

THE FRONT PAGE

In the headlines today: South African flags manufacturers are fuming because 10 000 World Cup flags seem set to be imported, robbing millions of rands and denying them an opportunity to create jobs. The estranged first wife of Mandla Mandela, former president Nelson Mandela's grandson and heir, has accused the Mvezo chief of beating her and having a string of affairs during their five-year marriage. Rural Development and Land Affairs Minister Gugle Nkwinti yesterday failed to put out the fires raging over suggestions that productive farm land could be nationalised, instead raising new fears with a proposal that appears to curb property rights. The Pretoria name-change saga is expected to start in the Pretoria High Court today with affected parties due to argue whether an interim order made in 2008, preventing the name change, should be made permanent or not.

News reviews

THE DAY IN SHORT

In the news today: The South African Human Rights Commission (HRC) has so far received 109 complaints against African National Congress Youth League (ANCyl) President Julius Malema for singing, "Shoot the boer."; the controversial Facebook page, on which some of Julius Malema's fans expressed racist, derogatory and criminal opinions, has been shut down; Rural Development and Land Affairs Minister Gugle Nkwinti yesterday failed to put out the fires raging over suggestions that productive farm land could be nationalised, instead raising new fears with a proposal that appears to curb property rights; and ANC spokesperson Jackson Mthembu admitted that he "did something wrong" by driving drunk - an admission that will see him paying a R6 000 fine - and said he endorsed the Arrive Alive campaign.

News reviews

TOP STORIES

Drunk Mthembu says sorry for stupid mistake

African National Congress (ANC) spokesperson Jackson Mthembu admitted that he "did something wrong" by driving drunk - an admission that will see him paying a R6 000 fine - and said he endorsed the Arrive Alive campaign. He was sentenced to a fine of R12 000, half of which was conditionally suspended for five years, when he appeared briefly in Cape Town's Wynberg Magistrate's Court yesterday. The sentence followed his conviction of drunk driving - at more than three times over the limit - after a plea agreement with prosecutors. Following his court appearance, Mthembu apologised to his family and to "all South Africans". "What inspired the guilty plea was that I had done something wrong," said Mthembu.

STAR; ENEWS PRIME @ 19:00

Complaints against Malema at fever pitch

The South African Human Rights Commission (HRC) has so far received 109 complaints against African National Congress Youth League (ANCyl) President Julius Malema for singing, "Shoot the boer." The number of complaints is exceeded only by the barrage of criticism against former journalist Jon Qwelane's anti-gay column in 2008. Complaints against Malema were lodged by the Democratic Alliance (DA), the Freedom Front Plus (FF+), Afriforum and individuals. The commission would investigate Malema only once the court had ruled on the matter as Afriforum had already taken it up with the Equality Court, spokesperson Vincent Moaga said yesterday.

STAR; KAYA FM NEWS @ 07:00

DA to lay 351 Juju complaints

The Democratic Alliance (DA) plans to lay 351 complaints against ANC Youth Leader Julius Malema with the South African Human Rights Commission (SAHRC) for singing "shoot the boers". The names of 351 farmers collected by the DA in the North West, and their complaints are expected to be handed over to the SAHRC today. "The people who are working in the agricultural sector and identify with the term 'boer', are not really interested in politics, so to get such an emotional response from them is very irregular," said DA Provincial Director Leandi Erasmus.

CITIZEN (Second Edition); KAYA FM NEWS @ 06:00

Malema's facebook fan page shut down

The controversial Facebook page, on which some of ANC Youth League leader Julius Malema's fans expressed racist, derogatory and criminal opinions, has been shut down. A posting by a man, calling himself Thabo Mbatethi Mbathethi, said white people would be killed and raped and that President Jacob Zuma would be murdered. Malema distanced himself from those comments, saying he has no use for Facebook.

TALK RADIO 702 NEWS @ 06:00; CITIZEN (Second Edition)

POLITICAL NEWS

DA to oppose land plan

The Democratic Alliance (DA) will oppose the adoption of a government land plan which proposes placing productive land under the control of the State. Party MP Annette Steyn said should the Department of Rural Development and Land Reform's 2010-2013 Strategic Plan be approved, it would propose an amendment of Section 25 of the Constitution, a provision that protects private property against expropriation. "We have in the past and will continue to argue for a state land reform policy that provides a comprehensive set of proactive measures, with budgetary backing, to tackle the stagnation of land reform in South Africa. Steyn said the claim by the department that declaring all productive farmland a "national asset" is not the same as nationalisation is merely an argument in semantics as the proposal would indeed place in the control of the state all productive land.

SAFM NEWS @ 07:00

There should be more African artists at World Cup - ANCyl

There will be many international artists performing at the 2010 World Cup concerts in South Africa. African National Congress Youth League (ANCyl) spokesperson Floyd Shivambu said they would like to see many more black singers taking part. He said, "The inclusion of international artists is fine but we believe South African and African artists should be in the majority. The World Cup in South Africa will only happen once in a lifetime. So it should truly be an African World Cup and organisers should appreciate that." He said the youth league would soon ask to meet with the Local Organising Committee to raise this issue.

