% additional GDP growth and 1.6 million jobs.

A study of coalition governments' policies reveal that after elections, coalition governments often tend towards conservative policy compromises to promote coherence between them. This finding does not augur well for those hoping for a more redistributive coalition government.

We also need to know whether the new administration can depart from the current austerity macro-economic framework adopted by the treasury and the South African Reserve Bank. The Finnish coalition model, for example, allows for budget line item changes and swaps within the framework, but it does not allow for changes to the overall framework. If this is true, then the space for bold new policies under whatever banner might simply be a fiction.

Any future government committed to real change will have to do some hard thinking and advice-seeking from constitutional experts and investors to discover ways to benefit the majority of South Africans.

Given the enormity of the growth, unemployment, poverty and inequality crises, the failure of parties to punt the universal basic income grant is worrying. Should we attribute this to a failure to understand the depth of these crises, or that they have a better and as yet unannounced solution, or are we left to conclude that they simply don't care?

Isobel Frye is the founder and executive director of the Social Policy Initiative, a feminist social security think-tank in Johannesburg, and a national minimum wage commissioner. She writes in her personal capacity.

Thought Leader

Mail & Guardian

Don't play politics over healthcare

Former Uruguayan leader José Mujica — in office from 2010 to 2015 — was known as “the poorest president in the world” during his tenure. He earned this description by withdrawing a modest stipend, rejecting any lavish trappings and owning little more than a clunky blue Volkswagen Beetle. When his term was up he called an end to his career gracefully, retreating to spend more time with his wife and three-legged dog.

Even if we are at our most cynical about his intentions, we have to admit Mujica understood that a leader serves the people. The good will he earned through his actions was converted into political currency that he spent on, among other things, pushing through progressive LGBTI+ and cannabis legislation.

Such tales of modesty are foreign to South Africa.

The ANC — the party that has governed the country for 30 years — has been in steady electoral decline and, according to most polls, will probably lose its majority later this month. Its tale is one of disillusionment and apathy.

No one disputes the ANC's vision of a nonracial, liberal South Africa — only the willingness of its leaders to selflessly implement it.

That tragedy is encapsulated in the National Health Insurance (NHI) Act.

What should be a discussion about equitable healthcare in a grossly unequal country has predictably devolved into shameless politicking.

In his State of the Nation address in February, President Cyril Ramaphosa primed us by declaring that he was looking for a pen to sign the NHI bill. Now he has found it two weeks before a watershed election. His trite jokes about missing stationery should not distract from his crafty timing.

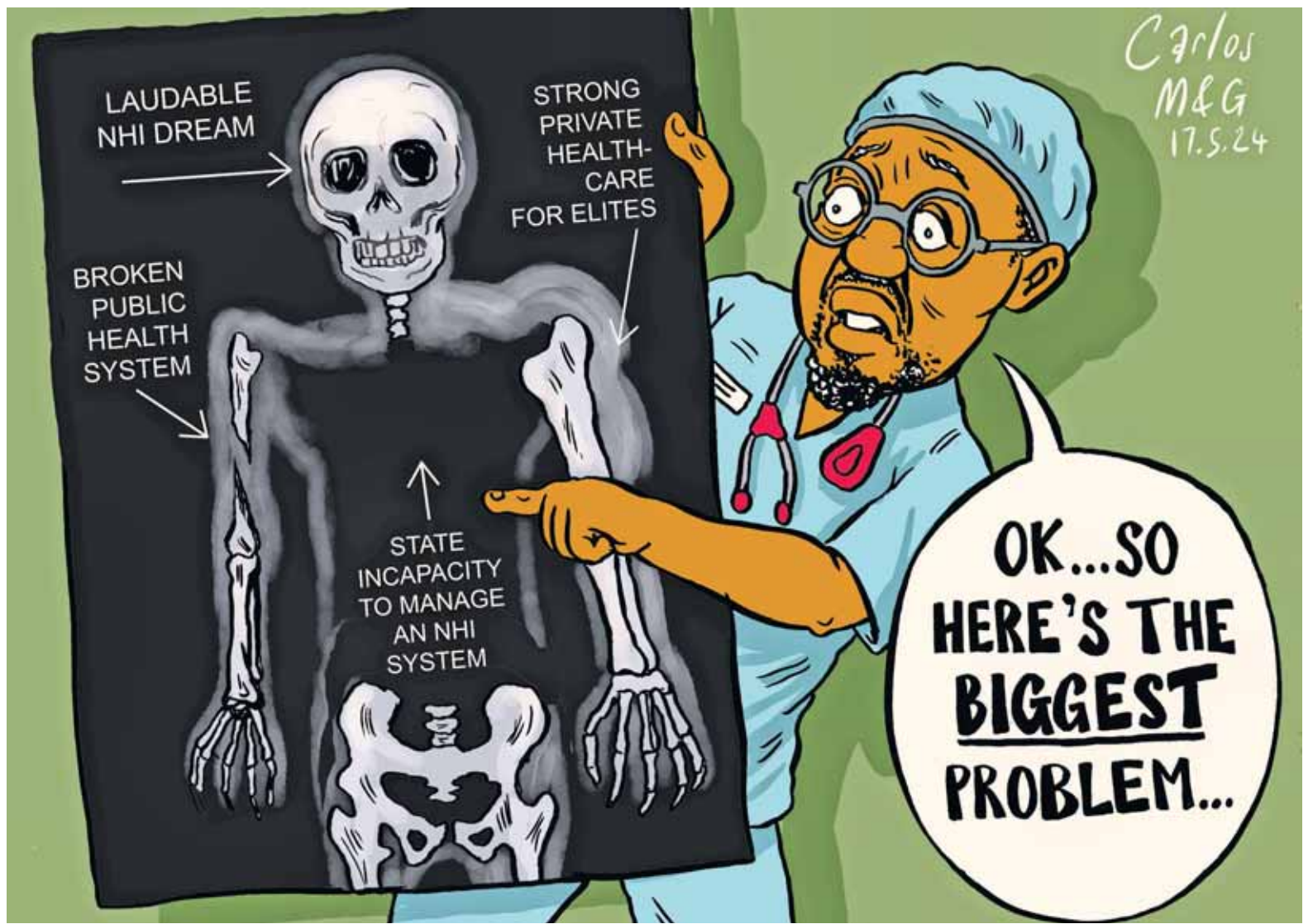
Nor should we be lured into the false dichotomy he has tried to construct between those wanting an empathetic national health policy and those who do not. “The opposition is coming from well-to-do, rich people,” he said on the eve of signing the bill into law. “This is what often happens. The haves don't want the have-nots to benefit from what they have been having.”

We have been shown no evidence or action in the past six years that our president is on the side of the “have-nots”. Ramaphosa, a wealthy business person who would never be accused of being one of the world's poorer presidents, has once again failed to engage on the merits of an issue and has instead fallen back on platitudes. This tendency is a sad characteristic of his presidency.

With NHI outrage bursting out of every headline this week, and the Act set to be challenged, we will temper our judgment. Instead we issue a plea to incumbent leaders and the loud opposition: for once, let's put our country and its people first.

With that comes a warning. South Africans are not fools. They are fed up with disingenuous politics and will duly punish anyone who wields them at the polls.

M&G Media Ltd



Steenhuisen's 'Sarafina' moment



The Democratic Alliance's flag-burning advert has turned into a bit of a hot potato for the party's leader as elections loom

I had a terrible vision last night. Sitting in his night school classroom, Democratic Alliance (DA) leader John Steenhuisen received what he felt was sage advice from his classmates.

“The people should burn South African flags rather than let the ANC win,” shouted a woman, known only as Sarafina, from the front of the class — a star pupil in her own right.

What followed was a cacophony of “Burn, burn, burn!” chants, as the class realised that — much in the way the Russians had razed their homes to the ground in September 1812 to defeat French general Napoleon Bonaparte's Grand Army invasion — the governing ANC could be removed from power with the torching of the national flag.

Okay, I concede the above is a bastardised take on the famous scene from the musical movie *Sarafina*, where learners attack their history teacher for giving them a sanitised version of Napoleon's invasion, in line with apartheid censorship laws.

I got the *Sarafina* image after the DA unveiled its political advert last week, ahead of the 29 May elections. In it, the opposition party shows the flag burning as a metaphor for the torched state of South Africa.

As if burning the flag was not enough, Steenhuisen misfired by dabbling in disinformation, declaring that the petrochemical giant



Just smile and wave: Leader John Steenhuisen appears on a Democratic Alliance election poster in Joburg. Photo: Waldo Swiegers/Getty Images

Shell's announcement that it would divest from the country — selling the more than 500 service stations and forecourts it operates — was the result of investors “fleeing ... at the prospect of an ANC-EFF [Economic Freedom Fighters] doomsday coalition”.

“Our economy will be burnt to ashes under the coalition of corruption,” the DA leader asserted last week, adding to his string of heated metaphors.

If he had burnt the midnight oil and studied what Shell was actually doing, Steenhuisen would have realised the company is selling off its assets around the world, including dispos-

The faux pas has seemingly lit a fire under cupcake-in-chief Cyril Ramaphosa, who called the flag ‘a sacred article in the life of our country’

ing of its interests in Singapore.

Moreover, in June last year, Shell said it would relinquish its home retail energy businesses in Britain, Germany and the Netherlands because of poor financial returns from in those markets.

Steenhuisen's faux pas has seemingly lit a fire under cupcake-in-chief Cyril Ramaphosa, who chastised the DA, calling the flag “a sacred article in the life of our country”, adding that it “united all of us”.

“It is despicable that a political party can, as it seeks to express itself, go and burn the symbol of our unity [and] the symbol of our existence as a nation,” Buffalo Bill contended.

“And I think it is treasonous because anybody, particularly an organisation, that does something like that for political expediency, should really be ashamed of themselves because it is the most despicable political act that anyone can embark upon, particularly when they are campaigning for votes,” Ramaphosa added.

Those were bold words from a suit

whose presidency has covered the country in the soot of record-high unemployment numbers, which stand at a staggering 32.1%.

Steenhuisen and the DA would do well, then — like a phoenix rising from the ashes — to resuscitate the stagnating Multi-Party Charter alliance, also known as the moonshot pact, seeking to coalesce in removing the ANC after the elections.

The alliance, like a candle in the wind, is striving to keep the flame alive amid accusations by Action SA, one of the charter partners, that the DA is refusing to run through the fire with its friends to unseat the ANC.

Things came to a head last month when the DA declined to support an ActionSA mayoral candidate in Ekurhuleni after the latter had successfully sponsored a motion to remove Sivuyile Ngodwana from the African Independent Congress, which has a paltry three of the council's 224 seats.

The musical chairs led to the election of the ANC's Nkosindiphile Doctor Xhakaza as mayor, with Siyanda Makhubo, ActionSA's Ekurhuleni caucus leader, stating that the DA, which neither supported Ngodwana's removal nor endorsed a candidate from its alliance to succeed, had displayed “leadership failures”.

Steenhuisen has his work cut out in trying to strengthen and unify his alliance if he harbours any hopes of extinguishing the ANC's 30-year reign of misgovernance.

It should not be too much of a problem, I don't think — what with him being the leader of a party that takes great pride in holding hands with all races around the campfire to sing *Kumbaya*.

And that would surely lead to Steenhuisen, as the renowned torch-bearer that he is, blazing a trail all the way to the Union Buildings' corner office.

From the election archives: 2009

Towards a moral vision

COMMENT
Pumla Gobodo-Madikizela

There have been moments when our leaders have faced challenges that have called on them to lead with moral vision. The essence of Nelson Mandela's leadership was moral authority and a keen consciousness of the potential for violence and destructiveness in our society. In a country with a history of violent anti-apartheid protests, systematic abuses of power by the apartheid government and state-sanctioned violence against those perceived to be the enemies of the state, Mandela recognised his role in building a culture of tolerance.

In contrast, under Jacob Zuma's leadership, political intolerance in our society seems to have deepened. In speeches delivered to crowds outside his court appearances, in statements by leaders of the ANC alliance partners and in the behaviour of Zuma's disciples, the message conveyed under Zuma's

leadership has been one of intolerance and a spirit of protest that has permeated many sectors of civil society, rupturing the sense of responsible citizenship among some ANC members entrusted with authority in institutions.

At a time when we need leaders who will be moral role models for the next generation of leaders, one wonders what the future holds when our president's strength of popularity is not matched by the strength of his reputation for moral stature. How will he speak with authority on matters of corruption?

Zuma's failure to address the important issue of the corruption charges against him in a thoughtful manner — despite the National Prosecuting Authority's revelations of political meddling — show a lack of awareness of the lessons conveyed by his behaviour. It is our right as citizens to know and for Zuma to address this issue. The dark cloud of unanswered corruption charges hanging over his head

has been redefined as a figment of the imagination of his enemies. The message conveyed to Zuma's supporters, it seems, is that his enemies are out to get him — again.

It is this "enemy" language aimed at silencing questions voiced by citizens that concerns me.

At the same time, the past represents the hard-fought years of the anti-apartheid revolution. What we have witnessed in the overwhelming display of support for Zuma seems to shift the focus away from the real work of strengthening our democracy and restoring dignity to the majority of our people. It cast the battle to bring Zuma to the presidency as the new revolution and anybody who disagrees with the stance as "counter-revolutionary".

How quickly we backslide. Under the apartheid government the voice of dissent was silenced. Courageous people, among them Archbishop Tutu, were unstoppable. Times change; it is now 2009. A black gov-

ernment led by people who fought fearlessly against apartheid is in power. Yet somehow things stay the same. Today Tutu is demonised and portrayed as part of a "lynch mob" unleashed to destroy Zuma. Rather, thus, the threats come from the ANC and its alliance partners, spreading fear to silence citizens' right to question those in positions of leadership.

The ANC, and the future president of our country, would do well to shift gears and to focus attention on uniting the people of our country. Fifteen years after the birth of freedom and democracy, this is an extraordinary moment to change history and to avoid South Africa deteriorating into a statistic of the African continent, where corruption reigns under post-colonial governments.

This is an edited version of author Pumla Gobodo-Madikizela's article in the *Mail & Guardian*, 24 to 29 April 2009.

EDITORIAL

You owe it to Mandela, Mr Zuma

It has been a brutal campaign, stretching back to the ANC's Mahikeng conference in 1997 and beyond, but Jacob Zuma can't spend too much time taking victory laps.

In a fortnight the ANC president will be the president of all South Africans and it is a job that comes with challenges that make the war within the ANC look like a playground squabble. If he is not yet frightened by the magnitude of unemployment, poverty and crime, and by faltering health and education systems, then he will be soon.

Many South Africans who voted this week said they were doing it for Nelson Mandela, who ushered in the dawn of a better life for all. In 2014, when Zuma's term comes to an end, it will be 20 years since the ANC took power. He can go down as the man who betrayed Madiba's legacy or the man who delivered his promise.

Zuma has told us that he will not be beholden to the coalition of leftists, crony capitalists and enemies of Thabo Mbeki who installed him at the top of the ANC.

He does not, he says, owe anyone anything. That is not true. He owes the millions of voters who chose him delivery on the promises of a broadly sensible election manifesto. And he owes us all a duty under the Constitution.

If he governs with that knowledge, he can be a vastly better president than Mbeki, who led as if he were guided by a higher power mysterious to everyone but him.

We will soon be able to see whether Zuma is ready to seize that opportunity; to write evidence of his leadership into the great blank that is our knowledge of his true intentions.

The first signs will be in the reshaping of the cabinet and the upper ranks of the civil service. Will he award key ministries like health, education, finance and safety and security on the basis of talent or loyalty?

Will the disastrous policy of cadre deployment, which has replicated the ANC's internal divisions across the entire state structure and rewarded compliance over competence, be abandoned, as treasurer general Mathews Phosa has said it must? And crucially, will Zuma appoint as chief justice someone who is truly capable of leading a robust and independent judiciary?

There have been some serious warning signs already, not least in his deeply misguided remarks about a "review" of the constitutional court, and his cave-in to the taxi industry last week, but elections tend to change things.

We are desperately anxious for Zuma to succeed, and he is going to need help. We will provide it in the form of very close scrutiny. Civil society, state institutions and, crucially, citizens must be both watchful and determined as we enter the period that will decide whether South Africa begins to fulfil its promise or lapses into disappointment and failure.

Mr Zuma, you owe Mandela, you owe the exalted and the nameless dead, you owe all of us. Don't let us down.

Zuma 'threat' to Constitution

The legal fraternity is uneasy after the ANC president's recent comments

Pearlie Joubert

A deep sense of unease is brewing in the legal fraternity and beyond after ANC president Jacob Zuma's comment last week that the constitutional court's authority needs to be "looked at" and that its judges "are almost like God".

The *Mail & Guardian* understands that a letter was circulated among judges in the constitutional court — the highest in the land — urging them not to respond to Zuma's utterances, and that they unanimously agreed to this.

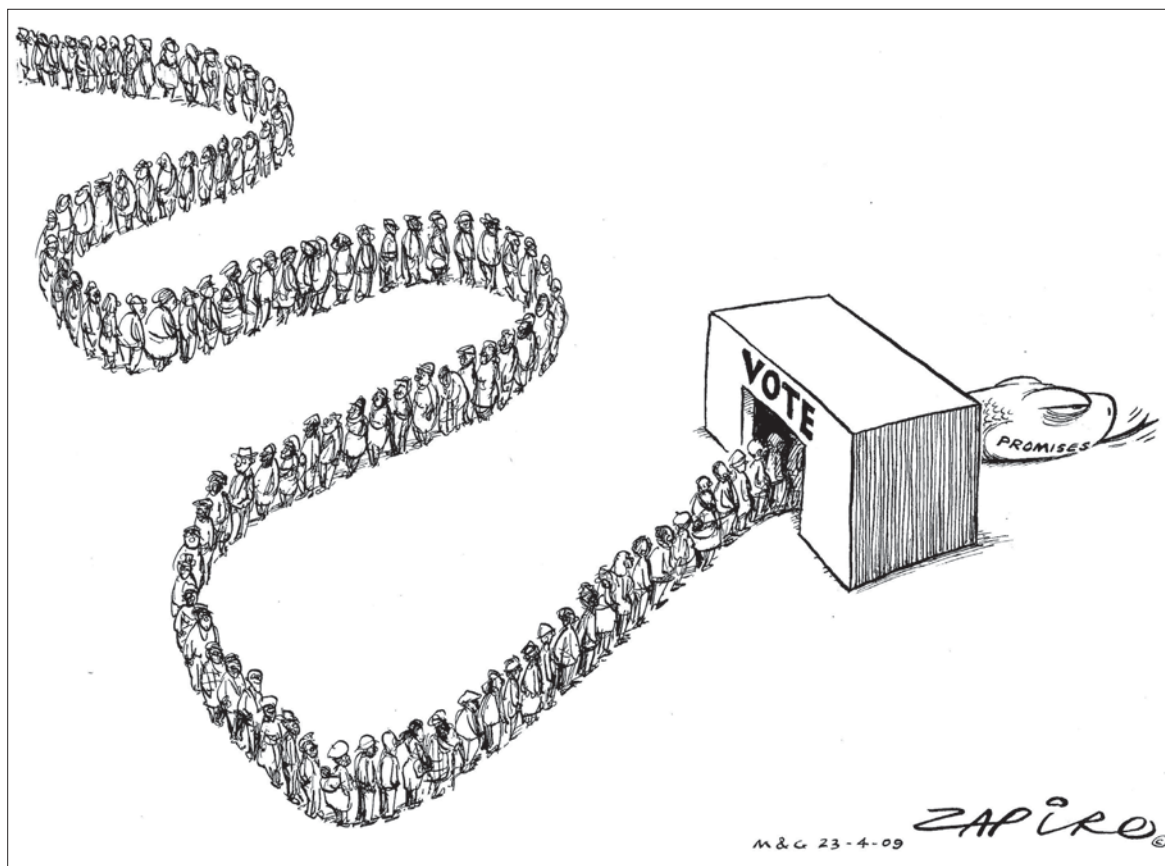
Zuma had been quoted saying: "If I sit here and I look at the chief justice of the constitutional court, that is the ultimate authority. I think we need to look at it, because I don't think we should have people who are almost like God in a democracy. Why? Are they not human beings?"

Also this week legal heavyweight Wim Trengove called on the legal fraternity to "be brave" and to speak out against the National Prosecuting Authority's (NPA) dropping of charges against Zuma, calling it "incomprehensible and indefensible". And former president FW de Klerk called on Zuma to "do nothing that will prejudice the independence and dignity of the judiciary".

The *M&G* has learned that the constitutional court's judges were "deeply concerned and perturbed" about Zuma's remarks and agreed among themselves that they should make no public response, given what they see as the gravity of his attack on the court.

Those familiar with discussions on Constitutional Hill say the judges are anxious not to get drawn into a potentially damaging public spat on such a crucial issue.

"The judges felt that they are mature enough not to respond," said one insider. "The constitutional court



ruled against [Schabir] Shaik when they refused him leave to appeal his conviction and sentence. Also remember that the court last year ruled against Zuma's objections that the search and seizure warrants were illegal and that client privilege was infringed when the Scorpions seized documents from [Zuma lawyer] Michael Hulley's office.

"The judges are judges — not gods. Zuma is implying that the judges think they are gods. It's not worth replying to this idiotic lashing out against the constitutional court. The judges have to stand above this and not respond," the *M&G* was told.

"Who does Zuma suggest should be the highest judicial authority in the land? Two judges have ruled in his favour; some 20-odd judges have ruled against him. He can't attack the entire system because he is angry. It's very dangerous," the sources said.

A senior Cape Town advocate, asking to remain anonymous, said Zuma's utterances are "unforgivable". "He is clearly, constitutionally

speaking, illiterate and it's dangerous because it's subversive. This is our future leader, who will have to appoint the judges of the constitutional court. Will he take us to the American model where judges are overt political appointments?" the advocate asked.

Speaking at the University of Cape Town, Trengove — who acted for the NPA against Zuma — said the decision to drop charges was flawed and "indeed ominous" and "had undermined the entire judicial process".

"I do believe that it is time for all of us — and particularly for lawyers — to stand up and speak out about abuses of this kind. Lawyers have a particular duty to do so and, if we don't, we might one day look back at this decision and realise that it was a tipping point leading to the slippery slope of erosion and ultimate destruction of the rule of law," Trengove told an audience of students and advocates.

De Klerk has called on Zuma to "observe the spirit and letter of the Constitution. The NPA's decision

last week not to proceed with the prosecution of Zuma may be identified by future historians as the point at which South Africa began to stray from the rule of law.

"Recent developments affecting the NPA and his remarkable comments on the constitutional court raise serious questions ... An enormous amount is at stake: the Constitution is the foundation for our national unity. Without it we will disintegrate. It is the assurance of our rights and freedoms. Without it we will descend into the mire of 'Big Man' politics that has blighted so many other countries in Africa," De Klerk said.

De Klerk urged Zuma to "do nothing that will prejudice the independence and dignity of the judiciary". He said: "I call on all South Africans to consider the critical importance of preserving our Constitution when they cast their votes next Wednesday. The Constitution provides the best assurance for the protection of our rights and freedoms and for the preservation of our national unity."

Thought Leader

SA needs to take a step to the left

None of the political parties offer what South Africa needs – a united left that represents the interests of the majority of the people

Not that long ago there was a lot of optimism about the election that is now about two weeks away. Political analysts and citizens were excited about the ANC being punished at the polls and hopeful that real consequences for the party's failures would be a wake-up call to our rulers.

For many, that optimism has evaporated and there is now a real sense of fear. A plethora of opinion polls have shown that the ANC could dip well below 50% in the national election and impeccable sources in the party are saying this will result in a coalition government with the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) and the ANC led by Paul Mashatile.

In KwaZulu-Natal, where the polls show the uMkhonto weSizwe (MK) party surging, there is even deeper fear of the prospect of a coalition government led by the MK party in alliance with the EFF.

It is possible that the fears about the national outcome may be overblown. In a brilliant piece in *Business Day*, Johnny Steinberg, our most thoughtful and independent political analyst, raised some deep methodological and ethical questions about the polling outfits, including their closeness to the Democratic Alliance (DA) and the wider organisational ecosystem of the right-wing of the liberal bloc.

But it seems certain that in KwaZulu-Natal the MK party's surge is going to be a real factor in the election.

