

Vuk'uzenzele

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February 2021 Edition 2

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COVID-19 restrictions eased

Allison Cooper

The steady decline of new Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) infections over the past few weeks has resulted in the easing of some of the adjusted level 3 lockdown regulations.

Addressing the nation recently, President Cyril Ramaphosa said South Africa has recorded its lowest daily increase in infections since the beginning of December and the number of hospital admissions has decreased. "This indicates that the country has passed the peak of the second wave," he confirmed.

The President thanked citizens for adhering to the adjusted level 3 lockdown regulations, stating that the measures necessary to contain the spread of the virus have caused great hardship and difficulty for some people.

"We are acutely aware that these restrictions have negatively affected businesses and threatened jobs in the hospitality, tourism and related industries. That is why we are determined that such restrictions should not continue any longer than is absolutely necessary to contain the pandemic and minimise the loss of life.

"We will continue to work with business and labour in

these sectors to revive businesses and restore jobs, both in the immediate and longer term," the President confirmed.

Adjusted level 3 regulations




Cabinet has eased the following adjusted level 3 regulations:

- Curfew is from 11pm to 4am.

- Establishments must close by 10pm.
- Faith-based gatherings are permitted, subject to health protocols. They may not exceed 50 people (indoor venues) or 100 people (outdoor venues). Where the venue is too small to accommodate these numbers with appropriate social distancing, no more than 50% of the capacity of the venue may be used.

- Public places such as beaches, dams, rivers, parks and public swimming pools are open, subject to health protocols.
- The sale of alcohol by licensed premises for off-site consumption is allowed from Monday to Thursday, from 10am to 6pm.

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SONA 2021: No ceremonial festivities

The Presiding Officers of Parliament have announced that given the current COVID-19 regulations, this year's State of the Nation Address will be different, with no SONA red carpet, ceremonial guard and many other activities associated with the event.

Only 50 people will be allowed in the National Assembly chamber and while the President will address the joint sitting of Parliament physically in Parliament, most Members of Parliament, and some from other arms of the State and the diplomatic corps

will follow proceedings virtually.

"The Presiding Officers of Parliament have received correspondence from the President of the Republic requesting a joint sitting and upon consultation, agreed to schedule the address on Thursday, February 11 at 19:00," says Parliament spokesperson Moloto Mothapo.

In strict adherence to the National State of Disaster regulations, this year's SONA will with no more than 50 Members of Parliament, representatives from the Judiciary and the Executive in the physical chamber and the rest of this category connecting

virtually.

"Due to the limited number of persons permitted within the precinct of Parliament, and Parliament's sensitivity to the prevailing conditions, various ceremonial aspects that usually characterise the SONA have been suspended.

"In this regard, there will be no red carpet and procession of the three arms of the State; physical participation of the junior and civil guard of honour; eminent persons; imbongi (praise singer); military parade that leads the presidential procession onto a saluting dais on the steps of the National Assembly; the guard of honour by the Na-



tional Ceremonial Guard, and the 21-gun salute," Mothapo says.

Mothapo says SONA provides the President an opportunity to speak to the nation on the general state of South Africa, to reflect on a wide range of polit-

ical, economic and social matters within the domestic and global contexts, to account to the nation on the work of government and to set out the programme of action for the coming year.

— **SAnews.gov.za**

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- Duty-free shops, registered wineries, wine farms, micro-breweries and micro-distilleries can sell alcohol for off-site consumption during their normal licensed operating hours.
- The sale of alcohol by licensed premises for on-site consumption is allowed from 10am to 10pm.

"I want to call on all of us to drink responsibly so that we do not experience a spike in trauma cases or an increase in infections due to reckless behaviour," the

President said.

Measures still in place

As the number of new cases is still high and there is an ever-present danger of cases rising again, the following restrictions remain in place:

- Social gatherings, political events, traditional council meetings and gatherings at sports grounds are not allowed. This does not include religious gatherings and funerals and other limited exceptions as detailed in the regulations, such as restaurants, museums

and gyms.

- Funerals may not be attended by more than 50 people. Social distancing, hand sanitising and mask wearing must continue.
- It is compulsory for everyone to wear a mask in a public space.

The President explained that as government rolls-out the vaccination programme throughout the year, and steadily works to reduce the number of new infections, we need to continue to observe careful precautions to reduce transmission.

"This is particularly important as the new variant of the virus (501Y.V2) is

widespread across the country. We know that it is more infectious than the earlier strain and is therefore far more likely to drive another resurgence of infections and increase the demand on our health facilities," the President said.

He added that much more is known about the pattern of infection. "If a member of a household has COVID-19 and hygiene measures are not implemented, the chances are high that infection will spread to persons in the same household. Therefore, people who discover that they have been exposed to the virus or are COV-

ID-19-positive should isolate at home away from other members of the household or, if this is not possible, go to a government quarantine site.

"Being in crowded places or spending time in closed, unventilated spaces dramatically increases the risk of contracting the virus. For this reason, avoid indoor spaces wherever possible and open windows to limit the spread of the virus through the air. Research has shown that the risk of transmission of the virus is almost 20 times higher indoors than in outdoor settings," the President said.



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An honour to lead the African Union



South Africa's term as Chair of the African Union has come to an end. As we reflect on our year in this position, I am reminded of the old saying that 'in crisis lies opportunity'.

Ours was a baptism of fire, having assumed the Chairship in the same month the first case of coronavirus was reported on the continent.

The priorities we outlined for our term, among them furthering peace and security, the economic empowerment of women and deepening economic integration, had to be immediately and dramatically reoriented to deal with the pandemic.

Our most pressing task was to steer the focus of the African Union to addressing the worst global emergency in over a century.

COVID-19 has affected all the countries on the continent. To date there are more than 3.5 million confirmed cases in Africa, and more than

88,000 people have died.

It has been a health, humanitarian, social and economic crisis for African countries, most of whom are inadequately resourced to manage a health emergency of this size.

And yet, as unprecedented as the nature of the pandemic has been, so too has been the manner in which African countries have come together to fight it.

