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Cancer of taxi wars

Ordinary people are losing their lives in South Africa's vicious taxi wars. Allegations by rival taxi associations are ignoring this salient fact. Solutions are uncertain. Joshua Raboroko explains why...

Transport Minister Mac Maharaj ...
violence is the most serious manifestation of problems in the taxi industry.

Kelly added that, from December 6 to 12, there were four deaths and five injuries in Gauteng alone.

Three people were killed and two injured in an attack on a SA Long Distance Taxi Association (Salta) taxi rank in Wolmarans Street in Johannesburg.

Another man was killed and three people injured in a shooting incident at the Quartz Street taxi rank in Johannesburg. Three men were subsequently arrested.

The Lethlabile Taxi Organisation (LTO) and Salda were apparently involved in these shooting incidents.

In Mpuumalanga, nobody was injured during a shootout in December between two rival groups at a shopping centre in Bushbuckridge.

The dispute allegedly arose when taxi organisations from Pretoria and Burgersfort allegedly tried to force local operators to join Salta.

In Northern Province, three taxi drivers were recently injured and several minibuses damaged when gunmen drove past the Erasmus taxi rank in Garankuwa and fired at commuters.

In Western Cape, a Mowbray Taxi Association member was assaulted in Mowbray, allegedly by Wynberg Taxi Association members in an dispute between the two parties.

Ironically, these incidents took place in an industry which provides more than 2.2 million people with a means of transport.

They are all trapped between the necessity of getting to work and the fear of not knowing whether they will get back home safely.

The woes of the minibus taxi industry are well-known: the market is overtraded, facilities are insufficient and many owners are not licensed.

The result is there is no such thing as normal competition: ranks have been turned into battlefields. Local authorities and security forces are often called in to end the violence.

Some taxi ranks have been closed and a security force presence established, but this is locking the stable after the horse has bolted.

Taxi ranks in the centre of Johannesburg - the Noord, King George and Quartz street ranks - have become cause for great concern.

The conflict between Salda and the LTO revolves around ranks and routes to the "Great North". As a result of their conflict, they have signed a peace treaty.

Police and transport officials have come up with recommendations which, if introduced this year, may prevent the conflict getting worse," said a concern taxi operator.

The NTTT appointed by Maharaj represented the taxi industry, all three levels of government and specialist advisors.

Maharaj said the recommendations presented to him by the task team in December tried to provide solutions to the industry, which has been allowed to grow unchecked and is therefore in a state of economic decline.

He said: "Violence in the minibus industry is the most serious manifestation of problems plaguing the trade."

Maharaj will table a White Paper on transport policy in Parliament in February.
25% of SA road deaths 'involved minibuses' (392)

MINIBUS-taxis are responsible for 25% of the deaths recorded on South African roads since the start of the holiday season, traffic authorities claimed yesterday.

The National Traffic Information Centre (NTIC) in Johannesburg said that of the 770 deaths recorded since November 30, 1991, deaths had occurred in collisions involving minibus taxis.

The NTIC cited driver fatigue, high speeds, lack of concentration, unsafe overtaking and vehicle defects, particularly in tyres, as being responsible for most fatal minibus accidents.

Mr Steven Williams, president of the Cape Amalgamated Taxi Association (CATA), disputed the NTIC claims about lack of sleep, speeding and overcrowding and said CATA inspected every vehicle which left the townships on long journeys and policed its members by setting up their own roadblocks.

He said the NTIC figure could be correct, but not for the reasons given.

He said a driver could easily lose control of his vehicle when an obstacle such as a goat crossed the road and evasive action was needed. This was because most taxis had luggage trailers and travelled at high speeds.

Transfusion services would be in urgent need of blood during the following few weeks as regular donors were still on holiday, the South African Blood Transfusion Service said yesterday.

Staff Reporter, Sapa
Minibus taxi death toll is 2

By KURT SWART

Accidents involving minibus taxis accounted for about a quarter, or more than 200, of the 800 holiday roads deaths this year.

And most of these could have been prevented, says the National Traffic Information Centre (NTIC).

The main causes of the fatal accidents were incompetent driving by minibus taxi drivers, alcohol-related accidents, failure to wear safety belts and hit-and-run incidents.

The centre reported that by 11am yesterday there had been 830 fatalities in 849 collisions since November 30.

Of the fatalities, 180 were in KwaZulu Natal, 168 in Gauteng, 106 in the Free State, 104 in the Eastern Cape, 86 in the Western Cape, 65 in Mpumalanga, 61 in North West, 37 in Northern Province and 22 in the Northern Cape.

Minibus taxis were responsible for about 25% of the deaths, according to Bjorn van Oort of the NTIC.

"Driver fatigue, speed too high for circumstances, lack of concentration, collisions with pedestrians, unsafe overtaking and vehicle defects - especially unsuitable tyres - were responsible for most fatal minibus taxi collisions.

"In terms of the kilometres travelled and the number of passengers transported, the taxis represent a large percentage of the total number of vehicles on our roads. One collision involving a minibus taxi would necessarily claim more lives than most other types of vehicles."

Van Oort said most of these collisions could have been prevented and called on taxi organisations, drivers and their passengers to join forces to promote safety on the roads.

A Transnet bus overturned and caught fire after a collision between Aberdeen and Beaufort West on Thursday. Six people were killed and 21 seriously injured.

The NTIC's Marlene Leita said traffic safety authorities were concerned at the many people thrown from vehicles and killed. "It is clear that road users still don't realise that their chances of survival in a collision are doubled if they are buckled up. Chances of serious injuries are also reduced considerably."

"The cost of the fatal collisions only this holiday period amounted to over R46 million in terms of loss of productivity, damage, medical expenses, and administrative, legal and other costs."

"It would therefore make

Licence a breeze if you have cash

By TEOF MOTHIBELI

"Acquiring a driver's licence in South Africa today is easy and there is no need for tedious reading and diligent practising, or even driving lessons."

The Saturday Star found out this week that, in reality, all you need to be "legally qualified" driver is money. With good contacts, acquiring a licence is like buying any other commodity sold over the counter; you simply give money and get what you want.

This scenario, which has been with us for some time now, is continuing despite undertakings by the government, that it would take tough measures to stop the carnage on our roads.

When we visited a driving school operating in Northern Province this week, we were told that people still going about the usual, legal way of acquiring their licences were wasting their time.

On arrival at the offices of this driving school I was met by a Sepedi-speaking woman who gave me a two-minute lecture on how I could save myself a lot of unnecessary headaches and acquire a licence in a day, given that I have my code 10 learner driver's licence.

She asked me if I could drive, to which I replied that I could do very well with just a little practice.

"Come on. Seriously speaking, do you want to tell me that you can be beaten by all those women who drive much bigger trucks than the one used for testing those gunning for code 10?" I was asked.

To salvage my pride, I nodded and said I believed I could also drive if those women could do it.

The next thing was money. I was asked if I had the amount needed as she could book a test for me for Monday. For just R360, I was guaranteed that I could go to Pietersburg tomorrow and return on Monday with a code 10 licence in my pocket.
5 out of every 100 victims
The new Nyanga bus and taxi rank has been welcomed by commuters.

There are offices used by the management of the rank for day-to-day business and for holding meetings to discuss problems and plans.

The only major drawback is the lack of the type of shopping complex one finds in other areas like Bellville, which would improve the lives of many Nyanga residents who now depend on vendors.

Some shops that have operated from the terminal since the late 1950s are still there and the dilapidated condition of the buildings contrasts markedly with the modern terminal.

It would seem the major supermarket chains have no plans for now to put up the shopping centre most Nyanga residents would love to have at their doorstep.

Ikapa town engineer Francois van Niekerk said the plan was confined to the improvement of the terminal "at this point".

Mr Van Niekerk said he was not aware of any plans to build a shopping complex.

Not all the people at the rank are commuters — many Nyanga residents are using the facility as a convenient place to relax, hang out and shelter from the sun.
Government to consider taxi task proposals

By Roy Coeine

Pretoria — The interim recommendations of the national taxi task team about restructuring the minibus taxi industry and returning it to profitability would be considered by a government committee of national and provincial transport ministers and MECs on Friday, a spokesman for Transport Minister Mac Maharaj said yesterday.

The spokesman said the recommendations would be implemented as soon as they had been adopted by the committee.

The task team had also presented a short-term survival package to the government to put the industry on a sustainable footing.

The package included alternative financial support mechanisms, with the main emphasis on input costs.

Among the key recommendations made in the team’s report, handed to Maharaj last month, were that the industry should be structured into formal business units, or co-operatives, which would facilitate training and channel economic assistance to the industry.

In terms of the recommendation, taxi owners would continue to operate as individuals but, as voluntary members of a co-operative, they would enjoy a range of benefits enabling them to reduce costs and increase their income.

Maharaj said the report would make a useful input to the government’s draft White Paper on public transport, which was due for release early this year.

Assistance

The team’s report proposed that the co-operatives provide the taxi operators with access to economic assistance including:

☐ A financial guarantee fund to enable financial institutions to reduce the extraordinarily high interest rate on taxis — usually 12 percent above prime;

☐ Insurance guarantees to reduce the risk which banks associated with taxis, thus lowering their high premiums of up to R20 000 a year;

☐ Capacity building to equip and empower the industry to be professional and develop its own institutions;

☐ Direct purchase of vehicles from manufacturers to bring down prices; and

☐ Capital grants for vehicle purchases to enable each co-operative to buy vehicles at auctions on behalf of its members.
Durban — The hospitality scene in Durban saw a radical change in the composition of its visitors last year, Eggy Naidu, the chairman of the Beachfront Business Committee, said yesterday.

In previous years, black tourists used to comprise about 10 to 20 percent of tourists to the area, however, they now comprised 60 percent.

The beachfront council had put proposals before the City Council dealing with the change in the composition of visitors.

If numbers increased at the same rate there would be a shortage of accommodation.

Naidu said it was too early for trading figures but hotels, holiday flats, timeshare resorts and private accommodation were fully booked over Christmas and New Year.

Fast food outlets had reported a very good session, he said.

The accommodation scene in Durban had changed over the past few years with hotels being downgraded and repackaged while other hotels had been changed into timeshare resorts.

Most noticeable was the change of the five-star Maharani and Malibu hotels into the Holiday Inn Garden Court format and the change of the Blangen and Beverly Hills hotels into liaisons with international groups.

A spokesman for the Amalintle Publicity Association said many resorts in the area had been fully booked over the Christmas season.

The visit composition appeared to have swung towards businessmen and there had been a change in the racial mix of visitors from previous years, he said.
Government adopts taxi principles

BY ROY CORNWELT

Pretoria — The government has adopted three strategic principles with regard to the minibus taxi industry, says Dipak Patel, the chairman of the National Taxi Task Team.

He says strategies and approaches recommended by the team and adopted by the government are the regulation and control of the taxi industry, the restructuring of the industry and economic assistance for the industry underpinned by a short-term financial assistance programme.

These principles were adopted by the Committee of National and Provincial Transport Ministers, which met on Friday.

Restructuring

The committee met to consider the team's interim recommendations about the restructuring of the minibus taxi industry and returning it to profitability.

Patel said the process made so far showed that the process was not just a "talk shop".

He said what now lay ahead was a final process of consultation with the industry with a view to obtaining consensus on the mechanisms to implement the recommendations accepted by the government and the time frame for implementation.

Patel said the government would have to go through a process of discussions and capacity building in all tiers of government to ensure that once an implementation programme had been developed, the government was able to manage it.
Taxi gunfight

THE army was called in after taxi drivers used bullet-proof vehicles against a bloody gun battle

JOHAN SCHRONEN, Crime Reporter
Taxi trailer aims to help industry in off-peak periods

FROM SANS

Pretoria — A trailer which will enable taxi operators to maximise the use of their vehicles during off-peak commuting periods was launched in Pretoria yesterday.

The first Tad Trailer, designed to enable taxi operators to use their vehicles profitably for small deliveries of bricks — up to 500 at a time — primarily for home improvement projects, was developed by a leading building materials supplier.

The 1,5-ton-capacity trailer can also be used for other loads in the building sector and in the distribution of consumer goods to spaza shops and shebeens.

Rod Taylor, the managing director of Brick 'n Tile, said the potential of taxis had not been fully explored. He said his company hoped to gain taxi industry support for a nationwide franchise operation which would give taxi owners the opportunity for a better return on their investment.

Useful

"Many of South Africa’s 120,000 minibus taxis are under-used between rush hours. Our plan will take up some of the slack so that taxis become more useful economically," Taylor said.

Present at the first public demonstration, Transport Minister Mac Maharaj said: "I see this as the beginning of a process not only of reconstructing the taxi industry and making it profitable, but one whereby big business ensures that small business takes its rightful place in the economy."

Taxi war: thousands 6 dead, stranded
THOUSANDS of commuters were stranded today in the wake of horrific taxi violence that claimed the lives of six people.

Ten people were injured in yesterday's havoc, including a woman who may now be a paraplegic.

The bloody spree erupted in Nyanga at 8am yesterday with gunmen shooting wildly at passing taxis, injuring bystanders, and it spread to Lansdowne and Philipps on the Cape Flats.

Three suspects were arrested.

Police reported today that the situation was peaceful but patrols were intensified in Cape Town where a large contingent of taxi-drivers was expected to congregate on the station parking deck before a planned "peaceful" march.

This morning, many people who normally travel the routes affected by the violence were too afraid to catch taxis.

Long queues formed instead for buses and trains at Khayelitsha, Guguletu and Nyanga.

At the Newlands terminal people stood on the streets in the hope that a taxi would come along, but none ran, Argus photographer Obed Zilwa reported.

They had no choice but to hitch-hike or walk five kilometres to Lansdowne Road where they had more chance of finding transport.

In Nyanga the situation appeared more in control with numerous buses and Cita taxis operating. Fewer people waited.

Late yesterday four people were killed when violence flared in Khayelitsha.

Police said said brothers S Buleni and N Buleni, fatally wounded, were taken to Khayelitsha police station about 4.30pm.

Welcome Ledopha, 18, of Khayelitsha, beside his car with a bul-
let wound in his neck at 5.40pm near the Good Hope College of Education.

Phami Matatane, 18, was taken to Groote Schuur Hospital after being shot in the neck in Khayelitsha.

The body of an unidentified man was found with gunshot wounds to his head and chest at the corner of Spine Road and Zola Budd Drive in Khayelitsha about 6pm.

In one of the incidents earlier yesterday a taxi-driver was killed and two of his passengers injured when their taxi was fired on in Modderdam Road, Bishop Lavis.

Police are searching for the occupants of a blue-and-white Hi-Ace minibus, registration number CA314 364, who they believe may be able to help them in their investigation.

A spokesman warned that the occupants of the minibus were considered armed and dangerous and if the vehicle was spotted, or if anyone had any infor-

**TAXI VICTIM:** Police inspect the body of Welcome Ledophia, 18, found near his car with a gunshot wound to his neck, at Litha Park, Khayelitsha.

mation about it, they should contact Crime Stop at 1800 111 113, or the emergency police number 10111.

Lichelle Barry, 23, injured in the taxi shootout in Modderdam Road yesterday, will have an operation today.

She works as a private tutor at the University of the Western Cape and yesterday went to the Cape Technical, where she applied for, and was offered, a post as an English lecturer.

In the taxi on her way home she was shot twice.

Her father Clive, the Eastern Cape horseracing correspondent for The Argus, said his daughter was paralysed from her waist.

"The doctors do not yet know whether the paralysis is permanent," he said.

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**ROADBLOCK:** Traffic police seal off Goodwood Road between Philippi and Nyanga, where several taxis came under fire.
Bus operators may ask for increased subsidies

Government had agreed to soften the impact of its November 1996 decision not to increase bus subsidies for 1995/96 by awarding raises for some bus companies on submission of business plans, the SA Bus Operators’ Association said yesterday.

The association said Transport Minister Mac Maharaj had made it clear last week that a shortage of funds made it impossible for his department to shift from its decision not to increase bus commuter subsidies for 1995/96.

Executive director Jackie Walters said the decision would cost the industry millions of randa because companies had been operating "with the legitimate expectation" of a subsidy increase. The organisation was informed too late that the subsidy would not be increased from the current R700m.

However, Walters said Maharaj had agreed at a meeting with a delegation of association, union and commuter organisation representatives that bus companies could approach the department individually with a business plan "as to how the company intends dealing with the lack of subsidy adjustment for 1995/96, and what actions it is likely to undertake to overcome the lack of funds".

The minister did, however, undertake to grant an increase in subsidies in 1996/97 and to provide the industry with information on the subsidy amount by mid-February, enabling the bus companies to plan in advance.

"In cases where severe hardship is experienced by bus companies, thereby also affecting employees and commuters, special attention will be paid to measures to soften the financial impact for the companies in question," Walters said.

He said: "Any further assistance will, however, only be considered from March onwards, based on criteria still to be determined."
Five die in taxi dispute over 'illegal rank'
Police ‘were warned before taxi violence’

Staff Reporter

POLICE were warned last week of impending violence in the Western Cape taxi industry, but were apparently unable to prevent it.

The African National Congress has called on provincial Police Minister Patrick McKenzie to launch an urgent internal inquiry into why the warning was “seemingly ignored, or not acted on”.

Mr McKenzie owed an explanation to the families of the six victims killed in Wednesday’s violence, and to the thousands of terrified commuters, said ANC provincial secretary James Ngculu.

And while the Urban Monitoring Awareness Committee (Umac), the non-governmental organisation that fired off warning letters to key role-players on January 10, expressed “severe disappointment” today, two major taxi organisations called on the police to “do their job”.

But police national priority crime director Leonard Knipe — one of the recipients of the warning letters — reacted by claiming police had not been party to “key discussions . . . if we had, it might have been different”.

Director Knipe was apparently referring to the agreement between the two largest township taxi operators, Cata and Codeta, to vacate an “illegal” rank in Wynberg, without consulting the Khayelitsha-based users or the police.

The Khayelitsha users belong to an organisation called Lingcros, which is affiliated to Codeta.

Director Knipe said police were warned by their own sources of imminent violence and had put “maximum” people on the case and “investigated it to the limit”.

Umac director Steff Snel said this was the second time police had failed to act on warnings of violence, the first time being in November 1994 when 11 people died in what became known as the Khayelitsha Stadium Massacre.

“I am severely disappointed . . . We (NGOs and state agencies) have developed extensive co-operation around problem-solving, but when push comes to shove we are not able to get off the starting blocks,” said Mr Snel.

Mr Ngculu called on Mr McKenzie to “not only step up police patrols . . . but to get to the roots of the crisis”.

And in a joint statement, Cata and Codeta said they had done everything in their power to “avoid this madness . . . we do not want to see a repetition, of what is happening in Johannesburg”.

Lingcros was responsible for the violence, and although the culprits were known to the police, they appeared to be “dragging their feet”.

“Some of these people are enriching themselves when there is taxi conflict. We would like to see the police doing their job,” the statement said.

● Mr McKenzie chose not to comment.
A new task for taxis

No more standing idle for taxis as Brick 'n Tile launches its new taxi trailer project, reports Rowan Callaghan

The long line of taxi's standing idle during off-peak hours at many taxi ranks may soon dwindle if their owners get hooked up with the new taxi trailer project.

The project, launched by Brick 'n Tile this week, was primarily designed to allow taxi owners to make small deliveries of bricks during off-peak hours for home improvement projects. However, other major companies have since then expressed an interest in the project and the scope of the deliveries has been expanded.

"Many of South Africa's 120 000 minibuses taxis are under-used between the morning and evening rush hours. Our plan will take up some of the slack so that taxis become more useful economically," said Rod Taylor, managing director of Brick 'n Tile.

Mac Maharaj; 'I foresee this as the beginning of a process ...'

Mac Maharaj, Minister of Transport, was present at the launch and praised the company for showing its support for the taxi industry through this venture.

"I foresee this as the beginning of a process — not only of reconstructing the taxi industry and making it profitable, but a process whereby big business ensures that small business takes its rightful place in the economy," he said. The project also has the support of the National Taxi Task Team.

Each franchise, issued by Taxi Trailers, will cost R20 000 and will include two 1.5 ton trailers, training and corporate clothing. (The cost of a single trailer is estimated at R13 000). Successful applicants are also offered finance packages. Each franchisee then receives contracts from the master franchisees (various businesses, which so far include breweries and supermarkets, interested in this service) involved in the venture to deliver small loads.

"The biggest problem in any distribution is small loads," Taylor said. He estimated that one taxi owner could make up to R60 000 a year using the franchise opportunity.
Govt accepts interim taxi team proposals

Theo Rawana

REGULATION and control of the taxi industry moved a step closer yesterday with government's announcement that it had accepted the national taxi task team's interim recommendations on solving problems in the industry.

The task team, set up early last year by Transport Minister Mac Maharaj to seek solutions which would end the industry's bloody feud and put it on a profitable footing, submitted the interim recommendations to Maharaj late last year after eight months of work.

The four major areas covered in the recommendations were regulation and control, industry formalisation, training and economic assistance.

Receiving the interim recommendations in Johannesburg late last year, Maharaj said the final report received from the team would form part of the national transport policy review to be finalised at the end of next month. Working groups would be established to address the four major areas, Maharaj said.

Maharaj said yesterday the broad thrust of the recommendations was acceptable to a meeting he held last week with the nine provincial transport MECs. "Certain specific issues require further investigation," he said in a statement.

The ministry spokesman was not available to say what the "specific issues" were.

It was agreed at the meeting that a national taxi workshop should be held on February 17 where the ministers and the task team would discuss the recommendations.

In Cape Town, meanwhile, taxi organisations Codeta and the Cape Amalgamated Taxi Association, as well as the SA National Civic Organisation, have signed a memorandum of agreement for taxi associations sharing rank facilities in the Cape Peninsula.

The agreement is in line with an agreement reached earlier between the Cape Town City Council, Codeta, CTA and the Khayelitsha branch of Codeta.

□ Saps report that a man was killed and another injured on Wednesday night in a shooting at a Randfontein taxi rank on the West Rand, police said yesterday.
Maharaj accepts bulk of taxi task team's proposals

BY ROY COKAYNE

Pretoria — The broad thrust of the interim recommendations of the National Taxi Task Team are acceptable to Transport Minister Mac Maharaj and the nine provincial MECs of Transport (Mincom).

Among the key recommendations made in the team's report, which was handed to Maharaj last month, were that the industry should be structured into more formal business units or cooperatives to facilitate training and channel economic assistance to the industry.

Maharaj said yesterday that certain specific issues, however, required further investigation. A spokesman for the ministry of transport said these issues in broad terms related to regulations and control and the economic sustainability of the taxi industry.

Maharaj said working groups would be established to address the four major areas covered in the recommendations—regulation and control, formalisation of the industry, training and economic assistance.

Maharaj said the task team, in conjunction with Mincom, would hold a series of report-back seminars for all stakeholders in the industry once the strategy and implementation plans had been finalised.

Maharaj said it had also been agreed that a national taxi workshop would be arranged jointly between Mincom and the task team to discuss the recommendations.

The workshop is planned for February 17 at a venue still to be finalised.

Other recommendations in the task team's report involved proposals that the co-operatives provide the taxi operators with access to economic assistance including:

- A financial guarantee fund to enable financial institutions to reduce the extraordinary high interest rate on loans;
- Insurance guarantees to reduce the risk banks associate with taxis, thus lowering their high premiums;
- Capacity-building to equip and empower the industry to be professional and develop its own institutions;
- Tax facilities, with at least 25 such facilities to be made available country-wide;
- Direct purchase of vehicles from manufacturers to bring down prices; and
- Capital grants for vehicle purchases to enable each co-operative to buy vehicles at auctions on behalf of its members.
Key taxi deal focused on renewed violence
A DRIVER was shot dead and two passengers were seriously wounded when gunmen in a minibus opened fire on a taxi in Nyanga, near Cape Town, yesterday afternoon, bringing to seven the number of people who have died in taxi-related violence this week.

Yesterday's incident happened in the face of a major operation in which police are manning roadblocks throughout the Western Cape this weekend to monitor taxis after they received information that professional hitmen were behind the renewed violence in the long-running taxi war.

Only hours before yesterday's shooting, regional Police Minister Patrick McKenzie told Metro: "We have information that this whole thing is much wider than we thought, that there are professional hitmen behind it."

A reliable source close to the taxi industry said he had been told that four disaffected former MK members who arrived in Cape Town from Transkei recently, could be involved in the latest incidents.

The latest round in the taxi war flared up on Wednesday when gunmen went on a killing spree, which began in Nyanga before spreading to Landfontein, Philippolis, Manenberg and Bishop Lavis.

The rapid escalation of the violence led police to suspect that it was part of a well-planned campaign.

Violence flared again on Friday when unidentified gunmen opened fire on two Codeta drivers at an Athlone garage. Both men are in hospital in a serious condition.

In yesterday's incident, a member of the Cata taxi organisation died when he was shot in the head by gunmen. A woman passenger in his taxi is in a critical condition after she was shot through the throat, and another passenger was hit in the leg.

In another incident yesterday, a police officer was shot dead by a man armed with a .38 Special revolver, who was standing next to a stopped taxi in Nyanga. Police returned fire before the man threw his weapon to the ground and fled.

Sources said they were expecting further attacks after Cata failed to attend a meeting called to finalise a peace plan brokered on Friday by regional Transport Minister Leonard Ramatšako between Cata and rival organisation Codeta.

The latest outbreak in the long-running taxi war, was apparently sparked off by an agreement signed earlier this week between Cata and Codeta, in which agreement was reached to close down an illegal rank in Wynberg used by Codeta affiliate, Lingelbach.

Police intelligence sources say this deal was doomed to failure because Lingelbach was excluded from the negotiations.

A week ago a letter warning of impending violence was sent to top police and government officials.

In the letter the director of the Urban Monitoring and Awareness Committee (UMAC), Stefan Nel warned that despite an improvement in relations between Cata and Codeta, "a large component of Codeta's members appear not to support the negotiations."
There are thousands of taxis yet none of them contribute to the country’s running costs.

**UNREGULATED** It is estimated that there are more than 500 000 taxis in the country, yet they have not been drawn into any type of formal tax structure.

TAXIING QUESTIONS

Act of parliament — unlike companies that are regulated by the Companies Act.

According to the government’s white paper on small business strategy published last March, there are about 800 000 small, medium and micro-enterprises.

One of the unregulated businesses is the taxi industry. It is estimated that there are more than 300 000 taxis in the country.

Up until now, taxi fares have escaped the VAT tomahawk. That means that taxi owners need not register as VAT vendors even if their turnover is more than R10 000 a year.

If taxi owners were relieved of the duty of collecting VAT on behalf of the government, they would still be liable to register and pay income tax like any other taxpayer. However, the majority, if not all, of taxi owners are not contributing to the cost of running the country through income tax.

There is an urgent need to ensure that taxi owners do not escape the fiscal thorns. Taxi enterprises operate on a cash basis and this can create fiscal headaches as far as disclosure is concerned.

A unique and effective way of taxing this industry should therefore be devised.

It is estimated that each taxi brings in about R6 000 a month or more. I am of the opinion that the taxi owners should pay a flat income tax rate of R500 a taxi. This amount should be paid monthly to the fiscus and not yearly, because they may lose the ability to pay tax at the end of the year.

This R500 minimum flat rate income tax should be set on the assumption that all expenses have been taken into account. Based on the estimation that there are 500 000 taxis, the payment of R500 a taxi a month would make the tax gatherer smile with a cool R250 million monthly.

Hawking is also one of the fastest growing unregulated industries in the country.

According to the National Labour Economic Development Institute, some hawkers earn as much as R2 600 a month.

It is estimated that there are more than 80 000 hawkers in the country. However, their income is not swept into the income tax basket as they are not registered as taxpayers. Hawkers too should pay a flat rate income tax. The minimum tax should be set at R200 a month or R10 million monthly.

Based on the estimation that there are about 50 000 hawkers, the payment of R200 a month could bring in the fiscus R10 million monthly.

The advantages of flat rate income tax for the taxi industry, hawkers and other informal businesses is that they will escape the yearly burden of completing the income tax return.

This is very important because there is a high illiteracy level among taxi owners as well as other unregulated businesses. Another tax bonus on the flat rate approach is that they will not pay income tax on the progressive scale.

The success of flat rate income tax on taxis, hawkers and similar businesses hinges on the government’s regulation of these industries. For example, a compulsory but free certificate of trading should be introduced.

This should make it easier for inland revenue to police and also know those who are paying tax and those who are not. When a taxi driver is granted a licence to trade, his name should be submitted to the revenue services.

To be effective, taxi and hawkers should be collected at a provincial level and not at a national level. This is where fiscal federalism becomes important. Heavy penalties and interest should be imposed on any taxi owner or hawker who fails to pay the monthly income tax.

Bringing all people into the tax net will close the gap between what ought to be collected and what is being collected.

This will also help to put bricks and mortar into the RDP.

Furthermore, it will create the perception that there is a proper allocation of burdens among all the tax-paying community.

This will also breed a better view of the tax system and improve tax morality. As more taxpayers imply less tax, this will rescue us from our present fiscal drought. Failure by the government to put its foot down on tax delinquency may create a perception that the state is being hijacked by the populist magic.

This will make mockery of words such as good governance. This is because good governance means ruling responsibly. This cannot be attained if the tax playing field is not levelled first.

□ Matshere Matshere is an independent tax consultant.
City cabbies agree to drop guns and shake hands after pact

Peace at taxi ranks?
tions will be back on the road after ratifying an agreement which involves them working together on rank committees and providing the names of all operators on specific routes.

When about 60 drivers and owners met in the provincial government building yesterday to conclude the agreement they had been meeting about 40 guns which were checked into security for the duration of the meeting.

A few men decided to wait outside the building, choosing not to check in their weapons.

Provincial Roads Minister Leonard Ramatlakane made it clear that he, with Police Minister Patrick McKenzie, would take tough action if there were any more shootings.

In a month eight people have been killed and 27 injured in violence between the two groups.

Mr Ramatlakane said he was considering a by-law which would make taxis and taxi ranks gun-free zones.

He said displaying and handling firearms in public facilities was “intolerable”.

“You can’t provide a service and terrorise at the same time. These are contradictions”. We need to create a situation where we work in a gun-free environment, where we work in harmony.

“This is the best way. Leave the guns at home and work together as brothers and sisters in this industry. This is the good advice I’m giving you.”

Conveying a message from Mr McKenzie, who could not attend the meeting, Mr Ramatlakane said Mr McKenzie had resolved this would be the year of action.

“If one more shooting happens the industry will be disarmed — whether your weapons are legal or illegal.

“Your gun will be taken away from you. It will be subjected to ballistic tests and will be gone for a very long time,” he warned.

In terms of the agreement which was ratified yesterday, both organisations will put forward names of people who will serve on “rank committees” with representatives from the police, traffic department and the community.

In addition, the taxi organisations will provide lists of their members operating on certain routes, along with other details such as the registration numbers of vehicles.

It is hoped that these committees will help curb the conflict which erupted this month over the illegal use of a Wynberg holding facility as a taxi rank.

Cape Town City Council has also been asked to provide clear lane markings in Wynberg indicating route destinations to alleviate conflict.

Leonard Kuipe, head of the priority crimes unit, told the gathering he supported the provincial initiative to create gun-free ranks.
Taxi office will deal with violence

THE Gauteng government would officially open the Gauteng Taxi Office in Johannesburg tomorrow — the first office of its kind in SA, where issues plaguing the industry and resulting in violence would be dealt with, the provincial transport ministry said on Friday.

Ministry spokesman Stephi Erasmus said the office, initiated by transport MEC Olaus van Zyl, would facilitate communication between the department and the taxi industry.

"It will be managed by the Gauteng department of public transport and will also serve as a centre for conflict resolution. "In addition, a toll-free 0900 line will be in operation 24 hours a day at this office to handle calls from taxi members and passengers with problems," Erasmus said.
Crackdown on motorists using taxi fast lane on N2

30/1/96

PETE DENNEY
METRO WRITER

THE “fast lane” reserved on the N2 for buses and minibus taxis during the morning traffic peak from 6.30 to 9 is proving a boon to taxi drivers — but motorists complain that it has increased traffic jams in their lanes.

To add to motorists’ woes, law enforcement officers — after two months in which they took a gentler approach — have begun fining drivers other than those of taxis who use the exclusive lane.

In the past 10 days, 211 tickets have been issued to motorists using the taxi lane — a figure that traffic officials regard as unusually high.

The standard fine is R50, according to the Cape Town traffic department, which serves as an agency for the provincial authorities by enforcing the law.

Mr. William Desai of Brackenfell, a motorist who travels in on the N2 every day at peak hour, complained this week that he had taken half-an-hour to travel from the Athlone cooling towers to the Lieberkneck Parkway.

“Four years ago we sat in traffic jams while they were building the road,” Desai said.

“My point is that things would be better afterwards.”

Now things are worse — and they have started fining the motorists who use the taxi lane.”

He sat fuming in morning traffic jams while the taxis flew past him “at 100km/h” in their own lane, Desai said.

When he reached the point where the lane ended and public transport vehicles joined the rest of the traffic, the congestion — which he blamed for the jams further back — made him fume again.

Desai said motorists — who paid taxes to the state — were getting a raw deal.

Mr. James Mafuya, president of Codeta and, as a taxi driver, a regular user of the N2, said taxi drivers were happy with the lane.

“It is much better — we are no longer caught up in traffic jams,” he said.

He believed the exclusive lane had also cut down on the number of offences committed by taxi drivers, Mafuya said.

Some motorists were still using the taxi lane as a fast lane, he said.

“Too many motorists were still using the taxi lane as a fast lane,” he said.

Asked if he thought these motorists should be fined, Mafuya said that in Johannesburg, a helicopter with a “sky-shout” flew over the highway and warned off such motorists.

Mr. Dumisane Ntuli, a spokesman for the Western Cape’s Minister of Transport, Mr. Leonard Ramatlabane, said a monitoring team was checking the effectiveness of the special lane. An evaluation report would be drawn up, he said.

Mr. Steve Fanner, chief engineer for planning in the provincial roads department, said the evaluation would take a few months.

“My view is that it is too early to make a definitive judgment,” he said.

He had been told that, near the start of the lane, about a third of the vehicles using it were not supposed to be there.

Fanner suspected that the drivers were aware of this as most moved over into the cars’ lane after a distance.

A working group is considering ways of dealing with the Cape Town end of the lane.

A destination survey may be needed to determine if most of the vehicles want to proceed to the Eastern Boulevard, get on to the Main Road, or be willing to be diverted on to the Black River Parkway.

Fanner said he did not want to anticipate the findings of the monitoring scheme, but he believed the bus and taxi lane was here to stay.

“I don’t think scrapping it is on the cards,” he said.