DAILY SUN

Buthelezi slams his detractors

Some councillors in the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) have been accused by party President Mangosuthu Buthelezi of trying to undermine his leadership as the succession debate heats up ahead of the party's elective conference in May. Buthelezi said that some councillors in the uThukela District had behaved in a way that not only contravened the constitution of the party, but one that also sought to deepen divisions in its ranks. Buthelezi has slammed his detractors, labelling them "mischief-makers".

DAILY NEWS (Deadline)

ANCyl slams 'Malema' Facebook page

The African National Congress Youth League (ANCyl) says it has nothing to do with the hate speech and racism on Facebook fan page dedicated to Julius Malema. The youth league said this in statement released yesterday. There has been significant public outcry after an apparent Malema supporter posted a comment calling for white people to be killed and raped. The ANCyl said it was disappointed that Eyewitness News "dignified" Facebook postings on the Malema fan page. Yesterday morning, after Eyewitness News reported on the outrage generated by the comments posted on the Facebook page, the youth league decided to comment. It said Malema did not have an official Facebook fan page and it was against all forms of hate speech.

TALK RADIO 702 NEWS @ 12:00

No definite answer on Shabir: JZ

President Jacob Zuma yesterday refused to give an assurance to the National Assembly that he will not grant a pardon to his former financial adviser and convicted fraudster Shabir Shaik. "I don't know why we should deal with it before it comes to the President." Zuma said in reply to a question on whether he could assure the House he would not grant a pardon to Shaik. "Why should we? If the information before me of any prisoner says that this person has supporting information, that this person must be released, why, if the person qualifies in terms of the information, must he not be released because he is so and so..."

CITIZEN (Second Edition)

SAFETY & SECURITY NEWS

Simelane's future as NPA head hangs in the balance

National Prosecuting Authority ((NPA) head Menzi Simelane's future as an advocate was now in the hands of the Johannesburg Bar Council. A three-person panel set up by the General Council of the Bar referred the matter to the Professional Committee of the Johannesburg Council following an investigation. It was investigating complaints laid against Simelane regarding his conduct during the Ginwala Inquiry into his predecessor Vusi Pikoli's suspension. The panel uncovered that Simelane was still a member of the Johannesburg Bar. He had asked for an extended leave of absence in the late 1990s when he became a public servant. The NPA head will now be treated as any other member of the Bar until an investigation of allegations against him is complete. If it decides to bring a court application, attempting to disbar Simelane, it could render him ineligible for the position of NPA head.

TALK RADIO 702 NEWS @ 06:00

No bail for warders who killed inmates

Three Krugersdorp prison warders serving jail time for murdering three prisoners have failed in their second attempt to be released on bail pending their appeal. Captain Simphiwe Shabangu, 35, Donal Letsoamotse, 33, and Regan Rudidge, 33, made their initial application to be released on bail last December after they were each sentenced to 20 years. Last June, Acting Judge Majake Mabesele ruled that the three were responsible for a brutal attack on Patrick Nxumalo, 27, Zamubuntu Maqhina, 35, and Simphiwe Tshababala, 28, which led to their deaths at Leratong Hospital on 14 April 2007.

STAR

Lion hunters released on warning

Two illegal hunters who handed themselves over to the police after their colleague was killed by lions in the Kruger National Park appeared in court this week. Richard Mathebula, 38, and Sydwell Ndlovu, 18, were released on warning and told to appear in the Skukuza Magistrate's Court on 31 March.

STAR

Westville Prison officials suspended

Nine officials from the Westville Prison have been suspended for the escape of eight awaiting-trial prisoners more than a month ago. The top brass of the Correctional Services Department said that the suspensions were conducted on a staggered basis soon after prison authorities launched an investigation into the escape. One of the escapees, Simon Bouque, has been rearrested while another, Nhlanhla Lucky Mhlongo, passed away in a shoot-out with police about two weeks ago.

DAILY NEWS (Deadline)

NGA lose battle to get their weapons back

Arms company, News Generation Ammunition (NGA), has lost a court battle to get its weapons returned to it. Nine tons of ammunition was seized by the Hawks in January. The North Gauteng High Court has ruled that the company did not have government's permission to use a military plane to transport the arms. The court also ruled that the company did not have authorisation for transporting the weapons through the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). The ammunition was destined for peace-keeping missions in Burundi, Liberia and the Ivory Coast. The weapons were seized before the military plane could take off from South African soil.

ENEWS PRIME @ 19:00

Metro officer killed in accident

A Metro police officer, who was killed by a speeding vehicle on the N1 on Sunday, was described as a committed and hard-working officer at his memorial service in Brixton yesterday. "He was a dedicated officer who was committed to his job at all times," said Johannesburg Metro Police Department (JMPD) spokesperson Wayne Minnaar. Lloyd Dhara, 28, a JMPD high-speed supervisor died on Sunday morning.

