

THE FRONT PAGE

Making headlines this morning, one of President Jacob Zuma's sons has taken up his fight, saying in a heartfelt letter to the media that his father should be judged on his performance as head of state and not on aspects of his private life; the DA's Helen Zille has said that President Zuma is worse than former president Thabo Mbeki when it comes to the fight against the HIV/Aids scourge; Sheryl Cwele, who has been identified as an international drugs trafficker is said to be a flight risk and cash-strapped and embattled state-owned signal distributor Sentech was in "terminal decline", and in urgent need to rescuing, Communications Minister Sipiwe Nyanda said yesterday.

NEWS REVIEWS

THE DAY IN SHORT

In the news today: President Jacob Zuma has considered 384 presidential pardon applications and rejected 230 of them - this was evidence provided to the Constitutional Court in the case brought by IFP against the Presidency. The state will oppose Sheryl Cwele's bail application as they believe she poses a serious flight risk if released. President Jacob Zuma has cancelled his public engagements over the next two days so he can rest following a "hectic" schedule. Pioneer Foods Bakery, was hit with a fine of R195 million for its role in the bread cartel.

NEWS REVIEWS

POLITICAL NEWS

IFP hails 'victory' in pardon bid

The Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) has claimed victory after President Jacob Zuma provided evidence to the Constitutional Court at the 11th hour that he has considered 384 presidential pardon applications. But the president has rejected 230 of them. The applications are prisoners who claim they have been incarcerated for political offences, and they lodged the first applications seven years ago. The case follows years of litigation by the IFP and Human Rights Commission finding in 2007 that the state had violated the rights of the prisoners by not considering their application. The IFP claim that the fact that the President has finally looked through the pardon applications is victory for them.

PRETORIA NEWS; BUSINESS DAY (National); CITIZEN (Second Edition); THE TIMES

DA calls for tougher action

The Democratic Alliance (DA) has called for more stringent action to ensure the swift demolition of several illegal resorts in parts of the Isimangaliso (St Lucia) world heritage site. A Durban High Court order to have the developments demolished and the area returned to its immaculate condition has been ignored by developers. Radley Keys, KwaZulu-Natal DA spokesperson on Conservation, said that Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife (EKZNW), should secure a court order that gives the organisation authority to take control of the demolition of a number of illegal resorts in the northern section of the park.

MERCURY (Durban)

Political tensions in ANCyl shows

Political tensions in the ranks of the African National Congress Youth League (ANCyl) in the Sisonke region is starting to show, following a fight among its members. The fight, which occurred on Sunday during the launch of a new ANCyl structure in ward six of Shayamoya township in Kokstad, resulted in one member, Nyameko Mhlongo being hospitalised for serious injuries to his head. Sisonke Regional ANC Secretary, Amon Zondi, slammed the incident, saying that the cause of the conflict was the upcoming regional and provincial ANC conference.

WITNESS (Pietermaritzburg)

SAFETY & SECURITY NEWS

Scopa: Defence Department a time bomb

Minister of Defence Lindiwe Sisulu will be asked to explain to members of Parliament what exactly is going on in her department after senior management there were asked to leave Parliament for the second time in a few months. "The Department of Defence is a time bomb... it is strategically important and is responsible for all of our safety, but we don't know what they are doing!" said a furious Mandla Mbili (ANC) at a meeting of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts (Scopa) on Wednesday. This followed after the acting secretary of defence, Tsepe Motumi and several senior accounting officers were unable to answer questions about the department's qualified audit opinion from the Auditor General.

NEWS24.COM - NEWS 24

Cwele poses flight risk

The state believes Sheryl Cwele poses a serious flight risk if released on bail. The bail application of Cwele, the wife of State Security Minister Siyabonga Cwele, will be heard in the Pietermaritzburg High Court today. She was apprehended on drug trafficking charges last Friday. State Advocate Ian Cooke said that in papers filed in opposition to Cwele's bail application that Cwele, the Director of Health and Community Services in the Hibiscus Coast Municipality, could also meddle with the investigation or the trial.

MERCURY (Durban); PRETORIA NEWS; BUSINESS DAY (National); CITIZEN (Second Edition); THE TIMES

Specials courts for 2010 World Cup

Swift justice will be served at three dedicated courts dealing with crimes connected to the 2010 FIFA Soccer World Cup in Durban. They will form part of 56 courts that are being established nationally, with the necessary interpreters, for World Cup related cases. "The basic rights of an accused person will be explained, and hopefully we will be able to print them out in a visitor's own language," said Pat Moodley, Chairperson of the KwaZulu-Natal 2010 Administration of Justice ask Team.