This is terrifying for the obvious reason that Jacob Zuma is an authoritarian kleptocrat with contempt for democracy and who holds far-right views on social issues.

The problem faced by most voters in this election is that the only real choices are between an ANC that has long passed its sell-by date, the authoritarian kleptocrats in the EFF and the MK party, or the various liberal parties primarily funded by the Oppenheimer family.

Liberalism will never be able to represent the aspirations of the majority, with the result that for most potential voters there is no credible party on the ballot.

This logjam in our politics can only be resolved with the emergence of a genuine democratic left or social democratic party. The failure to develop an honest and democratic party to the left of the ANC is a serious problem for our democracy and our society. Resolving this problem requires real political maturity; the maturity to understand the contours of the problem and to act to resolve the problem.

My participation in the left has largely been through many years of work as a trade union educator with



Left Lens
Imraan Buccus

a number of unions. Over the years I have also got to know grassroots activists in various organisations and I know a good many left actors in universities and NGOs.

Because I am a free-floating actor, not involved in any particular organisation, I have been able to speak to influential players in all factions of the left over a number of years. This does not mean that my analysis of the failure to build a left party is correct or without flaws, but it does mean that it is independent and that it draws on years of conversations with a wide range of people.

The understanding that I have come to has two central elements. One is that a minor part of the failure to develop a left party is the general breakdown between much of the middle-class left, mostly located in universities and NGOs, and the mass-based organisations of the left.

Many university and NGO people feel that the leaders of the mass-based organisations act as gatekeepers who limit access to their organisations.

Many people in the grassroots and working-class organisations think that some university and NGO people feel they have a right to control the mass-based organisations and to treat their elected leaders and internal processes without respect.

There have been some cases where donor funds have been used by university and NGO people to try to intervene in movement and union elections. This has not been well received.

There have also been cases when university and NGO people have lobbied the media to attack elected leaders with whom they have disagreements. Again this has not been well received.

There are some bitter divisions at play but with sufficient maturity and perhaps some independent assistance in conflict resolution it must be possible to achieve some degree of repair, even if not with all individuals. All the successful left parties around the world included mass-based organisations and intellectuals and so trying to repair the broken relationships in South Africa is an important task.

The major challenge that must be met if the logjam in the South African left is to be overcome is to fix the relations between the mass-based organisations. The largest such organisations are trade union federation Cosatu (about 1.8 mil-



Dividing line: The National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa (above), which has 400 000 members, is similar to the South African Communist Party ideologically but wary of its alliance with the ANC. Photo: Sharon Seretlo/Getty



Hurdle: Labour federation Cosatu (above), which has about 1.8 million members, is also one of the ANC's alliance partners. Photo: Papi Morake/Getty Images

lion members), the National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa (Numsa, about 400 000 members), the South African Communist Party (SACP, about 340 000 members), and Abahlali baseMjondolo (about 150 000 members).

These numbers are drawn from online sources and may be dated in some cases, but they are useful to give a general sense of the collective power of these four organisations.

There are also a number of smaller but important organisations including the Amadiba Crisis Committee and the South African Federation of Trade Unions aside from Numsa. But the big four organisations are numerically and politically the most powerful and this is where attempts at building collaboration and a shared left identity should be prioritised.

There are a number of lines of division. The main one is that Cosatu and the SACP remain in alliance

with the ANC and that this creates a stark division with Numsa and Abahlali baseMjondolo.

Another line of division is that Numsa's Marxist-Leninist politics are quite ideologically similar to those of the SACP on questions aside from affiliation with the ANC and that both organisations are ideologically very different to the bottom-up radical democracy of Abahlali baseMjondolo.

Numsa still blames the SACP for its expulsion from Cosatu in 2013, and Abahlali baseMjondolo blames the SACP for not speaking out against the regular assassination of the movement's leaders. Both are also suspicious of Cosatu's ongoing relationship with the ANC.

But these four organisations are aligned on all kinds of issues. They are all strongly in support of Palestine, for an increase to the minimum wage, against austerity, opposed to xenophobia, and so on.

It could be possible for them to meet, in a small closed meeting focused on building consensus, to identify matters of shared concern and to agree to act together on these matters.

To get the ball rolling and build trust, issues that are not particular to any one organisation could be pri-

oritised and collective action could be carried out in ways that don't require huge investments in time, people and resources. For example, if all four organisations collectively picketed an appropriate target, such as McDonalds, in support of Palestine, the costs and risks would not be high but people could get to know each other and trust could be built.

If this kind of collective action is sustained over time and sufficient trust is built, all four organisations could then agree to begin to support each other's internal struggles, such as strikes, struggles against evictions and resistance to repression. If this could be achieved then we could slowly start to see a viable left at scale.

None of this would easily resolve the central problem of the differing views on the ANC but working together could start to create a sense of a left that is bigger than any of its constituent organisations and that shares a set of core principles.

This could only help to move the left outside of its organisational solos and into a wider awareness of a shared identity and struggle that would, in time, open up political possibilities. It is worth a try.

Dr Imraan Buccus is a political analyst.

The failure to develop an honest and democratic party to the left of the ANC is a serious problem for our democracy

Thought Leader



Digging deep: Reversing deindustrialisation requires making investment in South Africa's mining industry more attractive. Photo: Waldo Swiegers/Getty Images

Dutch Disease and what to do about it

Research suggests South Africa is suffering from it, requiring better governance and institutions

OPINION

Ross Harvey

Last year, a colleague and I published a peer-reviewed journal article trying to identify whether Southern Africa was afflicted by “premature deindustrialisation”.

Harvard economist Dani Rodrik (in 2016) had identified this pattern of manufacturing decline in developing countries historically sooner than their industrialised counterparts and at lower levels of per capita income.

In other words, developing economies were transitioning into low-value services before having used the manufacturing bandwagon to build a prosperous economy. This is obviously concerning, as manufacturing has been the traditional channel through which to absorb labour and build a sustainable middle class empowered to hold its political and business elites to account.

African countries are increasingly plagued by growing youth unemployment. Given that Africa will be the only fertility-positive continent on the planet by about 2050, we are concerned about future employment prospects for young people.

In our paper last year, we found econometric evidence for premature deindustrialisation in Southern Africa: “There is good reason to believe that the Southern African Development Community group of countries is emerging as a region where deindustrialisation in both employment and output terms is

growing more distinct.”

In our regressions — a statistically rigorous way of determining a potential causal relationship between two variables — we found that “a reliance on oil and mineral rents is negatively correlated with industrial employment and manufacturing output”, which suggests Dutch Disease.

Dutch Disease was originally identified in the Netherlands, where growing oil wealth was strangely correlated with manufacturing decline. In Southern Africa, Dutch Disease “could be curbing industrialisation prospects in many oil- and mineral-reliant countries”.

Economists typically posit how the disease works as follows: The sale of a raw commodity increases the demand for that country's currency, which then appreciates as a result. However, such appreciation renders the country's manufacturing exports relatively more expensive in global terms, undermining their competitiveness.

It can also generate unearned income for the ruling class. Concomitantly, the extractive industries can draw resources away from the manufacturing sectors (especially during commodity price booms), which further impairs industrial competitiveness.

There have been many wrong-headed attempts to address this phenomenon, often based on poor diagnoses or a naive presumption about the causal mechanisms behind the disease. This is like treating cancer with TB medication. It won't work.

So, we set out to establish whether,

in fact, there was good evidence for Dutch Disease in South Africa. If so, what are its probable causal pathways or patterns and what can, practically, be done to address them?

In a forthcoming paper, colleagues and I at Good Governance Africa show there is (sadly) actually good statistical evidence to suggest Dutch Disease is afflicting South Africa.

When we interact a South African dummy with mineral rents (to ascertain country-specific effects in our sample of comparable countries), we find a strong negative effect on manufacturing output that is significant at a 90% confidence level.

We also see a negative impact on industrial employment (as a share of overall employment) but no statistical significance there (meaning that the relationship could be explained by other factors).

Critics of models such as the ones we've run suggest that it's impossible to isolate and specify the impact of a country's mineral rents in such a small sample of countries.

However, this is why we ran the model with data from 1996 onwards and controlled for other factors which the economic literature suggests could also play a role in mediating the relationship.

After controlling for institutional quality — typically the strongest explanatory factor in ascertaining why resource endowments can cause underdevelopment — we found that the effects still held.

What we think is going on here is that South Africa's mineral rents (despite a paralysed mining industry clearly in crisis) have played a partial role in weakening the country's insti-

tutional quality. This, in turn, has had a negative effect on manufacturing competitiveness through undermining the country's overall investment attractiveness.

Another possibility is that the electricity crisis, starting in 2008 and climaxing last year (which might still yet peak after the 29 May elections) might be the primary factor explaining manufacturing decline.

However, when we controlled for declining electricity consumption in the sample, the overall efficacy of the model deteriorated, probably because the electricity effect was already being picked up in other factors we had controlled for.

Another option is that globalisation has undermined South African manufacturing attractiveness — labour is cheaper elsewhere and skills and electricity availability are stronger. We haven't controlled for that in the modelling so, of course, it remains an option.

But all the countries in the sample would have been affected by that, so we still can't dismiss what we're seeing — mineral rents seem to be driving down manufacturing output in South Africa, specifically when compared with other countries similarly dependent on mineral rents.

So, what can we do about it? Two things, which are in turn dependent on two prerequisites. First, we need an industrialisation strategy that begins — perhaps ironically — with strengthening the investment attractiveness of the mining industry. We need more money to flow into exploration and production expansion.

Second, we need to ensure a growing mining industry is integrally connected to green industrialisation that will generate broad-based

development. This must be the foundation for a much more diversified economy.

However, we must not fall into the trap of thinking downstream beneficiation is our silver bullet — it's more important to build a set of industries initially connected to mining but that can be sustained long thereafter.

For any of this to happen, we need two other pre-requisites to be in place. First is improved political governance — electoral system reform, alongside parliamentary rule reform, to ensure greater accountability for politicians and government officials.

This goes with robust strengthening of key institutions, such as the Hawks and the National Prosecuting Authority, to prevent corruption.

Second is improved fiscal transparency. South Africa should join the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative and it must expedite getting off the Financial Action Task Force's grey list. The longer we stay on that list, the more expensive it is for us to service our debt and the less likely we are to attract investment.

Dutch Disease is a real hindrance to our growth as a country. As with many other obstacles to growth, the answer is better governance and high-quality institutions.

Better governance will not be achieved, however, unless citizens are also empowered to hold governing politicians and officials to account. This starts at the ballot box, but it cannot end there.

Ross Harvey is the head of research and programmes at Good Governance Africa. For election-related material and how to hold governments to account, search online for the Good Governance Africa Election Tracker.

Thought Leader

The 'civilised' are the biggest liars and killers

Israel and its Western allies – including the media – have lied or spread the lies about the occupier's intentions and its actions against Palestinians

OPINION

Nontobeko Hlela

In the aftermath of the 7 October attack by Hamas, mostly on civilians, Israel and its supporters have been found wanting when it comes to truth.

We were told that Hamas had beheaded and burnt babies and that pregnant women's bellies were cut open and their infants killed. These stories were circulated around the world and repeated by "reputable" media houses, and even the president of the United States.

These claims turned out to have been false. The now notorious *New York Times* story "Screams Without Words" has been comprehensively debunked.

We were told that the Al-Shifa hospital was being used by Hamas as its headquarters. "Embedded" journalists were taken to the hospital and we were shown what were purported to be "weapons" left by Hamas. When the veracity of these claims was questioned, the videos were taken down without explanation.

A video of a "nurse" at a Gazan hospital where Hamas was supposedly holding hostages turned out to have been falsified. The "nurse" was shown to be a Mexican-Israeli actor.

Earlier this year Tel Aviv claimed that the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA), the UN agency looking after refugees in Palestine, was infiltrated by terrorists and Hamas militants. Without any verified evidence being presented to support this claim Western media and Western governments, including the US, took Israel's word and stopped the flow of much-needed humanitarian aid to the people of Gaza.

This was despite the UN and the UNRWA stating that those claims were false and the fact that Israel had previously made baseless allegations against the UN refugee agency. Israel provided no evidence to the independent review led by former French foreign minister Catherine Colonna commissioned by the UN to look into these accusations.

Israel has not only been dishonest in its claims about Palestinians, it has also been dishonest about its own intentions. Palestinians were told to leave the north of Gaza and travel south to safety along designated routes. These routes were bombed by the Israeli Defence Forces (IDF) and scores of people were killed on their march south.

The south has itself been bombed and attacked by the IDF. Now Palestinians who have been displaced numerous times within the Gaza Strip have been told to leave the south and Rafah, the southernmost part of Gaza, the very same place

they had been told was safe.

We were told that a ceasefire was in the works, that Israel had made a "generous" proposal and that Hamas was the holdout. Although Hamas agreed to the ceasefire, Israel has not. It has instead signalled by its seizure of the Rafah crossing to Egypt that it is hell-bent on continuing the fighting and escalating the land invasion of Rafah.

Nobody disputes that atrocities were committed against civilians on 7 October but this fact does not give licence to fabricate lurid claims to legitimate further violence against civilians. When it turned out that false claims had repeatedly been made by the Israeli state and actors aligned to it, that these had been uncritically repeated by leading Western media houses and then repeated again by powerful Western politicians, there were no apologies.

When there were retractions they were not as ardent or prominent as the original claims. There has been no panic in the Western media about "fake news" emanating from Israel.

It seems that for all its lies and false claims there will be no repercussions for Israel for its systematic and repeated lying. Everything will carry on as normal and it will continue to receive the aid and support that it wants from the West. The fact that Israel's lies have in all probability caused the deaths of countless people will not make any difference to how it continues to portray itself as a victim while continuing to kill and maim civilians.

The real problem is not Israel. The way the Netanyahu government is behaving is par for the course, just on a much more devastating scale than before. The real problem is the powerful Western countries that allow Israel to continue on this path. The real problem is that Israel is taken as a credible actor despite its well-documented record of lying because it is seen as part of the West, as part of the civilisation that determines who is human and who is not, who is assumed to be rational and honest and who is not.

Netanyahu was very clear about this when in the aftermath of the 7 October attacks he said: "It's the battle of civilisation against barbarism. And if we don't win here, this scourge will pass." He understood very well that in the West, Israel is taken as part of "Western civilisation" while Palestinians are not and that this would ultimately determine how Western governments position themselves.

Much of Western media are every bit as complicit as their governments. What Israel says is frequently taken as Gospel truth, whereas state-



No more war: Graduate students and faculty members (above) protest against the war in Gaza after walking out of the University of Texas at Austin commencement ceremony. Hundreds of people gather (below) in front of the United States consulate general in Johannesburg to protest against Israel's attacks on Gaza and to show their support for Palestinian people. Photo: Brandon Bell & Ihsaan Haffejee/Getty Images



ments made from Gaza are always qualified as being from a Hamas-led or -controlled entity, thereby rendering their veracity questionable.

Israelis die in the active voice, someone kills or massacres them, while Palestinians die in the passive voice, they just somehow are killed. Strikingly different adjectives are used to describe violence, suffering and death affecting Israelis and Palestinians. Israeli lives are awarded vastly more column inches and television minutes than Palestinian lives.

Western critics of Israel and support for Israel by Western governments have frequently been slandered as being anti-Semitic and pro-Hamas. Many people have lost their jobs for opposing the destruction of Gaza and its people.

Our public sphere is far from perfect, and remains colonial in many ways. But when there are lies in the public discourse in South Africa these are ventilated in public, sharply and pitilessly. With all our problems we can disagree and we do so often and loudly. Talk radio's success shows how importantly South Africans value their right to voice their opinions. The right to disagree is not rubbish and it is not only the views of the political elite or administration that are allowed to stand.

We are all aware of the many failures to hold to the promises of 1994 but one of the things that we can be proud of, and which we should hold

dear, is the free speech that we have and which we enjoy as a result of our imperfect democracy.

In South Africa you can support the cause of the Palestinian people and rail against the genocidal Israeli government and IDF without being labelled anti-Semitic. Jewish and Muslim people can walk together and demand justice for Palestine. Zionists and their supporters can also express their views freely, even when making the most ludicrous statements such as when James Myburgh claimed that "South Africa resurrected Hitlerism at The Hague".

Not so in the land of the free. In the US, the self-proclaimed home of democratic values, students and university staff, many of whom are Jewish, are being painted as anti-Semitic, silenced, repressed for opposing the support given to Israel by their political elites. Despite all this many American students and academics have stood up for principle with great courage and many have paid a price for this.

The mobilisation by young people on campuses across the US has brought into sharp relief just how out of touch the Biden administration is with its base. The thousands of young people who have been calling for a ceasefire and an end to the genocide in Gaza have created a crisis of credibility for Biden and the wider liberal establishment.

As South Africans we should be proud that on this issue, and despite immense pressure and threats to our sovereignty, our government has led the way and shown what a principled stand against racism, colonialism and genocide looks like.

Our society and our government has done so much better on this issue than the US, or countries such as the United Kingdom and Germany because, despite all our many flaws, we understand colonialism when we see it. We understand that you cannot simply assume that the coloniser is always ethical, rational and honest while the colonised is, to put it bluntly, a barbarian.

The brave young people who are challenging the superiority complex of white liberal arrogance in the US and the wider West are teaching those liberal elites that they also need to begin to understand colonialism.

Like the generations before them who refused to accept Western support for apartheid or the Vietnam war, they are refusing the old script that divides the world into the civilised and the barbarous, and showing that sometimes those who see themselves as civilised are the ones doing most of the lying and killing.

Nontobeko Hlela is a research fellow with the Institute for Pan African Thought & Conversation and a PhD candidate in the department of politics and international relations at the University of Johannesburg.

Thought Leader

God's salvation comes in a blink of an eye

There is a hateful chorus that has risen to a crescendo, broadcasting to the world that we Jews are colonists who have no place in Israel

OPINION
Daniel Beider

I have contemplated submitting an article on a Jewish perspective on God, but I have been very blocked. There are multiple Jewish perspectives on pretty much any issue, so homing in on one Jewish perspective was never going to be easy. Ask two Jews get three opinions, goes the old adage.

To write about God. Where does one start? "Save me", I thought, while praying to God, of course.

The Jewish people are in need of salvation. The world has become an increasingly hostile place for Jews. As a young man, I once walked into a café in London with a couple of Jewish friends. We were wearing kippot. "Get out!" said an anti-Semitic customer. "Go back to Israel, where you belong."

Not long after that, I was living in Israel, where apparently I belong.

In recent years, a hateful chorus has risen to a crescendo, broadcasting to the world that Jews are colonists who have no place in Israel. Of course, as Jews we know that it is our spiritual and ancestral homeland, to which we have longed to return. But that does not make the hateful chorus any easier for us to stomach.

It can sometimes seem to us that we are welcome in the world, as long as a) we don't live outside of Israel, and b) we don't live in Israel. Never before has the moon seemed such an obvious safe haven.

As a people, though, we do not want to live on the moon. We want to live either in our spiritual homeland, and perhaps in other parts of the world. This does not seem like too much to ask, but the hateful chorus says "no".

We Jews need salvation from the hateful chorus.

Small as the Jewish people are, we are a fractured people. Within the Jewish world there are wildly differing views on most topics. (Although, of course, some of my Jewish friends would disagree with me.)

Sensible debate is always positive, however there have been times when the existence of different views within the Jewish world has, unfortunately, not stopped at the adoption of different debating positions, but has spilled over into animosity.

There was a brief lull as the Jewish world absorbed the terrible shock of the 7 October massacres, and in the face of the absolute evil we were confronted with, we remembered that we are one people. As we moved from "shock mode" to "processing mode", unfortunately, divisiveness has once again reared its head.

As a people we need salvation from internal schisms.

The Jewish world is in great pain. More than ever before, Israel is stigmatised as "immoral" as it tries to defend itself.

Jews face a brutal enemy in the form of Hamas, supported by Iran. Ismail Haniyeh and Ghazi Hamad, high-ranking Hamas officials, have stated publicly they would like to repeat 7 October massacres again and again. We now know they mean it.



'Help': A protestor covered in an Israeli flag sits in front of photographs of hostages taken in the 7 October 2023 attack by Hamas during a demonstration against the Israeli government and calling on it to arrange a deal to release the hostages. Photo: Alexi Rosenfeld/Getty Images

Even those of us who had naively hoped in the past that this talk from Hamas was just bravado, and that Iran only sought nuclear technology for peaceful purposes, have been forced to reconsider. It was so tempting to believe that. But now we know it is simply not true.

Having actual enemies who want to kill you comes with consequences. It means you need to try to ensure the next massacre does not occur.

For thousands of years, we were unable to do so, with awful consequences.

Now, Jews are able to defend themselves, and much to the consternation of our enemies, and with God's help, we are able to do so, very well.

The strategy of those who do not like us has therefore shifted. As we search in deepest Gaza for our captive brethren, some who are mere infants, our detractors make an incredible claim. They claim we are genocidal. They claim we are Nazis. They claim we are immoral.

We know we are moral.

We know we are not out to destroy a people.

We do not understand why some anti-Israel protesters shout violent chants about us if they truly want peace.

We do not understand why most anti-Israel protesters fail to call for the release of Israeli hostages, which we feel would be the easiest way for hostilities to decisively end.

There is so much we do not understand.

But beyond the lack of comprehension is the pain. Even when we know we are moral, it is still a source of immense pain to be maligned as immoral. It really hurts.

We so need the world to understand that there really are people calling for our destruction, and that we really cannot let down our guard. We so need the world to understand that

Israel does not target civilians. We so need the world to understand that there actually are powerful players in the Middle East, who target civilians. Oh, how we need salvation.

After the outpouring of sympathy back in October, it seemed to us recently that the world's sympathy was short-lived.

Revulsion over Hamas's behaviour on 7 October turned to casualty fatigue, as the world grew weary of the images coming out of Gaza. We know the grisly images are a direct cause of Hamas's indifference to Gazan casualties, but visuals are hard to explain away.

With the United States abstaining from voting when the anti-Israel Security Council vote was held at the UN, we have been left wondering.

We feel alone. We need salvation.

Many people believe in God. Theoretically. But there is a disconnect.

We often strip God out of the equation. We rely on an army for defence. On our jobs for sustenance. On our governments to provide utilities. (This one is for the non-South African readership.)

But who is ultimately in control? Who determines if the army will succeed, if you will hold down your job, or if the reservoirs will run dry?

We forget that God runs the world. We need salvation.

The salvation of God comes in the blinking of an eye. This is an ancient Jewish belief. From the bleakest and unlikeliest of places, God can bring salvation.

After the outpouring of sympathy back in October, it seemed to us recently that the world's sympathy was short-lived

On Saturday 13 April, the world learned that Iran had launched a drone and rocket salvo indiscriminately targeting millions of Jewish, Christian and Muslim civilians on an unprecedented scale. This was in response apparently to a precision attack by Israel on seven high-ranking members of the Iranian military.

Hundreds of explosive-laden drones and tens of ballistic missiles were launched by Iran, from sovereign Iranian territory, aimed at sovereign Israeli territory.

The fact that celebrations around the world erupted as this was happening broadcast to us clearly that for some people out there, the knowledge of this barrage of destruction making its way towards Israel, a country which 10 million people call home, was very exciting. We know about them.

For many others, the lethal salvo would have been reason to shake their heads disapprovingly and roll their eyes as they went to sleep.

For us Jews and our many friends, this darkest hour proved to be the most powerful expression of Godly salvation we have witnessed in living memory. It was truly a modern day "splitting of the sea".

Never could we have imagined that 99% of drones and missiles would be intercepted, and that there would be no fatalities. Never in our wildest dreams did we imagine that Iran's pernicious actions could result in such multilayered salvation.

The "hateful chorus brigade", who claim the Jews have no place in Israel, have received a modern-day reminder that someone up there is watching over the Jewish state, and might indeed be a fan. Diaspora Jews, too, are walking around this month feeling that bit more self-assured of their place in the world. Salvation! We do not need to move to the moon.

The internal schisms issue, which

sometimes plagues the Jewish world, was obliterated as Jews around the world watched together, hoped together and prayed together.

The moral stigma to which the Jews have been subjected in recent times now rings particularly hollow. As commentators around the world are forced to confront the reality that Iran is the bad guy, Jews feel a slight sense of relief that Iran and its proxies have shown their true colours. This all paints us rightly in a most favourable light. The moral stigma has disappeared.

