

THE FRONT PAGE

Making headlines this morning, the DA is gunning for the head of the Road Traffic Management Corporation, Ranthoko Rakgoale, who the party says should be suspended pending a full investigation into mismanagement and lavish spending; some of the top bankers attending the World Economic Forum in Davos have come out in favour of a bank-funded safety net to absorb large failures; and President Jacob Zuma stands accused of undermining his own government's battle against the spread of HIV/Aids, after it was revealed that he fathered a child with soccer boss Irvin Khoza's daughter - his 20th child.

NEWS REVIEWS

THE DAY IN SHORT

In the news today: the Democratic Alliance want the Public Prosecutor to launch an investigation into Road Traffic Management Corporation' (RTMC) CEO, Rantho Rakgoale, on alleged mismanagement of funds. State Security Minister Siyabonga Cwele knowledge of his wife Sheryl's alleged drug peddling, raises questions from opposition parties. African National Congress (ANC) Deputy President Kgalema Motlanthe yesterday tried to guide the lobbying process already under way in the fierce fight for the chair of the ANC's Gauteng provincial executive committee, between current Chairperson Paul Mashatile and Gauteng Premier Nomvula Mokonyane. Democratic Alliance (DA) leader Helen Zille has renewed an attack on President Jacob Zuma's sexual conduct, after it was alleged that he is the father of a four-month-old baby by Sonono Khosa.

NEWS REVIEWS

POLITICAL NEWS

Roads boss wastes millions

The Democratic Alliance (DA) wants the Public Prosecutor to launch an investigation on Road Traffic Management Corporation' (RTMC) CEO, Rantho Rakgoale, on alleged mismanagement of funds. The DA make this calling in the wake of receiving a copy of a report by auditors Deloitte & Touche, who Rakgoale paid R13.3 million for work done on cleaning up the RTMC's finance last year. The CEO did not approach his finance committee for authorisation as the cost was expected to fall below the limit of R10 million - but it ended up costing more, and Rakgoale had to ask the finance committee for condonation. Rakgoale is suspended pending a full investigation into mismanagement and lavish spending.

STAR

KaMagwaza-Msibi redeployed

It was decided in the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) national council meeting held in Ulundi yesterday that its Chairperson and Zululand District Mayor, Zanele kaMagwaza-Msibi, will be redeployed from her mayoral position to the KwaZulu-Natal legislature. The decision basically endorses a position adopted by the party's national executive committee last week but which was denied by the party's leadership. The party said that the redeployment was to allow her to participate in the deployment of IFP parliamentarians to constituencies.

MERCURY (Durban)

SACP attacks former ANC MPL Garth Strachan

The Western Cape South African Communist Party (SACP) has launched a scathing attack on Garth Strachan, who resigned as an African National Congress (ANC) MPL last month. He will now be taking on a post as chief director in the Department of Trade and Industry. The SACP said that Strachan had a direct contribution in the demise of the ANC in the province. Strachan had no comment.

CAPE TIMES

ANCyl led by thugs and drunkards

A resident at Wembley Mews in Granton Place in the Town Hill area said that an incident in the area is testimony that the African National Congress Youth League (ANCyl) is led by thugs and drunkards. This comes after partygoers became unruly when residents approached them to reduce the noise levels. The resident said that people expect to see young leaders set an example for other young people, but the behaviour displayed by those at the party on Friday showed a negative attitude.

WITNESS (Pietermaritzburg)

SAFETY & SECURITY NEWS

Top education official murdered

Ntombizonke Adelaide Cele, a Chief Education Specialist in the KwaZulu-Natal Education Department, was found strangled in her Westville home yesterday. Cele's 10-year-old granddaughter is receiving trauma counselling as she witnessed the attack. KZN Education Department spokesperson, Mbali Thusi, said that MEC Senzo Mchunu will pay a visit to Cele's family this morning to convey the department's condolences.

MERCURY (Durban)

Cwele arrest: How safe are we?