DAILY NEWS (Deadline)

Police uncover huge pothouse

A suspected drug smuggling ring apparently using light aircraft to transport millions of rands' worth of dagga across the country from a plantation outside Pretoria has been cracked. The syndicate, whose main operations were conducted on a small holding in Kameeldrift, north of the capital, was uncovered yesterday after a tip-off to police who seized more than R1 million worth of dagga. Police declined to confirm allegations that the tip-off came from disgruntled farm workers.

PRETORIA NEWS

Hawks bust drugs, smuggling ring

Operation Chameleon yesterday yielded fruitful results after the Hawks smashed another drug and smuggling ring in which six Nigerian nationals were arrested. Hawks spokesperson Musa Zondi said they believed the syndicate has been dealt a deadly blow. A woman believed to be part of the syndicate, was arrested in possession of drugs worth R1.6 million at Cape Town International Airport on Wednesday.

CITIZEN (Second Edition)

LABOUR & UNION NEWS

Motlanthe warns council BEE has failed

Black economic empowerment (BEE) - a key government policy intended to redress the wrongs of the past that left South Africa's black majority economically disenfranchised - has failed. That was the message yesterday when Kgalema Motlanthe, the Deputy President, delivered the inauguration speech at the first meeting of the BEE Advisory Council. Motlanthe stepped in when President Jacob Zuma, the Chairperson of the council, cancelled to take two days leave, after a week of torrid publicity about his personal life. Zuma launched the council late last year after delays of more than two years. "The percentage of black-owned companies registered at the JSE is disappointingly low," said Motlanthe. "We also have to admit that the "broad-based" part of BEE has remained elusive."

BUSINESS REPORT (National)

New body to expedite empowerment

The government is banking on the recently appointed Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment Council to speed up implementation of its affirmative action policy. The government's economic transformation programme has been blamed for alienating the white community, while creating new social inequalities, especially amongst its intended beneficiaries. The 19-member body, which is chaired by President Jacob Zuma, was officially launched yesterday. "We want it to give advice that will lead to action," said Trade and Industry Minister Rob Davies.

BUSINESS DAY (National)

Gold Fields talks of increasing number of shifts

Gold Fields is in talks with the government and organised labour to look at ways of making up for production lost during forced work stoppages at its mines when people died or accidents occurred. According to the firm, the current arrangement is that the employees work 77 shifts over 14 weeks. In the proposed new model, the company employees will work seven more shifts. The model was explained by Vishnu Pillay, Executive Vice-President and head of the South African region, on the even of the presentation of the company's results. It posted a 40% increase in profit for the three months to December. "Talks with organised labour and the Department (of Minerals and Energy) have started about this model to offset the effects of the safety stoppages and the Christmas and Easter breaks," he said, adding, "The objective is to improve efficiencies while maintaining current conditions of employment, especially working hours, in order to create a more sustainable environment and avoid possible retrenchments."

BUSINESS REPORT (National)

YCL wants answers

The Young Communist League (YCL) wants President Jacob Zuma, along with the Department of Public Works, to explain what became of the pledge to create 500 000 jobs by the end of last year. A million jobs were lost last year due to global recession. However, in his first State of the Nation address in June, Zuma had pledged to create half a million jobs by the end of the year.

BUSINESS DAY (National)

NEWS BRIEF

Pioneer Food to face further charges

The Competition Commission is planning a second take at Pioneer Foods - this time for lying. The Commission says it plans to institute perjury charges against Pioneer Foods Bakery, this after the company was hit with a fine close to R200 million for its role in the bread cartel. According to the Commissions' spokesperson Nandi Mokoena, one of the Pioneer's key witness lied to the Competition Tribunal during investigations.

SAfm News Extra @ 12

Warning on water demand

The country's water demand will exceed supply by 2025, Consulting Engineers SA (CESA) said on Thursday. "Of concern are the metropolitan areas such as the Witwatersrand where shortages are expected as soon as 2013," CESA's President Zulch Ltter said in Johannesburg. He said that due to rapid urbanisation and infrastructure constraints, intervention was required to prevent serious water shortages by 2019. "The Department of Water Affairs is and has been trying hard to encourage local authorities to reduce the level of unaccounted for water from a national average of 30% to more acceptable levels of between 10 and 15%, which will reduce the demand significantly."