There are morally upright nations who came to our rescue. The US, the United Kingdom and Jordan all stepped up to the mark and assisted militarily. We do have friends and that is a source of great comfort. Salvation. The Jews are not alone.

(We would love it if South Africa too wanted to befriend Israel too. Do South Africans really want to throw in their lot with Iran?)

Jews have utterly reconnected with the God factor. There are no atheists in foxholes. I, and thousands of Jews around the world, prayed like never before that Saturday night, that the number of casualties may be minimal. Salvation. We have remembered that God exists.

And as for me, and my quest for a topic to write about. Salvation. Modern-day miracles make really great topics.

As Jews around the world celebrated Passover, which commemorates our salvation from ancient Egypt and transition from slavery to freedom, we prayed that God will bring salvation and moral clarity to any place the need exists. And that is what we will continue to pray for.

Daniel Beider is a former investment banker and turned his attention in recent years to the nonprofit sector, particularly in the Jewish community. He has appeared on ChaiFM and SAFm.

Thought Leader

New responses to diseases – and each other

Antagonism and tension are inherent in our being but we can change the conversation

It is a well appreciated concept in medicine that when our defences are overstimulated or poorly mediated, we begin to disturb our own physiological equilibrium and create disease.

In 2021, tuberculosis killed 54 000 South Africans – that is one every 10 minutes. What's interesting about this disease is that it's not the pathogen itself that destroys normal cells, it's the body's response to the bug that actually distorts the normal integrity of lung and other organ tissue.

Immune checkpoints activate when proteins on the surface of immune cells, called T cells, recognise and bind to partner proteins on other cells, such as some tumour cells, to deactivate or destroy them. When this defence fails, cancer cells proliferate and healthy cells are infiltrated, killed by the cancer cells.

Autoimmune disease is another very topical example. Here, the body produces antibodies to its own tissue. These antibodies recognise "self" as foreign and sabotage, kill and disrupt normal, healthy cells.

All humans actually have some of these cells in their circulation, but there are checkpoints that inhibit them from wreaking havoc.

We know this because, when we use immunotherapy in cancer and



Health with Heart
Dr Skye Scott

suppress certain checkpoints, autoimmune-type activity results.

I have been thinking about less tangible defences – the ones that disconnect us from other people and from ourselves.

We all have strategies for keeping ourselves emotionally safe. While a defence strategy might have once served you to protect you from emotions or experiences that were too painful to bear, as we age and mature, we often need to rethink, re-model and release our historical defences.

In the same way that communication between cells can become inappropriate, so can our behaviour with each other. Core truths reflect similarly in physiology and sociology. I love this about the natural world, all these parallel ripples, echoes and mirrors of one another urging us to higher planes in every dimension.

It feels appropriate to give language to the brutal ways that territories are defending themselves in parts of the world today.

I looked to animal behaviour to find ways that conflict and devas-



In black and white: Animal behaviour can mirror human nature.

Photo: Eric Lafforgue/Art in All of Us/Getty Images

tation might pave way for higher ground or more stable equilibrium, but even down to colonies of ants, who display ritualised fights for territories, enslaving other colonies and killing or driving away their queens, no species seems to be exempt from seemingly unethical behaviours.

Who would have thought a blackbird would viciously peck another of its kind to death for triumph over a place? Who knew that polygynous mating animals, such as zebras and seals, allowed for one dominant male to mate with harems of females at the expense of the other males in the environment?

It's clear where our animal nature originates. As long as the world is an embodiment of tension and rivaling for higher ground, power and domination, it makes sense that our bodies would mimic this.

Audre Lorde reminds us that there are no new ideas, there are only new

ways of making them felt. This idea soothes me. The widening gyre can only be the widening gyre.

Victor Hugo wrote that even the darkest night will end and the sun will rise. This dual dance might be the only way that we can exist – antagonism and tension are inherent in our aliveness.

It feels like a truism to say that we are all in pursuit of less suffering. We are all in pursuit of relational ease between our own cells, ourselves and between one another.

We are living through a time with more access to tools for self-actualisation and healing than ever before. Why then does it feel as if suffering is more rife?

Cancer is the second-most frequent cause of death in humans. One in 10 humans have an autoimmune disease and, while the data is scant, it feels as if this is increasing.

While you are statistically less

likely to die from war or a war crime today than ever before, technology makes international conflicts a daily companion to all of us.

Perhaps what is new to our age is to sit with the discomfort of what is. Martha Beck suggests we can ease our anxieties by inviting them to sit beside us. Perhaps we can look to our pain, our cancer, our dissonance with self and enquire, "What brings you here?" "What wisdom do you speak?" When we do the same with one another, we will find that each of us carries the song of the blackbird and the shadow. Can we change the world by changing the conversations that we are having with ourselves and our cells? Let's invite our sickness to set us free.

Skye Scott is a GP based in Sandton. She has a special interest in patient education, integrative medicine and mental well-being.

IFP: M&G article cherry-picks the facts

RIGHT OF REPLY
Velenkosini Hlabisa

As with anything involving money, the public debate over the location of the capital of KwaZulu-Natal is understandably emotional. And as with all heated debates, the most valuable intervention is information.

Last week's article by Mr Paddy Harper omitted some important facts ("We'll make Ulundi the capital – IFP", *Mail & Guardian*, 10 May 2024); facts that have been effectively hidden through the smoke and mirrors of politicking.

Over several years, I have engaged with many business people in Pietermaritzburg and the Midlands on the possibility of moving the seat of provincial governance from Pietermaritzburg, and returning it to Ulundi. Our conversations invariably begin with fear for what this would mean for the city's economy, but end in agreement that the path mapped out by the current government will do greater harm than good.

Once all the information is on the table, the right path is easy to identify.

Right now, the government of KwaZulu-Natal owns a state-of-the-art provincial precinct. It includes a provincial legislature building with

a house that seats 130 members – more than sufficient for the 80 MPLs serving in the legislature. The gallery accommodates 650 guests.

There are offices for the premier, the speaker, the deputy speaker and all ministers, as well as departmental offices. There is ministerial housing as well as housing for the speaker, deputy speaker, premier and senior managers. There are 131 four-roomed apartments to accommodate MPLs; far more than is needed.

Yet, for the last twenty years, none of this has been used.

Instead, the ANC-led government has squandered billions of rand renting duplicate space. And now it is borrowing billions more – at the expense of KwaZulu-Natal far into the future – to fund an almost ten-year vanity project, duplicating infrastructure that already exists.

The building of a provincial precinct in Pietermaritzburg carries a price tag of over R6.8 billion. Realistically, this money will never be available. It requires a loan from National Treasury, which National Treasury cannot approve. How long would it take to repay such a loan? It goes against financial wisdom to saddle future generations with such an impossible debt, when the provincial economy is already unable to cope.



Right of reply: The IFP's Velenkosini Hlabisa. Photo: Darren Stewart/Gallo Images

Pietermaritzburg has been the centre of government in KwaZulu-Natal for twenty years. Yet Pietermaritzburg is falling apart. Infrastructure is crumbling, decay has set in, rubbish is piled up in the streets and criminals have free rein.

It is understandable that business is afraid of further decline. But clinging to something that is not working is not the way to ensure survival.

I agree with the Chamber of Business that funds need to be spent on infrastructure, to revitalise Pietermaritzburg. But borrowing money that we cannot repay to build one government precinct (that already exists elsewhere) makes no sense. We should be spending on infrastructure that supports economic development and investment in business.

We should be pouring money into cleaning up the city, eradicating crime and creating a conducive environment for investment, so that business will grow.

Mr Harper is right about one thing. The decision to move the capital from Pietermaritzburg to Ulundi is not mentioned in the IFP's national or provincial manifesto. This is because we believe that in-depth engagement is needed on how best to move forward in a way that will protect Pietermaritzburg from continuing to run at a loss or being saddled with outrageous debt.

The concern has been expressed that the provincial government does not have the kind of money it would take to move the capital. On the other hand, it does not have the kind of money that is required to stay.

It is a matter of using the resources available to best possible effect. No

one is talking about abandoning Pietermaritzburg. The IFP is committed to reviving the city and ensuring that twenty years from now it is a thriving centre of business, commerce and tourism – a far cry from the ruin left behind by a government that serves only its own interests.

It is unconscionable to duplicate in Pietermaritzburg what already exists in Ulundi when there is absolutely no money to waste. The prudent use of finances is a fundamental responsibility of government, and one that the IFP will vigorously champion.

We want this matter to be fully considered, weighing all the pros and cons. But we will only find the right solution when all the information is on the table.

The cost to taxpayers of renting space for government has been more than R150 million a year. That is triple what is cost to run two capitals, as we did in 1994 when all parties in the provincial legislature agreed that this was the most sensible and cost-effective arrangement.

Lest we forget, the ANC's track record of financial decisions is disastrous, because the interests of the party trump the interests of us all.

Velenkosini Hlabisa is the president of the Inkatha Freedom Party.

Thought Leader

Can brain transplants preserve genius?

Transferring someone's consciousness may not be possible, and it raises ethical questions about identity, autonomy and the sanctity of life

OPINION
Marietjie Botes

The human brain, with its intricate web of neurons firing in synchrony, has long been regarded as the epicentre of creativity and artistic expression.

Throughout history, artists and thinkers have pondered the mysteries of the mind, marvelling at its ability to conjure melodies, images and stories that captivate and inspire. In contemporary discourse, the idea of the brain as the fountainhead of creativity has led to speculations about the potential of brain transplants to immortalise artistic genius.

Ancient Greek society believed that the divine spark of inspiration could be found in altered states of consciousness, induced through various ways such as rituals, music and substances, many of which played important roles in artistic and prophetic endeavours, religious practices and spiritual experiences.

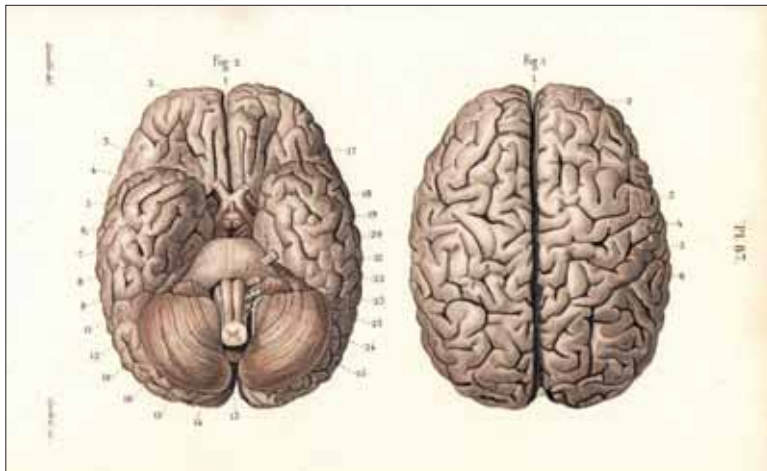
During the Renaissance, the burgeoning interest in human anatomy spurred Leonardo da Vinci on to conduct anatomical studies to understand the structure and function of the human body. His drawings and observations reflected a growing awareness of the brain's importance in governing human cognition, emotion, and creativity, recognising the brain as the seat of intellect and imagination and believing that its intricate workings held the key to unlocking the mysteries of creativity.

During the Enlightenment, thinkers such as Descartes and Locke confirmed the emphasis on reason, rationality and empirical inquiry through their mechanistic understanding of the mind, viewing it as a complex machine governed by physical laws.

As the Enlightenment gave way to the Romantic era, attitudes toward creativity again began to shift. Romantics celebrated the power of the imagination, intuition and emotion, favouring a more holistic and intuitive understanding, emphasising the transcendental and spiritual aspects of inspiration.

Recent explorations of the intersection between neurological research and creative expression has revealed the complex interplay between science, art and the human experience that are responsible for cognitive processes such as imagination, perception, and emotion — key components of artistic creation.

Research has shown that various regions of the brain, including the prefrontal cortex, temporal lobes and limbic system, play crucial roles in generating artistic ideas and executing them into tangible forms. The brains of musicians orchestrate the interplay of auditory processing, motor coordination and emotional resonance to give rise to melodies, while visual artists rely on the brain's visual cortex, hippocampus and amygdala to interpret the world around them to create works with personal meaning and symbolism.



In recent years, the notion of preserving artistic genius through brain transplants has ignited fascination and controversy. In December 2022, Sergio Canavero said "whole brain transplantation in man" is technically feasible. This concept posits that by transplanting the brain of a deceased artist into a new body, their creative essence could be perpetuated, allowing future generations to experience their work firsthand.

Proponents argue that such a procedure would safeguard cultural treasures from the ravages of time, ensuring that the brilliance of masterful composers, painters, and writers endures indefinitely.

But ethical concerns loom large in discussions of brain transplants. The very notion of transferring consciousness — assuming it is even possible — raises profound philosophical questions about identity, autonomy and the sanctity of life.

The two ethical components of consciousness relate to the value or disvalue that consciousness has for individuals and depend on its phenomenology (what it is like to be aware) and content (what one is aware of). These aspects shape normative judgments regarding the effects of various conscious states on individuals, influencing moral judgments about whether intentionally causing these states is permissible or impermissible and how these states can affect behaviour.

Critics caution against reducing

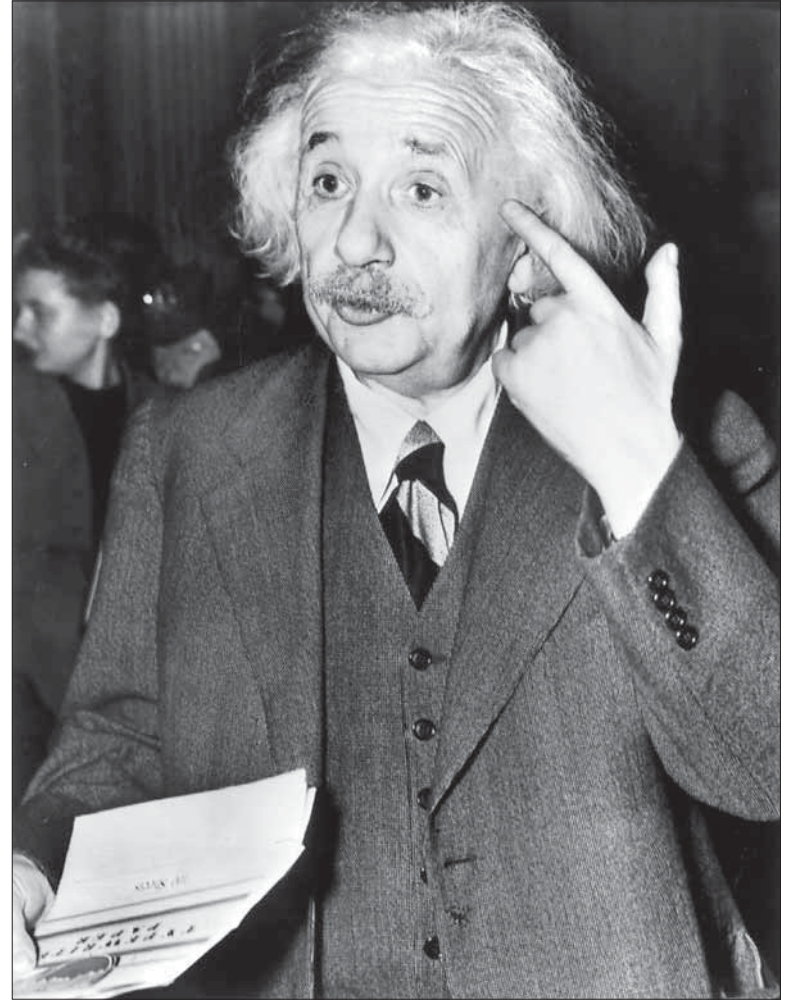
artists to mere repositories of their creative output, warning that the essence of art lies not solely in its physical manifestation but in the lived experiences and unique perspectives of its creators.

And the commodifying artistic genius through commercial exploitation raises troubling implications for the integrity of creative expression.

While brain transplants remain firmly entrenched in the realm of science fiction, historical anecdotes and contemporary advancements offer intriguing glimpses into humanity's fascination with the intersection of art and neuroscience. Several famous artists and scientists have donated their brains for future study, either to advance scientific understanding or to contribute to research on specific neurological conditions.

Albert Einstein, renowned physicist, bequeathed his brain to science upon his death in 1955. His brain was preserved for research purposes, with scientists hoping to uncover clues about the neural basis of his extraordinary intellectual abilities.

In the realm of consciousness transfer to computers, discussions often centre on the concept of mind uploading



Intrigue: Salvador Dalí (above left) and Albert Einstein donated their brains to advance research. Engraving of the brain from above and below (left) of a drawing by Leveille from Dr Joseph Nicolas Masse's *Petit Atlas Complet d'Anatomie Descriptive du Corps Humain*, Paris, 1864, published by Mequignon-Marvis. Photos: Keystone/Hulton Archive, Gamma-Keystone & Florilegius/Universal Images Group/Getty Images

Santiago Ramón y Cajal, considered the father of modern neuroscience, donated his brain to science upon his death in 1934. His pioneering work in neuroanatomy and histology revolutionised our understanding of the structure and function of the nervous system.

Surrealist artist Salvador Dalí expressed a desire to have his brain preserved for scientific study. While his brain was initially embalmed, it was later exhumed in 2017 for a DNA test in a paternity case, but the condition of the brain was reportedly unsuitable for further study.

These individuals, among others, have made significant contributions to scientific knowledge through the donation of their brains.

Innovations such as neuro prosthetics and brain-computer interfaces (BCIs) hint at the possibilities of merging biology with technology to augment human capabilities. Although these developments may not yet enable the transplantation of entire brains, they underscore the potential for future breakthroughs in neural engineering and regenerative medicine.

Neuro prosthetics, for instance, involve the development of artificial devices that interface with the nervous system to restore lost sensory or motor functions. These technologies focus on restoring functionality rather than transferring consciousness, but they provide insights into the complex interactions between the brain and external devices.

Similarly, brain-computer interfaces enable direct communication between the brain and external devices, allowing individuals to control computers, prosthetic limbs or even communicate through thought alone. While current BCIs are limited in their scope and resolution,

ongoing research aims to improve their precision, reliability and accessibility, with potential applications ranging from assistive technology to neurorehabilitation.

Advancements in neural engineering, including techniques such as optogenetics and deep brain stimulation, offer further opportunities for manipulating and modulating neural activity. While these approaches primarily target specific brain circuits or regions rather than the entire brain, they provide valuable tools for investigating the neural basis of cognition, emotion and behaviour.

In the realm of consciousness transfer to computers, theoretical discussions often centre on the concept of mind uploading, wherein a person's mental states, memories and personality are replicated in a digital substrate. Although speculative, proponents argue that such technology could theoretically enable immortality by transferring consciousness to a durable and potentially immortalised form.

The human brain, with its boundless capacity for imagination and innovation, remains a source of endless fascination and speculation. As our understanding of its inner workings continues to deepen, so too does our appreciation for the profound role it plays in shaping the course of human creativity.

While the concept of brain transplants raises provocative questions about the nature of art and the limits of scientific intervention, it ultimately underscores the enduring quest to unlock the mysteries of the mind and preserve the legacies of those who dared to dream.

Dr Marietjie Botes is the chief executive of BioLAWgic and The Visual Law Lab and an honorary research fellow in health law and bioethics at the University of KwaZulu-Natal.

Thought Leader

A response to criticism of wellness counsellors

Accredited wellness counsellors offer a crucial service to society, writes **Marius Herholdt**

On 5 April, an article in the Mail & Guardian raised questions about wellness counsellors. The following article puts wellness counselling in context and highlights its value and benefits.

No one can deny that the need for professional counselling services is increasing in a country with a toxic society, rampant crime, high unemployment, financial burdens, substance abuse and gender-based violence, to name but a few of the problems.

For the past decade, wellness counsellors with credentials have been serving the public in the domain of well-being.

Prior to that, informal counselling was a lay movement, largely comprising volunteers working in informal settings in the role of helpers at churches, schools, hospitals and NGO centres.

There was no system for regulation, formal training, professional structure or standardised scope of practice and ethical code. Nevertheless, these counsellors provided much-needed support, help and guidance as peer counsellors to fellow people, especially in places that had no, or meagre, access to professional mental healthcare services.

It seems that there is ignorance of the role of supportive counsellors and how they fit into the bigger scheme of healthcare. In this article, I hope to shed some light on the topic.

With the revival of the trade and industry sector in South Africa, based on Sector Education and Training Authority-accredited skills training, an opportunity presented itself to introduce a formal counselling services system.

During 2008, amendments to the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) Act provided for the establishment of professional bodies across the spectrum of trades and occupations.

Later, the Quality Council for Trades and Occupations compiled the Organisational Framework for Occupations of listed and recognised occupations.

The South African Qualifications Authority, as a statutory body, being mandated to implement the NQF, became the custodian of the professional bodies covering a wide spectrum of occupations, ranging from accountants and auditors to tourism management and religious practitioners.

A professional body is understood as a body of expert practitioners in an occupation or profession. To qualify as a professional body, an entity rep-

resenting a recognised occupation has to apply for an ID and undergo a stringent assessment of their terms of reference, scope of practice, administrative capacity and so forth.

Once approved, a professional body is bound to undergo a continuous five-year cycle audit to ensure ongoing compliance with the requirements.

A professional body thus plays an important role in society by registering lay counsellors in providing NQF-listed designations, providing an acceptable scope of practice and applicable regulation in terms of professional guidelines, ethical codes and disciplinary measures.

Not only does this bring standardisation across the spectrum, it also protects the public against unprofessional conduct.

Against this background, former chief executive of the South African Qualifications Authority, Joe Samuels, declared that: “The recognition of [professional bodies] will contribute to strengthening social responsiveness and accountability within the professions and promote pride in association for all professions.”

In this light, the Association for Supportive Counsellors and Holistic Practitioners (ASCHP) is proud to represent the “supportive counselling” industry within the wellness domain to differentiate it from psychotherapies.

Credentials

The ASCHP strives to contribute in a meaningful, constructive and effective way to the primary healthcare needs. The World Health Organisation defines professional healthcare communities “as a whole-of-society approach to health that aims at ensuring the highest possible level of health and well-being and their equitable distribution by focusing on people’s needs and as early as possible along the continuum from health promotion and disease prevention to treatment, rehabilitation and palliative care, and as close as feasible to people’s everyday environment”.

Aligned with this, the mission of the Association for Supportive Counsellors and Holistic Practitioners, as a professional body, is to establish wellness counselling as a basic support system for job creation in the counselling professions and the holistic well-being of the public.

This ties in with its vision – to promote wellness as a systems approach to counselling and preventative healthcare through training, practice and lifestyle coaching.



Graphic: JOHN McCANN

To achieve its mission and vision, three aspects are critical: training, credentialing and scope of practice.

“Credentialing” is the process of granting a designation, such as a certificate, by assessing an individual’s knowledge, skills and performance level.

The Association for Supportive Counsellors and Holistic Practitioners has a designation for every NQF level of an applicable and/or accredited qualification.

Wellness counsellors are required to have at least a bachelor’s degree or equivalent and a specialist wellness counsellor must be trained on at least postgraduate level.

To remain in good standing, counsellors, like all other professionals, are obliged to complete annual continuous professional development training relative to wellness counselling.

Every designated level is defined by a specific scope of practice relative to the competence and training of the counsellor in that position.

The scope of any profession is of the utmost importance as it defines a specific vocation, demarcates its boundaries of legal and acceptable practice, and justifies its existence.

The scope of practice describes the procedures, actions and processes that a healthcare practitioner is permitted to undertake, in keeping with the terms of their professional certification.

The scope of practice is limited to that which the law allows for their specific level of education and experience, as well as demonstrated competency. It describes the range of responsibilities – types of practices or caseload and practice guidelines that determine the boundaries of professional practices.

Any deviation from, or transgression of, the scope can be reported through the channels in the rules of the disciplinary policy of the ASCHP. The disciplinary panel will deal with this accordingly, should it arise.

The ASCHP has memorandums of understanding with preferred training providers that can offer training across an entire spectrum, ranging from skills certificates to post-graduate accredited qualifications, as aligned to the scope of practice.

In the process of providing a learning pathway for our members, the ASCHP is also encouraged to apply recognition of prior learning for membership access. As practical knowhow is crucial, applicants are required to submit a logbook of practical internship records.