If State Security Minister Siyabonga Cwele did not know of his wife Sheryl's alleged drug peddling, how safe are we? This is one of the questions asked by opposition parties after Sheryl Cwele's arrest on drug related charged on Friday. The Democratic Alliance yesterday questioned whether the country's security was the minister's number one priority. The DA say since they are married, there should be some form of communication between them. The ruling party would not be drawn into the debate and all they said was Minister Cwele was a man of integrity and an asset to the country.

STAR; MERCURY

Hibiscus Municipality mum on Cwele's arrest

The Hibiscus Municipality remains mum on the arrest of Sheryl Cwele, wife of Minister of State Security, Siyabonga Cwele. Municipal spokesperson, Simon Soboyisa, said that Cwele, who is the Director of Health and Community Services at the municipality, had returned from her annual leave for barely a day when the Hawks arrested her. The Congress of the People (COPE) has demanded the minister's resignation.

WITNESS (Pietermaritzburg)

Agliotti, Selebi trial resumes

The prosecution has said it is ready to proceed today with the trial of Glenn Agliotti, accused of the murder of mining magnate Brett Kebble, despite not having been able, so far, to extradite his co-accused, John Stratton, from Australia. However, the case is likely to be postponed as the judge scheduled to hear the case, Meyer Joffe, is also presiding over the corruption trial of former national police commissioner, Jackie Selebi. That case is also due to continue today, after a Supreme Court of Appeal judgement on Friday dismissing an appeal by State Security Minister Siyabonga Cwele against Joffe's judgement that former national intelligence co-ordinator Barry Gilder should testify.

BUSINESS DAY (National)

Special unit to tackle border town violence

A special police unit has been dispatched to the border town of Musina in Limpopo to tackle criminal gangs attacking and raping foreign nationals crossing into South Africa. The outcry by NGOs at the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) following an alarming increase in criminal brutality at the border since the beginning of the year spurred police into action. National Police spokesperson Phuti Setati said that since April last year, police operations had netted 30 suspects, resulting in 10 convictions.

STAR

LABOUR & UNION NEWS

Uasa calls petrol hike a 'blow to consumers'

Trade union the United Association of SA (Uasa) said on Friday that this month's petrol price hike was another blow to consumers. "Uasa is concerned that the substantial increase of 18c a litre in the retail price of all grades of petrol may prove to be just one more blow to SA's still struggling workers and consumers," the union said.

BUSINESS DAY (National)

Solution in sight to end six-week strike at ABI

The Food and Allied Workers Union (Fawu) hinted last week that its six-week strike at cold-drink bottling company ABI could be coming to an end. Fawu General Secretary Katishi Masemola said on Friday that Congress of South African Trade Unions General Secretary Zwelinzima Vavi had met officials from SABMiller, ABI's parent company, and developed an agreement for discussion by Fawu and ABI today. Masemola said that the strikers had made "many compromises" in the agreement, but he could not provide further details. "I will say our demand for ensured job security will be a sticky issue on Monday," he said.

BUSINESS DAY (National)

NEWS BRIEF**Flooding gives hope for Vaal's renewal**

For years, the Vaal River has been choked with tons of sewage, heavy metals and toxic waste, but the recent flooding has given the ailing waterway a new lease of life. Water released from the Vaal Dam, believe environmentalists and concerned residents, is flushing the river, washing away polluted sediments. The increased flow rate is likely to dilute and wash the sediments further down the river.

STAR

Reach Out Foundation works with France

The Reach Out Foundation has been working with France, a community on the outskirts of Pietermaritzburg, that is faced with several challenges such as poverty and unemployment, as well as many Aids-orphaned children who are forced to fend for themselves. Liberty Properties recently announced a donation of R2.4 million towards the development of a state-of-the-art community drop-in centre. Grinaker-LTA, Quad Africa, Bentels Associates International, Crane Registered Quantity Surveyors, RDP Consulting Engineers, AKI Consulting, Building Code Consultants and Southern Sun are some of the sponsors of the France drop-in centre.