CITIZEN (Second Edition)

LABOUR & UNION NEWS

CWU to take Vodacom to Labour Court

The Communication Workers Union (CWU) will take Vodacom to the Labour Court to oppose the allocation of shares to employees after the mediation body ruled that it did not have jurisdiction in the case. The union took Vodacom to the Commission for Conciliation Mediation and Arbitration (CCMA) last year to force it to include it in the process of allocating shares to employees, especially its members. This week, the CCMA said it did not have jurisdiction to rule on the case as the complaint by the union on unfair labour practice had "elements of discrimination and harassment". During the proceedings, Vodacom objected to the CCMA jurisdiction and, according to the ruling, the union later conceded that the Labour Court would be a proper platform to deal with the matter.

BUSINESS DAY (National)

Dispute declared between nurses, police and head

A dispute has been declared between striking nurses in the eThekweni Municipality, the head of the City's Health Department and the Durban Metro police about matters related to their ongoing strike and arrest earlier this week. The nurses have laid, or are in the process of laying, counter charges against the officers. They have also accused department head Dr Nomakhosi Gxagxisa of lying when she said they had failed to bring their grievances to her attention.

MERCURY

1 000 workers down tools at Gold One

About 1 000 workers downed tools at the Gold One Mine in Springs, protesting against a lack of living allowances, the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) said yesterday. Union spokesperson, Lesiba Seshoka, said that the mineworkers embarked on the strike late on Tuesday night. The dispute is over a living allowance as many workers were recruited from Limpopo. These workers qualify for neither RDP houses nor housing loans from the banks, Seshoka said.

CITIZEN (Second Edition)

Demands for wage hikes could stop job creation

Wage demands this year could be tempered by lower inflation and the heavy job losses of last year, but if unrealistic wage hikes are pursued it could damage the job market further. This comes as unions project demands of wage increases of up to 17%, which they attribute to high electricity prices and petrol price hikes. Lesiba Seshoka, spokesperson for the Cosatu-affiliated National Union of Mineworkers, said that, with high energy prices, inflation for workers was very high. He added, "I don't foresee wage demands below 15%".

BUSINESS REPORT (Star)

NTA threatens more taxi disruptions

The National Taxi Association (NTA) has threatened further strike action if Western Cape Transport MEC Robin Carlisle does not agree to meet them to negotiate the release of taxis impounded by the traffic department. NTA spokesperson Mvuyisi Mente said that future action had already been planned and would be announced if Carlisle did not agree to a meeting.

CAPE ARGUS (City Late)

NEWS BRIEF

R4m World Cup flag fury

South African flags manufacturers are fuming because 10 000 World Cup flags seem set to be imported, robbing millions of rands and denying them an opportunity to create jobs. The flags are to be displayed along main roads during the World Cup, an international event meant to create thousands of jobs and business opportunities. According to a local manufacturer, who lost out on the deal, the order would have been worth about R4 million, if sourced locally. The tender to provide signage and branding for the tournament - including the city-beautification flag project - was awarded to Icon Display SA by the local organising committee. Icon Display SA is a UK-based company and its South African partners are Worldwide Sports and Tone Digital. Icon Display SA's comment is that the order had not yet been placed and that a local producer would be used.

STAR

Santaco and government not seeing eye to eye

In a media statement, Transport Minister Sbu Ndebele said the department will continue its intensive engagement with everybody, including the taxi industry, in solving the issue of the Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) system. Meanwhile, the South African National Taxi Council (Santaco) says the minister's statement is nothing but a PR exercise. "When government say they are still open to negotiations with the taxi industry when there is volatility in Gauteng, what do they mean? Minister Ndebele opened [the] door when he established the National Joint Working Group. For government to go back on the agreement of the national working group and only to issue a statement and say they are committed to engagement when there is no effort on their part proves that this is really a PR statement and we take offence to that," said a Santaco spokesperson.

CLASSIC FM NEWS @ 10:00

Mega-projects 'worth R100bn'

Yesterday, Transnet announced that the mega-projects that are not part of its R93 billion five-year capital investment plan are valued at roughly R100 billion.

According to the Companies & Markets, this was the first time that Transnet had put an estimate on the projects it cannot fund off its balance sheet, underlining the need for the involvement of the private sector through private-public partnerships. Chris Wells, Acting CEO of the parastatal, said it was investigating additional projects worth R50 billion and noted that these could begin within five years.

BUSINESS DAY (National), BUSINESS DAY (National), Companies & Markets

Freedom Charter returned home

A copy of one of the most historic documents of our past has been bought for the South African government by the private sector. Former trade unionist Leon Levy put only one of the five signed copies of the Freedom Charter up for sale in London. The copy was signed by then African National Congress (ANC) president Chief Albert Luthuli and other alliance leaders in 1955. The deal to save the document from being auctioned was negotiated by the Liliesleaf Trust. Earlier the Congress of South African Trade Unions (Cosatu) said the document belonged to South Africans and Levy had no right to sell it. The document was expected to fetch between R200 000 and R300 000. The auctioneer refused to say how much it sold for.