In doing so we have drawn principally on the continent's own expertise, capabilities and institutions such as the Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (Africa CDC).

Africa did not sit by passively as the true extent and danger of the pandemic unfurled. From the earliest days of the pandemic and led by the AU, we swiftly developed a continental response strategy, driven by the Africa CDC and regional task forces.

We realised that every country on the continent would be

severely affected by the pandemic. Most would not have the resources needed to meet the public health challenge or to protect their economies. We therefore agreed as African countries to appoint several prominent Africans as special envoys, who would engage with international funders and multilateral institutions to make the case for financial support and debt relief on Africa's behalf.

In this way, working as a one continent, we were able to achieve debt relief for many countries and financial assistance towards our COVID response and economic recovery.

But much as African countries went to the international community for support, we first helped ourselves – establishing and capitalising a continental COVID-19 Response Fund.

For every partnership forged with better-resourced nations and the international donor community, we set

up our own innovative and ground-breaking African Medical Supplies Platform to enable all African countries to quickly secure personal protective equipment and other medical supplies in an equitable, affordable manner.

And now that the COVID-19 vaccine is available, we have worked as a collective to ensure that the continent gets its fair share, working with the COVAX Facility and led by our own African Vaccine Acquisition Task Team. Vaccine rollout has already commenced on the continent and we aspire to have the majority of the continent's population vaccinated by the end of 2021 to achieve herd immunity.

We have acted as one to protect health, people and livelihoods on the continent. In doing so, we have demonstrated our capacity for self-reliance and our ability to be the drivers of our own development.

Despite the dominance of COVID-19, we have still managed to make advances in several of our key priorities.

During our term, the Africa Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) was finally launched, heralding a new era of intra-African trade and economic integration.

Even under the difficult conditions posed by the pandemic, the continent has pushed ahead with towards the goal of 'silencing the guns' on the continent. The AU has been actively involved in ne-

gotiations around the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam, in achieving a ceasefire in Libya and promoting peace in South Sudan.

Another focus of our term has been on the economic empowerment of women, which we will continue to champion even beyond our term and throughout the Decade of African Women's Financial and Economic Inclusion to 2030.

As we hand over the baton to the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) we leave this preeminent continental body in a position of greater strength.

South Africa will continue to play its part to foster integration on the continent, and support the incoming Chair and the organisation in its efforts to meet the aspirations of the AU's Agenda 2063.

When the Organisation for African Unity was founded in 1963, Member States planted the seeds of cooperation and solidarity in pursuit of a better life for all the peoples of Africa.

They affirmed that African unity was paramount if the welfare and wellbeing of Africa's people was to be assured.

History bears witness that these seeds have not always fallen on fertile ground, and over the years the continental unity project has experienced many hurdles and false starts.

But the grave threat posed by this pandemic has galvanised African countries to collective action.

In the hot-house of the COVID-19 crisis, the seeds of unity and cooperation planted by our pioneering forebears have come to life and flourished.

This time of great trial and difficulty has been among the AU's finest hours.

We are honoured to have been given the opportunity to lead the organisation through this period, when it practically demonstrated the true meaning of the words African Union.

This is an accomplishment for which all the citizens of our continent Africa should feel proud and from which they should draw encouragement.

Bursary opportunity for Gauteng learners

More Matshediso

The Gauteng Department of Education invites students who completed matric and reside in the province to apply for the Gauteng City Region Academy (GCRA) bursary for the 2021 academic year.

Proof of residence will be required from all applicants, and only online submissions will be accepted.

The closing date is 31 March 2021.

"The GCRA bursary programme is open to all qualifying youth, with particular preference given to youth from Gauteng, who wish to study for an undergraduate and/or post-graduate programme at an accredited



and registered post-school education and training institution in South Africa," the department says.

"The bursary covers full cost of study, with conditions, as stipulated in the bursary contract."

According to the department, top achievers from Gauteng schools, the top three learners from non-fee paying schools in Gauteng and the top three learners

from learners with special education needs (LSEN) schools in Gauteng automatically qualify for the bursary, but must also complete the application form online.

Applications are open for the following:

- Students who completed matric and reside in Gauteng.
- Students intending to study an undergraduate programme and have been

accepted at an accredited Post-school Education and Training (PSET) institution of learning and/or is currently registered for such.

- Students who want to pursue post-graduate studies and have been accepted at an accredited institution of higher learning.

To qualify for this bursary, students must be South African citizens who reside in Gauteng, and be between the ages of 18 and 35.

Key requirements

- Copy of South African ID (certified).
- Proof of Gauteng residence.
- Matric certificate and/or latest academic results (certified).
- Proof of income from parent(s) or guardian(s) or affidavit.

- Letter of motivation (not more than two pages).

- Proof of registration or acceptance letter from PSET institution.

- Disability or medical report (where applicable).

The GCRA is responsible for building a pool of skilled, capable and ethical workers for the Gauteng City Region through different interventions such as bursaries, internships, learnerships and skills programmes, among others.

Online applications are available at: <https://gcrabursary.gauteng.gov.za>. For more information, contact 0800 000 789 or 011 355 0000 or email: gdeinfo@gauteng.gov.za

Simplified study guide equals success for maths students

Silusapho Nyanda

Pupils doing grades 11 and 12 now have the chance to do better in mathematics, thanks to a simplified study guide.

Mathematics with Nqayiya is an easy-to-use simplified maths paper 2 study guide developed by Nelson Mandela University master's student Awonke Nqayiya (25).

Nqayiya is from Seku Village in Centane in the Eastern Cape and his rural background made him aware of how often pupils in rural areas struggle to grasp maths concepts. As a school-child, he too experienced firsthand the challenges that come with not having study resources like computers and science laboratories.

When he was doing part-time maths tutoring after matricu-

lating, he saw how quickly his pupils came to understand basic maths concepts but realised that he could only help a limited number of learners through face-to-face tutoring.

Determined to assist as many youngsters as possible, he set about creating a study guide in which concepts are explained in a way that is simple enough for all.