WITNESS (Pietermaritzburg)

SA scientists win AU award

President Jacob Zuma yesterday congratulated two South African scientists, Professor Patrick Eriksson and Professor Diane Hildebrandt, for winning the prestigious Awards for Basic Science, Technology and Innovation at the African Union (AU). The programme was designed to celebrate achievements for African scientists in their efforts to transform entrepreneurship, attracts investments to Africa and create centre of excellence in the continent.

THE TIMES, CITIZEN, STAR

HEALTH NEWS**Swine flu back for the soccer**

Tourists visiting South Africa for the FIFA Soccer World Cup have been advised to be vaccinated against disease such as swine flu and measles. Dr Drew Benson, cluster manager for communicable disease in the National Department of Health, said visitors were advised to get their vaccinations, as countries in northern hemisphere, were expected to be hit by a second wave of swine flu before June. Meanwhile the department will be embarking on a national vaccination drive beginning in March, before the start of the regular flu season and the World Cup kick-off in June.

THE TIMES

PROVINCIAL NEWS**Durban to profit from waste**

Electricity generated from waste was expected to generate huge profits for the eThekweni Municipality, an official said on Thursday. John Parkin said, "We borrowed R58 million to start this project. We will be able to pay off the debt in four years and after that it will be a massive profit for the city". He was speaking at the launch of a plant which captures harmful methane gas from the Bisasar Road landfill site and produces 8MW of electricity. It is said to be the first landfill gas project on the African continent. The R100 million project was funded by the city, the Departments of Trade and Industry and Energy, and the French Development Bank which loaned R58 million.

NEWS24.COM - NEWS 24

Probe into Mpisane contract

Just hours before the National Home Builders Registration Council releases a report on its probe into the Umlazi housing scandal today, it has emerged that a second contract awarded to Zikhulise Cleaning, Maintenance and Transport is under investigation for unfinished and shoddy work. KwaZulu-Natal Education MEC Senzo Mchunu has affirmed that it would probe work the company had done at the department's Truro House headquarters in Margaret Mncadi Avenue in Durban last year. Both the departments of Education and Public Works have affirmed that Zikhulise received R12 million for renovations to the building, however it is believed the work remains incomplete, despite all the money being paid.

MERCURY (Durban)

Happy Valley residents want to move

Forty unhappy residents of Happy Valley in Cape Town have challenged their living conditions and forced relocation there from their former backyard dwellers settlement in Grassy Park. The applicants asked leave to introduce new evidence to constitute that Happy Valley did not constitute as reasonable accommodation. The families claim that they had an agreement with the City of Cape Town to be relocated to permanent accommodation in Grassy Park.

CAPE TIMES

Bosman-Zulu given new job

Co-accused in the Indiza corruption trial, Pamela Bosman-Zulu has been awarded a contract with the Eastern Cape Gambling & Betting Board. Bosman confirmed that she will join the board, as a financial management consultant, with immediate effect, after the deal with the board was secured last week. Bosman-Zulu, former chief financial officer for the KwaZulu-Natal Treasury and the Education Department together with KZN businessman Jabulani Mabaso will appear in the Pietermaritzburg High Court in May for charges of corruption, forgery, fraud and money laundering.

WITNESS (Pietermaritzburg)

Road upgrade to provide reprieve

A revamp to the N3/Chota Motala Road interchange, an area notorious for bumper-to-bumper traffic during peak periods, will provide some reprieve for frustrated residents. The South African National Roads Agency Limited (Sanral) has conducted the necessary design work for the upgrade, and Msunduzi Municipality has committed itself to the project by approving funding to an amount of R54 767 287. Acting Deputy Municipal Manager for Infrastructure Services, Thokozani Maseko, said that "The amount is considered reasonable, compared with the initial estimate of R94 million, which was considered not financially viable for the council".

