



Additional funding for NSFAS

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SA celebrates 20 Years of Freedom



President Jacob Zuma.

"We have succeeded in building an activist Parliament that continues to perform its oversight duties without fear or favour. Today many more South Africans have access to clean running water, sanitation and electricity. Social and economic infrastructure continues to improve," added Minister Mashatile.

In the past two decades, the country hosted three World Cup tournaments in major sporting codes - cricket (2003), rugby (1995) and football (2010), while infrastructure has developed with the Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) system, Gautrain and the King Shaka International Airport in KwaZulu-Natal.

South Africans can also be proud of an inclusive Constitution, voting by

powerment (BEE) transactions have been recorded since 1995.

Since its inception in 2004, the Expanded Public Works Programme created 1.6 million work opportunities in Phase 1 (between 2004 and 2009). Phase 2 (2009 - 2014) which was launched in 2009 aims to create 4.5 million work opportunities and so far it has created 3,7 million work opportunities.

EDUCATION

Achievements in education include Grade R enrolments increasing from 300 000 in 2003 to 705 000 in 2011.

The percentage of 0-4 year olds attending early childhood development (ECD) facilities increased by 18.4 per cent between 2007 and 2011.

The percentage of five year olds attending ECD facilities increased by 24.6 per cent between 2007 and 2011.

Illiteracy decreased from 30.4 per cent in 1995 to 19.3 per cent in 2011.

A total of 160 300 students graduated in 2011. This was up from 95 940 in 2001 and 144 852 in 2009.

HEALTH

On the health front, more people with TB are being cured. The TB cure rate has increased consistently, from 54 per cent in 2000 to 73.1 per cent in 2010.

Fewer South African children now suffer from severe malnutrition while more have been immunised against diseases.

The number of children under the age of five with severe malnutrition decreased from 88 971 in 2001 to 23 521 in 2011, while the percentage of infants immunised increased from 63 per cent in 1998 to 90.8 per cent in 2011.

South Africans are also living longer with life expectancy having increased from 56.5 years to 60 years between 2009 and 2011.

The anti-retroviral (ARV) treatment programme is now delivered at more than 3 500 of South Africa's public health facilities and more than 2.4 million children and adults take ARVs daily.

More than 1 million men and boys have been medically circumcised as part of the HIV prevention campaign.

According to the Department of Health's 2012 Mid Term Review Report mother-to-child transmission rates dropped from 3.5 per cent in 2010 to less than 2 per cent in 2012.

RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Since 1994 government redistributed 7 950 million hectares (or 30 per cent) of the 2014 target to redistribute 24.5 million hectares of the country's arable land to the previously disadvantaged.

Since the start of the restitution programme

Register to vote – there's still time

Staff Reporter

South Africans can still register to vote after the last voter registration weekend of 8-9 February.

Those who did not take advantage of the Independent Electoral Commission's (IEC) recent registration drive by registering at voting stations can still register at their local municipal electoral office during office hours.

If you choose to register at a municipal electoral office make sure you phone first to arrange a time.

To find the correct municipal electoral office where you can register, call the IEC on 0800 118 000.

To qualify as a voter, you must be a South African citizen, be at least 16 years old and have a green, bar-coded ID book or smart ID card.

TO CHECK YOUR REGISTRATION STATUS, YOU CAN:

- Send an SMS with your ID number to 32810.
- Check your voter registration details online.
- Call the IEC call centre on 0800 118 000.
- Check at your local municipal electoral office during office hours.



Albert Pule

2014 is a year of celebration as South Africa marks the 20th anniversary of one of the most remarkable days in its history – 27 April 1994.

It was on this day that South Africans, most of whom were allowed to cast their ballot for the first time, voted in a democratic government.

Since the defeat of apartheid, South Africa has seen major improvements and growth over the past 20 years.

According to Arts and Culture Minister Paul Mashatile, whose department is heading the campaign, the 20th year of freedom gives the nation an opportunity to acknowledge achievements since 1994.

"It is also an opportunity to look back at the road we have travelled since 1994 to deepen the gains of our freedom and democracy," he said recently.

During this time the country has made significant progress in building and strengthening institutions that support democracy.

"These include an independent judiciary as well as Chapter 9 institutions. Without fair regular elections are held and the outcome accepted by all.

all citizens regardless of colour, freedom of association and movement, the Constitutional Court, the Equality Court and an independent judiciary.

As South Africa marks 20 Years of Freedom, evidence of the big changes the country has experienced can be seen and felt in a wide range of places and programmes.

The Development Indicators 2012, Census 2011 and various independent studies show that South Africa is a much better place than it was in 1994.

Looking at these developments across the main national priorities, the following reality emerges:

ECONOMY, JOB CREATION

According to the 2012 Development Indicators South Africa's economy has also grown.

"Since 1994, the South African economy has been experiencing positive economic growth after a period of extremely slow growth from 1980 to 1994.

"The economy then experienced one of its longest periods of positive economic growth, sustaining 55 quarters of positive economic growth before the 2008/09 global economic crisis. Up until the 2008/09, South Africa's economic growth rate mirrored growth rates for many middle-income countries," says the report.

The economy has grown by over 80 per cent since 1993.

Over R600 billion in Black Economic Em-

EDUCATION

New Mvezo school a tribute to Madiba

*Ndyabo Kopo

Young people from the rural community of Mvezo can now dream of becoming scientists and engineers, with a high school on their doorstep to help achieve that dream.

The R100-million state-of-the-art Mandela School of Science and Technology was recently opened in the Eastern Cape village of Mvezo - the birthplace of former President Nelson Mandela.

The school is a tribute to Madiba and is the only high school in the area.

"This is a realisation of Madiba's dream. It is the legacy of Madiba and it means the children and teachers should work to preserve and continue with it," said President Jacob Zuma, who handed over the school to the Mvezo community recently.

In 2010, former President Mandela expressed his desire for a high school to be built in Mvezo to Peter Löscher, former Chief Executive of Siemens.

A partnership between Siemens, the Mvezo Development Trust and the Department of Basic Education realised this dream. Siemens



Learners at the newly opened Mandela School of Science and Technology capture the attention of Nkosi Zwelivelile Mandla Mandela (left), President Jacob Zuma, Eastern Cape Premier Noxolo Kiviet and Education Minister Angie Motshekga.

covered all the costs associated with the construction and initial operations of the school.

The school has 25 standard classrooms and three laboratories (science, biology and ag-

ricultural), a resource centre, which has two computer laboratories, and an engineering design laboratory.

Other facilities include a library, school hall,

administration building, ablution facilities, renewable energy (wind and solar), complete electrical infrastructure including an emergency standby generator, water infrastructure - borehole water supply, water pumps, tanks and water filtration systems - an intercom system and CCTV security system.

The school currently has 463 learners from Grades 8 to 10. Grade 11 will be incorporated in 2015 and by 2016, 700 learners will be enrolled from Grade 8-12.

"This school is inspired by uNkosi Dalibhunga Rolihlahla Mandela through his emphasis on education," said Madiba's grandson, Nkosi Zwelivelile Mandla Mandela. He said that many children dropped out after Grade 7 because there was no high school in the area and this contributed to teenage pregnancy and other social ills.

The community of Mvezo benefited during the construction of the school with about 150 people employed by the project. People were trained in bricklaying, plastering, carpentry, plumbing and construction.

Chief Executive Officer of Siemens Sigmar Proebst said the school was a weapon for the future and hoped it would produce scientists and engineers who would contribute to the economy.

"The school is much better compared to other schools in rural areas and what I like most is that the discipline is entrenched," said Sihle Phaliso, one of the learners of the school.

***Ndyabo Kopo works for GCIS in the Eastern Cape.**

Class of 2013 the best



Siphesihle Sithole was among the top 10 matric pupils in the country, achieving eight distinctions.



Top matric achiever Thembalihle Mdabula, who got seven distinctions, said hard work was her secret to success.

Samona Murugan and SAnews

From studying by candlelight to the pressure of living up to expectations, the matric class of 2013 beat the odds to go down in the history books.

They achieved a phenomenal 78.2 per cent pass rate, the highest post-1994.

Eighteen-year-old Siphesihle Sithole, from Soshanguve in Pretoria, was one of those who had reason to celebrate.

Sithole, who comes from a big family but disadvantaged family, had to study for his exams using a candle.

"I remember shortly after our June trial exams started, we didn't have electricity at home and I had to complete the

exams using a candle. I just had to adjust to using a candle to study at night but did most of my studying during the day," he said.

Despite these struggles, Sithole's results exceeded the expectations of even his mother.

The Makhosini Combined Secondary School learner was among the top 10 in the country.

Sithole's mum, Delinah Mthombeni, had expected him to do well because he had always been a great performer but even so, she was surprised at his exceptional performance.

He achieved eight As in mathematics (98 per cent), physical science (99 per cent), life sciences (99 per cent), geography (96 per cent), mathematics paper three (93 per cent), life orientation (93 per cent), English (87 per cent) and isiZulu home language (81 per cent).

Sithole was ranked the third-best pupil from disadvantaged schools across the country by the Department of Education. He is now studying chemical engineering at the University of Pretoria

after receiving a bursary from the Sasol Inzalo Foundation.

Over in the Eastern Cape, good results were expected of Thembalihle Mdabula, who attended St James Senior Secondary School at Cofimvaba, and the 18-year-old did not disappoint.

She achieved seven distinctions, with an impressive 99 per cent for mathematics and 96 per cent for physical science.

Her father, Mzonhle Rodo, is a teacher and mom Nancy works at the provincial Department of Education.

"With both my parents being directly involved in education, it was expected that I had to work hard and achieve great results," she said.

Mdabula, who lives in the small rural town of Cofimvaba, recently received a bursary from the Department of Public Works and is now studying mechatronic engineering - a combination of mechanical and electrical engineering at the University of Cape Town.

She said the secret to her success was hard work, which would not stop now as she strives to become a highly acclaimed engineer.

Mpumalanga no-fee school excels in matric exams

Siphiwe Nyathi

Mpumalanga's most improved no-fee school went from a matric pass rate of below 20 per cent to 100 per cent in the space of a year.

Mathukwane Secondary School in Casteel near Bushbuckridge achieved a mere 19.4 per cent matric pass rate in 2012 but managed to increase this to 100 per cent in 2013.

"I am very happy about the drastic improvement. We are aiming for the better quality this year and hoping to increase the number of the admission to bachelor degrees," said the school's principal Farris Siwela.

He attributed the school's success to teamwork on the part of provincial education officials, teachers, pupils and parents.

Siwela said the school had to overcome a shortage of chairs and desks to ensure that pupils studied in a comfortable environment.

"Pupils were encouraged to do their work both in the classroom and at home while the teachers were closely monitoring everything. We are happy with the progress and we can still do better this year," he said.

Thabang Malele, 19, is one of the pupils who achieved a bachelor's pass.

