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Sunset 5:34
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DAM LEVELS THIS WEEK

(last week's figures in brackets) Hartbeespoort 100%+ (100+), Roodeplaat 100% (100+), Vaal 100% (100+), Sterkfontein 89% (89)

City electricity initiative to benefit 'poorest of poor'

Pretoria is to introduce a new municipal category for poor people who live below the breadline and who are unable to pay for electricity and water. The city council said yesterday that a poverty programme - the "Poorest of the Poor" - had started in an attempt to solve the spiralling problem of non-payment.

Pretoria is owed R495,4-million in service arrears dating back to the 1995 municipal elections, when various councils were amalgamated to form the Greater Pretoria municipality.

The new Pretoria policy means that if a household's income is R500 or less a month, residents will be eligible for evaluation and registration.

Those who are able to pay will be given the advantage of a special tariff, no interest will be charged on any outstanding debt to the council, and they will be able to control electricity consumption through meters specially installed in their homes. Water usage will also be controlled.

If they cannot pay, it would be recommended that their water and electricity be cut off until they are able to pay, as "it is easier to be reconnected after being voluntarily switched off than to pay reconnection fees due to non-payment," the council said.

Households with incomes ranging between R500 and R2 500 who find it difficult to pay accounts will also be given a chance to repay outstanding bills. In such cases, a five-year interest-free period will be offered. - Special Correspondent

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NEWS

PRETORIA NEWS
FRIDAY MAY 8 1998

Plan to curb 'land mafias'

"Land mafias" responsible for orchestrating illegal land invasions in the city could be deterred by a R1,2-million plan adopted yesterday by the Greater Pretoria Metropolitan Council.

The plan, already used with success in Centurion, will see daily area patrols where the council will attempt to spot and remove illegal squatters within 24 hours.

ANC councillor George Masango told the council's monthly meeting yesterday that land mafias stalled delivery as they purposefully sent destitute job-seekers to invade land ready for development.

A confidential letter to the executive committee, written by Dr Lucas Botha, chief executive officer, stated it was found that about a third of all the files in Mr Snyman's metro council office were used for

UDM Whip 'abused his position'

Verano Wessels
MEMO WRITER

An internal investigation by the Greater Pretoria Metropolitan Council has found that United Democratic Movement (UDM) Chief Whip John Snyman abused his position as a councillor to conduct his own business affairs.

A full report on the investigation, as well as a possible course for disciplinary action, will be made to the metro council later.

A confidential letter to the executive committee, written by Dr Lucas Botha, chief executive officer, stated it was found that about a third of all the files in Mr Snyman's metro council office were used for

private business. The letter, leaked to the Pretoria News, said only about a third of Mr Snyman's scheduled appointments were related to council activities.

Mr Snyman is the chairman of a management consulting firm and was believed to have launched a community newspaper in the city.

However, it may be difficult to take any disciplinary action against Mr Snyman as the metro council has no clear policy guidelines for the misuse of council facilities, Dr Botha said yesterday. "I am drafting an official policy in this regard."

Mr Snyman may be forced only to make a formal apology.

It also highlighted problems outlined in the White Paper on

Local Government of not appointing councillors on a fulltime basis and paying them poor salaries, Dr Botha added. The White Paper proposes that councillors be appointed fulltime after the local government elections next year so that they could dedicate more time to council work.

"It is difficult for a councillor to complete metro tasks and see to their own work... it would have been inappropriate for Mr Snyman to have installed a personal line to his (Metro) office," Dr Botha said. "Mr Snyman paid for all his personal telephone calls."

Describing Mr Snyman as a competent, keen-minded and devoted councillor, Dr Botha estimated costs incurred by Mr Snyman's

misuse of the metro facilities could not have been more than R5 000. "Other councillors have probably done the same thing."

Mr Snyman did not deny any of the allegations, but told the News none of his personal business ever interfered with his council work.

He added the allegations stemmed from a vendetta by an ANC councillor who was against the UDM's vision of a capitalist system for the metro council.

ANC Chief Whip David Kekana said while there may be individual views within the ANC on the allegations against Mr Snyman, the caucus will wait the chief executive officer's report before adopting a stance on the matter.

Crack ex-MK man says cadres were well trained

Robb Northey
SPECIAL WRITER

Umkhonto we Sizwe's crack operative Mohammed Shaik believes he and fellow cadres were well trained and that it would have been a "ghostly" situation if they had not been.

"I would think we were well trained. I think the record speaks for itself: if we were not well trained, it would have been too gloomy to contemplate."

"It would have been a ghostly situation," he told the TRC amnesty committee in Pretoria yesterday while testifying in support of his amnesty application for at least 32 bomb attacks in support of the ANC's armed struggle over a five-year period.

He said there was little opportunity to pursue a career, considering the activities he was engaged in. He said he received about R200 a month to cover petrol or other costs but often had to pay for operations himself.

"No, sir, I was not a paid soldier. I was not paid to do operations but we did get a meagre allowance. From time to time I had other jobs - I don't think the situation allowed me to pursue a career."



Mohammed Shaik testifies before the TRC amnesty committee yesterday. He is seeking amnesty for 32 incidents between 1982 and 1987. PICTURE: NICOLENE OLCKERS

ROAD REPORT

National roadworks: N1 Dordrecht - Warmbaths: resurfacing in progress. N1 Gauteng - Cape Town: work on Grasmere, Vaal, Nguene and only N3 Gauteng - Durban: work on Wilkes, Tugela, Mooi toll plaza, N3 Harrismith - Van Heerden widening in progress. N2 Ermelo - Piet Retief: road potholed. Repair work in progress. Supplied by the AA.