Wellness and counselling

In a meeting with the Health Professions Council of South Africa (HPCSA) in 2012, prior to the establishment of the professional body, the delegation was required to identify a field of counselling that would clearly differentiate it from that of

psychology and related conventional psychotherapies.

Wellness was selected by the Association for Supportive Counsellors and Holistic Practitioners as the preferred domain of counselling. The latter constitutes a salutogenic approach to counselling that differs in principle from a normal pathogenic one. Hence, wellness counsellors do not diagnose or treat, but aim to enhance wellness.

This is understood as “the complete integration of body, mind and spirit – the realisation that everything we do, think, feel and believe affects our state of well-being”. The client is regarded as a bio-psycho-social, spiritual being and illness is the expression of an entire life lived, according to Canadian doctor Gabor Maté.

Principles like these shift the healthcare service from favouring sick care to a focus on wellness enhancement across the spectrum of human existence by employing various wellness modalities.

This is the space in which wellness counsellors work to fulfil a pressing need in society. In rendering this service, they ideally complement HPCSA-registered healthcare therapists by referring clients when and where required.

Dr Marius Herholdt is the founding president of the Association for Supportive Counsellors and Holistic Practitioners.

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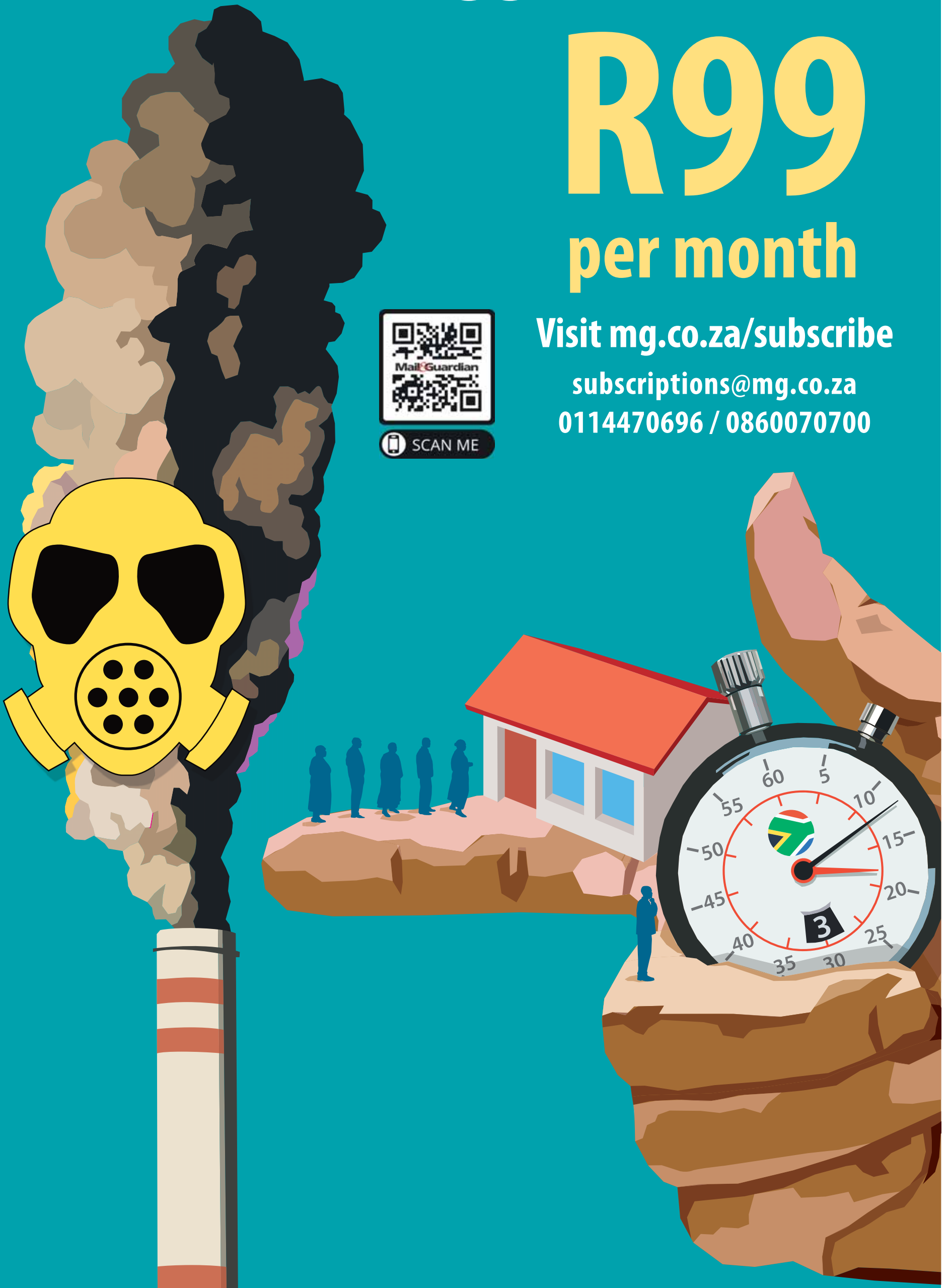


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Creating food security through training, technology and the establishment of Buy-Back Centres for recycling waste

MEC Mbali Hlophe

Thabo Mohlala

MEC Mbali Hlophe joined Gauteng government at the young age of 36, when she was appointed the MEC for Sport, Arts, Culture and Recreation by the then Premier David Makhura, in 2019. She is part of a new breed of youth to serve in the Gauteng provincial legislature as part of the ANC's policy objective of bridging the age gap and ensuring there is a generational mix in its leadership. Following a reshuffle in October 2022, Premier Panyaza Lesufi appointed her to head a super portfolio of merged Departments of Social Development (DSD) and Agriculture, Rural Development, and Environment (GDARDE).

She has held this post for the last 18 months, and yet she has in this short space of time far surpassed her predecessors' Annual Performances (APP) for the past four years in both departments, by scoring 81% in the Department of Agriculture, Rural Development and Environment and 91% on the Premier's Delivery Agreement for that department. She also scored 82% in the Department of Social Development, and 83% on the Premier's Delivery Agreement for that department, securing a strong finish for the Sixth Administration.

Addressing food security

Evidently, MEC Hlophe is not fazed by the responsibility that comes with running two big departments. She said the Premier merged the two departments to accelerate service delivery on food security, substance abuse, homelessness, skills development and environmental sustainability.

She wants to change the perception that social development is about giving out food parcels, by

ensuring that agriculture is at the centre of the province's social economic development. "Giving out food parcels is not sustainable, but empowering people to produce their own food is where agriculture becomes critical. So we teach people to feed themselves for a lifetime and restore their dignity," she explained.

Among her priorities is to ensure that people in Gauteng, especially the youth, value and embrace agriculture as the future and do not look down upon it or associate it with dirt and backwardness, particularly as predictions indicate that the next set of billionaires in Africa will be from agriculture. The MEC said that her department has tapped into the province's youthful population, by exposing them to innovative urban agricultural practices such as rooftop and vertical farming. To incentivise and make agriculture more appealing to the youth entails integrating the latest technology and promoting agro-processing.

Building self-reliant communities

Not only does agriculture feed the nation; it also proved to be a resilient sector during the Covid-19 pandemic. The province is faced with a myriad of socioeconomic challenges, chief of which is unemployment and poverty, so it is vital to invest in and encourage communities to start their own food projects and be self-sufficient. Townships have a lot of empty fertile land that is being used as dumping sites. The department, through its 6 000 Green Army (these are 6000 EPWP employees working in agriculture and environmental protection) is transforming these pieces of land into thriving agricultural sites, along with establishing communal farms within schools, clinics and police stations, to name but a few.



MEC Mbali Hlophe wants every household in the province to embrace the idea of food security.

The launch of Buy-Back Centre programme

Thabo Mohlala

The Gauteng Department for Social Development, Agriculture, Rural Development and Environment (GDARDE) is rolling out a Buy-Back Centre (BBC) programme to promote environmental awareness and waste management in communities across the province. The programme targets small, medium and micro enterprises (SMMEs) operating in townships, informal settlements and hostels (TISH) and equips them with skills, recycling infrastructure and equipment, so that they can meaningfully participate in the waste economy.

The programme was officially launched this month at Reashoma Buy-Back Centre in Naledi Ext.2 in Soweto. Dignitaries from various small local organisations and established companies involved in waste management and recycling graced the occasion. Loyiso Mkwana, Chief Director: Environmental Empowerment Services, said the programme is based on MEC Mbali Hlophe's vision to promote environmental sustainability by linking it to economic development.

The MEC said that very few people care about the environment and recycling, and therefore the best way to attract individuals into recycling is by showing them how they can turn their waste into wealth, by selling their waste to Buy-Back Centres. This is why the Department is internationally placing these centres within close proximity to townships, hostels and squatter camps, where waste is a huge problem.

Intermediary role

BBCs, according to Mkwana, play a critical intermediary role between small and community-based recyclers and the

big waste facilities. They are more like a local convenience store where you buy your everyday items without having to travel to a mall, he explained. Typically, local waste pickers will collect cans, glass, e-waste material and steel, among others, and take them to a nearby BBC, where they get paid per kilogram.

Skills training for BBCs

Gauteng has 180 centres and the MEC decided to develop them and create a robust ecosystem to enhance their capacity and ensure their sustainability. Every year the department receives applications for training from co-operatives, said Mkwana, and applicants are trained in a variety of critical areas such as finance and bookkeeping, in partnership with Nedbank. "We also train them on safety to know what type of protective equipment or gear they should wear when they handle hazardous materials, and expose them to a range of business opportunities available within the waste management and recycling space," he said.

Donating pieces of land

Mkwana said there are a number of thriving waste management businesses that have benefitted from their support. Some of them are selling their waste to the secondary market. Once a BBC is formed, it is provided with requisite tools of trade such as industrial bins, waste cages, forklifts and scales. He said the department has spent R23 million on equipment, which was handed out to waste co-operatives and BBCs. The beneficiaries are also given pieces of land, secured through negotiations with sister departments and municipalities in the province.



Loyiso Mkwana: Chief Director of Environmental Empowerment Services.

Reashoma Buy-Back Centre

Thabo Mohlala

Reashoma Buy-Back Centre's Director, Zisebenzele Gininda, was excited about the launch. He said the centre is located on a piece of land that used to be vacant; the local residents used it as a place to dump their waste. "We then rehabilitated it and turned it into what it is today. Not only do we create jobs, but we also protect the environment by recycling waste," he said. "Currently, we employ 38 people, and almost all of them are the youth, who help to collect and sort waste from households," said Gininda.

He said his centre is currently one of the biggest in the City of Johannesburg, and it is also an active participant in the GDARDE's "Separation at Source" programme. More importantly, noted Gininda, by recycling the waste they are helping to relieve pressure on the province's four overburdened landfills, which are nearing the end of their lifespans.

MEC Hlophe expressed her views about the great work Gininda is doing: "He is indeed a shining example of the type of social entrepreneurs we want to create: individuals who see challenges as opportunities, as he and his team are doing. In realising the opportunities within the waste economy, he brilliantly exemplifies his name, Zisebenzele, which means: 'work for yourself'."



Zisebenzele Gininda, Director of the Reashoma Buy-Back Centre.

Green Army programme

Thabo Mohlala

The Green Army programme forms a critical pillar of the department's fight against litter and environmental degradation in the province. It currently has 6 000 individuals mobilised from communities in the province. They are paid a monthly stipend to deal with waste management and greening through clean-ups of illegal dumping, and collecting waste in the neighbourhoods, main roads and open spaces. They also educate communities about the importance of waste recycling.

Boitumelo Tshepetse has been a part of the programme for a year now. She said she has not only learned how to deal with waste, but also learned a lot about agriculture. "We are involved in planting trees and we are working closely with schools, where we teach learners about how to plant shrubs. It is such a rewarding feeling to be part of this initiative, because we don't just clean for ourselves but the entire community. Our message is resonating and most residents are doing their bit to help keep their environments clean," said Tshepetse.

Her colleague, Kuki Edith Makgatho, concurred: "Apart from cleaning the environment, I also learned about the basics of gardening and the importance of planting vegetables for family consumption. We help community members to be self-sufficient and reduce their reliance on government's donations."



Members of the Green Army having a pep talk.

Gauteng climate change plan

Thabo Mohlala

Decarbonising the economy and building a climate change-resilient province

GDARDE has devised a comprehensive plan to adequately deal with the impact of climate change. Last year it convened a summit where experts in climate change and agriculture, including other strategic stakeholders from business, labour, youth, women and civil society met to hammer out a strategy that will enable it to adequately prepare its systems to mitigate the impact of climate change.

Economic hub

The recent floods that devastated KwaZulu-Natal and areas near the Jukskei river in Gauteng drove home the point that climate change is a reality. Although Gauteng has a small landmass compared to the other eight provinces, it is the country's economic hub and accounts for around 35% to the national GDP. It is home to a number of industries whose combined operations rely on the intensive use of energy generated from fossil fuel, which contribute significantly to greenhouse emissions and environmental pollution in the province. GDARDE aims to find imaginative ways in which the province can sustain its economic activities while ensuring it recalibrates its systems and infrastructure to respond timeously to emergencies, particularly within the agricultural space.

"Climate change is no longer something that we can see as a myth, or the preserve of 'greenies', as some like to think. It's our reality, and affects our daily existence. If you consider the flooding that took place in KwaZulu-Natal and parts of Gauteng and the unpredictable weather, Mother Nature is speaking, and it's time to listen," said MEC Hlophe.



Climate change is real and affects many South Africans. GDARDE has devised a comprehensive plan to deal with its impacts.

Drawing lessons from local and global initiatives

She said her department incorporates some of the regional and international lessons to refine and solidify its approach to address challenges related to climate change. What is crucial is to ensure these responses relate to and bring solutions that are attuned to and enhance the department's response to the local situation or challenges.

According to the MEC, the department also focuses on the adoption and deployment of cutting-edge technologies to innovate and introduce some technologically-driven methods, such as hydroponic and vertical farming. These latest technologies will empower those who use them, and also enable the department to sustainably produce food for the Gauteng population.

Building climate-proof structures

Building a robust infrastructure is another key focus area of the department. MEC Hlophe believes that infrastructure should be designed and built in such a way that it is climate-proof, and provides solid protection against any potential loss of life or damage to key networks or structures. Several residential areas around Gauteng have been built on sites adjacent to

river banks or low-lying areas that are prone to flooding and mudslides. This should be accompanied by a vigorous public education campaign about climate change and its impact. Part of this education should entail dissemination of factual, accurate and relevant information on climate change. Similarly, the capacity of municipalities should be enhanced to help mitigate the risks associated with climate change.

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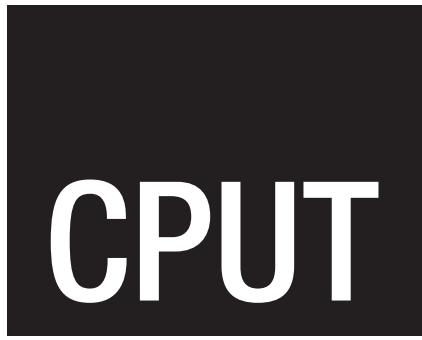
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| CPUT 10/24 | Appointment of a supplier to supply, install and commission SMART electricity monitoring meters at all academic buildings and residences exceeding 2000m2 on the Bellville, District 6 and Wellington campuses | Non-compulsory briefing: 27 May 2024 at 10:00 Meeting online: MS Teams | 10 June 2024 at 11:00 | Mr A Mangwana ✉ MangwanaA@cput.ac.za |
| CPUT 11/24 | Appointment of a service provider to serve as an independent electoral agency for the SRC elections at CPUT in August/September 2024 | Non-compulsory briefing: 28 May 2024 at 10:00 Meeting online: MS Teams | 10 June 2024 at 11:00 | Mr A Mangwana ✉ MangwanaA@cput.ac.za |
| CPUT 08/24 | Appointment of a suitably qualified service provider/contractor with CIDB grading of 7gb PE for the refurbishment of Barkley Davis and Arts & Design Building at Mowbray Campus | Compulsory briefing: 28 May 2024 at 11:00 Barkley Davis House (CPUT), Station Road, Mowbray, Mowbray Campus | 10 June 2024 at 11:00 | Mr N Macingwane ✉ macingwanen@cput.ac.za |
| CPUT 12/24 | Appointment of a service provider to provide a managed detection and response (MDR) system to CPUT for a period of three (3) years | Compulsory briefing: 30 May 2024 at 11:00 Meeting online: MS Teams | 10 June 2024 at 11:00 | Mr G Chirwa ✉ chirwag@cput.ac.za |
| CPUT 13/24 | Appointment of a service provider to provide the University with a time tabling solution for a period of one (1) year | Compulsory briefing: 27 May 2024 at 14:00 Meeting online: MS Teams | 7 June 2024 at 11:00 | Mr G Chirwa ✉ chirwag@cput.ac.za |

Instructions pertaining to the submissions of bids are obtainable on page 1 of the RFB documents.

Bid documents can be downloaded from: www.cput.ac.za/services/procurement. Prospective bidders should be in the possession of the RFB document during the briefing session.

A non-refundable amount (see page 5 of the bid document) is payable at the cashiers of CPUT using cost centre/account code: 0100/55056, or can be deposited directly at ABSA, electronic banking code 632005, account no. 01162510521. The bid reference number and company name must be inserted as reference for both payment options. Proof of payment must be submitted with your completed document by the closing date and time.

The University is committed to Specific goals, PPR 2022 and the Preferential Procurement Policy Framework Act No. 5 of 2000: 80/20 Preference Point System will be used for these bids.


ONLINE SUBMISSION:
Queries and bids are to be submitted online using the **SABEx Online Box** located on the Bid Notice Page where procurement documentation is downloaded.

+27 (0)21 959 6767
 www.facebook.com/cput.ac.za
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Cape Peninsula
University of Technology
creating futures

Tenders & Notices



Request for Expression of Interest for the Consultancy Services for Conducting a Comprehensive Groundwater Study of the Shire River Basin shared between Malawi and Mozambique

SADC-GMI Background

The SADC - Groundwater Management Institute (SADC-GMI), is established as a Centre of Excellence for sustainable groundwater management issues in the SADC region, hosted by the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) Pretoria, South Africa on behalf of and under the strategic guidance of the SADC Secretariat, Directorate of Infrastructure and Services, in Gaborone, Botswana.

Assignment Background

The Shire River Basin is a watershed within the greater Zambezi River Basin. It drains portions of southern Malawi and Central Mozambique. Originating from the southern edge of Lake Malawi/Nyasa. In January 2019, the Government of Malawi and the Government of Mozambique, in collaboration with the SADC-GMI and the International Water Management Institute (IWMI), developed the Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis (TDA) for the Shire River-Aquifer System.

The TDA identified gaps in groundwater data and information, and strategies to address these gaps were spelled out in the Strategic Action Plan, now SADC-GMI in partnership with the Government of Malawi and Mozambique, and ZAMCOM intends to conduct a comprehensive groundwater study of the Shire River Basin.

The Objective of the assignment

The objective of the assignment is to establish the hydrological/hydrogeological (quantity and quality) status of water resources in the Shire Basin through a research study considering climate change scenarios and enhancing data and information on the aquifer-river system.

This request for Expression of Interest is for enlisting the services of a firm of consultants to conduct the Shire River Basin Comprehensive Groundwater Study, shared between Malawi and Mozambique.

How to apply

Interested and qualifying consulting firms are requested to submit expression of interest proposals to SADC-GMI on or before **31 May 2024** electronically to: procurement@sadc-gmi.org, before 12 midnight (RSA Time).

NB: Should you not hear from us two months after your submission, please consider your application/submission unsuccessful.

Please visit www.sadc-gmi.org – opportunities for the detailed Terms of Reference (TOR).

13923M&G




Academics & Courses

CONTACT:

Ilizma
063 026 7450

Vanessa
083 458 8155

Elsie
076 556 8777



**LEROTHOLI POLYTECHNIC
REQUEST FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST**

**Invitation For Expression of Interest: Development of A University Campus For Lerotholi Polytechnic
Call for private sector partnerships**

1. Introduction

Lerotholi Polytechnic (LP) is an autonomous Higher Education Institution in Lesotho which offers training in Commercial, Technical and Vocational Education. It operates under three pieces of legislation which are Higher Education Act of 2002, and Technical and Vocational Training Act of 1978 as well as the Lerotholi Polytechnic Act of 1997 which establishes the Polytechnic. This scenario makes the institution unique and it is this historical character which the institution is proud of.

Lerotholi Polytechnic hereby announces an invitation for Expression of Interest for partnership with local and international Investors for the development of a new Lerotholi University at three locations, the existing City Campus, Matsieng and Likotsi, in the Capital City Maseru. This undertaking is an invitation intended to yield responses from interested parties who may want to partner with Lerotholi Polytechnic.

2. Scope

The Lerotholi Polytechnic requests expressions of interest from Promoters/Concessionaires for the development of a University of Technology with the following facilities:

- Student Accommodation
- Staff Accommodation
- Administration Offices
- Teaching & learning Facilities
- E-library facilities
- Sports and Recreation Facilities
- Student Centre
- Medical Centre
- Hospitality School
- Innovation Hub
- Shopping Centre

And all other relevant facilities that will assist Lerotholi Polytechnic to become a world class University of Technology (University of choice)

3. Eligibility and Minimum Qualification Criteria

Any interested contractor, shall provide, in its submission in response to this EOI, sufficient documentary evidence of adherence to the eligibility and minimum qualification criteria detailed below. Lerotholi Polytechnic will assess the documentation submitted by applicants in response to this EOI. Only applicants evidencing adherence to the eligibility and minimum qualification criteria detailed below will be shortlisted to take part in the planned upcoming tender exercise. APPLICANT should have executed at least one (1) Project on PPP or Rental Services in past ten (10) years.

Turnover in each of the immediately preceding two Financials years should be equal to or more than USD 100 million

Positive net worth in each of the immediately preceding two financial years

Current ratio shall not be less than 1 in each of the preceding Two (02) financial years

4. Enquiries

Further information can be obtained at the address below during office hours
Procurement Office, Lerotholi Polytechnic, P.O. Box 16, Maseru
Email: procurement@lp.ac.ls; motlatsimcips@gmail.com

5. EOI Submission Details

Interested applicants are required to confirm in writing via email to procurement@lp.ac.ls or motlatsimcips@gmail.com their interest in participating in this EOI exercise. This will allow Lerotholi Polytechnic to forward full Terms of reference and any clarifications, amendments to the EOI or any update to the EOI.

Any expression of interest received and not conforming to the EOI guidelines will be considered as technically non-compliant and the application may be rejected.

Submissions clearly referenced "EXPRESSION OF INTEREST: REDEVELOPMENT OF: The Existing LP Campus and Development of a New University Campus, should be sent to the Procurement Manager by email at procurement@lp.ac.ls or motlatsimcips@gmail.com on or before 20th June 2024 at 1pm or hand delivered to: the Procurement Manager's offices.

Hand deliveries submissions should be in sealed envelopes clearly referenced

14610M&G

RE: APPOINTMENT OF A SERVICE PROVIDER TO FACILITATE THE PUBLIC CONSULTATION AND UPDATE THE UTHUKELA BANKS MARINE PROTECTED AREA MANAGEMENT PLAN

Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife, in partnership with the Department of Forestry, Fisheries, and the Environment (DFFE), invites you to submit a proposal, company profile, implementation plan, curricula vitae and quotation, including costs for items and services, as provided for in the attached Terms of Reference.

Please mark your submission clearly with the following: uThukela Marine Protected Area Management Plan.

Your submission should be emailed on or before the closing of 31 May 2024 to the following email address: nonhlem@wildtrust.co.za. It shall remain your full responsibility to ensure that your quotation is submitted by this deadline. Proposals received after the deadline indicated above, for whatever reason, shall not be considered for evaluation.

**For enquiries, please contact Dr Welly Qwabe at Qwabew@kznwildlife.com
Thank you and we look forward to receiving your submission.**

14614M&G

Tenders, Notices & Classified



The U.S. Mission in Pretoria is in search of eligible and qualified applicants for the role of Financial Specialist within the Financial Management Office. This position, under the supervision of the Senior Financial Management Officer, contributes to the establishment of Mission-wide objectives and financial policy, overseeing six supervisory positions encompassing multiple financial disciplines. The ideal candidate will manage workflow, conduct assessments of 21 indirect staff members, and offer guidance, training, and leadership to a team of 27.