Nqayiya says: "Maths paper 2 is often the most complicated and difficult to grasp. A lot of rural pupils find it sophisticated and they don't have access to the internet, which would help them understand it better."

"Paper 2 is composed of statistics, analytical geometry, trigonometry and Euclidean geometry, which are not easy to understand."

The 300-page study guide was developed over four years. Nqayiya says the self-published

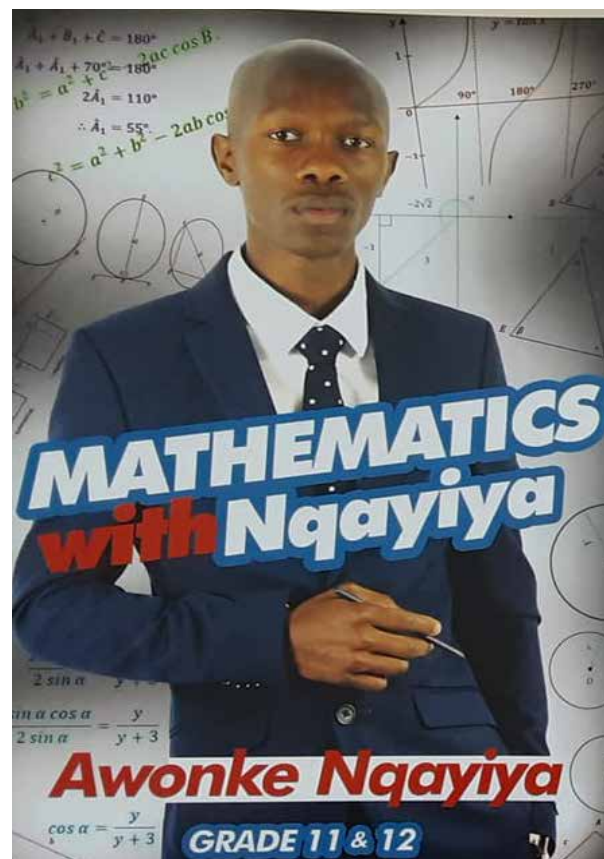
book will be adapted at the end of the year, if necessary, after reviewing comments from learners who used the guide.

He says that once he has perfected this study guide, he will start working on the maths paper 1 study guide.

The methods Nqayiya uses were taught to him by his teachers at Gobe Commercial High School in Centane. He says their techniques made it really easy for him to understand maths.

"They helped me and my classmates achieve great results. I have taken their techniques and put them in this book so that a bigger audience can be reached," Nqayiya explains.

The guide costs R220 and can be bought online from www.mathematicswithnqayiya.com. Nqayiya can be called at 073 426 6012.



■ Mathematics with Nqayiya is an easy-to-use simplified maths paper 2 study guide developed by Nelson Mandela University master's student Awonke Nqayiya

Vodacom makes GBV app free to use

Kgaogelo Letsebe

Vodacom has zero rated its Bright Sky SA app, meaning users will not incur any costs when downloading or using it.

Launched through the Vodacom Foundation, the Bright Sky app provides gender-based violence (GBV) support services to potential and existing victims and those concerned about someone they know.

The app includes a short questionnaire to help users identify different forms of abuse and provides information about the types of support available. It gives the user information



about GBV, the different forms of GBV and provides

various case studies. The app also offers information on support services available in the user's area, such as police stations, hospitals and non-governmental organisations. It also has a My Journal tool, where incidents of abuse can be recorded in text, audio, video or photo form, without any of the content being saved on the device or app.

Takalani Netshitenzhe, the External Affairs Director for Vodacom South Africa, says zero rating the application was a natural progression for the foundation as GBV has been declared a second pandemic in South Africa. "The app is part of our strategy to strengthen prevention

through awareness and education," Netshitenzhe says.

During a dialogue to mark the 16 Days of Activism for No Violence Against Women and Children campaign last year, President Cyril Ramaphosa called on citizens, including the private sector, to help fight GBV. "Empowering women financially gives them greater control over their lives. It is up to all of us, including the private sector, to make more opportunities available to women," he said.

According to Netshitenzhe, Vodacom's GBV programmes linked to the app focus on prevention, response and victim empowerment. "Response is through the GBV Command Centre in Pretoria.

By educating people about forms of domestic abuse, and providing advice on what to do, Bright Sky serves as a resource for friends and family to help loved ones. The app does not share anyone's personal details and ensures the complete privacy of its users," she says. 

The app is free to download on both iOS and Android devices on the App Store and Google Play Store respectively. It can be used on mobile phones or other smart devices and provides support and information in English, IsiZulu and SeSotho.

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Mzamo a beacon of hope for survivors of abuse

Silusapho Nyanda

AKwaZulu-Natal-based non-governmental organisation (NGO) has become a crucial link between victims of gender-based violence (GBV) and services that can assist survivors of abuse.

The Mzamo Child Guidance and Training Initiative helps survivors of abuse to make contact with the Department of Social Development's (DSD) social workers in 20

communities across 10 towns in KwaZulu-Natal.

The NGO, which cares for children between five and 18 years of age with cerebral palsy, has social workers who help GBV victims in Durban, Pinetown, Umbumbulu, Maphumulo, Dukuza, Mandeni, Ndwedwe, Nkandla, Jozini and Nongoma.

Director of Mzamo Child Guidance and Training Initiative Lindiwe Chiluvane says its social workers work hand-in-hand with the DSD in educating communities

about GBV and getting help for those who come to the NGO. Chiluvane says the NGO also organises counselling for abused children with cerebral palsy. These children are housed at the NGO's centre in Verulam, north of Durban.

"We give the children access to healthcare and development programmes that help them to do things on their own. We also work with the Childline Crisis Centre to help children with cerebral palsy who have been abused," she says.


According to Chiluvane, some child abuse signs include:

- a child developing learning barriers

- becoming withdrawn and not being able to express themselves
- developing emotional disorders such as wetting their bed at an older age
- a change in their behaviour- a child who is outspoken suddenly becoming an extremely reserved individual or lashing out and becoming violent.