WITNESS (Pietermaritzburg)

CEO not informed of Robben Island ferry

More than six hours after Robben Island's stand-in ferry ran aground last week, apparently loaded with tourists, nobody had informed the museum's chief executive. This was despite wide-spread concern over the island's permanent ferry, which had broken down three times in the past four months. Island spokesperson Dennis Cruywagen said that tours to the island are going ahead on vessels, Susan Kruger and Dias.

CAPE TIMES

Busy weekend for the NSRI

National Sea Rescue Institute (NSRI) members responded to back-to-back incidents at the weekend, in which two people died and at least ten others needed help. Calls came out from Chapman's Peak, Pinnacle Point, Pringle Bay Gordon's Bay, Knysna, Cape Agulhus and Melkbos strand.

CAPE TIMES

EDUCATION NEWS**Educators given suspension notices**

Two senior KwaDukuza educators who allegedly groped, touched and asked female teachers to perform sexual favours were given suspension notices yesterday. The teachers face a disciplinary inquiry next month. Problems at the school emerged late last year when teachers lodged complaints of sexual harassment against the principal.

DAILY NEWS (Deadline)

DA slams KZN Education

The Democratic Alliance (DA) has slammed the KwaZulu-Natal Education Department for its failure to improve the conditions at KwaDinabakubo Combined School in Molweni. A severe storm in November 2008 had left the school damaged. KZN Education Department spokesperson, Mbali Thusi, said that plans to reconstruct the school were under way.

DAILY NEWS (Deadline)

CPUT students to continue their protest

Student nurses have vowed to continue their protest at the Cape Peninsula University of Technology's (CPUT) Belville campus. They were evicted from the college's residences on Friday, until further notice. They were told that this was to ensure the safety of students and staff.

CAPE TIMES

Student tension brews at TUT

Controversy at the Tshwane University of Technology (TUT) Shoshanguve campus in Pretoria is mounting as tensions between student bodies increase. This comes after protests and weekend evictions in which about 400 students were booted out by university management following claims of lawlessness, hooliganism and marijuana-growing. Some students were allegedly assaulted by police in the evictions. In the meantime, the campus has temporarily closed its doors to beef up security.

CITIZEN (Second Edition)

GOVERNMENT BRIEF**Launch of International Year of Biodiversity**

Buyelwa Sonjica, Minister of Water and Environmental Affairs will officially launch International Year of Biodiversity (IYB) today. The United Nations (UN) declared 2010 the International Year of Biodiversity. IYB is a celebration of life on earth and the recognition of the links between biodiversity, ecosystem services and human well being. Celebrations for IYB will take place under the apt theme, 'Biodiversity is life, Biodiversity is our Life.' This aims to raise awareness of the importance of conserving biodiversity for human well-being, promote the understanding of the economic value of biodiversity, enhance public knowledge of the threats to biodiversity and means to conserve it, engage all of society, celebrate the achievements, reflect on challenges, and use the momentum gained to trigger even more action for biodiversity.

NEWS REVIEWS

Motlanthe in bid to guide Gauteng fight

African National Congress (ANC) Deputy President Kgalema Motlanthe yesterday tried to guide the lobbying process already under way in the fierce fight for the chair of the ANC's Gauteng provincial executive committee, between current Chairperson Paul Mashatile and Gauteng Premier Nomvula Mokonyane. Motlanthe was speaking to ANC branch members in a packed auditorium at the Johannesburg City Hall at the opening session of the provincial general council, ahead of the provincial conference in May, when the chairperson will be elected.

BUSINESS DAY (National); STAR; CITIZEN

Schism in ANC on Reserve Bank

Apparently contradictory statements indicating deep differences in the ruling ANC alliance over the nationalisation of the SA Reserve Bank were made at the weekend by two top government figures. Speaking from Davos, in an interview with Business Times, Finance Minister Pravin Gordhan called for an end to speculation about the role and independence of the institution. The Times quoted Gordhan as saying that there was no room for discussion "outside the context of the constitution". Gordhan appeared to warn those questioning the independence of the bank to step-off. He added, "This scepticism about either the independence of our bank or the importance of its role must be dismissed completely".