As the Financial Operations Manager for US Mission South Africa, the Financial Specialist holds direct responsibility for overseeing a budget totaling \$36 million, involving budget formulation, preparation, execution, and strategic planning. Additionally, the Financial Specialist will oversee three Creditors team leads, guiding them and their teams, towards achieving objectives through standard procedures and technology implementation. Experience in liaising with commercial vendors in Southern Africa and a solid understanding of local laws and prevailing business practices are essential.

Candidates must possess a university degree in Accounting, Finance, Economics, or Business Administration, along with five years of progressively responsible experience in budgeting, planning, financial analysis, data analytics, and reporting. Of these, three years should involve supervising teams of 30 or more, demonstrating strong communication and conflict resolution skills. Proficiency in Microsoft Word and Excel will be tested, English level IV (fluent) Written/Speaking/Reading with additional skills in Microsoft Power Platforms considered advantageous.

Applications must be received by 24 May 2024. For more details on this exciting opportunity, including salary, benefits, and a full position description, please go to: <https://erajobs.state.gov/dos-era/zaf/vacancysearch/searchVacancies.hms>

14586M&G



The U.S. Mission in Pretoria seeks qualified applicants for the position of Data Analyst within the Financial Management Office. Reporting to the Head of Business Intelligence, this role involves developing and implementing data analyses, collection systems, and management strategies to enhance statistical efficiency, data quality, and integrity. The ideal candidate will extract, analyze, and model large sets of unstructured data from internal business systems, translating data / information into meaningful business strategies, visualizations, and actionable insights. Responsibilities also include analyzing unstructured data, establishing data lakes and repositories, and identifying processing statistics, patterns, and trends to influence change management within the financial management organization.

As the primary Data Analyst for the Financial Management Section, the role involves reviewing existing business processes, making recommendations for improvements based on statistical trends, and possessing a working understanding of the South African economy and prevailing business practices. Candidates must have a university degree in Business Administration, Computer Science, Information Systems, or Data Analytics, along with three years of experience in Data Collection & Analytics, Interpreting, Analyzing, Reporting, and Visualization for Finance, Budgeting, Accounting, Auditing, Economic, and/or Business Administration. Proficiency in SharePoint development, Power Automate, Power BI, and the Microsoft Office suite is required. This non-supervisory position demands strong numeracy and literacy skills, experience with data analytics in a financial management environment, and familiarity with Business Intelligence applications. Candidates will be tested for application proficiency and should have English level IV proficiency in Written/Speaking/Reading.

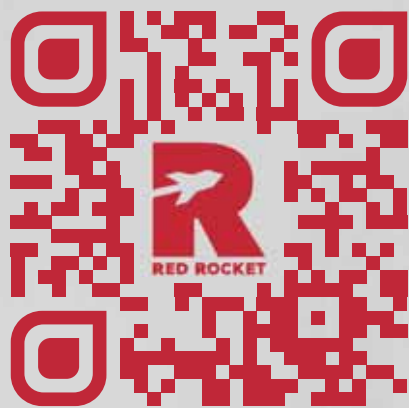
Applications must be received by 24 May 2024. For more details on this exciting opportunity, including salary and benefits, and a full position description, please go to: <https://erajobs.state.gov/dos-era/zaf/vacancysearch/searchVacancies.hms>

14587M&G

AFFORDABLE, RENEWABLE ENERGY

Red Rocket is switching things up in 2026 with 2000MW of clean energy to sell to businesses.

Connect with us to find out more.



givemepower@redrocket.energy

T&Cs Apply.

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**354 Louis Rive Street
Montana Gardens
Pretoria**

Die doel van hierdie aansoek is dat 'n lisensie aan die aansoeker toegeken word petroleum groothandel aktiwiteite te onderneem soos uiteengesit in die aansoek. Reëlings kan getref word om die aansoek dokumentasie te besigtig deur die Kontroleur van Petroleum produkte te skakel by:

*Tel: (012) 406 7631
* Faks: (012) 323 5840
* E-pos: Avishkar.Nandkishore@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
192 Visagie Straat,
Pretoria

Posadres:
Die Kontroleur van Petroleumprodukte
Departement van Energie
Privaatsak X 96 Pretoria
0001

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By: **Nannon: Riechel**

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Recourse, At arm's
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Notice to Principal is Notice to Agent

I, Carl Kelbrick, over the age of twenty-one years, competent with firsthand knowledge do state that I have never, or am I now, nor will I ever be in the future liable for any debts incurred by **CARL KELBRICK** (or any derivative thereof). I am not now, nor ever have been, the surety for **CARL KELBRICK**.

Carl Kelbrick

Puzzles

THE ORIGINAL SOUTH AFRICAN CRYPTIC CROSSWORD

JDE 430
by George Euvrard

- World class — and from our perspective, not that of the UK or USA
- Multilingual — every crossword has one Afrikaans (marked ^A) and one isiXhosa (marked ^X) word
- Fresh & unique — compiled the previous week especially for the *Mail & Guardian*

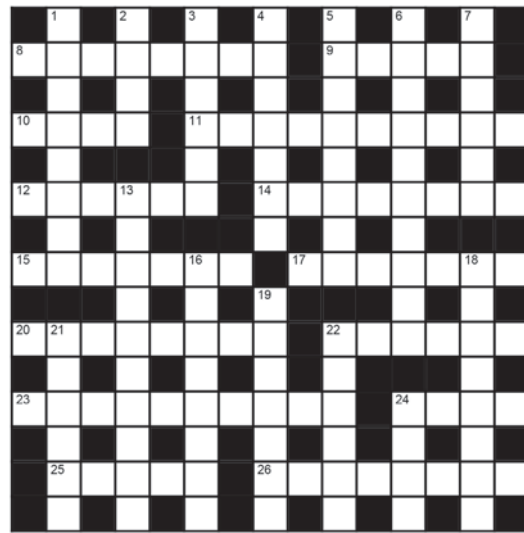
Across

- 8 Tweak okay melody (4-4)
- 9 Test for first beessiekte evidence (5)
- 10 Hoot hard at bird (4)
- 11 Hair tangled with huge fancy sets of flight attendant (3,7)
- 12 Signs of burrowing animals losing resistance (6)
- 14 Rats one leaves for top carnage farm equipment (8)
- 15 Medic I have said cheers to from a moving vehicle (5-2)
- 17 Be happy about James being picked up (7)
- 20 Working back, hermit drew in good. Not anymore (2,6)
- 22 Crazy and stupid to jail son (6)
- 23 Be fired to prepare for braai (3,3,4)
- 24 Sound of donkey right in cove (4)

- 25 Fear koi art oddly presented by religious beggar (5)
- 26 Deception of sick American with no-one coming back (8)

Down

- 1 Noise over small area? You are hearing something very old (8)
- 2 Collapsed into safe Llandudno (4)
- 3 Young one has answer for islanders (6)
- 4 Private matters to sergeant, except corporal resents extra time spent initially (7)
- 5 New auto dept is disastrous ... (2-2-4)
- 6^A ... as is stove, broken also, past repairs at last (10)
- 7 Landlady gets not as much gold (6)



- 13 Modify rake to play, at first roughly (4,2,4)
- 16 Virus brings annoyances (8)
- 18 Non-manic use of spice (8)
- 19 Hid, very distraught, in KZN dorpie (7)
- 21 Unique eon? (3-3)
- 22^X Middle child gets a heap of fruit (1-5)
- 24 Delight in work — bravo for time (4)

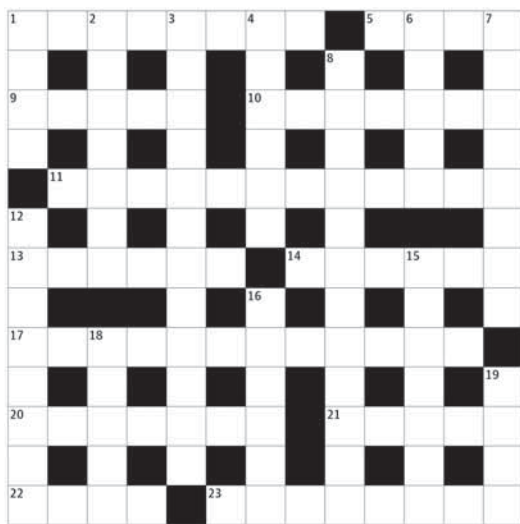
QUICK CROSSWORD

Across

- 1 Naval vessels (8)
- 5 Legislator appointed by a party to enforce discipline (4)
- 9 Venomous snake (5)
- 10 Hunting dog (7)
- 11 Place filled with treasure or unusual objects (8,4)
- 13 Opening — infraction (6)
- 14 Dealer in cloth (6)
- 17 Greek paste made from fish roe (1,2)
- 20 Stare down (7)
- 21 Remain — tolerate (5)
- 22 Public disorder (4)
- 23 Physical energy (8)

Down

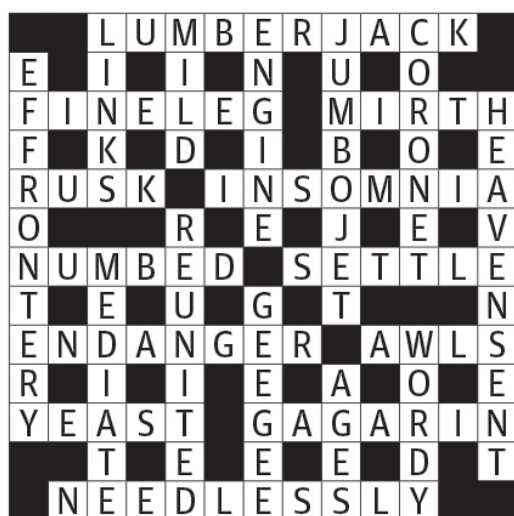
- 1 Hand gesture — hair feature (4)
- 2 Beat off — rebuff (7)
- 3 Out of action due to injury (4,2,6)
- 4 Head of State of Vichy France (6)
- 6 Israeli port (5)
- 7 Ornamental arrangement of flower beds and paths — rarer pet (anag) (8)
- 8 Statement issued to the media (5,7)
- 12 Slaughterhouse (8)
- 15 Compassionate (7)
- 16 Distant view of a wide area (6)
- 18 Proportion (5)
- 19 Interlock (4)



14 913

LAST WEEK'S SOLUTIONS

Quick Crossword 14912

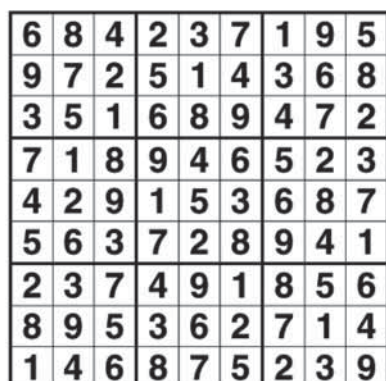


Cryptic Crossword 429

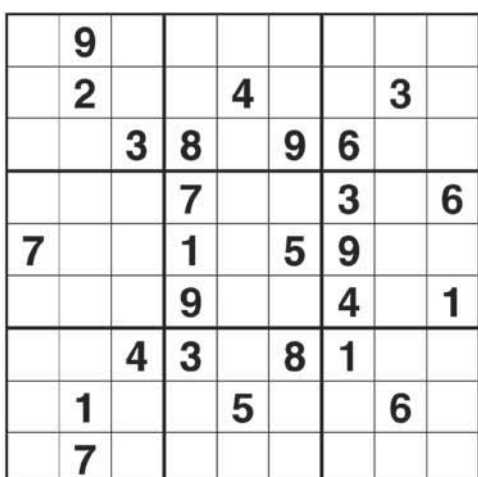


How to play Sudoku: Place a number from 1 to 9 in each empty cell so that each row, each column and each 3x3 block contains all the numbers from 1 to 9.

LAST WEEK'S SOLUTION



SUDOKU



What's up



Culture: Georgina Gratrix's new work is about Durban.

Georgina Gratrix show is on in Joburg

The Stevenson Gallery in Johannesburg is presenting *Between Two Palms: New Works from Durban* by Georgina Gratrix, marking her debut solo exhibition with the gallery. Born in Mexico City in 1982 and brought up in Durban, Gratrix now lives in Cape Town. But for this collection she went to the place she most considers home, reconnecting with the community and space in which she first discovered the practice of painting. Drawing inspiration from her formative years, Gratrix immerses herself in the environment of her

first art teacher's studio, infusing her pieces with the essence of Durban. She pays homage to her surroundings, incorporating elements of local culture and landmarks, such as the iconic Berea Court and the city's art deco architecture. Blending still life with portraiture, Gratrix invites viewers into a world where home, community and creativity converge, celebrating the interconnectedness of place and artistic legacy. **The exhibition opens on Saturday 18 May.**

Lady Skollie's 'Groot Gat' comes to Cape Town

If you missed South African artist Lady Skollie's *Groot Gat* exhibition that ran at the Standard Bank Gallery last year, you're in luck — the Norval Foundation in Cape Town will show it later this month. Lady Skollie was the recipient of the 2022 Standard Bank Young Artist award for visual art. Opening its doors on 22 May, and running until 15 September, this showcase, curated by Tayla Hollamby and Standard Bank Gallery, delves into Skollie's exploration of the intricate histories of the San, Khoi and Griqua communities. Through her artistry, Skollie fearlessly confronts themes of identity and the complexities of reclaiming lost histories within the Cape coloured community.



Provocateur: Lady Skollie explores issues of culture.

Groot Gat serves as a poignant testament to Skollie's impact as a cultural provocateur, using humour as a catalyst for societal transformation.



Laughs: Kwanda Radebe will be part of *Jokes & Jazz*.

Humour and jazz meet on university campus

The Centre for Jazz and Popular Music at the University of KwaZulu-Natal has announced its comedy and jazz event, *Jokes & Jazz*. It will take place at 5.30pm on Tuesday 21 May, on the Howard College Campus. The line-up consists of diverse talent within the local comedy scene. Leading the pack is Kwanda Radebe, a versatile 29-year-old model, actor and comedian with a repertoire spanning TV ads, online sketches and stand-up.

Joining him will be Charles Philani Mthethwa, a seasoned performer with a flair for comedy, acting and scriptwriting, and Cebo Mhlophe, who is known for his uproarious street videos and massive following on TikTok. Simunye "Church Boy" Sikhakhane will add his clean, Christian-based comedy. The musical backdrop will be provided by UKZN students, ensuring a harmonious blend of rhythm and comedy. **Tickets are R110, R80 for pensioners, and R50 for students. — Compiled by Lesego Chepape**

Books

Runner tried to pull a fast one

This is an edited extract from Jonathan Ancer's new book *Bullshit*

Sergio Motsoeneng, a 21-year-old long-distance champion from Phuthaditjhaba, a poverty-stricken area in the former homeland of QwaQwa, took his place on the Comrades Marathon starting line in Pietermaritzburg on 16 June 1999. His race number, 13018, was pinned to his vest. He was wearing a black cap, a pair of blue-and-yellow Nikes and a pink watch on his right wrist. (Remember the pink watch.)

The runners sang *Nkosi Sikelel' iAfrika* and *Shosholozo*, then the *Chariots of Fire* theme was blasted over the loudspeakers. It's a rousing tune that has come to represent human endurance and determination. And Sergio had bucketloads of determination. It was his first Comrades but he had won many long-distance races in Phuthaditjhaba and with a competitive marathon time of 2hr 19min under his belt he wanted to see if he could win the world's oldest and most famous ultramarathon. And not only win it, but break the Comrades record too.

If the lanky runner crossed the line first he would win R100 000. His running club, Rentmeester Reparil Gel, had promised another R1 million for breaking the record. Sergio lived with his 10 brothers and sisters in a two-bedroom house and the family had financial difficulties. With his winnings, he would be able to buy them out of debt.

At 6am, a cock crowed twice (not an actual cock, a recorded cock) and the Pietermaritzburg mayor fired the gun signalling the start of the 74th edition of the Comrades Marathon and sending Sergio and 16 806 other extreme athletes on an 89.9km race to Durban. The fastest would get there in five-and-a-half hours, give or take a minute or two. Most, though,



Pink watch on right wrist

Yellow watch on left wrist

Graphic: JOHN McCANN

would run, jog, walk, hobble and crawl to the finish in the final 60 minutes before the 11-hour cut-off.

Sergio didn't break the Comrades record and he didn't win the race. He finished ninth in 5hr 40min, almost 10 minutes behind the winner, Poland's Jaroslaw Janicki. Nevertheless, it was a remarkable achievement for a young athlete. Running pundits agreed he had a

long and bright career ahead of him.

For finishing in the top 10, Sergio received a coveted gold medal — made with actual gold — and R6 000. Not the R1.1 million windfall he'd wanted, but R6 000 went a long way in 1999. In an interview after the race, he said he would give his gold medal and prize money to his father.

But Nick Bester, an ultramarathon veteran who had won the race

three years earlier, smelt a rat. Sergio had beaten Bester, who came 15th, by eight minutes. The timing mat showed Sergio was seven minutes behind Nick at the halfway mark but Nick couldn't remember Sergio passing him in the second half of the race. He lodged a complaint with the Comrades Marathon Association.

Race officials examined data from the computer timing system but

couldn't see anything out of the ordinary and Sergio was cleared of cheating. The young athlete returned to a hero's welcome in Phuthaditjhaba and all was well until photos were published in *Beeld* newspaper a few weeks later.

Now is the time to remember the pink watch. One photo snapped in the first half of the race showed runner 13018 with a pink watch on his right wrist, while another from later in the race showed the same runner with a yellow watch on his left wrist. This was Bester's gotcha moment, the point in the whodunnit where the sleuth works out how the murder was committed.

A closer look at the photos also revealed that Sergio had grown a scar on his left shin during the race. You see, it wasn't the same runner. The man in the first photo was Sergio's brother, Arnold. Sergio is two years older than Arnold but the brothers have an uncanny resemblance and had often been mistaken for each other.

Confronted with the mounting evidence, the brothers confessed to working out a complicated bait-and-switch operation. It's still not clear how many times they traded places. One report claimed they switched once at the halfway mark but another said they ran a relay and swapped places several times.

The exchange (or exchanges) took place in a mobile loo (or mobile loos) where the brothers hurriedly swapped their clothes, caps, shoes with timing chip attached to the lace, everything — except their watches. Sergio then ran to the finish.

Caught out, Sergio handed back his prize money and medal and the brothers were banned from the sport for five years.

"If it wasn't for the fact that he made a mistake with the watches, he probably would have got away with it," said Cheryl Winn from the Comrades Marathon Association. "That's really scary."

Sergio's lawyer, Clem Harrington, described it as a tragic story. "Hopefully, Sergio will not be lost to the sport because he is a highly talented runner. If he harnessed the energy he put into cheating into rather running the race properly, who knows, he might finish in the top five," he said.

After serving his ban, Sergio returned to the Comrades and had a string of impressive runs until he proved Harrington right in 2010 and came third, winning another gold medal and R90 000. "It just goes to show he did not have to do what he did in 1999," said Winn. "He has great ability."

Unfortunately, his triumph was short-lived. Six weeks later, Sergio was found to have cheated once again, this time testing positive for the performance-enhancing steroid nandrolone. He received a two-year ban and had to forfeit his prize money and his gold medal for a second time.

But despite the twin controversies, Sergio wasn't done with the gruelling marathon. In 2019, on the 20th anniversary of the ill-fated bait-and-switch Comrades, Sergio, now 40, lined up in Durban. He sang *Nkosi Sikelel' iAfrika* and *Shosholozo*, listened to the *Chariots of Fire* theme and the double cock-crow and made his way to Pietermaritzburg in 7hr 21min.

Bullshit: 50 Fibs That Made South Africa is from Jonathan Ball.

And he isn't the only sport star caught peddling bullshit ...

Hansie Cronje remains South Africa's most infamous sporting cheat but the country has produced several others.

Kevin Evans and David George were mountain biking rock stars — they appeared on magazine covers, had groupies and were the heroes in *An Epic Tale*, a documentary about their crusade to be the first South African team to win the Cape Epic. But the dream came to a shuddering halt in 2012 when George tested positive for doping.

In what might be a cycling first, he didn't try to shift the blame ("My ex-wife sabotaged me", "I ate contaminated meat" or "Having sex before the test caused a testosterone spike" are all actual excuses which have been given). George admitted guilt and was banned for two years.

In 2016, the South African Institute for Drug-Free Sport found irregularities in Evans's biological passport and banned him for three years.

When journalist Thomas Kwenaithe covered an under-15 tournament in France in 1998, he discovered — and reported — that the captain of South Africa's winning



Fallen star: Cyclist Kevin Evans, hero of the documentary *An Epic Tale*, was banned for doping. Photo: Chris Hitchcock / Gallo Images

side was an engineering student in his early 20s. The player's father took Kwenaithe to the press ombud for "slander" but withdrew his complaint when Kwenaithe produced records to show that if the player was under 15, he would have been two years old in grade one.

Ronel Liss caused a kerfuffle at the 2002 edition of the Cape Argus Pick n Pay Cycle Tour (now the

Cape Town Cycle Tour) when she told officials she was the true winner of the women's race.

Moments after Anriette Schoeman lifted the trophy, Liss, who had no track record as a competitive cyclist, insisted she had crossed the line 15 seconds before her. And her husband Jago had proof.

The ceremony was stopped and Schoeman's celebrations were put

on ice while officials investigated. They decided to examine Jago's result as well.

He had "won" the men's A category — the top amateur group — by an unheard of 18-minute margin. Turns out that the Lisses had taken some shortcuts and both of them were disqualified.

Esports have become hugely popular, with technology allowing cyclists to race against riders from all over the world while sitting on stationary bikes in the comfort of their homes.

This is what East London virtual cyclist Eddy Hoole did in December 2022 when he competed in a UCI Cycling Esports World Championships qualifying race. Fans watched in disbelief as Hoole's avatar broke away from the peloton and flew up a hill to win.

When officials crunched his data, they found Hoole had generated significantly more power than Olympic champions. It was soon discovered the software developer had hacked the data.

Cycling South Africa found him guilty of cheating and suspended him from all cycling disciplines for six months. — Jonathan Ancer

'Just say that you are a coward and move on'

The pro-Palestine protests that ignited on campuses across the globe since late last month have also spread across opinion pages and social media.

The protests escalated after mass arrests by police on the campus of Columbia University in New York. Nearly 2900 students on almost 100 campuses have been arrested across the US in recent weeks, Associated Press reports. The students were protesting Israel's devastation of Gaza in which they have killed more than 34 000 civilians.

Many Gaza solidarity encampments were taken down recently after university authorities agreed to consider severing financial and academic links with Israel, according to Al Jazeera.

Last weekend saw many protests during graduation ceremonies in the US, including at Duke University North Carolina where pro-Israel



What's complicated? Police clash with protestors demonstrating at Columbia University in New York. Photo: Alexi J Rosenfeld/Getty Images

comedian Jerry Seinfeld received an honorary doctorate. Some protestors waved Palestinian flags and chanted "Free Palestine!"

The violent suppression of the

protests on many campuses was reminiscent of the demonstrations against the Vietnam War.

It brought the conflict in Gaza home to many Americans — and the

great and the good weighed in on their foremost comment pages.

One of the most controversial opinion pieces was an essay by English writer Zadie Smith in *The New Yorker* on 5 May, in which she wrote: "But, when I open newspapers and see students dismissing the idea that some of their fellow-students feel, at this particular moment, unsafe on campus, or arguing that such a feeling is simply not worth attending to, given the magnitude of what is occurring in Gaza, I find such sentiments cynical and unworthy of this movement."

The backlash on X was swift and angry.

Palestinian writer Mohammed El-Kurd responded: "Zadie Smith argues that protest slogans are 'weapons of mass destruction' in a new pretentious and navel-gazing article and she does it while a literal genocide ravages Gaza. I am sick of

ignorant and tone-deaf writers who feel like they can lecture us from their lavish homes."

American writer Camonghne Felix, who identifies as "Black & Jew" on X, tweeted: "No, I'm sorry, I don't understand what Zadie Smith is saying. Maybe I'm not smart enough, I'm still learning, but I don't understand an essay that suggests 'Zionist imperialist state' is a misnomer when Israel is, by all definitions of these words, a Zionist imperialist state."

Arnesa Buljusic-Kustura, a genocide researcher originally from Bosnia and Herzegovina, reacted: "Honestly it has become exhausting having to listen to liberal writers yap about 'it's complicated' and 'both sides'. Just say that you are a coward and move on."