"We did not have enough study materials so our teachers had to outsource them from a neighbouring school. We did not have everything but our attitude and hard work paid off," said Malele.

He said pupils attended a one-month camp at the school to ensure they studied and interacted with the teachers.

Malele said although he passed well, he did not apply to university. His dream is to pursue a career in traffic management.

Fellow pupil Mahlatse Mmola, 18, cried when she learnt that she had comfortably passed all her subjects.

"I want to thank my parents and teachers for their support. My mother gave me less domestic work to make sure that I get time to study while my teachers motivated me to study," said Mmola, who wants to study social work.



EDUCATION

New universities raring to go

Albert Pule

South Africa's two new universities will welcome their first students this month.

Last year the University of Mpumalanga in Nelspruit and Sol Plaatje University in Kimberley appointed their interim management teams and are now ready for their first academic intake.

"Teaching at the two new universities will commence in existing infrastructure that has been refurbished, while new infrastructure is built to accommodate the increasing numbers of students over the coming years," said Higher Education and Training Minister Blade Nzimande.

Sol Plaatje University (SPU) will offer three programmes - Bachelor of Education in Secondary Mathematics, Science and Technology Teaching, Diploma in Information Technology Applications and Diploma in Retail Management.

The Higher Education Quality Committee (HEQC) of the Council on Higher Education (CHE) has accredited all three qualifications.

The University of Mpumalanga (UMP) will also offer three programmes - Bachelor of Education in Foundation Phase Teaching at the Siyabuswa Campus, Bachelor of Agriculture and Diploma in Hospitality Management at the Nelspruit Campus. These qualifications have also been accredited by the HEQC of the CHE.

Both universities will start off with a modest number of students - 135 at SPU and 140 at UMP - and will increase the intake as their infrastructure and human resources develop.

"The number of students at the two new universities is expected to increase dramatically over the 10-year development plan with SPU growing to accommodate 7 500 contact students in a variety of programmes on its Kimberley Campus, with 80 per cent of these students accommodated in university residences.

"The UMP will accommodate 15 000 con-



The University of Mpumalanga in Nelspruit and Sol Plaatje University in Kimberley are ready to open their doors to students, says Higher Education and Training Minister Blade Nzimande.

tact students on its Nelspruit Campus with 60 per cent of its students accommodated in residences and 3 000 contact students on its Siyabuswa Campus accommodating more than 80 per cent of its students in residences," explained Minister Nzimande.

The two universities are among 25 public universities in the country.

"The 25 public universities offer a diverse range of degrees, diplomas and higher certificates to prepare the class of 2013 to take their rightful place in the country's economy.

"They provide access to approximately 197 946 new entrants wishing to pursue their studies across all general, technical and professional fields in 2014," he added.

Additional funding for NSFAS

Albert Pule

Thousands of students who were anxious about how to pay for their tertiary education now have a chance to study further as a result of an additional funding of R1 billion from the Department of Higher Education and Training.

The Department of Higher Education and Training has given National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) more money for the 2014 academic year. Minister of Higher Education and Training Blade Nzimande says the additional funding will be used to cover the 2013 and 2014 shortfall for continuing students.

"In respect to the shortfall of funds, the department has made available an additional amount of R1 billion sourced from the National Skills Fund (NSF) to all universities to cover the 2013 and 2014 shortfall for continuing students.



"The department has also actively engaged with sector education and training authorities (SETAs) to support students at universities." Minister Nzimande said as a result of limited funds, students who were funded by NSFAS in 2013 and did not perform well are likely not to receive funding from the scheme.

"Allow me to correct a misconception being portrayed by the media, amongst students or institutions regarding previously funded NSFAS students being prevented from registering for the 2014 academic year.

"In this context of limited funds, students who have performed poorly in 2013 will most likely not be funded in 2014" he added.

Recently, students across different institutions protested against lack of funding from NSFAS. Minister Nzimande said the destruction of property during protests will not be tolerated.

"We have been made aware of protest actions that took place at the University of Johannesburg, Durban University of Technology, Mangosuthu University of Technology and Tshwane University of Technology. "My major concern is the disruption of

academic progress and agony that is suffered by new students at universities and the parents of these students.

"Hope that the meetings we have had with stakeholders will help to address these. I also wish to strongly condemn any disruptions and destruction of property, and urge all to desist from this" he urged.

He added that students who received NSFAS funding in 2013 should not be prevented from registering in 2014 because of outstanding fees.

Since 1991, NSFAS has funded over 1 million students. One of those students is Group Manager: IT Strategy at Sun International Veronica Motloutsi from Shosanguve.

Motloutsi says NSFAS made her realise her dream by paying for her studies at the Tshwane University of Technology (TUT).

"NSFAS helped me realise my dreams by giving me the funding I needed to further my education and continue on my journey to success. Now my dream is that all young boys and girls get a good education and understand its value."

Meanwhile, the department says the department has made available more opportunities for students to further their studies at universities, Further Education and Training (FET) and Sector Education and Training Authority (SETAs). He says there are 396 449 opportunities available to students.

These opportunities can further be broken down as follows:

Community colleges a second chance for school leavers

Samona Murugan

South Africans who did not finish school but want to gain skills and attend college will soon be able to do so.

Higher Education and Training Minister Blade Nzimande has announced the creation of community colleges - new institutions that will address the education and skills gap for South Africans who never attended or completed school.

"Our post-education system will now cater for those who obtained seven As in matric and for those who never went to school but who also want to acquire a skill," the Minister said.

The introduction of community colleges will make a significant difference to people who never attended schools and give them a second chance, he added.

The community colleges are just one of the means through which South Africa's higher education and training system is set to be revamped in terms of the White Paper on Post-School Education and Training.

The White Paper sets out strategies to improve the quality of and access to post-school education, as well as provide training opportunities for the youth.

Improvements to the system set out in the paper include upgrading the quality of programmes offered Further Education and Training (FET) colleges, which will soon be renamed Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) colleges, and providing more support for students.

"We want to revamp our current education system to not only provide access to education at institutions, but to also ensure that all institutions provide high quality education," said the Minister.

Partnership between universities, TVET colleges and the Sector Education and Training Authorities (Setas) would also be improved.

The new system would not be a dead end for students who completed their qualifications but would allow students to improve on their qualifications without repetition, he stressed.

The department also plans to do away with short courses that were costly but did not lead to any meaningful qualification and work placement. More emphasis will also be placed on practical training.

- 197 946 new entrant opportunities at Universities
- 23 000 Engineering and Business Studies opportunities at FET Colleges
- 44 000 National Certificate Vocational programme opportunities at FET Colleges
- 10 000 Artisanal opportunities at FET Colleges
- 93 000 Occupationally-directed (apprenticeship or learnerships) opportunities in collaboration with FET Colleges, SETAs and employers
- 12 000 Artisanal opportunities within the Retail Auto sector
- 16 503 Learnerships through SETAs

EDUCATION

Public Works opens doors for top matric performers

Albert Pule

Elias Mhlongo is proof that with hard work, dedication and discipline you can rise above your circumstances.

The 18-year-old, who attended Soshanguve South Secondary School, near Pretoria, not only passed his matric exams with flying colours but also secured a bursary worth R180 000 from the Department of Public Works.

Mhlongo said the school year was demanding and he had to make a lot of sacrifices to achieve his outstanding results. Sharing a RDP house with his mother, two unemployed sisters and a brother proved challenging when it came to studying.

"It wasn't easy but I knew that if I worked hard and stayed focused I would achieve good results. I got five distinctions – physical science (94 per cent), life science (92 per cent), geography (92 per cent), mathematics (84 per cent) and Sepedi home language (82 per cent) – 76 per cent for English and 67 per cent for life orientation."

He plans to study electrical engineering at the University of the Witwatersrand.

Mhlongo was one of the 50 bursary recipients (28 males and 22 females) chosen from 15 schools that are part of the Department of Public Works Schools Programme. The programme promotes the teaching of maths and science and encourages learners to take studies in built environment professions.

Bursary recipients were chosen based on their matric results.

Public Works Minister Thulas Nxesi hoped to see more females being awarded bursaries in the future.

"In a male-dominated set of professions this might be seen as a good start but next year we want to see at least 50 per cent females," said the Minister.

The department plans to expand the programme to other schools.

"The plan is to include schools from all regions in 2014 and later to extend the programme to the



Public Works Minister Thulas Nxesi with some of the outstanding matriculants of 2013 who were awarded bursaries by the Department of Public Works.

provincial departments... and ensure the inclusion of more deep rural schools from across the country," said Minister Nxesi.

The department adopted the schools in the pilot programme from the five regional offices in Polokwane, Mmabatho, Kimberly, Mthatha,

Port Elizabeth and the head office (Pretoria).

Full bursaries were awarded to 50 learners from the 2013 matric class, who will study towards careers in the built environment. The bursaries are part of government's efforts to build a skilled and capable workforce.

Each bursary is valued at R120 000 and will cover tuition, residential fees including meals, textbooks, academic projects and includes monthly allowance. The Construction Education and Training Authority will provide an additional R60 000.

Second chance to write matric exams

Staff Reporter

There is hope for those who did not pass their matric exams, with the National Senior Certificate (NSC) 2nd Chance 2014 Programme giving them another chance.

The programme is a partnership between the National Youth Development Agency (NYDA) and the Education Training Development Practitioner Sector Education Training Authority (ETDP SETA).

According to the NYDA, this year's programme is expected to help 4 500 youngsters register with the Department of Basic Education to rewrite their Grade 12 exams at the end of 2014.

The programme started in 2011 when 2 039 learners enrolled. By 2013 that figure had grown to 3 168. The pass rate for these learners has also improved from 47 per cent in 2011 to 77 per cent in 2013.

This year the ETDP SETA will contribute R3.6 million to fund 1 500 youth and the NYDA will contribute R7 million towards

the remaining 3 000 youth.

HOW DOES THE PROGRAMME WORK?

Selected learners will receive tuition, career guidance and job preparedness training. Included in the programme are:

- Tuition of 52 hours per subject.
- Study guides.
- Career guidance.
- Past exam papers.
- Academic support.
- Three assessments per subject.
- Registration with the department to rewrite Grade 12 exams.

Exams can be rewritten for five subjects – physical science, mathematics, accounting, life sciences and English.

Candidates for the programme must have written Grade 12 exams between 2011 and 2013 and are not allowed to change their Grade 12 subjects during the course of the programme.

In addition, portfolio work will not be done and learners' school based assessment marks will be carried over.

Applications open this month and will close once the target of 4 500 youth have enrolled.

For more information on the programme contact NYDA on 0800 525 252 or visit your nearest NYDA branch.



About 4 500 youngsters learners who were unsuccessful in the matric exams will be able to sit for their exams again thanks to the National Senior Certificate (NSC) 2nd Chance 2014 Programme.

RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Joy for Mala Mala land claimants

SAnews

Members of the N'wandla-mhlarhi Community Property Association are proud landowners after their land claim was finalised.