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Ntsebeza to head misconduct probe into Kekana

Former Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) member Dumisa Ntsebeza SC has been tasked with investigating allegations against suspended Tshwane city manager Kiba Kekana. Mayoral spokesperson Tiny Mokoena confirmed yesterday that executive mayor Dr Gwen Ramokgopa had appointed Ntsebeza - who has also served as an acting judge of the high and labour courts of South Africa - as head of team to investigate allegations against Kekana. Mokoena could not say when Ntsebeza would start with his duties or whether he would be assisted by other people.

PRETORIA NEWS

Friends, comrades relive day of Madiba's release

A week before the 20th anniversary of the release of Nelson Mandela from prison, former members of the national reception committee gathered at his Johannesburg home yesterday to relive their experiences of that landmark event. They shared their experiences with the former president's children and grandchildren, taking them behind the scenes of how the reception committee made preparations for Madiba's release. Mandela's daughter Zindzi invited former members of the reception committee to a private lunch to mark the 20 years since her father was released from Victor Verster Prison on 11 February 1990.

PRETORIA NEWS; STAR

RTMC reaffirms its support for Rakgoale

The Road Traffic Management Corporation (RTMC) has poured cold water over calls for the suspension of its Chief Executive, Ranthoko Rakgole, accused of pillaging public funds. Yesterday, the RTMC board "reaffirmed its support and trust" in Rakgole, saying statements by Democratic Alliance (DA) that Rakgole had approved salary increased above approved limits, bought a luxury car for personal use with RTMC funds and issued tenders without following procedure were untrue.

PRETORIA NEWS

SA 'heads for water crisis'

The country's water demand will exceed supply by 2025, Consulting Engineers SA (Cesa) said yesterday. "Of concern are the metropolitan areas such as the Witwatersrand where shortages are expected as early as 2013," Cesa's President Zulch Lotter said in Johannesburg. He said due to rapid urbanisation and infrastructure constraints, intervention was required to prevent serious water shortages by 2019.

CITIZEN (Second Edition)

HEALTH NEWS

E Cape stops OSD payments

The Eastern Cape Health Department said it is R1.8 billion in the red, and had suspended all outstanding occupation specific dispensation payments until the start of the new financial year in April. It has also put a hold on all payments to creditors, and has announced plans for a major overhaul of its tendering system. "The reason why we cannot effect payment now is that we are currently facing a deficit of about R1.8 billion," spokesperson Sizwe Kupelo said on Wednesday. However, he emphasised that existing salaries would be paid out as normal.

NEWS24.COM - NEWS 24

Measles outbreak increases in the province

The Western Cape Health Department has been lambasted by the National Health Department and civil society groups for withholding information about the measles outbreak in the province. Provincial authorities have hit back, saying they kept mum because they did not want to cause unnecessary panic. The National Institute for Communicable Disease said the number of cases in the Western Cape had increased by 62 from 303 last Tuesday to 365 this week.

CAPE ARGUS (City Late)

KZN Health official arrested

Police said that a KwaZulu-Natal Health Department official and three other people have been apprehended for alleged fraud. Supt Vincent Mdungo said that the four people were arrested for attempting to defraud the KZN Health Department of about R3.4 million. KZN Premier Dr Zweli Mkhize said that the "arrest was the result of a partnership with law enforcement agencies".

WITNESS (Pietermaritzburg)

Pharmacies could cut queues

Private sector pharmacies could help cut long queues for medication at state health facilities, United SA Pharmacies said yesterday. "The best solution for patients using public health services is for them to be able to collect their medication at their nearest pharmacy," the group's Chief Executive Drew Horner said. The group is an association set up by pharmacists.

BUSINESS DAY (National)

'Give locals more power'

United States and South African HIV/Aids workers say putting more of the decision-making in local hands can help stretch donor money amid global recession concerns. Since 2004, the US government has funded a project for South African Aids patients through Catholic Relief Services, the charity arm of the Catholic Church in the US. In a significant shift made official this week, the US would directly pay South Africans with whom the group has been working.