American academic and novelist Steve Salaita responded in kind to Smith with an essay of his own. See below. — **Charles Leonard**

Author is sloppy and ignorant

In its apparent nothingness, Zadie Smith's essay on student activism tells us about how genocide can be rationalised, writes **Steve Salaita**

Since the publication of her debut novel *White Teeth* (2000), Zadie Smith has been a darling of tastemakers across the Atlantic.

Much of her ensuing work feels like a love letter to the forces who anointed her into literary stardom. Twenty-four years on, she continues to repay the favour.

Her reflections on student activism in *The New Yorker* on 5 May represent a milestone in the venerable genre of Self-Important Liberal Novelist Giving Unwanted Advice To Wayward Youth And Uncouth Radicals.

Most entries in the genre are merely obtuse and sanctimonious; Smith manages to also be sloppy and misinformed. Give her credit. She's mastered the trick for which the *haut monde* sent her off into the world.

While positioning herself as a Deep Thinker detached from primitive loyalties, Smith painstakingly tethers expressions of ambiguity to the status quo, the most primal loyalty of all.

Let's examine the essay's most egregious failures one by one.

In the first line, Smith writes, "A philosophy without a politics is common enough." It's not at all common. In fact, a philosophy without a politics is impossible. Only a mind afflicted by upper-class rot could think otherwise.

Smith speaks of activism that can lead to arrest or other forms of punishment, concluding that it "represent[s] a level of personal sacrifice unimaginable to many of us".

This royal "us" betrays Smith's position as outsider and poseur. In reality, sacrifice is eminently-

imaginable to the countless people who have chosen to act on their consciences and subsequently languished in prison, lost jobs and careers, suffered exile and ostracism.

It is eminently imaginable to the very students on whom Smith lavishes so much scorn. They are being punished in horrible ways and yet they keep going.

Sacrifice isn't unimaginable to "many of us". It is unimaginable to Smith and her cohort of frivolous lickspittles.

This she confirms a few sentences later with what is supposed to be a droll anecdote about her inability to give up travel to New York for the sake of the environment.

"What pitiful ethical creatures we are (I am)!" she laments. This singular (and parenthetical) flash of self-awareness, meant to be ironic and thus venial, is the only aspect of the essay worth the reader's attention.

"The more than seven million Jewish human beings who live in the gap between the river and the sea will not simply vanish because you think that they should."

Who has called for seven million Jews to vanish? It is not a demand of any Palestinian political party; the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions movement; pro-Palestine student organisations; the vast Palestinian intellectual tradition or of the Palestine solidarity community around the world.

Not a single spokesperson in any of the student encampments has even hinted at replacing or eliminating Israeli Jews. To interpret Palestinian demands for freedom as inherently malicious is crude racism dressed in humanistic affectations.



Critical: British author Zadie Smith is guilty of ignorance, cynicism and racism in her essay titled *Shibboleth*, which appeared in *The New Yorker* this month, the writer says. Photo: David Levenson/Getty Images

Smith, like too many of her Western contemporaries, believes herself capable of discussing Palestine without apparently having read a single Palestinian writer.

Regarding the encampment at Columbia University in New York: "It may well be that a Jewish student walking past the tents, who finds herself referred to as a Zionist, and then is warned to keep her distance, is, in that moment, the weakest participant in the zone."

Yes, and it may well be that an elephant wakes up one morning with a trunk attached to its arse. The only Jewish students facing recrimination are those who have joined with their Palestinian classmates. The ones agitating for genocide are supported by the entire corporate and political establishment.

"To send the police in to arrest young people peacefully insisting upon a ceasefire represents a moral injury to us all. To do it with violence is a scandal. How could they do less than protest, in this moment? They

are putting their own bodies into the machine. They deserve our support and praise."

Here's the point at which a competent editor would have asked Smith if she planned on including any support and praise or if she just wants to keep bombarding college students with passive-aggressive bromides.

(The same editor might have explained that in 2024 pretensions of neutrality have become incredibly trite and boring.)

Smith tut-tuts protestors and their antagonists for simplifying "unbelievably labyrinthine histories".

There are three reasons why a person would describe the history of Zionist colonisation as labyrinthine: ignorance, cynicism, racism.

Ignorance is self-explanatory and the least troublesome of the options. Cynicism might result from careerism or bootlicking or simple contempt for the downtrodden.

And racism, of course, arises from any form of Zionism, in this case the notion that Palestinians don't deserve freedom because it would muck up the good times for everyone else.

"But it is in the nature of the political that we cannot even attend to such ethical imperatives unless we first know the political position of whoever is speaking."

Finally, a moment where the term "labyrinthine" is applicable.

I'm having trouble figuring out what Smith wants to say. She's prob-

ably confused too, but, being a long-standing member of the cultural elite, understands that clarity is less important than satisfying the right audience.

Anyway, students are saying exactly what their position is, as Smith acknowledges elsewhere in the essay. She just doesn't accept it. Perhaps she's upset that the approval of Zadie Smith was never part of their calculation.

I could explain why the essay also fails rhetorically, stylistically and creatively or go on about how it is thoughtless, ungenerous, superficial, but what's the point?

It was doomed the moment that Smith decided she could philosophise without politics. It only got worse when she changed her mind and then found 10 ways to butcher the word "political".

At one point, Smith seems to almost recognise she's talking a whole lot of bullshit and tries to preempt the inevitable backlash.

"The objection may be raised at this point that I am behaving like a novelist, expressing a philosophy without a politics, or making some rarefied point about language and rhetoric while people commit bloody murder."

Incorrect yet again. The objection is that you're abetting genocide.

Steve Salaita is an academic and a writer.

Sacrifice isn't unimaginable to 'many of us'. It is unimaginable to Smith's cohort of frivolous lickspittles

Taking pot shots at Polanski

The director's masterful, technically brilliant work is lacking in humanity

Drew Forrest

Now that Roman Polanski's long and stormy career seems finally over, what verdict should we pass on his body of work?

Is the 90-year-old Pole one of the greatest film directors, as especially claimed by the French cultural establishment? Is he so important that we should wink at his statutory rape of a drugged 13-year-old and almost 50-year flight from justice?

An overview of his more than 20 feature films brings into relief his great technical facility, particularly in his early films, gift for building suffocating emotional tension.

But they also bear out his fascination with psychic disintegration, interpersonal conflict, sexual dysfunction and, tinged with sadism, the abuse of women.

After making his initial mark with the Polish-language *Knife in the Water*, his first Oscar nomination, he really turned heads with such essays in horror and anomie as the claustrophobic "apartment trilogy" (*Repulsion*, *Rosemary's Baby* and *The Tenant*) and *Macbeth*.

He has ventured into comedy, but two efforts at either end of his career, the flat-footed, mixed-genre *Cul-de-Sac* (1966) and last year's *Palace*, panned by one critic as a "ghastly flaccid hotel farce", suggest his heart was not really in it.

He has been at his most potent when portraying human misery. Commenting on his 1992 erotic "comedy" *Bitter Moon*, which ends in a murder-suicide, the critic Janet Matlin described his underlying worldview as "nasty, mocking and darkly subversive".

For the viewer, the resultant mood is generally one of emotional disturbance and gloom. Ordinary pursuits tend to be waved away and there is little to suggest the possibility of untwisted personal attachments.

"If ever there was a body of work on intimate terms with cruelty and domination, and steeped in a vision



Violence: Director Roman Polanski's experience of Nazi crimes as a child and the murder of his wife Sharon Tate might have contributed to the tendency towards brutality in his films. Photo: Beata Zawrzel/Getty Images

in which men are cold-blooded and women cold-hearted, this is it," writes *The Guardian's* Leo Robson.

The most memorable films end in loathing, suicide, madness, murder and the triumph of evil.

But he is a complicated man whose current wife, French actor Emmanuelle Seigner, insists is incapable of violence. Unlike Michael Fassbender and Wesley Snipes, for example, he has never been accused of physical battery. The lead character in *The Tenant*, an introverted Polish office-worker at sea in hostile Paris, played by himself, can be seen as partly autobiographical.

But the abundance of physical brutality in his films suggests a charged fantasy world that might have grown from the loss of his parents in Nazi-occupied Poland and childhood exposure to Nazi crimes, such as the shooting of an old Jewish woman in the Krakow ghetto.

"These early experiences of the oppression of the weak stole his

innocence and distorted his sense of things," Robson remarks.

The coarsening of his sensibility is also suggested by his impenitent attitude towards his self-confessed rape — in fact, he seems to view himself as the object of a puritanical, and possibly anti-Semitic, witch-hunt.

In a notorious interview with the novelist Martin Amis in 2009, he ascribed the rape uproar to the paedophile lust of media practitioners, judges and jurists, saying that "everyone wants to fuck young girls". He also admitted that he liked "girls of [the rape victim's] age ... and they seem to like me".

(The original charges, softened by a plea bargain, were considerably more serious and included rape after feeding Mandrax to a minor.)

Polanski's insouciance is further indicated by photos taken at the Munich Oktoberfest during his trial, under terms set by the court, showing him cavorting with young girls, jugs of beer in hand.

Another plea in his defence is that the savage, drug-fuelled murder of his wife, Sharon Tate, might have indelibly darkened his cinematic vision. In particular, it is pointed out that Tate's killing and mutilation by the Manson family in August 1969 preceded his adaptation of Shakespeare's *Macbeth*. This is filled with gratuitous visual brutality, including the decapitation of the anti-hero, whose head bounces down the castle stairs, and the gang rape of Lady Macduff's maid.

Gratuitous nudity — Lady Macbeth's naked somnambulism and the stabbing of Macduff's naked teenage son while bathing, for instance — was a further interpolation, prompting some critics to point out that *Playboy* owner Hugh Hefner financed the film.

In fact, Polanski's visual sadism predates the Tate murder. *Repulsion* was released in June 1965 and *Rosemary's Baby*, in which Rosemary is graphically raped by the devil after her legs are tied apart by coven members, in June 1968. He has a taste for the rough treatment or moral/mental overthrow of childlike young beauties such as Mia Farrow, Francesca Annis and Nastassja Kinski.

Polanski's belief that he has been crucified emerges clearly from the parallel he drew between himself and Alfred Dreyfus, the 19th-century victim of official French anti-Semitism, while discussing his dramatisation of the Dreyfus affair in *An Officer and a Spy*. "I'm familiar with many of the workings of the apparatus of persecution shown in the film, and that has clearly inspired me," he said in 2019. "I can see the same determination to deny the facts and condemn me for things I have not done."

This stunning evasion was cheered by French culturati, including woman actors such as Catherine Deneuve (who has also excoriated the #MeToo movement for infantilising women as "little things under the influence of demon phalocrats").

Of relevance here is the concept of the "benefit of clergy", used as a metaphor by George Orwell to explain the apparent tolerance of painter

Salvador Dali's necrophiliac and excretory fantasies.

Literally meaning that the priesthood should not have account for crimes to the secular authorities, it is a view much favoured by the Catholic Church — witness its desire to shield paedophile priests.

For the French cultural establishment, art and artists have the same exalted status. When Polanski was arrested in Switzerland on a US extradition warrant in 2009, 850 members of the French cinematic fraternity, the SACD, petitioned for his release. They were joined by the elite of Hollywood including ... wait for it ... Harvey Weinstein. The Swiss courts set him free. Weinstein has given a novel twist to the "benefit of clergy" notion by arguing that, because of its "compassion", only Hollywood is fit to judge Polanski.

It might be thought that in recent films such as *The Pianist* and *An Officer and a Spy* the Polish director has discovered a newfound concern with social justice. But their real focus is himself and his self-absorbed sense of grievance.

His operative model of society is a universal struggle for dominance.

"If two men are on board, one is the captain," remarks one of his characters in *Knife in the Water*.

It is in this work that his taste for closed interiors as spaces for gladiatorial combat first appears. The sailing boat sets the stage for a mounting Oedipal and veiled political struggle between an older journalist named Andrzej — in communist Poland, a civil servant — and a handsome young drifter, ultimately for control of Andrzej's wife.

The theme recurs in *Bitter Moon*, where a cruise ship becomes a cruel testing ground for an English couple whose matrimonial idyll is soured by a sexually disabled and vengeful failed writer.

Revisiting his films, one is struck by Polanski's ingenuity and mastery of the medium: his inventive sets, brilliant editing, acute casting and ability to wring emotional capital from the most trivial and unpromising scenes.

One example of his technical creativity is the set of *Knife in the Water*, which had to be mounted on a small, moving vessel on a lake.

But one sees it everywhere in the shooting detail, such as Rosemary's hysterical attempt to escape the demonic conspiracy against her by contacting an independent doctor.

Her terror grows as other would-be callers besiege the payphone, including a man who resembles the sinister Dr Saperstein.

There are glimpses of a humanist perspective in his portrait of the sympathetic German commanding officer in *The Pianist*, and perhaps in the ambiguous conclusion of *Bitter Moon*, where the English couple embrace in sorrow — though it is unclear whether they are truly reconciled or the emotional injury caused by their mutual infidelity is too deep for healing.

Polanski has an Oscar for best director and five academy nominations, as well as a clutch of French Césars. But his vision has been impaired and narrowed by the intrusion of personal phantasmagoria.

He is a great technical magician and manipulator of the emotions. But, lacking their broad humanity, he cannot be classed as a great artist in the mould of Michelangelo Antonioni, Satyajit Ray or Martin Scorsese.

Actress says verdict is a 'sad day for women'

A French court on Tuesday acquitted filmmaker Roman Polanski of defaming British actor Charlotte Lewis after she accused him of raping her when she was a teenager.

Polanski, 90, was not present for the verdict at the Paris court.

Lewis told the court she became the victim of a "smear campaign" that "nearly destroyed" her life after she spoke up about abuse that took place in the 1980s.

The 56-year-old actor told the court it had taken her time to put a name on the incident that occurred in Paris when she was 16.

The verdict by this court relates strictly to the charge of defamation and not the rape accusation.

The judges highlighted a "significant gap between the admiration and gratitude (of Lewis) towards the director, which she publicly expressed until 2010, and the denunciation of the violent nature of their relationship at the moment



In tears: Actress Charlotte Lewis, who accused Roman Polanski of raping her when she was a teen. Photo: Thomas Samson/AFP

she decided to join in the condemnation against him".

Lewis, in tears, said it was a "sad day for women accusing their assaulters", while her lawyer,

Benjamin Chouai, said she would probably appeal the ruling.

Polanski's most notorious conviction was one of sex with a 13-year-old minor. — *Alain Jean-Robert*

Fine Art

Partnership is a blessing

Lesego Chepape

Standard Bank has announced a collaboration with Blessing Ngobeni, an artist known for his abstract creations using materials such as magazines and newspapers.

Ngobeni's distinctive artworks, which tell stories about everyday social issues South Africans face, will feature in Standard Bank's new lifestyle store 1862 at its headquarters in Rosebank, Johannesburg.

His work will form part of the customised apparel and homeware range. Yolisa Koza, the bank's head of brand experience, says: "Teaming up with Blessing allows Standard Bank employees to access his creative vision through an exclusive collection of items such as hats, shirts and scarves that he has personally signed to guarantee their authenticity."

Ngobeni expressed his delight about the collaboration, saying,

"There's a saying that when art intersects with fashion, it breaks new ground, transcending budgetary constraints.

"I'm confident that my work will resonate with the right people, regardless of their earnings from diverse hustling endeavours."

The bank has a long history in the arts, including a 40-year partnership with the National Arts Festival and has been sponsoring the Young Artist Awards for 30 years.



Exclusive: Blessing Ngobeni will be working with Standard Bank.

'My art provides the catalyst'

Majak Bredell explores themes of nature, our relationship to the earth and feminism

Aarti Bhana

The White River Gallery in Mpumalanga is behind brick walls crawling with creepers, covered in dry autumn leaves.

It's reminiscent of a Victorian garden — but with a South African charm, with curio shops tucked into the corner, while sculptures of steel and iron loom large.

The gallery is displaying the work of South African artist Majak Bredell, which is a feast for the eyes.

The colourful figures and geometric shapes on paper, mounted on the white walls, are enticing.

They raise questions about the artist's interest in figures, especially the human form.

The work is symbolic and it's interesting to view and contemplate.

"I am the catalyst — my artwork is the catalyst that opens the viewer to the thoughts and feelings that come up for yourself when you look at the art. To me, that is why I make art," Bredell told the *Mail & Guardian* at a restaurant in Pretoria.

Her exhibition *Interconnections* is divided into two parts: *Dialogues & Analogies* and *Levels & Layers*.

At the centre of this intricate world of conversations and connections is the story of humankind and Earth, which has developed out of her previous works, which touched on similar themes.

"My earlier works worked on the idea of restoring a sacred mirror for women — where women can see themselves reflected by the sacred — and what is the sacred female? It's Goddess. It's not God with boobs.

"It's a Goddess with a cunt and a womb. That's really what's at the bottom of my work — restoring that imbalance."

Bredell said her new work celebrates the many levels and layers of interconnections and interdependencies between humanity and the earth that supports us. She echoes the theories of eco-feminism that regard the earth as a living organism but also speaks to its relationship with women.

Through themes of nature, she relays that we are not only products of the sky and the stars, but we are also bound to the earth — to Mother Earth — and through this analogy and understanding of the world, she suggests that, if we regard the earth as a mother body, we might feel the damage that we do to her as pain in our own bodies.



Walkabout: Majak Bredell talks about one of the works at her exhibition *Interconnections* at the White River Gallery in Mpumalanga.

Although she is not intentionally speaking about the climate crisis, her work exemplifies this profoundly.

Speaking of her *Dialogues & Analogies* series, South African artist and curator Gordon Froud said she shows how animal forms are equal with humans, whether they are spirit animals or a symbol of our co-dependency as we co-exist on Mother Earth.

"What is particularly powerful about this body of work is that it is experienced or felt, rather than explained.

"Majak does not wield a stick of punishment or warning but suggests that we need to take better care of our earth mother, our planet, the animals, plants, each other and even the seemingly lifeless inanimate forms like rocks, mountains and landscapes," he said.

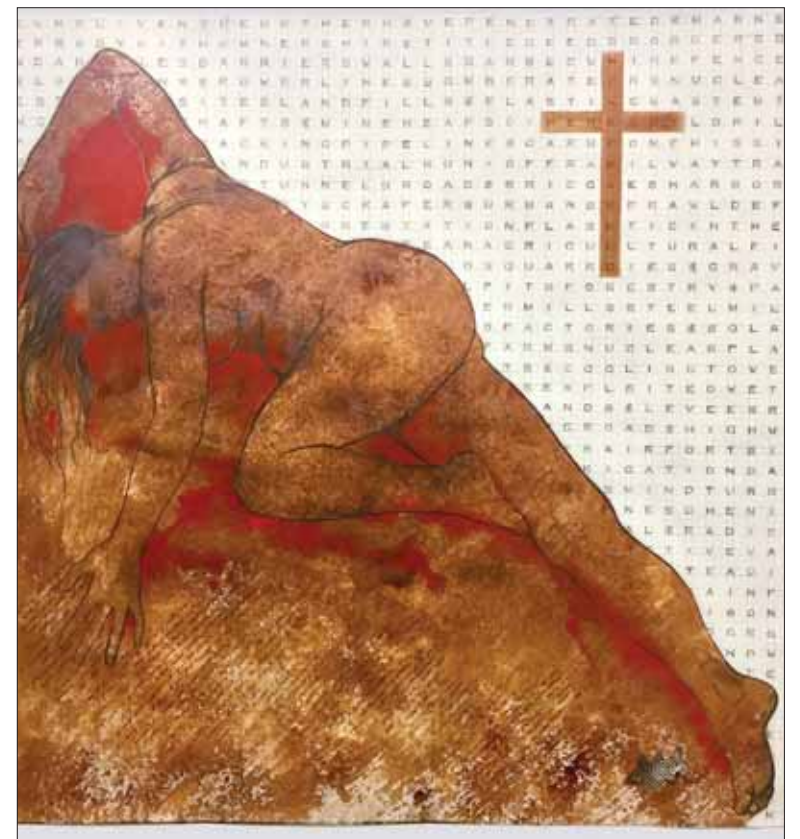
"I suspect that she may suggest that they appear inanimate or lifeless but are in fact perhaps living and moving more slowly, and on a different vibrational level to us, and that we should acknowledge this."

This collection contains 83 pieces

and Bredell said it took her seven years of hard and consistent work in her studio in Limpopo to bring it to fruition.

One piece stands out for her — *How Her Body Be Marked*.

In the work, in a grid above the figure that represents the Earth, she lists the ways in which we have damaged the planet: "Our Human Deeds ... We who live on the Mother have penetrated & marked her body with ownership and title deeds, borders, boundaries, barrier walls, barbed wire fences, pylons & powerlines, bomb craters, nuclear test sites, landfills & plastic waste, mining shafts & mineheaps, oil drills, fracking, pipelines, carbon emissions, industrial run-off, railway tracks, tunnels, roads, bridges, harbours, skyscrapers, urban sprawl, deforestation, toxic emissions & plastic in the ocean, agricultural fields & grazing tracts, quarries & gravel pits, forestry & papermills, steel mills, wetland & levees, ring roads, highways, airports, irrigation dams, wind turbines, chemical & radioactive waste, acid rain, poisoned oceans & groundwater fire & smoke," it says.



Below the figure, she scripted earth's dark, primitive and mysterious voice: "Once when my body was being formed from gases and rock, I was not yet stable enough to support life from my bones and my breath. The oceans would in time demark the outlines of the continents and allow the journey of tiny creatures from the deep watery depths onto the shore where they started breathing air.

"That was long before you, humankind, walked upright along inland lakes and ocean shores. Long before most of you abandoned gathering and hunting and began to plant seeds in my flesh to harvest for your daily bread.

"In all this, I was there, your mother, the body on which you lived while you became industrious using the rocks of my bones to build your temples and your palaces and your cities, and claimed my earth as property to be divided and fenced and walled as you waged wars over the boundaries you drew..."

Bredell considers herself iconoclastic — someone who challenges the norm and the traditional ways and suggests open and freer ways of thinking about the world.

Upending and questioning the patriarchy is also a major theme in many of her works.

The artist said that this interest in challenging the male system of dominance stems from her Calvinist upbringing and the subsequent opening of her mind during the 22 years she has spent living in New York.

She says the patriarchal writers of Genesis expunged the female from creation. She is not even part of the created world and, growing up in the Dutch Reformed Church, "Men were like little gods on earth and what were women?"

She uses figures tumbling or upside down to convey a re-thinking of hierarchy.

"We've been taught to look to the sky," she said. "God is somewhere up there in heaven. But the sacred is right down here and it's what sustains our lives on earth."

Seasoned artist and writer Annali Dempsey said of Bredell: "When I look at Majak's work, I think of the archaeological layers of civilisation excavated in places like Bath in England or Toledo in Spain where Moors, Jews, Christians and Romans created layers of reality according to religion, state and legislature.

"But it is still above the real earth — these compacted levels of history.

"And we tend to dance over these layers and levels with dazzling smiles and digital cameras, capturing what we perceive as the manifestation of what it means to live on this planet.

"What we do not see is the bones of the ancestors, the destruction and pain embedded in each of these layers that separate us over the ages from the earth mother."

This is something we should all be thinking about. And driving to White River to see.

Bredell's exhibition *Interconnections*, on at the White River Gallery, closes on 2 June.

Orford: Writing to stay alive

South African author speaks about suicide, being a woman and her new book — a memoir

Charles Leonard

If it hadn't been for writer's block, the book lying between the writer and me on the coffee shop table may not have been there. In fact, the writer herself would probably not have been here on this late autumn Friday morning in Johannesburg.

Unlike us two hacks, the writer's therapist did not find her joke about why she couldn't commit suicide funny at all.

Internationally acclaimed and respected author and journalist Margie Orford tells the story in her powerful, recently published memoir *Love and Fury* of a freezing London day in January 2018, when she felt her career as a writer had shuddered to an end — the one thing she knew, writing, had abandoned her. It made her desperate. It made her mad.

"I did not want to work," she writes. "I did not want to use my talent. I did not want to be alive. How, though, does one go about eliminating oneself without causing a disturbance?"

She had tried for months to write a suicide note but couldn't.