President Jacob Zuma gave the title deeds for the land, which comprises the Mala Mala Game Reserve in Bushbuckridge, Mpumalanga, to the association recently.

"We are very happy that this claim has been concluded and that land is being handed over today. The restoration of land to rightful owners is one of the biggest responsibilities you gave the democratic government.

"We have made a lot of progress, but work still continues. I am pleased to note that the current landowners of the Mala Mala land have accepted the validity of the claim and have not declared any dispute about the merits of the claim," the President said.

The number of households and total number of beneficiaries of the restitution project on properties owned by Mala Mala Game Ranch (Pty) Ltd is estimated to be 960 and 5 760 respectively.

The claimed land falls within the Bushbuckridge Municipality in Ehlanzeni District, one of the prioritised districts by the Department of Rural Development and Land Reform due to the high levels of poverty.



Land handover by President Jacob Zuma.

The claimed land includes the Mala Mala Game Reserve, which is currently operating as an internationally renowned game farm and ecotourism destination.

Negotiations for the settlement of the claim on the land began in earnest in May 2008 when an initial formal offer was made for the acquisition of the 12 855 hectares.

"As the Mala Mala claimants you lodged claims against 21 properties consisting of 63

portions, measuring 65 000 hectares as the total extent.

"After lengthy negotiations, the legal representatives of the land owners considered a settlement amount of R 939 360 000, close to a billion rand for the purchase of the land in respect of the 13 184 hectares. These properties are fully utilised as game land," President Zuma noted.

The President added that he was aware that

the majority of claimants were currently living in and around the Lillydale area, which borders the claimed land.

The conditions were less than favourable as there was inadequate infrastructure development, most of the households lived in poverty and there were high levels of unemployment.

The successful land claim would bring hope to the community, President Zuma noted.



The women of Muyexe in Limpopo are fighting hunger by growing their own food through the Macena Vegetable Cooperative, which they started in 1993.

Muyexe women stand together to fight poverty

Albert Pule

Life has changed for the better for the community of Muyexe, a rural village outside Giyani.

Like the name itself - Muyexe is a Xitsonga word that means alone - the village is far-flung and deeply rural. It is one of the villages identified and prioritised for development by President Jacob Zuma under the Comprehensive Rural Development Programme (CRDP).

Like other parts of the country, Muyexe

is affected by poverty and a high unemployment rate among the 7 000 community members scattered across five sections.

A few kilometres after entering the village, signs of life start to emerge.

Children play on the streets and women dressed in orange Extended Public Works Programme (EPWP) overalls are busy with various activities.

In the south of the village, a 17-hectare garden is a hive of activity with women singing and dancing as they work the garden in preparation for the planting season.

They are part of the Macena Vegetable Cooperative, which was started by 40 women from the village in 1993. The women grow spinach, beetroot, pepper, butternut and sweet potato.

Maria Ngobeni, a member of the coopera-

tive, said they supply these vegetables to the community.

"We started these gardens just so we could have food in our houses. We received assistance from the Department of Rural Development which bought us pipes and wheel barrows in 2012," she added.

The cooperative has faced many challenges over the years including water shortages, lack of equipment and transport.

It is a member of the Limpopo Tomato Growers Association and being part of the group allows it to supply tomatoes to Agro Processors of Limpopo (APOL) on a continuous base.

"Our agreement is very simple, all they (the cooperative) do is to supply us with tomatoes and we don't restrict them on how and when they can supply with their pro-

duce," John Mahasha of APOL explained. This agreement started in 2013 and has proved to be fruitful.

"We are happy with the quality of the tomatoes. We've never had issues apart from one or two occasions where they wanted to sell us rotten tomatoes," Mahasha added.

A ton of round tomatoes is sold for R800, while a ton of jam tomatoes is sold at R1 200.

Ngobeni hopes the agreement with APOL will be a sign of good things to come as the cooperative has been struggling to find a market for some of their products.

"We are happy with the agreement we have with them and we hope there will be more to come in the future," Ngobeni added.

2014 a big year for SA

Albert Pule

South Africans can look forward to an exciting year as the country not only celebrates 20 Years of Freedom but also holds its fifth national elections.

As in 1994, 1999, 2004 and 2009, South Africans who are eligible to vote will have the opportunity to do so at polling stations across the country this year.

The date of the elections is expected to be announced soon.

After South Africans vote, the President elected by Parliament will be inaugurated and a new administration will be installed.

This month, President Jacob Zuma will deliver his last State of the Nation Address (SONA) of the current electoral term and will reflect on the achievements of this administration since 2009.

After the elections, another SONA will be delivered with the newly-elected President outlining the way forward for the next five years.

HEALTH

Govt steps up fight against cervical cancer

SANews

Primary school girls will from this year be immunised against the Human Papilloma Virus (HPV), which causes cervical cancer.

President Jacob Zuma made the announcement at the launch of Ngidini Primary School in Libode in the Eastern Cape recently. He said government would target girls between nine and 12 years of age, through the Integrated School Health Programme.

"The Departments of Basic Education and Health will work closely together in this national programme to protect our girls from this disease.

"Vaccination teams from the Department of Health will visit schools twice a year to ensure that each girl-child receives two doses of the HPV vaccine. We urge parents to cooperate

with us and help us succeed in fighting cervical cancer," said President Zuma.

Cancer of the cervix is the most common cancer diagnosed in women in South Africa. Estimates indicate that there are 16 million women over the age of 15 who are at risk of cervical cancer.

There are more than 5 000 cases per year in South Africa, with around 3 000 deaths from this cancer and black women carry the heaviest burden of the disease.

"The introduction of the HPV vaccine is a significant public health milestone for South Africa. It will significantly contribute to the control of the cancer and reduce associated deaths within the next two to three decades," said the President.

The Cancer Association of South Africa (CANSA) said it supported government's immunisation initiative and called on the private sector to work with government by reducing the price of immunisation.

"CANSA is in favour of vaccinating all young girls against HPV and calls on the manufacturers to reduce the price or subsidise the price for use in developing countries," said the association.



Primary school girls will soon be immunised against the Human Papilloma Virus (HPV) as government intensifies efforts to combat cervical cancer.

Cancer CAN be beaten

Staff Reporter

World Cancer Day is marked on 4 February to raise awareness of the global impact of cancer and increase understanding of prevention, detection, treatment and care. The theme for 2014 is Debunk the myths.

Cancer is a leading cause of death worldwide. According to the World Health Organisation (WHO), it accounted for 7.6 million deaths (around 13% of all deaths) in 2008.

According to the WHO, more people die from cancer than from AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis combined.

Most of these deaths are expected to occur in low to middle income countries like South Africa where myths, stigma and lack of knowledge are often the greatest barriers in the fight against cancer.

In commemoration of World Cancer Day Gauteng Health MEC Hope Papo applauded the department of Medical Oncology at Charlotte Maxeke Johannesburg Academic hospital for efforts in improving the lives of children with cancer and reducing patient waiting times at its clinic.

The waiting times for new patients to be seen at the hospital has been reduced to less than two weeks which has enabled the hospital to offer more prompt chemotherapy treatment to patients and increase the number of patients seen by the oncology unit.

Charlotte Maxeke Johannesburg Academic hospital is the only hospital in the southern part of Gauteng that offers both medical and

radiation oncology services. The hospital's Radiation Oncology Unit is the largest in the country and treats about 3 500 patients a year. It is followed by Tygerberg hospital in the Western Cape which treats 2 500 patients a year.

The Radiation Oncology Unit has four dedicated clinics to treat a variety of cancers using state-of-the-art equipment and a dedicated Computed Tomography (CT) scanner on site for cancer planning. The unit has hosted the very first prostate brachytherapy seminar in the country and has a dedicated children's room for paediatric oncology cases.

"One of our satisfied patients, Shirley Koch is a volunteer who supports the hospital. She points out that if she had not received treatment at Charlotte Maxeke she would have long demised. This follows treatment from private hospitals who "abandoned" her when she could not manage the cost of treatment" the MEC said.

Health Minister Aaron Motsoaledi said in his budget vote speech that it costs up to R100 000 per patient in the public sector to treat each of the 6 000 cervical cancer patients.

Another patient, Susan Elder who is also on treatment at the Medical Oncology Unit provides tea and sandwiches to patients awaiting their treatment on a regular basis. In celebration of Cancer Awareness Day, she handed out goodies to patients in the outpatients' medical oncology clinic.

About 270 children are admitted to the hospital's paediatric haematology and oncology units annually for cancer and blood disorders.

Children of school going age receiving

treatment are attending classes in the hospital premises. This allows children not to lose out on education whilst receiving treatment. Whenever a child is unable to attend class,

lessons are offered at their bedside. A number of learners have written their final examinations on a sick bed under a supervision of full time teachers and succeeded in their examination.

The Steve Biko Academic Hospital in Pretoria also recently opened the doors to their new Paediatric Oncology Unit, with a new state-of-the-art isolation room. The Oncology unit originated at the Kalafong Hospital, after which it moved to its new premises at Steve Biko Academic Hospital. The unit is managed by Prof David Reynders, who successfully conducted the first bone marrow transplant in a child in Pretoria.

Helen Joseph Hospital in Gauteng boasts a state-of-the-art Breast Clinic which is staffed by highly trained and experienced health professionals who perform miracles daily on women who have been diagnosed with breast cancer.

To continue the fight against cancer the Department of Health runs awareness campaigns on early detection on various types of cancer. In the past, cancer patients had to travel to other provinces to receive treatment - and in most cases they had to go numerous times to access treatment.

Provincial health departments are increasingly investing in state-of-the-art equipment to improve treatment and detection of the disease.

Inkosi Albert Luthuli Hospital in KwaZulu-Natal also has three radiotherapy machines which services cancer patients from around the province.

SYMPTOMS

Different cancers have different symptoms but there are certain general symptoms. These include:

- Severe tiredness.
- Unexplained weight loss or weight gain.
- Developing a lump or growth.
- Persistent cough or hoarseness.
- Noticeable changes in bowel movements or bladder activity.
- Difficulty swallowing.
- Continual indigestion.
- Changes to the appearance of the skin and to existing moles or wounds that do not heal.
- Constant unexplained pain in a particular area of the body.

If you are experiencing any of these symptoms visit your doctor immediately. Cancer can spread very quickly and the sooner it is diagnosed the greater the chances are of treating it successfully.

PREVENTION

Many people believe that there is nothing you can do to prevent yourself from getting cancer but in truth a lot can be done.

According to the Union for International Cancer Control (UICC) which founded World Cancer Day, "with the right strategies, a third of the most common cancers can be prevented".

By living a healthy lifestyle and taking part in healthy activities you can decrease your chances of getting cancer drastically.

These include eating a nutritious diet, exercising and not smoking or consuming alcohol.

Tobacco use is the most common risk factor for cancer and is linked to 71 per cent of lung cancer deaths and 22 per cent of all cancer deaths.