BUSINESS DAY (National)

Forensic labs in a shamble

South Africa's three forensic chemistry laboratories are in shambles and expose staff to deadly diseases, including HIV. This was revealed in a report by the Auditor-General, released last week, which details the dismal performance of the country's three forensic laboratories in Pretoria, Johannesburg and Cape Town. The laboratories, administered by the Department of Health, are supposed to analyse blood samples for use as evidence in drunken driving cases, as well as postmortem examinations.

THE TIMES

PROVINCIAL NEWS

Mayor named in '2010 fan parks scandal'

The executive mayor of Thembisile Hani Municipality in Mpumalanga has been identified in a R2.6 million 2010 World Cup Fan Parks project scandal that led to the suspension of municipal manager Koos Mahlangu during a special council sitting on Monday. An internal investigation found Mahlangu guilty of unauthorised expenditure for awarding a contract to Friends Events Management Services in which Executive Mayor Victor Nkosi is listed as a "patron". According to the committee tasked with investigating the scandal, Mahlangu confessed that the documents were not asked for or received from the company. The report states that Nkosi "confidently informed the committee that he was behind the initiation of the project concept", but denied any knowledge of the company, though the organisational structure document submitted to council listed him as a "patron" of the organisation. The committee established that there was no need for the project.

SOWETAN.CO.ZA

Possible bull slaughter at Infecting the City Festival

A group of sangomas plan to slaughter a bull on Thibault Square during the opening ceremony of the festival aimed at drawing people to the CBD. A decision from the City of Cape Town to grant permission to the organisers of the annual Infecting the City Festival is still pending.

CAPE ARGUS (City Late)

Probe into uMngeni Municipality launched

The KwaZulu-Natal provincial government has appointed a commission of inquiry to probe the uMngeni Municipality. The aim of the inquiry is to take decisive action with damning evidence produced by a forensic investigation commissioned by former provincial MEC for Local Government, Mike Mabuyakhulu. A key aspect of the investigation will be the conduct of suspended uMngeni Municipal Manager Dumisani Vilakazi, and whether he has compromised the municipality's credibility and integrity.

WITNESS (Pietermaritzburg)

Serfontein fined thousands

Jacobus Serfontein, a senior employee of the Public Service and Administration Department was fined R100 000, of which R85 000 was suspended, yesterday after he pleaded guilty to constructing a holiday home in the iSimangaliso Wetland Park world heritage site without permission. Serfontein, a director in the department, also confessed, in terms of a plea agreement in the Pietermaritzburg Magistrate's Court, to establishing a sewage disposal system at the site without approval. In terms of the sentence, Serfontein agreed to remove the structure before 15 May.

MERCURY (Durban)

Govt plans legal action over housing project

National Home Builders Registration Council (NHBRC) CEO, Siphon Mashinini, said that the government will take the eThekweni Municipality to court over Shawn Mpisane's Umlazi housing project, as the City would be "the culprit" if it was discovered that taxpayers money had been wasted on shoddy construction work. Mpisane has been slammed for the bad quality of houses built as part of a R300 million reconstruction and development programme (RDP) housing contract. Mashinini added that if the matter is taken to court, a geotechnical probe would have to be conducted.

DAILY NEWS (Deadline)

EDUCATION NEWS

Dept: Drop-out case premature

The case of an 18-year-old A-student fighting for a promotion to Grade 12 started on a tense note in the South Gauteng High Court on Thursday. This was after the Gauteng Education Department's legal representatives argued that Edwin Botha's court application was prematurely brought to court. Advocate Tebogo Frank Mathibedi said internal remedies for Botha's matter had not been exhausted. He asked that the matter be dismissed with costs. Botha dropped out of Hoerskool Noordheuwel in Krugersdorp while in Grade 11 last year. He said this was after he was traumatised by a prefect initiation ceremony held after he was elected deputy head boy. Botha had taken the Education Department to court over its decision to overturn his school principal's alleged decision to promote him to matric.

NEWS24.COM - NEWS 24

UCT looks to improve race relations

As South African universities and universities of technology gear up for a national conference on the state of higher education in the country, the University of Cape Town (UCT) was starting to implement a programme aimed at improving race relations on its campus, UCT acting Deputy Vice-Chancellor Prof Crain Soudien said yesterday. Higher Education and Training Minister Blade Nzimande's office is organising a higher education stakeholder summit for April, at which institutions are expected to make presentations on how they are responding to a 2008 ministerial committee report that revealed that racism and discrimination were alive and well in the sector.