CITIZEN (Second Edition)

Details of payments to Maroga to be made available

BuaNews said on Friday that the details of payments made by Eskom to former CEO Jacob Maroga would be made available in Eskom's annual financial statements later this year. Citing Eskom, the government news agency said that all payments made to Maroga would be declared, in line with statutory requirements. Maroga has filed an R85 million lawsuit against the Department of Enterprises and Eskom, arguing that Eskom's board forced him to quit before he end of his contract in 2012. He is asking that the utility pay him the amount or give him his job back. Eskom and Public Enterprises Minister Barbara Hogan have indicated that they will oppose the lawsuit.

BUSINESS DAY (National)

Ad agency's summons 'left at security'

The African National Congress (ANC) yesterday defended its failure to appear in court to defend a claim for R25 million in fees owed for election campaign work done by advertising agency Ogilvy. Spokesperson, Ishmael Mnisi claimed the summons, served in December 2009, had been left with security staff at Luthuli House and "did not reach the attention of the ANC executive committee and officials". "Investigations are under way at the sheriff's office to find out whether legal procedure were followed in delivering this summons," Mnisi said.

STAR; CITIZEN

Comair tries to defuse storm over 'fare-fixing' email

Comair on Friday denied approaching other domestic airlines to collude on fixing 2010 Soccer World Cup air fare prices, saying it would co-operate fully with a Competition Commission probe. Comair found itself at the centre of the storm on pricing after it emerged that the commission began its probe focusing on an email from the airline's offices. While Comair admitted it had sent out an email on pricing, joint-CEO Erik Venter said it was in response to an email from Pule Selepe of the Department of Transport, advising the airlines that alleged excessive pricing to be raised at an aviation sub-sector task team meeting last year. The task team oversees airline plans for the World Cup.

BUSINESS DAY (National)

Growing service delivery protests lead to hearing

As service delivery protests continue to erupt around the country, Parliament will this week start public hearings on problems afflicting municipalities where communities' frustration is running high. A special ad hoc committee has been set up to hear testimony. Its Chairperson, Lechesa Tsenoli, said yesterday they are hoping that the hearing would help MPs understand the reasons behind the spate of protests and arrive at solution that would assist local municipalities and councils to provide services more speedily and effectively.

STAR

Zuma's hopes on telescope contract

South Africa and Australia are competing to host the multibillion-rand Square Kilometre Array, which will allow astronomers to peer back in time almost to the birth of the universe. President Jacob Zuma revealed this in a speech prepared for delivery at a session of the African Union Heads of State and Government Assembly being held in Addis Ababa. Scientist want to use the radio telescope to study omission generated when the first stars and galaxies were formed, about 750-million years after the "big bang" that gave birth to the universe 14 000-million years ago. The naming of the site is expected between 2011 and 2012.

STAR; BUSINESS DAY

Zille resumes attack on Zuma's sex life

Democratic Alliance (DA) leader Helen Zille has renewed attack on President Jacob Zuma's sexual conduct, saying he was setting back the fight against HIV and Aids. Zille's comment followed a report yesterday that the president had fathered a child, now for month old, with the daughter of Olando Pirates boss Irvin Khoza. A few month ago, Zille drew the ire of the ruling party and its youth league after telling a newspaper that Zuma was putting his wives at risk of contracting HIV/Aids with his polygamous relationships.

STAR; CITIZEN

Taxpayer's bill grows with Zuma's brood

President Jacob Zuma has officially fathered at least 19 children with his ex-wives and current wives and girlfriends. The 67-year old president may also be the father of 39-year old divorcee Sonono Khoza's love child, who will add to the amount taxpayer's spend on the president. All Zuma's official wives are entitled to a number of perks at the state expense - benefits for which taxpayers will be shelling out for long after he vacates the Presidency. All those legally binding polygamous marriages to Zuma are entitled to personal assistants, air travel, medical expenses and security. These expenses will all be borne by the state.

