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## Picking Up The Pace

TODAY marks an important date on South Africa's – indeed Africa's – calendar: 50 days before the start of the World Cup. It will be the first time since the first World Cup in 1930 that it will have been held on this continent. It is an honour for Africa, and an even rarer accolade for South Africa.

In Kimberley, President Zuma will get the celebrations rolling at the 50-day countdown event, the last major event before the official kick-off on June 11. African soccer legends Jay Jay Okocha, Sunday Oliseh, Patrick Mboma, George Finidi, Francois Omam Biyick, Lucas Radebe and Doctor Khumalo will join in the celebration. This milestone is another blow against the doomsayers, who have relentlessly cast doubt on this country's suitability and readiness to host this prestige event.

The murder of right-wing leader Eugene Terre'Blanche added impetus to their campaign, with one UK tabloid warning of machete-wielding gangs wreaking havoc on South Africa's streets.

But still there are literally dark clouds on the horizon. The ash spewing from the volcano in Iceland has thrown international travel into turmoil. Thousands of flights to and from Europe have been grounded, though yesterday some limited flights resumed in the UK.

The respite, however, may be temporary: the last major eruption of Eyjafjallajökull lasted intermittently from 1821 to 1823.

Even if it does slacken, there is an enormous quantity of ash already in the atmosphere over Europe, and World Cup travel to South Africa from Europe in less than two months may present challenges.

Back home, Fifa predicts that fewer than half of the 500 000 foreign tourists expected to travel to South Africa for the football extravaganza are actually going to arrive, owing to a number of unrelated factors which are beyond South Africa's control. But at least up to a quarter of a million people are still expected to make the trip to witness history in the making.

For South Africans, the enthusiasm is undiminished. Fans are snapping up tickets to see stars such as Messi, Rooney, Ronaldo and Drogba weave their magic.

## When The Dust Settles

IT'S SOD'S LAW, isn't it? No sooner had the British government announced it was sending the Royal Navy to rescue stranded British citizens, than the worst of the volcanic eruption in Iceland appeared to be over. There are hopes that the hundreds of thousands of travellers trapped by the closure of much of Europe's airspace will soon be on their way home.

That so many personal dramas may be drawing to a welcome end, however, does not mean there are no questions to be asked. In some ways, the bigger inquest is only beginning.

As two days' delay extended into four and five, travellers, airlines and travel companies began to ask why so much airspace was closed for so long, and whether such a blanket ban was really necessary. There will be questions about whether airlines and travel companies complied with their legal obligations, where these exist, to provide accommodation and sustenance. There will also be fights about compensation.

While all these are considerations that deserve to be aired, however – and we do not wish to underestimate the damage to business or the inconvenience caused to individuals – it is important to keep a sense of proportion. The dangers of volcanic ash are recognised by international aviation, and rules were in place which were speedily invoked and adhered to.

The closure of British and much European airspace was announced and extended in an orderly manner. There were regular European consultations, and safety – as it should have been – was the paramount concern. And, while there is surely a case for reviewing the rules on flying and volcanic ash; that must not be done in the heat of public indignation. This was a safety issue and, where safety is concerned, the government and the aviation authorities are right to err on the side of caution. – The Independent



You & Me  
ROD SMITH

WITHIN each person is a holy place called the Self. It is here, in the deepest recesses of who each of us is, that the human spirit, soul, and intellect meld, forming the powerhouse for who each of us is.

And the subtle art of self-care ("subtle" because there is a delicate difference between being self-caring, selfish and self-serving) is fundamental to good mental, emotional and relational health.

Appropriate self-care is neither selfish nor self-indulgent. It is not self-centred-ness. It is not self-serving.

It is self-awareness. It is self-monitoring, with the firm understanding that each person is responsible for the condition of his or her self.

Each of us is responsible for how we relate to all others (to neither dominate or be dominated).

Each of us is responsible, when it comes to ALL other adults, for maintaining relationships that exemplify mutuality, respect and equality.

Part of self-care is the enduring understanding that each person has a voice to be respected, a role to be fulfilled, and a calling to be pursued.

Every person (every Self) requires room to grow, space apart from others, while at the same time requiring intimacy and connection.

The healthy Self is both connected and separate all at the same time, underscoring again the subtlety required in the art of self-care.

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# We need a deepening of democracy

Continuing on the path of an elite democracy, in which the majority is both politically and economically excluded, is simply not viable

JULIUS Malema is the most vocal public opponent of our democracy. If there were any doubts about how to interpret his increasingly neo-fascist political orientation, his embrace of the Mugabe dictatorship made it crystal clear that he aspires to an out-and-out totalitarianism.