Consuming alcohol is strongly linked to cancers of the mouth, pharynx, larynx, oesophagus, bowel and breast as well as liver cancer and bowel cancer in women.

Obesity is a high predictor of certain types of cancers such as bowel, breast, uterine, pancreatic, oesophagus, kidney and gallbladder cancer.



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CIP



SAFETY AND SECURITY

Security cluster cracks the whip on criminals

Noluthando Mkhize

South Africa is a much safer place than it was 20 years ago with police working hard to reduce crime and the justice system keeping criminals behind bars.

As the country celebrates 20 Years of Freedom, one of the democratic South Africa's success stories is progress in the fight against crime.

Much of this success is down to good work by the Justice, Crime Prevention and Security Cluster (JCPS), which includes the South African Police Service, State Security, Home Affairs and Justice and Constitutional Development. Justice Minister Jeff Radebe recently reflected on the accomplishments of this cluster, noting that its aim was a safe society.

There had been significant decrease – just under 40 per cent – in contact crimes such as rape, murder and assault between 2004 and 2012, he said.

The cluster was also working hard to tackle sexual offences with the establishment of Thuthuzela Care Centres (TCC) across the country.

TCCs are one-stop facilities to reduce secondary trauma for the victim, improve conviction rates and cut the time taken to finalise cases.

The centres offer rape victims care, treatment and support, including anti-retroviral drugs to reduce the risk of HIV infection, treatment of sexually transmitted infections, prevention of unwanted pregnancy and counselling.

At the moment, there are 35 fully functional



During 20 Years of Freedom, the police, the South African Defence National Force and judicial officers have worked together efficiently to make South Africa safer.

TCCs, while centres at a further 16 sites are open but offering limited services.

The conviction rate in the prosecution of sexual offences reported at TCCs for the second quarter of last year was 65.8 per cent, which is an improvement of 5.2 per cent compared to 2012.

SEXUAL OFFENCES COURTS

In August last year the Sexual Offences Courts were re-launched.

Fifty-seven Sexual Offences Courts are now operational and another 22 are expected to be re-established.

Minister Radebe said the fight against corruption had been also stepped up, resulting in a number of arrests. In total 522 incidents of serious corruption were recorded by the end June 2013.

About 791 people are currently under criminal, financial or forensic investigation.

By the end of September last year, 228 people had been successfully convicted for

corruption related crimes.

SANDF

The South African Defence Force (SANDF) is also playing a role in ensuring the safety of South Africans by patrolling country's borders.

Last year 2 469 SANDF members were deployed to Limpopo, Mpumalanga, KwaZulu-Natal, Free State, Eastern Cape, Northern Cape and North West to patrol the borders these provinces share with neighbouring countries.

The SANDF apprehended 600 undocumented people, the majority of whom were arrested along the border between South Africa and Zimbabwe. The SANDF also confiscated illegal imports to the value of about R1.2 million at the South Africa and Zimbabwe border. The total amount of illegal imports confiscated at all the country's borders was valued at about R1.7 million.

The Department of Justice was also making

progress in making sure criminals paid for their crimes.

CONVICTION RATES

The Minister said when it came to conviction rates, courts at all levels performed better than the targets set for quarters one and two of the 2013/14 financial year.

The High Courts' target was 87 per cent and performance stood at 88.1 per cent while the Regional Courts' target was 74 per cent and their performance was 75.3 per cent.

District Courts were set a target of 87 per cent and the achievement was an exceptional 96.6 per cent conviction rate.

Minister Radebe acknowledged the backlogs within the justice system that stood at 26 233 by the end of September 2013.

"The total backlog cases at the end of September 2013 for all courts stood at new record low of only 26 233 cases, which is 24.7 per cent better than the target set for the end of quarter two of 32 117."

He added that progress was being made in transforming the judiciary.

"We have made significant strides... Today 61 per cent of judges are black compared to only one black [judge] in 1994. Similar progress has been made in addressing race and gender imbalances in the magistracy. Of the 1661 magistrates, 974 are black and 687 are white, 647 are women and 1014 are men."

Infrastructure has also been improved with 43 courts built since 1994.

"Besides the 43 new courts, we have revamped and equipped a further 24 Branch Courts and elevated them into proper courts. The outstanding 65 Branch Courts and 230 Periodical Courts have been lined-up for rehabilitation consistent with the National Development Plan," said the Minister during his Budget Vote.

He added that the Limpopo High Court will be completed by June this year and the construction of the Mpumalanga High Court is expected to begin in July.

Over the next three years six new courts are due to be built.

THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE AND CONSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

WHAT IS MAINTENANCE?

Maintenance is the duty to provide another person, whether it is a minor, a former spouse or a family member with an income essential for everyday life.

The types of maintenance:

- child maintenance;
- spousal maintenance;
- cross border maintenance.

WHO MUST APPLY FOR MAINTENANCE?

- The parent/person who has custody of the child/children may claim maintenance from the other parent.
- A spouse would like to apply for support from the other, where applicable.

WHO MUST PROVIDE MAINTENANCE?

The duty to maintain or pay maintenance is based on blood relationship, adoption or the fact that the parties are married to each other.

WHERE TO GO FOR COMPLAINTS REGARDING THE MANAGEMENT OF YOUR MAINTENANCE

- If you have a complaint about the management of your maintenance case contact the local court manager.
- If you are not satisfied with his/her response, you can contact the area court manager.
- If you are not satisfied with the response at this level, contact the regional maintenance complaints manager at the regional office of the Department of Justice in your province.
- If you are still not satisfied with the response contact national complaints manager. Contact details are available at every magistrate's court or on the website

www.doj.gov.za

LOGGING A MAINTENANCE CLAIM

APPLICATION



Go to your nearest magistrate's court with the following documents:

- Proof of birth certificate for the child/children.
- Your identity document.
- Divorce order and/or settlement if any.
- Proof of applicant's income and expenditure.
- Name and surname of parent/person responsible for the payment of maintenance money.
- Physical/ work address of the parent/person responsible for the payment of maintenance money, if available.
- Copy of bank statements.
- Proof of residence/affidavit.

The maintenance clerk will help you complete the forms and refer your application to the maintenance officer for final assessment of your documents.

After the assessment the registration of application and reference number will be issued.



ISSUING A DIRECTIVE

The maintenance officer will issue a directive calling on the parties to meet so the complaint can be investigated.

The maintenance officer will then investigate the complaint or conduct mediation with both parties present.



MEDIATION AND GRANTING OF AN ORDER BY CONSENT

The maintenance officer will conduct mediation with both parties to reach an agreement or settlement.

Where the parties reach an agreement/settlement, the agreement will be made an order of the court. The maintenance officer may request both parties to sign a written consent and have that made an order of the court.

The court then makes an order for payment of maintenance in accordance with the agreement between the two parties.

Where parties do not reach an agreement, the matter is then referred to court for a formal enquiry (section 10).



COURT DATE

On the day of the court appearance, an enquiry will be held to determine the need and the means from both parties.

After consideration, the magistrate will make a maintenance order indicating the amount to be paid.

PAYMENT METHOD



The court may order the respondent to make payments by:

- Electronic funds transfer (EFT) to the beneficiary's bank account.
- Deducting the maintenance money from the respondent's salary (garnishee order).
- Direct deposit to the beneficiary's bank account.



PROCEDURE (IN CASES WHERE A RESPONDED DOES NOT PAY)

If the respondent does not pay within the specified times you should report the matter to the maintenance office.

The court will proceed with one of the following two options:

1. Civil enforcement of maintenance. The magistrate may order one of the following:
 - emolument attachment;
 - attachment of debt and/or;
 - execution of movable/immovable property.
2. Criminal Prosecution - where a warrant of arrest can be issued if the respondent failed to comply with an order of court.



Employment News

New training programme to raise skills

SAnews

The Department of Labour has announced a R300 million training programme that will benefit 8 000 unemployed people and youth.

The programme, funded by the Unemployment Insurance Fund (UIF) and the Sector Education and Training Authority (Seta), will also involve the Departments of Public Works, Higher Education and Training and Human Settlements.

The immediate beneficiaries of the programme will be youth and unemployed people who have registered on the department's match-making platform, the Employment Services for South Africa (Essa), at the recent Jobs Fairs held by the department.

Minister of Labour Mildred Oliphant confirmed that those chosen for the programme would receive training in fields such as motor mechanics, instrument mechanician, fitting and turning and diesel mechanics.

The Chemical Industries Education and Training Authority (CHIETA) is expected to train 1 500 students at a cost of R100 million.

The Tourism, Hospitality and Sport, Education and Training Authority (THETA) will train 777 learners in aviation-related fields at a cost of R47 million, while the Construction Education and Training Authority (CETA) and the Energy and Water Sector Education and Training Authority (EWSETA) will train 200 learners in plumbing and renewable energy skills at a cost of R3.6 million.

Minister Oliphant said a further 100 learners will receive training in the scuba diving-related field at a cost of R6 million and 500 more learners will be trained as seafarers.

The Department of Human Settlements to train 1 800 youth in a variety of construction skills, while the Department of Public Works will also train 900 learners in the same field at a cost of R16 million.

A further 2 000 youths will be trained in information, communication technology and marketing skills to assist the UIF to market the uFiling (online filing for UIF) system to both employers and employees.

It was a priority that workers' skills be improved, said the Minister.

"The more people we train, the more likely that they will gain the necessary skills and



A new programme by the Departments of Labour, Higher Education and Training, Human Settlements and the Sector Education and Training Authority will provide training to thousands of people in fields such as motor mechanics, fitting and turning and diesel mechanics.

secure employment therefore rely less on UIF benefits and other social services," Minister Oliphant said.

For more information contact the Department of Labour on 0800 209 020.

Youth raise the bar for local tourism

Samona Murugan

One-hundred young hospitality graduates from Further Education and Training (FET) colleges will participate in the country's first-ever Food Safety Programme this year.

The graduates will be placed in participating hotels as food safety assistants for 12 months and will receive a monthly stipend.

They will be trained to monitor and assess food and food safety issues such as how food is stored, handled and served.

The pilot project will see 100 graduates chosen from FET colleges in Limpopo, Mpumalanga and KwaZulu-Natal. An initiative of the Federated Hospitality Association of Southern Africa (FEDHASA) and the Department of Tourism, the Food Safety Programme assists, encourages, mentors, teaches and employs youth in the hospitality industry.

It also aims to place South Africa as a leading tourist destination by increasing the country's food security levels to compete on the global tourist market.

According to FEDHASA chairman Eddie Khosa, food safety at hotels is an important factor in local tourism.

He explained that the first thing leading sport teams, music artists, celebrities and dignitaries do when booking their stay is hire an independent food security consultant to ensure the food at the hotel is up to scratch.

"If food levels are not up to par, they move onto the next hotel. This is why the programme is so incredibly important - it allows us to raise our food safety standards and enables us to

compete with the finest hotels and establishments across the globe," Khosa said.