“We might make adjustments.”

A similar scheme has not been implemented yet on the outgoing carriageway of the N2.
New taxi troubleshooting bid

The Gauteng Taxi Office will contribute towards peace, cooperation, good regulation and financial viability in the industry, says Gauteng Transport MEC Claus van Zyl.

The newly opened office was set up on the recommendation of the Gauteng Taxi Initiative, convened to provide practical solutions to industry problems. It aims to improve communication between taxi associations, passengers and the Government.

A toll-free number will be installed, but for now, these officials – John Msiza on (011) 339-1612 or Knox Matija on 240-1726/1555 – can be contacted directly.

– Staff Reporter.
Taxi insurance for commuters

BY FRANCOISE BOTHA

Cape Town — In a bid to combat the low levels of compensation offered by the Motor Vehicle Accidents Fund, Heritage Insurance Brokers (Cape) will launch an insurance package for taxi and minibus commuters today.

The package, underwritten by Lloyd's, will be launched nationwide and will cover both metropolitan and long-distance trips.

Bernard O'Sullivan, the attorney who has been handling the development of the package, said: "The fund only provides R25 000 in the case of death or permanent disability and no compensation if passengers were travelling in the vehicle that caused the accident."

The fund often took "many months" to process these claims and the compensation for the loss of the breadwinner was not high enough. As a result, the family of the victim suffered.

O'Sullivan said the package was part of a bid to reduce the public's reliance on the fund, which was funded by a 9c a litre fuel levy.

"The fund, which is close to bankruptcy, could not be supported by an increased fuel levy because this would be inflationary," he said.

The policy offers commuters insurance in the case of death or total disability in multiples of R10 000 for R17 a year up to a maximum of R75 000 and covers commuters travelling in registered and unregistered taxis.
Police use dogs to break up IFP demonstration

DURBAN — Police used a water cannon and dogs to disperse about 600 IFP supporters who staged a march in Durban yesterday to demand the withdrawal of Putco buses from the Lindelani squatter camp north of the city.

The demonstrators, who had earlier prevented commuters from boarding Putco buses, were warned the march was illegal as no permission had been obtained. Some heeded the warning while others continued marching before being dispersed.

The demonstrators are aligned to IFP KwaZulu-Natal MP Thomas Shabalala, who was censured by the IFP national council recently for the anti-Putco campaign in his Lindelani stronghold.

IFP secretary-general Ziba Jiyane was forced to flee a meeting there last month after Shabalala's supporters fired gunshots. Jiyane had visited Lindelani to try to persuade them to let residents choose their transport. Shabalala's supporters were accused of intimidating residents out of using Putco so that taxi operators could expand their business. Seven Putco buses had been torched in December.

Shabalala denied any knowledge of yesterday's demonstration, but said residents were dissatisfied with Putco as it was unable to provide an effective service. Residents wanted other bus companies and taxi services to operate in Lindelani.

Meanwhile in Richmond, IFP MP Therese Millen said the ANC had launched a stayaway to turn the area into a "little Cuba" in the run-up to the May 29 election. The ANC had warned anyone not adhering to the stayaway call that they would be beaten to death, she said.
IFP slams protesters

The Inkatha Freedom Party has strongly condemned residents from the party's stronghold of Lindelani for demanding the withdrawal of Putco buses from the area.

Residents in the township prevented pupils from attending schools and forced shops to close as they enforced a work stayaway on Tuesday.

Putco buses were forced out of the township and one of the company's bus drivers was forcefully removed from his bus. A shot was fired at him as he fled from his assailants at a roadblock.

Putco spokesman said the driver was later rescued from the mob by police and no damage was done to the bus. The protesters later moved to the city centre where chaos broke out as police opened fire and used water cannons with purple dye to disperse the unruly mob.

The IFP also condemned those involved in an illegal march in the Durban city centre on Tuesday and said they should face the full legal consequences of their actions and face the party's disciplinary machinery. The protesters, armed with dangerous weapons, threw traffic into chaos when they blocked two main roads in the city.

IFP South Coast spokesman Mr. Anthony Grinker said the party was not aware of the march and its provincial leadership had not been consulted. "Those behind the march should immediately desist from any further planned action," Grinker said.

He said those responsible for the action should face the full legal implications of their action. The party would also take appropriate action on all those who defied its resolutions. The party censured the area's strongman Thomas Shabalala earlier this month for allegedly orchestrating the call for the withdrawal of Putco buses in the area.
Police use dogs to break up IFP demonstration

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SA ‘not serious’ about co-operation

Michael Marnack

VICTORIA FALLS — Tough words marked the first session of a three-day Southern African Development Conference which had aimed to defuse some of the tensions surrounding SA’s economic relations with its neighbours.

Morrison Sifelani, head of Zimbabwe’s export promotion body Zimtrade, said SA trends “do not suggest there is economic or political willingness to enter into serious co-operation”.

Sifelani, a former head of the Confederation of Zimbabwean Industries told the 140 delegates he had attended six meetings with South Africans.

“I get the impression they are saying ‘we are too big, if you don’t like it, tough luck, we are going to steamroller over you’. If that is the case then we are going to sit down and look at our future,” he said.

Sifelani said a review of trade problems given by Natal University’s Prof Gavin Maasdorp gave him the impression there were no hopes of reviving Zimbabwe’s lapsed 1964 most favoured nation pact with SA.

The current three-day conference is a follow-up to last year’s exclusive conference when SA high commissioner Kingsley Mamabolo made an emergency trip to Victoria Falls to try and damp down talk of an all-out trade war between SA and Zimbabwe over the stalled trade pact talks.

Maasdorp said the World Trade Organisation was worried at a lack of appreciation in southern Africa of the implications of the 1994 Marrakech agreement.

It barred SA from giving Zimbabwe any concessions not extended to every other developing country in the world.

Maasdorp urged the region to look towards co-operation rather than trade.

Confederation president Jonah Wakatama said: “One of the issues that inhibits serious regional integration is the narrow-minded national identity which is common in this region. Until we overcome that hurdle our success towards regional integration remains a dream.”

He warned that southern Africa was not keeping pace with other underdeveloped regions, as population growth continued to outstrip economic growth.

3 die in taxi alteration

Theo Rawana

A FEDERAL over use of a taxi rank led to shooting last night. Three people died and 17 were injured — seven of them policemen — in Carletonville, Gauteng, yesterday, police said.

Five of the 10 victims were seriously injured, police spokesman Supt Melica Moss said.

She said 27 people were arrested.

Moss said there had been an arbitration meeting the previous night, at which an inter-governmental agreement between the Carletonville United Taxi Association and the Carletonville-Botswana Close Corporation was reached.

It had been decided at the meeting that police should monitor the area at night.

“At 4am a white Toyota Hi-Ace with 20 occupants raced towards the rank.

“The occupants jumped out, shooting at the police and their rivals. The other group fired back and in the conflict, three people died. But at the moment we do not know which group was which,” Moss said.

In police action following the attack, 27 people were arrested and a large number of arms, mainly traditional weapons, were seized.
IFP condemns members' march against Putco

Farouk Chothia

DURBAN — The IFP yesterday condemned the violent demonstration its supporters staged in central Durban earlier this week and vowed that disciplinary action would be taken against the culprits.

The IFP’s south coast deputy publicity secretary Anthony Grinker said the demands listed during the demonstration were “nothing less” than defiance of the IFP’s national council. The council last month for the anti-Putco campaign. The council warned him that if he did not “remedy” his mistakes he would be expelled at a council meeting scheduled for March 9.

Shabalala said yesterday the demonstration should not be politicised. It had been organised by the Lindelani transport committee, and he had had no role in it. He was not acting in defiance of the IFP and would remain a member of the party.

Police used teargas, dogs and batons to disperse the marchers.

Grinker said those who had caused disruptions faced the “full legal implications” of their actions.

Police spokesman Supt Bala Naidoo said two demonstrators had been arrested and could be charged with malicious damage to property.

Shabalala said the demonstrators had legitimate grievances, but had erred in organising an illegal march.

Shabalala’s critics have previously accused him of wanting to drive Putco out of the area so that he could expand his taxi business, a charge which Shabalala denied.
Bid to implement national taxi policy

Transport Minister Mac Maharaj will tomorrow begin a process to implement a national taxi policy by meeting local road transportation boards countrywide, after the Government's approval of the National Taxi Task Team's recommendations.

The task team will monitor the implementation of the national policy, as its mandate has been extended to another six months, so that it can make its final proposals by the end of March.

Each province will hold workshops over the next three weeks on these recommendations and another plenary will be convened within a month.

Maharaj made the announcement at the weekend's national taxi plenary conference held in Midrand. The recommendations included financial assistance but not subsidies, formalisation of the industry, regulation and control.

A move to larger vehicles would be encouraged.
Putco’s operations in KwaZulu to close down

Lukanyo Minyanda

JSE-LISTED bus operator Putco plans to close all its operations in KwaZulu-Natal, resulting in about 500 job losses, following government’s refusal to lift subsidies for the 1995/96 financial year.

Bus operators warned in December that they would cut jobs and routes and raise fares after government decided to hold 1995/96 subsidy allocations at the previous year’s R770m level.

Putco MD Michael Oldham said at the weekend: “It is highly unfortunate that a large number of jobs will be lost. Putco will try to treat this traumatic situation as sensitively as possible.”

Putco’s operations in Durban — one of its principal areas of operation — had been running at a deficit for a long time.

Oldham called on government to provide a subsidy to cover the Durban operation’s losses until it could be placed on open tender.

The unstable political situation in KwaZulu-Natal, coupled with the “disastrous” position in Lindelani, where some community leaders were preventing Putco from operating, had also contributed to the company’s decision to pull out of the province.

Oldham said Putco, which employs about 5 500 people nationally, had decided to put a freeze on all new appointments and would try to integrate some of its transferable KwaZulu-Natal staff into its other operations.

The company would also evaluate its other operations to determine whether there should be further rationalisation.

Oldham said Putco would increase passenger fares by an average 10% from next month and, depending on the subsidy situation, by a further 10%-15% in October. Pupils’ fares, previously discounted, would also increase by the same amount.

The diesel price had increased 14c over the past two months and further fare increases would follow if the trend continued.

The company would still lose about R15m as a result of the subsidy situation, despite the fare increases. “The losses will be greater if we lose passengers as a result (of the fare increase),”

Wage negotiations would commence shortly and Putco hoped that trade unions would agree to a “substantially” reduced settlement to lessen the impact of the subsidy freeze.

Putco reported share earnings of R85.2c for the year to June 1995 from 66.4c a year before, on turnover of R649.2m (R478m).
The taxi industry adopts govt proposals to develop the industry's governance

Commuters threaten bus boycott over Putco fares

The SA Commuter Organisation (Saco) has warned it will arrange alternative transport for bus commuters if Putco implements its 10% fare increase on March 1.

Saco chairman Stephen Sangweni said other bus companies were being consulted, adding that trains and taxis would also be used to “save passengers from unaffordable fares” which would also be increased by a further 10%-12% in October, depending on Putco’s subsidy allocation.

This follows the Government deciding not to increase bus subsidies from the previous R770-million for 1995-6, following demands by other transport bodies to be subsidised.

Putco, which employs about 5 500 people, warned in December it would retrench drivers, cut routes and raise fares if its subsidy allocation was not increased.

In its first move, the company is considering closing its operations in KwaZulu Natal resulting in about 600 job losses.

Sangweni said Putco was “venting its anger” on commuters. “Unlike the taxis, at least buses are being subsidised,” he said.

Sangweni called on the Government to address the situation, saying it would “frustrate commuters who cannot afford the fares”.

Putco managing director Mike Oldham said the company would still lose about R15-million as a result of no increase in subsidies, despite the fare increases.

Oldham added that Putco would be holding a conference on Saturday to discuss the subsidy situation.
Anger at Putco moves to cut services

Lukanyo Mnyanda

WORKER and commuter organisations have reacted angrily to reports that bus operator Putco was planning to cut operations and increase fares, dubbing the moves premature and harsh.

The SA Commuters' Organisation (SACO) said yesterday it would meet Transport Minister Mac Maharaj to ask him to subsidise the increases.

SACO president Steven Sangweni said if the meeting with Maharaj was unsuccessful, they would be forced to look at alternative transport and would hold talks with the taxi industry.

Putco warned at the weekend that the freeze on passenger subsidies from government would force it to halt operations in KwaZulu-Natal, axe around 600 staff and jack up fares.

The Transport and General Workers' Union called on the company to halt its plans and negotiate alternatives with unions.

Spokesman Malcolm Ray said his union would reject any unilateral closures and demanded Putco disclose its financial position to prove the cuts were necessary.

Other KwaZulu-Natal operators have warned of further fare increases and job cuts if government does not reverse its decision to freeze passenger subsidies for the 1995/96 financial year.

South Coast Bus Services GM Asokon Naidu said it would lift fares by about 40%.

Durban Transport Acting CEO Brian Stokes said the council-owned company had been "seriously" affected by the subsidy freeze and he urged government to act to remedy the situation.

KwaZulu Transport MD Chris Peckett said the company had advised its shareholders it would not be able to continue operating unless new funding was found.
Government unveils R14,5m taxi plan

BY ROY COLAYNE

The government has unveiled a R14,5 million-a-year package that it hopes will help resolve the problems in the taxi industry.

The package forms part of the government's response to recommendations made by the national taxi task team. It was unveiled by Transport Minister Mac Maharaj over the weekend.

The package includes a R10 million-a-year training programme to increase the industry's capacity. There will also be economic assistance in the form of co-operatives based at petrol stations. Nine provincial offices will be established to help organise the taxi industry.

Kitsa Gordhan, director general of transport, confirmed the financing for the package had already been approved by the cabinet.

Gordhan said a plenary meeting of Mincom, which is comprised of all the provincial transport MECs, and the task team had accepted in principle the recommendations about the industry.

Gordhan said the government's response to the control and regulation of the taxi industry involved three aspects. They were:

- Cleaning up the permit system to make it more manageable. This would 'probably entail changing from a radius-based to a route-based taxi permit system;
- Legalising taxi operators through a registration system. There are an estimated 60,000 illegal operators at present;
- A process to issue new permits through local taxi or transport forums.

This would also involve a passenger-plan for areas with local authorities involved in preparing plans for routes.

Gordhan said all of the government responses to the task team recommendations were accepted in principle but there were issues that required discussion.

These included the process by which the co-operatives would be established around petrol stations. The issuing of route permits also needed discussion, he said.
Putco announce fare hike

PUTCO bus fares would rise by 10 percent on average on March 1, Putco announced yesterday.

A further average increase of between 10 and 12 percent would take effect on October 1, the company said in a statement in Johannesburg.

It said the rise had been necessitated by the Government’s decision not to increase subsidies for bus commuters.

"The Department of Transport informed the bus industry in December 1995 that, due to a limited increase in the allocation of its budget for bus subsidies, they are not in a position to increase subsidies to bus commuters on a general basis during the 1995-96 financial year," the company said.

"Meetings covering the subsidy issue have also been held with our union representatives and with the commuters in the various areas of our operation. Putco has stated that it would have to consider various alternatives to lessen the impact," the statement said.

Putco said it had asked the Government to reconsider its decision but Transport Minister Mac Maharaj, at a joint meeting with unions and commuter representatives, had reiterated the Cabinet’s decision.

"The Minister appreciated the problems being experienced by operators, commuters and labour but stated that the industry is going through a period of structural adjustment and all the parties concerned should find ways of addressing the obstacles," the statement said.

Meanwhile, the SA Commuter Organisation has warned it will arrange alternative transport for bus commuters if Putco implements the fare increase on March 1.

Saco chairman Mr. Stephen Sangweni said other bus companies were being consulted, adding that trains and taxis would be used to "save passengers from unaffordable fares". - Sapa.
**Increased bus subsidy, but fares go up**

*By Mandla Mthembi*

Bus subsidies for 1996/7 would be increased by 8% from April 1 to ensure continued services, Transport Minister Mac Maharaj has announced.

He said yesterday that the increase—announced earlier than in previous years to end uncertainty among commuters and operators—has been made possible by "careful management and adjustments in the transport budget".

Last year, the Government froze bus subsidies to the R270-million level because of lack of funds, prompting Putco to increase its fares by 10% from March 1 and threatening to cut jobs and routes in the event of no increase in government subsidies.

"Of the funds available, a limited amount will also be used to adjust the current low economic tariff structure of some bus operators," said Maharaj, urging bus companies to plan rationally for their operations and passenger fare increases.

Ministry spokesman Theo Maeder said the subsidy budget had now increased to R840-million, and would be divided among 28 bus companies according to their distances and passenger volumes. He added that the changes in the bus subsidy system were consistent with the strategy being developed for the entire transport system, also involving rail and taxis.

"A partnership between the Government, public transport operators, labour and commuters will ensure we overcome the short-term difficulties and build an efficient public transport system," he said.

Putco managing director Mike Oldham was delighted about the subsidy increase, saying: "It was what we expected and we will be consulting with all stakeholders to review the pending cuts in jobs and routes."

However, he indicated the fare increases had nothing to do with subsidy increases because the fares were covering last year's losses.

The SA Commuter Organisation and the Commuters' Rights Association of SA also welcomed the subsidy increase, but regretted that fares were not subsidised.
THE BIG BLACK HOLE

Fuel will be added to the blazing taxi row after an astonishing report by the government-appointed National Taxi Task Team, released last week. If its recommendations are heeded, millions of rand will be "donated" to the beleaguered industry.

Approved by Cabinet on Friday, the plan — with an initial bill of R40m — calls for the establishment of co-operatives, registration of taxi operators and associations and the issue of route-based permits.

Transport Minister Mac Maharaj says the programme will be implemented in stages. One of the main reasons behind the frequent "taxi wars" is quarrelling over routes and passengers, he says, blaming the problems on "the financial insecurity of taxi drivers."

He says the move to co-ops calls for business management training for drivers, which will be provided by the small business unit of the Department of Trade & Industry. "We estimate it will cost about R1m per co-op in the form of assistance from government," Maharaj says.

The co-ops are expected to be self-financing in less than two years. But therein lies the twist. The report asks for a "donation" of R500 000 to each co-op to employ a core management team. Further "donations" of R450 000 to each co-op are envisaged to pay directors' fees and management costs for the first year. Though co-ops "are intended to become self-financing after limited first-year support, there may be need for additional support during the second year," says the report. Government "should budget 70% of the first-year figures for this purpose."

It recommends the creation of a "notional" fund of R100m and a cash fund of R10m to guarantee finance houses against co-op members defaulting. In return, finance houses must agree to reduce rates from 10 percentage points above prime to three.

Government is expected to help co-ops sidestep the present insurance rates of 25% of the value of the vehicle, by enabling each to have its own insurance cell — effectively its own insurance company with capital supplied by government in the form of cash and guarantees. A stop-loss policy will be taken with Lloyd's of London.

The taxpayer will also be asked to provide each co-op with R200 000 to enable it to buy vehicles at auctions.

And so the list goes on — all for an industry that doesn't even pay tax. One suggestion is unlikely to endear the report to the motor vehicle manufacturing industry. The team believes the present system of manufacturers selling vehicles to the public through dealers "has elements of a cartel." Therefore government should persuade manufacturers to appoint taxi co-ops as dealers. It doesn't suggest where the operating capital will come from but notes the co-ops "would find this an invaluable source of income."

Government will also be asked to contribute R20m "for a wide-ranging series of pilot projects." Local authorities will be requested to "transfer" off-street taxi ranks to co-ops, "if only by way of a long-term lease." This would enable them "to suddenly acquire a significant capital asset," through which they could raise finance by using the ranks as collateral. The co-ops could also enter into wealth-generating ventures with property developers.

Government will also be asked to force financial institutions and credit bureaus to eliminate all bad-debt listings. It regrets that many minibus-taxi operators have defaulted on payments, but says it's usually not their fault. Rather, it is economic conditions and past government policies.

Surprisingly, the report manages to include some findings which smack of reality. These include recommendations on improving standards, criticism of the violence in the industry and the bad driving and concomitant accidents. It also suggests compulsory registration and says only permit holders should be eligible for registration.

It suggests expelling members from associations and cancelling permits for certain misdemeanours. This would be fine if half the 140 000 taxis on the road were not already without permits.

In its search for ways to move the industry from the informal to the formal sector, it considers only what can be done for it, not what it can do for itself. It fails to mention that the taxi owners' plight is attributable, to a large extent, to customer resistance to fare increases.

What was once hailed as the first deregulated model to which other sectors should aspire, has virtually become the graveyard of "free enterprise." Discussion forums have given way to gun battles and terrorism wins the day.

Despite the fact that this is an interim report, its acceptance by government is likely to further raise unrealistic expectations. The industry which, from the outside, appears dominated by a coterie of terrorists, will continue to attract those seeking easy pickings, rather than business-related growth. ■

Taxi blockade . . . but it's not their fault, says Maharaj (right)
Protesting taxi drivers block entrance to parliament

JOSEPH ARANES
Municipal Staff ARG 24/12/96

ABOUT 200 minibus taxi drivers blocked the Stal Flein entrance to parliament in protest against the recent government announcement that subsidies for bus commuters will increase by eight percent as from April 1.

The taxi drivers and owners — all members of the Western Cape Taxi Task Team, a body which represents all the different taxi associations in the Western Cape — outlined their grievances to provincial Transport Minister Leonard Ramatikake under a heavy police guard.

Chairman of the task team Basil Nagel said the government “had done little or nothing” to enable the historically disadvantaged taxi industry to benefit from a government subsidy.

“Just last week we had a national meeting of the task team and were told by the national Transport Minister Mac Maharaj that the government did not have money to restructure the taxi industry.

“But just five days later they made an announcement they would be giving the bus companies R90 million to help subsidise their commuters.”

Mr Nagel said what angered them was the fact that the government’s own statistics indicated that bus companies only transported 25 percent of the country’s workforce.

“We are demanding that a moratorium be placed on all forms of government subsidies until a structure is in place which will allow all commuters to benefit from it.”

He said yesterday’s protest actions were done in such a way that it did not inconvenience anybody, but warned that if their demands and concerns were not properly addressed, they would embark on a national campaign to highlight their plight.

“We are angry and believe the government is acting in bad faith by unilaterally making subsidies available while they are still involved in talks and negotiations with the role-players.

“Throughout this process of talks we continuously raised the problem we had with only certain sectors getting subsidies — yet they went ahead and increased the amount paid to bus commuters,” he said.

Mr Ramatikake said he would raise these concerns with the national transport minister and arrange a meeting so the issue could be discussed and hopefully resolved.

“In a statement yesterday, the taxi component of the national taxi task team said the eight percent increase in subsidies for bus commuters was an insult to the taxi industry.

“It called on the taxi industry to boycott the team’s planned plenary policy meeting for today and rather embark on a campaign aimed at preventing the bus subsidy increase.”
Tour is just a stage in Leanne’s odyssey for needy children

JANSADLER, Sports Staff

MOST cyclists finishing The Argus/Pick’n Pay Cycle Tour next month will be content to hang their bikes up in the garage for a few weeks and take a breather. Not so Leanne Dickerson. She will continue on her way up the Garden Route, headed for Kosi Bay.

This determined Englishwoman is cycling from Vleesdrift on the Namibian border along the coastline - stopping off in Cape Town for the Tour - then on to the Mozambican border.

She left Vleesdrift on February 19 and is due in Cape Town on March 5. The reason for the 3200 km ride is to collect money for Isaiah 58, a children’s shelter in East London.

“This will be my first long cycle trip, although I’ve done plenty of training,” said Leanne, Press officer for the national Missing Persons Helpline in London.

“She will be my first long cycle trip, although I’ve done plenty of training,” said Leanne, Press officer for the national Missing Persons Helpline in London.

“Singer Cliff Richard, a patron of Helpline and a supporter of Isaiah 58, sent Leanne a letter of encouragement on the eve of her trip.

She intends covering about 80km a day and will be accompanied on the first leg by Neil Smith of the firm Puncture Buster, sponsors of her bike.

Contributors can get in touch with Leanne on 867 1210, fax 867 1018.

MARATHON JOURNEY: Leanne Dickerson of London on the bicycle she will ride for charity round the coast from Vleesdrift on the Namibian border to Kosi Bay on the border with Mozambique. While in Cape Town she will take part in The Argus/Pick’n Pay Cycle Tour.

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Monies saved by retrenchments to help pay for civil service parity
Commuters threaten to boycott buses

By Joshua Raboroko

THOUSANDS of commuters have threatened to boycott Putco buses if the company implements its 10 percent fare increase on March 1.

The South African Commuters Organisation has warned that it will arrange alternative transport, including taxis and trains, for bus commuters.

The new fares will hit hard on the pockets of commuters in the Gauteng, KwaZulu-Natal and Mpumalanga provinces where most blacks use Putco buses.

Saco’s chairman Mr Stephen Sangweni said other bus companies were being consulted to save the commuters from the high fares.

Indications of increases

Putco had indicated that fares would be increased by between 10 and 12 percent in October last year depending on its subsidy allocation from the government.

The move to hike fares follows Government’s decision not to increase Putco’s subsidy from the previous R770-million for 1995/96 after subsidy demands by other transport bodies.

Putco, which employs more than 5 500 workers, warned that it would retrench drivers, cut routes and raise fares if its subsidy was not increased.

Putco managing director Mr Mike Oldham said the company would still lose about R15-million due to the freeze in subsidies despite the fare increase.

Sangweni said Putco was “taking out its anger” on poor commuters who could not afford the increased fares. Most blacks were still reeling under the escalating cost of living.

He called on the Government to resolve the matter with Putco.

Meanwhile the minibus taxi industry has also asked the Government for subsidies, arguing that it provides one of the largest modes of transport in South Africa.

This matter is being studied by the Minister of Transport, Mr Mac Maharaj, but no decision had been taken so far, official sources disclosed yesterday.
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Taxi strike threat over bus subsidy rise

BY MANDELWA NTSHABE

The taxi industry believes it has been neglected by the Government and has called for an urgent meeting with Transport Minister Mac Maharaj to avert a possible national strike, following an 8% increase in bus subsidies from April 1.

Taxi organisations said the increase indicated how the Department of Transport "continued to favour the highly subsidised bus industry over the long-suffering taxi industry".

The increase meant buses would get about R90-million compared with R10-million for taxis.

This increase led the Lehalale Taxi Organisation (LTO) and the SA Long Distance Taxi Association (Salda) to boycott the national transport policy plenary session held at the weekend.

Salda said it did not want to be part of the process because it had not been consulted about the proposals in the Government's green paper.

The LTO accused Maharaj of "using and abusing the national taxi task team for his own political gain".

Spokesman Jacob Lodwala warned that "there are very serious problems awaiting the Government if the minister tries to determine our future".

SA National: Civic Organisation spokesman Dumisani Daniels said the subsidy problem would continue "unless commuters are relocated into areas near their jobs".

"Providing subsidies is only a short-term solution," he said.

Cape Town taxi organisations staged a march on Parliament on Friday in protest against the increased subsidies for buses.

On the same day, the national taxi task team met Maharaj to voice its anger over the bus subsidy increase.
Taxi industry set for battle

JOHANNESBURG: The taxi industry has called for an urgent meeting with Transport Minister Mac Maharaj to avert a possible national strike following an 8% increase in bus subsidy allocations from April 1.

Taxi organisations said the increase showed the Department of Transport "continues to advantage the highly subsidized bus industry against the long-suffering taxi industry."

The subsidy increase means the bus industry will get about R90 million compared to R10 million for the taxi industry.

The Lehelalele Taxi Organisation warned that "there are very serious problems awaiting the government if the minister goes unilaterally in trying to determine our future."
Putco’s fare hikes on
增加其票价10%。第二轮10%的上涨将于10月实行。

PUTCO will go ahead with its fare
increase on Friday, despite the
threat by commuters to boycott it
and seek alternative transport.

Putco managing director Mr Mike
Oldham said yesterday he had spoken
to different commuters’ groups to
explain reasons for the hike. The com-
pany “has announced that it will
increase its fares by 10 percent from
Friday. The second hike of 10 percent
will be introduced in October.

The South African National
Civic Organisation described the
new fares as “a reflection of a com-
plete disregard of the economic
problems” of the “poor.”

Sanco views Putco as being
“insensitive and naïve”. Sanco has
asked Putco to suspend the fare
increase until an “amicable” solution
had been reached. It called on the
company and the Minister of Trans-
port, Mr Mac Maharaj, to convene a
meeting to discuss the subsidy issue.

Oldham said he welcomed the
move, but indicated that the subsidy
issue was not the only reason. He also
cited the hike in the price of petrol,
diesel and vehicle maintenance as
some of the “burning issues”.

By Joshua Raboroko and Sapa
Eastern Cape wins first round in rail tariff row

PORT ELIZABETH — In what could amount to a substantial economic boost for the region, the Eastern Cape has gained solid ground in its struggle to gain equitable rail tariffs.

Proposals by a regional delegation met at a weekend session were unanimously accepted by the full plenary after six commissions (including transport and maritime) met in Gauteng to draw up a draft national transport document.

Leader of the Eastern Cape delegation, Port Elizabeth Chamber of Commerce and Industry CEO chamber division Kevin Wakeford said the delegation’s full recommendation had been included in the revised green paper.

Wakeford said this was a giant step forward for Port Elizabeth and East London. Despite being 400km to 500km closer to Gauteng, they have had to pay the same rail tariffs as the Western Cape. This has meant the two ports have remained underutilised.

East London has only feeder port status and has failed to attract international lines.

As a result the Eastern Cape cities have also been avoided by some foreign investors.

Cape Town’s rail tariffs were lower to enable Spoornet to compete with road haulers.

Wakeford said the Eastern Cape recommendation pointed out that “serious consideration” needed to be given to the rail tariff structure.

It said the principle of equity — based on economic principles — should be applied to ensure that no rail route drew benefits above another. The principle should be regulated until competition evolved between rail routes and operators.
Maritime Industry Winning Foreign Currency for SA

George Vonna
Mediation for taxi dispute under strain as one side withdraws

BY MANOLO MTHEMBU

Prospects to resolve the taxi dispute over the use of Rank 29 near Johannesburg's Park station have been dealt a heavy blow by the withdrawal of the Lebalule Taxi Organisation (LTO) from the mediation process.

This follows a deadlock on the procedure of last week's mediation meeting between LTO and the Federated Local and Long Distance Taxi Association (Felldta), forcing mediator Roger Odée to postpone the meeting.

"We are withdrawing until a suitable person, like a retired judge, is appointed to lead the mediation process which has lost direction," said LTO spokesman Jacob Ledwaba, alleging Felldta was controlling the process.

Felldta wanted to discuss a Northern Province incident in which one of their members, LP Mapholoa, was shot dead last Monday. LTO member Joseph Phoshoko was arrested for the shooting.

But LTO opposed the discussion on the grounds that the mediation process was set up to deal with matters in Gauteng.

Ledwaba said Felldta had "deliberately interfered with the agenda to undermine all participants."

"We are suspicious that this dirty trick was calculated and well-orchestrated with the intention to cause damage to all efforts of the mediation process," said Ledwaba.

He expressed unhappiness about the mediation process, saying the process had been protracted by "unnecessary" delays.

Felldta spokesman Paul Mametsa accused LTO of being "unfaithful", adding the Northern Province incident had a bearing on the meeting as "our members are being killed while we are negotiating."

Several meetings in the past had also to be postponed as organisations involved would either walk out or not turn up for meetings.
Bus operators 'must prepare to compete'

Theo Ravana

BUS companies not satisfied with the new subsidy system and who clamoured for the maintenance of the status quo should realise it was time to drop their dependency syndrome and be prepared to compete, Transport Minister Mac Maharaj said yesterday.

He told the SA Bus Operators' Association (Sabo) AGM in Pretoria that while some bus companies were not satisfied with the 8% interim increase in subsidies he announced last week, taxi operators were up in arms, complaining that the move was an insult to their industry.

The transport policy document set out the proposed framework for the provision of future bus commuter services on the basis of tendered contracts.

"We are convinced that greater efficiency can be brought into the system by means of tendered contracts," Maharaj said. "Your industry has for a number of years indicated support for the system, but it appears that every time we start moving in that direction, the industry shies away," Maharaj said.

He reminded the bus operators that he had asked them if they were prepared to co-operate in developing a new subsidy policy which would be accessible to smaller, emerging operators, and in which the playing fields would be levelled without setting pre-conditions before getting the co-operation.

He expected "firm and executable recommendations" regarding the few problem areas that still existed in the contract system.

"In a meeting with representatives from Sabo, trade unions and commuter organisations last month, I indicated that a partnership would be required between those rule players to assist in sieving the process through the transitional bumps," Maharaj said.

His announcement of the subsidy increases for 1996/97 last week was the first step in the direction of a general implementation of tendered contracts. "Thereafter, consideration will be given to a possible further increase based on each company's particular circumstances. This will be with the clear understanding that we will be moving towards tendered contracts to be concluded with each company this year. "It may be the last time subsidy increases will be handled on this basis."

At the end of the interim contract period, tenders would be invited for service.
ANC, IFP want Mdlalose to intervene after bus attack

Farouk Chothia

DURBAN — ANC and IFP leaders will today approach KwaZulu-Natal premier and security MEC Frank Mdlalose in a bid to persuade him to intervene in the KwaZulu-Natal province in support of law and order in Durban's Lindelani settlement after a Putco bus driver was shot yesterday by suspected IFP dissidents.

Putco KwaZulu-Natal manager Ricky Stevenson said a bus was fired at as it travelled in the vicinity of Lindelani early yesterday morning. Driver Christopher Zungu was injured after a bullet "skinned his head and ear". There were no passengers in the bus.

Stevenson said the incident had forced Putco to suspend its services to Lindelani. Putco had served an average 180 000 people a month on this route, and it contributed to about 20% of Putco's business in the province.

Putco MD Michael Oldham announced a week ago Putco planned to close all KwaZulu-Natal operations because of government's refusal to lift subsidies for the 1995/96 financial year. The unstable political situation in KwaZulu-Natal, coupled with the "disastrous" situation in Lindelani, had contributed to the decision.

Stevenson said Putco would resume operations on the Lindelani route only after the authorities gave the company a guarantee of safe passage. The SAPS had since early February been providing Putco with an escort. However, police had been unable to provide protection at the required level at the time that Zungu was shot because of their extended commitments.

Durban transitional metropolitan council executive committee chairman Obed Mlaha (ANC) announced at a news briefing that a multiparty delegation, including IFP leaders, would urge Mdlalose to bring the "criminality" to an end.

Mlaha said the violence was spilling into the city centre. Some Lindelani residents were now hijacking Durban Transport Management Board buses. An average of three board buses had been hijacked daily in the past two weeks, Mlaha said.