ENEWS PRIME @ 19:00

SA safer for tourists than Spain or even Germany

South Africa is a safer tourist destination for British tourists than Spain, Thailand or even Germany. This is according to a report released which examined the behaviours of British tourists from April 2008 to March 2009, and measured how much help Brits needed from their different consulates abroad. And the results were surprising: of the 451 580 Britons who visited South Africa in the 12-month period - and a further 212 000 living in the country - there were 23 arrests, 23 hospital admissions and 48 deaths, due to either accidents, natural causes or murder. No rape or sexual assault cases were reported. These statistics were from a country with a crime rate so high that a British firm, Protektorvest, felt the need to market stab-proof vests to tourists wanting to visit South Africa for the World Cup.

STAR

iSimangaliso to receive R190m

The iSimangaliso Park will receive a R190 million infusion of cash, partly to improve the dwindling water flow to drought-hit Lake St Lucia. The amount of clean, life-giving water that flows into Lake St Lucia has been cut dramatically over the past 60 years, mainly because of sugar farming along the banks of the Umfolozi. A grant agreement of R66 million to find a way to restore the degraded ecology and water flow was signed by senior representatives of the iSimangaliso Wetland Park and World Bank yesterday. The Expanded Public Works Programme and other national governments will provide another R120 million to create jobs and tourism-related businesses in the surrounding region.

MERCURY

Wessa cleans up for World Water Day

Members of the Wildlife and Environment Society of South Africa (Wessa) and other interested parties hauled out their gumboots and rubber gloves to clear alien invasive water weeds from the Keyers River in Steenberg. The clean-up was held to mark World Water Day which was marked internationally on Monday. World Water Day is not affiliated to the local South African Water week.

CAPE ARGUS (City Late)

Probe into SA Roadlink fire

Transport Minister Sbu Ndebele has dispatched a team of accident investigation and reconstruction specialists to probe the SA Roadlink bus fire that left its passengers without their belongings. The bus caught alight on Monday on the N3 freeway passing Lions River. Transport spokesperson Logan Maistry said that a timeframe had not been set on the probe because each case was treated individually.

DAILY NEWS (Deadline)

Opposition parties slam plans

Opposition parties in Durban have condemned plans to have residents pay a "call-out fee" to report a fire. The Minority Front's (MF's) Patrick Pillay said that this was not acceptable, as people would reconsider reporting a fire. Although no fee was provided to the proposal, City Treasurer Krish Kumar said that they hoped to have the charge adopted in principle, as other municipalities such as Cape Town and Johannesburg already had such charges.

DAILY NEWS (Deadline)

Child protection programmes during the World Cup

Child protection programmes are to get a significant slice of this financial year's Social Development budget, as the department turns the spotlight on the safety of children, especially during the World Cup. Delivering his department's budget, MEC Ivan Meyer said that while the soccer showpiece offered many opportunities, the department was also acutely aware of the risks involved. Meyer said that the department has drafted a collaborative Child Protection Plan to be implemented during the World Cup.

CAPE ARGUS (City Late)

Transport committee checking routes to stadiums

Parliament's transport portfolio committee is to inspect the roads leading to each of the country's 10 World Cup stadiums. Committee Chairperson Ruth Bhengu said that it was important for MPs to inspect the routes from the airports to each of the stadiums, as if they were fans. Democratic Alliance (DA) MP Stuart Farrow agreed that the committee needs to get a balanced report on the state of readiness and track the route that fans would take.

CAPE ARGUS (City Late)

KZN MECs bestowed with gifts

A sword from Dubai, a tracksuit from a local municipality, a sheep from President Jacob Zuma, and a zebra skin and vegetables from a local community are some of the gifts that have been bestowed on KwaZulu-Natal MECs. According to the register of executive members' interests, MECs have accumulated properties worth more than R30 million. KZN Premier Zweli Mkhize was presented with a sword from Dubai's foreign minister, cattle from Zuma, and zebra skin worth R10 000, while Economic Development MEC Mike Mabyakhulu received a tracksuit from the uMshwati Municipality.

MERCURY

HEALTH NEWS

Fresh tuberculosis stats as the world marks TB Day

Yesterday marked International TB Day, with experts warning that drug-resistant tuberculosis is increasing at an alarming rate. The World Health Organisation says of the 440 000 multi-drug resistant cases world wide about 16 000 were recorded in South Africa. Tuberculosis (TB) treatment advocacy group, the TB/HIV Care Association, says TB is the biggest killer of people living with HIV in South Africa. The NGO says 73% of TB patients in the country are HIV positive. As the world commemorated World TB day, the NGO says it wants to highlight the need for partnership to fight the twin epidemics.

SFM NEWS @ 07:00; ENEWS PRIME @ 19:00

Doctors say 'no' to sick notes during World Cup

Doctor Lebohlang Phahladira, President of the SA Registrars Association, hopes that doctors will not give sick notes to employees wanting to bunk work during the 2010 World Cup. Phahladira said he was aware of doctors' tendency to issue sick notes without verifying that patients cannot work. "But I hope doctors will refrain from doing that since it gives our profession a bad reputation," he said. Doctor Kgosi Letlape said he did not think doctors would issue sick notes indiscriminately. He said the majority of doctors were ethical. Those who are not should be reported to the Health Practitioners Council, he said.