BUSINESS DAY (National)

UCT staff are threatening to strike

Academic staff at the University of Cape Town (UCT) are threatening to strike over a pay dispute. UCT's management remain tight-lipped about the possibility of industrial action, saying the discussions are at a delicate point. A meeting was held yesterday to discuss the dispute.

CAPE TIMES

Water restored at DUT

The Msunduzi Municipality yesterday restored the water supply to a Durban University of Technology (DUT) campus in Impendle, ahead of a high court application to compel it to do so. The restoration of the water supply follows talks between the DUT and municipal officials. Prof Reggie Ngcobo, Executive Director of the campus, said that the problem of the outstanding bill of R12 million stems from the lack of separate and independent water meters at the campus.

MERCURY (Durban)

Ottery school to no longer get subsidised

The Western Cape Education Department (WCED) has notified an Ottery school that it intends to withdraw its subsidy and de-register it as an independent school because of concerns about the quality of education at the institution. A meeting with Penny Vinjevold and the Simon Estes High school governing body will be held to discuss the way forward.

CAPE ARGUS (City Late)

Revision sessions for those writing supplementaries

Revision sessions to help prepare candidates for the matric supplementary exams have been arranged by the Western Cape Education Department (WCED), Education MEC Donald Grant says that 7116 candidates registered for the exams, which start on 11 February.

CAPE ARGUS (City Late)

GOVERNMENT BRIEF

Justice Dept ready for World Cup

The Department of Justice and Constitutional Development says South Africa and the African continent by extension will host an "exceptionally" successful 2010 World Cup. In a statement issued to the media on Wednesday, the department's spokesperson Tlali Tlali said government has identified critical areas of focus that have received attention to ensure that the tournament is a success. The areas include, safety and security, transport and hospitality. According to the department, the administration of justice is also a critical area into which the safety and security feeds.

CITIZEN (Second Edition)

President to take two days off to rest

President Jacob Zuma has cancelled his public engagements over the next two days so he can rest following a "hectic" schedule, his office said in a written statement released yesterday. The presidency say Zuma is tired after attending the Economic Forum in Switzerland and an African Union meeting in Ethiopia. The president returned to a storm of controversy back home after fathering a child out of wedlock. Speaking on Midday live SAFM presidential spokesperson said that people must understand that the president is a human being and needs rest. He also brushed aside that the Zuma two day leave might add on to speculations that he is avoiding talking about his baby.

5 Fm News @ 1; IOL.CO.ZA; PRETORIA NEWS; CITIZEN (Second Edition);

BUSINESS DAY

Cautious response to proposals for road accident scheme

The state's proposals for restructuring the Road Accident Fund (RAF) yesterday were met with caution by the Hospital Association of South Africa and the Law Society. The Hospital Association, which represents SA's private hospitals, said it should make it easier for accident victims to get medical care. Its CEO, Kurt Worrall-Clare, welcomed the proposal to pay service providers directly. "It will probably facilitate a better administrative arrangement between service providers and the fund," he said. One of the most important changes being mooted is a shift towards a no-fault reimbursement fund, which includes payments for present and future medical expenses. Stripping out the need to determine whether an accident victim was at fault is expected to reduce legal fees and free up more money for medical care.

BUSINESS DAY (National)

Proposals to transform KZN municipalities

In a bid to streamline and bring stability to ailing municipalities in KwaZulu-Natal, the Department of Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs has submitted proposals to the Demarcation Board. This could result in the closure and merger of some municipalities. Those which would be affected, if this move is authorised, are mainly the rural municipalities that have no revenue base and have failed to deliver on their mandates and largely live on government hand-outs.