IFP south coast deputy publicity secretary and Durban councillor Anthony Grinker said the IFP would discuss the behaviour of its supporters at a national council meeting on March 9.

If IFP supporters were found to have been involved, they would be "dismissed" from the party, Grinker said.
Wage deal likely for taxi drivers

TAXI drivers' wages and working conditions may soon be regulated, as could those of security guards.

Lisa Señal, director of the Department of Labour's Minimum Standards Directorate, said a wage determination for the taxi industry and a labour order for the security sector was part of the Wage Board's programme, which Minister of Labour Tito Mboweni had approved last year.

However, the Wage Board had collapsed some time ago and had to be resuscitated.

Trade unions and organised business in the National Economic Development and Labour Council (Nedlac) had already agreed on new nominations to the Wage Board.

All that remained was for the Department of Labour to formally set up the structure. Ms Señal said this was likely to happen this month.

Current road transport laws are limited to particular areas of the country and exclude small employers. A wage determination in the Road Passenger Transport Act excludes employers who own fewer than 11 minibuses.

Taxi drivers and security guards are currently covered by the Basic Conditions of Employment Act, but this does not deal with minimum wages.

Earlier this month the Department of Labour released a Green Paper with proposals for revised minimum employment standards. The paper proposed that working hours for security guards drop from a 60-hour week to 48 hours a week.

Workers who now normally worked 46 and 48 hours a week should have the number reduced to 45 hours.

Overtime should drop to 10 hours a week, payable at one and half times the normal wage, and Sunday work should be paid at double the normal rate.

There were also proposals for an Employment Standards Commission to replace the Wage Board.

The Department of Labour has proposed that until the Green Paper proposals are refined into a new employment standards law later this year, the Wage Board should be resuscitated to deal with the 19 sectors of the economy, such as the taxi and security sectors, which are covered by wage determinations.

During February the government also announced a R14.9 million-a-year package to regulate the taxi industry.

This followed recommendations from a national taxi task team that the industry should be restructured into more formal business units to facilitate training and to get economic assistance.

The package includes a training programme to boost capacity in the taxi industry, economic aid through co-operatives based at petrol stations, and nine provincial offices to help organise the industry.

Taxi owners would be required to register, and the permit system would be changed to make it more manageable.
Bus boycott fails to materialise

The threat by the SA Commuter Organisation (Saco) to boycott Putco buses from today if the corporation's 10% price increase is not reversed failed to materialise early this morning.

Thousands of commuters in Soweto used the bus service as usual. Putco said any impact of the boycott would probably only be felt next week when passengers bought their weekly tickets.

Mike Oldham, managing director of Putco, said he hoped commuters would abandon their threats to strike in keeping with Transport Minister Mac Maharaj's appeal for restraint and understanding over the fare increases.

Saco has warned it would arrange alternative transport for bus commuters if Putco implemented the 10% rise, which comes into effect today.

The increase comes as a result of transport subsidy restructuring by the Government, which is likely to also mean a further escalation in fares later this year. Oldham said there had been no increases in fares last year, despite increases in wages, fuel, maintenance and vehicle servicing.

"Fares should have gone up by 43% if all these things are taken into account." - Staff Reporters.
Mass action threat over promise of 8% bus subsidy

JOHANNESBURG.—The taxi industry has threatened to embark on a nationwide mass action campaign culminating in a two-day strike to protest against the government's increase in bus subsidies.

John Ledwaba, Gauteng spokesman of the taxi component of the National Taxi Task Team (NTTT), said the taxi industry had decided to take a "firm stand against the unilateral decision taken by Transport Minister Mac Maharaj to increase bus subsidies by eight percent.

"We will meet the taxi industry leaders from the other provinces next week to finalise the mass action programme and decide on a further course of action," Mr Ledwaba said.

The taxi industry has also decided to boycott all further meetings of the transport policy review of the Department of Transport.

It also said it is unwilling to further participate in any of the meetings of the NTTT.

"This decision unanimously upholds taxi operators' rights to boycott as a fundamental human right when authorities disregard bilateral talks and take unilateral decisions," Mr Ledwaba said.

Earlier this week the taxi industry released a joint statement slamming the Minister of Transport's announcement of the eight percent increase in the bus subsidy.

"At a meeting between the taxi industry and the government on February 17 Minister of Transport Mac Maharaj indicated that the government of national unity inherited a bankrupt government from the past regime.

"Therefore, his department can only subsidise our (taxi) industry with R10 million, but hardly four days thereafter the minister approved giving R98 million to the Putco bus company.

The taxi industry accused Minister Maharaj of using the NTTT for his own political gain."
with rip-off banks

TAXI OWNERS HAVE THREATENED TO BLOCKADE THE CAPE TOWN IN A

MINISTER OF JUSTICE, D.

DEPUTY WITH BANKS OVER MANSION CHARGES.

/4/2/99

(331)
Taxi strike looms after bus subsidies increased

By WILLIAM-MERVIN GUMEDE

The taxi industry yesterday threatened to embark on a nationwide mass-action campaign culminating in a two-day strike to protest against the Government's increase in bus subsidies.

John Ledwaba, Gauteng spokesman for the taxi component of the National Taxi Task Team (NTTT), said the taxi industry had decided to take a stand against the unilateral decision by Transport Minister Mac Maharaj to increase bus subsidies by R1.2 billion.

"We will meet the taxi industry leaders from the other provinces next week to finalise the mass action programme and decide on a further course of action," Ledwaba said.

The taxi industry has also decided to boycott all further meetings of the transport policy review of the Department of Transport.

It also said it was unwilling to participate further in any of the meetings of the NTTT.

"This decision unanimously upheld taxi operators' rights to boycott as a fundamental human right when authorities disregard bilateral talks and take unilateral decisions," he said.

Earlier this week, the taxi industry released a joint statement slamming the minister of transport's announcement of the R3 billion increase in the bus subsidy.

"At a meeting between the taxi industry and the Government on February 17, Mac Maharaj indicated that the Government of National Unity inherited a bankrupt government from the past regime.

"Therefore, his department can only subsidise our (taxi) industry with R10 million, but hardly four days thereafter the minister approved giving R90 million to the Putco bus company.

"It shows again how the transport ministry continues to advantage the already highly subsidised bus industry against the long-suffering taxi industry.

"This move has taken us all by surprise and we need to reiterate to the minister that we are not going to tolerate this," the statement said.

The taxi industry accused Maharaj of using the NTTT for his own political gain and of negotiating in bad faith.

"If the minister and the NTTT go on unilaterally in trying to determine our future, there are going to be serious problems in the future," the statement read.

"While we are open for ongoing discussions with the Transport Department, we are confident that our concerns enjoy the support of the overwhelming majority in the taxi industry."

Ledwaba said the proposed mass action by the taxi industry could be reversed only if the minister meets the industry "very soon".

Mediation efforts over lucrative rank falter

By WILLIAM-MERVIN GUMEDE

Peace talks between the three rival taxi associations in the ongoing feud over the use of Park Station's lucrative rank 29 were derailed this week when one of the parties pulled out of the negotiations.

The rival organisations - the Lehlabe Taxi Organisation (LTO), the Federated Local and Long Distance Taxi Association (Felleta) and the South African Long Distance Taxi Association (Salokhe) - deadlocked at a meeting called to resolve the conflict over the Johannesburg rank.

Mediator Roger Oseko then decided to postpone the meeting after the two taxi operators could not agree on an agenda.

The LTO said it was withdrawing from the mediation process, citing difficulties with Oseko and delaying tactics from Felleta.

We are withdrawing until a suitable person, like a retired judge, is appointed to lead the mediation process, which has lost direction," said LTO spokesman Jacob Ledwaba.

He alleged that Oseko had been too lenient with the Felleta delegation and allowed Felleta to hold the mediation process to ransom.

At the meeting, Felleta insisted on discussing last week's shooting of L P Mabola, a Northern Province member of the organisation.

Joseph Phoshoko, alleged to be a LTO member, was arrested.

The LTO opposed the discussion on the grounds that it did not fall within the terms of reference of the meeting, which was set up to deal only with taxi violence in Gauteng.

Ledwaba said Felleta had "deliberately interfered with the agenda to undermine all participants."

"We are suspicious that this dirty trick was calculated and well orchestrated with the intention to cause damage to the mediation efforts."

Felleta spokesman Paul Mametsa blamed the LTO and accused it of being unfaithful, adding that the Northern Province incident had a bearing on the meeting because "our members were being killed while we were negotiating."

Wesley Mpewu, spokesman for Saloka, the other taxi organisation involved in the peace talks, defended Oseko's role in the mediation.

"The credibility of Oseko is beyond dispute, and Saloka can't see why he should be replaced," he said.

"Saloka views any suggestions that Oseko is biased towards any of the parties as untrue," he said.

Mpewu accused the LTO of straining the peace negotiations and of unwillingness to commit itself to resolving the taxi violence. "For the sake of bringing an end to the senseless killings and counter-killings, we would settle for any other credible mediator suggested by the LTO."

Mpewu said his organisation saw nothing wrong with the Felleta delegation at the meeting insisting on discussing the slaying of one of its members. "We (Saloka) want to sit down around the negotiating table to resolve the conflict," he said.

On Thursday night, LTO failed to arrive at a follow-up meeting that would have decided on a process to resume the peace negotiations.
CONCERNED: Richard Oliphant, the managing director of Phoenix.

**News**

Pluto calls for halt to boycott plans
Policing 'vital to taxi competition'

Theo Rawana

THE introduction of regulated competition which would allow taxis to bid for routes in the same way as buses would succeed only if there was strict law enforcement to regulate competition on the road, the SA Bus Operators' Association said.

In a paper spelling out the bus industry's response to the public transport policy review initiatives contained in the draft green paper on national transport policy, association vice-president Helen Gray said the ability of the taxi industry to gain access to the regulated competition for service provision would determine the long-term success of the policy.

"Key to the success of regulated competition is the issue of law enforcement. Not only must the current lawlessness be curbed, but law enforcement will be required to regulate competition on the road and to control operators," Gray said.

The draft document recommends that the public transport system be based on regulated competition. It says: "This implies competition for a route or network, and not competition on a route or network. The regulation will be in the form of a permission, contract or concession awarded in terms of a passenger transport plan and supported by strict law enforcement."

It says permission will be given only to privately owned or fully corporatised municipal and para-tertial bus companies and registered minibus operators.

Taxis could form legally registered co-operatives or companies, or be registered as associations. Taxi businesses could also compete for contracts from transport authorities.

"Financial and technical assistance will be offered to minibus taxis to enable them to obtain permission and/or contracts and to improve their economic viability."

Buses might get permission from provincial permit boards and might have to compete for contracts from a transport authority.

All transport operators will be encouraged and empowered to bid for contracts and concessions. "Contracts will be partitioned into manageable parcels to encourage bids by co-operatives comprising small, medium and micro enterprises," the document says.
Minibus taxi collisions increasing — Maharaj

More than 166 000 accidents in three years

CLIVE SAYYER
Political Correspondent

There have been more than 166 000 collisions involving minibus taxis in the past three years, with the figure increasing each year.

Most were because of too high speeds, lack of concentration, unsafe overtaking, overloading, fatigue or unroadworthy vehicles, Transport Minister Mac Maharaj told the national assembly.

In a written reply to a question by Farouk Cassim (IFP), Mr Maharaj said a task team of national, provincial and local officials had made detailed proposals for reforming the industry.

These proposals affected regulation of the industry, its formalisation and financing.

Other aspects investigated by the task team included lack of regulation, lack of skills — including driving skills — working conditions of drivers, and inadequate infrastructure — for example, shortage of stopping bays and inadequate ranks.

Mr Maharaj said the task team’s reports were aimed at putting it on the path towards greater order, professionalism and profitability.

“It is expected that these interventions will, through addressing the underlying causes of violence and intolerance, contribute significantly to the stabilisation of the minibus industry.”

Relying to a question by Piet Welgemoed (NP), Mr Maharaj said 3 025 drivers, 3 544 passengers and 4 473 pedestrians had died in road accidents last year.

Drivers seriously injured totalled 13 386, passengers 17 896 and pedestrians 11 558.

On the Beaufort West to Laingsburg “death road”, notorious for fatal accidents, 42 occupants of vehicles were fatally injured between January 1993 and August last year.

On the road from Beaufort West to Three Sisters, 10 occupants of vehicles were fatally injured between January 1993 and December last year.

Mr Maharaj said steps were being taken to reduce traffic accidents.
Bank denies taxi loan rip-off

"We ensure our rate is never above legal limit"

Staff Reporter
A LEADING bank has denied overcharging taxi owners and other clients on their interest.

Last week The Argus reported that a number of taxi drivers and associations had threatened to blockade Cape Town roads, alleging they were being ripped off by banks.

Standard Bank's national manager for motor finance, Henk Vosloo, said that while mistakes could occur, the bank had control mechanisms in place that made this almost impossible.

"We have long ago taken the necessary steps to ensure that our computer system will reject any interest rate entered which is above the maximum permitted by law. All agreements get loaded into the system immediately and even if there is an error of 0.125 percent, the programme will reject the data."

He said although the taxi industry was a high-risk operation for the bank, taxi owners were being charged the same interest rate levels as any other client.

"It is a high-risk segment of the industry with lots of bad debts, but it is also an industry we need and will look after. We handle them with a great deal of empathy as we know and understand the background."

Mr Vosloo said the bank had established a dedicated unit to look at claims relating to the recalculation of interest and that to date, no payouts had been made relating to the allegations of the taxi drivers.

"While there is always room for improvement in this business, our own investigations into the allegations revealed that no errors had been made.

"We are open for scrutiny and if any mistakes are found we will rectify them immediately, and even pay interest on the refunds," he said.

He urged taxi owners to go directly to the bank if they had any problems relating to the agreement they had signed, and he promised that the bank's staff would do everything in their power to explain all aspects of the contract to them.

Mr Vosloo said the bank held discussions with members of the Cape Amalgamated Taxi Association (Cata) on the issue and would continue its open-door approach in trying to address their concerns.

"There is no need to blockade streets to highlight their plight. "They must come in and speak to us, and I am sure the confusion about the recalculation of their interest rates would be sorted out," he said."
Taxi in Line for $80 Million Subsidy

60,000 Minibus Taxis Operate Illegally

Politics
Permits to control taxis in new plan

The number of permits would depend on the need estimated in terms of a passenger transport plan. Minibus taxi businesses would be able allowed to compete for contracts granted by transport authorities. Routes and networks would be based on existing operations, both legal and pirate. Financial and technical assistance would be offered to minibus taxi operators to enable them to get permits and contracts and to improve their economic viability.

Minibus taxi businesses would have the option of going into partnerships with bus operators. On bus operations, the green paper recommends that they should be privately owned, legal entities or full corporatised municipal or parastatal bus companies. Permission to operate would be decided by the provincial permit board.

Existing permits on subsidised routes would be converted into interim contracts. Special efforts would be made to encourage small, medium and micro enterprises in the bus transport industry.

On rail passenger transport, the report said all infrastructure, rolling stock and reserve land should be owned by a national transport authority. The deficit financing system for rail transport should be abolished and replaced with a concession system, ensuring more efficient use of funds.

The green paper recommends increased fiscal powers for provincial and local governments to augment national funds to urban and public transport. However, funding should be channelled through a single authority.

"This is to ensure that transport operations do not receive funds from more than one authority for offering the same service," the green paper states.

CLIVE SAWYER
Political Correspondent

PROPOSALS to control the unruly minibus taxi industry have been unveiled by Mac Maharaj, the national Minister of Transport.

Not yet government policy, the proposals are contained in a preliminary green paper on the transport industry. They are subject to change depending on further consultation.

The green paper, released yesterday, proposes regulating competition in the minibus taxi industry. This would mean formalising the industry and introducing measures to ensure its economic viability.

Minibus taxi operators could form legally registered businesses, for example co-operatives or companies, or become registered associations. These would have to get permission from a provincial permit board to operate on a route or network.
Tow truckers apologise for blockade

TOW truckers involved in this week's blockade of the N1 in Goodwood in peak-hour traffic have apologised to motorists they inconvenienced.

"We achieved what we wanted to, but on the other hand we had bad vibes from the motorists," said Frans Conradie, a committee member of the Cape Towing Association.

He said the incident would not be repeated.

The tow truckers blocked the N1 to publicise their demands to be allowed to listen to police radio frequencies to get early notice of road accidents.
IN DEFENCE OF THE HANSOM

Your article "The Big Black Hole" (Business February 23) on the taxi industry, is so wide of the mark, that it obliges me to take issue with you vigorously.

When the FM went to print the position was: the interim report of the National Taxi Task Team (NTTT) had been presented to me at a public event on December 6 1995 and I made it available to the public. Mincom (the structure representing the nine provincial MECs for transport and myself) indicated that it had considered the report at a special meeting held on January 12 1996. Its assessment and evaluation was the basis on which I took the matter to Cabinet on February 7 1996.

Cabinet informed the public that government’s response was a broad approval and that I was mandated to provide the detailed response, which I announced I would do at a plenary meeting of the taxi industry on February 17 1996.

All this and more was known to you even before you put pen to paper. Yet your article descends into denigrating the industry ("the industry...dominated by a coterie of terrorists, will continue to attract those seeking easy pickings...") pours scorn on the NTTT recommendations ("fuel will be added to the blazing row...discussion forums have given way to gun battles and terrorism wins the day"); is dismissive of government’s response and paints me as abumbling fool ("taxi blockade...but it’s not their fault, says Maharaj").

Hardly a serious analysis and commentary in our common search for solutions for an industry which serves 50% of our daily commuters and which is trapped in a spiral of violence and severe economic straits.

The interim recommendations of the NTTTT are the outcome of intensive consultations with all the stakeholders concentrated into a period of nine months and including 35 public hearings in all nine provinces.

It is a deeply inclusive exercise. The NTTTT is composed of nine representatives of the industry (one from each province), nine representatives from the three tiers of government and nine specialist advisers.

Why, you may ask, bother with all this inclusivity and deep-going consultation? First, effecting regulation and control becomes more feasible, effective and reduces reliance on policing if we draw the industry into finding the solutions.

Second, the majority of the industry are black, that is, part of the community which was previously never allowed any say in determining public passenger transport policy. Finally, as an industry serving the public (almost exclusively black commuters) it remains important that the commuters should play a role, which was eminently served by the public hearings.

Given that the NTTTT recommendations are the product of such an inclusive and thorough process it behoves us to evaluate them rigorously and constructively. This you fail to do.
R80-m Government subsidy for minibus-taxi industry

BY PATRICK BULGER
Political Correspondent

Cape Town – The Government will make R80-million available over the next two years to assist the minibus taxi industry. Transport Department director-general Ketso Gordhan said yesterday.

Speaking at the launch of the department’s Green Paper on National Transport Policy, Gordhan said details of the funding were still being finalised in negotiations with the Department of Finance.

The capital guarantee fund would channel assistance to taxi operators in two ways. It would attempt to reduce interest rates being paid by taxi operators on capital goods from prime plus 8% to the prime rate. The rest would go towards setting up and assisting taxi co-operatives to establish petrol stations, spares and maintenance shops.

Introducing the green paper, Transport Minister Mac Maharaj said a policy of “regulated competition” would be introduced for the road transport system. This included measures to formalise the taxi industry.

Gordhan said the 70 000 legal and 60 000 illegal taxis operating on the country’s roads indicated the extent of the demand for road transport. Taxis would, however, have to be registered and would have to apply for permission to operate certain routes.

“As far as is possible in terms of the transport plan, the determination of routes networks will be based on existing operations, including legal and pirate operators. Financial and technical assistance will be offered to minibus taxis to enable them to obtain permission and/or contracts, and to improve their economic viability.”

“Minibus-taxi businesses may apply for permission and/or contracts either on their own or in partnership with bus operators,” the green paper says.

The system of issuing bus permits on a permanent basis would be phased out over the next three years and existing permits will be translated into interim contracts.

Maharaj said the green paper was the result of an intensive process of negotiations and consultation over the past year.

He said transport was an important catalyst to development and ranked second only to education in this role.

“The transport sector must be outward looking, shaped by the needs of society in general, of passenger and goods customers in particular, and of the economy that transport has to satisfy,” he said.
Minibus taxi industry crisis 'has been defused'

CAPE TOWN — The crisis in the minibus taxi industry, after Transport Minister Mac Maharaj's announcement of an 8% rise in bus subsidies for the new financial year, had been defused, national taxi task team chairman Dipak Patel said yesterday.

Briefing Parliament's transport committee, Patel said the threats of national blockades and strikes had been averted after talks and much "diplomatic" activity. However, about 60 taxi drivers formed a blockade in the Germiston CBD yesterday. Police arrested five people while removing it.

The dispute regarding routes is between the Kekeng People's Taxi Association, Greater Germiston Taxi Association and the Vaalortunus Taxi Association.

Patel said that while no increase in the bus subsidy had been granted last year, the increase this year was granted because of the move towards a tender contract system for public transport.

In future, bus companies would have to enter into interim contracts when subsidies were increased. These would last for about three years before the new open tender contract system for routes and services was started. Efforts to formalise and restructure the minibus taxi industry were being made, but were hampered by a lack of a comprehensive database.

Training to improve skills was an important aspect of the process and R20m had been made available for this over the next two years.

Measures to regulate and control the industry included cleaning up existing permits. This was being done voluntarily, Patel said. — Sapa.
Ultimatum
for taximen

By Dan Fuphe

The Germiston City Council has given feuding taxi
groups in Katlehong, Thokoza and Vosloorus on the East
Rand three days to resolve their differences or face com-
petition from a municipal bus service.

Council chairman Mr Oupa Modikoane issued the
ultimatum after a four-hour meeting and said he was dis-
appointed by the unwillingness of the Germiston and
Vosloorus taxi associations to reach a compromise on
routes.

He said discussions between the Germiston, Boks-
burg and Alberton councils to look at restoring munici-
pal bus services in the suburbs were in the pipeline.

Meanwhile, the Vosloorus-Spruitview taxi blockade
which involved about 200 minbuses and left hundreds of
commuters stranded on Monday appears to be over.
Taxi fare hike looms large

By Joshua Raboroko

THOUSANDS of taxi commuters, already reeling under the escalating cost of living, should prepare themselves for an increase in taxi fares from next month, according to transport organisations.

South African Black Taxi Association treasurer Mr Enos Makena said yesterday there was a strong possibility fares would go up after the Minister of Finance Mr Chris Liebenberg announced an increase in the price of petrol and diesel.

In his 1996/7 Budget Liebenberg announced that petrol and diesel prices are to increase by 3 cents a litre from next month.

Makena said different taxi organisations would hold meetings with commuters in various regions to decide new fares because "we have not increased our fares for the past three years."

"Our fares will definitely have to go up, whatever opposition we have to face this year. Civic associations normally protest when we increase our fares, but we hope they become sympathetic to our problems this time," he said.

Makena said unlike buses, taxis were not subsidised. "Poor taximea have to pay high prices for vehicles, tyres, spares and general maintenance. The price of petrol and diesel worsens the situation.

"We are also feeling the pinch and unless we increase fares we will never be able to run our business," said Makena. Taxi commuters have in the past accused the taxi organisations of unilaterally increasing fares without consulting the passengers.

A taxi commuter Mr Sam Mkhize said most blacks, who were still reeling under the soaring cost of living, would be hard hit if taxi fares were increased. Employers would have to increase their employees' salaries, he said.
Putco sees its earnings halved

Patrick Wadula

BUS company Putco’s earnings more than halved to R4.8m in the six months to December from R10.6m a year before following government’s refusal to increase passenger subsidies for the 1995/96 fiscal year and the continuing deterioration of its KwaZulu-Natal operations.

Share earnings came to 8.2c from 40.1c previously, while an interim dividend of 8.6c (17c) was declared.

Chairman and CE Albino Carleo said government’s announcement to the bus industry in December that it was unable to raise subsidies to bus commuters had caused serious problems.

“The company was confronted by, firstly, the holiday period and secondly, limited time to correct the adverse financial position with which it was faced.

“Putco was unable to implement any measures which could have improved the first six months’ results.”

The company’s “multi-faceted action plan” included a decision to raise fares by 10% from March 1.

Transport Minister Mac Maharaj announced last month that 1996/97 subsidies would increase by 8%. As a result of this and the 10% fare hike, it was decided that the annual fare increase would be postponed to October 1.

Carleo said the KwaZulu/Natal operation had been operating at a deficit for some time. Putco was discussing final alternatives with various stakeholders to determine if there were any viable solutions, although the prospects of finding an acceptable solution were very limited, unless special subsidies were received.

Putco’s intention was to “minimally disrupt” bus transport in the province while the required actions were being implemented. About 600 employees would be adversely affected and 220 buses were involved.

Revenues in the review period edged up 4.4% to R281.5m, but operating profit plunged 70.7% to R4.7m after operating costs rose to R276.7m from R223.4m.

Interest received rose 72.7% to R3.4m, while a tax bill of R3.2m (R7m) left taxed profit at R5m from R10.6m.

Carleo said Putco expected to spend R55.8m (R57.7m) on major chassis and body overalls in the current financial year, while the cost of new buses purchased would amount to about R33.3m (R18m).
One killed, 25 hurt in taxi violence

CT 20/3/96
DALE GRANGER
STAFF WRITER

MONTHS of peace between the city's volatile taxi factions ended last night when running gun battles erupted all over the Cape Flats.

One man was killed and up to 25 commuters were injured.

Police spokesman Captain Wicus Holzhausen said last night the shootings flared in Guguletu, Khayelitsha, Nyanga and Philippi at taxi ranks and on routes.

Police were investigating the possibility that rival taxi groups Cata and Codet had resumed their war for control of the routes.

At Groote Schuur Hospital nine injured men were treated with gunshot wounds to the neck, chest, back, stomach, arms and legs. Seven were in serious condition.

At Khayelitsha Day Hospital a nursing sister said 25 people had been injured.

Tygerberg Hospital reported treating one man for a wound in the foot.

Speaking from the trauma unit at Groote Schuur last night Mr Clarence Mtendukane, 24, of Claremont, who was shot in the hand, described the terror of commuters in the Cata taxi he was travelling in down Lansdowne Road between Guguletu and Philippi.

He said they screamed as they came under fire and fled from a hail of bullets.

"Another taxi came past and bullets just came flying through the window," said Mtendukane.

"The driver hit the brakes, the taxi stopped and people just fled for their lives. I don't know how many people were wounded."

Mr John Mdoyakae, 22, said he was near traffic lights at Site C taxi rank in Khayelitsha when gunmen leapt out of a taxi and opened fire. He was hit in the arm.

Another man identified as Sibota described how the attackers fired at almost point-blank range into the taxi he was travelling in between Lansdowne East and Khayelitsha.

He was shot in the side but was too weak to give more details from hospital last night.

A weak Mr Ntlozi Iliani said he too was shot in the side.
Joint venture creates black-owned truck dealership.

By ROY COLAYNE

Pretoria — Africa Truck & Bus, the first black commercial-vehicle dealership in South Africa, has been created through a joint venture between MAN Truck & Bus, Fabcos, Nafso and Boabab Solid Growth.

Wolf Meurer, the executive chairman of MAN and deputy chairman of the joint venture, said MAN was overseeing the venture under a management agreement. He said that MAN Germany

and MAN South Africa were contractually committed to comprehensive training courses.

The aim was that a professional dealership for MAN products would be run and owned by black South Africans within the next three to five years.

“By that time it is expected that annual sales of between R200 million and R250 million will be achieved in Gauteng through sales to government, parastatal and municipal organisations,” he said.

Meurer said the present shareholding of the joint venture was 30 percent each held by Fabcos, Nafso and MAN, and 10 percent held by Boabab Solid Growth, an investment company listed on the JSE, which was helping to finance the joint venture.

Meurer said total shareholding in the joint venture consisted of 1,000 shares of 100c each. MAN’s 30 percent shareholding would also be sold at par value.

“MAN has put its money where its mouth is, and our South African partners are getting their shares at nominal value without any premium or goodwill,” he said.

Africa Truck & Bus has rented the former MAN Isando premises and has taken over its retail sales of trucks, buses, parts and service.

Africa Truck & Bus will also offer an opportunity to enhance owner-driver schemes whereby entrepreneurs will be encouraged to establish and develop their own businesses.
Taxi peace talks flounder again

Hopes of getting the taxi peace talks, which ran aground three weeks ago, back on track faded this week when the warring parties failed to pitch up for a meeting intended to entice them to return to the negotiation table — sparking fears of renewed taxi violence.

Roger Oxlee, mediator in the feud between the Federation of Local and Long Distance Taxi Association, Lehalale Taxi Association (LTO) and the SA Long Distance Taxi Association over the busy Johannesburg Park Station's rank 29, has called on the provincial government and local authorities to be part of the mediation process.

"The Greater Johannesburg Metropolitan Council, the provincial safety and security departments and the transport department, which regulates the taxi routes, should help resolve the conflict," Oxlee said.

The LTO yesterday remaining adamant that it would not return to the negotiation table unless Oxlee was replaced by a mediator of its choice.

Oxlee, however, was cautiously optimistic that the LTO could still be brought back to the mediation process and help bring the conflict to an end. — William-Mervin Gumede
Commuters shun taxis after weekend violence

GOLDEN Arrow Bus Services provided an extra 16 buses on Khayelitsha routes during peak hour yesterday morning as many commuters shunned minibus taxis after Sunday's violence in which two people were shot dead and five wounded.

A police spokesman said the situation in the townships was calm, but police were still being deployed at a number of taxi ranks.

A Golden Arrow spokesman said demand in other areas, including Nyanga and Guguletu, had been "a little more manageable".

Hundreds of commuters also used train services.

In Durban, police and the army were out in full force and coils of barbed wire were placed at potential flashpoints.

In Port Elizabeth, where four people were killed in taxi feud-related violence at the weekend, taxi services were suspended indefinitely.

Among the victims was Eastern Province Hockey Board founding member and former teacher Ms Grace Peterice, 75, who was hit by a stray bullet.

Thousands of township residents were bused to work after mayor Mr Nceda Faku said taxi organisations would be sidelined until they had sorted out their differences.

The ANC-Cosatu-SACP alliance said "people have decided enough is enough" and they can't stand being victims of a war they are not part of." — Sapa, Own Correspondent.

See page 6.
Thousands shun taxis after weekend battles

Own Correspondent

PORT ELIZABETH — Thousands of township residents were bussed into work yesterday after Port Elizabeth mayor Noebu Faku announced that taxi transport would be avoided until feuding organisations sorted out their differences.

The ANC-Cosatu-SACP alliance announced the move on Sunday night, saying "people have decided enough is enough, and they can't stand being victims of a war they are not part of".

Taxi ranks were deserted yesterday and police and the army were out in full force. Barbed wire was placed at points around Port Elizabeth in readiness for a possible flare-up of violence.

By late afternoon no incidents had been reported after a bloody weekend which left four dead.

A police spokesman said the situation was under control.

Among the four people killed in the weekend feud was Eastern Province Hockey Board founding member and former Port Elizabeth teacher Grace Fredericks, 75, who was hit by a stray bullet while visiting a friend near the Durban Road taxi rank in Korsten. The other victims were an unidentified 32-year-old man, who was shot dead in Strand Street, a man who was killed in Sidwell and a commuter who was killed on the north-south freeway.

The battles began on Saturday when a man was shot dead at the Strand Street rank and commuters injured in the crossfire between rival groups. A man was shot dead in Sidwell after being chased by taxi drivers.

Sapa reports from Cape Town that Golden Arrow Bus Services laid on extra buses in Khayelitsha, Nyanga and Guguletu yesterday after commuters shunned minibuses following Sunday's taxi violence in which two people were shot dead and five injured. Others were killed earlier in the week. Hundreds of commuters also used trains.
Taxi routes to be put out to tender

PUBLIC transport routes are to be identified and put out to tender and successful operators will get subsidies to ply their exclusive routes.

It appears that, for the first time, taxi operators will be in line for commuter subsidies.

This emerged from a report to the Cape Metropolitan Council at its monthly meeting yesterday. Councillors passed the report without debating it.

Two Metro councillors, Ms Rhodes Southgate and Mr Nic Bischoff, and the acting chief engineer Mr Tony Murray, went to a Transport Policy Review workshop at the end of last month at the Rand Afrikaans University.

They reported that the government’s new transport policy “is in the final stages of formation.”

The government’s new proposals had been released at two conferences at the end of last month — one at RAU, the other in Pretoria at a bus operators’ association gathering.
Sweet future for fruit and vegetable exports

By Jeremy Woods

A LEADING American corporation, Trans-Fresh, who specialise in making rarified air to keep perishable fruit fresh during transportation, is making a major impact on Western Cape agricultural exports.

Trans-Fresh came to the Western Cape a year ago and targeted deciduous fruit and vegetable shippers as likely users of their technology, which involves controlling the temperature and atmosphere levels inside a container.

And the move into the local agricultural market is beginning to pay off.

"In the first year of business we have easily beaten our budgets and now that exporters have experienced the improved quality our air control systems bring to their fruit during transportation, the business looks set for an exciting future," says Dr Malcolm Dodd, managing director of Trans-Fresh in Cape Town.

The key to the Trans-Fresh operation is its preservation of fruit and vegetables during a long export journey.

This is done by sealing a container with plastic sheeting and installing a portable computer with a specially developed software programme to regulate the flow of oxygen through the container during the voyage.

"When fresh fruit and vegetables are harvested they continue to breathe, consuming oxygen and emitting carbon dioxide. By using our computerised Tectrol system to control the atmospheric components, the respiration rate is lowered and the product maintains its quality over longer periods of time," says Dr Dodd.

An important factor in this operation is finding the right rate of respiration for the right product.

One hurdle to installing the Trans-Fresh system is its cost.

"It increases shipping costs by about 25 percent a container of goods and this is obviously a significant added cost that shippers have to contemplate," says Dr Dodd.

"However, the significant growth of the business over the last year suggests local exporters are prepared to pay this price so long as using our system allows better prices to be obtained for the goods transported."

But there is another interesting facet to the use of Trans-Fresh, who operate in a number of other food-exporting countries.

"So long as the system is being used by competing countries to their advantage, major fruit and vegetable exporting countries like South Africa will be forced to look at it," Dr Dodd says.

"There has been such a range of inquiries from growers that Trans-Fresh has now opened a small laboratory close to Cape Town harbour.

"We are running a series of tests on various products to see how they respond to our air control systems. Once growers see the effect of our methods on their produce here, they feel more confident about using them during export."
GROWING AIRPORT: Increased lines of aircraft at Cape Town International Airport bear witness to the growing importance of the city as a destination. The number of passengers is expected to double by the year 2000.

Airport gets ready for the year 2000

Big changes on way as millions more fly in

Cape Town International has been rated as the sixth busiest in Africa, handling 3.2 million passengers during 1995, with some seven million passengers expected to be handled by the year 2000.