"I can write anything," she tells me over espresso and a croissant. "Copy, reports, thrillers, romances, anything ... I can write it."

Orford looked online at "literary" suicide notes. "There are many," she says. "[Russian writer Vladimir] Mayakovsky's suicide notes ... it's so florid and embarrassing."

She looked at how Virginia Woolf's addressed her note to her husband: "Dearest, I feel certain that I am going mad again ..."

But Orford did not hear voices like Woolf did. "I heard muffled silence; felt my lack of ballast," she writes in *Love and Fury*.

She told her psychoanalyst in Hampstead, where she lived then, about her unsuccessful attempts.

"Writer's block. So far, it's kept me alive." He didn't laugh at her gallows humour.

She writes: "He looked at me over slender steepled fingers and said, 'It's what's alive in you — your writing, your creativity — that won't let you finish.'"

Orford picks up on it in our conversation.

"He didn't let me joke about it," she says in measured tones. "He made me look at what was the impulse which I wouldn't look at ... this feeling that I wouldn't address."

"And then the very thing ... that I couldn't do, which was write another novel..."

"You know, the capacity to write, which is to create, which is to make sense."

She pauses.

"I'm here. Like this."

We both smile.

"I'm glad for writer's block," I say. "Because what would I have done today?"

"Yeah, exactly."

Orford, who is still based in London, is in South Africa to promote her captivating, at times dark, autobiography.

She will make a turn in Namibia, but her main destination is the Franschhoek Literary Festival. "I've done it many times. Oh, it's nice!"



Word power: Margie Orford's recently released memoir *Love and Fury* is gripping, but not an easy read, telling of marriage, divorce, depression and sexual assault. Photo: Bella Galliono-Hale

She is an easy conversationalist, with a fine sense of humour, but not unwilling to delve into uncomfortable places, so I can understand why she has cracked repeated invites to the festival.

And with *Love and Fury* she tells the gripping story — political and personal — of her life so far, surviving marriage, divorce, depression, sexual assault and loss.

Orford was born in London to South African parents but has lived through eventful periods in Namibia and South Africa during the two countries' tumultuous times of transition, working as an activist, journalist, film director, publisher and teacher. Yet, she says she never set out to write a memoir.

However, the "queen of South African crime-thriller writers" had stopped writing her massively popular Clare Hart series. And then the novel Orford had written didn't sell.

It was around 2017, and her agent said: "Write a memoir."

"Memoir was, like, a big thing. I thought, 'Oh, alright,'" she says, "and I'd done a couple of pieces for *Granta* [the British literary magazine]."

The other reason for *Love and Fury* was literally to survive.

"In retrospect ... I think the reason I wrote it was to try and keep myself going. And keep myself alive and sort of ... make sense of things again."

"But it was only after the fact that I realised that's what had happened."

The previously rejected novel — *The Eye of the Beholder* — has since sold and was published in 2022 (its

sequel is due next year).

"And I think, in that book, I started taking on in the writing really how violence shapes people. And then I was also thinking how it's shaped me in a number of ways."

"And it was a reckoning ... first in fiction. And then in the memoir."

As journalists and writers in deeply violent societies we learn to cope by flicking our emotional switch. "We were trained in a way that you switch off your feelings. That you switch off the trauma."

"The response — it was a kind of macho way," Orford says as she orders her thoughts, picking at the flakes of her croissant.

"You know, macho female, and I suppose it was like Freud's return of the repressed ... it makes sense of us."

As a lifelong feminist, Orford writes that, "I could not bear the thought of being dependent, of being a leech on my husband, of needing someone else to pay my and my baby's way. That filled me with horror and shame."

I ask her what the most important lessons are a male reader can get from *Love and Fury* about being a woman in the world today.

"Probably they shouldn't marry me... that would be my first advice," she says with a wry chuckle. "Just as an aside ... a lot of men have been reading the book. I've been really struck by it because men I know and men I don't know, just write to me."

Orford is a survivor of sexual assault. One of her friends said he was consumed by the book and

added: "I believe you."

Whenever she told other women, they believed what had happened to her but, "It was striking to me how important it was that this man believed me ... then it enabled me to believe myself."

"That sounds like a profoundly anti-feminist sentiment but one of the crucial things for me in terms of understanding and writing about all this stuff ... and getting better and worse was understanding just how I didn't believe myself."

"And women don't believe themselves very often ... but, when a woman tells you something, you need to believe her."

"Watch how women walk in the street — you feel afraid ... you always calculate it and it's a thing that men don't live with all the time."

She recounts sitting around a table with friends at Oxford where she was teaching. They were all in their 50s and all of them had experiences of rape in their late teens and early 20s in similar ways.

"And I thought, 'Okay, all of us carry these things.' So, for men, pay attention to what women feel ... and do something about it."

Love and Fury is a compelling book, but by no means an easy read, especially where Orford writes about the violence meted out to women's bodies.

In 2001, equipped with a PhD from the City University of New York, she moved back to Cape Town where she had studied years before.

This is how Orford sets the scene about returning to what she started her working life as — a journalist: "When I get back, I wrote in my notebook, 'I will arm myself with one question: why?' And yet, as I wrote those words, a familiar sense of doubt — a close cousin of futility —

stopped my writing hand and I put down my pen."

"Words cannot repair torn skins. Even though they must be spoken, they do not right wrongs."

In Cape Town, she writes, "there were many times when the dead and wounded women I was writing about inhabited my body."

"I heard their outraged voices in my head asking, 'Why me?' and their despairing imperative: 'Do something!' All I could do to quieten them was to write."

Orford eventually turned to fiction. "Writing fiction about crime was the only way I could think of to capture South Africa's spectacular post-apartheid violence and its effects on ordinary people."

I ask her about the switch back to non-fiction to write her memoir.

"I found it really difficult," she says. "Was it worthwhile? I don't know. In many ways it is for me like writing fiction — in the way that you construct a world for the reader."

Orford knows this world is important.

"I went through some difficult things and I've come to understand ... maybe this [book] will be helpful because I've been helped by so many of the books that I've read in my life."

"So, I did get to really appreciate the generosity of the books that I've loved because they helped me navigate the world."

She says as you get older you "care less what other people think of you but care more about the world and people".

However, there are three people whose opinions about *Love and Fury* still mattered a lot: her daughters, Olivia, Hannah and Emma.

"They're proud of their mum; they think I'm very brave," Orford says with an almost relieved smile.



Friday

Beware of the false prophets

Kendrick Lamar's win over Drake shows the resurgence of an illiberal racial mood in America

Boima Tucker

By now, plenty of ink has been spilled over the rap beef heard around the world between Aubrey Graham, the Canadian artist known as Drake, and Kendrick Lamar of Compton, California.

I have to admit that, after a week of doing my best to keep it at the margins of my consciousness, I was pulled in by Lamar's flawless victory move in *Not Like Us*.

Mostly, that was because it tapped into my libidinal California sensitivities as a long-time resident of the Golden State. But also, while the chorus, "They not like us," rings out in public, from cars that pass by, there's something unsettling in the rumble of the bass.

The beef's misogynistic posturing has already been discussed widely. So has the criticism of it as a distraction from Israel's relentless bombing of Gaza since early October.

But the visceral feelings this particular piece of rhetorical art set to rhythm evoked got me thinking. Is this a distraction or is it a symptom of something deeper going on in society?

If we look at the framework of the argument Lamar is putting forth about Drake, in our collective declaration of Lamar as the winner, what exactly are the politics that we are co-signing, if any?

For a long time, Lamar has danced around the fringes of black liberationist thought; at his best, he's channelled the cathartic release of the Black Lives Matter movement or made us question the norms around mental health in ourselves, our families and communities.

On his latest full-length effort, *Mr. Morale & the Big Steppers*, he poetically and movingly challenged toxic self-held ideas around masculinity, sexuality and gender relations. But even with his verbal dexterity in making us question the world we live in, we don't exactly know what the world he would advocate for would be.

What I am most interested in is how and why the accusations Lamar levelled at Drake resonated so deeply with audiences (beyond the shock value of accusing someone of paedophilia and sex trafficking), and what that says about the current political mood.

Like much of the world, the US is experiencing a crisis of democratic liberalism. This crisis reached its apex (for now) with the disastrous policies of the Joe Biden administration on Israel's war against the Palestinians.

The colonialist character of Israeli aggression reveals the true shape of American democracy as it is "promoted" throughout the rest of the world — material comfort for a protected minority, principally those who are lucky enough to be born

within the right borders, and subjugation for the majority.

This subjugation isn't reserved for those who remain outside the borders of a figurative Athens, either. In the US, African-Americans are the largest, perennially excluded out-group of the economic and political system.

Often treated as a homogeneous demographic and voting bloc with an outsize influence on the outcome of elections, in recent times this group has been taken for granted as a liberal, "blue" bloc on which the Democratic Party can depend.

However, black people, like any group of voters, are heterogeneous with divergent political aims and social desires. And so, often flying under the radar, has been a tendency, particularly among black men, towards a tailored form of political conservatism that has roots going back to the early stages of black liberationist thought.

This propensity, towards a masculinist strain of black nationalism, arises out of structural exclusion from the capitalist system as well as an individual's experience with social marginalisation.

Looking for answers and explanations for their fate, some become attracted to conspiracy theories and a historical revisionism that can uplift and put black manhood at the centre of global history.

However, while groups such as the Black Israelites, the Nation of Islam and millennial Christian preachers promise a pathway out of oppression, they do so on a road that fails to deliver universal salvation.

Since the rise of Donald Trump, political lobbying groups such as the American Descendants of Slaves foundation have found resonance with some of the rhetoric of white reactionaries and nationalists, making for unexpected political bedfellows.

Most recently, an anti-migrant sentiment among black residents of northern cities facing an influx of asylum-seekers has been widely publicised by the national press.

Also making headlines is a perplexing anti-Semitic sentiment — either implicit, from figures such as basketball star Kyrie Irving, or explicit, from those such as Kanye West.

In March, a survey put support for Trump among African-Americans at 17%, twice as much as in 2016. While that is hardly a majority, the more hardline views of black nationalists seem to consistently find a receptive vessel in some of the nation's most talented public figures, figures who also happen to have an outsize influence on the mood of the nation.

In the communities where Lamar grew up, these strains of black nationalism run deep. Some of the evidence for this can be found in the history of Los Angeles rap.



Unprepared: The disproportionate attention paid to the battle between rap stars Kendrick Lamar (above) and Drake is symptomatic of a change of tone in America. Photo: Christopher Polk/Getty Images

Nipsey Hussle famously courted conspiracy theories and trafficked in black conservative capitalism, going so far as to partner with the Republican Party on redevelopment initiatives in his own LA suburb.

Compton-born and -raised Dr Dre, Lamar's mentor, and Ice Cube both engaged in their own rap beefs with former NWA partner Eazy-E and manager Jerry Heller, a feud that trafficked in homophobia and anti-Semitism.

Taking this context into consideration, how can we read between the lines of what Kendrick raps to understand how people are receiving his dressing-down of Drake?

On the face of it, the charges that Lamar has laid against Drake are clear. He is first a vampiric cultural appropriator; second, a sexual predator with a penchant for underage black women; third, a feminine, biracial man, a wannabe who likes to pose as tough masculine black man; and fourth, an insecure, plastic-surgery addicted self-mutilator.

Drake, in Lamar and his fans' telling, is thus a symbol of all the social ills wrought on the black community by wealthy, white liberals in all their cultural appropriation, DEI initiatives [American shorthand for diversity, equity and inclusivity], snide late-night talk show jokes, and tokenistic elitism.

For black nationalists, Drake is the perfect target on which to unleash their xenophobia, anti-Semitism, colourism, misogyny and anti-queer sentiment — all sprinkled on top of

Black nationalists [can] unleash their xenophobia, anti-Semitism, colourism, misogyny and anti-queer sentiment [on Drake]

a DJ Mustard beat at that.

To me, Drake and many of his cohort of popular black music artists of this century do succinctly represent the now-failed project of North American liberal multiculturalism, which found its apex during the presidency of Barack Obama.

They soundtracked the joyous revelry of an era of excess, techno-capitalist expansionism and individualistic self-commodification.

Drake, who grew up upper middle class in Toronto's suburbs (his parents are separated and he lived with his white mother), flawlessly copied US black regional cultural output from New Orleans to Atlanta to the Bay to embody the empty "rainbow" nationalism of a multiracial democracy.

The public bumped and grinded to beats from across the Euro-American empire, oblivious to the elderly black residents who were displaced to make way for that nightclub for young professionals or to the bombs raining down on poor Afghans, Syrians, Yemeni, Libyans and Iraqis in their name.

When Drake linked up with Rihanna, and they ordered us to work, work, work, we put our heads down and did so without question.

So, in conclusion, I'd argue, rather than a frivolous distraction, the celebration of Lamar's triumph over Drake is really symptomatic of a resurgence of an illiberal mood within America's racial reckoning. And, most importantly, that mood is not unique to the American context.

In El Salvador, a right-wing crypto-currency booster has imprisoned a staggering proportion of the population in the interest of law and order. He rails against meddling in his country by "global elites" (an anti-Semitic dog whistle), and is celebrated as an innovative and visionary thinker for doing so.

In Niger, Burkina Faso, Mali and Guinea, an anti-France mood has

swept military juntas into power, with masses of youths seen celebrating in the street, themselves fuelled by black nationalist online content and state-sponsored propaganda.

Even in Egypt, a race-driven nationalist discourse has reared its ugly head, causing a row over who can claim belonging in a national context.

If anti-colonial or anti-West authoritarianism weren't on the rise from the Sahel to El Salvador, then I wouldn't think twice about its latest arrival in mainstream American popular culture.

In fact, just like the DEI initiatives that have disappeared after the BLM uprising of 2020, I would imagine that it would slowly sink into the background, left once again to percolate in the barbershop.

But I'm afraid, post the genocide in Gaza, that's not the world we live in anymore.

If anything, the discomfort that some might have felt with the disproportionate attention paid to the vitriolic beef between two wealthy rap stars, proves that the US is actually unprepared for the future that is slowly creeping up upon it.

While, personally, as a member of the university-educated left, Macklemore's recent single is a surprising and refreshing entrant as a potential song of our moment — rapping about stopping the war against Palestinians, critique of the heavy-handedness by the police against protesters (with an NWA shoutout to boot), followed by a declaration that all proceeds from the song would be donated to the UN Relief and Works Agency.

At the same time, who decided that a liberationist anti-colonial authoritarian mood can't produce inciteful cultural products as well?

This article was first published in *Africa Is a Country*. Boima Tucker is a music producer, DJ, writer and cultural activist. He is the managing editor of *Africa Is a Country*.

Friday

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Procurement as a force for good

Conference speakers champion ethics and sustainability in supply chains

Jamaine Krige

In an era marked by large social inequalities and economic uncertainty, and as the global economy grapples with ongoing disruptions, procurement and supply chains are emerging as powerful vehicles for positive change. Nowhere is this potential more evident than in Africa, where ethical and responsible procurement practices can play a pivotal role in transforming economies and societies.

This was the main takeaway from the CIPS Africa Conference 2024, where hundreds of procurement and supply chain professionals convened in Johannesburg last week to focus on building a more ethical and sustainable procurement profession across the continent. The two-day event, organised by the Chartered Institute of Procurement and Supply (CIPS) in partnership with the Mail & Guardian, brought together industry leaders from across the southern African region. They discussed key trends, shared best practices, and renewed their commitment to shaping the future of the industry — and repositioning procurement and supply as a force for good.

According to CIPS Fellow and Programme Director Stephen Ashcroft, no industry is better positioned for this, as there is not a single sector that is unaffected by procurement: “By harnessing technology, enabling personal development, fostering innovation and prioritising social and environmental responsibility, we can create supply chains that not only deliver goods and services efficiently but also empower communities, protect the planet and ensure a better future for all. The conference organisers and every participant must know that none of us know more than all of us; collectively we have the answers, skills and tools needed to move the industry forward.”

The conference, themed: “Transforming procurement and supply: The road less travelled”, took an unconventional approach. It focused on fostering inclusive dialogue and an open exchange of ideas to tackle issues currently shaping the industry and the profession’s future, including sustainability, artificial intelligence (AI), digitisation, diversity and inclusion. Central to the conversation was the industry’s increasing prioritisation of ethics, both as an urgent need and a tremendous opportunity, and the need to rebuild trust in procurement practices across the continent.

‘Procurement affects everyone’

According to CIPS interim CEO Matthew Howell, disruptions in global supply chains — whether from geopolitics, climate impacts or other factors — have widespread ramifications for everyone, from individual consumers to entire economies: “Procurement affects us all, and having an ethical, highly competent profession driving sustainability through supply chains is important. Africa, with its rapidly growing youth population and economic influence, cannot be excluded from the conversation.”

As a professional body serving the public interest, Howell said upholding ethical standards was central to CIPS’s qualifications and mission. He emphasised the organisation’s role as a “broker of great conversations”, aiming to provoke new thinking and insights among procurement professionals — a role that those in attendance felt was well fulfilled.

By building the organisation’s voice and influence with governments, regulators and business leaders, Howell said CIPS can drive conversations that can create a pull towards ethical change across the continent and instil greater confidence in procurement



Deputy Commissioner responsible for Taxpayer Engagement and Operations at the South African Revenue Service, Johnstone Makhubu.



Dr Izimangaliso Malatjie from the National School of Government.



CIPS interim Chief Executive Officer, Matthew Howell.



Panellists Edson Marcus (Unitel, Angola); Tsholofelo Tsholofelo (Puma Energy, MENA); Dr Rebecca Setino (Transnet, South Africa) and Stephen Ashcroft, Conference Programme Director in a lively discussion.

integrity. “We do this through training, qualifications and professional standards. By growing our membership, we grow our ability to positively influence transparency, trust and ethical practices in Africa and globally.”

In his welcoming address, Howell praised industry professionals’ “resilience and ability to adapt” amid recent disruptions such as the pandemic, supply chain constraints, geopolitical disruptions and rising costs, but challenged attendees to embrace their “privileged position” and use their supply chain influence as “a force for good” in making “a cleaner, safer world for future generations”.

Industry transformation a matter of survival

The keynote address, delivered by the Deputy Commissioner responsible for Taxpayer Engagement and Operations at the South African Revenue Service (SARS), Johnstone Makhubu, set the tone for the conference. “The need for transformation at scale has not only become a necessity; it has become a matter of survival. It’s either you transform, or you become obsolete,” he warned.

Despite the fact that we are being driven by technological advancements like AI, automation, machine learning and quantum computing, Johnstone emphasised the continued need for uniquely human abilities: “Data and big data is the new gold, but ethics must be at the core of this transformation. This will require a synthesis

of people, data and technology, because machines have proven they do not have the emotional intelligence required to make ethical decisions ... at least not yet. This is what gives us as humans a competitive advantage in the transactions we oversee.”

Reflecting on South Africa’s recent history, Makhubu addressed the issue of state capture. “Where were the procurement professionals during this time?” He asked. “It is clear that positioning procurement and supply professionals is the first step in capturing any economy, and indeed procurement professionals were positioned throughout the state capture project.”

What’s driving corruption and unethical behaviour?

In a candid keynote address on the second day of the conference, Dr Izimangaliso Malatjie from the National School of Government pulled no punches, highlighting the societal pressures driving unethical conduct and corruption among professionals and public servants in South Africa. “We want to belong to the society of consumption. It’s a society of showing off ... success is measured by what you have,” she stated bluntly.

She argued that professionals are incentivised to engage in unethical behaviour, such as embezzling funds or accepting bribes, to attain the trappings of wealth and status that define “success” in modern society — luxury cars, private jets, elite addresses and opulent lifestyles. “Even minor procurement decisions are unethically

influenced by this mindset.”

The speech provided a blistering account of widespread corruption scandals implicating both public and private sector professionals in South Africa. She identified ethical failings enabling the rot, including fear of speaking out, favouritism in hiring and promotions, a lack of real consequences and “inconsistent application of discipline” that often amounts to “a slap on the wrist” for violations.

To combat the scourge, Malatjie advocated for a multifaceted approach that strengthens accountability, ethical leadership, consistent consequences for misconduct, merit-based hiring, transparency and making ethics “part of the metric for professionalism”.

“You cannot be professional if you are not ethical. It goes hand in hand,” she reiterated, contending that the societal forces promoting corruption must be recognised and counteracted. This can only be done through personal integrity and robust organisational cultures that prioritise ethics from top to bottom.

‘Entire GDPs pass through our hands’

For this reason, Makhubu agrees that ethics must be embedded in institutional DNA and the core ethos of the profession: “We have seen that collapsing organisations is easy and quick, but rebuilding them is tough. We must do everything in our power to ensure that the organisations we work for are never compromised by corruption and malfeasance. Africa’s GDP is estimated to be \$3.1 trillion, and at the core of this GDP and production is expenditure that passes through the hands of those in this room.”

“In South Africa, government sector purchases amount to R1 trillion and public sector purchases total about R600 billion. All these funds pass through our hands. For our continent, governments, institutions, and businesses to thrive, those managing these vast economic outputs must maintain the highest ethical standards and be beyond reproach.”

Makhubu called for procurement professionals to take responsibility for value creation within their organisations and urged those who want to remain relevant to be imaginative, curious, empathetic and collaborative. “Gone are the days when procurement and supply chain professionals could be sidelined. They must move to the forefront and shape value creation for businesses,” he argued. “Embrace change. Together, we hold the key to thriving and transforming the businesses that drive the success of our countries and institutions.”

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Ethical, sustainable and inclusive

Procurement leaders chart the way forward

Jamaine Krige

From embedding ethical practices to prioritising sustainability, diversity and inclusion, managing public-private partnerships and keeping people at the centre of tech-driven transformation – procurement and supply chain professionals at this week's CIPS Africa Conference grappled with the weighty issues that define the future of their evolving industry.

The two-day event tackled these crucial topics head-on, underscoring their rising significance for supply chains across Africa and their potential as a force for societal change and continental development. A series of expert-led panel discussions, heated debates and delegated exploratory sessions yielded invaluable insights for navigating an increasingly complex landscape where ethical lapses, environmental degradation and inequity can severely tarnish an organisation's reputation and bottom line.

Embedding ethics

In an increasingly globalised and interconnected world, consumers and stakeholders demand more than just quality products; they expect companies to act responsibly. Experts invited delegates to explore why ethics must take centre stage as a strategic priority. However, they cautioned, embedding ethics must go beyond mere compliance to foster a culture where integrity, fairness and respect for human rights are fundamental.

Rooting out corruption, ensuring fair labour practices and promoting honest dealings can help build trust and long-term partnerships, which are essential for sustainable growth. This is particularly crucial within African supply chains, where issues like corruption and labour exploitation have historically been prevalent.

This emphasis on ethics reflects a broader trend of increasing accountability and transparency in supply chains. The speakers agreed that in today's environment of heightened scrutiny and conscious consumerism, embedding ethics in organisational DNA is not just "the right thing to do" but a core business imperative.

Prioritising sustainability

Industry experts made a strong case for "sustainable procurement for business results". Sustainable procurement aligns purchasing decisions with Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) principles, addressing issues such as carbon emissions, resource depletion and social equity. This is increasingly important amid growing pressures from stakeholders and regulators.

The panellists argued that procurement leaders are uniquely positioned to leverage their purchasing power to drive sustainable growth across supply chains. This can be done by choosing suppliers who adhere to eco-friendly practices,



General Manager of CIPS Southern Africa, Paul Vos.

reducing their overall ecological footprints and supporting local economies. Strategic sourcing can catalyse economic development by supporting and developing local suppliers and the communities they operate in, contributing to both environmental stewardship and the socioeconomic development of communities.

Managing public-private partnerships

An entire session was dedicated to addressing public-private partnerships (PPPs) – or rather, the enduring fear these partnerships instil in organisations on either side of the conversation. Regulatory constraints, procurement inefficiencies, and lack of trust were identified as key barriers to collaboration. To overcome these obstacles, a partnership mindset of mutual support is required, rather than an adversarial approach.

Industry experts also called for policymakers to prioritise compliance programmes, joint training and an enabling legislative framework that fosters collaboration. When managed effectively, they argued that PPPs can drive significant economic and social benefits

by improving efficiencies, innovation and resource mobilisation. These partnerships are crucial for infrastructure development, technological advancements and the large-scale project implementation outlined in national development plans. For African nations, PPPs are particularly important for bridging gaps in critical sectors like transport, healthcare and education.