"We also run education drives in our communities. We educate parents about the rights of children with disabilities, symptoms of abuse in children and how to get help for an abused child. We also train parents on how to care for children with cerebral palsy," Chiluvane says.

Recently, the NGO received

an electric car from vehicle manufacturer BMW that it uses to transport children to receive medical care for social assistance and other essential services. Speaking at the handing over ceremony of the vehicle, KwaZulu-Natal's Social Development MEC Nonhlanhla Khoza said the NGO is doing great work in helping people with disabilities, victims of GBV and children in general. 

For more information about the Mzamo Child Guidance and Training Initiative, call 031 906 1611 or send an email to mzamoch@polka.co.za.



COVID-19 vaccines arrive in SA

Allison Cooper

South Africa's fight against the Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) took a big step forward with the arrival of one million AstraZeneca vaccines (Covishield), manufactured by the Serum Institute of India (SII) recently.

South Africa's fight against the Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) took a big step forward with the arrival of one million AstraZeneca vaccines (Covishield), manufactured by the Serum Institute of India (SII) recently.

President Cyril Ramaphosa that received the vaccines at the OR Tambo International Airport.

"Now that the vaccines



have arrived, they will be tested at the National Control Laboratory to confirm that their integrity has been maintained during transportation. After testing, they will be distributed across the country to thousands of our healthcare workers who every day put their own lives at risk to save others," says

President Ramaphosa.

The distribution of vaccines to healthcare workers is phase one of South Africa's mass COVID-19 vaccination programme.

The National Department of Health will coordinate the vaccine rollout with provincial health departments and the private healthcare sector.

"Provincial health departments have submitted their distribution plans and we have identified about 200 facilities to which the vaccines can be distributed," the President says.

No-one will pay for their vaccination. The cost will either be covered by a person's medical aid or by the State.

President Ramaphosa says the vaccine will be available to all adults living in South Africa, regardless of their citizenship or residence status.

While encouraging citizens to get vaccinated, he also stressed that no one will be forced to take the vaccine.

"Nobody will be forbidden from travelling, from enrolling at school, or from taking part in any public activity if they have not been vaccinat-

ed. Nobody will be given this vaccine against their will, nor will the vaccine be administered in secret. Any rumours to this effect are both false and dangerous."

How to access the vaccine?

The Department of Health has developed the Electronic Vaccine Data System (EVDS) to streamline the vaccine registration and rollout process.

"This will allow us to capture all relevant data associated with the administration of the vaccine. The system allows a person to make an appointment as soon as they qualify for a vaccination, at the vaccine centre closest to them. The system will record vaccinations as they are administered," President Ramaphosa explains.

Health Minister Dr Zweli Mkhize launched the EVDS recently and urged all active healthcare workers to register on the portal (<https://vaccine.enroll.health.gov.za>).

COVID-19 vaccine: What you need to know

Allison Cooper

With South Africa's mass Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) vaccination programme rolling out for healthcare workers in February, *Vuk'uzenzele* sheds some light on what the COVID-19 vaccine is, how it works and why it's so important to stop the spread of the virus.

What does a vaccine do?

A vaccine trains your body's immune system (which fights infection), to produce antibodies (proteins that fight disease) – exactly like it would if you were exposed to a virus.

Why is the vaccine so important?

Being vaccinated against COVID-19 is an effective way to protect yourself against the virus because your risk of infection is reduced. You are then less likely to pass the



virus on to someone else.

The aim of vaccination is to reach herd immunity – when enough of the population is immune to the virus it provides indirect protection to those who aren't immune, bringing the spread of the virus under control.

Are vaccines necessary to prevent the spread of COVID-19?

There is overwhelming scientific evidence that vaccination is the best defence against serious infections.

Will the vaccine stop me from getting COVID-19?

No vaccine provides 100% protection.

Herd immunity also does not provide full protection to those who are not vaccinated. However, with herd immunity, these people will have substantial protection.

Is the vaccination safe?

COVID-19 vaccines go through a demanding, multi-stage testing process, including large trials that involve tens of thousands of

people.

Every vaccine used in South Africa's mass vaccination programme has to be approved by the South African Health Products Regulatory Authority.

The Oxford University-AstraZeneca vaccine has already been approved by various regulators around the world and is being rolled out in other countries.

Who will get the vaccine first?

The country's estimated 1.25 million healthcare workers will receive the vaccine first.

In Phase Two, essential workers such as teachers, police, municipal workers, taxi drivers and other front-line personnel; people in institutions such as old age homes, shelters and prisons; and people over 60 and adults with co-morbidities will be prioritised.

In Phase Three, about 22.5 million of the remaining adult population will be vaccinated.

The target is to vaccinate 67% of the population by the end of 2021. By then we should reach herd immunity.

Who is purchasing the vaccine?

Government is the sole purchaser of vaccines and will distribute them to provincial governments and the private sector.

All those who are vaccinated will be placed on a national register and provided with a vaccination card.

*This information was supplied by the Department to Health.
www.sacoronavirus.co.za*

Chickens a savvy business for Limpopo youth

More Matshediso

Five enterprising youngsters in Ga-Ranθο in Limpopo have established a broiler chicken farming venture to alleviate poverty and fight youth unemployment in their community.

Tsoga Mshongo Farmers Primary Cooperative was founded by five young people between the ages of 25 and 29.

The cooperative was registered in 2019 and is the only business that sells chickens in Ga-Ranθο village and surrounding areas.

Speaking on behalf of fellow co-founders, Tiishetjo Maimela (25) says the idea to start the cooperative came as a result of learning through social media how



Hard at work are Emeldah Tsehla and Jeff Mabowa who are directors of the Tsoga Mshongo Farmers Primary Cooperative.

other young people were succeeding in running broiler chicken farms.

"We saw it as a great opportunity because there is no other poultry farm or business in our community," she explains.

Maimela says after register-

ing the cooperative she and fellow members approached the National Youth Development Agency branch in Groblersdal and asked for support.


They were offered cooperative governance training and received a business grant

worth R50 000 to start the farm.