Over the past two years regular passengers will have noticed a vast improvement in the airport's facilities. Major alterations are to commence shortly with the upgrading of the international terminals, which will in the short term be able to cope with current traffic increases.

These improvements are not part of the long term development plans for the airport, but will ease passenger handling in the short term.

Passengers entering the international departures terminal will proceed up escalators to the first floor where they will pass through check-in and immigration.

An enlarged ground floor area will allow for a more spacious departure lounge capable of handling sufficient passengers for five simultaneous departures of jumbo jets.

Airline offices are to be moved to the first floor allocating more area of the ground floor to passenger services.

The recently opened world standard first and business class lounges have been well received by travellers and offer full phone, fax and secretarial services. Passengers have also complemented the new duty free shop and VIP lounges.

The international arrivals hall will also receive an upper floor while new carousels will assist arriving passengers with the speedier retrieval of luggage.

A recently created area for the departure of pilgrims has been welcomed by the Muslim community.

A special events terminal is to be built shortly according to Henrie Taljaard, manager of Cape Town Airport.

This facility will not only cater for pilgrims but will also be used for other events.

However, as the terminal will primarily serve the Muslim community, the Airports Company has had consultations with the community with regard to their own architects designing the project and implementing their ideas to suit their needs.

This terminal will assist in taking pressure off the international terminals as friends and families of the pilgrims will be able to greet them in the new terminal.

The green light has been given for a railway service to be established from the airport to the centre of Cape Town.

Mr Taljaard sees this rail service as not only serving airport passengers and workers, but hopes to draw in commuters from Somerset West and surrounding areas who would park their cars at the airport and take the 15-minute train journey into the city.

A multi-storey parking garage is to be built as well as a hire car filling station which will cater for exotic car rentals.

Plans are well advanced for the long term development of the airport and final proposals are presently being studied by the Airports Company.

Proposals include the establishment of a new central terminal with departure and arrival areas extending on either side.

Enlarged tarmac areas extending to a new set of buildings, the creation of an additional runway and redesigning the airport to cater for the expected increase in passenger and flight movements is part of the long term plan.

The Airports Company has already put in motion plans to cope with the 2004 Olympics should the games be awarded to Cape Town, and according to Mr. Taljaard the facilities will be in place and fully functional before 2004.
Metrorail to clean up its act and woo passengers

Metrorail had embarked on an $800m programme to clean up and upgrade stations, clean, paint and generally repair coaches as part of a campaign to woo back passengers lost to other modes of passenger transport, Metrorail Services said yesterday.

CEO Mafika Mkhwanazi said besides the “commuter flight” triggered off by train violence in the 1980s and 90s, the lack of cleanliness at stations and in coaches, and the general breakdown of facilities, had done nothing to win passenger confidence.

Market research conducted last year moved him to start preaching the “Back To Basics” campaign, by which the organisation would undergo a process of soul-searching and appraisal and try to win back passengers.

“The demands from commuters are clear: Clean trains, clean stations, punctuality and safety. This is a focused campaign to get all our employees, all our divisions and all our regions to strive to be competitive as a transport organisation. It is also a drive to focus on the commuter by ensuring that our services are user-friendly and grant true value for money,” Mkhwanazi said ticket examiners and barrier attendants were taught to be polite and helpful and security was stepped up. “We have employed a multi-pronged strategy, including commuter participation, community policing, better training of guards as well as hi-tech equipment to ensure the safety of passengers and Metrorail property.

“We are setting up a computer system that will analyse the trends of crime so that we can react to them speedily. Also, we are setting up a close circuit TV camera network on stations. The pilot project, in Dube, is already running,” said Mkhwanazi.

Meanwhile, the SA Rail Commuter Corporation donated R460 000 to 36 community organisations as part of its annual social responsibility programme. Strategic planning and communication GM Connie Nkosi said the organisations were a vibrant non-government, organisational and community assistance sector which SA should be grateful for.
Taxi factions agree on ranks

A MAJOR breakthrough has been brokered among the warring Port Elizabeth taxi factions.

Spokesperson for the three main local taxi organisations Howard Hans said taxi bosses on Friday signed an agreement to use all ranks together.

Hans said the agreement stipulated that 17 ranks would be overseen by management committees comprising the three organisations. Two marshalls would supervise each rank under strict supervision by the management committees.

A disciplinary committee has also been put into place. However, the taxi bosses still have to inform their drivers of the agreement. — Sapa
Police have begun a major crackdown on a renegade splinter taxi group which they believe is behind the latest flare-up in the long-running taxi war in the Western Cape and have so far arrested nine men.

The arrests followed intensive investigations by the National Priority Crimes Investigation unit after the taxi dispute flared up again this week, leaving two people dead and at least seven injured after gunmen attacked taxis in several incidents in the Peninsula.

Police also seized three firearms on Thursday, bringing to 20 the number of weapons confiscated during the past week. The firearms will be tested ballistically to ascertain whether they were used in attacks on taxis.

Five of the suspects were arrested on Thursday and are due to appear in court tomorrow. Police said five men suspected of being ringleaders in the taxi conflict fled the Western Cape after the latest attacks but were arrested when they returned to the Peninsula earlier this week.

Negotiations to end the violence and to regulate the taxi industry were continuing, but as long as there was disagreement about ranks and routes, the process would be hampered by ongoing conflict, said provincial commander of intelligence co-ordination for the National Crime Intelligence Service, Colonel Gordon Brookbanks.

Col Brookbanks said “fringe elements”, who represented “a very, very small part of the vast industry”, were responsible for the violence and the police were focusing their investigations on these men.

He said the conflict in the taxi industry in the Cape had “peaked”, leading to major outbreaks of violence on three occasions.

The first major violence took place between October and December 1994, followed by a renewed outbreak in January this year.

This week’s violence was the third sustained period.

Each time arrests were made, it was found that “similar individuals were the key role players in the violence.”

The suspects arrested in December 1994 and those arrested in January were released on bail and police were now trying to ensure that the latest men arrested were not released.

Unrest Monitoring and Awareness Committee (UMAC) spokesman Mark Jansen said it was an “open secret” that the two warring factions, Cata and Codeta, each had their own hit squads.

The latest conflict was apparently sparked off by an accord signed in January between Cata and Codeta in which it was agreed to close an illegal rank in Wynberg used by a Codeta affiliate, Lingcross, said Mr Jansen.

“Cata” was dissatisfied with taxis being able to operate on any route and wanted the “gap-gap” system, which meant “you load one, I load one”, while the conflict was being resolved, he said.

Despite the January agreement, all the parties were not honest in their allocation of ranks and routes to specific taxis, and violence flared again.

Yesterday no Lingcross taxis were operating.
Laser Transport

DOWN ANOTHER CUL-DE-SAC

Technical (share-price chart) analysts are likely to say the prognosis for Laser’s price is down.

Over the past four years it has built a

ACTIVITIES: Transportation and storage of household and commercial goods, machine moving and rigging.

CONTROL: Directors S4, S6.

CHAIRMAN: P. R. S. Thomas. MD: A. C. P. Cotterell.

CAPITAL STRUCTURE: 18m ords. Market capitalisation: R49,5m.

SHARE MARKET: Price: 275c. Yields: p/e ratio, n/a; cover, n/a. 12-month high, 500c; low, 220c. Trading volume last quarter, 630 000 shares.

Year to September 30 '92 '93 '94 '95
ST debt (Rm) 16.2 6.5 43.1 28.2
LT debt (Rm) 9.5 15.4 68.4 83.0
Debt/equity ratio 0.29 0.86 2.99 1.26
Shareholders’ interest 0.31 0.31 0.18 0.19
Net & leasing cover 3.9 2.2 1.49 (0.1)
Return on cap (%) 1.2 1.9 6.3 6.0
Turnover (Rm) 214.2 191.3 204.1 203.3
Pre-int profit (Rm) 0.7 6.7 16.3 17.8
Pre-int margin (%) 0.01 5.6 8.0 6.8
Earnings (c) (2.8) (3.5) (1.7) 0
Tangible NAV (c) 1.92 2.34 4.62 0.74

FINANCIAL MAIL - MARCH 22 - 1996

large “head-and-shoulders” formation. This would be seen as the precursor of a substantial fall in the share price which, if it penetrates the resistance level at 250c, could tumble from 275c now to an extreme low around 150c.

From a technical analyst’s viewpoint, the share is at a critical point. The fundamentals indicate a similar conclusion.

The slight improvement in operating income for 1995 could be cause for guarded optimism. But that is where it ends. Interest payments absorbed more than the year’s profit.

Outgoing chairman Peter Thomas makes it clear that while the household removals division had a satisfactory year and, by implication, were profitable, Mainline Carriers, bought in early 1994 for R11m, produced disastrous losses.

This acquisition, plus the outright purchase of certain properties used by the group, propelled the debt-to-equity ratio to an unacceptable high.

Clearly, Mainline’s contribution was expected to click in much earlier, to at least counterbalance interest payments on borrowings. Instead, its high losses have caused a crisis for the company.

The pre-tax loss was R315 000. It is a crisis because, having come to the market with a successful R36m rights issue at a share price of 450c in October/November 1994 — in spite of a dubious track record since the late Eighties — the company is in no position to do this again now it urgently needs to reduce debt.

Other ways will have to be found to achieve this. Assets are likely to be sold — unless Mainline can be turned around in a hurry and good times continue for the core removal business.

Thomas says: “a major focus will be on the continuance of overhead cost reduction and the rationalisation of operating divisions and functions to more productive levels.”

Laser is essentially in transport, a tough, competitive and capital-intensive business that can only be successful if its assets can be made to produce returns considerably greater than the cost of capital — which Laser has not done for some time. Perhaps the arrival of former Wooler CE Tony Williamson on the Laser board will provide some of the acumen to achieve this.

Until results provide evidence the company has improved its balance sheet and its ability to produce sustainable and growing profits, the share should be avoided. Gerald Harshon
Easter taxi blockade will not be allowed, warn authorities.

Some beaches around the city were closed to

the city to reduce the number of
due to the Easter weekend.

Easter is expected to

be busy with a large number of
tourists visiting.

The

zone around the

beaches was

closed
to

taxi services.

However,

the

authorities

warned

that

the

blockade

would

not

be

allowed.
PORT ELIZABETH taxi operators would know today whether the community boycott, launched last week in reaction to taxi violence, had been lifted, a local ANC source said yesterday.

The boycott began when Port Elizabeth mayor Noxubhe Fuku announced that taxi transport would be avoided until funding organisations sorted out their differences.

The ANC-Cosatu-SACP alliance said "people have decided enough is enough."

The source said yesterday that the community would march through KwaZakhele this morning to a rally where an announcement would be made on whether the boycott had been lifted.

Meanwhile, Durban traffic chief Peter Noppe said a taxi group, threatening to stage a blockade during the Easter weekend would face the full force of the law if they acted on their threat.

Meanwhile, Sapa reported that two men were killed and three wounded in a shoot-out in Nyanga, Cape Town, in an incident believed to be linked to taxi violence.
Two killed in taxi shoot-outs

**ART 3/4/96 (332)**

Staff Reporter

Taxi violence flared up again today, claiming two lives, in spite of a strong police presence on the taxi routes and combating taxi-related crimes being declared a national priority.

In two separate incidents only minutes apart, a driver and passenger were killed and two others were injured, police spokesman Wicus Holtzhausen announced.

At Middestad Mall in Bellville at 10:30am a Codeta minibus taxi was fired upon by a bystander and the driver of the vehicle was killed. There were no other injuries.

Just 15 minutes later, gunmen standing in the street opened fire on a taxi that had stopped in Lansdowne Road, Nyanga. One passenger died and two were injured. No arrests have been made.
Taxi fares hit by petrol hike

Johannesburg: Today's eight cents a litre increase in the petrol price would add to the suffering of taxi commuters who would have to pay higher fares, Leitshile Taxi Organisation spokesman Mr Jacob Ledwaba said yesterday.

The R40-million financial assistance package promised to the taxi industry by Transport Minister Mac Maharaj from April 1 would cost the government nothing because of the petrol increases, he said:

"We have the government giving with one hand but taking everything they give with the other."" - Sapa
Taxi chiefs renew their peace pact

HOURS after renewed taxi violence claimed two more lives, leaders of Cape Town's main taxi organisations, Gafa and Codeta, have again declared peace.

Only 24 hours after an earlier cease-fire, there were shootings at taxi ranks early yesterday in Bellville and Nyanga.

A meeting was urgently called by Western Cape Transport Minister Leonard Ramplakane and the Centre for Conflict Resolution to find out what had gone wrong with the peace agreement.

During the two-and-a-half-hour meeting last night, emotions ran high as the taxi organisations blamed each other and the police for the outbreaks of violence.

Internal struggles within Codeta seemed to be another obstacle in the peace process. But the parties finally agreed to hold a press conference, at which leaders again confirmed their commitment to peace.

In a show of solidarity they called on members to stop the violence and asked commuters to return to the taxis. Another meeting was arranged for 9am today.
In April last year, he was arrested in the Eastern Cape in connection with an attempted murder. He is on bail pending his trial.

In the meantime, the peace talks between the taxi groups and the police continue. The South African Police Service (SAPS) and the taxi associations have agreed to meet again to discuss the ongoing conflict.

However, the tensions between the taxi operators and the police have not subsided. The taxi operators, who have been protesting against the police's heavy-handedness, have called for a peaceful resolution to the conflict.

Meanwhile, the SAPS have promised to monitor the situation closely and to take appropriate action to ensure the safety of all parties involved.

The peace talks are a positive step towards resolving the conflict, but more needs to be done to ensure lasting peace in the area.
Ex-MK cadre named in taxi war

Cops say crimes form violent chain

POLICE have linked some suspects in ongoing taxi violence to attacks in both the Eastern and Western Cape, and some of the suspects are believed to be members of the former liberation armies.

A key suspect in both provinces is Teenage Siphiwe Naki.

On Thursday Western Cape police spokesman Capt John Sterrenberg confirmed Naki was awaiting trial in Pollsmoor Prison on one count of murder and another of vehicle hijacking.

Eastern Cape police say Naki, said to be a former member of Umkhonto we Sizwe, is a suspect in taxi violence. In April last year he was arrested in the Eastern Cape in connection with an attempted murder at the Queenstown taxi rank.

Naki has been linked to the Umdedo taxi association in the Eastern Cape and to Umdedo’s ally, the Cape Amalgamated Taxi Associations, in the Western Cape.

Naki was also arrested in Lady Frere in connection with the murder of taxi operator Mickey van Heerden. He failed to appear in court on his Eastern Cape cases, jumped bail and fled to Cape Town.

Western Cape police claim Naki was a key member of a Western Cape vehicle hijacking syndicate, believed to be led by Andile Joseph Mladlane, whose members were linked to the Pan Africanist Congress and its former military wing, the Azanian Peoples Liberation Army.

Police have arrested 14 members of this gang since February and all are in custody.

Linked

Police believe the gang is also closely linked to taxi-related attacks.

Eastern Cape police are also looking for Simphiwe Ngqusha, who faces charges with Naki in connection with van Heerden’s murder.

Border Allied Taxi Association member Peterson van Heerden, believed to be related to the late Mickey van Heerden, faces charges of attempted murder in a case in which he allegedly retaliated to the attacks linked to Naki.

Peterson, also known as Zithulele Seluma, has three armed robbery convictions and was last month sentenced to three years in jail for possession of an unlicensed firearm. He is out on bail pending appeal.
Taxis clash at station rank
Council to crack down on city taxis

MR Arthur Wienburg succeeded yesterday in having a resolution cracking down on the taxi industry passed by the City Council.

But fellow councillor Mr Fred Carneson of the Communist Party said Wienburg was "hitting the industry on the head with a sledgehammer" with his motion. Without the taxi industry, the working class would struggle to get to work, or from one place to another, he said.

Wienburg asked that a sub-committee report on appointing a delegation to approach Minister of Transport Mac Maharaj to urge him to review transport legislation.

He proposed that the local road transport board revoke all radius permits and issue route permits in their place.

He also wants no annual vehicle licences to be renewed or ownership transfers to go through until all outstanding fines are paid.
Taxi forum to be launched

Staff Reporter 12/4/96

THE Wynberg Transport Forum, a body that will implement a programme of self-regulation and self-management for the Wynberg taxi rank, will be formally launched tomorrow.

The occasion will also mark the official opening of the police information centre at the landmark thatched cottage near Wynberg station.

Forum spokesmen Paul Siebritz and Anwar Begg said all community organisations and Wynberg residents were invited to attend the opening that would also feature the Habibia Band and a church band. Taxis will form a motorcade.

The transport forum was “workshopped” in September last year in the spirit of the reconstruction and development programme for people to take responsibility for their own development.

The transport forum was determined to collectively manage the new transport interchange area.

All stakeholders in the area are represented on the forum, including various taxi associations, Wynberg and District Civic Association, the Wynberg Hawkers Association, the Yusufeyali Mosque Committee, South African Police Services, Intersite, the Cape Town City Council and business groups.

Major upgrading starts in June.
BMT lane backed, but ...

JOSEPH ARANES, Municipal Staff

THE Cape Chamber of Commerce and Industry has come out in support of the controversial bus and mini-bus taxi (BMT) lane on the N2 freeway into Cape Town, but has urged improvements.

Motorists have complained that the lane is exacerbating already congested conditions during the peak period and many have asked that it be scrapped.

The provincial traffic authority had emphasised that an integrated public transport network with specified lanes was the only way to relieve congestion.

Albert Schuitmaker, deputy director of the Cape Chamber, said the need for bus lanes had long been supported by the organisation.

"Traffic congestion caused by the oversupply of motor vehicles on the road during the peak period can only be combated by motivating commuting motorists to switch to public transport."

"But motorists will only make such a move when they are attracted by a safe, clean and fast public transport network and will be discouraged by the increasing delays caused by traffic congestion on their way to and from work."

He added: "The transport department's experiment with the BMT lane has shown that 50 percent of the people on the N2 are now transported in the dedicated lane during peak hours."

"It is, however, up to the traffic authorities to maximise the benefits of such lanes by carefully assessing their relative position, length and user control."

"We believe the success of the BMT lane needs to be evaluated."
Effort to improve pay, employment conditions in minibus taxi industry

BY MANDELA NYTHEMBI

Wages and other terms and conditions of employment in the violence-racked minibus taxi industry are to come under the spotlight of the Wage Board, according to a working document to be made public soon.

After the investigations, the board will make recommendations to Labour Minister Tito Mboweni, who will be persuaded that investigators into the taxi industry should represent operators and drivers to ensure that the industry plays a meaningful role in the process.

This was revealed in a document to be formally made public after being discussed by the National Taxi Task Team.

NTTT special adviser Ashima Singh, who prepared the document, said a division of the board to carry out investigations into the taxi industry was expected to be established soon.

The document has urged a disciplinary code for members of a co-operative (which is expected to replace associations), with a list of offences and appropriate penalties such as suspension or expulsion.

Among the offences would be failure by taxi owners to register as employers with the Department of Labour so that drivers could benefit from medical aid, pension, unemployment, insurance and accident funds.

Taxi owners would also be charged for failing to pay a minimum wage as set out by legislation. Some drivers currently earn less than R900 a month because they are being paid on commission or per trip.

Singh said the informal nature of the taxi industry made it difficult for drivers to benefit from the Labour Relations, Employment Standards, Compensation for Occupational Injuries and Diseases, and Unemployment Insurance Fund acts.

She said the investigations would assist the Government to monitor employment practices in the industry as there was no information regarding employers and employees.

"Employment contracts in the taxi industry are usually made verbally."

Singh added that most labour practice disputes arising within the industry were not referred to the Industrial Court for adjudication. "Taxi owners and their organisations do not recognise or bargain with representative unions."

NTTT chairman Dipak Patel said the Government was committed to workers' rights and improving employment conditions.

The South African Taxi Drivers' Union and the Transport General Workers' Union welcomed the plans, hoping they would improve drivers' 'appalling working conditions.'

TGWU general secretary Randall Howard said there was no need to make a distinction between a taxi driver and other workers.

SA Commuter Organisation spokesman David Sekobela said drivers were the worst exploited workers, adding this made them turn their anger on passengers. He said the extension of the Labour Relations Act, to be presented in Parliament in June, would help to strengthen relations between commuters and drivers.
Taxi groups hire assassins for R70 000 — police chief

PRITORIA — Taxi associations paid hit squads up to R70 000 to murder opposition taxi owners and R90 000 to kill police detectives, organised crime unit director Jack van Zyl told delegates at a security conference in Pretoria yesterday.

The intensity of violence in the taxi industry could be attributed to hired killers, often criminals and gang members, he said. Commuters were often afraid to step forward as witnesses and were bribed or intimidated not to testify.

Roux said the criminals were driven by greed and power, not poverty.

More than 480 organised crime syndicates involving 2178 primary suspects were known to be operating in SA. Of these, 136 specialised in drug trafficking, 112 in vehicle theft and 85 in commercial crime. The criminal activities of 125 of these syndicates are at present restricted to sub-Saharan countries in Africa, Roux said.

Syndicates often used gangs for assassinations, kidnappings, distributing drugs and stealing cars and guns.

There were more than 70 gangs in Gauteng alone. Among them were former self-defence units which had turned to crime when security forces failed to absorb them.

"Many gangs maintain a reign of terror within communities. They force youngsters to join them by ... constant harassment and even assault. These techniques are also used to intimidate communities to abide by their rules."

Some gangs operated across provincial borders. There were clear links between Gauteng, KwaZulu-Natal and Western Cape. At least 157 of the 451 organised crime syndicates in SA operated internationally. "Crime networks are so well established that the same channels and networks are often used to smuggle firearms, drugs, vehicles, ivory, rhino horn, precious metals and gemstones," he said.

The main smuggling routes were from Mozambique to Gauteng or via Swaziland, and from Angola via Namibia to Gauteng. Goods were also smuggled from Angola via the Cunupri Strip in Namibia, through Botswana to Gauteng, and from Tshembe to Cape in the Eastern Cape to Gauteng.

Roux said Gauteng was a major market for stolen goods and a safe haven for criminals, taking into account the sizes of Soweto and Hillbrow with their dense populations. — Sapa.
Hired guns are paid thousands by taxi warlords

R90 000 on the heads of police officers investigating the violence between rival associations, says crime unit director

BY DEREK RODINBY Crime Reporter

Hired assassins "freelancing" for taxi associations are being paid thousands of rand to murder members of rival associations.

And some killers are charging up to R90 000 to kill police investigators.

Organised crime unit (OCU) director Jack van Zyl Roux said yesterday that hit squads were playing a major role in the intense taxi violence in the country. They were generally controlled and paid by the executive committees of taxi associations.

Addressing a security conference presented by the Institute for Strategic Studies at the University of Pretoria and the Security Association of South Africa, Van Zyl Roux said opposition taxi owners were targeted for death for about R70 000 hit.

He said the cycle of violence would not be reversed until witnesses came forward to testify.

He said the assassins used the latest in communications equipment, ranging from Citizen Band radios and cellphones to pagers and cellphones.

Many of the attacks occurred in rural areas where police communications were at their poorest, and gunmen had the opportunity to disappear, sometimes to other provinces, before investigators could arrive.

"Individuals are employed as full-time bodyguards for taxi associations, and many associations make use of external groups from KwaZulu Natal or the Eastern Cape who return to their provinces, making it difficult to identify them," Van Zyl Roux said.

A disturbing trend identified by the OCU was the use of gangs by organised syndicates, for assassinations and kidnappings or for distributing drugs, and stealing cars and firearms.

"Syndicate leaders hardly ever come into direct contact with street-level criminals, preferring to use field workers who can tap into an entire criminal network without exposing the leader. Some gangs do not even realise that they are part of syndicate networks," he said.

More than 480 organised-crime syndicates, involving 2 178 primary suspects, were known to be operating in South Africa. The OCU was investigating 62 major syndicates.

Of these, 136 specialised in drug trafficking, 112 in vehicle theft and 85 in commercial crime.

"The criminal activities of 125 of these syndicates are at present restricted to sub-Saharan Africa."

More than 70 gangs had been identified in Gauteng, and among them were former township self-defence units that had turned to crime.

"Many gangs maintain a reign of terror within communities. They force youngsters to join them by constant harassment and assault," Van Zyl Roux added.
Business has crucial role in fighting crime

A 2/14/94

National strategies, needed on crime

September 20

The Argus

Hired Killers

Taxi opponents

need to kill

National, strategies

12

The Argus, Thursday April 25 1996
New taxi war erupts as man dies in Tension at breaking point.
Fare row: Police plan go-slow on

METROTRAIL'S DECISION to charge police officers full fare when they travel to and from work seems set to spark protest action. Crime Writer JACKIE CAMERON reports.

Police have vowed to stop crime prevention patrols and searches of suspected criminals on Peninsula trains unless Metrorail allows them to continue travelling to and from work free of charge.

About 270 angry commuter unit police members have threatened to embark on an indefinite go-slow in protest against the decision that they must now pay full fare on trains.

Many have called for the disbanding of the unit, and said they would prefer to work at police stations where they can pay R27 for monthly transport on police vehicles — considerably cheaper than paying for train tickets.

Unit members have asked for an urgent meeting with Metrorail and police management tomorrow. If their demands are not met, the go-slow will start on Tuesday, South African Police Union and Police and Prisons Civil Rights Union spokesman said yesterday.

Meanwhile, at a highly-charged meeting at Cape Town railway station yesterday, many community policing officers — paid for by Metrorail — said they would join the protest action.

The decision to make all police members pay for their transport on trains is unlikely to be changed, and, if police embark on the protest, commuters can expect the crime rate on trains to soar.

Last year on Peninsula trains, at least 20 women were raped, about 23 people were murdered and more than 470 people were robbed, according to police statistics.

Metrorail spokesman for the Western Cape Mr André Harrison said the decision to make all police members pay full fare had been a police management decision.

"We were going to give them a concession rate like we give our own staff. Police headquarters came to us and asked us to keep the current status quo until July, and then make all police members pay full fare," he said.

Harrison said Metrorail, in Gauteng, had liaised with police in Pretoria about the matter and that he would not be in a position to negotiate with local police.

Harrison said police — the only civil servants permitted to travel free on trains — had been given this benefit with a view to them helping Metrorail fight crime.

"They have not been assisting us. They would all group together on first class coaches and refuse to help out our staff if there was a crime. There have obviously been exceptions."

Harrison said many police members had also abused the benefit by helping friends and relatives to travel free.

Police spokesman Senior Superintendent John Sterrenberg said:

"If they want to make us pay, there is nothing we can do. It is a private business, not a state department."

He said it had not come to the attention of provincial police management that protest action was in the pipeline.

Sergeant James Davids, SAPU representative for the unit which polices trains, said: "We will have to pay to get to work on a train which we will then spend the whole day policing. This is a ridiculous situation."

Other unit members told how they were primarily responsible for controlling unruly crowds returning from protest marches in the city, a task which should be undertaken by the Internal Stability Division members who received a special danger allowance.

Others said they found it "disgusting" that police management made decisions of this nature "when they have made statements that they want to improve our working conditions".
We could end up broke, says minibus driver

BY MANDELA MTHEMBU

Nomathemba Xaba is a taxi driver who is still not sure that she might not be able to feed her family because of the expected increase in petrol prices.

Xaba's worry is that she could end up working for less reward or without any earnings to take home.

She works from 6am to 7pm after running about seven loads of passengers from Vosloorus into Johannesburg.

A single round trip covers 80km and, Xaba says: "After filling up with petrol for R150, I am left with a daily taking of about R200." And out of that she must still pay other running expenses.

"It will be difficult to increase the R3 fares as commuters could leave the taxis for buses," says the mother of two.

She indicated that the increasing number of taxis contributed to the problem, because drivers now had to wait for two hours, in order to make loads at Johannesburg's Noord Street rank.

Given the lower number of commuters on Sundays, some drivers say they may stop operating on this day.

"If you are lucky, you could make a taking of about R100 on a Sunday," said Philemon Ndana, a taxi owner and driver.

"Before I bought my own minibus I thought my boss was making a lot of money.

"But now I know that all the money is taken by petrol and vehicle spares."

Ndana said drivers who do not own minibuses face disaster as most of them are paid at irregular intervals by taxi owners.\n
Running on empty ... taxi drivers Nomathemba Xaba and Stanley Shongwe.
We’ll be paying through the nozzle

Angry taxi drivers threaten strike as fuel price poised to rise to over R2 per litre

BY NIKKI WHITFIELD

Taxi associations and drivers are threatening nationwide strikes to protest against the 13c-16c petrol price increase, expected to be announced tomorrow and to take effect in May. The increase will push the price to more than R2 a litre.

The threatened strike would affect millions of commuters and cause traffic chaos if taxi drivers also decide to blockade roads and streets, as they have in the past.

Jacob Ledwaba of the Leithabile Taxi Association called on all taxi drivers across the country to stand together in protest against the increase, which would force taxi owners to increase their fares to people, many of whom “do not earn a living wage”.

And, as motorists brace themselves for tomorrow’s announcement on the increase, economists have predicted a ripple effect that will further dent the economy.

While petrol is expected to dip back below the R2 mark in July, spin-off increases, which affect the cost of hundreds of petrol-dependent products, from soap powder to paint, are unlikely to fall off.

Filling-station forecourts are expected to charge between R2,05 and R2,06 a litre from May 1.

Central Energy Fund figures show the under-recovery on the fuel price from March 26 to April 22 was 12,88c/litre, which could result in a rise of 13-14c/litre.

But the May price hike could include a further 2c/litre if oil companies are successful in pushing index of 6.5%.

Ledwaba said taxi drivers were fed-up with the Government for promising subsidies and grants and not having delivered.

“The Government told us they would help us, but nothing has happened yet. It’s very unfair. While they are busy talking, something like this happens.”

Prices at South African petrol pumps take their cue from several factors, such as fluctuations in the economy, higher oil prices and northern hemisphere seasons.

“Prices at South African petrol pumps take their cue from several factors, such as fluctuations in the economy, higher oil prices and northern hemisphere seasons,” Mr. Chinwe said.

“Prices are going to increase in the demand for diesel, paraffin and petrol,” said Transnet economist Mike Schuster.

“This last winter was particularly bad in all countries, not just in isolated spots.

“Oil stocks were depleted because of the increase in demand, and also because the world was waiting for Iraq and the UN to sort themselves out.”

“Now that there is no agreement with Iraq, stocks are being replenished, and the northern hemisphere summer has started, we will probably see Brent oil prices coming off the highs we’ve had of $22 a barrel to closer to $18.”

The fuel tax of 69c South Africans pay on every litre of fuel might sound high but, at around 37% of the total price, was low compared with the tax charged in other countries, some of which took 80%, Schuster added.

“But, of course, it’s different there because public transport is

Additional content not included in the natural text representation.
Angry taxi drivers threaten strike as fuel price poised to rise to over R2 per litre

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The threatened strike would affect millions of commuters and cause traffic chaos if taxi drivers also decide to blockade roads and streets, as they have in the past.

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But the May price hike could include a further 2c/litre if oil companies are successful in pushing through a rise in the wholesale margin before tomorrow.

Petrol jumped 8c/litre at the beginning of April to R1.92/litre for 93-octane fuel. Economists have predicted that a 13c/litre hike could add another 0.35% to the producer price index of 6.3% and 0.23% to the consumer price index of 6.5%.

Ledwaba said taxi drivers were fed-up with the Government for promising subsidies and grants and not having delivered.

"The Government told us they would help us, but nothing has happened yet. It's very unfair. While they are all busy talking, something like this happens."

Prices at South African petrol pumps take their cue from several factors, such as fluctuations in the economy, higher oil prices and northern hemisphere seasons.

"When it is winter in the northern hemisphere, there is a 35% increase in the demand for fuel, diesel, paraffin and petrol," said Transnet economist Mike Schussler.

"This last winter was particularly bad in all countries, not just in isolated spots."

"Oil stocks were depleted because of the increase in demand, and also because the world was waiting for Iraq and the UN to sort themselves out."

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The fuel tax of 69c South Africans pay on every litre of fuel might sound high but, at around 37% of the total price, was low compared with the tax charged in other countries, some of which took 80%, Schussler added.

"But of course, it's different there because public transport is so much better."

"Here, there is no bus from, say, Kempton Park to the Randburg Waterfront. We are far more reliant on fuel in South Africa. And we earn less."

And while fuel prices could be down by July, it was unlikely other prices would follow suit.
Taxi bodies warn of violence

Theo Rawana

WARNINGS of taxi violence and threats of strikes greeted the planned increase in the price of petrol yesterday as two major taxi associations expressed their opposition to the move.

The Lehlabile Taxi Organisation (LTO) and the National African Federated Transport Organisation (Nafto) both condemned the proposed increases which are expected to push the price of petrol to more than R2/l when they take effect on May 1.

LTO spokesman Jacob Ledwaba said his organisation was strongly opposed to the increases, and government would be inviting strikes similar to those staged in opposition to the increase in VAT if it pressed ahead with them.

He said the petrol price affected the poorest section of the population and “hard-pressed petrol consumers are once again forced to subsidise the government patronage of apartheid white elephants such as Sasol”.

Nafto general secretary Victor Mogale said the increases would fuel violence as taxi drivers, competing for fares, would ignore agreed loading procedures. Also they would overload vehicles and not maintain them.

He said government would have worked out a mechanism to save taxis from any fuel increase if it was serious about rescuing the industry.

Sapa reports that the Automobile Association of SA said the imminent petrol price increase once again called for urgent deregulation of the domestic oil industry.

The AA said it was only in a deregulated market, with competition between oil industry players, that the motorist could reap the benefit.

The AA said that research conducted on the association’s behalf had shown that — contrary to popular belief — the SA motorist was much worse off than his overseas counterpart, and that petrol in SA was expensive.

With personal disposable income under pressure even though continued growth was forecast for the country’s economy, the motorist’s role should not be underestimated and overtaxed, the AA said.
Taxi leaders urged to put reform fears behind them

Theo Rawana

TAXI industry leaders were harbouring groundless fears that co-operatives planned for the industry would replace taxi associations and thereby strip them of their authority, the national taxi task team said yesterday.

Team chairman Dipak Patel said the co-operatives, which were meant to help the industry to diversify in government's grand plan to produce businessmen out of taximen, held no such threat, as taxi associations were an integral part of the scheme.

"There is a fear and uncertainty in the industry that the co-ops were designed to replace the taxi associations. The leaders should be assured that their role to keep the industry together through voluntary associations will always be there. It is important that these fears are allayed."

The co-ops were an integral part of the development of the taxi industry into a viable, sustainable industry which would produce business leaders. "We say the time has come for leaders to rise to the challenge and lead the industry into its new future."