CITIZEN (Second Edition)

BUSINESS BRIEF

In Business news today, substantive mistakes that were introduced into the Companies Act after the parliamentary hearings are so serious that the act is, according to a leading legal figure, "unimplementable" in its current form. With the imminent sacking of the Chief Executive and the entire board of Sentech, it has emerged that the struggling signal distributor is budgeting for a net loss of R123 million for the 2009/10 financial year as a result of discontinued operations such as MyWireless. Barloworld's share incentive plan gives managers too easy a ride because it uses results timed with a global slump as its base year, according to shareholder Oasis Asset Management. Fawu hinted last week that its six-week strike at cold-drink bottling company ABI could be coming to an end, though it would appear that there are still issues to discuss.

NEWS REVIEWS

'Companies Act a mess'

Substantive mistakes that were introduced into the Companies Act after the parliamentary hearings are so serious that the act is, according to a leading legal figure, "unimplementable" in its current form. In a bid to resolve the act's "significant problems" without having to reopen the drawn out parliamentary process, the Department of Trade and Industry (dti) initiated a "rectification" process during the year end holiday period. On 22 December Trade and Industry Minister Rob Davies published a notice in the Government Gazette calling for comment on "issues for rectification". Comments had to be submitted within 30 days. Before the act needed to be rectified, the act was expected to come into force in April. At this stage it is unclear how long the rectification process will take, but MacDonald Netshitenzhe, a Director in the dti, said it hoped the process could be finalised by April.

BUSINESS REPORT (National)

Stop Obaro deal, says Solidarity

Obaro, the trade name of MGK Operating Company, offered a 0% wage increase this week and asked to be exempt from increases this year, Solidarity union has revealed. Solidarity, which represents more than 1 800 members in the Grain Bargaining Council, said on Friday Obaro was pleading poverty but recently spent more than R110 million buying several Afgri retail branches, with existing stock. The union has rejected Obaro's 0% offer and asked for the Afgri deal, which has to be considered by the Competition Commission, not to be approved.

BUSINESS DAY (National)

Lack of agency breeds BEE verification crunch

The number of black economic empowerment (BEE) verification agencies was worryingly lower than the number of companies they had to accredit, making it impossible for them to certify all local firms as required by law, consultants warned on Friday. Keith Levenstein, the Chief Executive of EconoBEE Consulting, said their were 26 verification agencies that had to accredit about 500 000 companies. "The sheer volume of work that is going to come in is huge," said Levenstein. "These agencies may not be able to accredit all these companies. This state of affairs is not right if we want companies to comply. Some companies may not comply, knowing that it could be impossible to verify their BEE status". This could undermine the state's efforts to redress imbalances of the past. It would also open up the process to abuse by companies not interested in meeting the broad-based BEE legal requirements.

BUSINESS REPORT (National)

Chief astronomer suspended, faces dismissal

South Africa's chief astronomer, the highly regarded Director of the South African Astronomical Observatory, Phil Charles, has been suspended by the National Research Foundation. He faces potential dismissal over his alleged leaking of confidential information to fellow scientists and is due to face a disciplinary hearing in the next few days. Charles was instrumental in the roll-out of the South African Large Telescope (Salt) in Sutherland, and he is a key player in SA's bid to win the R20 billion Square Kilometre Array (Ska) contract.

PRETORIA NEWS

Maize possibly damaged

Grain SA, an association of local farmers, asked the government for help in assessing damage to SA's maize crop after rains washed plants out of the ground and caused floods in some growing areas. "At this stage, we cannot quantify the damage," Neels Ferreira, Grain SA's Chairperson, said on Friday. "Most of the damage was in central parts of SA, which includes the Free State and parts of North West and eastern Mpumalanga." White maize for delivery in March, the most actively traded contract on the South African Futures Exchange, had slid 23% since early November to R1 184 a ton. Yellow maize for delivery in March has dropped 15% to R1 247 a ton.