According to Beulah Mosupye, chief director of domestic tourism at the Department of Tourism, the programme is not just upgrading existing jobs but also creating brand new jobs and developing new skills, which is a government priority.

"There will no longer be a need to import skills and expertise from other countries because we are creating local skills ourselves," she said.

FEDHASA head of strategic projects Caleb Mabaso said introducing the youth to responsible tourism would ensure the future success of the hospitality and tourism industry in South Africa.

Currently food safety checks are done by local municipalities. However, due to a lack of resources and manpower, it is impossible to ensure that food security is at its highest level at all establishments.

To address this government has joined forces with FEDHASA and local hotel groups.

"This is another example of how public private partnerships are adding value to our local economy," Mabaso added.

The programme is also in line with Tourism Minister Marthinus van Schalkwyk's call for young people to join the tourism industry.

"Government has also made it a priority to popularise FET colleges as the institutions of choice. This is why we have decided to absorb FET graduates to create this new career path within the hospitality industry," said Khosa.

While the programme is funded by FEDHASA and the Department of Tourism, it is hoped that once the year is up participating hotels will realise the benefit of having food safety assistants and employ the graduates on a permanent basis.

"We believe this Food Safety Programme will deliver sustainable jobs to the youth... It will also contribute to placing the country on the preferred choice of destination lists for many international travellers as food safety concerns are often deciding factors when making travel plans," said Khosa.



Federated Hospitality Association of Southern Africa (FEDHASA) chairman Eddie Khosa says the Food Safety Programme, an initiative of the Department of Tourism and FEDHASA, will provide opportunities for about 100 young people, while also boosting local tourism.

EMPLOYMENT NEWS

Cotton farmers beat the odds

Siphiwe Nyathi



Mpumalanga's rural cotton farmers have overcome challenging conditions to produce good quality bales and create jobs.

The farmers had to endure many hardships in 2013 but overcame these to meet the demands of their market, says Robert Nkalanga, chairman of the Nkomazi Secondary Cotton Cooperative.

The cooperative, an umbrella body that comprises 16 cotton associations, including 525 farmers from the Nkomazi Local Municipality, congratulated farmers from Khombaso.

"Although they were operating on dry land and under dangerous conditions the farmers were still able to attain the best results," said Nkalanga.

One of the challenges the farmers faced was poor pest control management, which was later addressed by workshops and training by the provincial Department of Agriculture, Rural Development and Land Administration.

Nkalanga said other farmers lost their cotton when a fire gutted their stores but they still managed to produce enough.

"As cotton farmers we were hoping that we would reach 4 000 cotton bales (last year) but we are happy with the more than 3 000 bales we produced in the face of all the challenges," he said.

Cotton farmer Daisy Ngwenya, from Mangweni, was named highest cotton producer by cotton gin processing company Loskop Gin. Cotton gin is when the cotton fibre is removed from the seed.

Loskop Gin, which is in Marble Hall, Limpopo is the rural farmers' biggest customer.

Ngwenya produced quality cotton that made 93 bales.

"I am very happy with the achievement. I



Cotton farmers Daisy Ngwenya (left) and Noma Nkosi show off the high-quality cotton they produced despite tough conditions in Mpumalanga.

managed to create 10 job opportunities for the locals who also played a big role in the success of my farm," said the 59-year-old.

Her employees helped during soil preparation and harvesting.

Ngwenya started farming cotton in 2009 after she received a piece of land from a local chief. She started with a one hectare and managed to fill 1 000 basins of cotton.

"Most cotton farmers struggle a lot in their

first year but I managed to nail it. I used that as a motivation to expand my farming land to five hectares. I am happy that I managed to control the American Bollworm pest, which gave most farmers a problem," she said.

Ngwenya made more than R100 000 profit from 93 bales.

The department's director in the Ehlanzeni district, Oneday Magagula, appreciated the cotton farmers' high productivity.

"The future is looking bubbly for the farmers after putting up a great yield. We encourage them to establish cooperatives so that they can be able to take collective decisions," said Magagula.

He added that the department would support the farmers in exploring the possibility of establishing a cotton mill and also with logistics. The farmers are supported with seeds, pesticides, tractors and training workshops to ensure that their businesses are sustainable.

Acting director in the department's Masibuyele Emasimini programme Mandla Ndlala also applauded the farmers' efforts.

"The R4.5 million the department injected to buy production inputs, chemicals, fertilisers and manure did not go into waste on cotton production because the cotton harvest has yielded great results," said Ndlala.

The Masibuyele Emasimini programme was introduced in 2005 to encourage communities to take advantage of government's agriculture-related projects. The project affords black farmers a realistic chance to improve production, increase yields and gain access to domestic and global markets.

NEF funding makes dreams reality

Nabelah Fredericks



A loan of R23.3 million from the National Empowerment Fund (NEF) has helped an Eastern Cape businessman realise his dream of building a rural town's first shopping centre.

An added bonus to building the mall was the 115 people employed in the process.

Sibongile Mdyesha says the idea behind Willowvale Shopping Centre developed when he thought about the people who had to travel to a different town to do basic things such as banking and buying food. Willowvale is situated about 30km from Idutywa and 80km from Butterworth.

"The area needed a facelift. There was poverty, unemployment, a lack of development, no infrastructure and the people here were dependent on other towns so I decided to close the gap," says Mdyesha.

Mdyesha is co-owner of Mdyesha General Trading, along with his siblings Lwazi Mdyesha, Vuyolwethu Mdyesha, Notemba Mqing-

wana and Nonyameko Mbiko. They decided to invest a piece of land owned by the business for the shopping centre.

However, despite investing in the land and about R800 000, the siblings still came up short and realised they needed funding.

"We did a feasibility study, costing, business plan, drawings and plans that needed approval by the municipality and we also approached potential tenants.

"Once we had working papers we went to the banks but we were denied funding because the return on investment wanted by the banks was too high.

"We can only charge a certain amount of rent because our tenants are not wealthy people and could not meet those high returns," says Mdyesha.

He then heard about the NEF, which seeks to assist black businesses with both financial and non-financial support, from another business

owner and set up a meeting with it.

During the meeting Mdyesha did a presentation on his business and his plans for the shopping centre.

"I then filled in forms and the NEF sent a team to do a due diligence on the land and three months after applying we were notified that our loan was approved," says Mdyesha.

Besides the R23.3 million loan, the NEF also bought shares valued at R6.6 million in the shopping centre.

Mdyesha says the reason for the NEF's investment was because the business would not have been able to pay back a higher loan amount.

"After 10 years we will have the right of first refusal. If it had not been for the NEF it would probably have taken us longer to get the money because banks want sureties and guarantees," he adds.

Mdyesha says the shopping centre opened

its doors in October 2013 and its tenants include big retailers such as Pick n Pay and Boxer Super stores, a bank and clothing store.

According to Emmanuel Mohlamme, communications manager at the NEF, the transaction was approved in August 2012 and construction began in December 2012.

"The loan horizon is 10 years and was granted on normal commercial terms," says Mohlamme.

Since 2004, the NEF has approved funding for 500 black businesses amounting to more than R5 billion and as a result created more than 44 000 jobs.

At least 21 per cent of businesses funded are owned and managed by women.

As a result of poor business plans and lack of understanding of financials by business owners, the NEF has launched a free, comprehensive online business plan tool available on its website www.nefbusinessplanner.co.za or www.nefcorp.co.za

Business owners who apply for funding from the NEF must meet the minimum criteria available on the website.

The tool is designed to help applicants improve and refine the quality of their business plans, including financial projections, through a step-by-step question and answer process.

Article first appeared in Small Business Connect

For more information call the NEF on 0861 843 6333.



EMPLOYMENT NEWS

SANDF improves skills and lives

Samona Murugan

Eleven newly qualified artisans are helping upgrade and maintain infrastructure at South African National Defence Force (SANDF) Units.

The group, from the SANDF's Regional Works Unit in KwaZulu-Natal, completed a three-year training course to develop their electrical and welding skills at the Desto Technical Training and Development Centre in Claremont, Pretoria.

The training formed part of the SANDF's skills and development programme and saw trainees within the force given the opportunity to qualify in their trade.

Of the 11, six qualified as electricians and five as welders.

Sergeant Sihle Nqenqa, 52, said his electrical qualification has given him a new lease on life.

"There is no age limit to furthering your education and skills. I encourage anyone who wants to study a trade not to think twice about it," he said.

When Private Lucia Sithunga heard about the training programme she knew immediately she had to apply.

Sithunga always wanted to study in the electrical field but a lack of funding prevented her from doing so previously.

She applied for the training programme and was elated when she was accepted. "The thing I loved most was learning about motors, especially how to find faults and fix them," Sithunga said.

According to the campus manager of the Electrical Trade Test and Training Division, Lionel Westraadt, the aim of the course is to assist electrical and welding trainees gain skills that would help them create a better life for themselves.

Trainees were taught electrical work, plumbing, woodwork and handyman skills. They were encouraged to develop and apply their minds to the practical elements of the course.

"The qualified artisans can now enter the working world and make a difference. The knowledge gained here is the kind that they will be able to apply to the outside world," Westraadt said.

For more information on the trainee course contact the Department of Defence on 012 355 6999.



Trainees from the South African National Defence Force (SANDF) Units are being given the opportunity to qualify as artisans thanks to the SANDF's skills and development programme.



Graduates of the Tourism Ambassador Programme, an initiative of the Western Cape Department of Tourism, celebrate their achievement with George Mayor Edward Njadu.

New tourism ambassadors get a head start on the road to success

Samona Murugan

The Western Cape's tourism and hospitality industry has received a major boost with 300 graduates completing the Tourism Ambassador Programme.

The programme, which targets unemployed youth in the province, trains and skills youngsters in the hospitality and tourism industry. It also provides work exposure for those who have never been employed.

Funded by the provincial Department of Tourism, the R15 million programme is also an Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP).

During the year-long programme 350 tourism ambassadors from Eden, Central Karoo and Cape Town were placed in hotels and establishments across the province and trained in accommodation service, food and beverage services, housekeeping, table attending and customer care.

Three-hundred successfully completed their training and graduated. Ninety-five were employed full-time by their host hotels.

Ahmed Davids, 20, from Pontville in Cape Town, was one of those employed. He matriculated from the Dominican Grimley School for the Hearing Impaired and decided to pursue a career in business studies. But he then found about the programme through a friend, applied and was chosen to be part of it.

"I had never thought of a career in the hospitality industry previously but I decided to give it a try."

Davids was trained in housekeeping before becoming a porter. He has now

been employed as a full-time receptionist at the Brightwater Lodge situated in one of the city's major tourists attractions, Hout Bay.

"Learning these skills has opened up a world of possibilities for me," says Davids.

"The greatest part of my job is being exposed to local and international guests who do not see colour. All they see is a person's nature and service with a smile - that really boosted my development and made me realise that the sky is my limit."

Solile Malusi, 25, who also completed the programme, is now a proud employee at the Park Inn in Cape Town.