"This is where the entrepreneurial flair in the black community will emerge. We want to see successful black business people emerge from this sector."

The co-ops were part of the task team's interim recommendations to government, seeking a meaningful role in the economic mainstream for the industry and ending the violence gripping it.

Key recommendations in the package included regulation and control of the industry, its restructuring into more formal business units or co-operatives, and economic assistance through a short-term "survival" financial package.

The team had proposed the development of a skilled and trained industry, and improvement of labour relations and traffic safety.

Patel said the process which began with the task team engaging the industry, the different tiers of government and other roleplayers in a series of consultative workshops and provincial conferences, was beginning to bear fruit because implementation of some of the recommendations had already begun.

This had brought about a drop in taxi violence, which had plagued the industry, because of uncontrolled competition for a declining market.

Steering committees and forums had been set up in some provinces and others were still being established, Patel said.

The task team went through 36 public hearings over most of the country and in seven or eight months, had identified urgent issues to be acted on.

Government had considered the recommendations and the process was on the verge of practical implementation, Patel said.
Taxi drivers fear for their lives in bloody KwaZulu-Natal battle over lucrative routes
Urgent peace bid as taxi war claims another life

A COMMUTER has been killed and another seriously injured in renewed Cape Flats taxi violence.

As the taxi war continues, Western Cape Police Minister Gerald Morkel is today meeting members of the Cape Amalgamated Taxi Association (Cata) in a bid to resolve the violence in which two people have been killed in the past week. At least nine people have been wounded.

In the fatal drive-by shooting yesterday, a woman was shot dead while getting out of a taxi at the Nyanga rank. Early today another passenger was wounded on the Terminius Road side of the rank.

The woman who was killed, T'hanise, of Nyanga hostel, died before help could arrive. The name of the commuter who was injured today was not known.

Several other shootings were reported this morning at and around Crossroads, Nyanga and Guguletu taxi ranks. Police collected nine spent cartridges.

In Lansdowne Road, Crossroads, police reported a shootout between occupants of two taxis.

National Crimes Investigation Services chief, Attie Trollope said the latest flare-up was due to internal disputes between leaders in one of the factions.

"Police mediators are involved in negotiations and we hope this will bring a speedy end to the violence."

Police said tension was at breaking-point and they summoned reinforcements to boost their presence at taxi ranks. A helicopter was waiting by.
New taxi industry policy soon

Western Cape Minister of Police Gerald Morkel has been arranged, but its effectiveness has been questioned.

A spokesman for the Centre for Conflict Resolution in Cape Town said yesterday the taxi industry needed a proper policy.

Western Cape Minister of Transport Leonard Ramatlakane agreed the industry was suffering from a lack of policy and said the long-term solution lay in a policy declaration, now being drafted by the ministry of transport in the Western Cape, to be completed at the end of next month.

THE government and the provincial administration have been hammered for doing little to end the taxi war, which claimed two lives this week in the Western Cape.

But, the province is drafting a new policy on the taxi industry, due to be completed late next month, which could help alleviate the crisis.

A meeting between one of the rival taxi organisations, the Cape Amalgamated Taxi Association (Cata), and...
Attempt to improve driving skills of minibus taxi operators

In an effort to improve driving skills in the taxi industry, Castrol will today embark on a three-month defensive driving course for 100 taxi operators from Rustenburg, Brits, Ga-Rankuwa and Mabopane.

The course, which will end on July 25, will be divided between in-class, theoretical aspects of safe driving and on-the-road, practical measures of traffic management.

Castrol managing director Martin Dando said participants will learn how to better visualise traffic flows and road hazards and to make appropriate driving decisions based on that information. This includes correctly estimating time gaps for passing and turning, as well as proper techniques in gear selection, braking and steering. - Staff Reporter.
**Accusations fly as operators fight bloody war over premium routes**

Both sides claim to be ‘angels’ in feud which has turned rank into battle zone

By Karen Jackson

Investigative Unit

Hit squads with Johannesburg links are suspects in the murder of at least six taxi drivers in the Durban and District Taxi Association (DDTA) as a power struggle for control of the long-distance taxi industry intensifies between two families.

An investigation by Independent Newspapers has revealed a web of牵扯在 a conflict between “Big Ben” Ntuli, the association’s president and founder member, and the Gcaba family, both formerly based in Johannesburg, but now taxi bosses in Durban.

The taxi rank next to Durban central railway station has been turned into a battle zone.

Taxi violence was made a national priority crime two months ago under the Priority Crime Unit.

The unit says several warrants of arrest are out for key role players in the violence.

Heavily armed police in a Casspir maintain a high profile at the rank.

Nineteen DDTA members have been targeted in just three months since the murder of taxi boss Simon Gcaba, according to sources within the association.

Twelve are dead, although police have only identified six DDTA-linked murders.

The Durban association’s 87 members are all taxi owners.

Now the ordinary drivers and taxi managers fear for their lives, particularly following the recent murder of Johannesburg/Durban rank manager Fano Ngcobo.

He was killed outside Durban Station on April 22. The surviving association members, who have alliances to either family, are running scared.

“Big Ben” Ntuli has been in hiding, thought to have run overseas, since earlier this month. He said he had a R100,000 price on his head. A private security company has been hired as bodyguards after Gcaba’s senior’s death in February. He was gunned down near the rank in February.

His death came a month after the shooting of DDTA member Keith Mvalose, outside his beachfront flat.

Percy Xulu, chairman of the DDTA, was killed outside his house in Avoca last month.

“We don’t know when they will attack again,” he said prophetically, in an interview shortly before his death.

He said hired professional killers had been brought into the taxi war from outside Durban, referring to the first of two Sunday afternoon attacks at the rank in March. Association member Jabulani Mbhli and driver Mazwakhe Ndlurw were killed and five bystanders wounded.

Xulu said the AK47-toting gunmen fired into crowds waiting to board taxis.

Gcaba’s three sons, Mandla, Moses and Frank, have a temporary Durban Supreme Court interdict allowing them to be absent from the rank, as they fear they will be killed.

The rules of the association state taxi owners have to be present in person at the rank.

At present none of the family’s taxis are “loading” in Durban and 20 minibuses have been hidden.

Despite contradictory stories from both sides, the common thread appears to be that the war stems from a jostling for control of the extremely lucrative business between the arch rivals.

Ntuli has almost 80 taxis running between Gauteng and the rest of KwaZulu Natal.

The Gcaba have 46 on the same route.

They both claim to be the victims in the war, but the police, who recently launched a massive weapons swoop at the rank, assisted by the South African National Defence Force, believe both sides are paying for hits on their enemies.

One AK47 was recovered along with 120 rounds of ammunition and a man was arrested.

Fifteen people had been arrested for DDTA taxi violence-related reasons during the last two months, said the unit.

Eight AK47s, nine 9mm pistols and one submachine gun have been recovered by the unit.

The unit also claims to be victims as they have frequently been accused of taking sides. The provincial head, Senior Superintendent Johan Booyzen would not go on record for just this reason, preferring to defer official police comment to the Durban police spokesman, director Bala Naidoo.

The police were faced with a minefield of unsubstantiated facts, hearsay and wild accusations between the groups, said Naidoo.

Hard evidence was not easy to come by as people were too frightened to come forward.

“If I say we haven’t looked at the Gcaba and the Ntulis then I would be lying. We are looking at a sensitive issue. People are being killed and it would be stupid of the investigator to lay his cards on the table before the perpetrators are arrested,” he said.

“If we can make a breakthrough in the DDTA dispute, for people who have similar ideas elsewhere, I think it might serve as a deterrent. Just six weeks ago we had a meeting with all the groups. Everyone left happy and that same weekend Johan Ntuli, a DDTA member was wounded in a shooting.”

In an interview before he went into hiding, Ntuli claimed attempts at reconciliation were in vain.

“We’ve talked to the family involved and offered to let bygones be bygones and start afresh. We are at our wits end.”

A member of the Gcaba family, who says he is in hiding and does not want to be named, believes there is also a price on his head.

The Gcaba’s moved to Durban 1991 and initially worked amicably together with other taxi owners at the Durban rank.

The family member said tensions arose because of attempts to push the Gcaba out.

Police arrested five men for an attempt on Mandla Gcaba’s life at his home outside Durban in March.

Said Naidoo: “There is constant pressure on the investigators to arrest people. But we need evidence in the form of sworn statements...”

“Our vision is to stop taxi violence. What counts in the end is the evidence we can acquire.”
**VIP dies in taxi shooting**

Staff Reporters

TENSION was mounting at Cape Flats taxi ranks today after a member of the ANC Women's League executive committee in the Western Cape was killed in Langa and four people were seriously injured in the latest outbreak of the taxi war.

Western Cape ANCWL chairperson Builewa Tinto said 42-year-old Olga Ncivata was shot dead when rival taxi factions exchanged gunfire close to the Ikapa Town Council offices about 8pm yesterday.

Mrs Ncivata was in a taxi ferrying people back from the Cosatu march on parliament during yesterday's national strike.

She is survived by her husband, who is employed by the SA National Defence Force in Port Elizabeth, and by four children.

At Nyanga taxi rank today police formed a human barrier between Codeta and Cata members. A police spokesman said reports of heavily armed men heading for the taxi rank in five minibuses had added to the tension.

Chaos broke out in the township late yesterday when taxi drivers randomly opened fire on pedestrians and citizens in shooting incidents.

One of the injured is a traffic officer who was shot in the neck and was taken to hospital. Another victim was a 16-year-old girl who was shot in the leg.

The other victims also had gunshot wounds and were taken to hospital.
Unity against ‘joint taxi foe’

Constantia councillors speak as one on the problem

CONSTANTIA’S emerging “taxi problem” temporarily united councillors in the Metropolitan Substructure and led to two maiden speeches at the monthly meeting.

Usually tempers in this sombre, purple-upholstered chamber are stirred at trees being felled illegally or applications to own extra horses. Most of the debate is left to two or three of the 11 councillors.

But in this instance the PAC, ANC, Wecusa and non-aligned councillors were united against a common foe – Constantia’s new “taxi problem”.

Two members who have scarcely uttered a word in the nine months they have been paid on the council – the National Party’s Prince Gobinca, and the ANC’s Lorriane Nonkeneza – were formally congratulated by Councillor Ron Gaylard on their belated maiden speeches.

It was a high-tech, star wars type meeting. Officials arrived with a video screen and recorder and played a jumpy scene of taxis driving, stopping, parking on red lines and performing illegal U-turns on Constantia Main Road opposite Pick ‘n Pay.

Traffic officer Curt van Niekerk said that one day taxi drivers had banded together, surrounded and shaken the car of a traffic officer who was issuing tickets to offenders. Drivers recently formed their own “rank” on the roadside. Up to 20 taxis sometimes parked along the road, waiting for customers.

“It’s an eyesore,” said Mr Van Niekerk.

He said it was recognised that taxis were an “essential service”. Fines would not solve the problem.

“We don’t want gunfire,” he said. “We must negotiate and sort out the problem.”

He did not have a solution, but proposed that some sort of rank be built to accommodate up to three taxis. Traffic officers have met drivers’ leaders and negotiated an interim agreement not to clutter the road, but they have appealed to council to come up with a solution.

Mr Gobinca (Wecusa) warned that this was an “unfinished story”. If three were allowed in others would follow, and then “people will start shooting because of lack of space”.

He warned that blockades could result, as had happened elsewhere.

Mr Vic Fowler (PAC) said that taxis were a “law unto themselves”.

Ms Nonkeneza (ANC) said that if a rank was built for the Constantia taxis, another would have to be built in Southern Cross Drive for the Hout Bay taxis.

“This is the beginning of the fight,” she said. “And once it starts, no-one will stop it.”

Mayor Andrew Ross-Munro steered the debate into calmer roads, saying: “If they can work among themselves, surely we can work with them. Let’s not be entirely negative.”

A suggestion that the Alphen Clinic parking lot be used was rejected as unwise and dangerous.

Mr Gobinca suggested that the owners of Constantia’s Pick ‘n Pay be approached to find parking in their parking lot.

A team of councillors – Yvonne Wood, Jeanette Shapiro, Prince Gobinca, and Lorraine Nonkeneza – as well as planner Henry Aikman, metropolitan traffic and transport chief Chris Atkins, Pick ‘n Pay centre manager Athol Swanson, police liaison officers from Wynberge and Diep River and CPOA chairman Neil McCarthy, have already met taxi leaders at the Alphen Centre.

Negotiations will continue.

One of the problems to emerge from the meeting was the discovery that many of Constantia’s taxi-men were “pirate” operators.

Police say these include some who do not conform to codes of conduct.
Local government must take control of the taxi industry

ANDREA BOTHA
Staff Reporter

TAXI associations are not ready for peace; it's now up to local government to take control of the taxi industry.

This is the view of Western Cape Minister of Transport, Leonard Ramatla, who said the time had come for local government to take responsibility for the crisis in the taxi industry.

Addressing a meeting of Metro councilors yesterday, he said the South African National Defence Force would assist the police in patrolling taxi ranks and protecting citizens from incidents of random violence, such as the one last week in which prominent ANC Women's League executive committee member Oiga Ntivu was killed.

He called for greater police visibility and praised operations like the recent clamp-down on a Nyanga taxi rank, in which 14 guns were confiscated.

Mr Ramatla said control of the streets should be taken back from the taxi operators. He said he had so far been the only one dealing hands-on with the problem and that greater co-operation between departments and councils was needed.
Why police returned taxi drivers' guns

TAXI CONFLICT IS SO INTENSE in the Western Cape that some policemen, fearing for their lives, have handed back weapons and released suspected killers to defuse a tense confrontation, writes Crime Writer JACKIE CAMERON.

At least 50 taxis were parked around the police station. Dozens of intensely angry men were inside the Langa charge office, some toy-toying, others shouting at the police. Outside, police vehicle tyres were being slashed.

Some taxi drivers were threatening to blockade the N2 and cause havoc at Cape Town Airport if seven men suspected of violent crimes were not released from custody immediately — and nine confiscated firearms returned.

The men had been arrested in connection with drive-by shootings in which one woman passenger was killed and two taxi drivers injured, in Langa earlier in the day.

It happened last Tuesday, when it looked to everyone as if the police had surrendered.

"We had no choice. We were all scared," one national priority crimes unit detective said after the incident.

"Some threatened to kill us when they see us the next time we are working on an investigation in their township. They mistakenly think we favour the rival taxi organisation."

Death threats by taxi-violence agitators cannot be taken lightly. Since the beginning of the year, taxi wars have claimed 24 lives and left 73 people injured — many maimed for life — around the Peninsula.

Some attacks have been well-planned killings, bearing the hallmarks of professionally trained hit men.

Others are more random, spontaneous revenge killings, in which it is not always clear who fired the first shot.

These are the incidents in which passengers and innocent bystanders are often the victims.

Attackers are brazen and appear to have no fear of the law, often opening fire within sight of the police on major commuter routes.

Some police members fear that the authorities have lost their grip on taxi-related violence, but their superiors are more optimistic.

The Western Cape's national priority crimes unit chief, Senior Superintendent Attie Trollip, has this to say about the clash between police and taxi drivers at Langa police station: "We did not lose control of the situation. There was a choice. We could either use maximum force, with the chance that the situation could turn extremely nasty, or we could use minimum force."

So the suspects were released and the firearms were returned.

Last Thursday police seized 13 firearms and arrested at least three men in connection with taxi-related crimes, in a planned operation at the Nyanga taxi rank.

They hoped to regain some of the firearms seized and returned two days earlier.

The confiscated firearms have been sent for ballistics testing to determine whether they can be linked to any of the attacks.

Meanwhile, the heart of the taxi conflict remains the fight for routes and ranks.

"The industry needs proper regulation. New legislation is not in place yet. We have been told that it is at a national level that these things are being discussed," Trollip said.

"Rival taxi groups continually make agreements with one another about how they will share their routes but there is no one to see that these agreements are complied with."

"Taxi leaders hold regular meetings with police and non-governmental organisations and "reach wonderful agreements, but the implementation of these is impossible."

"Each rank has its own problems. A lot of the violence may stem from the frustration that these problems cause."

Trollip said many of agreements could not be enforced by law. For example, a ban on people carrying firearms in taxis had been discussed.

Police could not enforce this because people are allowed to carry firearms for their own protection.

Police, meanwhile, "cannot solve the problem. "They can only keep it under control," Trollip said.

National priority crimes unit detectives, who are carrying about 100 dockets in connection with taxi-related crimes committed since the beginning of the year, are trying to bring the perpetrators of the violence to book — but they have difficulty persuading witnesses to shootings to testify in court.

"We offer substantial rewards to encourage people to come forward and make statements," Trollip said.

Anyone with information about any taxi-related violence, particularly a shooting on the R200 in Ruiss River last Monday, is asked to contact Inspector Herman Beckman at 351-1355.
Taxis in fuel price demand

THE Western Cape taxi industry wants the government to help set up a national committee to discuss the fuel price increases within 48 hours.

About 150 members of the Cape Metro Fuel Crisis Committee gathered outside the gates of parliament yesterday to present a memorandum to Finance Minister Trevor Manuel.

It said the fuel price was being increased unilaterally and Reserve Bank governor Chris Stals was allowing the rand to collapse to the benefit of big business and to the detriment of the poor.

Mr Manuel said the taxi industry did not fall under his ministry and it would not be possible to respond in 48 hours. The memorandum would have to be discussed with Transport Minister Mac Maharaj. – Sapa.

(332) ARG 7/5/96
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(332) ARG 7/5/96
Driver dies as taxi battle rages

Staff Reporter
GUGULETU has been turned into a battleground in Cape Town's taxi war, with one taxi driver being killed and another wounded in Guguletu in taxi-related violence so far this week.

The latest victim, Zwelivumile Kaza, 30, was shot dead last night. He was travelling alone down the NY1 in Guguletu at the time.

A police spokesman said several unknown gunmen shot at Mr Kaza's vehicle near the corner of NY111 and NY1. He was hit in the chest and legs and died at the scene.

Arrests have not been made.

Earlier this week Zolani Feni of Langa was wounded in the legs and back.

The shootings are being investigated by the National Priority Investigating Unit in its probe of taxi violence.

Anybody with information can contact Inspector Schmidt from the unit at 391 1333.

7/5/96 ARG
Council urges rival taxi bodies to resume talks

Mbudzi Ka Harvey

JOHANNESBURG's council is more determined than ever to encourage the various parties involved in taxi violence to return to the negotiating table to end wasteful injuries and the waste of life, often involving innocent members of the public.

Council acting CEO, Karen de Beer, said in terms of current legislation the council had the sole right to establish and allocate ranks and to specify which organisations or associations would operate from those ranks.

She said it was an error to believe that any other group had ownership of the ranks and the right to control them. The council also had the sole right to specify particular routes, within Johannesburg, to be used by taxis.

De Beer also pointed out that the same right that gave council the right to determine routes, also empowered it to remove ranks and routes in circumstances which called for such decisions.

A metropolitan planning department spokesman said allocation of ranks and routes were decided on in consultation with traffic authorities, the taxi organisations concerned and transportation planners within the Regional Taxi Forum.

The establishment of these ranks needed to be agreed upon by council and the public, land and business owners, near the ranks had, especially, to be given the opportunity to comment.

Unofficial, private arrangements and agreements between taxi associations to use the same or legally established ranks or routes were discouraged as they were unofficial and would lead to congestion. At the same time the setting up of illegal ranks could not be condoned. The council would not tolerate solving disputes by violence.
Five held after shots at taxi drivers' protest

CRIME WRITER

POLICE arrested five people after gunmen in a crowd of taxi drivers protesting against the petrol price hike shot at them on the Station Deck in the city yesterday.

At least 30 cartridge cases were recovered after the lunchtime shooting incident, police spokesman Senior Superintendent John Sterenberg said.

The protesters dispersed after the incident.

Sterenberg said gunman affiliated to a taxi organisation had earlier shot at protesting taxi drivers gathered at Athlone Stadium. Two men had been injured and taken to hospital for treatment.

Later, taxi drivers had formed blockades on several major routes into the city, causing major traffic delays. But the drivers had sped off before police could arrest them, he said.

In Claremont, a taxi had forced a detective's vehicle off the road, causing it to crash into another vehicle, but no one had been injured.

Taxis had also blockaded the entrance to the Huguenot tunnel, but had disbanded after police negotiated with them, Sterenberg said.
No end to taxi strife in sight

The Western Cape government has been blamed for the failure to defuse the taxi violence in Cape Town which has claimed seven lives in the past month.

Taxi organisations and mediators say that in the past two years, the provincial government has failed to promulgate regulations or legislation for the industry, creating opportunities for thugs to operate above the law.

The reasons for the outbreak are murky: nameless factions of the two major taxi organisations in the Cape, the Congress of Democratic Taxi Associations (Codeta) and the Cape Taxi Association (Cata) have been blamed for fuelling the violence in an attempt to wrest control of lucrative routes.

Codeta chairman James Mafuna said the delay in promulgating regulations to govern the industry was stymieing attempts to mediate between warring groups.

Mafuna said he believed the taxi sector required special protection from government to minimise the barriers they faced to making a profit.

He called for an end to the violence and assured commuters that Codeta's office bearers were trying their utmost to end it. He said he was concerned about reports that commuters were planning a taxi boycott as this might fuel the violence.

Western Cape police representative Superintendent John Sterenberg said the SAPS had a "contingency plan" to deal with the violence. "The minute it breaks out, we call UMAC (the Unrest Monitoring Action Committee) and the Centre for Conflict Resolution (CCR) to facilitate negotiations."

"To get everybody involved around a table is extremely difficult and these two organisations can do it better than we can."

CCR mediator Nonagcиса Sipoyo said her organisation and UMAC decided they would no longer rush to the scenes of violence to mediate as it served no purpose.

"We've done our best to keep the parties in discussion, believing that if they were negotiating they were less problematic. But without guidance from government, without legislation controlling the industry, there is nothing we can achieve," she said.

Sipoyo said UMAC and the CCR held a meeting with all the law enforcement agencies this week and warned them that mediation is slowly collapsing.
No fare hikes - taxi body

By JEFFERSON LENGANE

THE LETHLABILE Taxi Organisation (LTO) yesterday achieved a first in the taxi industry when it successfully convened a strategic conference that resolved not to hike fares and to work towards establishing a single taxi organisation.

The conference, sponsored by Shell, was attended by various taxi organisations and stakeholders in the industry.

On the agenda were the latest petrol price increase, possible fare hikes, the lack of a subsidy for the industry and agreement on a decisive, democratic and united proposal to put to the government.

To implement resolutions taken at the conference, a five-member interim organising committee, comprising members of different organisations, was elected.

The conference resolutions were:

- To brief and mobilise taxi organisations that were not present;
- To appeal to government to exempt the taxi industry from the recent petrol price increase;
- To work on a ceasefire of all hostilities in the industry and towards the formation of one taxi organisation; and
- To establish communications with the National Taxi Task Team.

After the conference, the interim organising committee warned that it had adopted a two-fold strategy to deal with government - dialogue and confrontation.

"Where dialogue succeeds, it will be a feather in our caps; but where it fails we have to map out strategies to push our points," it said.
Taxi industry moves to solve its problems, but wants exemption from petrol price rise

BY MANOLO MTHEMBOU

The taxi industry has set up an interim organising committee to examine its problems, including ongoing taxi violence.

The five-member committee, elected at the weekend's taxi conference in Midrand, will soon be replaced by a 32-member committee that will include national taxi associations and community organisations.

Spokesman Jacob Ledwaba said the interim committee would approach the Government this week to demand that the industry be exempted from the latest 14c/litre petrol increase.

"It would be unfair for the Government to resist the proposal as it was making more than R15-million a month from the recent increases."

Ledwaba said the conference, attended by taxi and Congress of SA Trade Unions (Cosatu) representatives, also undertook to delay fare increases until the Government had responded to its proposals.

Although the industry has backed down on its threat of a twoday national strike, it warned it had adopted a two-fold strategy to deal with the Government - dialogue and confrontation.

Ledwaba said the interim committee, which would be in contact with the National Taxi Task Team, would work to resolve conflicts in the industry and for the formation of one taxi body. He said it was time for the industry to resolve its problems as "people were using the industry to further their aims."

Four taxi drivers and two passengers were shot dead in separate attacks on minibus taxis in the Western Cape at the weekend.

Two drivers were also injured.

A police spokesman said yesterday the killings were linked to continuing rivalry between the Cata and Codeta taxi organisations.

He said a Cata driver was killed in the first attack on Friday. Three Codeta drivers and two passengers were shot dead in three attacks on Saturday. Sapa.
Mortgage Bond Indemnity Fund: granting of loans

*30. Mr G M MASHA asked the Minister of Housing:

(1) Whether her Department has granted any loans from the Mortgage Bond Indemnity Fund yet; if not, what is the position in this regard; if so, (a) how many and (b) what is the total value of the loans so granted;

(2) whether she or her Department has laid down any guidelines whereby loans are granted; if not, why not; if so, what guidelines;

(3) whether she will make a statement on the matter.  

N565E

The Minister of Housing:

(1) No, the Mortgage Bond Indemnity Fund does not grant loans. It is a guarantee scheme which guarantees financial institutions against political risk in areas where the due process of law has collapsed.

The basis of mortgage lending is that a loan is granted against the security and value of a fixed asset (residential property). Where, in the case of default by the borrower, the lender cannot exercise its contractually entrenched right to attach and dispose of the property due to a breakdown in the due process of law in a specific area, the state (MIF) will buy in affected properties at fair market value, subject to certain restrictions. This scheme has been introduced as a short-term, temporary measure in order to facilitate an early re-entry by mortgage lenders into areas where measures taken to stabilise and normalise the environment, are taking effect. Cover will only be provided to accredited lenders whose credit considerations have been approved by the MIF and adhered to in lending practices.

As a matter of principle, the state should not get involved in covering or indemnifying against normal commercial risks undertaken by private sector institutions such as banks and building societies, in the course of their business activities. The MIF clearly excludes normal commercial risks.

(2) Not applicable.

(3) Not applicable.

Health plan for prisons

*31. Mrs E J CHAIT asked the Minister of Correctional Services:

(1) Whether he or his Department has drawn up a health plan for prisons; if not, what is the position in this regard; if so, what does this subsidy amount to;

(2) whether he or his Department has laid down any guidelines about how this subsidy is to be spent; if not, why not; if so, what are these guidelines?

N570E

The Minister of Correctional Services:

(1) Yes. The current health care plan which is based on the Correctional Services Act, 1959 (Act No 8 of 1959). Regulations promulgated in terms thereof and Departmental policy, was evaluated by a Work Group appointed by the Commissioner: Correctional Services, during 1995. This Work Group recommended certain adaptations to the current health care plan which is presently under consideration.

Delegates from the following Departments/Organisations formed part of the Work Group and were thus involved in making recommendations for a new health care plan:

- Department of Correctional Services
- International Committee of the Red Cross
- Gauteng Provincial Administration (Medical Legal Section)
- Chief District Surgeon
- Part-time District Surgeon
- South African Nursing Council
- Department of National Health
- Lawyers for Human Rights and
- Transformation Forum on Correctional Services

(2) Clear guidelines have been laid down as to how this economic and financial assistance will be applied. It would be useful here briefly to outline the context within which these guidelines have emerged.

The National Taxi Task Team (NTTT), was established to help solve the problems experienced in the taxi industry. The NTTT followed a consultative process to identify the critical problems and to seek concrete solutions. Resulting from this process, recommendations were made to me as Minister of Transport and to MINCOM.

The three essential areas covered by the recommendations are:

- regulation and control measures;
- training and skills development; and
economic sustainability and industrial structure.

These have been accepted as the basis for addressing the fundamental problems of the taxi industry. Government has now also convened three working groups which will present implementation guidelines within the next few days.

I can also report that the provinces are all on board and have already started giving effect to many of the proposals. Most notably, taxi offices have been established in the provinces to help the industry build capacity and Provincial Registrars offices for the regulation of taxi associations and operators are in the process of being set up.

Proposals to be implemented very soon are:

- Legislation of illegal operators using sound and responsible criteria
- Amendment of existing permits to normalise taxi operations
- A comprehensive training strategy and programme for operators and drivers
- A draft standard constitution and code of conduct is nearly completed and the taxi industry will then be consulted about it.
- Co-operatives have been approved by Government both as a mechanism for the economic development of the taxi industry and as the most appropriate structure for channelling financial assistance to it. Other forms of assistance will also be made available to the taxi associations.

Unemployment figures

*33. Mr D W MAKHANYA asked the Minister of Labour:

(1) Whether he or his Department has an unemployment figure for the past financial year; if not, what is the position in this regard; if so, what is the figure;

(2) whether he or his Department has any strategies or plans to reduce this figure drastically; if not, why not; if so, what are the relevant details;
Taxi operators warned against blockading roads

STAFF WRITERS

THOUSANDS of Peninsula commuters will be forced to find alternative transport today, as the taxi industry embarks on a day-long strike in protest against the recent petrol hike.

About 500 taxis are expected to meet at Athlone stadium this morning and drive along the N2 to the Cape Technikon, before taxi owners and drivers march on Parliament to protest against the fuel price rise.

But Roads, Transport and Works MEC Leonard Ramatlanake warned the taxi fuel crisis committee yesterday that if they tried a highway commuter blockade today police would use "whatever force they need to unblock any blockade — including impounding offenders’ vehicles”.

Mitchells Plain taxi forum spokeswoman Ms Nesha Mohamed said the taxis would use the special taxi lanes on the N2 and would not blockade it.

Taxi operators want a rebate of 50 cents a litre for public carriers, and say this will benefit commuters.

Yesterday Golden Arrow Bus Service said it supported the Western Cape Taxi Industry Forum’s appeal to government to consider ways of limiting the effects of fuel price increases on the transport industry.

However, it could not support any action that “disrupts the ability of commuters to get to where they need to be” and intended running normal bus services.

It appealed to the taxi forum to allow everyone their democratic right to make their own decisions.

Mohamed said: “There will be no intimidation of those who do not support our struggle.”

The Cape Chamber of Commerce and Industry came out strongly against today’s proposed strike saying actions that prevented people from reaching their places of work was “totally irresponsible.”
Angry taxi drivers protest over killings

Traffic came to a standstill yesterday as about 200 taxi drivers blocked a main road yesterday in protest against the killing of two taxi drivers and the shooting of a police officer in April.

The operators, protesting outside the police station, said that the problem is getting worse with the police failing to address the killings.

The markers later gave way to all the roads.

The police said they were investigating the incident and that no arrest had been made so far.

They said they were working closely with the taxi drivers to ensure the safety of the roads.

The operators, who are members of the Taxi Drivers Association, said that they were concerned about the rise in the number of taxi drivers being killed.

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Scattered incidents as
taxi strike draws blank

TAXI OPERATORS who went on strike yesterday and sent a
dlegation to Parliament to discuss fuel price relief with
Transport Minister Mac Maharaj failed to get any satisfac-
tion from the meeting, writes LISA TEMPLETON.

THERE were scattered acts of
violence yesterday when
angry taxi drivers poured on
to the Cape Flats after a heated
meeting with Transport Minister
Mac Maharaj ended in deadlock.

Earlier the Western Cape Taxi
Industry Forum led a cavalcade of
about 170 taxis along the N2 into
District Six and then led a march of
about 400 taxi operators to Parlia-
ment, where they sent 12 delegates
to discuss the latest fuel price hike
with Maharaj.
The 12, led by Mr. Achmat Dya-
sen, sought a solution that would
keep fares down, either by freezing
the fuel price or paying a subsidy of
50 cents a litre to commuter car-
riers.

One delegate from Paarl walked
out midway through the 2½-hour
meeting, which failed to find a
solution.

"The fuel price has increased
dramatically and must be frozen," said Dyason. "There are rumours of
another increase on June 5. As
businessmen we are forced to put
up our fares and it is the commu-
community that suffers."

The delegates, who came from
such areas as Bonteheuwel,
Manenberg, Heidelberg, Park City
and Paarl, complained that taxis
had never received money from the
government, whereas buses
enjoyed a rebate.

They also complained about a
lack of communication between
operators and the taxi task force
team established by the cabinet to
liaise with operators.

The minister said he was
unable to help operators as long as
many of them remained unregis-
tered. He estimated that only 7,000
of the 14,000 operators were regis-
tered.

Maharaj undertook to discuss
the fuel price problem with
Finance Minister Trevor Manuel
and Mineral and Energy Affairs
Minister Pik Botha.
He said fuel prices depended on
the international oil price and the
rand/dollar exchange rate.

He was also told that his
position was always open and that
they need not take to the streets to
get his attention.

"Today we had to deploy 175
police staff, 40 traffic officers and
have a police helicopter on stand-
by. These are the costs to the
taxpayer that such a march incurs," he said.

While the talks continued
inside Parliament the 400-odd
operators waited outside for the
outcome. Emotions ran high when
Dyason came out of the meeting
and reported that fuel prices
would not come down.

Elsewhere, the day was marked
by sporadic acts of violence.

Stones were thrown at buses in
Paarl East early yesterday morning,
and three taxi drivers were arrested
in Mowbray for reckless driving.

A Cape Times employee
reported that stones had been
thrown at a Golden Arrow bus by
passengers riding in a taxi in
Woodstock.

Mitchells Plain became a hub
of activity, with about 50 taxis
blocking Klipfontein Road and
Vanguard Drive.

Golden Arrow's general manager
Mr. Hannes Grebe said buses were
forced to stop on the outskirts of
Mitchells Plain and drop passen-
gers off at Westgate Mall.

"It is unfortunate that some
people had to walk a long way to
get home, but we feared for the
safety of passengers and drivers," he said.

There had been separate inci-
dents of stone-throwing and
tyreslashing, and shots had been fired
near Manenberg terminus, he said.

Yesterday thousands of com-
muters were late for work because
of the strike. The railways reported-
ly carried 15% more passengers
than usual.

Taxi associations Cata and
Codeta signed a resolution yester-
day condemning the shootings in
the recent taxi violence.

They pledged to work towards
forging peace and stability in the
taxi industry and called for a cess-
ation of "shootings or killings".

They appealed to all taxi drivers
and operators to resume their nor-
mal work today.

The ANC's Western Cape
branch has condemned the intimi-
dation and disruption by certain
taxi drivers yesterday.
Bid unveiled to end taxi violence

By Wilson Ramothata

IN a bid to end taxi violence, national taxi operators at the weekend resolved to appoint a 32-member committee from different organisations within the industry to work towards achieving peace.

Speaking at the peace conference in Midrand, Lethlabile Taxi Organisation spokesman Mr Jacob Ledwaba said the committee would work towards a ceasefire and a formation of one taxi organisation.

He said the committee would visit and conduct hearings in troubled areas in the nine provinces.