"With the grant money we managed to build a structure for the chicken house and buy feeds, broilers and medications. We started off with 300 broilers and 250 chickens," she says.

She adds that the cooperative has managed to sustain itself so far and it is now on its third batch of chickens since the business started over four months ago.

In addition to creating jobs for themselves, the entrepreneurs believe a project such as theirs could help fight food insecurity and poverty in many rural areas.

Maimela says due to the second wave of the Coronavirus they were unable to attend further training on how to improve their business knowledge. At the moment, they rely on information they find online. 

To get hold of the cooperative, email: mshongofarmers25@gmail.com

Food gardens to feed COVID-19 victims in Cape Town

PROJECT ENCOURAGES hard-hit communities to start backyard and urban farms to reduce food insecurity.

Daniel Bugar

An initiative to establish food gardens in areas where the Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) pandemic has severely affected households was recently rolled out by the City of Cape Town's Mayoral Committee for Urban Management.

The Food Gardens Project forms part of the City's Urban Management Support Programme's initiative to establish sustainable food gardens that will help address food shortages in vulnerable communities.

Approximately R3 million has been budgeted for the project. The funding will go towards providing targeted



beneficiaries with farming kits that include seeds, fertiliser, equipment and training, among others.

"Given the devastating impact of COVID-19 and growing unemployment, we all have to play a role to assist our citizens. We also have the responsibility to create opportunities for

communities to feed themselves through initiatives like these," says Alderman Grant Twigg, the Mayoral Committee member for Urban Management.

The initiative is underpinned by a skills development programme to ensure beneficiaries are equipped with appropriate skills for future

employment in the sector.

The city anticipates appointing a service provider by March 2021 to assist with business development support, mentoring, the establishment of cooperatives and access to markets.


The aim is to involve a few hundred backyard and urban farms from across the city, comprising of 24 sub-councils. Each subcouncil was asked to identify 30 participants to start up food gardens. Assessments of the gardens are currently underway.

According to Twigg, more than 400 submissions from across the municipal area have been received so far.

"We are busy with the assessment and verification process and once that is

complete we will appoint beneficiaries," he says.

The Food Gardens Project will provide support to new and existing farmers making use of areas such as backyards, schools, open spaces around city-owned buildings, churches, non-governmental organisations, clinics and libraries. The venture will not require capital costs.

"This project is aimed at encouraging households to start their own food production units. Owning a garden offers great potential for improving a household's food security. This includes direct access to nutritionally rich foods, savings on food bills and fall-back food provision during lean periods," says Twigg. 

Residents interested in being considered for the Food Gardens Project, can direct enquiries to urban.agriculture@capetown.gov.za

Mourners urged to keep observing COVID-19 rules

Daniel Bugan

South Africans attending funerals are urged to continue practising Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) safety protocols even as new infections continue to ease and cemeteries show a decline in burials.

According to the South African Funeral Practitioners Association (SAFPA), a national body representing funeral parlours across the country, there has been a decrease in

the number of burials recently.

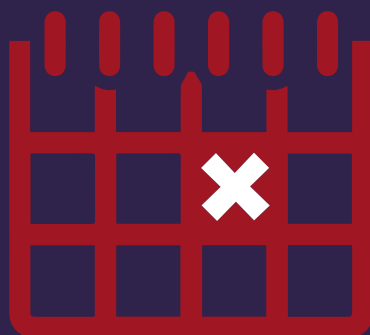
Declining deaths

"The situation is slowly normalising. When the second COVID-19 wave hit us, funeral parlours on average dealt with about 20 bodies a week. Right now, I only have two bodies at my parlour and it is about the same for all our members," said SAFPA President Muzi Hlengwa.

In the Western Cape, where the surge in COVID-19-related deaths are among the highest in the country,

burials at City of Cape Town cemeteries have also shown a slight decline.

The city urged people to consider weekday burials to alleviate congestion at cemeteries as well as alternative

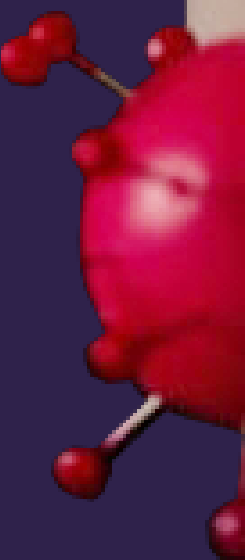


burial methods. It also advised people to stay home if they feel unwell or have been exposed to someone with COVID-19.

Government guide

To curb the spread of the pandemic at funerals, national government has urged people to adhere to Level 3 COVID-19 regulations. These are as follows:

- Attendance at a funeral is limited to a maximum of 50 people, with people observing a distance of at least 1.5 metres from each other.
- Night vigils are not allowed;
- After-funeral gatherings, including 'after-tears' gatherings, are not allowed.
- During a funeral, a





Night vigils not allowed



person must wear a face mask and adhere to all health protocols and social distancing measures.

- The duration of a funeral is restricted to a maximum of two hours.



attendance register. This register, which is not to be confused

Safety measures

According to Hlengwa, SAFPA has introduced several COVID-19 guidelines to ensure the safety of the public. These include:

- Encouraging people entering SAFPA member parlour offices to sign an

with the register clients sign when making payments, is specifically for Covid-19 tracing.

- Checking the temperature of those attending burials.
- Family members should not interact with the body or

perform any physical rituals on the body.

- The undertaker should be contacted immediately upon death to come and collect the body.
- The area where the body was stored must be disinfected and family members who were in the vicinity should be encouraged not to touch anything and to wash their hands.
- The belongings of the deceased must be handled with gloves and cleaned with a detergent followed by disinfection.

What are you allowed to do?

Following a recent meeting with the

Department of Health, SAFPA said the following burial practices have been agreed to:

- Bodies are allowed to be viewed as they pose no threat if they are touched;
- Bodies can go home or to church for services.
- There is no need for personal protective equipment at the service or graveside, as the coffin does not pose a risk of transferring the disease.
- Coffins do not need to be cling wrapped in plastic.
- Families can observe their cultural beliefs.



