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Ex Transnet execs granted bail

Fraud, corruption charges relate to billion-rand locomotives tender

BANELE GININDZA
banele.ginindza@inl.co.za

THE State says it will need time to compile and present to the defence the volumes of documentary and electronic evidence related to the case against four former executives of Transnet.

Former Transnet chief financial officer Anoj Singh, former Transnet CEOs Brian Molefe and Siyabonga Gama who are both Members of Parliament under the Umkhonto Wesizwe Party (MKP), and former engineering chief executive Thamsanqa Jiyane were each granted R50 000 bail by the Palm Ridge Specialised Commercial Crimes Court yesterday.

They face charges including contravention of the Public Finance Management Act (PFMA), fraud, corruption and contravention of the Companies Act.

Prosecutors argued that there was a substantial volume of evidence that still needed to be examined, necessitating a structured process for the defence to access all the pertinent information surrounding the charges.

At the heart of these accusations lies the R3.2 billion tender awarded for the supply of 95 locomotives to Chinese manufacturers, CSR and CNR—an arrangement purportedly established through favouritism rather than due diligence.

This initial contract, marred by alleged misconduct, saw costs escalate to over R3.4bn.

Subsequent agreements for additional locomotives followed, with contract values ballooning from R3.8bn to R4.8bn and from R38.1bn to R54bn.

These developments form part of a broader investigation into Transnet's controversial 2011 Market Demand Strategy (MDS), aimed at bolstering South Africa's freight capabilities through significant investment in rail and associated infrastructure.

In response to enquiries, Transnet said through its Media Desk that it will continue to support the National Prosecuting Authority.

"The organisation has completed its own investigations into the locomotive contracts and has instituted civil recovery litigation for the losses suffered. Transnet has implemented all the Zondo Commission recommendations applicable to the organisation," Transnet said.

In court, State prosecutor Advocate Santhos Manilal alleged that the accused used their senior positions within the State-owned enterprise to manipulate procurement processes, inflate costs, and steer contracts toward favoured suppliers.

"There are further investigations that I want to have finalised and then I want to disclose, not in piecemeal, but I want

to disclose the docket in its entirety. So on the 6th of October, I will give the defence an indication of when we are going to disclose," he said.

"I will now suggest a proper timeline and process of how we are going to disclose because of the volumes of documents involved in this particular matter, also the electronic evidence."

The MKP has called for fair treatment by the judiciary of its members, saying the charges were a direct attack on black professionals, especially those affiliated with the party who once held strategic roles within SOEs, including Transnet," Ndhlela said.

"We are also particularly alarmed at what appears to be a targeted campaign against black professionals and intellectuals, especially those affiliated with the party who once held strategic roles within SOEs, including Transnet," Ndhlela said.

"These developments are reminiscent of unfair treatment as afforded to our president, who is yet to receive a legal process grounded on fairness and constitutional justice."

According to the Investigating Directorate Against Corruption (IDAC) spokesperson, Henry Mamothame, during the process of acquiring locomotives to expand and modernise the country's rail infrastructure, the accused allegedly flouted the tender process by irregularly appointing a company that did not qualify, CSR, to provide the 95 locomotives.

Mamothame said there were two other bids relating to the acquisition of 100 and then 1 064 locomotives, which were procured again with CNR due to the alleged flouting of processes by the accused.

"This is a State Capture matter. During the State Capture Commission hearings, the country heard how billions were looted from Transnet. This case depicts (the) flouting of services and the generation of billions of rands for use not attributed to the rail modernisation project," Mamothame said.

The GOOD party welcomed the criminal charges against the former Transnet executives.

"This case is yet another example of the industrial-scale looting that took place under the cover of State capture, a project that robbed South Africans of infrastructure, integrity and justice," said GOOD secretary-general Brett Herron.

He added that the arrest of high-profile figures like Molefe and Gama is a critical step in showing that there are consequences for abusing public office and plundering State institutions.



RACEHORSES, including some that will compete on Hollywoodbets Durban July day this Saturday, were put through their paces during a morning training session at the Shongweni stables yesterday. | TUMI PAKKIES Independent Newspapers

'POOR GOVERNANCE'

SASCO demands immediate dismissal of Minister Nkabane due to alleged misconduct

SIMON MAJADIBODU
simon.majadibodu@iol.co.za

THE South African Students Congress (SASCO) has joined a growing number of voices calling for the removal of Higher Education Minister Dr Nobuhle Nkabane.