By braving these fears and implementing strong partnerships across private-public demarcations, procurement professionals can help ensure that these projects are executed effectively, sustainably, and ethically.

People-centred technological transformation

How digital tools and artificial intelligence (AI) are revolutionising the procurement landscape also featured prominently across all panel discussions, as experts and delegates unpacked these emerging applications and their impact on the profession.

There was a strong consensus that emerging technologies should not be viewed as threats to job security; instead, the focus should be on how these

technologies can help drive smarter decision-making. They should not replace, but augment human capabilities. AI and automation can handle repetitive and data-intensive tasks, freeing up time for procurement professionals to focus on strategic activities such as supplier relationship management, negotiations and innovation.

Continuous upskilling and training will equip the workforce to navigate this evolving landscape. This technology-driven transformation should be people-centred, emphasising the role of human expertise and judgement.

Human capital remains key

The transformation of procurement into a strategic function underscores the importance of human capital. Experts emphasised the continued importance of human capital and fostering an inclusive profession amid other competing industry trends.

Developing procurement talent, fostering leadership skills and promoting a culture of continuous improvement are critical. By recognising and nurturing the potential of procurement professionals, organisations can harness their strategic value to drive innovation, efficiency and sustainability.

Diversity and inclusion within procurement and supply chains are critical for fostering organisational and societal innovation and resilience. Diverse teams bring varied perspectives, leading to better problem-solving and creative solutions. For this reason, experts argue that creating equitable opportunities should be a top industry priority.

The power to right societal wrongs

Promoting inclusivity must encompass addressing gender imbalances within companies and communities, supporting historically disadvantaged business owners and ensuring equitable opportunities for all. This inclusiveness must extend to the supply chain itself, encouraging the development of local suppliers and creating economic opportunities in underserved communities. An inclusive approach helps to build a more robust and adaptable supply chain that is capable of weathering various challenges.

As procurement increasingly plays a central role in core business operations, these ethical, environmental and social considerations can no longer be ignored. Procurement professionals are no longer just transactional facilitators; they are strategic enablers who can drive competitive advantage, organisational growth and transformation.

Over the coming years, African supply chains will be defined by how well they embed these priorities. Whether it was discussing technology, sustainability or human capital, however, ethics emerged as the golden thread that has the power to shape the profession's trajectory and help to build resilient, responsible supply chains across Africa and beyond.

Winners: CIPS Africa Excellence in Procurement & Supply Awards

After two days of robust engagement, the conference ended on a high note with a gala dinner to honour the winners of the 2024 CIPS Africa Excellence in Procurement & Supply.

Awards – individuals and organisations who "embody the spirit of excellence and set an example for others to aspire towards". Speaking at the award ceremony, General Manager of CIPS Southern Africa Paul Vos reflected on the importance of not only celebrating the achievements of today, but also the promise of tomorrow.

Vos emphasised that the evening was about more than just accolades

– it was a reaffirmation of the collective commitment to advancing the procurement and supply chain management profession through actions, not just words. "We celebrate tonight's winners and look back at the journey that brought us here; we also look ahead with optimism and determination as we continue to push the boundaries of what is possible and change the status quo."

The Safaricom team took the first accolade of the evening for Best Approach to Risk Mitigation, while DKT International Nigeria received Best Collaborative Teamwork Project. FNB was awarded the prize for Best

Initiative to Deliver Social Value Through Procurement, with a merit certificate being awarded to Ey. Transnet bagged the Best Public Sector Transformation Programme.

Sustainability Project of the Year went to Equity Bank Limited. The Rohloff Group bagged Best Use of Digital Technology, with a merit certificate in this category awarded to Wartsila. Rand Water was awarded the Outstanding People Development Programme Award, while Public Procurement Project of the Year went to Sentech. The Procurement Team of the Year went to Builders.

Four individual winners were announced

in the Young Talent category: Janet Kamau from Equity Group Holdings, Faith Barasa from Bic East Africa, Eric Mwendwa Kiamba from Safaricom and Lungile Nkwanyana from ABB South Africa.

The coveted Leader of the Year Award went to Vuledzani Nemukula, the Chief Procurement Officer for Transnet. Three other finalists, namely Atoapem Frimpong Barimah from Newmont Africa, Joyce John from Coca Cola and Emmanuel Chisesa from African Development Bank also received special mention for outstanding leadership.



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The Conscious Leadership and Ethics Summit™ 2024



TRUTH OR DARE SUMMIT CHALLENGES LEADERSHIP TO EMBRACE CONSCIOUS, ETHICAL BEHAVIOUR

The Conscious Leadership and Ethics Summit 2024, held at Melrose Arch last week had telling messages for leadership both in the political and business environment. The role of leadership, particularly before the elections, is crucial at this point in the country and globally. The voters who vote with wisdom should ensure that the leaders they vote for should display integrity, compassion, capability, commitment, accountability ethics and a systemic, holistic alignment of consciousness.

The key outcome of the Summit is the Conscious Leadership Strategic Report, which will offer solutions and provide a profound new framework to the leadership of this country to help, think and identify what's missing, what's gone wrong and what needs to be done. The annual Report, arduously put together by the voices

of the delegates, speakers, panelists and international icons from the Summit, nurtures a fervent hope that leaders will have the courage and resilience to act on its insights and input. The objective is to embed conscious ethical behaviour and inspire leaders to pioneer inward transformative journeys to grasp consciousness.

Local and global icons, humanitarians and some of the country's foremost thinkers on consciousness, governance, ethics and wisdom, participated in the Summit. They include: Tsakani Maluleke, Auditor General SA, directors of the Conscious Leadership Academy, Guru Kali and Dr. Jan Bellermann, Palesa Phili, CEO of the Durban Chamber of Commerce and Industries, Lubin Ozoux CEO of Sumitomo Rubber SA and the winner of the Conscious Companies Awards 2023, Rowan Gillies, Blu-Dot Advisory and Dr. Richa Arora, University of Stirling (UK).

GLOBAL ICONS AND HUMANITARIANS SHARE THEIR WISDOM



MOHANJI
 Founder: Mohanji Foundation

We are currently experiencing turbulent conditions in the world – everything from war and confusion to possible economic meltdown. This Summit – which brings together great business and leadership minds – is vital as a pivotal force for change. We need to be real and we need to be decisive. We have had enough of hypocrisy. The new generation who will be taking over is just around the corner. What are we handing over to them: Will it be a world filled with greed, nepotism, indifference, wars and bloodshed? We need to get our act together right now. We need to say no to the arms race and we need to stop the production of narcotics. We need to come back to humanity. The time to do it is now.



PAUL POLMAN
 Business Leader and Author: Net Positive

Globally we face economic inequality and planetary crises as well as a stability watershed in South Africa with unemployment, corruption and crime, to name just a few challenges. There's a leadership crisis where many still put their short sighted self-interests ahead of a long term shared interest. This is one of the greatest and most important moments to be a leader. The actions of this generation will determine the future of all generations. It's a massive responsibility but every single one of our challenges can be flipped around into the biggest opportunities. The governments and companies leading these transitions to cleaner economies and more equitable societies are already reaping the benefits.



SRI PREETHAJI
 Co-creator: Ekam - World Center For Enlightenment

There is an ancient Indian verse which says you are what your deep, driving desire is. Is your driving desire for success, achievement, fame or importance? Is it only to make yourself feel bigger or is it rather to create a greater well-being for everyone? As leaders it is important to know the truth of your being. I don't believe in ideas but I do believe in the transformative power of seeing one's truth and uncovering one's driving desire because that is where true transformation begins. When you are only focused on yourself, you will live your life feeling restless, stressed and anxious. You need to start living your life from a space of connection and oneness



DR. MAURO ZAPPATERRA
 Director: Synovation Medical Group

My guiding principle is to manifest and emanate love. Each one of us has the ability to cultivate this in ourselves and in each other. We have to express love in everything we do in the world. We have to question whether all our actions go towards love. We start this by understanding the connection between the mind, the heart and the body. We have to learn to rest in pure awareness; that space of total potentiality from which everything manifests and emerges. The third step is moving from this space of pure awareness and pure potentiality and go into the world intending to spread love; to lead with love, to walk with love. Whatever it might be - may we all be in love.

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH:



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PANEL ONE: CONSCIOUS, ETHICAL LEADERSHIP: ITS IMPACT ON THE REPUTATION AND BRAND OF A COMPANY OR COUNTRY



Chairman (far right); Michael Judin - Partner: Judin Combrinck Attorneys
From left; Pepe Marais - Group Integrated Chief Creative Officer: Joe Public; Lubin Ozoux - CEO: Sumitomo Rubber SA; Dr Jan Bellermann - CEO: Conscious Leadership Academy (Germany); Viviana van Agtmaal - Chief Representative Officer: Banque Syz and Dr. Dominik Heil - Partner: Hewers and Programme Director / Cranfield School of Management, (UK)

The subtle difference: Brand and reputation are the consolidation of long term factors reflecting the overall perception built over time whereas brand image is the impression or perception of an entity's identity. This is susceptible to change based on various factors, but both depend on a combination of internal and external factors to evoke good will in the public eye. Both work in tandem to shape the company's growth strategies and define its brand identity directly influencing the relationship between the brand and its stakeholders.

Trust in organisations is diminishing globally: Consumers are now more interested in what is behind an organisation, who is responsible for it and what they are buying into. That's where the leaders of organisations come into play. Their values are important and at the end of the day, that's what consumers are interested in - the ethical

behaviour of it's leaders must align with the values of the organisation.

Trust quotient of a company: How employees feel within a company and whether they feel valued and have a sense of belonging is critical to it's success.

Conscious leaders shape Conscious Companies: You risk the company's whole reputation if the leader is neither ethical nor accountable. Thousands of decisions are made every day. Leaders should create a framework and that enables those working in the organisation to make the right decisions and do the right thing in line with the company's philosophy. Businesses need to be transparent about what they stand for and this then filters down to everyone in the organisation.

Culture of a company: Leaders are not always told the truth about what's going on in the company because

everyone has an agenda. Those who are the custodians don't always know what they are dealing with and some companies fail badly. There should be sessions so people can openly speak about what's not working for them and learn from each other.

House of cards: You can spend hundreds of years building a company's reputation and it can fall apart and be ruined within just a few seconds. This is especially pertinent in today's era of social media.

People Power: It's about creating your own ecosystem and bringing your own value chain into it; from your suppliers to your customers. Employees should also check that they are a fit with a company's culture, vision, mission and purpose and align with their values accordingly.

Truth and Transparency: People don't buy what a company is selling, they buy if there is transparent and ethical leadership. One has to figure out what is the truth and who you are authentically in an organisation? Either one rises to the occasion or fails to act with integrity. So reputation impacts the company's choices and core beliefs.

The most creative way of being is the willingness to be wrong: This creates new, real and authentic opportunities. Even conscious leaders have to make unconscious mistakes. You should be applauded and rewarded for being honest and take accountability abouttelling what you did wrong in the organisation instead of being applauded and rewarded for the end result and not being questioned for how you got there.

Gross National Happiness Index: Bhutan measures happiness by surveying its population. All other countries are driven by Gross Domestic Product (GDP). We could learn from a country like Bhutan about the leadership impact on reputation and brand.

PANEL TWO: EMBEDDING A NEW FRAMEWORK FOR CONSCIOUS ETHICAL LEADERSHIP: GIVEN THE ELECTIONS AND THE DEMISE OF TRUTH AND TRANSPARENCY

Leadership is not a science, it's an art: Leadership isn't all about the authority, the boss, the CEO title. Leadership is about being the facilitator and the catalyst. The days of a messiah leading employees forward are in the past. Leadership can operate behind-the-scenes facilitating the change we need to see. It's not about authority. It's not about position. It's not about title. It's about being a good human being. Then carry your organisation, put the values into the system and take that organisation along with you into the competitive world. Leadership is more about perspective and empathy.

What are young people's views of leadership? Young people today are confused about the news. Some believe that TikTok is a news channel. There's an apathy about voting in the upcoming elections because they have lost faith in the current system. They are not taught the difference between right and wrong and often cannot discern the difference between positive and negative behaviour. We need to teach young people the basic principles of humanity so that they can make the right choices.

Quorum: Our Constitution is still arguably one of the greatest documents. So these structures are similar to that of a chat GPT for the future as a corporate. The foundation of the house has been created and it's now up to us to create a greater structure and to infuse the socio-economic corporate governance, technology with the technology of the ecology, the latest science on planetary boundaries and on neuroscience and psychology. These need to be infused into the corporate governance structure and listing rules, so that there's a transdisciplinary approach. The law and the



Chairman (from left); Marc Lubner - Executive Deputy Chairman: Africa Tikkun
 Dr. Richa Arora - COO and Head of Institution: University of Stirling (UAE); Palesa Phili - CEO: Durban Chamber of Commerce and Industries; Rowan Gillies - Co-founder: Blu-Dot Global System Integration Advisory (UK) and Dr Wilhelm Lichtenberg - Founder: Young Hearts Africa / Winner CC Awards 2023 (NGO)

accounting rules are in place but the consciousness and ecological foundations and the drafting of it is crucial. We can take the example of a quorum. If you have a quorum requirement, what is its presence? What is the physical presence and consciousness of a nominated director in a room?

Radical new thinking: We do the same things over and over again at pivotal moments, expecting things to change. This is a form of immaturity and insanity according to Einstein. We need to create new structures

and we need radical new ambitions. A reconfiguration of the mind.

Responsibility: If leaders are not aware of their sense of responsibility – to self, to family, to friends, to colleagues, and to greater society – then they are going to miss the opportunities to make their lives better, to make society better and to leave a legacy of something good behind. Integrity is earned not by what we say but by what we think and do.

AN OVERVIEW OF THE DAY FROM THE PROGRAMME DIRECTOR: ADAM CRAKER

- In the present day, companies must strive to become Conscious Companies, where it's leaders become the stewards of mindful consciousness and ethical behaviour.
- The Japanese chairman of Sumitomo Rubber reflects on the need for "Discipline of Mind" in their business. This highlighted for me the benefit we gain from international diversity and perspective in business. The work in society by Sumitomo is a great example – we cannot take for granted the intent, ambition and impact that this has in Ladysmith.
- "Here's to conscious leaders, the crazy ones, the misfits, the rebels, the troublemakers, the round pegs in the square holes... the ones who see things differently..." (Steve Jobs 1997)
- I was reminded of how important it is to balance in life passion, compassion and dispassion and the need to build the spiritual dimension of my life (not to be confused with religion, unless this is wanted too).
- Our mind works on the basis of 5% conscious and 95% subconscious. We can percolate our thoughts through silence.
- Quorum - the minimum number of members of an assembly or society that must be present at any of its meetings to make the proceedings of that meeting valid. But being physically or virtually present is not enough. Conscious leaders must bring self-awareness, mindfulness, and a deep sense of purpose to the meeting.
- A powerful, driven and intentional leader, calling others to step forward and take the leadership roles "occupied by the hyenas" in our country.
- Reputation is built in the long-term and image reflects brand at a point in time.



Adam Craker
CEO: IQbusiness / Winner CC Awards 2018 / Programme Director



Dr. Jan Bellermann
CEO: Conscious Leadership Academy (Germany)

TWO STATES OF BEING

Human beings experience life in two states – in stress or in well-being. When we experience stress, our body moves into a survival state and prepares for fight and flight. Put that into the business context when you face a new unknown challenge and are unsure how to handle it. In that moment, your brain is moving into a stressed state and you are not having access to your full intelligence. You're driven on autopilot; that means you're only repeating old solutions from the past. And that doesn't sound very clever in a world that is changing every day.



Tsakani Maluleke
Auditor General, South Africa

HOPE FOR SOUTH AFRICA

Working with young people in this country inspires me and gives me great hope for the future of South Africa. It tells a big story about what each and every one of us can do as leaders and to be conscious of our responsibilities to the country and to building our future. As we head towards the elections, we can reflect on 30 years of democracy and where we are currently. There are many troublesome stories about service delivery and the shrinking fiscus. This needs all hands on deck – every single one of us, whether we happen to be leaders in the private or public sector.



Prof. Mervyn King
Patron - Good Governance Academy

CONSCIENCE AND CONSCIOUSNESS OF CORPORATE LEADERS

What directors don't understand is that they are the conscience of the company because the company by definition, is always innocent. It's incapacitated. So it cannot mindfully and with intention, commit or wrong, but when something happens, which is adverse to society, the people to blame are those who are its mind and its conscience, namely, its corporate leaders, its directors individually and collectively as a board.

So consciousness in regard to corporate life is absolutely essential. And Brenda brought this to life, in discussions with me and I agreed to become a patron of Conscious Companies. And a conscious company is an organisation where its leaders have realised that they are the stewards of the company's assets, and it's business affairs that they have to believe and they have to look after it as they would look after an incapacitated human being. They are the conscience of the company and if they are proud of their consciousness, then the company will be seen as a good corporate citizen. So the emergence of conscious companies is critical, provided they have corporate leaders who are conscious, ethical corporate leaders.

PARTNERS WITH PURPOSE

The Conscious Leadership and Ethics Summit would not have been possible without the support and contributions of our partners listed. They have generously given of their time and resources over the years to make all our initiatives hugely successful. They understand that conscious leadership is action.



GURU KALI

CCO: Conscious Leadership Academy



LUBIN OZOUX

CEO: Sumitomo Rubber South Africa



ROMAIN DUVERGÉ

Relationship Manager: Banque Syz (Switzerland)



PEPE MARAIS

Group Integrated Chief Creative Officer: Joe Public

For now, though, it's chaos as usual in the upside down: Lockheed is bullish, and geopolitical leaders have new toys to test out. And some of these individuals who make that choice may be with us here this morning, with their own stories of a spark that went off inside, stories of an internal experience that moves the needle and an aching beauty found between the silence of each breath. Leaders with visions to turn ripples into tsunamis and the many voices trying to straighten out a wiggly world.

At Sumitomo, we have a special document by our founder from the 17th century. At its heart are business philosophies that informs how we should conduct ourselves, and they are integrity and sound management, enterprising spirit, people are our most important asset, to work for the benefit of self and others. It directs us to act in an ethical and conscious manner, and decisions that I, and the company take, are guided by this.

I worked from 2015 to 2022 in London in a top bank but while I was feeding my ego my soul felt empty. The early stages of the pandemic served as a spiritual awakening; a time where I embraced fully yoga and meditation. In every crisis, you can find sources of inspiration and growth. In 2020, I co-founded Goldman Sachs mindfulness community, introducing thousands of employees and clients to another way of being in the world.

Company culture is vital: Culture is determined by the purpose beyond profit of the organisation. The more employees are connected to the purpose, the higher their commitment to the company. Conscious Companies: It's about creating your own ecosystem based on a virtuous cycle, which starts with a focus on the development of people, which affects your product, which in turn serves your clients, resulting in a more sustainable bottom-line.



Hoosain Karjieker
Chairman: Mail and Guardian

NATION BUILDING NEEDS A CONSCIOUS SHIFT

If our leaders embrace ethical conscious leadership by prioritising honesty and integrity as a social responsibility, perhaps they can regain the trust and confidence of their country, their brand and the community. South Africa needs to recreate a strong reputation in the global community and at home. Will these elections bring about the ethical and conscious shift needed? If you consider the country's brand or reputation, then the country is the community and its populace should be involved when evaluating situations and making decisions. After all, involving people in nation building is a key success to securing your position as a successful leader.

Ethical Leadership has a significant impact on citizen engagement and encourages a culture of trust and justice. So many people have lost faith in the current leadership due to the lack of conscience and ethics. However, in looking to build a country and encourage change by working together to create the shift we need in consciousness and ethical behaviour.

HOW DO WE HERALD IN CHANGE FOR A BETTER WORD - A MORE CONSCIOUS ONE

There is a Sanskrit word called "*Chit-ghanna*" which means a mass of consciousness like a concentrated energy of consciousness all around us. This Summit is just that – a concentrated gathering of leaders whose stream of consciousness creates a oneness that is tangible in the room.

"Truth or Dare", the theme of the summit, comes at a pivotal time in the history of our nation. Although most of us are quite familiar with the concept of the game, in this context, it's a challenge as truth seems to be a matter of individual perspective and agenda.

The truth is that we are a week away from the national elections which could be a period of awakening for this country. The dare is a question that we put to every political leader on the ballot paper. Are you there to join a failed and corrupt political establishment in its looting frenzy while appeasing donors? Or are you there because you care about this nation's people, winning public trust and wanting to make a meaningful difference? We dare you to tell the truth. And the truth for those who vote is this: If we don't vote with wisdom, we risk the hijacking of our democracy.

Another dare is a challenge to both business and political leaders to look inward and experience the truth within themselves and how they impact the lives and livelihoods of others? The dare to business leaders is this: Ask yourself who are you and are you courageous enough to examine your own state of being; despite the challenges, despite your positional power, your asset base, your wealth status, and beyond your intellectual and academic understanding? Are you willing to examine your own consciousness?

“ There should be no room for hate when our true nature is love – but hate thrives! ”

The ancient Greek philosopher Socrates was once asked to sum up what the entire philosophical commandments could be reduced to and he replied "Know Thyself", which essentially was a call for self-awareness. He was also famous for saying that an unexamined life is not worth living. But few heeded him or took him seriously during his time. The ancient wisdom and the quest for consciousness has always been alive through the centuries and marks a turning point in the evolution of those seeking it. So what we are trying to do today - *is no different. Especially in these times and the dismal state of affairs globally - it is critical to have the narrative of conscious, ethical leadership brought into the mainstream. Growing this mass of consciousness- this Chit-ghanna!*

Imagine if the Presidents, pundits, world leaders and titans of industry who gather at Davos each year would embrace the deeper understanding of the transformative behaviour of conscious leadership and come to the realisation that true authentic leadership is an internal power that can touch and change a multitude of lives. A power that can never be found externally to you. This would propel us to return to a more just, more sustainable and better world and would be a catalyst for change to lead the way to a renewed sense of trust, humanity, honour and responsibility as the cornerstones of the sustainable future.

If it was at all possible, this realisation then gives rise to a sense of meaning, purpose and corrective, conscious, ethical behaviour that can propel us to return to a more just, sustainable and better world. This would then set into motion a global collective will to build a better world for us all, with the urgency that we currently require.

But what are the chances of the Heads of States and the luminaries that gather at Davos – dare to act as a cohesive force? So for now, this hope for Leadership to



Brenda Kali
Founder / Chairperson: Conscious Companies

embrace consciousness and mainstream its narrative and action can only be a dream or dare.

Our current dismal failure to build a conscious society, let alone a peaceful world, is a moral failure. When humanity finds itself with its back against the wall and the agony of utter hopelessness crushes it down, we need to realise that we could never have been brought down to such depths of anxiety and misery, if it had not been for the corruption, ignorance and grave weaknesses of the defective character of some of our leaders, both at home and globally.

We weep today as a humanity, not only over the corruption and ignorance globally, but at the hateful rhetoric, war-mongering, anti-semitism, racism, brutality, violence, distorted narratives and the anguish and despair that exists around the world. There should be no room for hate when our true nature is love – but hate thrives! When so many people in so many lands have to suffer such catastrophic events, unprecedented chaos, diabolic leaders and the destructive agonies of nature... what can we do as individuals, as leaders - as human beings to create a better world – a more conscious one.

How do we herald in a change? We need to look no further than the mind and heart of leaders and their state of being.

This is where consciousness plays a pivotal role. When we find the time to embark on an internal journey to penetrate the depths of one's own soul and understand what it means – this can stimulate our thinking enough and awaken something within that speaks to the heart and soul of humanity. This is who we are truly as human beings and the understanding and action of it is a choice: In giving, in doing, in feeding the hungry, in healing the hurt, in helping your adversary, in dancing with your enemy, in loving the unloved, in saving a life, in defending the underdog, in educating a child that's not yours- is a choice.

There is nothing more powerful in your choices as your random acts of kindness and compassion – when you do it anonymously and do it enough times - particularly when it is done with no desire for recognition, fame or praise. Your every act- even the smallest can impact one life or several. It is the most powerful tool to change the world - to secretly commit little acts of compassion. So the question is What is holding you back from your little acts of compassion and kindness? What is holding you back from acting on behalf of humanity.

**CALL FOR NOMINATIONS FOR THE
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CLOSING DATE: 31 MAY 2022

SEND YOUR NOMINATIONS TO

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