Youth urged to shine at TVET colleges



Boys Auto (Pty) Ltd in Newcastle is run by two young artisans who have created jobs for locals.

GOVERNMENT encourages youth to gain practical skills for their vocations and create jobs for others.



More Matshediso

As many young people seek to enrol at tertiary institutions to pursue their dreams, technical and vocational education and training (TVET) colleges are highly recommended to gain practical skills and create jobs.

Government encourages young people to consider enrolling at TVET colleges as an alternative to traditional universities. The country seeks to produce 30 000 artisans a year by 2030.

Boys Auto

Wanda Thobani Msimango (28) and Mbuso Prince Ngwenya (27) from Newcastle in KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) are living proof that being artisans is a useful way of mastering one's destiny.

In 2019, they established

Boys Auto (Pty) Ltd, an automotive repair services company. This was after completing their respective apprenticeship programmes.

"We provide professional mechanical solutions to motor vehicles and commercial vehicles. Our services include servicing, brake repairs, diagnosing what could be wrong with the vehicle and clutch and other repairs.

"Before starting the business, we both started working from home during weekends, while doing our apprenticeship at different automotive companies. After completing our apprenticeship programmes, we started working for ourselves," says Msimango.

Msimango and Ngwenya attended Majuba TVET College in Newcastle where Msimango studied Diesel Trade Theory and Ngwenya

studied Motor Trade Theory.

After college, they participated in an apprenticeship programme in order to complete their qualifications and get their Motor Trade Test Certificates.

Ngwenya started his apprenticeship programme at BMW Supertech in 2015 and qualified in 2018, while Msimango began his apprenticeship at Bell Equipment in 2015 and qualified in 2019.

Their business has created jobs for four people in their area.

Msimango says the business would not be a success if it was not for the help it received from the National Youth Development Agency (NYDA), which granted the business R50 000 to buy tools for its workshop in order to trade and meet the requirements of the Retail Motor Industry Organisation (RMI).

The RMI accreditation en-


sures that businesses in the motor industry sell quality products and services at a fair and reasonable price.

Msimango encourages young people to consider becoming artisans because the skills currently needed in the country are offered at TVET colleges.

What is a trade test certificate?

According to the South African Qualifications

Authority, a trade test is a final test that is undergone to be a qualified artisan. This test is assessed by a representative from the National Artisan Moderating Body.

An artisan that has a trade test certificate has met the requirements to be called a qualified artisan. One of the moderating bodies that issues trade certificates is the Quality Council for Trades and Occupations. 

Did you know?

- If you decide to become an artisan, you will be learning practical skills that you may find useful in day-to-day life.
- Students who wish to apply for entrance must achieve 40% for mathematics (excluding maths literacy) at Grade 9.
- Artisan training includes a combination of theory and on-the-job training. The duration of an apprenticeship varies from 18 to 36 months. Once a candidate has gathered enough on-the-job training and theoretical knowledge, they gain access to do a trade test.

Passionate about small-scale farming

More Matshediso

Vaccinating live-stock is important to prevent animals from being infected with deadly diseases and to sustain productivity.

This is according to Mampe Masemola (32), an agricultural economist at the Agricultural Research Council (ARC).

Rural farming households use livestock for different purposes, such as a source of income, food, insurance or savings and social status. However, the productivity of these animals is threatened by the presence of deadly diseases. Farmers need to vaccinate their livestock," says Masemola.

Vaccinations, she adds, will ensure farmers keep healthy herds and continue to benefit from livestock keeping.

Helping smallholder farmers thrive

Masemola says she is pas-



Mampe Masemola is an agricultural economist who is passionate about assisting small-scale farmers.

sionate about participating in research and development initiatives that help smallholder farmers succeed.

Her work at the ARC plays a role in influencing policy, encouraging increased production and the adoption of agricultural technologies to improve the sector.

Masemola holds a Master's degree in Agricultural Eco-

nomics from the University of the Free State.

As part of her master's degree, Masemola conducted research on smallholder farmers' willingness to pay for livestock vaccines.

Her research focused on how to achieve acceptance and widespread use of livestock vaccines, such as those for lumpy skin disease and

Rift Valley fever.

"My research on farmers' willingness to pay for veterinary vaccines was one of a kind in South African literature and created a niche focus area that local agricultural economists can now boldly explore," she says.


In October last year, she was awarded the 2019/2020 best Master's Research award by

the Agricultural Economics Association of South Africa.

Masemola's job as a research assistant and PhD candidate entails conducting research to improve the agricultural sector.

How to become an agricultural economist?

If you are a young person and have an interest in becoming an agricultural economist, Masemola has a few tips for you:

- Most universities require a minimum of 60% in mathematics, english and physical sciences.
- Learners should achieve outstanding results so they can be accepted into university.
- You need to have an interest in agriculture, develop good social skills to interact well with people, especially farmers of all ages ; and be willing to study, persevere and be mentored. 

How your estate is shared when you die

More Matshediso

The death of a loved one is painful for those left behind. That pain can be worsened by squabbles among family members for assets left behind by the deceased.

The estate of a deceased person is commonly distributed based on the wishes of the deceased, as stipulated in a written will. If no will exists, the estate is said to be intestate and is divided among your surviving spouse, children, parents or siblings, according to a set formula as stipulated by Intestate Succession Act 81 of 1987.

According to Advocate



Refilwe Morake, Assistant Master of the High Court in Pretoria, those intending to inherit the estate of the de-

ceased must first report the death at their nearest magistrate's court or the office of the Master of the High Court.


"Once an estate is reported, we either issue a letter of executorship or letter of authority. If the estate exceeds R250 000, we issue the letter of executorship. This must be done according to the Administration of Estates Act 66 of 1965. The executor of the estate must be assisted by an agent who is either a lawyer, a registered chartered accountant or a trust company. These people must prepare and advertise a liquidation and distribution account of the late estate holder," Morake says.

Once this advert is completed, the agent will give creditors owed by the deceased 30 days to come forward and

claim their share from the estate of the deceased.

If the deceased was never married or did not have children, the estate will be inherited by the parents of the deceased. The siblings of the deceased will only inherit the estate if one or both parents have already passed.