SOWETAN (Late Final)

High incidence of MDR and XDR increasing

The high incidence of drug-resistant tuberculosis (MTB) in the country is increasing at an alarming rate and if case detection and adherence to treatment are not heightened urgently, the figures could spiral out of control. This is according to TB experts in the city. Speaking before World TB Day, Professor Harry Hausler of the TB/HIV Care Association said that the devastation with which TB and HIV acted in unison meant that anyone involved in the fight against these infectious diseases must team up, adding that communities formed part of the solution to the problem. The Western Cape has registered more than 1 000 new cases of MDR and extremely-drug resistant (XDR) TB in the past two years.

CAPE ARGUS (City Late)

Fresh concerns over OSD

The Treatment Action Campaign (TAC) has expressed concern about the costing of the implementation of the occupational specific dispensation (OSD). It says poor planning and improper costing has led to instability in healthcare budgets and the delivery of services. In a statement, the TAC says the problems of the shortage of life-saving drugs (antiretrovirals) in the Free State and other provinces are a result of poor costing for issues such as OSD.

SFM NEWS @ 08:00

SA air quality system launched

Policy makers and the general public should now be able to access centralised air quality information through a system aimed at reducing pollution in the country, the Department of Environmental Affairs said on Tuesday. The department said in a statement, "This has a profound advantage in that as a country we can begin to assess whether air quality is improving and also identify areas where potential air pollution problems exist." This statement came after the launch of the South African Air Quality Information System (Saaqis) at the South African Weather Service. Chief Director of air quality and climate change at the department, Peter Lukey, said the system would always contain the latest updated data of a location and can give the status of air quality or pollution according to the chosen day and time when checked on the website Saaqis.org.za.

NEWS24.COM - NEWS 24

PROVINCIAL NEWS

Pretoria/Tshwane saga back in court

The argument over the name of the country's capital will be back in the North Gauteng High Court this morning. AfriForum said the City of Tshwane did not have the legal right to change the name. It is bringing this case in response to the City of Tshwane's decision to change the city's name. "There is a clear distinction between a place name and a municipal name. There are different laws governing the naming of such entities," said the group's Alana Bailey. The Geographic Names Council had already suggested to Cabinet that the name should change to Tshwane. However, this had been sitting with ministers for nearly five years while Arts and Culture Minister Lulu Xingwana retracted an official decision to change it earlier this year.

TALK RADIO 702 NEWS @ 06:00; PRETORIA NEWS

Gauteng traffic to 'flow more freely' during WC

Gauteng Premier Nomvula Mokonyane said on Tuesday that traffic in the province will "flow more freely" during the 2010 World Cup. "We are confident that in the next few months, traffic on our roads will flow without the congestion and the inconvenience that is currently being encountered," she said in a speech to the Foreign Correspondents' Association. "We have been given a guarantee by the South African National Roads Agency (SANRAL) that key parts of the Gauteng Freeway Improvement Project will be completed by end of April 2010."

IOL.CO.ZA, PROJECT2010.CO.ZA

Gauteng's lack of funds halts services

The Gauteng government's shortages of funds crippled the provision of services in the province late last year - delivery came to a standstill in some instances - according to department portfolio committee quarterly reports. The department was allocated R1.6 billion for the 2009/10 financial year and had spent more than R1.1 billion of this by the end of the third quarter last year. The finance portfolio committee's report for the third quarter on the Gauteng Shared Service Centre (GSSC) revealed that a shortage of funds had ended investigations into fraudulent activities.

BUSINESS DAY (National)

Gauteng premier says WC preparations are on track

The premier of Gauteng launched a strong defence of World Cup preparations on Tuesday and said that South Africa has "gone an extra mile" compared to other hosts. Premier Nomvula Mokonyane said that her province, which includes host cities Johannesburg and Pretoria, was ready despite concerns over transportation strikes, a lack of hotel accommodation and high crime. "In spite of negative reports emanating from known and unknown sources hell-bent on besmirching the image of our country, I am confident that South Africa is ready to host the 2010 FIFA World Cup," Mokonyane read from a statement. Gauteng has three World Cup stadiums - Soccer City and Ellis Park in Johannesburg; and Loftus Versfeld in Pretoria. They will stage 21 of the 64 games, more than any other province, including the opening and final matches.

SUPERSPORT.COM

A word of caution for childhood development centres

Gauteng Premier Nomvula Mokonyane has called on non-governmental organisations (NGOs) running early childhood developmental programmes and who receive funding from provincial government to raise their standards. She says early childhood development is not only about caring for children when parents are at work. Mokonyane urged those who run the centres to hire people who are capable of giving children lessons such as basic numeracy. She says the province wants to build strong partnerships with NGOs in an effort to improve the lives of the people of the province. The premier said old buildings in the province, such as unused municipal and government offices, should be used by these organisations to serve their communities.

SAFM NEWS @ 12:00

Housing solutions in Western Cape

The private sector, employers, corporate social investors and private individuals will be encouraged to become involved in the Western Cape's provision of housing. This was the word from Housing MEC Bonginkosi Madikezela as he presented the Democratic Alliance's (DA's) first housing budget. Madikezela said that his department will aim to service just over 18 000 sites.

