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KZN R275m rent bill

Wealth pattern not sustainable

CHRIS NDALISO

WHITE and Indian South Africans own 80% of buildings the KwaZulu-Natal government rents.

That's according to Ravi Pillay, the provincial MEC for Human Settlements and Public Works.

He said the provincial government spent R275 million a year leasing buildings from private landlords and the ownership patterns reflected where wealth in the province lay.

"This pattern is simply politically, socially and economically unsustainable," he said.

Pillay was talking to the Daily News after reports that the KZN government wanted to exclude certain blacks (coloureds and people of Indian and Chinese origin) from BEE deals worth more than R50 million.

"After applying the legal framework which defines black, and provides for 80/20 and 90/10 points allocation for companies bidding for a government contract, whites and Indians are still the majority landlord beneficiaries.

"There is a need to level the playing field," Pillay said.

To do this, the government is thinking about ensuring that, on all new leases, the successful bidder should be at least 51% owned by a black African.

"Whites and Indians who own buildings must seek partnerships with black Africans to maximise their chances of winning tenders in terms of the criteria we are setting," Pillay said.

He said the government needed to find ways to incentivise black African property owners through its empowerment funds, and banks needed to do their bit to help fund emerging black African property owners.

After perceptions that Indians were getting a disproportionate number of tenders, government convened the 2015 Procurement Indaba.

An analysis of R1.3 billion

worth of government tenders showed 34% of the tenders went to whites, 32% to Indians and 30% to black Africans.

"This should not have been a crisis but it showed a regression from a previous study a few years before which showed black Africans benefited from 38% of tenders," said Pillay.

"One of the key resolutions of the indaba was that government procurement should strive to achieve a 60% black-African beneficiary profile.

"That's not excluding whites, Indians and coloureds because combined they make up 13% of the population in KZN and have the remaining 40% to share," Pillay said.

He said the government needed to look at how it could change the laws to get a different outcome, but in a "progressive" way.

Policies

Pillay defended the stance of Sihle Zikalala, the KZN MEC for Economic Development, who is spearheading the move to "reshape" the BEE policies to benefit black Africans.

Pillay said Zikalala was "truly committed" to social cohesion because he was removing a threat to social cohesion.

"We must deal with these matters in a way that does not polarise society."

Several opposition parties have criticised the stance taken by the KZN government but Zweli Sangweni, the spokesman for the Mazibuye African Forum, said only laws could change the economic inequalities in KZN.

He said that, as things stood, black Africans would not succeed in government procurement.

"There are many buildings sold to minority groups by the government, leaving black South Africans out because of a lack of funding and government support.

"There is no government procurement policy which is meant to empower black (South Africans)," he said.

Sprinting superhero sisters



More than 5 000 participants took to the streets around Durban North College for the running of the annual Color Run yesterday. Pictured before the race were superhero sisters Lizel Wiggill, Jessica Klopfer, Chanell

Theron and Jo-Ann West, who were running in memory of their sister, Tammy. The event heads to Port Elizabeth next weekend as it continues its national tour.

PICTURE: LS DESIGN LAB FOR THE COLOR RUN

'Government has a track record fighting racism'

RAVI Pillay is an Indian South African sitting in the KZN cabinet.

Chris Ndaliso asked him how he balanced this with moves to seemingly sideline coloured people as well as people of Indian and Chinese origin.



government took Mazibuye African Forum to court and interdicted their unacceptable threats. We have confronted and contested all racism or any conduct that is inconsistent with our constitutional values.

"I am proudly a South African of Indian origin and always urge all South Africans

to claim their space. For this we need fair and equitable economic opportunities."

Data from Stats SA shows that in terms of employment and wealth creation, Indian South Africans have been the biggest beneficiaries since democracy.

"Now this must be seen in a historical context because it's the consequence of the different levels of oppression," said Pillay.

"Both Ahmed Kathrada and Mac Maharaj were always at pains to give examples of how even in prison, Indians were allowed long pants, socks, and shoes while black African prisoners got short pants and sandals," Pillay said.

"When opportunities opened up in 1994, South

Africans of Indian origin were better placed to take advantage of these opportunities due to higher levels of education, business skills and acumen and a higher level of "intergenerational capital build-up."