"In a case where the deceased had a spouse but no children, their entire estate will be inherited by the surviving spouse. If they only had children but were not married, the descendants would share the estate equally," Morake says.

The Intestate Succession Act also accommodates polygamous marriages. In these instances, if the deceased left only spouses and no descendants, the wives will inherit the estate in equal shares. 

This information was supplied by the Department of Justice and Constitutional Development.

Mill to grow rural economy

MAIZE MEAL is being produced locally in the Nongoma district in an attempt to grow the area's economy and put food on tables.



Silusapho Nyanda

A milling plant is helping to end poverty and create business opportunities for residents of a Kwa-Zulu-Natal (KZN) village.

Maphophoma Milling processes white maize bought from farmers in Vryheid, KZN and Mpumalanga. The business was formed in 2018 by merging the Maphophoma Ward 11 and Maphophoma Farming cooperatives.

Treasurer

Sipho Nyembe (65) says the 20-member company is able to sell maize meal at a cheaper price because people can buy directly from the mill, which is based in Nongoma's Maphophoma village.

Each day, the mill produces about 50 bags of maize meal, each weighing 12.5 kilograms.

The Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD) has provided much assistance to the mill. According to Nyembe, the mill is helping to drive economic development by growing the area's grain processing abilities. He says that when the mill is able to function at full capacity, it will boost local maize farming.

Nyembe says the R18 million structure will help create job security for future generations. "The mill and silos here are going to be a catalyst for the development of this area's economic prospects. This will help create a lot of jobs for the young people of Maphophoma and Nongoma in general. We need more young people involved in running the mill as this is for their own future," says Nyembe.

The Agribusiness Development Agency in KZN has also assisted

Maphophoma Milling with infrastructure, a tractor, farming implements, production inputs, business support services and maize contract planting.

The mill works in partnership with the South African Farmers Development Association to get local maize farmers to support their local mill.

As part of its efforts to boost economic development in rural areas, the KZN DARD runs several programmes to fund agriculture initiatives, such as Maphophoma Milling.

"In order to ensure that productivity on land reform farms continuously increases and positively affects household food security, the employment rate, independence and social stability, the province is investing over R57.2 million to kick start our farmer support package," says MEC Bongiwe Sithole-Moloi. The money will benefit 39 low-risk smallholder and commercial farms in all 11 districts.

She says the support package includes tractors, implements, crop production and infrastructure inputs, water harvesting and water rights.



Call for entries for SADC Media Awards

Members of the South African media are invited to submit their entries for the 2021 Southern African Development Community (SADC) Media Awards.

"To promote regional integration and cooperation, the awards aim to recognise excellence in journalism in the areas of print, photo,

television and radio and encourage media practitioners in member states to cover issues pertaining to the region," the Government Communication and Information System (GCIS) said recently.

The awards were established following a decision by the Council of Ministers in 1996 to establish a sector that deals with matters relating to, amongst others,

information, culture and sport.

These awards serve to ensure a link, coordination and synchronisation between the formal structures of SADC governments, civil society, academia, labour and the media.

Journalists who wish to enter the competition can access more information from the www.sadc.int and www.gcis.gov.za websites.

The forms and competition rules can be found at the links below:

Forms: <https://www.gcis.gov.za/sites/default/files/SADC%20Entry%20form.pdf>

Competition rules: <https://www.gcis.gov.za/sites/default/files/>

SADC%202021%20Rules%20of%20C

Entries need to be posted or delivered to the Media Development and Diversity Agency or any GCIS office nationwide.

All entries must be submitted no the 28 February 2021. – SAnews.gov.za

WHAT WILL PEOPLE SAY?



There is no excuse for abuse.
People can only help if they know.

TELL SOMEONE.

Police: 10111
Stop Gender Violence: 0800 150 150
Childline: 0800 055 555

Violence and abuse are poison to society. Let's make it stop.



government
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Department:
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REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



COVID-19

**Help prevent the spread of
respiratory diseases like COVID-19**

**Stay home when you are sick,
except to get medical care.**



COVID-19 Hotline: 0800 029 999



health

Department:
Health
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



Foundation makes education 'fashionable'

YOUNGSTERS COLLECT food donations and motivate vulnerable learners to stay in school.

Kgaogelo Letsebe

Four rural youth from Thulamela Local Municipality in Vhembe, Limpopo, have formed a non-profit foundation to help learners in the region stay at school.

Last year, Ntsieni Sirwali, Rotondwa Matshidze, Tshifhiwa Munyai and Otanganedzwa Phosa established Rotangana Foundation, which means 'come together' in vhiVenda.

Sirwali, the foundation's chairman, says Rotangana seeks to link underprivileged learners to the many opportunities outside their district. "Our ward has high levels of poverty, which leads to many learners dropping out of school and ending up hopeless and involved in crime. With the country



on lockdown since March 2020, the situation became more dire. Children who would normally be at school – receiving meals and an education – were going hungry

and risked completely giving up on school. We had to do something."

Since then, Sirwali and his team embarked on a food donation drive after identifying

needy families. "We rely on donations from ourselves, other community members and local businesses. We offer academic support to learners through the distribution of school stationery such as books, uniforms and study materials, especially at primary and secondary schools."

What's more, Rotangana helps matriculants fill in online applications for admission at institutions of higher learning. "Internet access is an issue in our rural areas. We try and help matriculants to apply online for admission, bursaries and scholarships," he says.

A report released by the Department of Basic Education and Statistics South Africa last year indicates that the 'survival rate' per 1 000 students was around 520,

meaning that the drop-out rate was closer to 48%.

Furthermore, Minister of Basic Education Angie Motshekga last year confirmed that more than 300 000 children dropped out of primary schools across South Africa over a six-month period, including during the national lockdown.

Data from the report also indicates that high school learners had the highest number of drop-outs. Grade 11 showed a 24.08% of drop-out rate, followed by Grade 10 with 14.84%.