SASCO, which has joined parties including the EFF and DA, has called on President Cyril Ramaphosa to dismiss Nkabane.

Nkabane is facing allegations of misconduct and misleading Parliament about the process used to appoint the SETA board members — a list that was dominated by ANC affiliates, including the son of Mineral Resources Minister Gwede Mantashe, Buyambo.

Addressing the media this week, SASCO president Alungile Amshe said Nkabane had failed students on multiple fronts, including by failing to appoint a proper board for the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS).

"The crisis facing students today is not incidental. It is the direct result of poor governance by the Department of Higher Education and Training and the opportunistic, malicious, and poor bourgeoisie agenda by the university and college management," Amshe said.

"We contend that the Department

of Higher Education and Training, led by Minister Nobuhle Nkabane, within the government of national unity, has consistently failed to deliver on its most basic responsibilities — from the catastrophic delays in NSFAS disbursements to the flawed appointment of strategic boards meant to accelerate access to education and training."

Amshe also criticised the chronic underfunding of institutions that serve working-class communities and accused university managers of treating higher education as a profit-driven enterprise.

"These managements are complicit in the systemic exclusion of Black and working-class students, perpetuating a two-tier education system that serves capital, not the people," he said.

He added that SASCO has no choice but to take a "drastic stance" and called for Nkabane's immediate removal.

The DA yesterday said that it will be laying criminal charges today against Nkabane for lying to Parliament.

"The charge-laying will be led by DA Federal Council chairperson Helen Zille, DA deputy chief whip Baxolile Nodada MB and DA national spokesperson Karabo Khakhau MP," the statement said.

Meanwhile, political analyst Professor Bheki Mngomezulu said calls for Nkabane's

firing appear selective, pointing out that other ministers implicated in corruption allegations remain in office.

"There have been mounting calls on President Cyril Ramaphosa to fire Nkabane, but what are they saying about Human Settlements Minister Thembu Simelane? It will be unfair to focus on Nkabane while ignoring others," Mngomezulu said.

Simelane, while mayor of Polokwane, allegedly took out a R575 600 loan from the now-defunct VBS Mutual Bank to purchase a Sandton coffee shop.

She has since denied any wrongdoing and was later moved from the Justice and Constitutional Development Ministry to Human Settlements.

Simelane also faced scrutiny for alleged inflated billing linked to a R700 000 Eskom contract, which she vehemently denied.

Another minister under fire is Khumbudzo Ntshavheni, the minister in the presidency, who was under Hawks investigation for alleged tender fraud dating back to her time in the Ba-Phalaborwa Municipality, in Limpopo.

She has not responded to the allegations. However, ANC Secretary-General Fikile Mbalula has defended her, saying the party would only respond when it has "something tangible."

TENSIONS

Malema calls for DA to leave the GNU, paving the way for EFF's entry

MASHUDU SADIKE AND HOPE NTANZI

EFF president Julius Malema has again called on the DA to leave the Government of National Unity (GNU) in order to make way for his party to join the government.

Malema's remarks come after the DA said it had withdrawn from the National Dialogue due to what they perceive as President Cyril Ramaphosa's failure to address corruption within the ANC.

The DA's action comes after the president's decision to remove DA MP Andrew Whitfield as deputy minister of Trade, Industry and Competition.

The DA claims that Whitfield's removal was unjustified and that Ramaphosa has failed to take action against corrupt ANC ministers.

Malema, however, sees the DA's ultimatum as an opportunity for the EFF to join the GNU.

At the weekend Malema criticised the DA's decision to join the GNU, saying that they should have allowed the ANC to govern as a minority party instead.

"If the DA was anti-corrupt and pro-poor, they should have allowed the ANC to govern as a minority party. Nothing was forcing them into government. They should have stood outside and allowed the ANC to constitute its government and continue to oppose the ANC if they want to do so," Malema said.

Malema also emphasised the importance of respecting government protocol and the decisions of the president.

"There is a president here, whether they like it or not...they voted for him and they must respect government protocols. If they don't want that, they must step out and let the ANC do its own mess, and we all oppose it collectively," Malema said.