CAPE TIMES

R16 billion needed for water and sanitation backlog

The Western Cape government will need at least R16 billion to address a backlog in the province's water and sanitation bulk infrastructure. This follows a report compiled by the provincial Department of Local Government following a request by MEC Anton Bredell to develop a bulk infrastructure master plan.

CAPE TIMES

City's draft operating budget

More than R2 billion of the eThekweni Municipality's R25.9 billion draft operating budget has been allotted to repairs and maintenance of roads, water, sanitation and electricity networks in the next financial year. These form part of the City's major capital projects, together with spending of about R304.9 million for the public transport plan. Municipal Manager Michael Sutcliffe said that one of the challenges the council faced was unfunded mandates that amount to R728 million.

MERCURY

Protest over service delivery

More than 100 people held a protest in Inanda yesterday to demand better services, including housing; proper roads; and schools and park facilities for their children. The group said that their councillor Sibusiso Shembe has yet to respond to a memorandum they submitted to him last month. The group has given him one week to respond to their demands.

MERCURY

Senior positions to be announced

The names of likely candidates to take control of the troubled Msunduzi Municipality were announced last night ahead of today's special sitting of the council, which is expected to announce the new team. African National Congress (ANC) politician Mike Tarr's resignation from his position as a member of the provincial legislature has fuelled speculation that he will today be appointed mayor. While the position of deputy mayor remained a mystery, party insiders revealed that Babu Bajoo would be nominated and appointed as speaker.

MERCURY

Own version of government's ministerial handbook

Western Cape Premier Helen Zille has announced that she and her Cabinet will produce their own version of the national government's ministerial handbook in a bid to cut back on wasteful spending. The handbook will create new rules related to the Western Cape ministers' spending on cars, accommodation, travel and entertainment. The book will be created to curb power abuse.

CAPE ARGUS (City Late)

Call to review Taking Parliament to the People

Finance portfolio committee members have called for a review of KwaZulu-Natal's Taking Parliament to the People. The members have questioned the value for money on the legislature's regular outings at a time when the province is in a poor financial position. Committee members said that the outing, which cost the taxpayer R2.3 million over three days, is a money-wasting exercise whose primary concern is to provide a platform for the ruling party to get more support.

MERCURY

Mbombela Council facing money crisis

The Mbombela Municipality faces a financial crisis because funds earmarked for future projects and services have been utilised to fund 2010 World Cup contracts. The problem has been worsened by the council's recent downward adaptation of funds for operational costs, which resulted in further pressure on its finances. The construction of a disaster centre, which will not be completed before the World Cup tournament, has also drained money from council. The Democratic Alliance feels that the auditor-general should investigate matters. One of the items on a nine-page list - which still needs to be addressed - concerns R12 million which has to be set aside for a fan park. An operator for the park has as yet not been appointed. A reliable source in council said the results of the utilisation of funds will only be felt after the tournament when council will not be able to supply services due to a lack of funds.

CITIZEN (Second Edition)

EDUCATION NEWS

Questions raised over DUT's academic performance

As education officials and stakeholders at the Durban University of Technology (DUT) attend to students' grievances, questions have been raised about the quality of academic performance there following the recent disruptions. The Democratic Alliance's (DA's) KwaZulu-Natal Education spokesperson, Tom Stokes, said that the recurring student rampages, intermittent closures of the university and the distraction of the upcoming World Cup might lead to a sharp drop in academic standards. Gops Chetty, Special Adviser to Acting Vice Chancellor, Prof Nqabomzi Gawe, said that management is doing its best to restore teaching and learning at the university when it reopened on 6 April.

MERCURY

Grade R important, says minister

The Basic Education Department has set a target to give all children in South Africa access to grade R by 2014 in order to get them ready for the schooling system. Minister Angie Motshhega said Grade R is a critical time as children are taught the basics before literacy and numeracy education in Grade 1. Motshhega said the grade is not compulsory but would encourage parents to enrol their children. Government subsidises schools which offer the grade.

YFM NEWS @ 07:00

DA budget of education in the province

Presenting the Democratic Alliance's (DA's) first budget on education, MEC Donald Grant continued his party's open opportunity society theme. Grant said that the R11.8 billion education budget and the allocation of R38.2 billion over three years was proof of the DA's commitment to quality education for all students in the province. He said that his department has created an extra 134 teaching posts in the Western Cape.

CAPE TIMES

2009 Matrics to write final sup-exams today

2009 Matric pupils will sit for their last national supplementary exams today. The engineer and graphic design paper 2 will be written at 09:00 and the music paper 2 comprehension will be written at 14:00. The Education Department says 97 000 pupils who either failed two subjects; want to improve their marks for university entrance; or were absent during the exams last year, and have a valid medical certificate, qualified for the exams.

YFM NEWS @ 11:00

WC to get education inspectors

The Western Cape government looks set to introduce education inspectors. Western Cape Education MEC Donald Grant gave an indication of this and added that inspectors at schools will help struggling pupils improve their performance. He says the introduction of these educationalists forms part of the department's turnaround strategy to lift learners' performance. Only 17.4% of the province's Grade 6 pupils have the required numeracy skills and only 48.6% are reading and writing at the required level. Grant, however, has not indicated when or how many inspectors will be introduced. "They've basically changed the way they ask questions. They are supporting the learners, making sure that they are determined. They are even teaching on Saturday mornings," said the MEC.