BUSINESS DAY (National)

BANKING BRIEF

In Banking news this morning, South Africa's trade surplus balance swung unexpectedly back into the black with a surplus of R3.7 billion last months, and imports plunged; There is a move towards greater pricing realism in the residential property market despite more sellers having to drop their asking price to conclude a sale, according to FNB; Demand for credit by South Africa's private sector fell by 0.76% year-on-year in December after a contraction of 1.59% in November, Central Bank data showed on Friday; and data on the South African government's revenue and expenditure, released by the National Treasury on Friday, suggest VAT collections in the fiscal year, which ends next month, are "likely to surpass the October estimate of R138 billion by R8 billion to R10 billion".

NEWS REVIEWS

'Strong SA showing at Davos'

South Africa has exceptionally strong representation at this year's World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland. The contingent is marketing South Africa not only for the World Cup Soccer tournament, but also for the good opportunities for investment growth in Africa, says Geoffrey Qhena, Chief Executive of the Industrial Development Corporation (IDC). From Davos he told Sake24.com that Africa currently offers better growth opportunities than do China and India. Qhena, who on Thursday attended a panel discussion on international energy prospects, said South Africa will have to invest more in clean and renewable energy in the light of diminishing oil reserves.

FIN24.CO.ZA - FINWEEK

SA still in anti-credit mode

Demand for credit by South Africa's private sector fell by 0.76% year-on-year in December after a contraction of 1.59% in November, Central Bank data showed on Friday. During the same period, growth in the broadly defined M3 measure of money supply quickened to 1.62% compared with 0.58% year-on-year growth in November. A Reuters poll forecast that private sector credit demand would decrease by 0.51% year-on-year, while annual M3 growth was seen at 1.31%.

FIN24.CO.ZA - FINWEEK

US economic growth of 5.7% boosts stocks

The US economy roared back to life with a growth pace of 5.7% in the fourth quarter of last year, sending the JSE on an upward spike in late trade on Friday. The performance was led by brisk business spending to restock inventories and buy new equipment and software. Dawie Roodt, the chief economist at Efficient Group, said that this meant South Africa's economy could well be on the way to recovery. "These figures were better than expected and that economy is benefiting from a huge stimulus package". The US Commerce Department report showed the strongest growth in domestic product in six years.

BUSINESS REPORT (Star)

Tax take is on track, data shows

Collections of VAT made a strong comeback in December, according to Leon Myburgh, Citi's sub-Saharan Africa specialist. Data on the government's revenue and expenditure, released by the National Treasury on Friday, suggest VAT collections in the fiscal year, which ends next month, are "likely to surpass the October estimate of R138 billion by R8 billion to R10 billion," according to Myburgh. The figures relate to the period April to December. The improvement in VAT is a "lead indicator of what to expect in corporate taxes." He added that corporate taxes fell in the period by 18.2%, compared with the same period of 2008.

BUSINESS REPORT (Star)

Households lead corporates in return to banks

As the local economy fights free of recession, corporate rates are more reluctant to borrow than the household sector. Reserve Bank figures on credit extension show credit to corporates continued to fall sharply last year, while households showed tentative signs of borrowing more freely. Stanlib economist Kevin Lings said that there were very few private sector investment projects that needed finance. "Many businesses have spare capacity and are not expanding." Credit to the private sector fell for the third month in a row in December, by 0.76% year-on-year, slightly better than the annual shrinkage of 1.59% the month before.

BUSINESS REPORT (Star)

Surprise as SA notches up surplus

The trade surplus balance swung unexpectedly back into the black with a surplus of R3.7 billion last months, and imports plunged. Markets had predicted a deficit of R800 million after a shortfall of R2.5 billion in November, but the figures are notoriously volatile. Over the whole of last year, the trade deficit shrank 64% to R25.84 billion from a shortfall of R71.631 billion the previous year. Analysts said the improvement reflected the poor state of domestic demand as the economy pulled out of its first recession in 17 years".