Taxi organisations were expected to submit the names of their representatives later this week.

Each organisation would have a chance to submit two names, Ledwaba said.

He said the peace conference was also aimed at bringing unity to the industry.

The conference which was attended by various taxi organisations and commuter representatives also appointed a five-member interim committee to brief and mobilise other organisations that were not present at the conference.

The committee was mandated to appeal to Government to exempt the taxi industry from the recent petrol hike.

'Regulate industry'

"The Government should come in to regulate the industry in order to make it viable to commuters," Ledwaba said.

However, taxi organisations agreed in principle not to increase fares because this would financially damage the industry as people would resort to other means of transport.

Taxi organisations will meet again on May 21 and 22 at the World Trade Centre to formulate further strategies to clean up the industry."
Taxi peace bid becomes a war of words

BY ADAM COOKES

A conference aimed at bringing peace to the war-torn taxi industry turned sour yesterday when two associations nearly scuttled the initiative.

The conference of the National Taxi Transitional Committee (NTTC) at the World Trade Centre in Kempton Park was attended by about 60 delegates representing 17 national taxi organisations.

The initiative sprang from government and industry efforts to try to bring about peace in the embattled industry and to work out a strategy for its development.

But about 100 taxi association members claiming to represent two major taxi groups – the Lehlabile Taxi Organisation (LTO) and the South African Long Distance Taxi Association – said the meeting was illegitimate as they had not been properly consulted.

After a heated debate, LTO spokesman Jacob Ledwaba walked out of the conference, followed by other delegates who begged him not to leave. He twice threatened to leave, which would have left the initiative in tatters.

He was objecting to the inclusion in the conference of James Chapman, a consultant to the NTTC, who was accused of having prepared the agenda without prior consultation.

But Chapman was confident of a positive outcome.

"If we are to resolve the years of animosity, which was fuelled by past administrations, we need to keep all the big organisations on board," he said.
Taxi unity conference gets off to stormy start

A NATIONAL taxi unity conference had a stormy start at the World Trade Centre in Kempton Park yesterday with fighting talk and slanging matches between delegations, and threats to walk out.

SA's 12 most powerful taxi organisations were represented at what was billed a two-day taxi unity conference, sponsored by a major oil company.

But in the first session the agenda was ignored as delegates argued among themselves and with Pretoria transport consultant James Chapman, who was running the conference secretariat.

Newly formed Transitional United SA Taxi Council organiser Jacob Ledwaba, who claimed to represent numerous taxi organisations, called for a conference boycott and for Chapman to be booted out.

After a heated argument Ledwaba walked out, but was persuaded to return later. Another organisation threatened a walkout because they said they were not properly invited. The walkout was stopped when a letter from their association, accepting the invitation and naming delegates, was produced.

The conference followed a taxi peace conference in Cape Town in February, where Transport Minister Mac Maharaj urged leaders to end rivalry and violence and form one united body. A 10-member National Taxi Transitional Committee was elected to organise a unification conference.

Referring to the heated debate, Chapman, a consultant to the taxi industry for 17 years, said this was to be expected. "You have the leadership of the whole taxi industry in this conference and there are people who have not spoken to one another for five years.

"They were divided by the previous government and violence was encouraged. Now they are sitting down and talking ..." About 800,000 people are employed in the industry and if they can form a united body, they could become the biggest micro-economic force in the country." — Sapa.
Dissent follows meeting's call for united taxi body

BY MANO 23/5/96

The two-day national taxi transitional meeting ended yesterday on yet another sour note when the SA Long Distance Taxi Association (Saltda) distanced itself from the resolutions of the initiative.

The conference, held at the World Trade Centre in Kempton Park, moved to form a united taxi body “to speak with one voice for the industry”.

But Saltda spokesman Sonke Siwweya said the decision was premature as “members on the ground had not been consulted”.

“People who are affected by this taxi violence know nothing about these peace initiatives,” said Siwweya, arguing that “peace should begin on the ground where it is most needed”.

Saltda also objected to the manner in which the organisation would be represented on the united taxi body.

North West Province national taxi task team member John Mboweni pointed out there were also other associations that were not part of the resolutions, but he said the management committee had been given a mandate by delegates from all provinces and major taxi associations to implement recommendations adopted at the convention.

The proposals included drawing up a constitution; policy issues; budgets and source of funding; powers to convene meetings and liaison with government ministers.
Taximen unite
to end hostilities

MORE THAN 90 percent of South Africa’s minibus taxi groups yesterday united in an attempt to halt violence associated with the industry and to get Government transport subsidies.

"This development is viewed as historical within the taxi industry and marks the bridging of the enormous rifts in the industry," the national taxi management committee (Manco) said after a two-day, tense negotiating conference in Johannesburg.

According to police, 254 people died in minibus violence last year and 300 were injured — a 10 percent increase from 1994.

The groups hope Manco will help to quell violence often sparked by drivers competing for routes and passengers.

"The industry is going to start rolling up its sleeves," said Mr Joe Bowen, a taxi representative from Gauteng.

Another goal the statutory body — the first of its kind for the industry — hopes to tackle is getting government transport subsidies that have typically gone to train and bus commuters.

According to the taxi group, minibus taxis transport more than 56 percent of South Africa’s commuters and should be eligible for government subsidies and aid.

"We see the way government subsidies have been dished out as a violation of the very letter of the Constitution," Bowen said.

Taxi representative Mr Boeti Letsoela said the unified body would be in charge of regulating the industry, forming policies and liaising with the Government.

The South African Long Distance Taxi Association was reportedly the only minibus taxi organisation which did not join the unified body.

The group said Salda disagreed with the way provincial leadership for the body would be set up.

"We will still have negotiations with them," Bowen said. — Sapa.
Taxi talks off again

A MEETING described as "vital" between the African National Congress and the Western Cape Taxi Alliance has been postponed again.

It is unclear why discussions were not held in Mitchell's Plain this week.

A spokesman for the Western Cape Taxi Alliance, Junaid Peters, said none of the relevant participants had arrived.

But an ANC spokesman said the purpose of the meeting had merely been to arrange another meeting for later this week.

The meeting was called to consider an accusation that the taxi alliance, which organised a protest against the fuel price rise, supported the National Party.

"This is a slap in the face. We want to clear our name," said Mr. Peters.

He said the taxi industry in Mitchell's Plain had a problem with the government rather than with the ANC.

An ANC spokesman confirmed the meeting would be held later.
Wynberg taxi men sign pact

Code of conduct agreed by all

Southern Reporter

A CODE of conduct, drawn up jointly by taxi associations using the Wynberg transport forum, has been accepted at a meeting attended by 80 taxi marshals.

Steve Britto, chairman of the forum, said: "We felt the taxi industry had such a bad name we wanted to turn it around and through the code we hope to achieve this."

"The code has been drawn up to promote management and control of the rank from within," he said.

The new system offered motorists the opportunity to lodge complaints - and compliments - with the marshals.

These responses could be assessed and attended to at management level, he said.

"The marshals will be at the forefront of the new system," Mr Britto said.

"They have been drawn from all taxi associations using the rank and will supervise the implementation of the code."

Taxi associations using the rank include Route Seven, Hanover Park, Grassy Park, Parkwood Estate, and Lotus River.

The marshals' responsibilities will be to curb abusive language, loitering, gambling, the misuse of facilities in the area and traffic violations.

Councillor Mansoor Jaffer said: "The Transport Forum identified problem areas, which included dangerous driving in Ottery Road and noise from the rank near the mosque, which disturbs prayer."

Inspector George Matfield, community policing officer for Wynberg, said the Transport Forum had been a great success.

He said that since its formation in April no crimes had been committed at the rank.

"Crime has dropped completely and we have brought several criminals to book including an illegal liquor dealer," Inspector Matfield said.
Taxi talks put off yet again

Vuyani Ntsebenzisa
Western Cape<br>

The Western Cape Provincial Government and the Western Cape Taxi Industry have decided to postpone talks on the taxi industry's request to be granted a special permit to operate in the province.

The decision was made after a meeting between government officials and taxi representatives this week.

The talks were initially scheduled for last week, but were postponed due to outstanding issues that needed to be addressed.

The taxi industry has been calling for a special permit to operate in the province, citing the need to improve service delivery and address safety concerns.

Government officials have stated that they will continue to engage with the taxi industry to find a solution that meets the needs of both parties.

The postponement of the talks is expected to cause frustration among taxi operators, who have been waiting for a resolution to their long-standing request.

The government has assured the taxi industry that it is committed to finding a solution that will improve service delivery in the province.
Taximen warn Maharaj on transport policy changes

By Thabo Leshilo

Johannesburg — South Africa’s taxi bosses yesterday warned Mac Maharaj, the transport minister, not to go ahead with proposed changes to the country’s public transport policy, which could be detrimental to the multimillion-rand industry.

Speaking at the end of a two-day peace and unity conference at the World Trade Centre, the captains of the taxi industry said they would support the Transport and General Workers’ Union in its planned protests against Maharaj’s plan to introduce competitive tenders for the provision of bus transport.

The taximen said the introduction of competitive tenders would drive their members out of business as they would not be able to compete with large bus companies for government contracts.

“We won’t accept the government saying we should compete with big business. We are still toddlers,” said Joe Mboweni, a representative of taxi bodies in North West Province and a member of the national taxi task team set up by Maharaj to investigate problems in the industry.

Although the taximen did not spell out what action they would take, Mboweni hinted at a fuel boycott. “As businessmen, we will not toyi-toyi (like the union) but will do it in a way that the economy will suffer,” he said.

He said competitive tenders would lead to increased unemployment in the taxi industry because one bus driver could do the work of four taxi drivers.

The taximen were also angry because they still did not receive government subsidies, despite the fact that they transported at least half of the commuting public.

The government has allocated R860 million in subsidies for bus companies for the fiscal year.

Mboweni accused the transport department of having ignored the input from the taxi industry in drawing up the Green Paper on transport.

The department is drawing up a White Paper to be tabled in parliament in July.

The meeting decided to form a united taxi body to enable the industry to speak with one voice and promote peace. A management committee was appointed to draw up a new constitution, consider policy issues, prepare budgets, source funding and liaise with the government.

The taximen hailed the move towards unity as a historic moment that would help restore profitability and significantly reduce violence.

The SA Long Distance Taxi Association expressed reservations about peace prospects, saying the new initiative did not involve taximen at grassroots level.
Five hurt in taxi war

By Themba Sepotokele

THREE of five victims of a taxi-shooting yesterday at Fourways, north-west of Johannesburg, are fighting for their lives at Johannesburg Hospital and the other two are in serious but stable conditions.

Hospital spokeswoman Mrs Trudie Schutte told Sowetan yesterday that three male victims were in the intensive care unit while the other two were admitted at the theatre.

The fighting by the rival Bryanston Taxi Association (BTA) and the newly formed Diepnooit Taxi Association (DTA) was sparked by a dispute over routes.

Chief of the CID in the area Captain Johan Koegelenberg said both groups claimed the other was operating illegally.

Police intervened members of the BTA threatening to attack an alleged "hitman" said to belong to the DTA. They later arrested three men in connection with the shooting and confiscated three firearms.

A member of the BTA, Mr Sampie Masopa, claimed the DTA had forged permits to operate on the route.

He said trouble started when the DTA tried to "hijack" the rank. "They shot at our cars on three occasions and are now forcing passengers out of our taxis," he claimed.

A spokesman for the DTA said they had permits to operate on the route but were being prevented from doing so by members of the BTA.

Police were yesterday monitoring the situation.
Another peace deal – then another shooting

By WILLIAM-MERVIN GUMede

The ink had hardly dried on a peace agreement signed by taxi organisations around the country, committing them to ending the taxi violence, when three people were injured in a taxi shooting in William Nicol Drive, Sandton, on Thursday morning.

Police blamed the Bryanston (DTA) and Diepoors (DTA) Taxi Associations for the attack, which took place less than 24 hours after the peace pact.

Police spokesman Inspector Andy Pieke said a taxi driver was shot in the leg and a passenger in the shoulder and leg. Another person in a car was also shot and injured. Men seen rushing from the scene in a red minibus with false number plates were said to be behind the attack.

Three men believed to be connected with the shooting were later arrested and three firearms confiscated.

Captain Johan Koegelenbore, police crime and investigations division chief in the area, said both groups had accused each other of operating illegally.

And police had to stop Bryanston taxi men assaulting a man they alleged was a “hitman” from the DTA.

Sampie Masopha, a spokesman for the BTA, accused the DTA of forging permits to operate on the route. Police were yesterday still keeping a watchful eye on the area.

Boetie Letsosela, chairman of the South African Long Distance Taxi Association, said in response to the shooting that the taxi industry needed to be regulated properly if violence was to be eradicated.

Meanwhile, police said figures showed that 224 people died in minibus taxi violence last year and 360 were injured – a 10% rise from 1994.
Three people injured as shootings blast taxi peace accord

WILLIAM-MERVIN GUMELDE
Own Correspondent
Johannesburg - The ink had hardly dried on a peace agreement signed by taxi organisations around the country committing them to ending the taxi violence when three people were injured in a taxi shooting in William Nicol Drive, Fourways, Johannesburg.

Police blamed the Bryanston (BTA) and Diepnoit Taxi Associations (DTA) for the attack on Thursday, less than 24 hours after the peace pact. Police spokesman Andy Picke said a taxi driver was shot in the leg, and a passerby in the shoulder and leg in the incident. A third person in another vehicle was also shot and injured.

Men in a red minibus with false number plates seen rushing from the scene were alleged to be behind the attack.

Police crime and investigations division chief in the area Johan Koegelenberg said both groups accused each other of operating illegally. Police had to stop Bryanston taxi men assaulting a man they alleged was a "hitman" from the DTA. Three men believed to be connected with the shooting were arrested and three firearms were confiscated.

A spokesman from the BTA, Samile Masopha, accused the DTA of forging permits to operate on the route. Police were still keeping a watchful eye on the area yesterday.

Chairman of the SA Long Distance Taxi Association Boetie Letsela said in response to the shooting the taxi industry needed to be properly regulated if violence was to be eradicated from the industry.

Meanwhile, police said 224 people died in minibus taxi violence in 1993 and 390 were injured - a 10 percent rise from 1994.
GLYNNIS UNDERHILL
Staff Reporter

ILLEGAL "pirate" taxis are allegedly employing armed men to ride shotgun on some Cape Town routes.

While taxis in the Western Cape might be carrying legal arms, they were not "riding shotgun," according to Feock Ariefdien, secretary on the Western Cape Taxi Task Team. A taxi which was spotted with a man "riding shotgun" in Sea Point must have been a pirate on the road, which was operating without a municipal permit, he said.

Witnesses were recently stunned to see a man leap out of a taxi with his gun cocked and usher passengers into the minibus on Sea Point Main Road.

However, Mr Ariefdien said his team had been quite adamant in putting across the message to leave guns at home.

It was the "illegals" without municipal permits which were driving around with arms, said Mr Ariefdien.

"But let's face it, most of society is armed with legal weapons, some own four or five or even 10," he said.

Taxi operators brandishing weapons without reason can be arrested and charged, according to police.

Sergeant Robert Cant of the police firearm licensing department said taxi operators could be arrested and charged if they were seen to be wielding weapons without necessity.

"They can be charged for pointing a firearm in anybody's direction. Even if the weapon is legal, it is there for the sole purpose of necessity," he said.

"Monitoring squads" consisting of legal taxi operators were checking up on routes to keep tabs on the illegals, said Mr Ariefdien.

The traffic department was not helping in keeping these taxi operators off the routes, he claimed.

"They only concentrate on the taxis which they know are legal because they can give us heavy fines for traffic violations," alleged Mr Ariefdien.

The Western Cape Taxi Task Team, which was appointed by a ministerial committee, is looking into many aspects of the taxi industry, including police issues.

There are now about 100 taxi associations in the Western Cape, all governed by constitutions and codes of conduct.

Mr Ariefdien, who is also the provincial representative on the National Taxi Task Team, believes many people prefer to project an image of the taxi industry in chaos.

As an organised unit, taxis would eventually wield as much power as the trade unions' Cosatu, he said.

"We move the bulk masses of people, at least 50 percent of the population, to and fro from work," explained Mr Ariefdien.

The petrol price increase had come as a blow, but the government was looking at ways to subsidise the taxi industry, he said.

He believed much of the taxi violence was set-up.

"Quite honestly there is not a really a taxi war. What better place to stage a killing than a taxi rank. The police and media then just attribute this to the 'taxi war'," he said.

Taxi drivers overcome stormy start to pact

WILLIAM-MERVIN GUMEDE
Own Correspondent

JOHANNESBURG. - After a stormy start and fighting talk, the volatile taxi industry stitched together a historic pact this week, uniting most taxi groups into a single body.

The national taxi unity conference at the World Trade Centre in Kempton Park was almost a non-starter when slanging matches erupted between delegations over the agenda, and some taxi organisations threatened to walk out.

The country's 17 most powerful taxi organisations got together at the two-day event.

It followed a taxi peace conference in Cape Town in February where Transport Minister Mac Maharaj urged leaders to end rivalry and violence and form a united body.

Mr Maharaj gave the organisations an ultimatum to unite or forfeit government transport subsidies.

In the first session of the conference, the agenda was ignored as delegates argued among themselves and with transport consultant James Chapman, in charge of the secretariat.

Mr Chapman later said the heated debate was to be expected.

"You have the leadership of the whole taxi industry in this conference and there are people who have not spoken to one another for five years.

"They were divided by the previous government and violence was encouraged. Now they are sitting down and talking.

"About 300 000 people are employed in the industry and if they can form a united body, they would be the biggest micro-economic force in the country."

A national taxi Management Committee (Manco) was elected to draw up a new constitution and a taxi policy, source funding and liaise with the government.

Manco is intended to be a statutory body, the first of its kind for the taxi industry.

Manco said the minibus taxis transported more than 50 percent of South Africa's commuters and should be eligible for government subsidies and aid.

"We see the way government subsidies have been dished out as a violation of the very letter of the constitution."
New Codeta leaders vow to seek taxi peace

TAXI organisation Codeta's new leaders have committed themselves to peace and stability in the industry.

After months of internal conflict, a new, seven-strong executive council was elected yesterday by a managing council at the offices of Codeta's lawyers. They are George Skade, Gilbert Msotso, Jaftha Magoda, Charley Doda, Howard Dyubeni, Reggie Malimba and chairman David Jeziile.

Spokesman Howard Dyubeni said yesterday: "We are very happy. The people have spoken.

"Finally people can stop asking who the leaders of Codeta are and who is representing the people," he said.

Uncertainty over the leadership of Codeta has caused much conflict and unrest recently in the industry.

Negotiations with taxi organisations have repeatedly failed because of the lack of clarity over who was representing the organisation.

Last week the Supreme Court ordered that a general Codeta meeting be held.

At this meeting Codeta members unanimously voted the old executive out and elected a new council, from which the executive council was chosen yesterday. Mr Dyubeni said the new executive council was committed to the Codeta constitution and would address its members tomorrow at a mass meeting.

He said that unlike the old executive, the new executive council would work closely with its members.

On Friday the council will have a meeting with Western Cape Transport Minister Leonard Ramathlakane.

NEWLY ELECTED: The new leadership of the taxi organisation Codeta are determined to help stop violence in the taxi industry. They are, from left, Reggie Malimba, Howard Dyubeni, Charley Doda, Jaftha Magoda, Gilbert Msotso and George Skade. The seventh member, David Jeziile, was not present.
Six banks to pay taxi owners R2-m

Financial Research Foundation blames the banks for taxi violence

By Themba Sepotokele

The Human Rights Commission has asked six banks to repay R2 million owed to 182 taxi owners after a probe by the Financial Research Foundation (FRF) revealed that these institutions were overcharging owners on interest, illegal fees and insurance.

According to a statement released by FRF chairman Mr Dave Thomas this week, his organisation has uncovered a massive scam over the past year.

He attributed the ongoing taxi violence to financial institutions, saying they were the "root cause of the taxi unrest".

Thomas said the FRF was investigating over 1 000 hire purchase accounts of taxi owners and found that they have been overcharged by amounts over R100 000 per hire purchase account.

The FRF has met with Trade and Industry Minister Mr Trevor Manuel, Justice Minister Mr Dullah Omar and the Human Rights Commission about the issue.

Rescinded judgement

After the meeting, the attorney general agreed to prosecute the banks, the Commercial Crime Unit and leading financial institutions, Thomas said.

He said the FRF had a previous judgment against a taxi owner rescinded.

The magistrate ruled that the bank had charged 30 percent when it was only allowed by the Usury Act to charge 28 percent.

The organisation has also requested the National Taxi Task Team to investigate allegations that the cause of the ongoing taxi violence is that banks are overcharging taxi owners on interest fees and illegal insurance.

Thomas said the transport department is presently seeking alternatives to this massive problem.

However, head of the Human Rights Commission Dr Barney Pityana refused to comment on the issue saying the matter was at a sensitive stage.

He said his organisation was in a "delicate" stage with the banks.
Taxi industry needs rescue package

By Thabo Leshilo

Johannesburg — The transport department has been urged to speed up the implementation of its R401 million rescue package for the minibus taxi industry to soften the blow to the depressed industry of the 13c a litre petrol price rise, to come into effect on Wednesday.

James Chapman, a transport consultant, said the rescue plan, which included reducing the cost of finance, insurance and fuel, could save taxi operators, whose margins had been under pressure.

"The petrol price increase ... could be the straw that will break the camel's back," Chapman said.

He said the industry, which gets no government subsidy despite transporting more than half the country's commuters, had become less profitable because costs had risen sharply.

Peter Rabali, the president of the National African Federated Transport Organisation, said the taxi industry would be forced to increase fares.
Petrol drags inflation up in its wake

With fuel at its highest level yet, taxi drivers threaten strike action

South African transport fuel costs increased to their highest price ever at midnight, and motorists, fleet managers and commuters woke up this morning with the prospect of being poorer from higher running costs.

The price of petrol went up a further 13c/l after the last increase and economists said the hikes would inevitably have a knock-on effect right down the consumer line.

Added to last month's 14c/l price rise, the fuel cost has now risen to a record high of R2.19 a litre. Diesel went up by 5c/l to R2.02. Although many motorists queued up at filling stations until late last night to save a few rand a tankful, most seemed resigned.

Users of public transport will also feel the bite, bus companies and taxi organisations saying they would review and most likely increase their fares soon.

The Automobile Association said today it saw the soaring cost of petrol as an opportunity to revisit the whole question surrounding the deregulation of the oil industry as a matter of urgency.

Spokesman Robin Scholtz said: "It is only in a deregulated market that the motorist can reap any benefit from economies of scale that such a market-driven industry would bring."

The South African Black Taxi Association (Sabella) warned today it was considering national strike action and that the price would be passed on to its customers.

Spokesman Reggie Mutsi said Sabella was angered that it had not been involved in discussions about the price. "Our is one of the largest industries affected by the cost of fuel and we should have been consulted before any decisions were made," he said.

National African Federated Taxi Organisation secretary-general Victor Mogale confirmed the rise was forcing the industry to raise fare prices: "We are really suffering because it's not only petrol that has gone up but the price of spare parts has also increased with the devaluation of the rand."

However, Mogale added that Nafta was not supporting any strike action, but wanted to negotiate with the government.

Cosatu's parliamentary office chief in Cape Town, Neil Coleman, warned the increase would have a disastrous effect on the economy and consumers: "We cannot behave as if the situation is normal. We will be approaching Government to find some mechanism to deal with the situation and avoid the devastating effects the price increase may have."

National Congress of Trade Unions deputy general secretary Mahlomola Sib诸葛亮 said: "The latest price hike has come at a time when unions are just about to begin their annual wage and conditions of employment negotiations. Unions are not expected to respect the current rate of inflation following the petrol price increase."

Federation of South African Labour spokesman Darnhaus van der Merwe said: "There is no doubt the Government must take some of the blame as the consumer has been paralysed again."
Taxman has a plan to take on the taximan

Political Staff

The taxman is taking on the taxman.

Commissioner for Inland Revenue Trevor van Heerden has told parliament that taxi operators are among a burgeoning number of entrepreneurs who should be paying tax and aren't.

Briefing the joint standing committee on finance on the activities of the SA Revenue Service (SARS), Mr Van Heerden said the service had devised a plan to collect tax in the informal sector.

Closing in on the informal sector would be part of the revenue service's overall efforts to recover an outstanding R9 billion in unpaid revenue.

The SARS was expecting to employ 220 investigating officers during the next five years to net millions of rands a year which were currently lost and to ensure that local industries were protected.
Bus, taxi fares set to rise

Rail services expected to benefit

LINDSAY BARNES
Staff Reporter

WESTERN Cape commuters will be hard hit this month by an increase in bus and taxi fares as a result of soaring fuel prices.

Golden Arrow Bus Services, Codeta and Cata all confirmed their fares had risen or were to rise again to absorb the shock of the recent increases in petrol and diesel.

On Wednesday last week petrol rose 13c a litre to R2.09, while diesel went up 5c a litre to R1.92. Unleaded fuel rose to R2.09 a litre.

This followed a 16c increase for both at the beginning of June, and amounted to a jump of 32c a litre for diesel and 35c a litre for petrol since January.

The reason for the shocking new prices was the under-recovery of petrol sold between April 26 and May 25, the plummeting rand and a rise in international oil prices, according to the Central Energy Fund.

Cape Metro Rail Services, whose fares have remained unchanged since September last year, look set to benefit as many taxi commuters are expected to opt for the cheaper rail option.

Spokesperson Riana Jacobs said no fare rise was imminent. "At this stage we haven't been notified of any imminent increase," she said.

Bus fares are set to increase between 10 and 20c a trip from July 1 following the latest increase in diesel prices, Golden Arrow Bus Services announced last week.

Diesel is to increase for the eighth time in successive months, pushing up the bus company's operating costs.

While the increases will not affect all its 90 routes, the company will only announce towards the end of the month which are in the spotlight, general manager Hannes Grebe said.

He was confident the company would not lose commuters, due to an anticipated rise in taxi fares, too.

"The whole of the Western Province will be affected. In some instances the taxis haven't put up fares in four years," he said.

Golden Arrow's fares rose by about five percent in July last year and again in January.

While a further increase had not been expected until January 1997, the 32c rise in diesel so far this year forced the company's hand.

"That added R4 million to our expenses and we have to try to recoup some of that," Mr Grebe said.

The next increase was scheduled for January but this could be moved forward if the petrol price went up in the interim.

Cata president Stephen Williams announced that fares charged by its members were to rise by 50c a route today.

The fare from Nyanga to Claremont/Wynberg would now cost R3, from central Cape Town to Khayelitsha R4.50, and from Wynberg to the Foreshore R4.50.

Cata's last increase was two years ago and this week's jump was unavoidable as a result of the recent petrol price increases, Mr Stephens said. The taxi fare increase could have a detrimental effect on taxi owners as many commuters may seek cheaper options.

"A lot of people won't take taxis anymore. They will take the trains as most of them (rail commuters) don't pay," he alleged.

James Tafa of Codeta confirmed its fares would also rise by 50c. This increase followed one of 30c in December and came earlier than anticipated.
Taxi industry should be encouraged to use diesel...
Metered taxi industry may soon get national grading system

By Stuart Rutherford

Durban — The unregulated metered taxi industry in South Africa might soon get a national grading system, if proposals by the metered taxi working group, a subsidiary body of the national taxi task team, were accepted.

Faye Freedman, the KwaZulu Natal committee member, said they were proposing that three grades be established: tourist, standard and shared ride.

"We'd like to improve the image of the industry and upgrade standards so that taxis, which deal with tourists, are of an international taxi standard."

She said criteria for the grades and the system would be issues discussed at workshops in Durban, Port Elizabeth, Cape Town and Gauteng this month.

Freedman said workshop delegates would also discuss the escalating input costs, high crime rates and the training of drivers and other people in the industry.

"There will be a working document available at the workshops detailing problems, issues and recommendations that we have been working on," she said.

These proposals had come out of four meetings of the working group, which was established in March this year by taxi operators, government officials and transport experts from around the country.

She said the establishment of a national grading system would help bring quality standards to the industry which previously had no internal regulation. "We want to encourage a more taxi-friendly industry like London and New York," she said.

Freedman said that the proposed body should administer the grading system and be representative of the metered taxi industry and tourism bodies like Satour, Fedhas and the greater Durban marketing authority.

Freedman said once input had been received from the workshops, the working group would formulate final proposals and hand them over to the national taxi task team in the middle of next month.
Sun Air staff agree to privatisation

By Audrey d'Angelo

Cape Town — Staff of the state-owned regional airline, Sun Air, have all voted in favour of privatisation and are keen for it to go ahead, Johan Borstlap, the managing director, said this week.

Borstlap said he thought Sun Air, which was not part of Transnet, would be privatised soon. The government was talking to Cosatu and he hoped for an announcement in about a month.

Sun Air started out as Bop Air. Its main business for 14 years was ferrying tourists between Johannesburg and Sun City.

Since the abolition of the Bophuthatswana government it has achieved rapid growth and now offers scheduled services linking the Johannesburg, Cape Town and Durban triangle and carries tourists between Sun City and Victoria Falls.

Borstlap believed all the airline's 320 employees, 50 percent of whom are black, would be allocated shares. Sun Air is proving a strong competitor to South Africa's second airline, the 50-year-old, unlisted Comair.

Yesterday, Comair announced a franchise agreement with British Airways.

Borstlap said Sun Air might form a similar link with a foreign airline after privatisation.
Taxi subsidies mooted

They may be the only solution for an industry that is not sufficiently viable and is not operating in a level playing field, says Gauteng transport MEC.

BY MANDELTA MTHEMBU

The taxi industry could receive direct subsidies when transport subsidy allocations are transferred from the national government to the provinces next year.

Warning that continuous demands by the taxi industry for subsidies could not be ignored, outgoing Gauteng Public Transport and Roads MEC Olaus van Zyl said “more direct subsidies may be the only solution” if the formation of cooperatives did not address taxi problems.

“The playing field is not level for them,” he said. “The industry must become financially more viable.”

Speaking during the presentation of a R415-million budget in the Gauteng legislature, Van Zyl said the department would also receive about R1,2-billion for public transport subsidies (R810-million for rail and R390-million for bus transport) as part of the Government’s plan to transfer subsidy allocations to provinces as from April 1, 1997.

Although it was still difficult to organise subsidies for taxis, Van Zyl said the industry would be assisted through the reduction in vehicle capital, operating and insurance costs, and an increase in income “through more realistic tariffs and extra work”.

“If we do not succeed with this, more direct subsidies may be the only solution,” he said.

He also stressed the need for regulation and control of the industry, saying about 40% of taxis were unregistered. This represented about 20 000 of the 50 000 taxis in Gauteng.

A process of registering the taxis was expected to begin in the next month or so.

“Before this, we will have to register associations so that they could play a role in the registering of taxis, which needs to be done voluntarily and also in such a way that no newcomers slip into the already over-supplied industry,” Van Zyl said.

He also announced stiff law enforcement to reduce the overloading of heavy vehicles, which caused more than R400-million damage to the roads, and to cut down on the number of traffic accidents, which cost the province R4-billion a year.

On funding, Gauteng supported the Government’s proposal to increase its fuel levies for a dedicated road fund, but Van Zyl said some of the funds should “come down to the provinces rather than drawing up more roads to the national level”.

NEWS
Two hurt in new taxi violence

Staff Reporter

A TAXI driver and a passenger have been injured in a new outbreak of taxi violence in Khayelitsha.

Cape Amalgamated Taxi Association (Cata) chairman Stephen Williams said shots had been fired at Cata taxis in two separate incidents yesterday.

In Makaza, a passenger had been injured when shots smashed the rear window of a taxi.

In the other incident a driver was injured by shots fired at his taxi.

Mr Williams said he had contacted the office of Western Cape Transport Minister Leonard Ramathlakane for an urgent meeting to discuss the violence.

Police have said that a major problem was the excessive number of taxis.
ON THE MOVE Peter Mageza, the chief executive of Autonet, displays the keys to his chunk of Mainline Carriers, Laser Transport Holdings' troublesome subsidiary

**Autonet swallows a slice of Mainline**

By Marc Hassenfuss

CAPE EDITOR

Cape Town — Autonet, Transnet's road transport arm, emerged yesterday as the surprise buyer for a large slice of Laser Transport Holdings' troublesome subsidiary Mainline Carriers.

Transnet, a transport parastatal, is a strong contender for privatisation.

Autonet will buy 235 vehicles from Mainline Carriers for about R29 million. The deal also includes refrigeration and general cargo contracts worth about R29.5 million.

Mainline Carriers will not disappear from the Laser stable because its profitable remnants will continue operations.

Laser bought Mainline in May 1994 for R11 million, but Mainline's under-performance proved too costly for its bottom line.

Peter Mageza, Autonet's chief executive, believed Laser's proposal was competitive because Autonet's infrastructure allowed the incorporation of the Mainline fleet at low costs.

He said the Mainline deal was a strategic move in line with Autonet's policy of expanding in identified markets.

□ See Business Watch, Page 14
Adele Balata, Staff Reporter

The sensitive question of whether mentally and physically disabled people can be taught in mainstream schools, universities and the workplace is the subject of heated debate and is only likely to be settled when the government makes a policy decision.

While lobbyists for a single inclusive education system are opposed to "banishing" disabled children to special schools, others believe that educating disabled children in classes with children with no disabilities would be disastrous for everyone.

The Ministry of Education is to appoint a National Commission on Special Needs in Education to review the policies and principles regarding special education.

Two committees have been set up to investigate and research the issue, one of which - the national curriculum committee - has already accepted inclusive education in principle, according to well placed sources.

The pro-inclusion groups say it's a human rights issue and believe that sending children with special education needs to ordinary schools, with the necessary support systems to meet their needs, is the most effective way of fighting discriminatory attitudes towards the disabled, creating welcoming communities and building an inclusive society.

Supporting their position with a proclamation from a world conference on special needs education held in Salamanca in Spain in 1994, these groups - which include the South African Federal Council on Disability - believe an education system should be designed to take into account each individual child's unique characteristics, interests, abilities and learning needs.

Different styles and rates of learning and different language needs - in the case of deaf learners, where their first language is sign language - would have to be accommodated.

The anti-lobbyists believe inclusion, which they say "sounds good in principle" , is an unattainable ideal for an education system that is already in crisis and underscored by high pupil-teacher ratios and teacher retrenchments. This system, therefore, does not meet the needs of those children currently in mainstream schools.

They do not believe that South Africa can afford it in the short or long term.

There is also the fear that children with disabilities would suffer cruel attacks in the mainstream school system and question whether the rights of those without disabilities will be respected.

Many also believe that, because of the high pupil to teacher ratio, there would be heavier burdens placed on teachers who would have to worry about children with special needs.