TALK RADIO 702 NEWS @ 10:00

GOVERNMENT BRIEF

Zuma defends his call for debate on morality

President Jacob Zuma has defended his call for a national debate on morality. He was grilled by opposition MPs in Parliament yesterday, most of whom say the debate is nothing but damage control following bad publicity about his child born out of wedlock. Zuma says South Africans need to understand and respect the country's diversity of cultures. Fielding questions from MPs, Zuma lashed out at those whom he says regard their culture beliefs as the only acceptable one.

ENEWS PRIME @ 19:00; TALK RADIO 702 NEWS @ 06:00

Zuma wants more evidence before he acts

President Jacob Zuma says an inter-ministerial committee on corruption is looking at ways to improve government tender processes. Zuma told Parliament that problems do not stem from government policy, but rather from contractors' failure to comply with the rules. Zuma was responding to questions posed by MPs. The Congress of the People (COPE) asked Zuma whether he would investigate allegations that SGL Engineering Projects raked in R104 million in government tenders in Limpopo over the past two years. The company is owned by African National Congress Youth League (ANCyl) President Julius Malema. Zuma has responded that he cannot investigate on the basis of media reports.

KAYA FM NEWS @ 06:00

BANKING BRIEF

In Banking news this morning, inflation slowed in line with expectations last month, falling back inside its official 3% to 6% target range for the first time in three months, official data showed yesterday; and analysts say interest rates are likely to remain steady this year following further declines in consumer inflation to within the Reserve Banks 3% to 6% target range. The Development Bank of South Africa has backed the University of Johannesburg's "Principal Network", with the donation of a technical assistance grant of R500 000; and in property, Redefine Properties' move to increase its stake in Hyprop Investments - announced yesterday - has drawn criticism from property analysts and Hyprop's own unit holders.

NEWS REVIEWS

Split over rate cut as inflation returns to range

Inflation slowed in line with expectations last month, falling back inside its official 3% to 6% target range for the first time in three months, official data showed yesterday. The rise in the consumer price index (CPI) targeted for interest rates retreated to 5.7% compared with the same month last year, from 6.2% in January. It was the lowest increase since an overhaul of the CPI basket of goods and services took effect in January last year. Other data yesterday showed that South Africa's leading indicator of business activity surged 19% in the year to January - its biggest leap in nearly a decade. This rise "bodes well for the continuation of the recovery", said Reserve Bank economist Ian Venter.

BUSINESS DAY (National)

'Rand does not hurt exports'

South Africa's export potential has not been impaired by the strong rand, despite warnings by many exporters and unions. The fourth quarter's 2.8% gross domestic product (GDP) deficit on the current account - surprisingly smaller than expected - showed that pleas for a weaker currency do not make sense. John Cairns and Nema Ramkhelawan, currency analysts at Rand Merchant Bank, reckon that the deficit was much smaller than expected, mainly thanks to strong export performance. In fact, amid all the claims that a strong rand hurts exports, the statistics show good growth in both export volumes (6.6% higher) and value (up 10.7%). Other analysts agree that the data indicates the rand is not a culprit.

FIN24.CO.ZA - FINWEEK

Analysts expect rates to remain on hold

Interest rates are likely to remain steady this year following further declines in consumer inflation to within the Reserve Banks 3% to 6% target range. The consumer price index for February slowed to 5.7%. This was 0.5 of a percentage point lower than in January when inflation rose to 6.2%. On average, prices for consumer goods rose by 0.6% between January and February, Stats SA said yesterday. Investec economist, Annabel Bishop said, "CPI inflation remains largely driven by structural or relatively demand-insensitive costs, the key one this month being the increases in medical aid tariffs."

TIMES, Business Times

Makalani reviews plan to delist

Mezzanine finance company, Makalani Holdings, said yesterday that it is reviewing aspects of a plan to buy out Makalani units and delist the company, and a further announcement would be made as soon as possible. Makalani's unit price slipped 1.66% to R80 per share yesterday. On 23 February, it proposed a buy-back at R83.97 per linked unit, which at the time represented a 14.3% premium to the 30-day volume-weighted average price of a linked unit, calculated on 29 November last year.

BUSINESS DAY (National), Companies & Markets

Futuregrowth Agri-Fund aims to raise R3bn

The Futuregrowth Agri-Fund, launched yesterday by Futuregrowth Asset Management and UFF Asset Management, seeks to give investors direct investment exposure to agricultural land. The South African fund is aiming to raise R3 billion from institutional investors, including retirement funds, by December next year.

BUSINESS DAY (National), Companies & Markets

DBSA donates to technical grant

The Development Bank of South Africa (DBSA) has backed the University of Johannesburg's "Principal Network" with the donation of a technical assistance grant of R500 000, the university said yesterday. The network is an education leadership development initiative in collaboration with the Harvard Graduate School of Education and the university's education management department, which aims to raise the professional standards for SA educational leadership.