Sirwali, a university graduate himself, says it is important for youth to get a sound education. "Education is the pillar of success in our communities. We want to make education fashionable to enable our youth to help improve the current state of livelihood in the area." **U**

To contact the Rotangana Foundation contact Ntsieni Sirwali at 073 952 7639 or Rotodwa Matshidze at 071 808 3209, or email rotanganafoundation@gmail.com.

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Better lifestyle choices key to healthier life

Kgaogelo Letsebe

February has been dubbed Health Awareness Month by the South African Department of Health.

According to the World Health Organisation (WHO), great health is defined as "A state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity."

South Africans mostly struggle to keep healthy. In 2019, a report released by the WHO and the Indigo Wellness Index noted that South Africans are dangerously unhealthy and the country was named the unhealthiest country in the world.

Edward Skosana, a Mpu-



malanga-based doctor, notes that maintaining good health is indeed a struggle for the most South Africans. "Adopting lifestyle changes would reduce morbidity and mortality in all our communities," he says.

While common diseases vary according to a region, he says, most common ones include:

- upper respiratory tract infections, for example the common cold, sinusitis, sore throat tonsillitis,

- gastroenteritis and colitis, causing abdominal complaints such as diarrhoea, abdominal pain, vomiting
- pain from headaches, arthritis, backache, muscle ache and toothache.

Six of the most common causes of death are chronic and can mostly be associated with certain lifestyles such as:

- poor diet choices,
- a lack of exercise,
- excessive alcohol consumption,
- smoking, and
- obesity.

"These include TB; diabetes; heart diseases; cerebrovascular diseases; such as strokes, HIV, hypertension and influenza; and pneumonia," he adds.

Dr Skosana says the elderly are especially vulnerable to these diseases.

However, there are remedies to this health challenge. These involve citizens making subtle but consistent

lifestyle choices, namely diet, regular exercise, keeping a clean environment and having sound mental health.

"Nutrients are the primary building blocks of our body. They are important in maintaining a healthy body and in helping it heal and repair itself. It is important to know what, how much, when and why you are eating? Secondly, a regular active lifestyle is crucial for general well-being as it reduces stress levels by promoting the release of natural endorphins (feel good hormones). Lastly, a clean, less polluted environment is ideal. Germs cannot thrive in a clean environment," he concludes. **U**

For regular check-ups and screenings, visit: www.health.gov.za to find your closest facility.

Fund to revive tourism sector

THE INITIATIVE aims to broaden inclusion of all South Africans in the sector.



More Matshediso

Government has committed R1.2 billion towards the renewal of the South African tourism sector over the next three years.

This was announced by Tourism Minister Mmamoloko Kubayi-Ngubane at the launch of Tourism

Equity Fund (TEF) recently.

As part of South Africa's Economic Reconstruction and Recovery Plan, the TEF aims to drive transformation through advancing equitable opportunities to ensure inclusive economic growth in the tourism sector.

"Broadening participation in the tourism sector to South Africans of all races, ages and

genders can only enrich the tourism sector to be more competitive and sustainable in the long run," says Minister Kubayi-Ngubane.

This initiative is in collaboration with the Small Enterprise Finance Agency (Sefa), which falls under the Department of Small Business Development.

Sefa will manage the fund on behalf of the Department

of Tourism over the initial three years.

"During this three-year period, the department will capitalise the fund with an amount of R540 million. The funding from the department will be matched with a contribution of R120 million from Sefa and R594 million from commercial banks that will be participating in this programme. This combination will put the value of the *Tourism Equity Fund* at just over R1.2 billion," says the Minister.

The fund will focus on tourism enterprises in the following sub-sectors;

- Accommodation such as hostels, lodges, resorts, self-catering units and backpacker facilities.
- Hospitality and related services, which include conference and convention venues.

- Tour operators.
- Any other tourism-related products and initiatives not referred to above which support tourism development and job creation.

Eligibility criteria

To be eligible for funding:

- The enterprise has to be a registered legal entity in South Africa.
- The entity needs to be 100% owned by South African citizens.
- The entity needs to be predominantly black owner-managed and controlled.
- The entity needs to be registered and compliant with the South African Revenue Service. **V**

For more information on the TEF, visit: www.sefa.org.za

Joburg Theatre opens up stage to newcomers

PROGRAMME OFFERS aspirant artists an opportunity to showcase their work and make some money.

Silusapho Nyanda

Shelton Forbez, one of the foremost South African R&B and soul musicians, is ploughing back into the music industry by helping upcoming musicians.

Forbez (29) is providing a platform to upcoming musicians to expose their work through the Joburg Theatre's Youth and Community Development Programme (known as Space.com). In 2012, the theatre gave Forbez a platform to refine his musical skills, host live shows and compose new music on the same stage he started on.

Since then, the programme

has helped him improve his music and understanding of the business side of music. "The Joburg Theatre's Youth and Community Development Programme has given me a platform to organise shows and book artists. This has taught me what it takes to put together a show. I have also learnt about sound management for stage," says Forbez.

Forbez has decided to transfer his skills to other artists. He says upcoming musicians such as Young Tyrant, Kgale and SK, from the Tshwane Gospel Choir, improved their live performance abilities after working with him.

The young musician also

invites recording label executives to scout for talent during his shows. "The theatre is a platform that enabled me to succeed as an artist. I am also doing the same for upcoming artists," he says.

The Joburg Theatre Youth and Community Development Programme offers aspirant artists a chance to showcase their work and create an income, says Joburg Theatre Spokesperson Bongani Maseko.

"The venue hosts plays, stand-up comedy, poetry, dance and music. The Space.com Theatre allows for greater access to theatre and embraces new talent and promotes active participati-



Artist Shelton Forbez is using the Space.com Theatre to develop upcoming artists.

on by disadvantaged communities in the performing arts," Maseko says.

The theatre also runs a three-year Applied Performing Arts and Arts Management programme, in partnership with Wits University's Drama for Life.

The programme celebrates

and promotes South Africa's cultural diversity through educating audiences about different cultures, says Maseko.

At the moment the programme has five community theatre groups working to improve their craft through the theatre. **V**