Malema's comments indicate that the EFF is positioning itself to potentially join the GNU in the future. If the DA were to leave the coalition, it could create an opportunity for the EFF to negotiate its way into government.

Malema previously said, "We are waiting. We are going to enter this government; we are just waiting. When they start fighting with Helen Zille, *siyangen* (we are entering)," Malema said, hinting that the EFF would be ready to step in when the DA and ANC's differences become irreconcilable.

"We are patiently waiting for the DA to leave the GNU so that we can participate in government," Malema said, hinting that the EFF is ready to take on a more significant role in South African politics.

Meanwhile, DA federal executive chairperson Helen Zille has defended her party's decision not to leave the GNU despite growing tensions with the ANC.

In an interview with 702, Zille said the DA's decision to withdraw from the National Dialogue and to vote against budget allocations for departments headed by "compromised ministers" is a "commensurate" and serious response to what she described as unilateral decisions by Ramaphosa.

"The president showed hypocrisy, double standards and a lack of respect for his coalition partner by unilaterally firing a deputy minister. And we've got to say we won't be treated like that," she said.

Zille criticised the dismissal of Whitfield over an unauthorised US trip, defending the visit as a private, party-funded mission to engage US officials on trade relations.

She argued that Whitfield had written to the president and, despite not needing formal permission under the ministerial handbook for non-official trips, received no reply.

Zille confirmed the DA has not yet resolved to table a motion of no confidence in Ramaphosa but warned that such decisions would be guided by future developments and the broader consequences for the country.

"We will take that decision on the basis of understanding what the consequences will be for the country."

DRONES

eThekweni Municipality to harness technology to improve service delivery

THAMI MAGUBANE
thami.magubane@inl.co.za

THE eThekweni Municipality will deploy drones in an effort to identify and quickly address service delivery issues in the City.

EThekweni mayor Cyril Xaba stated that the City no longer wants to wait for residents to complain about the service delivery challenges they are experiencing in their areas.

Xaba emphasised that matters like water leaks and potholes must be identified urgently through the use of technology and addressed quickly, rather than being left unresolved for weeks or months.

Xaba made these remarks while speaking at the Municipal Innovation Awards in Durban yesterday afternoon.

The second Municipal Innovation Recognition Awards (MIRA) is an initiative of the Department of Science, Technology

and Innovation (DSTI), the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN), and the South African Local Government Association (SALGA).

It follows the implementation of the Municipal Innovation Maturity Index (MIMI) in 2021, a tool that assesses the capacity of municipalities to innovate in a bid to improve service delivery.

The awards are also a flagship initiative of the Viability and Validation of Innovations for Service Delivery Programme (VVISDP), which supports municipalities in piloting specific technologies or innovations, focusing on aspects like access, availability, acceptability, and adaptability of these solutions in basic service delivery.

Award categories included Special Recognition Awards, Top Innovative Municipality, and the Trailblazing Innovations Award for Innovations for Service Delivery.

Several municipalities across the coun-

try took part in yesterday's ceremony. Among those present were eThekweni, the City of Cape Town and representatives from municipalities in Gauteng, the Eastern Cape and Limpopo.

Xaba stated that the use of technology is central to how municipalities must be run. "Innovation within local government is not merely a technical endeavour, but it is a governance imperative that bridges the gap between policy and the lived realities of communities. Research consistently affirms that municipalities that embed a culture of learning are more resilient and better positioned to respond to complex developmental challenges."

He said the municipality was committed to institutionalising innovation as a strategic tool for service delivery.

"I am happy that as a city, we have taken the decision to deploy technology, including utilising drones to proactively identify

and resolve service delivery challenges. As we strive to improve performance, this will go a long way in ensuring that we don't wait for communities to report faulty streetlights, burst pipes, and overgrown verges."

SALGA President Bheke Sofile applauded the programme, stating that it is pleasing to see the UKZN, SALGA, and the government working together to address challenges. He expressed concern about the lack of innovation in municipalities and highlighted the importance of collaboration with academics to improve the lives of people in the country.

He said innovation was necessary, especially in municipalities with low resources.

"Let us co-create solutions. Mira represents a sector with the potential and talent to transform itself from within. Let us share what works, document what does not, collaborate and share solutions."



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ONE DOES NOT FALL IN LOVE; ONE GROWS INTO LOVE, AND LOVE GROWS IN HIM. | **KARL A. MENNINGER**