BUSINESS DAY (National)

Exports give recovery momentum

As local consumers remain cautious about spending, an export-led recovery is underway in the economy. Despite a relatively strong rand in the fourth quarter of last year, exports did well - driven by a recovery in the manufacturing sector. Quarterly figures from the National Association of Automobile Manufacturers of South Africa (Naamsa) show how vehicle exports plunged and recovered last year: from 43 492 in quarter one to 36 964 and 34 209 in the following quarters, before rising sharply to 60 282 in the fourth quarter. The numbers reflect the extent of the global recession earlier in the year and the subsequent recovery.

BUSINESS REPORT (National)

Lifestyle audits spark debate

The controversial idea of lifestyle audits being conducted on politicians sparked a lively debate in Durban yesterday with some welcoming it, while others said that it created an impression that black politicians were corrupt. The debate, attended by several leaders of political parties and members of the public, came in the midst of several "audits" conducted by newspapers, including The Mercury, on several politicians and elected representatives, both provincially and nationally. University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN) political analyst Zakhele Ndlovu said that it is more effective to have the audits conducted by government agencies, such as the South African Revenue Service (SARS).

MERCURY

State plans strict new curbs on land rights

Rural Development and Land Affairs Minister Gugile Nkwinti yesterday failed to squash fires over the suggestions that productive farm land could be nationalised, instead raising new fears with a proposal that appears to curb property rights. Recently, the department's Director-General, Tozi Gwanya, tabled a strategic plan in Parliament that proposed declaring all productive land a national asset, implying nationalisation. Critics, including farmers' group AgriSA, argued the proposals were a smokescreen to hide the department's bungled implementation of land reforms. AgriSA and opposition parties have warned of a devastating effect on agricultural investment.

BUSINESS DAY (National)

SPORTING HIGHLIGHTS

Chelsea ensured they kept pace with English Premier League leaders Manchester United with a 5-0 demolition of Portsmouth in their game in hand last night. The result lifted the Blues to second place overall, a single point behind United and one point ahead of Arsenal, with all teams having now played the same amount of games. Chelsea can, however, be seen to have advantage over their title rivals as they no longer have the Champions League to be concerned about. Quarter-finals against Bayern Munich and Barcelona lie ahead for United and Arsenal, respectively, and at this stage of the season, prioritising fixtures is impossible. Every match in every competition is a potential eliminator and needs to be taken seriously. This means that a team's best players must take the field in all matches, with the result that the team that survives, will, inevitably, be the team that wins silverware.

News Reviews

Bulls make only one change

Bulls coach Frans Ludeke has made only one change to his starting line-up for Saturday's Super 14 match against the Western Force in Perth, with Jaco Pretorius returning from injury to take Stephan Dippenaar's place at outside centre. The change sees Dippenaar dropping out of the match 22 for the Bulls' first match on the away leg of the competition.

CITIZEN (Second Edition), Sport

Aces and Leopards to fight it out for PSL spot

Black Leopards and Mpumalanga Black Aces booked their places in the Premier Soccer League's promotion play-off final after registering aggregate wins in their respective semi-finals against African Warriors and Nathi Lions yesterday. Leopards lost 3-2 to Warriors last night but went through 6-3 on aggregate, while Aces defeated Lions 2-0 in their semi-final second leg to go through 4-2 on aggregate. Leopards will host the first leg of the final in Thohoyandou on 3 April, with the second leg set for Witbank on 7 April.

THE TIMES

Chelsea keep pace with win

Chelsea moved within a point of English Premier League leaders Manchester United with a 5-0 victory over Portsmouth last night. In other matches, Everton became the first away team to win at Eastlands in league play this season when they beat Manchester City 2-0. Aston Villa and Sunderland drew 1-1, while, in the late match, Blackburn Rovers beat Birmingham City 2-1. In an FA Cup match, Tottenham Hotspur beat Fulham 3-1 to book their place in the semi-finals, where they will play Portsmouth.

THE TIMES

England sweep Bangladesh

England completed their Test series sweep of Bangladesh when they won the second Test by nine wickets in Dhaka yesterday. Set a target of 209 for victory after dismissing the hosts for 285 in their second innings shortly after lunch, England cruised to a comfortable win on the final day, with captain Alastair Cook finishing unbeaten on 109.

CITIZEN (Second Edition), Sport

INDICATORS

Rand - Dollar \$	7.3850	(-0.0525)
Rand - Sterling £	11.0007	(+0.0428)
Rand - Euro €	9.8575	(+0.0648)
JSE Allshare	28401.7	(-49.33)
Gold	\$1090.8	(-10.75)
Platinum	\$1586.0	(-12.00)
Brent Crude Oil	\$79.6	(-1.13)

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

WEATHER

Bloemfontein	14	(28)
Cape Town	16	(21)
Durban	20	(30)
East London	20	(28)
Johannesburg	14	(23)
Kimberley	14	(28)
Mafikeng	15	(31)
Nelspruit	20	(30)
Pietermaritzburg	17	(32)
Polokwane	16	(28)
Port Elizabeth	17	(25)
Pretoria	17	(25)