"I have learnt a lot and continue to learn every day. I am very grateful for the opportunity to be a part of such a great programme," he said.

Malusi, who is completing a tourism degree at the Cape Town University of Technology while working, has ambitions of rising up the ranks in the tourism and hospitality industry.

New fund to help businesses

Stephen Timm

A new business support fund rolled out by the Technology Innovation Agency (TIA) will help boost entrepreneurs with bright new ideas that need funding.

It is the first-such fund in South Africa as the country joins a number of emerging countries that already use small grants to help entrepreneurs fund the initial proof of concept stage for new ideas.

Bongi Gumede, TIA's general senior manager of business development and strategic partnerships, says while the fund is operating at some universities, the agency is still in discussions with other universities and provincial development agencies through which it plans to offer seed grants of up to R500 000 per entrepreneur.

The seed grants would cover things such as initial proof of concept, prototype development, sourcing of intellectual property (IP) opinions, production of market samples, support of certification activities, piloting and scale-up of techno-economic evaluations, primary market research and business plan development.

In very special circumstances, an allocation of up to R1 million can be considered.

So far R25 million has been set aside for the programme but Gumede says the agency's board might allow a further R30 million allocation to the programme.

The idea is that techno-entrepreneurs who need funding will be able to approach these agencies, which would then forward names to TIA for approval of these grants.

For entrepreneurs to qualify for TIA funding, projects must hold significant potential for further investment.

For more information go to www.tia.org.za

Article first appeared in Small Business Connect.



EMPLOYMENT NEWS



Internship/Trainee: Environmental Assessment Practitioners (Stellenbosch)

The CSIR (Council for Scientific and Industrial Research) is a leading scientific and technology research organisation, implementing projects throughout Africa and making a difference in people's lives.

Internship/Trainee: Environmental Assessment Practitioners

About the job:

CSIR Consulting and Analytical Services (CAS) unit has Internship/Trainee: Environmental Assessment Practitioners in the Environmental Management Service competence area.

These positions involve the application of a range of environmental assessment and management skills, including environmental impact assessment; environmental management plans; strategic environmental assessment; as well as related skills such as environmental audits and due diligence; monitoring and evaluation; devising sustainability frameworks; and sustainability reporting. These positions are based in Durban and Stellenbosch.

Key responsibilities:

Conduct independent investigations as well as integrate information from across disciplines.
Work together with colleagues to develop our environmental assessment and management capabilities, through developing networks, growing our business and building new competencies.
Coordinate and manage environmental studies, from the proposal and negotiation phases through to public consultation, information collation, report writing and communication of findings, under supervision of a senior project manager.
Travel regularly both within South Africa and possibly to other African countries.

Qualifications, skills and experience:

An Honours degree in environmental science or any related field to sustainable development such as geography, conservation ecology, planning or environmental engineering. A Master's degree will be an added advantage.
Experience in environmental assessment and management will be an added advantage.
A keen and critical grasp of national and international developments regarding development and sustainability issues, for example, pertaining to infrastructure development, renewable energy and climate change.
Familiarity with, and experience of, international funding, aid and donor agency contracting processes and project management.
Knowledge of environmental legislation, institutional structures and environmental assessment, and management practice in South Africa and possibly also other developing countries.
Experience in application of scientific analytical research methodology, as verified through for example, publication of papers, conference proceedings or book chapters.
Training and/or experience in proposal preparation, report writing, project management and communication skills.
Capability in conducting independent investigations as well as integrating information from across disciplines.
A valid South African Code B or EB driver's licence.
Closing date: Open-ended

PLEASE NOTE THAT FEEDBACK WILL BE GIVEN TO SHORTLISTED CANDIDATES ONLY.

Should you experience any problems in submitting your application, please contact the CSIR Recruitment Centre at Recruitmentqueries@csir.co.za. Please do not submit your application to this mailbox.



Internships

The CSIR (Council for Scientific and Industrial Research) is a leading scientific and technology research organisation, implementing projects throughout Africa and making a difference in people's lives.

CSIR Meraka Institute: The Next Generation ICT and Mobile research group- Internships (2 positions)

About the job:

The research unit is seeking motivated and enthusiastic Interns to gain exposure and practical work experience by conducting software development in the group's research and development projects.

The group focuses on research into architectures for, and the development of, next generation software systems.

Topics of interest include:

System/Business analysis;
Advanced software development;
Open architectures;
Large scale system integration;
Service-oriented architectures;
Mobile technologies;
Convergence and next generation telecommunications applications;
Health informatics;
Complex data management; and
Data analysis and visualisation.
Key areas of application for the technology developed in the group include:

Smart World/Cities;
Health (e-Health and m-Health); and
ICT for Education.
About Internships:



In-Service Trainee (SET)

The CSIR (Council for Scientific and Industrial Research) is a leading scientific and technology research organisation, focused on the translation of applied technology for social and economic impact.

In-service Trainee (6-12 months' contract positions)

About the job:

The CSIR: Defence, Peace, Safety and Security (DPSS) unit has 10 vacancies for In-service Trainees. The unit positions itself as the strategic science, engineering and technology (SET) partner of state departments and agencies in defence, peace, safety and security, as well as the aerospace-related industry. As such, it develops its people to operate as experts in SET disciplines and to have systems insight and application domain understanding. It contributes to the national need for skilled SET people through programmes with universities and leading laboratories.

The unit has a number of positions for outstanding undergraduate students in the following competency domains:

Aeronautic systems; Command control and information warfare; Landwards sciences;
Optronic sensor systems; Radar and electronic warfare; and Technology for Special Operations.

Key responsibilities:

Design, plan and execute experiments under supervision.
Assist in test set-ups.
Maintain good housekeeping and safety practices in-depth analysis and objective interpretation of data under supervision.
Contribute to writing reports and manuscripts.
Contribute to presenting data in a poster format or orally.
Perform operational responsibilities including, infrastructure, equipment, GLP and SHE.

Qualifications, skills and experience:

The minimum education qualification will be the completion of at least two years' theoretical component of a national diploma or a Bachelor's degree in engineering & P1 with completed academic subjects.
Candidates must be able to demonstrate an in-depth understanding of theory with the ability to apply knowledge.
A strong work ethic (e.g. accountability and reliability) and the ability to work under supervision within a dynamic team environment.

The following competencies are critical for this position:

Innovation; Sound technical knowledge; Integrity and lateral thinking ability; and Knowledge and appreciation of a cross-disciplinary project team environment.
Excellent communication skills and the ability to contribute across the boundaries imposed by classical scientific disciplines.
Strong interpersonal skills involving the ability to work effectively cross-functionally and cross-culturally.
Closing date: 30 April 2014

PLEASE NOTE THAT FEEDBACK WILL BE GIVEN TO SHORTLISTED CANDIDATES ONLY.

The CSIR Internship programme is a prestigious programme, which:

Employs graduates on a fixed term contract;
Provides the opportunity for graduates to gain practical experience which augments their theoretical studies and research field;
Enables up-and-coming researchers to exercise their skills and knowledge under the guidance of more experienced professionals;
Bridges the gap between the world of academia and practical application, making recent graduates more employable and easily absorbed into industry
Qualifications and skills required:

A minimum of a B.Sc in a related field (Data Science, Computer Science, Software Engineering or Health Informatics) or BEng (Hons) (Electronic or Computer Engineering);
Bsc Hons would be advantageous
Programming experience is essential (preferably Java, Ruby and Python)
Closing date: Open Ended

PLEASE NOTE THAT FEEDBACK WILL BE GIVEN TO SHORTLISTED CANDIDATES ONLY.

Should you experience any problems in submitting your application, please contact the CSIR Recruitment Centre at Recruitmentqueries@csir.co.za. Please do not submit your application to this mailbox.

The CSIR gives preference to candidates who meet the job requirements and who will add to the cultural and gender diversity of the organisation. By applying for this position at the CSIR, the applicant understands, consents and agrees that the CSIR may solicit a credit and criminal report from a registered credit bureau and/or SAPS (in relation to positions that require trust and honesty and/or entail the handling of cash or finances) and may also verify the applicant's educational qualifications and employment history. The CSIR reserves the right not to appoint if a suitable candidate is not identified.



GENERAL

Gro-E funding boosts youth-owned businesses

Staff Reporter

Youth-owned businesses have been urged to take full advantage of the Industrial Development Corporation's (IDC) Gro-E Scheme, which funds start-up businesses.

The R10 billion Gro-E Scheme was launched in 2011 to help create jobs. According to IDC CEO Geoffrey Qhena, by 2013 about R3.5 billion had been approved to 114 companies, with an estimated 23 800 jobs created.

As part of the Youth Employment Accord, the IDC earmarked R1 billion of the remaining R6.5 billion budget of the Gro-E Scheme for businesses owned by young people (those younger than 35).

The scheme provides loans to businesses that operate in industries that fall within the IDC's

mandate and create jobs. The funding is available to South African citizens and the minimum amount of finance is R1 million.

Qhena said young entrepreneurs played an important role in the South Africa's economic development.

"It is important that we recognise the role that young people play in developing the country's economy and the fund will go a long way in helping youth grow their businesses. The fund will also contribute in reducing the current levels of unemployment.

"It will support the youth to become part of the solution to curb unemployment. Young people are very enterprising. However, access to funding has been one of the greatest challenges," says Qhena.

The scheme is aimed at companies with a shareholding by youth of more than 50 per cent.

Those who can apply for funding from the Gro-E Scheme include:

- Start-up businesses that need funding for buildings, machinery and working capital.
- Existing businesses that want to expand.
- Businesses that show economic merit and have prospects of acceptable profitability.
- Businesses whose maximum cost per job does not exceed R500 000 relative to the

total funding required for the duration of the funding period.

- Businesses operating or expanding in South Africa.

Where necessary, a Broad-based Black Economic Empowerment certification from an accredited verification agency will be needed.

The funding period will be structured to meet the cash flow needs of the business and there is no prescribed minimum for owner contribution.

Appropriate capital and interest payment holidays will apply depending on the financial needs of the business.

Qhena said the IDC would work closely with other institutions, such as the National Youth Development Agency (NYDA), Small Enterprise Development Agency (Seda), Small Enterprise Finance Agency (Sefa) and sector bodies, to ensure that the fund is well marketed.

"We appeal to experienced entrepreneurs to join with the youth in establishing businesses to ensure that these new entrepreneurs are coached and mentored," he added.

Applications for Gro-E Scheme funding can be made at any of the IDC offices across the country.

Entrepreneurs can also make use of IDC's



The Industrial Development Corporation's (IDC) CEO Geoffrey Qhena says youth-owned businesses should make the most of the IDC's Gro-E Scheme, which gives funding to start-up businesses.

online application facility on www.idc.co.za

For more information contact the IDC on 0860 693 888.

Albert Pule

It's a fishy business that is bringing sweet success to members of the Phetwane Aquaculture Scheme in the dusty village of Phetwane, south of Polokwane.