R20 'lucky break' for rocketeers

R20 was the price of success for an Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK) unit which launched a rocket attack on Voortrekkerhoogte.

Two of the rocketeers were stopped by a policeman while carrying rocket tubes to an Erasmus plot. The attack was to be launched from this site on the night of August 12 1981.

Amnesty applicant Johannes Mntsi yesterday told the TRC amnesty committee he and Barney Molokwane, the commander of the rocketeers, were stopped by a policeman while on their way to the site.

"He asked us what we were doing. We told him we had stolen

some pipes and were taking them to Aterredville. We gave him R20 and he let us go," Mr Mntsi told the committee. He did not identify the policeman.

The unit's troubles were not over yet.

Once they began firing the rockets at Voortrekkerhoogte, as part of an attack designed to show the ANC could strike at the heart of the apartheid military machine, onlookers had gathered to watch.

Five rockets were fired into Voortrekkerhoogte, four of which detonated, injuring one woman.

Mr Mntsi said that after the attack, the unit was due to leave the scene in a car driven by another MK

cadre, identified as Philemon. Philemon had parked nearby but he was unable to collect the rocketeers as a group of onlookers were sitting on his car.

"Barney and I walked to Laudium looking for transport, saw an Indian man and got into his car. The man refused to drive us and Barney got angry and shot him. The man then ran into his house."

Mr Mntsi said the rest of the unit hid in a house on the Erasmus smallholding while he went to Mamelodi to find Philemon. They were only able to collect the other cadres three days later, after police had reduced the number of roadblocks in the city. - Special Writer

'Slandered' Motshhega sues tabloid for R3-m

Johannesburg - Gauteng Premier Mathole Motshhega is suing the Mail & Guardian newspaper for R3-million, claiming it published a series of unwarranted and slanderous reports about him.

In a statement yesterday, Dr Motshhega's spokesman Mado-sini Nkosi said the Premier's lawyers had served summons on the tabloid's editor Phillip van Nieskerk, its owners M&G Media Ltd, distributors Caxton Limited and reporter Sifaans Brunner.

Mr Nkosi said the first claim, for R1-million, was for an article the Mail & Guardian headlined "Who crashed Mathole's calls?"

The second claim is for an article on April 17, headed "ANC probes spy claim - 'Who crashed Mathole's calls?'"

The Premier has for the past four months suffered unwarranted and slanderous reports by the said newspaper. On many occasions it has failed to give his office adequate time to formulate responses and also failed to treat the Premier's responses fairly.

Mr Van Nieskerk said the newspaper would not bow down to the "intimidatory tactics" and would have another story on Mr Motshhega in today's issue.

He said the Premier's summons did not clarify on what basis Mr Motshhega was taking his action and said all the Mail & Guardian stories published about him were factual. He also disputed Mr Motshhega's claim that he had never been given an opportunity to answer allegations against him.

No release for McBride

Maputo - The wife of South African diplomat Robert McBride, jailed in Mozambique on suspicion of gun-running, left here for home yesterday with her hopes for a quick release dashed.

Paula McBride arrived in the Mozambican capital on Wednesday amid South African media speculation that her husband would be freed this week.

Before returning, Mrs McBride said: "I'm 99,99 percent sure that nothing will happen this week." She said the Mozambican legal process was not yet completed.

"The judge is going to look at the arguments presented by our attorney, Albano Silva, and by the police and make a final decision as to whether he will charge Robert."

"I would optimistically expect a decision sometime next week. But then again, I expected one this week and I've been disappointed." - Reuters

NewsWatch

BORDER CLAMPDOWN

Komatipoort - Police at Lebombo border post near here in Mpumalanga recently confiscated 23 stolen vehicles worth R3,7-million and 1 188 Mandrax tablets that police valued at more than R59 000.

A police spokesman said a Mozambican citizen was arrested after he was allegedly found in possession of 128 Mandrax tablets.

An additional 1 060 tablets were confiscated in an undamaged bag found on a train. No arrests were made. - Sapa

WITS OPEN DAY

Johannesburg - The University of the Witwatersrand Open Day, an annual event that often sees pupils from across Gauteng and even KwaZulu-Natal being tugged to the campus, will take place between 9 am and 5 pm tomorrow.

Pupils from grades 7 to matric will be offered an insight into the university's diverse courses and career choices from both students and lecturers.

Professional career guidance will also be on offer throughout the day. - Own Correspondent

DEALERS SENTENCED

Two men were found guilty in the Pretoria Regional Court of attempting to sell rhino horns.

The men, Kirsche Naido (22) and Heinrich Wippenaar (32), appeared in court yesterday.

The court heard that on September 23 1997, Mr Naido attempted to sell 27 kg rhino horns in Pretoria. Magistrate Mr M C de Wit sentenced both men to three years' imprisonment or R30 000, of which 15 months or R15 000 is suspended for five years. - Staff Reporter

PUPILS IN COURT

Seven city pupils appeared in the Pretoria District Court in connection with a charge of smoking dagga at school.

The pupils of Sutherland High School in Wierda Park were arrested on Wednesday after the South African Narcotics Bureau (Sanab) received a tip-off. The schoolmates, aged between 13 and 17, apparently admitted to the charge brought against them.

The case will be heard in camera over several days in July. - Court Reporter

BAIL APPLICATIONS

Five men allegedly involved in the R174-million Bonkhosspruit heist had their bail applications postponed in the Pretoria Regional Court.

The men - Thabo Simelwa, Shongwe, Alfred Makholisa, Landelet Shezi and Nhlalaha Ngobese - appeared briefly in court yesterday.

Magistrate H C Nolte said he postponed the bail applications in order to consider each application separately. The case was postponed to May 19. - Staff Reporter