Pillay said apartheid had left "historic and racial fault lines in our society".

"There are even tribal fault lines for that matter and to the credit to the ANC, we have tried to overcome them and build unity. However, that unity should not be taken for granted."

"It can unravel if it's not handled carefully. It must be nurtured."

Pillay took a swipe at corrupt individuals.

"Part of the narrative

that only those who are politically connected or pay bribes benefit the most is killing our efforts. We've got to fight corruption much more effectively.

He warned against the dangers of building a "false economy", adding that there were too many examples of black Africans being awarded tenders only for them to do a small percentage of the work and subcontract the rest to an established contractor.

"This is a clean way of fronting because you've won the tender fairly. But this is not a genuine partnership because you are not capacitating yourself by buying machines and employing people. You spent the 10% you took and that is false economy," Pillay said.



ODWA NDUNGANE

Fill up the stadium

OPINION

IT'S BEEN a tough year so far. The economy is in the doldrums and the less said about the state of our politics the better.

But this weekend, the Sharks gave us something to cheer about when they beat the Blue Bulls to make it into the Currie Cup final.

What's more, given the success of the team this year ensured they topped the log, and that the final will be played in Durban.

Win or lose, it is a triumph for our city and our province. There will be economic spin-offs but, the greatest benefit of such an event lies in its ability to bring people together.

It is for this reason that the Daily News has embarked on a social media campaign called #FillUpTheSharkTank last night.

We want to get behind the men in black and white, and give them the support they need to win the final.

It's been four long years since the Sharks last won the Currie Cup, and seven since they won it at home. This Saturday, one of the survivors of the 2013 winning team, Odwa Ndungane, will take to the field for what will be his final game for the Sharks before he retires.

A win this Saturday against Western Province will be a fitting send-off for him and will give the rest of us some much-needed cheer.

So, let's get behind the Sharks and let us #FillUpTheSharkTank.

Aakash Brandeo
Daily News Editor



SEE PAGE 6 AND 18

SNE MASUKU AND ANA

AS THE matric class of 2017 write their unofficial languages paper one today, the future is still uncertain for some 2014 matriculants who were accused of group cheating and are yet to receive their results.

While some have sought court orders to have their results released, others have been hoping they would be called upon to defend themselves.

Pinky Mzobe is one of those

Lives on hold for pupils accused of cheating

still without her matric results. Yesterday, she recalled how excited she was to write her exams.

"I prepared well. I had plans to go to university and study teaching. I was going to be the first person in my family to study that far."

When the school told them the matter would be investi-

gated, she hoped she could clear her name. To date, she said, none of her classmates were ever called before a hearing.

Mzobe, now a mother of two, said: "Without a matric certificate my life is at a standstill. I cannot study further: I have been forced to work at factories in order to support my children.

"At least if we were given a

chance to defend ourselves we would be less frustrated. I did not cheat," she said.

Last year, KwaZulu-Natal had four cases of irregularities. In 2015, there were 12 cases, far fewer than the 39 in 2014.

One of the schools implicated in 2014 was Mashiyamahle High School in Ndwedwe, where 139 pupils were accused of group

copying. Umalusi, the Council for Quality Assurance in General and Further Education and Training, disallowed the release of their results.

In March last year, the pupils took the KZN department and the Department of Basic Education to court, seeking an order forcing the department and Umalusi to release their

results.

An affected pupil from Mashiyamahle said they wrote under strict supervision: "The department has no evidence; that is probably why there were no hearings."

Muzi Mahlambi, a provincial Education spokesperson, said the Mashiyamahle High matter was still before a court.

A total of 634 527 full-time and 168 109 part-time matric pupils have been registered to write the exams this year. As in previous years, KwaZulu-Natal presented the highest number of full-time candidates with 153 624. Gauteng, with 41 952, had registered the most part-time candidates in the 2017 NSC exams. In addition, the Basic Education department had made provision for 3 805 full-time and 544 part-time special-needs pupils with barriers to learning, such as dyslexia, blindness, and deafness.

Lucky Ditaunyane, of Umalusi, said they were confident that the general educa-

tion system was adequately prepared to run the 2017 exams with success.

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