The cooperative produces tons of fresh fish every week, which they sell to markets and communities and have created jobs for the locals in the process.

Village fish project nets jobs

"We supply the Goseame Open Market with seven tons of fresh fish per week," said the cooperative's chairperson Philip Magane.

The cooperative employs six people full-time and 101 on a seasonal basis.

The Phetwane Aquaculture Scheme started after farmers pooled their resources in 2010 to start a fish farming scheme for the entire village.

The cooperative started off with just two ponds and a handful of fish. After a number of attempts to get more land to build additional ponds, the cooperative finally got 48 hectares from Chief Mok-

goma Matlala of the Mohlalaoane village.

There are four ponds each carrying 98 000 fish, which means 392 000 fish are produced every three months. The cooperative farms three different types of fish - catfish, carp and tilapia.

According to Magane, the journey has been filled with challenges. Faced with a lack of equipment, packaging home, slaughter house, financial muscle and the necessary skills to farm fish, the road to success seemed far off.

The cooperative then approached the Department of Agriculture for funding and received R2 million, which was used

to buy the necessary equipment.

Magane said there was a big demand for the fish they produced. "Neighbouring villages queue at the small packaging house when it's time for harvest," he said.

The cooperative also has a partnership with Tompi Selekla College of Agriculture, which sees lecturers giving members of the cooperative lesson in fish breeding, fish feeding, identifying diseases in fish and growing fish.

"We've got a good relationship with the college and they offer refresher courses to our members," he said.

Bridging the gap for Mkhuze residents

Noluthando Mkhize

Residents of Mkhuze in KwaZulu-Natal no longer have to spend R100 for a single 45km trip to Vryheid to visit the police station, Home Affairs office or buy groceries.

With the new Mkhuze River Bridge built in their area, the town of Louwsberg, which is about 20km away, is now more accessible.

"Things were very difficult for us because there was no direct road connecting us to Louwsberg which meant no direct transportation to that area.

"When we needed basic government services we had to take two taxis to get to Vryheid," said Councillor Alson Nkosi of Ward 3, where the Mkhuze River Bridge is situated.

Children can now travel to school, which is across the river, hassle free. In the past they struggled to cross the river, especially when it was full, Nkosi added.

Nkosi said with the new bridge, the community would only spend between R30 and R40 for a return trip to visit Louwsberg.

Speaking at the official opening of the bridge, KwaZulu-Natal Transport MEC Willie Mchunu said his department was making it easier for citizens to connect with each other, and more importantly, access government services.

"It has been a long time since the communities of this area were able to connect with one another. We see this as a step in the right direction," he said.

The bridge was built as part of the Mbulula Road Project, which is aimed at connecting communities. MEC Mchunu said the bridge was built at the same time as the 11.5km D579 road and other small bridges in neighbouring areas, costing the department R58.3 million.

LAST PHASE

"Many may remember that we started this programme in 2008 and each year we were surfacing a certain number of kilometres. We are currently on the last phase and have about 2.5km left of the road to build."

MEC Mchunu said other projects included building access roads in the Baqulusi Municipality, which Mkhuze falls under. The access roads will cost R5.1 million.

He appealed to community members to continue working together with government. "We are working very hard to eradicate poverty and if the money collected from taxes is not spent adequately on poor communities we would have failed the people of South Africa."



The Mkhuze River Bridge will bring government services closer to the people of Mkhuze by giving them easy access to the nearby town.



GENERAL

Cornubia brings relief to shack dwellers

*Slindile Maluleka

Former shack dweller Simangele Mhlongo no longer has to worry about her home being washed away by floods or destroyed by fire.

For the first time in her life Mhlongo has decent house that she can call home thanks to the Cornubia Human Settlement Project.

The eThekweni Municipality in KwaZulu-Natal recently handed over homes to 154 families as part of the housing project.

Situated in Mount Edgecombe, north of Durban, the project is worth R25 billion and is set to house people from different parts of eThekweni, while adopting the human settlements approach of integrating people from all walks of life and building an environment with allows easy access to facilities.

The mixed-use project also includes an industrial area and retail services, schools, clinics and other public services.

The first batch of homes, allocated as part of Phase 1A of the project, cost R102 million. Mhlongo, who lived in an informal settlement at Phola Park, Phoenix, was one of those who received a home during this phase.

"The challenges that I faced at the informal settlement have been left behind and my life has completely transformed. I will not have to deal with flooding if it rains or the burning down of houses. Here, I have all the basic services like electricity and water in my new home with proper ablution facilities," she said.



The Cornubia Human Settlement Project, a R25-billion housing project outside Durban, is providing people from all walks of life with decent homes.

Mhlongo's new home consists of two bedrooms, a lounge, a kitchen and ablution facilities - a far cry from the usual one-bedroom RDP starter homes.

With an industrial area under construction near the housing project, Mhlongo hopes for better employment opportunities.

eThekweni Municipality Mayor James Nxumalo said the municipality would ensure that homes were allocated to the right people.

"We want the new owners to treat these housing units as their homes, not as an informal settlement. We will ensure that the right people are allocated houses and monitor compliance. Thereafter, no one is

allowed to sublet or sell the housing unit, as it belongs to the government," he stressed.

Various informal settlements including Blackburn, Stonebridge, Ridgeview and 13th Street in Clermont as well as transit camps, will be relocated as part of the first phase of the housing project.

Ridgeview informal settlement will be completely demolished and closed off, as all residents will be moved to Cornubia.

Construction of the next phase - 1B, which is expected to result in 2 186 housing units at a cost of about R560 million, is expected to start soon.

*Slindile Maluleka works for the eThekweni Municipality.

Since 1994 South Africa has seen a tremendous growth in the provision of homes.

Over the years government invested more than R100 billion to provide housing opportunities, ensuring that 12 million people now have a place to call home.

About 5 677 614 formal homes have been built over the past 20 years.

The number of people living in formal housing increased from 64 per cent in 1996 to 77.7 per cent in 2011.

The proportion of households living in informal dwellings decreased from 16.2 per cent in 1996 to 13.6 per cent in 2011.

Govt takes action to keep water flowing

Government is working flat-out to ensure that no South African is left without water and to maintain the country's proud record of bringing safe, drinkable water to 95 per cent of citizens.

In 1994, just 59 per cent of South Africans had access to safe, drinkable water - way below today's 95,2 per cent, even though South Africa is one of the 30 driest countries in the world.

Speaking late last year at the launch of the Spring Grove Dam in KwaZulu-Natal, President Jacob Zuma declared: "Water is a basic necessity and a basic human right."

"This is why this government prioritises the provision of water throughout the country to our people, especially to the poor who have been marginalised by successive apartheid regimes."

President Zuma said that as part of the national infrastructure plan, government was building dams, bridges and roads; upgrading schools, hospitals, ports and airports, and was building power stations for more electricity.

"It is an exciting programme, which is changing the face of the country," the President said.

When Water Affairs Minister Edna Molewa shared her plans for 2013/14 with Parliament last year, she included examples such as the R 186 million water supply project in the Maphumulo area of the Ilembe District, KwaZulu-Natal, benefiting 150 000 people.



More and more South Africans now have access to safe drinking water thanks to government's efforts.

In the Ugu District, also in KZN, a further 100 000 people benefited from Mhlabatshane water scheme. The Minister also said a new R134 million project, the Richmond Pipeline, would provide water to 200 000 people.

In the North West, work has begun on the R1.2 billion Pilanesberg scheme is being implemented.

This project, developed in partnership with the mines, will provide a further 100 mega litres of water per day for the benefit of local municipalities and mines. At least 700 direct jobs will be created and 6000 indirect permanent jobs through new mining developments.

In the Free State, R156 million will be invested

in two new pipeline projects providing additional water to Botshabelo and Thaba Nchu municipalities and the Mangaung Metro.

Government recently announced that it is sending technical teams, consisting of engineers, technicians and artisans, to check water systems in areas where communities have complained of water shortages.

An amount of R500 million has been set aside to repair or upgrade water systems and stop interruptions in water supply.

In areas like Madibeng in Brits, the national department has installed new pumps in the treatment plant and has fully restored the functionality of the system.

Working with Eskom, Water Affairs officials are checking various communities for leaks that can be fixed.

At the same time, government has repeatedly called on South Africans to treat water as something precious and to make sure that not a single drop is wasted or polluted.

With South Africa changing for the better every day, government is keen that development and delivery must succeed and that problems must be identified and sorted.

However, government also calls on communities to raise their problems peacefully and to work with government to help solve them.



GENERAL

Funeral insurance: what you need to know

Noluthando Mkhize



If you have a funeral policy or are considering investing in one, make sure you equip yourself with all the necessary information to get value for money.

This is the advice from the Long-term Insurance Ombudsman, which deals with issues related to funeral policies. Deputy ombudsman Jennifer Preiss says it is important to know the name of the company you have a funeral policy with as well as the one underwriting the policy, and not just the name of the salesperson, administrator or funeral society.

"There are scams and illegal operators around. It is important to deal with trustworthy organisations and not to be rushed into a decision to buy a policy," she warned.

It is also vital to have the contact details of the insurance company, funeral society and administrator, which you will need if there is a problem with the policy or need to claim.

Preiss said you should never sign a blank document and always check that the person selling you the policy is licensed by the Financial Services Board.

"Policyholders must receive an original policy document, booklet or membership certificate. All the details must clearly set out, including the details of the actual cover and parties covered. The policyholders must check whether stepchildren, common-law spouses are covered where such cover is needed."

When you receive the policy document check that all the information is correct. If the information is not correct, contact the insurance company immediately.



With more and more South Africans signing up for funeral insurance, the Long-term Insurance Ombudsman says it is important to know all the details of your policy.

All documents must be kept in a safe place and tell family members, who may become claimants, where this is.

Preiss said you should make sure you clearly understand what the premium is per month, how you will pay it, when it will be deducted and that policy could lapse if the premium is not paid.

"There is a grace period for paying premiums, usually of 30 days but it can also be 15 days."

Don't forget to keep proof of payment such as receipts, along with written proof of interaction with the salesperson.

You should also find out about any special conditions of the policy such as waiting periods, exclusions and the time period for claiming benefits.

Preiss advised that if you have problems paying for the policy you should contact the insurance company as some policies allow for a few premiums to be skipped.

If you are having trouble claiming from an insurance company, read the policy and check if what you are claiming is covered.

"If it is covered you should complain to the insurer about the non-payment of the claim. If that does not produce a satisfactory response you can complain to the Ombudsman for Long-term Insurance," she added.

The ombudsman's services are free of charge.

If you have complaints, contact the Ombudsman for Long-term Insurance on 021 657 5000 or 086 0103 236.