MERCURY (Durban)

Govt must rule with compassion - religious leaders

Religious leaders have called for government to rule with compassion and to make the needs of South Africans its top priority. Anglican Archbishop Thabo Makgoba and Chief Rabbi Warren Goldstein delivered the first moral state of the nation address in Illovo on Wednesday. They outlined some of the greatest ills facing society today, including crime, a lack of proper education and poor basic services in many areas. Goldstein said facing the country's moral and ethical problems would require a change in the style of governance. "What we need is a government of compassion. It's about not seeing people as numbers, people are not statistics, people are special," said Goldstein. *EWN.CO.ZA*

Zuma gets heat from world over

President Jacob Zuma's latest love child not only grabbed the attention of South Africa, but that of media across the world. The New York Times, like many others, also brought up the issue of South Africa's alarmingly high HIV/Aids rate and how Zuma's actions could confuse the nation. "Although SA has only 1 percent of the world's population, it suffers 17 percent of the globe's HIV infections," it noted in an article. Australia, United Kingdom also ran scathing stories in relation to Zuma's love child. *CITIZEN (Second Edition)*

BUSINESS BRIEF

In Business news today, Cell C and Vodacom said yesterday that they would lower their tariffs next month, despite Icasa's rejections of its proposals. The communications watchdog objected to a three-year "glide path", laying out a gradual reduction in rates, which would have "bound it to an undertaking not to review mobile termination rates until 2013". But Uys has now said that Vodacom will confer with the other companies to arrange a new proposal with no mention of a "glide path". Recommendations by a task team that was asked by Minister of Communications Siphwe Nyanda to investigate the turnaround opportunities on Sentech and the SABC suggest that Sentech is "rudderless, inadequately funded and misdirected". Pioneer Foods has been told to "shut up and pay" the fine of R195 million for its role in the bread cartel from 1999 to 2006. *NEWS REVIEWS*

Pioneer told to 'shut up and pay'

Pioneer Foods has been told to "shut up and pay" the fine of R195 million for its role in the bread cartel from 1999 to 2006. Analysts said yesterday that the group was lucky not to have been slapped with a fine of about R1.5 billion instead. However, Pioneer Chief Executive Andre Hanekom was unrattled when he said he was confident it would be able to settle the fine "should they have to pay it in the first place". He would not comment on the Competition Tribunal's findings until it had been properly studied. Though he admitted that the group had not made provisions for a fine in last year's financial statements, Hanekom said the group would not raise the price of bread and it was "unlikely" that some of its staff would be retrenched. *BUSINESS REPORT (National)*

Job loss prevention 'crucial to approval'

One of the reasons the Competition Commission investigated proposed mergers was to mitigate or prevent job losses that might occur, an official said this week. This was in response to reports this week by competition law analysts that merger cases were being delayed, which could endanger otherwise pro-competitive and efficient transactions. Nandi Mokoena, Manager of strategy and stakeholder relations at the commission, said investigations were being kept within the time frames prescribed by the Competition Act. The act directs the authorities to consider public interest issues in deciding whether of not to approve a merger. *BUSINESS DAY (National), Companies & Markets*

Threat to upset World Cup

Trade unions have threatened to disrupt the World Cup over allegations, being investigated by FIFA, that the tournament's mascot is being manufactured in China. Global Brand Group (GBG), the firm that manages branding for FIFA, yesterday said it had noted a British media report about a Chinese factory that made a figurine of Zakumi, the tournament's green haired mascot. "GBG has taken appropriate steps to contact Intertel to conduct an immediate ethical and social compliance audit and inspection of this facility," it said. No issues had been raised regarding the company before, and the manufacturer did not produce any other of the Zakumi toys, merchandise or products, it added. *BUSINESS REPORT (National)*

Nyanda report raises job cut fears

Communications Minister Siphwe Nyanda had refused to indicate whether some staff at state-owned entities SABC and broadband communication company Sentech are facing retrenchment. Questions of possible retrenchments at the organisations arose yesterday when Nyanda announced the findings of the report compiled by the ministerial task team he appointed last year to look into ways of saving the entities further financial decline. *TIMES, THE Business Times*

BANKING BRIEF

In Banking news this morning, South Africa's economic confidence improved last month, bolstered by growing optimism that the local economy would rebound this year after emerging from recession in the third quarter of last year; South Africa's job market is stabilising and preparing for recovery as employers gradually regain their confidence news, according to analysts in the recruitment sector; and the Democratic Alliance (DA) says government departments and organisations are wasting millions of rands producing annual reports. In addition, the long-awaited property valuation appeal boards have finally been set up in KwaZulu-Natal, and property owners who disagree with their valuations can take their appeals to them in about one month. *NEWS REVIEWS*