His threats to the media and his attack on the BBC journalist made it quite clear that he intends to begin an immediate roll-back of our democratic gains.

Political analyst Justice Malala is quite correct to argue that if Jacob Zuma does not have Malema expelled from the ANC, then Zuma's presidency will descend into an irredeemable crisis of credibility. There is simply no other credible course of action for Zuma to take.

But while Malema's yobish contempt for democracy is the most visible and crass threat to our democracy we would be wise to recall that there are others.

For a start Malema is not alone. He is the "useful idiot" fronting the project of what the trade unions have called "Kebbelism" – the unsavoury

alliance between business and political elites.

But Kebbelism has other adherents in the party – most notably Tony Yengeni and Fikile Mbalula. If the ANC is not able to engage in some sort of internal revolution against the Kebbelism within its ranks, as its left flank demands, the cancer will spread despite the expulsion of its most visible face – Malema.

But the rot runs deeper than Kebbelism. The fact that the ruling party stands to profit from the World Bank loan to Eskom is absolutely unacceptable. For a start the loan is a disaster. World Bank money never comes without strings attached and once a country is indebted to the bank, it has to give up its economic autonomy.

So, it seems we have put our economy in the clutches of imperialism. And when the party stands to profit, and hugely, from this sort of decision it is quite clear that there must be an enormous temptation to put party interests be-



IMRAAN BUCCUS

fore the national interests.

Of course there has been a call to conscience on the question of stake in the Hitachi contract from within the party.

People like Pravin Gordhan and Barbara Hogan, who unfortunately did not oppose the loan, have, at least, taken a clear position against the institutionalisation of corruption in the nexus which joins the party to the state. It is essential that they are supported and that a broad coalition is built to support forces that are seriously committed to opposing corruption.

Corruption does not just introduce inefficiency and wastage into delivery. It fundamentally distorts delivery towards the interests of the corrupt and thus undermines democracy which is, of

course, supposed to be government by and for the people.

The turn towards a more repressive approach to grassroots dissent is also a matter of deep concern. Kader Asmal is quite right to berate the militarisation of the police as a grave error of judgement. And the tendency to ban marches and beat activists shows a turn towards repression.

If basic democratic rights, including the right to organise and protest, are not guaranteed, then we are not living in a democracy.

After World War II Aneurin "Nye" Bevan, the Welsh Labour Party politician who played a key role in the development of the National Health Service in Britain, famously said, "Either democracy will destroy poverty or

poverty will destroy democracy." This, to put it bluntly, is the choice that confronts us. Either we use democracy to end poverty or poverty will be used, as in Zimbabwe, by some or other force to end democracy.

Those among the rich who think that they can keep on with this elite deal in which black and white elites have got fabulously wealthy while the poor have got poorer really need to face up to the fact that they are sitting on a powder keg.

We do not have a passive citizenry in this country. Ordinary people were highly involved in the struggle against apartheid and remain highly politicised.

Some are involved in movements and others in spontaneous upsurges of anger. But in both cases the demand for a full and equal inclusion into society is clear and unrelenting.

Some among the rich, black and white may prefer to go the route of carrying on

with their elite deal and defending it with more security from the police and private security.

But security does not resolve the problem; it merely delays the resolution of the problem. The problem is massive inequality and the solution, the only real solution, is movement towards equality.

Julius Malema has shown us all the ugly face of the right-wing nationalist alternative to democracy. His expulsion from the ANC will be a clear indication that the ANC does not wish to follow the path of Zanu-PF which will result in the fabulous enrichment of the political elite at the price of the devastation of the entire country.

But not following Zanu-PF is not enough. Continuing on the current path of an elite democracy in which the majority are both politically and economically excluded is simply not viable. What we need is a profound deepening of our democracy.

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## forum

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# CRIME COSTS A LOT AND NOW IT'S COSTING SA TOURISTS

THE ORIGINALLY forecast 450 000 foreign World Cup fans has been reduced to a now anticipated 200 000.

This figure may well decline further, subject to more exhibitions by Julius Malema and his "Shoot the Boer" ravings, the president with his machine-gun song-and-dance routine, farmer and other murders, etc.

Not to mention those having the intelligence to first investigate understated SA crime figures.

Police numbers have also been increased to around 200 000. Of these, 40 000 have been allocated to "take care" of the soccer nuts. This equating to one cop for every five foreign fans.

This is either good or bad

news for our visitors when it is considered that a number of our police officers may themselves be on the wrong side of the law.

The remaining 160 000 police will be left to look after the general population of 50 million, many of us taxpayers who are only good for picking up the tab for a bunch of foreigners to be

provided with questionable but infinitely larger numbers of "protection" to that offered ourselves.