BUSINESS DAY (National)

SA's trade balance swings back into black

South Africa's trade balance swung unexpectedly back into the black with a surplus of R3.7 billion last month as imports plunged, official data showed on Friday. Markets had predicted a deficit of R800 million after a shortfall of R2.5 billion in November, but the figures are notoriously volatile, reflecting the timing of shipments. Over the whole of last year, the trade deficit shrank 64% to R25.84 billion from a shortfall of R71.63 billion the previous year, Analysts said that the improvement mainly reflected the poor state if domestic demand as SA's economy pulls out of its first recession in 17 years.

BUSINESS DAY (National)

Treasury bill yields at a low

South African 264-day Treasury Bill yields fell to their lowest this year and received bids for more than nine times the amount sold by the government at an auction on Friday, as bets on a rate cut intensified. Investors bid for R3.24 billion of the 7.5% securities at the fourth weekly auction this year, of which R350 million was available, the Reserve Bank said. Bids for 273-day bills yielding 7.53% reached R4.82 billion, more than six times the R750 million on offer.

BUSINESS DAY (National)

Pityana suspended from Development Bank

The Development Bank of Southern Africa last week suspended human capital and technology executive manager Loyiso Pityana-Ndlovu. While the bank would not divulge details on her suspension, officials denied allegations that she was escorted off the premises. "There is going to be an internal process that will be followed, a statement will be sent out once the process has been finalised," Snowy Khoza, group strategy and communications manager, said yesterday.

BUSINESS DAY (National)

SPORTING HIGHLIGHTS

Roger Federer and Serena Williams proved why they are the two best tennis players on the planet after they each added one more crown to their growing list of Grand Slam titles at the Australian Open this weekend. Federer increased his record tally to 16 with a clinical straight sets win over Andy Murray, while Williams claimed her twelfth following a three set triumph over comeback queen Justine Henin. Over and above their victories - Federer's fourth and Williams's fifth at Melbourne Park - these two players' motivation and determination is what impresses most. Having already earned the most prize money ever on the men's and women's tours respectively and having both already won all four Grand Slams, both Federer and Williams remain focussed on winning. They do not rest on their laurels and for this very reason will remain in contention for every major title.

News Reviews

Bulls show Lions how it's done

The Bulls convincingly beat the Lions in both Super 14 warm-up matches in Polokwane on Saturday, with a near full-strength A team running out 42-12 winners and the B team winning 25-3.

CITIZEN (Second Edition), Sport

Egypt win African Cup of Nations

Substitute Mohamed "Gedo" Nagy scored a late winner as Egypt defeated Ghana 1-0 to capture their third straight African Cup of Nations title yesterday.

STAR, Sport

Federer ends Murray's dream

Roger Federer beat Andy Murray 6-3, 6-4, 7-6 to capture his fourth Australian Open title 16th Grand Slam title yesterday.

STAR, Sport

Serena aims for more silverware

Serena Williams won the Australian Open women's singles title for the fifth time following a 6-4, 3-6, 6-2 victory over Belgian Justine Henin on Saturday. The 28-year-old also won the doubles with her sister Venus for the fourth time and has no plans of stopping. "I don't see an end now," she said following her win. "I feel like as long as I'm happy and I want to do it and I enjoy being out there (I'll keep playing)".

STAR, Sport

INDICATORS

Rand - Dollar \$	7.5599	(+0.0395)
Rand - Sterling £	12.1291	(+0.1614)
Rand - Euro €	10.5219	(+0.0815)
JSE Allshare	26675.9	(-119.35)
Gold	1078.5	(-9.50)
Platinum	1512.0	(-5.00)
Brent Crude Oil	72.8	(+0.68)

The figures quoted are from the close of business yesterday, along with any movement, either up or down, from the previous day.

WEATHER

Bloemfontein	18	(28)
Cape Town	16	(23)
Durban	21	(25)
East London	16	(25)
Johannesburg	17	(26)
Kimberley	18	(31)
Mafikeng	17	(28)
Nelspruit	19	(32)
Pietermaritzburg	19	(24)
Polokwane	17	(31)
Port Elizabeth	17	(24)
Pretoria	19	(28)