One of the strongest opponents of inclusion comes from the deaf community. Social worker for the Deaf Community Cape Town Wilma Krielhoudt says: "Access to information for deaf children is best via sign language. The best place for this in special schools for deaf children, with full sign language being used in the classroom."

She adds that a deaf child in a hearing school is so often an interpreter, "will not receive full information that is needed for the psycho-social development and well being of the deaf children.

Deaf Federation of South Africa PRO Carol Corey, who has a deaf daughter, says deaf people - whether they communicate through sign language or lipreading - require specialist and intensive teaching.

"Inclusive schooling for the deaf would confuse these brilliant and courageous people to untold frustration, isolation and a break down in confidence."

She adds that children who are not disabled can become anxious and sensitive to disabled children by being in contact with them. She says the education system would sacrifice their education and the "costs would be too much to bear."

Vista Nova, the national co-ordinator of the Disabled Children's Action Group who has a disabled child currently in a special school, says: "We believe inclusion cannot happen overnight. It's a vision for a future education system and a paradigm shift from the segregated system that we have now."

"We are not looking for quick fixes solutions and we understand what the problems of the current system are. But we believe inclusion is the only way that people's fear of disability will be reduced."

"We do not want our children stepped into special schools in a system which has failed them. We are also not advocating dumping children into mainstream schools if they cannot cope. We need to have an inclusive system that caters for all needs. Inclusion has to be an option."

"We are not advocating the closure of special schools, which are expensive, but that they become resource centres where adult basic education is taught."

Outreach programmes should be conducted from them, and parents and disabled children need be drawn in and allowed to participate.

Mrs Soit says that staff with specialist skills, like occupational therapists, need to go to ordinary schools and give advice to teachers on how to deal with children with disabilities in their classes.

She said that it was time that parents had a say in where their children should be placed.

It should not be left exclusively to doctors, social workers and other church workers.

Project co-ordinator of the Cape Mental Health Society Elgin Kirschel believes in training "a rational middleground" on the issue.

She said the society was already in the process of giving preschool teachers the support and training needed to cope with disabled children from an early age.

"I think it's important that parents can get to a point where they can totally or physically disabled child onto the bus and not feel ashamed." She believes it is important to have the support of the community as well and not just have "special" teachers who are not coping with mainstream schools, but at the same time there are also problems with the opposite view of keeping children separate from the community.

The important aspect was to begin training teachers at the earliest stage possible to cope with disabled children.

According to Vista Nova psychologist Jean Du Plessis, the critical issue in the debate is the right of the individual child and not the implementation of a policy which sounds good.

"It would be cruel and insensitive to put a child in a situation where he or she is not coping. There are stresses in the mainstream which could cause some disable children to crumble. We place people in mainstream in a very careful way and usually on a trial basis," he said.

Despite the diverse views, there is consensus that the issues need to be debated and concerned parties at all levels of government need to be consulted before policies are made.
Unions, taxi bodies to protest at fuel price hike

BY MARIA MCHEREN

Many commuters could be stranded next week when transport organisations embark on a national protest action against the fuel price.

The protest action, called by the SA Independent Trade Union Confederation and the Transitional United SA Taxi Council (Tusatco), will be held at the offices of the Department of Mineral and Energy Affairs, Transport and Finance countrywide.

The organisations have also called on all motorists to stop for 15 minutes, regardless of where they may be, to protest against the increases.

The action follows this week’s meeting between the organisations and the Government at which Tusatco demanded that taxis be exempted from petrol price increases.

The increase in the price of petrol so far this year amounts to R2.35 per litre, from a price of R1.84 per litre in January.

Although the Government has made it clear that economic constraints made it difficult for taxis to be exempted, Tusatco spokesman Jacob Ledwaba said the body was opposed to “all unilateral petrol price hikes.”

Ledwaba claimed the “pump price fixing and generous guaranteed profits” for oil companies had been designed to reward them for defying international oil sanctions.
Snarl-up likely over protest

OWN CORRESPONDENT

THOUSANDS of taxi drivers and motorists could be stranded on Thursday when transport organisations embark on a national protest action against the fuel price rise.

Next week's protest action, called by the South African Independent Trade Union Confederation (Saituco) and the Transitional United South African Taxi Council (Tusatco), would be held countrywide outside the offices of the departments of Mineral and Energy Affairs, Transport and Finance.

The organisations have also called on all motorists to stop for 15 minutes, regardless of where they may be, to protest against the increases. The action follows this week's meeting between the organisations and the government in which Tusatco demanded that taxis be exempted from petrol price increases. The total increase for the year so far amounts to 15c up from a price of R1.84/litre in January.

Warning that the increases are going to provoke "a series of protests", Tusatco spokesman Mr Jacob Ledwaba criticised the government for continuing to increase petrol prices as "it South Africa is still hit by sanctions".

However, Mineral and Energy Affairs Ministry spokesman Mr Ronald Darroll challenged the organisations to come up with a plan to help the government to address the situation.
Business and taxi industry join to offer better Soweto service

By Mandla Mthembu

For the first time, business and the taxi industry have reached an agreement which will see the improvement of taxi facilities and services at Soweto's Dobsonville shopping centre.

About 200 Soweto taxi drivers met there at the weekend to conclude a special arrangement with the centre's management regarding the upgrading of facilities and support for the industry.

Sanlam Properties presented the Dobsonville-Johannesburg Taxi Association with a patrol car and a fully equipped office.

Sanlam Properties spokesman Wren Mat-Ingle said the agreement, believed to be the first of its kind, could set the pace for taxi associations around the country, and would enable taxis to use the centre as a depot so that the association could enhance its services to passengers.

The association welcomed business assistance, saying this would clear the congestion at the main junction, near the centre.

The local traffic department will be offering ongoing driver training workshops and road safety seminars, and will also work closely with the association from the centre.

The centre will soon also house the first full-scale traffic training department in Soweto.
Rival taxi groups to hold urgent talks on flare-up

ANDREA BOTHA
Staff Reporter

AN urgent meeting of rival taxi organisations Cata (Cape Amalgamated Taxi Association) and Codeta (Cape Organisations for a Democratic Taxi Association) is to discuss a new outbreak of taxi violence.

Earlier this week a passenger was injured in a shooting incident in Khayelitsha. Police could not confirm the allegation by Cata president Stephen Williams that a driver had been injured in a second shooting incident the same day.

Since Codeta elected a new executive at the end of last month no incidents of serious intimidation or violence have been reported to the police.

A new executive committee was unanimously elected last month after the Supreme Court ordered the old leadership to hold a general meeting.

At the meeting the old leadership was asked to step down and the new committee was elected.

But peace between the two taxi rivals appeared short-lived after Monday's shooting.

Codeta spokesman Howard Dyubeni said his organisation wanted to meet Cata urgently to discuss the violence.

He could not confirm that Codeta members had been responsible for the shootings, but said tension was mounting again at taxi ranks.
New taxi body is launched

Mboheli Mlaudzi

THE newly formed taxi organisation Transition- al United SA Taxi Coun- cil will work to "eradi- cate" taxi violence.

The body, made up of five of the eight national taxi associations, was launched in Johannesburg at the weekend.

The council resolved to form a five-member committee which would visit all nine provinces to promote peace, council co-ordinator Jacob Ledwaba said.

Ledwaba said disputes would be investigated in conjunction with the warring taxi groups in a bid to solve problems.

The council also resolved to appeal to government to exempt the taxi industry from the latest petrol price hike.

The council, in conjunc- tion with the SA Independent Trade Unions Confederation, has organised a march to the mineral and energy affairs ministry in Pretoria on Thursday.
Feuding taxi groups vow to negotiate

BY SEPATI SENGYE

Taxi owners of the Brits United Long Distance Taxi Association (Bulta) have vowed to engage in peaceful negotiations with their local rival.

The promise was made at the burial of Bulta member Herman Ramontsho at Madikwe Village in the North West Province at the weekend.

Bulta PRO Mike Mangena said that, despite the killing of Ramontsho and Bulta chairman Gabriel Moekwena in what he described as the worst taxi violence in the Lethlabile and Brits areas, they would exhaust all mechanisms to solve their taxi feud.

He said the killings last week followed Bulta attempts to operate on the Brits-Johannesburg route, which was only operated by their rival – the Brits Local and Long Distance Taxi Association (Blalto).

“We have been negotiating with Blalto to share the route since 1993. We feel it is our right to operate on that route,” he said.

Mangena added that a meeting with a delegation from the Department of Transport in the North West Province, Blalto, the Brits Civic Association, and the police would be held in two weeks’ time in a bid to solve their problems and the ongoing taxi violence in the area.

Meanwhile Maurice Bokaba, secretary-general of the South African Taxi Union (Satu) condemned the killings and urged different taxi associations in the area to seek peaceful negotiations.

Bokaba said Satu would implement short-term taxi regulations in conjunction with the Ministry of Safety and Security such as deploying policemen at taxi ranks in the Lethlabile and Brits area.

He added that taxi permits should also be reviewed to facilitate the professional services in the embattled taxi industry.
Conflict at Langa rank as Peninsula taxi war flares again

Two taxi men belonging to the Cata group have been arrested at the Langa taxi rank and police had to escort a member of the rival Codeta taxi group leadership out of Langa for his own safety.

This follows an upsurge in intimidation and threats of violence at the taxi rank which have fuelled fears of a new round in the simmering Peninsula taxi war despite a recent peace agreement.

An explosive situation developed at the Langa taxi rank yesterday when members of Cata took control of the rank and chased Codeta taxis away.

A spokesman at Langa police station said the two Cata men were arrested on charges of trespassing and theft.
Many taxi fares don’t cover operational costs, says MEC

Cost indicator and a booklet about revenues and fares should help to bring industry to profitability

BY MANDELA MTHEMBU

A

lthough the taxi industry does not receive any government transport subsidies, the industry has been subsidising commuter fares to compete against fares of other subsidised modes of transport.

Speaking during the launch yesterday of two innovative management aids for taxi operators, outgoing Gauteng MEC for Public Transport and Roads Olaus van Zyl said many taxi fares charged did not cover operational costs and this had led to a “lack of maintenance and unroadworthy and unsafe vehicles”.

In an effort to provide operators with “simple and useful operational aids that will assist them in running their businesses”, Van Zyl said the management aids – a “taxi-cost indicator” and a booklet about revenues and fares – were developed by the Gauteng Taxi Initiative.

“The aim is to bring the taxi industry into profitability,” he said.

These aids had evolved from work aimed at assessing the costs of keeping a taxi on the road. Inputs to a computer program for this purpose included costs of fuel, lubrication, servicing, maintenance and tyres for vehicles used as taxis.

As Gauteng had more than 50,000 taxis run by about 30,000 owners, operators “need to know what their real costs and revenues are”, Van Zyl said.

About 2,000 copies of the aids, printed at a cost of about R80,000, would be distributed in Gauteng through metropolitan taxi forums.

Accepting the models on behalf of the industry, SA Long Distance Taxi Association president Thulani Kubheka urged operators to use the aid, adding that “commuters should also know how much we have been subsidising them. We are operating at a loss,” he said.

Other Gauteng Taxi Initiative projects so far are: training of more than 1,000 operators, drivers and association officials; setting up a provincial taxi office; production of a taxi maintenance and operations safety book; taxi road safety programmes; as well as pilot projects on the introduction of planned taxi cooperatives.
ANC steps in to stop another taxi war

ANDREA BOTHA
Staff Reporter

26/6/96

THE African National Congress has arranged an emergency meeting today between taxi associations Cata and Codeta to prevent another taxi war between them.

A peace meeting between Cata and Codeta themselves failed yesterday when Cata refused to give up the Langa taxi rank.

Since Sunday, Cata has taken control of the rank and is allegedly intimidating and chasing away all other taxis.

The deadlock over the crucial Langa taxi rank, from which all long-distance taxis run, has raised fears of another outbreak of violence.
Taxis.

COMMUTERS tell the Cape Times that taxis are cheaper, faster and more reliable than buses, writes LISA TEMPLETON.

There has been a mini revolution in the city's transport; Commuters have abandoned the lumbering bus service for zippier, cheaper taxis.

Last week the Cape Times took to the terminuses to compare the two services on major routes from the city and to canvas commuters.

I started with a nine-minute wait in the chilly deserted Golden Acre terminus for the Camps Bay bus, which leaves hourly. It cost R2.50 and took 35 minutes to lumber over Kloof Nek with 18 passengers in the 82-seat double-decker.

"I always catch the bus, sometimes its late, but I don't like the taxis because I have seen all the accidents and they (the drivers) can be so rude," said Mrs Janet Evans.

Waiting at the bus stop in Camps Bay was an insurance consultant who catches a bus daily from Tamboerskloof to the city centre to avoid parking problems.

It is a terrible frustration - the buses are never, ever on time.

The transport system here is abysmal compared to cities such as Budapest and London where you can get anywhere, anytime. We will have to do something if we are to host the Olympics," she said.

The bus back to town was eight minutes late, but three domestic workers who boarded said they normally found it reliable, and never more than 10 minutes late.

There are no taxis on this route.

The bus to Sea Point leaves half hourly, costs R1.50 and takes 33 minutes to reach central Sea Point through Mouille Point.

I waited 30 seconds before flagging down a taxi to take me back to
town. It was rather cozy after the spacious bus. It had plastic sheeting for a missing window and a system of wires to open the door, which was worked by the passenger sitting closest. It cost R1 and zipped to Cape Town in 13 minutes.

"I prefer the taxi because the bus takes for ever and the fares are much higher. Taxis from Mowbray are available every few minutes and take 20 minutes to get to town, but the bus takes an hour," said Mrs Maria Jonas.

All those canvassed by the Cape Times at the topdeck taxi terminus above Cape Town station agreed that taxis were quicker, cheaper and more regular than buses.

From the station deck I paid R3 for a freeway taxi which avoids Salt River and races somewhat hair-raisingly along De Waal Drive to Rondebosch in 10 minutes.

The strip of Main Road between Mowbray and the city was packed with taxis which come by every few seconds, charging R1,50 for the trip to town which takes 15 minutes. (The bus goes approximately every 10 minutes, costs R1,80 and takes 35 minutes).

I was taken under the wing of the passengers on the taxi, who told me the price of the trip to town and where the best place to disembark was. One woman amiably escorted me off the topdeck.

Taxi drivers said the government should subsidise the taxi industry. "We are not expecting handouts, but we need a subsidy to help with running costs and for shelters to be erected and improved. They subsidise the buses but to us they just make promises," taxi owner Mr Ismail Mohamed said.

He pointed out that the bustling Mowbray taxi rank had no shelter, unlike the bus terminus.

"If you keep the commuters happy it is good for business."

He said his taxi, which does an average of 10 trips a day between Bonteheuwel and town, made approximately R300 a day — of which R150 went to the owner, R120 was spent on fuel and the driver and conductor were still to be paid out of the remains.
Olaus's aids for taxi-men

Ingrid Salgado

THE greater Johannesburg metropol-
itan council's first post-apartheid bud-
get reflected a commitment to impro-
ving service delivery, particularly to
areas that were neglected under the
apartheid order, council executive
committee chairman Collin Matjila
said yesterday at the debate on the
council's 1996/97 R7.2bn budget.

This would be achieved through
shifting capital expenditure and creat-
ing a uniform rating system across the
metro, Matjila said. Although a uni-
form tariff system and assessment rate
policy would be a "bitter pill to swal-
low" for some, long-term benefits were
"immeasurable" and would remove
remnants of the apartheid era.

The provision of basic services
through the extension, upgrading and
maintenance of municipal infras-
tructure and fiscal discipline would under-
pin the budget.

The budget was opposed by the DP,
which failed to pass a motion rejecting
a R438m levy that the eastern
metropolitan substructure would pay
to the council and R4m payable by the
northern substructure.

DP councillor Mike Moriarty said he
accepted the need for a uniform valu-
ation role for greater Johannesburg's
area, but rejected the size of the levy
payable by the eastern substructure.
SEVERAL people have already been arrested since the Government started taking extensive steps to curb continuing taxi violence which has claimed many lives in the past year.

Safety and Security Minister Mr. Mfumadi said a multi-agency team had been appointed to end taxi violence that had become a feature of urban living.

Last year 86 people were killed in violent taxi protests and in the first four months of this year 37 people died along the Durban-Johannesburg-South African Police Service routes, the minister revealed.

"This task team was also appointed during taxi-related protests in an attempt to solve the problem," Mfumadi said.

National priority

The Western Cape and KwaZulu-Natal taxi violence has been declared a national priority crime and in these areas, a specialised police unit and task force have been appointed to deal with violence-related cases, he said.

In the Western Cape, discussions were held with the attorney general for the setting up of a centralised court to deal with taxi violence cases.

"A provision has been made for overtime pay for SAPS battalions and for the scientifically collected evidence so that all seized firearms can be scientifically examined as soon as possible," Mfumadi said.

The teams were also investigating alleged vehicle thefts and violence associated with the theft of vehicles involved in taxi violence.

He said the priority crime unit used to investigate ongoing violence for all projects to ensure that no violence was made and further arrests will be made in the near future," he said.

Many injured

In addition to the high number of deaths that have been attributed to taxi violence, a large number of people have been injured, police figures revealed.

In Durban-Natal, about 337 injuries were reported. The Durban-Johannesburg routes and the Durban-Nongoma routes, last year in the first four months of this year, 76 injuries were reported.

Mfumadi said, of the more pressing problems, police encounters were being faced by the lack of equipment and facilities required for them to effectively carry out their tasks.
Police accused of fearing taxi war criminals

ANDREA BÔTHA
Staff Reporter

POLICE have been accused of lacking the courage to arrest known perpetrators of taxi crimes.

Spokesman for the Cape Organisation for a Democratic Taxi Association (Codeta), Reggie Malimba, accused police of being unwilling to make arrests and properly investigate charges.

Tension in the industry has been mounting because of increased intimidation and harassment of ranks all over Cape Town.

The latest incident of intimidation was at Nyanga taxi rank on Friday where the Cape Amalgamated Taxi Association (Cata) had taken control and chased Codeta taxis.

"Members of Codeta had to run for their lives," said Mr Malimba.

Trouble at the Langa rank resulted in the arrest of two men on charges of trespassing in an earlier incident.

But this wasn't enough, said Mr Malimba.

"The same people are responsible for the intimidation at the different ranks but police aren't arrest them," he said.

Group Empowerment and Investigative Unit Theo Kleyhans denied allegations of police cowardice. "It's untrue," he said.

"A new permit system is needed to clearly identify taxi rank and drivers. This is the responsibility of local government departments," Superintendent Kleyhans said.
Sun Air studies deal with Yemen ahead of decision on privatization

By Andrew Dargie

CTM (01/10/96)
Taxi industry urged to solve its problems

Bonile Ngqiyaza

The taxi industry must act quickly to solve its problems if it wants to attract investment and reap the benefits of privatisation, Transnet deputy MD Saki Macozoma said yesterday.

Speaking at the seventh National African Federated Transport Organisation (Nafo) AGM in Johannesburg, he said there was no business which could thrive in an unstable environment.

"Privatisation will release a lot of assets that will be used for empowerment. If Nafo were able to facilitate the acquisition of (those) state assets, it would have helped to deracialise the transportation industry," he said.

The industry could only attract investment if it provided a cheap and reliable service, was customer oriented and invested in the security of the public and goods it carried, Macozoma said. It had also to invest in research and the development of both products and human resources.

"At the conference ANC MP Winnie Madikizela-Mandela said private taxi operators needed assistance from the state in order to maintain a safe, efficient and affordable transport system."

She warned, however, that state assistance would mean taking into consideration consumers' interests. Presently, she said, neither the private nor the public sector had met these requirements. "The cost of transport in both these sectors is much too high, taking into consideration the wage structure."

She urged various taxi associations to find an umbrella body to which all of them would be affiliated. "Let's get rid of the petty jealousies among ourselves," she said.
Bus firm gives employees 'ultimatum'

Indebted firm demands handover of pension funds

By Françoise Boha

Cape Town — Golden Arrow Bus Services, the debt-ridden former Tollgate subsidiary, has invoked the rage of its employees with an ultimatum that they hand over R85 million of pension fund money to revitalise the company.

The move flows from union demands that the company set up a provident fund.

The company said that it was in no position to meet the union demands, given its debt of R79 million.

"The situation was exacerbated by accumulated losses of R39 million as a result of outside factors such as violence, rising costs and inflation in the industry," the company said in its in-house magazine.

A pensioner said yesterday that the company had offered the members of the fund two choices and, essentially, an ultimatum.

The first option offered to continue the existing pension fund system with small inflation-linked yearly increments. The second would dissolve the pension fund to provide enhanced benefits, a plan that would gain the company R85 million to reduce its debt burden.

The second option would allow the pension fund, now valued at R348 million, to be used to buy a lifetime pension for existing pensioners.

The pensions would account for R145.6 million of funds and include a 20 to 40 percent boost to pensions based on the number of years in retirement plus one month's pension as a bonus.

Employees have been offered the choice of transferring to either of two new funds — a provident or a defined contribution fund — also offering a minimum of 20 percent boost. That plan would take R108.9 million of the fund's assets.

The company proposed that the remaining R85 million of assets should revert to it.

Representatives of the five unions said that the management had threatened them with the closure of the business should the money not be made available.

A pension fund member who asked not to be named said: "The company is in dire financial straits and for that reason it is winding up the pension fund.

"The pensioners I have spoken to feel it's extortion. We are being held to ransom. Either we give them the money or we do not get a decent increase in our pensions," he said.

"Some of us are prepared to grant an interest-free loan if it makes the difference of the company surviving," he said.

A spokesman for the Transport and General Workers' Union said: "We don't want to grant it because they are not entitled to it. We are really going to give them a light."

Management and union representatives plan to meet today to negotiate a solution.
Free training course for Gauteng taxi operators

By Thembekile Sepotokele

UBUNTU Academy, a free and compulsory training course for taxi operators in Gauteng aimed at eradicating violence in the industry will spread its wings to other provinces next year.

This was disclosed at the weekend by the director of Norite Educational Holding, Dr. Jeeta Naidoo, in Florida at the certificate presentation ceremony of six taxi operators who had completed the course.

A four day course assists taxi drivers to relate positively with commuters and other drivers, alleviate the level of violence in the industry and manage their business professionally.

The Government funded the course, which is a brainchild of the Gauteng Taxi Initiative (GTI), formed by the former transport MEC Mr. Olaus van Zyl.

The course is also aimed at bringing to an end pirate taxi operators, and since the course is free and compulsory, taxi operators who fail to enrol will not be issued with permits and some would not be renewed.

Norite senior training officer Mr. David Finda said the course aims to promote the spirit of reconciliation.

"It also assists them to exercise healthy debates when petrol is increased and not to vent their anger by blocking the streets," Finda said.

Taxi operators who were presented with certificates were Mr. Archieboy Morrison, Mr. Moses Dooms, Mr. Dick Trompettes, Mr. Dallie Dawood and Mr. Ernest Joseph.
Bus company negotiations reach deadlock

By Françoise Botha

Cape Town — The management of Golden Arrow Bus Services and representatives of five unions reached a deadlock on Friday in negotiations surrounding the distribution of the employees' pension fund surplus.

The company earlier gave the Golden Arrow Retirement Plan members an ultimatum to accept an offer for the restructuring of the fund, which would lead to R85 million of the surplus reverting to the company. The funds were designated for the reduction of the company's R79 million debt burden.

Unions involved in the negotiations include the Transport and General Workers' Union and the Transport and Omnibus Workers' Union (Towu). The five unions proposed that R85 million be made available as an interest-free loan. They included 5 percent of the fund's asset value, which was to be invested in shares in the company.

The company's management rejected the proposals.

"They want R85 million as a gift, as if it belongs to them. But, the company has taken pension contribution holidays since it was taken over in 1992," a Towu spokesman said yesterday.

"Those directors are the biggest shareholders of the company. They will be enriching themselves. They cannot do that because it is the workers' money," he said.

The fund surplus is estimated to be worth between R120 million and R170 million. The company directors claim that they are entitled to the funds since they are guaranteeing them.

The spokesman said the directors had no right to do that, as they would have to sell off assets and put jobs at risk to raise the funds.

The unions agreed on the minimum increases in the current pensions, which would range between 25 percent and 45 percent, depending on the year of retirement.
High Tithe

Private-sector bus operators have come out strongly against the payment of R40m to the violence-torn taxi industry. They see the cash, promised by Transport Minister Mac Maharaj, as a donation to taxi owners, who don’t pay taxes.

The influential bus operators’ lobby, which itself receives R800m a year in government subsidies, is objecting to what it perceives as “blatant discrimination” in favour of an industry that cannot regulate itself. They argue that the only form of tax levied on the black taxi sector is that paid at petrol pumps.

SA Bus Operators’ Association executive manager Eric Cornelius says at least the scheme does not involve the payment of direct subsidies. Were that to happen, it would be an invitation to anyone able to buy a minibus to become a taxi operator.

“There are already too many taxis and that would aggravate the problem,” says Cornelius. “If there weren’t so many operators, taxis could charge more cost-related fares and wouldn’t have to ask government for help.”

But Dipak Patel, the Department of Transport’s chief director of management services, doesn’t view the R40m as a donation. Patel, who also chairs the National Taxi Task Team, says the funds will be used to legalise illegal taxi operators and establish how the team believes the Road Transportation Act should be amended.

“The cost will be minimal because government capacity will be deployed. In the short term, it may need additional structures, which may cost money — but not much.” Educating and informing beneficiaries of the R40m will incur extra costs. Before applying to the Road Transportation Board, they will have to prove they have been operating illegally for a year.

Each application will have to be supported by an affidavit from a taxi association and two legal operators, a requirement that, observers say, has the potential to open a Pandora’s Box of graft, extortion and corruption.

Not yet approved is a plan that will see government opening funding offices in each province for two years. These will install control and accounting mechanisms at a cost of roughly R400 000 a year each — a total of R3,6m a year — and will be run by the taxi industry.

Registrars of taxi associations and operators will be appointed at provincial level. They will absorb R450 000 a year each, a total of R5,4m a year.

Training of association officials, operators and drivers will be implemented at provincial level and will absorb R10m.

Another R20m will be allocated in the first year to economic assistance, “not be dished out as handouts,” because, says Patel, “the taxi industry is a black economic sector that can be transformed into a success story.”

Economic assistance includes creating cooperatives that will include a number of income-generating allied businesses, such as filling stations, panel-beating shops, spares and tyre outlets.

Though the cost must be borne by the taxpayer, whatever steps are taken, if proven satisfactory, may introduce some sanity into an industry racked by indiscipline and violence.
FEARS of renewed taxi war after shooting

By JESSICA BEZUIDENHOUT

FEARS of renewed taxi violence were sparked by the killing of yet another taxi driver in Crossroads early yesterday morning.

Although considered an isolated incident, police yesterday expressed concern that the shooting could set off further clashes between two rival factions in the taxi industry, in which the Congress of Amalgamated Taxi Associations (Cata) and the Congress of Democratic Taxi Associations (Codeta) are engaged in a territorial war.

Police spokesman Inspector Virna Simon said the man was driving with two passengers when the occupants of a parked vehicle fired several shots at the taxi and killed the driver, a Codeta member.

Police believe the shooting follows the pattern of other taxi-related killings.

"Later yesterday, a group of about 500 Codeta members marched to the provincial parliament demanding government intervention to stop the killing and intimidation of their members," Codeta's vice-chairman, Howard Dyuben, described the march as a desperate attempt to put an end to the violence, which sometimes caught innocent passengers in the crossfire.

Codeta claimed policing in the township had become "insufficient and ineffective ."
Initiative will ensure peace and stability and also attract investors.

New peace move in taxi industry

By Thembeka Septeroko
DRIVERS SHOT IN KHAYELITSHA

City braces for new taxi wars

CODETA MEMBERS are to meet acting MEC for Police Mr Lampie Fick today to plead for tough measures to curb the bloodshed in its battle with Cata over taxi ranks and routes. Three drivers were killed and several taxis shot at during the weekend. DALE GRANGER reports.

CAPE TOWN is bracing itself for another round of taxi violence after two Cata drivers were shot dead in Khayelitsha yesterday in apparent revenge for the slaying of a Codeta driver on Saturday.

At the heart of the swift reprisals and the simmering tensions that fuelled them is the battle for control of four ranks in Langa, Guguletu, Eyoni and Phillipi.

Codeta chairman Mr David Jezile laid the blame for the violence at Cata’s door last night. He accused it of muscling in, threatening Codeta drivers and trying to chase them away from the ranks.

Hundreds of Codeta drivers met in Mitchells Plain last night to discuss the violence.

A meeting has been called for today between the acting MEC for Police, Mr Lampie Fick, and Codeta. This follows demands by Codeta drivers — who gathered outside the Western Cape legislature on Saturday — to see the MEC for Police, Mr Gerald Morkel. They had hoped to press him to introduce tough measures to stamp out the violence. Morkel is overseas.

On Saturday in Lower Crossroads, Codeta driver Mr Jongilaka Zabandiya was pursued by sedan taxis from which gunmen fired at his taxi.

When Zabandiya’s taxi came to a halt in the firing, gunmen leapt from the cars and shot him more than 20 times.

Police found the body of a Cata driver lying next to his taxi on Lansdowne Road in Khayelitsha just after noon yesterday. He had been shot in the head.

A wounded man was found lying about 100 metres from the taxi. He was taken to hospital.

Five minutes later, at the Kuwait rank in Khayelitsha, another driver was found slumped next to his taxi. He had been shot in the back.

Taxis in Lansdowne came under fire just before and just after 2pm, but no one was wounded.

Forty minutes later police found a taxi riddled with bullets 300m from the Mitchells Plain turn-off on the N2. They found the driver, who was wounded in the leg and had fled, hiding in a nearby shack.

Jezile warned Cata: “If they are going to attack our people one thing is for sure: We will not stand still.”

He said tensions had reached boiling point last Tuesday when heavily armed Cata members began moving in on the ranks.

On Thursday they annexed the route from Nyanga to Phillipi.

Jezile claimed Cata’s “warlord”, known only as “Sam”, had told Codeta members to leave the ranks or pay the R7 000 “fee” and team up with Cata.

The fee Codeta charged affiliates was R2 500 and its members outnumbered those of Cata, Jezile said.

Codeta taxis had been smashed, but he claimed it was futile to lay charges with the police as senior policemen had told Codeta: “We can’t do anything.”

“We were marching (on Saturday) to try to let people know the position we are in and then hopefully the police will protect us,” Jezile said.

“We don’t want to live like this because revenge attacks will get us nowhere. If things go right at the meeting (with Fick), we will stop everything. But even tonight or tomorrow, we never know what is going to happen.”

Cata president Mr Steve Williams failed to return calls from the Cape Times last night.
Police to call on mediators in bid to end city's taxi war

POLICE are to enlist the help of independent mediators to end the latest outbreak of the taxi war on the Cape Flats in which five people - four drivers and a passenger - were killed at the weekend.

Police spokesman John Sterrenberg said today police would contact mediators as part of the effort to establish a lasting peace between warring taxi factions Codeta and Cata.

Codeta members are meeting acting provincial police minister Lampie Fick today. It is understood they are demanding that he introduce tough measures to stamp out the violence.

Yesterday two Cata drivers were shot dead and several injured in apparent revenge for the slaying of a Codeta driver on Saturday.

Yesterday's first incident occurred at 12.30 pm on the corner of New and Lansdowne Road in Khayelitsha where a driver was found lying dead next to his taxi. He had been shot in the head.

Five minutes later, another driver was found shot dead at the Kuwait rank in Khayelitsha.

Supa reports that a driver and a passenger were shot dead outside Stellenbosch between Khayamandi and Mfuleni late yesterday.

A 20-year-old passenger, Lucy Metebe, was also shot dead and two passengers were wounded.
PEACE-OR-ELSE ULTIMATUM

Taxi ranks ‘will be closed’

TALKS BETWEEN RIVAL taxi associations aimed at ending the violence and settling the fight over routes failed yesterday, leading to an ultimatum to the groups to settle their differences or be shut down. CHRIS BATEMAN reports.

ACTING Western Cape Police Services MEC Mr Lampie Fick has threatened to close “every taxi rank in the Peninsula” on Friday unless warring organisations Codeta and Cata reach and implement a peace agreement by then.

Fick delivered his ultimatum at a New Street press conference attended by senior police officials, lawyers and the Codeta hierarchy after police-brokered peace talks between the warring organisations “failed to deliver” earlier in the day.

Late last night, SABC radio news reported that Codeta chairman Mr David Jezile had called for a consumer boycott of taxis from today. Attempts to reach Jezile to confirm this were unsuccessful.

Fick said seven people had been killed at the weekend in violence connected to demands for exclusive use of taxi ranks by the warring factions.

“I intend to give them time to reach a solution and to implement it by Friday,” Fick said.

“If they are unable to end the violence and killings we’ll consider closing all taxi ranks in the Peninsula until the three parties (police being the third) have reached an acceptable agreement which results in a halt to the violence.”

Fick intends to meet Cata today and is to inform both sides in writing of his intentions. Tomorrow has been set as truce-making day.

Jezile said all ranks “can be closed if there is no peace in the townships” and that his members would accept the sanction if talks failed.

Fick said if the taxi industry failed to meet his deadline “then they shouldn’t complain if the government steps in and does what has to be done”.

He appealed for understanding by commuters, who would be hit hardest, but said the choice between inconvenience and human lives was clear. Also, there was “alternative transport”.

He declined to be drawn on how police, with their limited resources, would implement his threat or on whether the army would be called in as a back-up.

“Let us rather assume reasonable people can implement reasonable solutions by Friday.”

Fick said the taxi industry had been given repeated opportunities to resolve the crisis.

Superintendent Attie Trollip of the public violence investigative unit said yesterday’s meeting between the factions had “not delivered what we expected it to”. 
GET YOUR HOUSE IN ORDER: Acting MEC for Police, Mr Lample Fick, addresses Codeta members in his office after the killing of three taxi drivers at the weekend.

PICTURE: THEMBAKOSI DWAYSA
Codeta calls for boycott of all city taxis

ANDREA BOTHA
Staff Reporter

THE Cape Organisation for a Democratic Taxi Association (Codeta), which is locked in a bloody war with its rival Cape Amalgamated Taxi Association (Cata), today called for a boycott of all taxis by commuters in the Western Cape.

David Jezile, chairman of Codeta, said the decision had been made last night. "We won't get a peaceful solution while other taxis are still moving. All taxis must stop", said Mr Jezile.

He said the boycott was to ensure that Cata attended tomorrow's meeting to work out a peaceful solution to the crisis-stricken minibus industry.