SA lines up for debt counselling

The National Credit Regulator received 1 429 applicants for debt counselling in just the first two days of February 2010, Debtbusters noted on Thursday, an indication that the average South African consumer's debt problems are only getting worse. It means that the total number of applicants for debt counselling has reached 145 027 to date. "If this trend continues, that would be over 20 000 applicants applying for debt counselling per month - almost double the amount of any previous months - and a 14% growth rate per month," Debtbusters said. Luke Hirst, MD of debt experts Debtbusters said: "Unlike Europe and America, where interest rate cuts have allowed consumers to reduce their debt, in South Africa the rate reductions have been proportionately smaller and have just postponed the inevitable - consumers falling into arrears and slipping further into the debt spiral". *FIN24.CO.ZA - FINWEEK ; BUSINESS REPORT (Star)*

Confidence up, rebound looms

South Africa's economic confidence improved last month, bolstered by growing optimism that the local economy would rebound this year after emerging from recession in the third quarter of last year. The economy is expected to have contracted by about 1.8% last year, but signs of recovery in manufacturing output and higher vehicle sales, as well as an injection of foreign money during the World Cup point to a better performance this year. Factory activity is on the rise, tracking conditions in other countries, although concerns remain about soft consumption demand. *BUSINESS REPORT (Star) ; BUSINESS DAY (National)*

Job market to stay under pressure

South Africa's job market is stabilising and preparing for recovery as employers gradually regain their confidence news, said analysts in the recruitment sector. "Companies are gearing up for growth in the early part of 2010 and are hunting for the right caliber of skills." said Lars Porseth, Director for Europe, the Middle East, and Africa of Manpower, an international recruitment company. "South African employees expect hiring activity to improve considerably for the first quarter of the year. According to Statistics SA, the number of people in the labour force decreased by 418 000, from 17.5-million in the second quarter to 17.1-million in the third quarter of last year. *BUSINESS DAY (National), Companies & Markets*

Help Haiti with your eBucks

On 12 January 2010, a series of earthquakes with magnitudes ranging between 6.5 and 7.3 devastated the Haitian capital of Port au Prince. The aftermath of the disaster has claimed hundreds-of-thousands of lives; and damages to the country's infrastructure has left many more individuals homeless and destitute. eBucks members wishing to assist those affected by this devastating catastrophe, can do so by making a donation - either using their eBucks or rands - to Doctors without Borders and/or Gift of the Givers Foundation - via the eBucks website. Donations from eB250 or R25 will support much needed emergency relief and recovery efforts, and help the Haitian people reclaim their country and begin to rebuild their lives. To date, almost eB2 million has already been donated. For more information visit <<https://www.ebucks.com/web/shop/categorySelected.do?catId=123997925>>. *NEWS REVIEWS*

Lottery requirements 'relaxed'

The National Lotteries Board is unable to distribute R2 billion in surplus funds to poor beneficiaries. The board's Chief Executive Professor Vevek Ram, said that enormous obstacles are preventing the board from distributing the money. From 2008 to 2010, R3.7 billion was available for distribution to beneficiaries, but could not be disbursed. Over the past nine years since the establishment of the board some R6.8 billion has been paid out. Ram put the blame for the surplus money on the distribution agencies, in particular. The board, which should largely play the role of a regulator, holds the money in a trust, and the distribution agencies, which are appointed by the Minister of Trade and Industry, select the beneficiaries. But these two bodies have for years been got bogged down over the nature of their actual roles.

FIN24.CO.ZA - FINWEEK

Increase in poverty expected in KZN

Unemployment in KwaZulu-Natal is set to reach 36% and poverty is expected to increase by up to 8% in the next two years. KZN Finance MEC Ina Cronje had presented these figures to Pietermaritzburg businessmen, government officials and the private sector during a discussion yesterday, preceding the tabling of the provincial budget in March. Cronje said that the KZN Treasury forecasted gross domestic product (GDP) growth of 1.5 and 2% in the next two years.

MERCURY (Durban)

Strike ends at hotel group

Striking Sun International workers were back at their posts following a lengthy pay strike over the holiday season, the company said yesterday. "For now everyone is back at work," Solly Phetoe, the spokesperson for the SA Commercial Catering and Allied Workers' Union in the North West. About 4 500 union employees went on strike for about two months from the beginning of December, but failed to get the company to increase its offer of 8.75% to 13%.

BUSINESS REPORT (Star)

Coral International opens in Cape Town

Cape Town's newest five-star hotel, the Coral International will officially open its doors this weekend. The Coral will be the fourth five-star hotel to have opened in the city in the past three months, showing the massive power in the drawing power of Cape Town. The others are the Crystal Towers, The Taj and 15 on Orange. Last year Sol Kerzner opened the One&Only Hotel in the Waterfront area.