WHAT TO ASK ABOUT FUNERAL COVER:

- Will my premiums increase? If so, will my cover increase?
- Is there any savings element?
- Can I end up paying more in premiums than the actual cover?
- What happens if I get divorced? Will my nominated spouse still be covered?
- Some funeral societies cover a funeral if they arrange it themselves –you need to be aware of this. You have the right to a cash payment instead of a funeral service.
- Will my cover end at a particular age?
- Will cover for my dependents carry on after my death?



sassa
SOUTH AFRICAN SOCIAL SECURITY AGENCY

Notice to beneficiaries of social grants: Deductions for funeral insurance policies and micro loans

Deductions for funeral insurance policies

Deductions for funeral insurance policies are permissible in terms of Regulation 26A of the Regulations to the Social Assistance Act, 2004, published in Government gazette Number 32254 and Government notice R.591 dated 29 May 2009 ('Regulation 26A'). Only those long-term insurers who are registered in terms of the Long-Term Insurance Act, No. 52 of 1998 or Financial Service Providers who are authorised in terms of the Financial Advisory and Intermediary Services Act, No.37 of 2002, will be allowed to market and sell funeral insurance policies.

Only one deduction for funeral insurance is permissible. The deduction must not exceed 10% of the value of the social grant amount.

Deductions for micro loans

With effect from 1 June 2013 SASSA will not be responsible for processing deductions regarding micro loans. Micro loan agreements will be the sole responsibility between the beneficiary and the micro lender. SASSA shall not be responsible under any circumstances whatsoever to assume liability for the repayment of instalments on behalf of beneficiaries of such loans.

Beneficiaries are advised that it is an offense to give your PIN-code and SASSA Payment Card to a micro lender. It is your personal card to receive your monthly social grant.

For all payment related issues please call one of the following numbers for assistance"
SASSA 0800 60 10 11 or CPS: 0800 60 01 60 or SASSA customer care on 012 400 2322.



INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Summit works for peace in Great Lakes Region

SAnews



Leaders attending the 5th Ordinary Summit of the International Conference of the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR) recommitted themselves to achieving peace and stability in the region, especially in conflict countries.

President Jacob Zuma recently attended the summit in Luanda, Angola, which discussed conflicts in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Central African Republic (CAR) and South Sudan.

The leaders resolved to review their implementation of the ICGLR Pact on Security, Stability and Development in the Great Lakes Region and the United Nations (UN) Framework for Peace, Security and Cooperation for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the region.

President Zuma said South Africa was invited to observe and participate in the summit because South Africa was one of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) countries that contributed to the UN Stabilisation Mission in the DRC (MONUSCO).

"Matters discussed in the Great Lakes Region Summit have an impact on the DRC. It is for this reason that South Africa participated throughout the summit and found the consultations useful and positive," the President said.

DRC

With regards to the security situation in the DRC, the leaders welcomed the summit's previous declarations, as well as the declarations signed by the DRC government and the defeated former M23 rebels in December.

The summit urged MONUSCO to urgently intensify its operations to remove all other negative forces operating in the eastern DRC, since their activities were also threatening the security of the Great Lakes Region.

According to President Zuma, the DRC government is committed to dealing with this matter and MONUSCO has been tasked to effectively eradicate these forces.

"This is a matter that Africa has taken up in a particular way to achieve sustainable peace and stability on the continent," he added.

CAR, SOUTH SUDAN

The summit expressed deep concern at the



President Jacob Zuma with Angolan President José Eduardo dos Santos in Angola, where they attended the Ordinary Summit of the International Conference of the Great Lakes Region.

recent outbreak of violence and worsening security and humanitarian situation in the CAR and South Sudan.

It urged the African Union and its partners to strengthen the International Mission for the Stabilisation of Central African Republic (MISCA) by making available resources and logistical support to help it fulfil its mandate.

Leaders also offered political and other forms of support for the on-going mediation efforts in

South Sudan, led by the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD).

South Africa was asked to help by intervening in the process of finding an immediate solution and bringing about peace in that country, due to its experience in conflict resolution and national reconciliation.

The 6th Ordinary Summit of the ICGLR will take place in the Republic of Kenya on 15 December 2015.

AU Summit tackles agriculture and food security

SAnews



Africa was the focus of the global community as the continent's political leaders gathered in Ethiopia's capital city of Addis Ababa for the 22nd Ordinary Session of the African Union (AU) Assembly recently.

The two-day summit saw African leaders, unite under the theme '2014 - Year of Agriculture and Food Security in Africa, Marking the 10th Anniversary of Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme'.

With the focus on agriculture and food security high on the agenda, the summit discussed the transformation of agriculture, and leaders agreed that despite progress being made in Africa's agriculture, it is now time to renew the commitment to do more in the sector.

Highlighting South Africa's commitment to doing more, President Jacob Zuma presented South Africa's progress report which showed that in the past decade the country has made great progress in the priority areas, as well as in economic development, social security, health, governance and infrastructure development.

"We have a lot to do on our own to produce more food, but there still is a land issue to resolve, as land is necessary for food production," said President Zuma.

According to AU Commission Chairperson Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma, "Africa must also improve its human resources for agricultural infrastructure and research that would contribute to boost productivity on the African continent.

She added that South Africa and Africa as a whole still have a vast amount of land that is not utilised, unlike other continents who



Agriculture and food security were high on the agenda of the 22nd Ordinary Session of the African Union Assembly.

have already exhausted their lands.

It was agreed that Africa will need to transform its agriculture in order to improve agricultural development and food security.

Trade-enabling infrastructure and job creation were also topics at hand. After successfully hosting the 2010 FIFA World Cup, South Africa was then tasked by the AU to spearhead infrastructure initiatives throughout the continent and President Zuma was unanimously elected the Programme for Infrastructure Development in Africa (PIDA)'s president.

He highlighted that South Africa had introduced the National Development Plan (NDP) – the country's policy framework to eradicate poverty, reduce inequality and cre-

ate employment by 2030. The plan outlined the country's intentions of transforming the economy and creating jobs through promoting sectors in which the country has competitive advantage. This includes the minerals sector, agro-processing, mining, manufacturing, construction, general infrastructure and the green economy.

"We are building roads, bridges, dams, schools, hospitals, universities, colleges and a lot of other infrastructure. We believe we are making progress. Very few nations have gone through the repression, subjugation and divisions that we went through and emerged to build a new society and a stable democracy in such a short space of time," said President Zuma.

"Without infrastructure, our dreams will never be realised. We cannot trade on the continent because of the lack of communication. The infrastructure that we want to create will provide new opportunities for our continent," he added.

President Zuma's delegation included Minister of International Relations and Cooperation Maite Nkoana-Mashabane; Minister of Public Service and Administration Lindiwe Sisulu; Minister of Defence and Military Veterans Nosiviwe Mapisa-Nqakula; Minister of State Security Dr Siyabonga Cwele; Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries Tina Joemat-Pettersson, and Deputy Minister of Public Service and Administration Ayanda Dlodlo.

SPORT, ARTS & CULTURE

SA hosts successful CHAN 2014

Albert Pule

South Africa once again cemented its position as a great host of world class sporting events.

It was proven that South Africa is capable of successfully hosting mega events by pulling off a memorable CHAN 2014 tournament without any incident.

After 32 matches were played at the world class facilities used during the 2010 FIFA World Cup, Libya emerged as the champions of Africa.

Thousands of people flocked to South Africa, to watch the soccer while also visiting various tourist destinations across the country.

It was the third major African soccer tournament that South Africa hosted, proving the country's capability to stage mega events of this nature.

On the field, Libya defeated Ghana 4-3 on penalties to win the after both teams failed to score in the regulation 90 minutes and extra time.

Libya scored the first three penalties and almost threw the game away when Ghana came back to level the scoring.

Unlike in their quarterfinal match against Zimbabwe, Libya created more goal scoring opportunities but they failed to punish their opponents.

Ghana were also looking dangerous on the counterattack but also failed to get a goal, making the first 45 minutes more balanced as the two teams went to the half-time break



Libya celebrates after edging out Ghana on penalties to lift the CHAN trophy.

without a goal.

In the second half, Ghana did not waste time in putting their opponents under pressure, but they continued to squander their chances.

Substitute Yahaya Mohammed, who replaced the injured Sulley Mohammed, tried to get a goal for Ghana, but the solid defence of the North Africans kept him at bay.

Libya came back attacking their opponents and they should have been rewarded in

the 94th minute when Abdelsalam Omar's header missed the top corner.

In the first minute of the second half of extra time, Libya was lucky when Abdul Mohammed's weak shot - which had already left the goalkeeper stranded - went just wide off the post.

Two minutes later, the North Africans got an opportunity when Omar's header, who was unmarked inside the box, was easily stopped

by Ghana's goalkeeper Stephens Adams.

The Black Stars of Ghana came to the match as favourites following their good record, which saw them conceding only one goal in five matches in the CHAN tournament. The two sides met earlier in the group stages in Bloemfontein and played to a 1-1 draw.

As the new CHAN champions, Libya pocketed R8.4 million, while the runner-up will leave with R4.4 million, while Nigeria and Zimbabwe each received R2.8 million.

Proteas, Aussies battle it out



Graeme Smith will lead the South African test team when they meet their old rivals Australia on the field this month.

Albert Pule

The Proteas will resume their rivalry against their Australian counterparts in a three match test series followed by three Twenty20 internationals. The six matches will start this month and end on 14 March.

The Proteas will host the Australians following their 1-0 test series win against India on home soil, while Australia completed a one-sided 5-0 triumph over England in the Ashes recently.

Following their win over England, Australian opening batsmen David Warner reportedly told reporters that the South African batting line up will be ripe for the picking following the retirement of top batsman Jacques Kallis. Warner's comments could be seen as a statement of intent and makes for an interesting series.

TEST FIXTURES

12 – 16 February: 1st Sunfoil Test Series, SuperSport Park, Centurion.

20 – 24 February: 2nd Sunfoil Test Series, Axxess St George's Cricket Stadium, Port Elizabeth.

1 – 5 March: 3rd Sunfoil Test Series, Sahara Park Newlands, Cape Town.

T20 FIXTURES

9 March: 1st KFC T20 International, Axxess St George's Cricket Stadium, Port Elizabeth.

12 March: 2nd KFC T20 International, Sahara Stadium Kingsmead, Durban.

14 March: 3rd KFC T20 International, SuperSport Park, Centurion.

Tickets for all the games are available online at <http://cricket.ticketpros.co.za> or contact Ticket-Pros call centre on 087 151 4400.



Springboks Sevens take on the world

Albert Pule

The Springbok Sevens team will be seeking victory as they tackle the top nations in Sevens Rugby.

Following a series win on home soil in Port Elizabeth last year, the Springboks will want to repeat their feat as they compete in the New Zealand and Japanese legs of the HSBC Sevens World Series.

Both these legs will feature Sevens powerhouses like New Zealand, Fiji, Samoa, South Africa, Wales and the United States of America.

The New Zealand leg will be played from 7-8 February at the Westpac Stadium in Wellington, while the Japanese leg will take place at the Prince Chichibu Stadium in Tokyo from 22-23 March.