Criminals and crooked cops will seize every opportunity to exploit foreign visitors. Therefore, despite greater security, the law of probability dictates that some must become victims.

As a repeated victim of

serious crimes (police case numbers available), I have been severely assaulted, stabbed, robbed, mugged, burgled, had cars and other assets stolen.

These crimes have cost a fortune. Hospital bills and on-going treatment already exceed R250 000 plus a similar amount in stolen goods.

Not a single perpetrator

has been apprehended nor the proceeds of robberies recovered. Naturally, the government has gleefully taken its 14 percent VAT share of this criminal activity. As it does with the hundreds of thousands of other crimes.

PR TIDMAN

Durban

## Appalled at the mess

I AM A FREQUENT visitor to Durban North and am appalled at the litter lying around. It's everywhere. At bus stops and taxi ranks, at shopping centres where there are some very upmarket pavement cafes. It's visible along the M4 as well.

On a visit to your new soccer stadium, I again was disgusted to see schoolchildren, at the athletics track opposite, throwing litter out of bus windows. This mess was being blown across the road to the soccer stadium.

Does no one care? Why are children not being instructed about littering?

The incompetence of municipalities and misspending of taxpayers' money must, yet again, be blamed for the shabby state of the roads and verges.

With about 50 days to go, please get this littered place tidied up so you can be proud to show it off to the world.

Lonehill

A EDWARDS

## ANC is to blame for country's negative image

THE OPPOSITION are often blamed for creating a bad image of our country on the eve of the World Cup, but it is the tripartite alliance that brands our country as violent, racist and lawless.

President Jacob Zuma has not assisted to positively market our country since 2005.

The singing of songs with lyrics like *Dubul' iBhunu* ("Shoot the Boer") were sung by Samwu workers in Durban.

We all sang these songs before 1994, it was relevant

then. The focus on Samwu should be on the needs and rights of workers, but not the boers.

Salga and the Department of Co-operative Government are not run by boers.

The killing of Eugene Terre'Blanche, Samwu's trashing of cities and Julius Malema's behaviour were broadcast all over the globe, hence attempts by Zuma to save face by publicly reprimanding Malema. I am not anti-workers, but the behaviour of Samwu

members is anti-South Africa. How will Zuma and the ANC criticise the decision of Solidarity to highlight crime on the eve of the World Cup when alliance members sing anti-boer songs and trash host cities?

We were expecting 450 000 visitors, but fewer than 200 000 have bought tickets. Doesn't this signal that the way we misbehave and voice our grievances scares soccer fans?

It's unfortunate that Zuma is the midwife to all this

vulgarism that we see in Cosatu and the youth league. We urge him to speak to his supporters to demonstrate peacefully.

We also urge the AWB to stop carrying apartheid flags. Two wrongs do not make a right.

Our actions, especially by the ruling party and its alliance partners, must not jeopardise chances of this becoming the best World Cup ever.

SIYANDA MHLONGO  
KwaDukuza

## Going to the root cause

WE MUST look to local government for the root cause of municipal strikes.

I hold no brief for the South African Municipal Workers Union (Samwu) because they fail to discipline their members. However, the bungling of South African Local Government Association (Salga) irks me.

Even after employees raised the issue of limited municipal resources being wasted on lawyers for run-of-the-mill disciplinary cases – one of the factors leading to the current industrial action – they have on two occasions approached the Labour Court only to have their cases thrown out at great cost to the municipalities concerned. Does this represent

contempt for the public fiscus or is it a microcosm of a bigger problem within Salga?

I believe that it is a combination of both given the fact that Salga got an adverse audit report from the auditor-general and the latest roasting from MPs regarding Salga's inability to deliver services, especially to the poor.

It is scandalous that Salga failed to meet almost 70 percent of the reported 120 performance indicators.

Serious discussions are needed regarding the relevance and effectiveness of this structure for local government to deliver on its mandate.

MOGOMOTSI MOGODIRI  
Joburg

## Sad side to youths' jail 'luxury'

LETTER-WRITER Sascha Albrecht misses the point in "Five-star incentive for delinquent youths?" (The Mercury April 19) about the accused youth in the Eugene Terre'Blanche case enjoying luxury in jail.

The saddest thing here is that most black people in this country have situations that warrant them no such luxuries

like even having a pair of shoes.

Many people have never experienced poverty. It is sad these youths had to go to prison to get things people take for granted, and worse go to jail for Terre'Blanche who should have been jailed for more crimes.

CHUNU MCHUNU  
Tugela Ferry