CAPE TIMES

Rezidor expands partnership with Mvelaphanda

International hotel group Rezidor has expanded its management partnership with empowerment group Mvelaphanda Holdings to cover Rezidor's entire South African portfolio. Until now, Mvelaphanda were only partners in the management of the Radisson Blu at the V&A Waterfront in Capre Town. However, in recent years Rezidor has embarked on aggressive expansion in SA and the rest of Africa, and has three hotels open in SA, including the 177-room Radisson Blu Hotel Waterfront, Radisson Blue Hotel in Sandton and the 173-room Radisson Blu Hotel in Port Elizabeth.

BUSINESS DAY (National), Companies & Markets

SPORTING HIGHLIGHTS

This outcome of some of this weekend's Absa Premiership and English Premier League fixtures will go a long way to proving which teams want it most as the league title races intensify. On the local front, Premiership leaders SuperSport United will have the perfect opportunity to extend their lead over Mamelodi Sundowns when they host Free State Stars, a team they should have no problems beating. Sundowns must beat Ajax Cape Town in a tricky game to keep pace. In England, the team with the most to play for this weekend is Arsenal. Following their 3-1 defeat to Manchester United last week, the Gunners face a must win against leaders Chelsea on Sunday. A loss will all but eliminate them from league contention and their will be intense pressure on them to show they want it more. And in the cut-throat world of top-level football, there is only one way to do that and that is through winning.

News Reviews

South Africa and India set for battle of supremacy

South Africa and India will be battling for Test cricket supremacy as the series gets under way with the first of two Tests in Nagpur tomorrow. South Africa go into the series with a lot to prove after only managing temporary stays as the No 1 team in the International Cricket Council rankings. The annual \$175 000 prize for the team that finishes top of the rankings on 1 April is also up for grabs, with the Proteas needing only a series win to return to the top, while a drawn series or an Indian victory will keep the status quo.

BUSINESS DAY (National), Sports Day

Maximum points up for grabs for SuperSport, Chiefs

SuperSport United and Kaizer Chiefs stand to claim maximum points from their respective Absa Premiership matches tomorrow, while SuperSport's main title rivals, Mamelodi Sundowns, face a tricky encounter on Sunday. SuperSport host Free State Stars, while Chiefs play relegation-bound Jomo Cosmos. Sundowns travel to Ajax Cape Town, who were one of only two teams to register a win in the midweek games.

THE TIMES

Arsenal face must-win against Chelsea

Arsenal take on London rivals Chelsea in an English Premiership encounter they must win on Sunday to remain in the title race. The Gunners' 3-1 defeat to Manchester United last weekend capped off a miserable 11-day period in which they were knocked out of the FA Cup, drew 0-0 with Aston Villa and were outclassed by United. This after they soared to the top of the standings last months following a good run of form and their season appeared to be coming to the boil. The Gunners remain six points adrift of Chelsea in third and four behind United, who host bottom club Portsmouth. In other games, Manchester City travel to Hull City and Liverpool host Everton in the Merseyside derby.

BUSINESS DAY (National), Sports Day

Armstrong to ride in Cape Argus

Seven-time Tour de France champion Lance Armstrong will participate in this year's Cape Argus Pick n Pay Cycle Tour, he confirmed in social networking website Twitter on Wednesday. The race takes place on 14 March.

STAR, Sport; CAPE ARGUS (Late Final), Sport

INDICATORS

Rand - Dollar \$	7.6170	(-0.1450)
Rand - Sterling £	12.0105	(-0.0822)
Rand - Euro €	10.5031	(-0.0826)
JSE Allshare	26318.4	(-608.10)
Gold	1083.3	(-32.00)
Platinum	1549.0	(-29.00)
Brent Crude Oil	73.5	(-2.40)

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

WEATHER

Bloemfontein	15	(30)
Cape Town	17	(23)
Durban	22	(30)
East London	17	(27)
Johannesburg	15	(27)
Kimberley	14	(33)
Mafikeng	15	(30)
Nelspruit	19	(28)
Pietermaritzburg	20	(33)
Polokwane	17	(25)
Port Elizabeth	17	(31)
Pretoria	18	(28)