Meanwhile, police have warned that the province's threat to close Peninsula minibus taxi ranks unless warring factions signed a peace accord, could worsen tensions in the taxi war, which claimed at least five lives at the weekend.

They were reacting to Acting Western Cape Police minister Lampie Fick's ultimatum that all taxi ranks be closed by Friday unless a peace agreement was signed by Cata and Codeta.

Codeta has welcomed the ultimatum while Cata has not reacted to it.

Mr Fick issued his ultimatum late yesterday after meeting Codeta members who had marched to his offices earlier to ask for government involvement in the taxi crisis.

The intervention of the provincial government in the taxi crisis comes after emergency meetings between Cata and Codeta taxi drivers failed yesterday.
Fick to meet Codeta, Cata in peace bid

EFFORTS to broker peace in the minibus taxi industry will continue this afternoon when acting provincial Safety and Security MEC Mr Lampie Fick meets representatives from Codeta and Cata.

Ministerial spokesman Mr Armand le Roux yesterday stressed that the government's goal was to "find a solution to the benefit of all concerned", and said that a statement by Fick that he would close taxi ranks on Friday if the violence did not end was a "worst-case scenario".

Codeta chairman Mr David Jezile confirmed that a Codeta taxi had been shot at by Cata members in Mandalay, saying it showed that Cata spoke about peace but acted differently. But Cata's legal representative, Mr Reuben Liddell, said that the shooting did not have the approval of the Cata leadership.

Police could not confirm the Mandalay shooting.
Fick steps in as rivals meet to seek end to taxi warfare

ANDREA BOTA
Staff Reporter

24/7/96

THE WARRING Peninsula minibus taxi organisations, Cata and Codeta, are due to meet today to find a peaceful solution to their taxi conflict before Friday, or else face the closure of all their taxi ranks.

This follows the deaths of five people during taxi warfare at the weekend.

The provincial ministry of police confirmed that acting minister Lampie Fick would chair the meeting.

Yesterday, Cata president Steven Williams had called on Mr Fick to mediate between the two warring groups.

On Monday, Mr Fick delivered an ultimatum to both organisations to resolve their conflict by Friday or face the closure of all taxi ranks in Cape Town and the disruption of their business.

Codeta was delighted at the hardline attitude taken by Mr Fick, but Mr Williams expressed “disappointment” with Mr Fick’s stand.

“He only listened to Codeta, he didn’t even find out what we were thinking,” he said.

Mr Williams said Cata wanted Mr Fick to mediate so that he could decide for himself who was speaking the truth.

He said the main problem in the minibus taxi industry was that Codeta was demanding its own taxi ranks.

“We can’t allow Codeta to operate alone,” he said.

However, he did extend an invitation to Codeta to “come back” and work with Cata.

But Codeta yesterday asked commuters to boycott all taxis in an attempt to force Cata to negotiate.
Ceasefire declared in city taxi war

DALE GRANGER

A CEASEFIRE was declared in the taxi war between rival factions Codeta and Cata yesterday after a two-hour meeting with acting MEC for Police Mr Lampie Fick.

Sitting between Mr Steve Williams, president of Cata, and Mr David Jezile, chairman of Codeta, Fick said there was tension at the meeting but a "very good spirit" had prevailed and the two organisations had finally reached a watershed agreement whereby they will share the ranks on condition that the taxis are legal.

At a further meeting today Cata and Codeta will decide how many taxis may operate at each specific rank. It was also agreed that the police would patrol the ranks and routes to protect the agreement.

Fick said taxi war incidents created a negative international reputation for the country.

"There is little point in our President receiving a hero's welcome in Paris a week ago while we at home give no support in promoting our country's image. We have very little future if we create the impression we are barbarians killing one another."

Williams said: "We will come back tomorrow to finalise the agreement."

"I agree tensions were a bit high but it is because we met that we can shake hands as brothers."

Jezile said: "I am very sorry for the people who always die in these actions and hope it doesn't happen again. Seven died."

"The leadership of both organisations committed themselves to ensuring their members would toe the line but the question on everyone's lips was: What guarantee was there for a lasting peace?"

"Nobody can give a guarantee when it comes to human action," said Fick. "But I was impressed with both sides, which gives me hope that with police support we have something that can work. I sense a difference in that both sides realise the seriousness of the situation and the dire consequences for the future of our country."
PEACE TALKS: Acting Western Cape Police Minister Lampie Fick is the man in the middle at peace talks between Cape taxi association chiefs Steve Williams of Cata, left, and David Jezile of Codeta.

New police plan to curb taxi violence

ANDREA BOTHA
Staff Reporter

POLICE are devising a new plan to control minibus taxi violence.

This emerged after the Peninsula’s warring taxi associations reached a tenuous peace deal yesterday.

After the truce, police disclosed that a new strategy for the taxi industry was being discussed and would soon be made public. It could involve informal regulation of taxi ranks.

Rival taxi associations Cata and Codeta reached a fragile peace under the watchful eye of mediator Lampie Fick, acting Western Cape Minister of Police. But no final agreement was reached between the two bodies and a further meeting was scheduled for later today.

"The meeting was conducted in good spirit, but I would be lying if I was saying there is no tension", said Mr Fick.

"But both organisations have accepted that all taxi ranks are free to operate for all permit holders and that no one will interfere in any way with those who operate the routes legally," said Mr Fick.

Police had pledged their support to any new agreements reached by the taxi associations. But Mr Fick said there was no guarantee that any agreement between the organisations would mean an end to the violence.

After last night’s peace meeting, both organisations were cautious about the success of the meeting.

Cata president Steve Williams did not want to comment on the feasibility of a peace agreement today, saying: "I don’t want to count my chickens before they’ve hatched."

Codeta president David Jezile said: "It looks good."

But the organisations have a long way to go to reach an agreement that will end the conflict, which claimed seven lives over the weekend.

Two senior officers from the Priorities Crimes Unit, which deals directly with the taxi violence, were also at the meeting.

"Whether they reach a peaceful agreement or not, police will be out in full force," an officer said, disclosing that a vital meeting was being held today with police commissioners, station commanders and traffic officers to discuss a new plan of action in dealing with the war-torn taxi industry.

Although they did not want to give details of the new plan, police said it would involve informal regulation of taxi routes.

The police said that Mr Fick’s threat to close down taxi ranks if violence continued remained in effect.
2 held over taxi violence

By Charity Bhengu

TWO men allegedly involved in taxi violence in Soweto were arrested yesterday in connection with attempted murder and the illegal possession of an AK-47 rifle.

Police spokesman Inspector John Shuburi said a taxi driver was arrested after police found an AK-47 rifle and 70 rounds of ammunition in his vehicle at a taxi rank in Diepkloof.

This followed a tip-off to police after a clash between two rival taxi associations at the rank early yesterday.

Another man, believed to be a member of the Dobsonville Taxi Association, was arrested after he shot and critically wounded two women who were in a minibus in Dobsonville.

The driver of the minibus was stopped by a “suspected DTA member” who accused him of parking. The driver told him the minibus was a private vehicle driving colleagues to work.
Make peace or ranks close, taxi factions warned

ANDREA BETHA
Staff Reporter

ACTING Western Cape Minister of Police, Lampie Fick has given a final warning to rival Peninsula taxi organisations Cata and Codeta to solve their problems by midnight or face the closure of all ranks.

Mr Fick gave the ultimatum at a meeting last night, after the two sides failed to agree on the division of ranks and routes.

The two called a truce this week after violence claimed seven lives.

They postponed further peace talks to last night to decide on routes.

The meeting with Mr Fick deadlocked at 3.30pm when Codeta members left under police escort, fearing for their lives.

The deadlock was over six routes.

'According to a source, Codeta initially claimed most routes from Khayelitsha, which is its stronghold."

Although Cata came to the meeting without any proposal, it apparently refused to compromise by giving any ranks to Codeta.

Finally, Codeta said it wanted only the six routes between Khayelitsha and Nyanga and one in Langalibalele.

Mr Fick said it would be "a tragedy" if the dispute could not be settled.
Delight as taxi rivals reach 11th-hour peace agreement

ANDREA BOTHA
Staff Reporter

WARRING taxi organisations Cata and Codeta finally agreed on a peace formula last night just hours before the midnight deadline.

Acting Police Minister Lampie Fick, who helped with the week-long negotiations, had said all ranks would be closed if agreement was not reached last night. A compromise was reached over the "ownership" of various ranks and routes.

"I have to be honest – I had very little confidence that we would succeed here tonight," admitted Mr Fick.

Cata president Steven Williams said after the meeting: "I apologise for all those who lost their lives. Hopefully the peace will last this time".

Codeta chairman David Jezile repeated the apology and added: "Next time, before we fight, let's come to the table".

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tragedy and give Games B

For the past eight years, Western Cape has been plagued by intermittent bloody taxi wars which often claimed innocent lives. Routinely, the warring factions sign peace treaties, but these noble agreements are not honoured because they are broken at the drop of the hat. Special Correspondent VUYO BAVUMA looks at the background of the conflict which is a scourge to many defenceless township residents – and a city that is bidding to host the 2004 Olympics.

Intermittent conflicts became a frequent feature of the industry. The year 1991 saw the longest and most brutal clash which saw the death of several people, including prominent African National Congress leader, Michail Mapongwana.

The killing of Mr Mapongwana brought a political dimension to the taxi conflict and it was worsened by the fact that Webta were mainly apolitical. Webta members were also viewed in some quarters as being “apartheid stooges”. On the other hand, Lagunya had impeccable political colours as most of its members were from the established townships who mainly supported the ANC.

In 1992 a far-reaching peace settlement was finally reached: Lagunya and Webta would unite and all routes were to be shared by all the members. Cynics who had seen many treaties being dishonoured, expressed concern, but the peace held on for more than two years.

In 1994 seeds of discontent started germinating when the former Webta members accused the Codeta executive of being undemocratic and aloof from its membership. Former Webta members were in the main unhappy that they had to share their lucrative routes with their old rivals.

The disgruntled ex-Webta members ransacked Codeta offices in the city centre. The fury was followed by mafia-style cold-blooded killings of some former Webta officials who were serving on the new Codeta executive. One of the casualties was Siphiwo Mool, the former Webta secretary, who supported the new peace arrangements. Other surviving officials fled into hiding.

In the streets, it was business as usual, but it was tense.

Matters became more complicated and dangerous when a shadowy group, dubbed the Big 8, was accused of being behind the killings.

This development had a political flavour as some people claimed the group was based in Crossroads where it was also allegedly instrumental in the conflict raging in squatter camps.

Significantly, the Big 8 was linked to the well-known Crossroads warlord, Jeffrey Nongwe, but the former ANC chairman always strongly denied this.

This low-key violence continued as some members of the so-called Big 8 were shot and killed in ambushes.

Rumours abounded that Webta would set up their own association. Worried Codeta members hurried to the Leonard Ramatlahane, provincial Minister of Roads, to warn him about the impending crisis of having two associations within the same area.

But their pleas could not be attended to: Mr Ramatlahane's hands were tied. In fact, the right of the freedom of association for anyone – including the former Webta members – was guaranteed in the country's interim constitution.

Oblivious to the fears of Codeta members, a hand-
End taxi war

Every time, the bloody taxi war erupts, beleaguered township commuters experience a chilling sense of déjà vu.

They have to practically duck for cover while gunmen spray bullets at fully-laden taxis. Sometimes innocent commuters are killed. This week, at least seven people died after conflict flared up between members of the Convention for a Democratic Taxi Association (Codeta) and Cape Amalgamated Taxi Association (Cata) for umpteenth time.

Ironically, the violence began on the day Codeta members protested against alleged intimidation and police bias.

This litany of events is nothing new in this conflict.

The roots of the conflict can be traced to the warring factions' unwillingness to adhere to key agreements of the 1992 "peace treaty" which ended a seven-month bloody war between the then Lagunya and Webta taxi organisations. These agreements stipulated there should be a single taxi association and no one was allowed to exercise exclusive rights over routes.

The clash over the routes dates back to the early 1980s when Webta, comprising mainly Khayelitsha and Crossroads members, forcibly won the struggle for operating on routes between townships and formerly "white" areas. At that time only Golden Arrow buses operated on these routes.

Bearing the brunt of the then notorious pass-law raids, most Webta members came from poverty-stricken homelands to seek greener pastures in the city. They soon found out that running pirate taxis was the easiest way of earning money to support their families in the homelands.

Interestingly, Lagunya members, most of whom operated on the lesser lucrative inter-township routes, collaborated with the authorities to clamp down on the new entries whom they saw as undercutting their business. Lagunya members were legally permitted to operate a taxi service and gradually they tipped into the Nyanga-Claremont and Nyanga-Bellville routes.

After the authorities relented to the intrusion of the African taxis on the township-city routes, both taxi associations, Lagunya and Webta, claimed the right to operate on these routes as they "pioneered" these routes and hence claimed exclusive "ownership" of the routes. That claim is at the centre of the present conflict. Almost overnight the Webta members transformed their shabby rickety vehicles into flashy minibus taxis - and they officially launched their association in the late 80's.

Their cause received a further boost when South African Black Taxi Association (Sabta) adjusted its rules that barred membership of two associations from the same region. Lagunya's protests that this was

Bid a chance

ful of former Webta members converged on a cold Saturday afternoon to launch their new body, the Cape Amalgamated Taxi Association (Cata) at NY 49 stadium. For the first time in two years, there were two contenders in the township taxi brawl - an ominous sign for conflict.

Gradually, Cata members consolidated their membership and operated side-by-side with Codeta members. But it was clear that the days of peace were over as intermittent clashes between Codeta and Cata flared up.

Encouraging signs of finding long-lasting peace in the industry emerged when Mr Ramatlakane began setting up an all-inclusive process involving more than 50 taxi associations.

These organisations resolved to form a Western Cape Taxi Industry Taxi Task Team to investigate policy formulation and draft constitutional proposals for the industry.

Codeta and Cata agreed on a cease-fire only to break it within days. But Mr Ramatlakane's office, at times in conjunction with then provincial police minister Patrick Mackenzie, continued to search for a solution.

Their peace overtures received a severe setback when eleven people were shot dead and 24 injured in an attack on taxi members during a rally in Khayelitsha. Several Cata members were killed in the shooting and the organisation's spokesman claimed they were set up.

Mr Mackenzie promised swift action, but the culprits have still not been apprehended.

This incident widened the gulf between Cata and Codeta.

A crack police team was appointed to investigate the taxi conflict and several arrests were made. In 1995 Mr MacKenzie moved to the courts when several Cata members, including Victor Sam, the so-called feared hitman, appeared in connection with allegations ranging from murder to intimidation. The Cata members were discharged because of lack of evidence.

For the better part of 1995, the fragile calm prevailed in the industry.

Meanwhile Mr Ramatlakane did not give up the search for peace.

This year, it's the same conundrum: People being killed, taxi gunmen shooting each other; peace talks being held and so-called cease-fires being reached.

But as long as the two sides do not accept the bona fides of each other, the taxi war will remain a permanent feature of the city that wants to host the Olympic Games in 2004.

Innocent people will continue to bear the brunt, and any solution to the taxi problem is futile without effective law enforcement.
Taxi drivers gunned down in fiery battle

BY ROOS MONKOMA

At least two taxi drivers and a passenger were shot dead and eight others were injured in a shooting incident linked to the Taxi Association (STA) in Soweto yesterday.

The incident occurred at a taxi rank near the University of the Witwatersrand campus, where taxi drivers and passengers were protesting against alleged mistreatment by police.

A police officer confirmed that two dead bodies were found at the scene. The police are investigating the matter and have launched a manhunt for the suspects.

The STA has warned of a possible escalation in violence if the association's demands are not met. The association has called for an end to police brutality against taxi drivers and passengers.

In a statement, the STA said the shooting was a result of frustrated taxi drivers' efforts to gain a voice in the regulation of the industry.

The association has been protesting for better working conditions and against police harassment.

The recent violence has sparked concerns about the safety of taxi drivers and passengers in the area. The association has called on the government to take action to ensure the safety of its members and the public.
A GROUND-BREAKING agreement by rival taxi groups to divide city routes between them has ended the long-running taxi war in the Western Cape, but police kept a high profile on routes around the Peninsula yesterday "just in case".

The agreement was thrashed out in tense negotiations late on Friday night, just hours before the midnight deadline set by Acting Safety and Security Minister Lampie Fick for the closure of all taxi ranks following a week of violence in which seven people died.

The Cape Organisation for a Democratic Taxi Association (Codeta) and the Cape Amalgamated Taxi Association (Cata), agreed that Cata would run the routes from Langa, Guguletu and Nyanga and Codeta would operate between Khayelitsha and the city, Bellville and southern suburbs.

After a week of intense negotiations all parties expressed satisfaction.

The breaking of fragile peace treaties signed by warring factions has become commonplace in the years of indiscriminate shooting, which has claimed hundreds of lives, often of innocent passengers caught in the crossfire.

However, Codeta vice-chairman Howard Dynbeni echoed the general mood of negotiators, saying: "We've never reached an agreement like this."

Dynbeni referred to the march to the provincial parliament by about 500 Codeta members last Saturday as a desperate move to end eight years of conflict.

He hoped the "hit squads" of both organisations would get the message that taxi ranks are not a place for scuffles.

Informed sources say both organisations had struck a compromise to reach the final agreement.

Earlier this week the groups agreed to a truce in the bloodletting, but at further peace talks to decide on routes on Thursday night the parties deadlocked after more than four hours of talks, leading Fick to sternly reiterate his midnight ultimatum to close the ranks.

After the agreement on Friday night, a very relieved Fick said the intense negotiations had led to sacrifices by both parties.

He said the agreement on routes meant police would not have to carry out his threat to close taxi ranks, but he added that police would turn out in force at taxi ranks at the weekend to ensure the accord was maintained.

Fick said the agreement reached was "a first step based on the understanding by both sides that routes would not belong to organisations, but to permit holders."

He added that the agreement to grant certain routes to different organisations was "the first real step to lasting peace and order."

Cata president Steven Williams apologised to those who had lost loved ones in the taxi conflict and thanked Fick for bringing them together to solve their problems.

"We must try and be flexible and accept the solutions agreed upon," he said, adding that ultimately taxi members had a responsibility to their commuters.

Codeta chairman David Jekile said the taxi operator's lack of education was greatly to blame for the conflict. "Before, if you wanted to join (Codeta) you were asked whether you had an assegai or a gun. Now I'm going to ask to see school certificates," he said.
2 killed as taxi violence flares

The latest fragile ceasefire between the Cape Amalgamated Taxi Association (Cata) and the Congress of Democratic Taxi Associations (Codeta) was shattered when two taxi drivers were killed in fresh outbreaks of violence.

Cata president Stephen Williams said violence had erupted when a taxi driver from Crossroads was gunned down in a hail of bullets which had apparently also wounded two schoolchildren. Emergency services staff said one man was shot dead and another knifed to death in a clash at 10.15am today between rival groups at a taxi rank in Bellville South's Charl Malan Street.

Tensions were apparently also running high between rival taxi organisation members at the taxi rank near Wynberg station, the terminus for Khayelitsha and Cape Flats taxis in the southern suburbs.
Taxi officials, politicians meet to resolve violence
collective apology" by doctors comes under fire

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission has been accused of neglecting to provide an apology to victims of medical misconduct. The commission has come under fire for not adequately addressing the harm caused by doctors, particularly in the apartheid era. Critics argue that the commission has failed to adequately consider the experiences of victims, and that it has not adequately acknowledged the wrongs that were done.

The commission has been criticized for its failure to provide a sufficient apology to victims. Many victims of medical misconduct have expressed disappointment with the commission's handling of their cases. They believe that the commission has not adequately acknowledged the harm that was caused, and that it has not adequately provided a way for victims to seek redress.

Critics argue that the commission has failed to adequately consider the experiences of victims, and that it has not adequately acknowledged the wrongs that were done. They believe that the commission has not adequately provided a way for victims to seek redress.

Our past is littered with incidents where doctors neglected their duty. Some saw collusion with the state as patriotic.

The stories of victims would probably reopen deep wounds and would need an empathetic audience. Also, a debriefing mechanism would have to be in place for all participants.
MECs intervene in Reef taxi dispute

ByThemba Sepotokile
and Sapa

The Soweto Transport Services
have decided to resume opera-
tions following a week of
clashes between its members
and those of the Soweto Taxi
Association after Gauteng govern-
ment officials visited the Baragwanath taxi
rank yesterday to meet rival factions.

When Gauteng MEC for safety and
security Mrs Jessie Duarte and MEC
for transport Mr Paul Mashatile arrived
at the rank yesterday the situation was
tense, with only the STA operating.

Briefing the media at the rank,
Duarte and Mashatile said they had
urged the two organisations to work
towards attaining peace and stability.

Mashatile said the transport depart-
ment planned to meet the two groups
tomorrow to seek an amicable solution
to their problem.

Meanwhile, on the Cape Peninsula
at least four taxi drivers were killed
and a commuter injured in taxi vio-
ence yesterday.

This follows a fragile peace agree-
ment struck at the weekend between
the warring Cape Amalgamated Taxi
Association and the Cape Organisation
for a Democratic Taxi Association
when a compromise was reached over
the use of various ranks and routes.

Driver killed

Yesterday, however, a taxi driver was
killed when shots were fired at him
from another taxi in Philippi East,
Lower Crossroads, at about 6.30am.

In the second incident a taxi driver
sought refuge behind the Khayelitsha
Police Station when his vehicle came
under fire. He got into an unoccupied
police vehicle and began returning fire
before he was killed.

Another driver was shot dead and
another stabbed to death at the
Bellville taxi rank. Two men were also
stabbed at the Wynberg taxi rank and
taken to hospital.

Meanwhile in Soweto, STA general-
secretary Mr Elphus Malo said the
decision to work together with the
STA followed a meeting held at
Tshwane Community Centre.

Malo said the STA still believed
that the violence had not thwarted
plans to bring the two feuding organi-
sations under one umbrella.

An STA official at Baragwanath
taxi rank also endorsed the notion of
merging the two groups.
ANC calls for taxi boycott

The National Congress of South Africa (ANC) has called for a boycott of taxi services in response to the violence that erupted on 16 June.

The ANC's call follows a series of violent protests and clashes between taxi drivers and law enforcement agencies in various parts of the country. The protests were triggered by the death of a taxi driver in Durban, who was killed during a police operation.

ANC president Cyril Ramaphosa said in a statement that the violent protests were unacceptable and that they threatened the peace and security of the country.

"We condemn in the strongest terms the violent protests that have taken place in various parts of the country," Ramaphosa said.

The ANC urged all South Africans to remain calm and peaceful, and to avoid any form of violence.

"We call on all South Africans to remain calm and peaceful, and to avoid any form of violence," Ramaphosa added.

The ANC also called on law enforcement agencies to ensure that those responsible for the violence are brought to justice.

"We call on law enforcement agencies to ensure that those responsible for the violence are brought to justice," Ramaphosa said.

TheANC's call for a boycott comes after a similar call by the South African Transport and Catering Workers' Union (SACWU), which has called for a nationwide strike in protest against the violence.

The SACWU has reiterated its call for a boycott of taxi services, stating that the violence was a result of the government's failure to address the needs of the taxi industry.

"We call on all South Africans to join us in our boycott of taxi services," SACWU general secretary Tony Ehrenreich said.

The SACWU has also called on the government to take urgent action to address the needs of the taxi industry, including improved safety measures and betterworking conditions for taxi drivers.

"We call on the government to take urgent action to address the needs of the taxi industry," Ehrenreich added.

The government has said that it is investigating the violence and will take appropriate action against those responsible.

"We are investigating the violent incidents and will take action against those responsible," says South African Transport Minister Fikile Mbalula.
SA Express plans to spread its wings

BLACK-controlled airline SA Express was planning to expand its routes to include destinations in areas not covered by SA Airways.

CE Israel Skosana said yesterday the company was considering Phalaborwa, Hoedspruit and Pietersburg as possible routes in the north, and the airline, already servicing 12 routes including Richards Bay, Kimberley, Upington and Bloemfontein, was also looking at opportunities in other areas not tapped by SAA.

He said the infrastructure of the new airports at Pietersburg and Hoedspruit created possibilities for development of the tourism market in these areas. "However, we'll have to do a cost benefit analysis to see how viable these destinations would be," he said. SAA did not fly to these areas, and SA Express intended to take advantage of the fact. But with SAA's existing routes it would be at the discretion of SAA to offer some of its short distance and smaller destinations to his airline.

SA Express — a joint venture between Thebe Investments (51%) and SAA (49%) — was launched last year to service small towns in SA.

SAA spokesman Leon Els said it was not clear what routes SA Express planned to secure from SAA. "SA Express have not approached us yet. We are waiting to see their intentions and routes they have an interest in," he said.

Els said SAA still valued its domestic routes and would be introducing new cabin equipment and service procedures on domestic services from Thursday.
Taxi violence claims four lives as fragile accord breaks down

CAPE TOWN — At least four drivers were killed and a commuter injured in taxi violence in a number of areas on the Cape Peninsula yesterday. This follows a fragile peace agreement struck at the weekend between the striking Cape Amalgamated Taxi Association and the Cape Organisation for a Democratic Taxi Association when a compromise was reached over the use of various ranks and routes. Yesterday, however, a taxi driver was killed after shots were fired at him from another taxi in Philippus East, Lower Crossroads at about 6.20am. A young schoolgirl was wounded in the attack.

In the second incident four hours later, a taxi driver sought refuge behind the Khayelitsha police station when his vehicle came under fire.

Police spokesman Sgt Vivienne Lenboor said the driver got into an unoccupied police vehicle and began returning fire at his attackers. Later, a taxi driver was killed by a bullet which ricocheted into the window. Police arrested five people, three for public violence and two for driving under the influence of alcohol near the Khayelitsha police station. They also confiscated six firearms, one of which was unlicensed.

One man was shot dead and another stabbed to death at the Bellville taxi rank near Cape Town at 9am. Another two men were taken to hospital for stab wounds.

Two men were also stabbed at the Wynberg taxi rank and taken to hospital while the tyres of seven taxis at the rank were slashed.

Lenboor said police had also received reports of shots being fired at taxis in Borchers Quarry Road, Nyanga and New Road, Khayelitsha yesterday, but no one was injured.

Meanwhile, Gauteng safety and security MEC Jessie Duarte and transport MEC Paul Mashatile visited Soweto's Baragwanath taxi rank yesterday to assess the situation following renewed violence at the weekend.

Surrounded by heavy security, Duarte said police presence had been stepped up at "hot spots" along the Old Pofchefstorm Road to monitor taxi routes and ranks.

"Most violence happens in the areas where taxis are forced off the roads and passengers pulled out ... and since last night (Monday night) it's a little army. We've been pulling them (police) from every station," she said.

Violence broke out between the Soweto Taxi Service and the Soweto Taxi Association following the shooting of an STA driver. The incident was related to continuous conflict between the two associations.

Hospital seeks non-political name

Ingrid Salgado

JG STRIDDOM Hospital's name should be changed to reflect its geographic location in order to rid itself of the political connotation attached to being named after a former prime minister, according to the hospital's management.

In a submission to the Gauteng legislature's petitions and public participation standing committee, the hospital suggested it be renamed Auckland Park Hospital or Perth Road Hospital.

The committee, which started a round of public hearings on renaming Gauteng hospitals in Johannesburg yesterday, hopes to rename institutions based on their physical location. Where possible, institutions would not be named after people. Names should stand without having to change as government changed, the committee said.

Other hospitals, including Coronation Hospital in Coronationville, Hillbrow Hospital and South Rand Hospital asked that their names remain unchanged since they referred to the hospitals' locations.

Management of Tara psychiatric hospital, the H Morose Centre also believed its name should be retained. The institution was named after its first medical superintendent Dr H Morose, who had laid the foundations for treating psychiatric patients in Johannesburg.

Management said the name Tara should at least be retained. Changing the name would remove the recognition the hospital had acquired over the past 40 years and incur unnecessary expense.

Nursing colleges urged the committee not to change their names yet since rationalisation of the colleges would involve name changes. Embarking on the process twice would be wasteful. Several health institutions said it could prove difficult to consult their respective communities about changing names.

Other institutions which could be renamed include HF Verwoerd Hospital in Pretoria.
Meanwhile, taxi violence trended in first but nobody was injured. Police from loading passengers' shops were involved in incidents. The Williamson where the heinous taxi groups were located has been hit by the police. The driver and his passenger died from the sniper attack. Police and taxi drivers differ from those not in police records.

CHECKPOINT: Police confirmed a taxi at the Kateyehinmunch after finding theenger and cases numbers different from those in police records.

Irene Andrew/National News

Taxi factions patch up differences after bloody conflict

Andrew Smith
More deaths in battle of the taxis
THE warring taxi associations warned yesterday of increased "crime" if the provincial government and the ANC went ahead with plans to carry out a consumer boycott with the assistance of the police and defence force.

Police yesterday raided the Kuwait rank in Khayelitsha to search for weapons as both the ANC and regional government went ahead with their boycott plans.

The ANC exco sat for several hours last night to plan their intended boycott after an outcry over four deaths and the wounding of a schoolgirl on Tuesday. A provincial government "cabinet committee" is expected to convene today.

Premier Mr Heman Kriel said the committee, Police MEC Mr Gerald Morkel, Tourism MEC Mr Lampie Fick and Transport MEC Mr Leonard Ramatla had been given 30 days to make recommendations.

Early today the committee meets the Officer Commanding Western Province Command, General Dan Lamprécht and divisional Police Commissioner Leon Wessels to formulate a crackdown.

Kriel said the committee's terms of reference were to:

- Intensify action against taxi violence by the police, calling in the defence force to support them and close taxi ranks "if necessary".
- Discover the fundamental causes of the violence by talking to all parties.
- Table legislation to remove these causes.

Kriel added: "It is clear that the users of taxi services are fed up with the barbaric actions of some taxi operators."

The newly formed Western Cape Taxi Forum (representing all taxi organisations - not just Codeta and Cata), said the fighting had to be stopped "because it is besmirching the name of the entire industry".

The deputy chairman of the forum, Mr Junaid Peters, described the impending civic boycott of taxis as "only fair - the commuters are the people whose lives are at stake".

Peters said law enforcement was a priority as police had allegedly "turned a blind eye" to Codeta and Cata offences in implementing existing legislation.

A spokesman for Golden Arrow Transport (buses) said the company had asked for an urgent explanatory meeting with Morkel.

The company is known to be concerned about possible attacks on its drivers and the implications this has for industrial action.

During 1992, when commuters last boycotted taxis, taxi-related thugs murdered four bus drivers.

ANC exco sources said the boycott -- prompted by party branch calls -- would be ready for launch "within 10 days".

Rival taxi organisations Cata and Codeta warned, at a joint press conference in the city, that crime would escalate if the boycott went ahead.

In an 11-hour meeting last night, Cata and Codeta representatives were thrashing out what they believed was a "small thing to rectify".

The organisations are fighting over who will control certain taxi ranks, particularly in Nyanga.

Cata spokesman Mr Stephen Williams said: "The ANC have no right to call for a boycott. People are going to struggle for transport. This is a pain for us.

"Crime in Cape Town will be too high if people boycott the taxis. The ANC should rather help us find solutions," he said.

Mr Howard Dayben, of Codeta, which is more closely aligned to the ANC, said: "I object to the ANC's threatening to call for a boycott. I hope there will be an agreement by the time we see the ministers tomorrow."

Cata and Codeta representatives said peace agreements reached last week had not been kept because the news had not filtered to all its members.

Police yesterday raided Khayelitsha's Kuwait rank, and searched taxis for legal and illegal weapons. They want to test the weapons to see if they can be connected to certain crimes.

About 40 taxis were searched, but no firearms were seized.

Taxi drivers fled as police were cordoning off the area with two-metre-high barbed wire fences.

After the operation, roadblocks were set up and vehicles searched.
RAID: Khayelitsha residents and taxi drivers look on as police search taxis for weapons. They seized one vehicle after noticing an irregularity with the serial number.

PICTURE: BENNY GOOL
ANC calls for boycott of Cape taxis

Even after the signing of a peace accord recently the killings continue

By Rafiq Rohan
Political Correspondent

The African National Congress has called for a taxi boycott in the Western Cape to show opposition to the escalating bloodshed in the province.

The call has the support of the National Party and Democratic Party.

Despite the signing of a peace accord last week between feuding taxi associations, the Cape Amalgamated Taxi Association and Cape Organisation for a Democratic Taxi Alliance, the killings have, in fact, escalated.

On Tuesday the violence reached new heights with five people killed and others injured.

Yesterday, drastic new steps were being taken to bring the fighting to an end, including calling in the army.

While the emergency measures were being introduced, Western Cape premier Mr Henno Kriel also called an urgent cabinet committee meeting to address the crisis.

MECs Gerald Moeketsi, Leonard Ramaphosa and Lambie Fick head the committee charged with that task.

Immediate steps introduced are:

- Intensifying South African Police Service's action;
- Calling in the SA National Defence Force to support the police;
- Closing taxi ranks;
- Getting the interested parties together to discuss the crisis; and
- Introducing new legislation, such as a new process for licensing taxis.

Kriel said: "It is clear that the users of taxi services are fed up with the barbaric actions of some taxi operators."

The ANC said that a boycott of the taxis should be considered because it proved to be an "effective deterrent" to violence in the past.
NP opposes ANC call for Western Cape taxi boycott

The Western Cape ANC called on commuters yesterday to boycott taxis in several Cape Town areas from Monday to protest against escalating taxi violence, but the NP provincial government said it could result in further conflict and more deaths.

The boycott call comes as the Gauteng government took a hard line yesterday on last weekend’s fighting between rival Soweto taxi associations. Gauteng public and urban transport director Lennox Magwaza promised “tough action” after a meeting with the bodies and said “the time for negotiating was over.”

Police would monitor flashpoints and increase visibility.

In Cape Town the ANC said it would meet the PAC, Asapisa and civic bodies this afternoon to seek support for the boycott.

NP MEC Cameron Dugmore said the party had made alternative transport arrangements for commuters and secured additional police and army security around flashpoints.

Saps reports the NP provincial government said it would not support the boycott because it was an action of “civil disobedience”, NP agriculture, planning and tourism MEC Lampie Fick said it could lead to further conflict and, if emotions ran high, result in deaths.

Dugmore said the NP’s stance appeared to contradict an earlier statement by NP safety and security MEC Gerald Morkel that the NP sympathised with the call for a boycott.

The call to boycott followed an ANC-SACP-Cosatu alliance meeting on continued fighting between taxi groups, the Cape Amalgamated Taxi Association and the Cape Organisation for a Democratic Taxi Alliance. Five people were killed on Tuesday despite a peace accord between the two associations. More than 20 people, including commuters, have been killed in taxi violence in the region this year.

Dugmore said motorists had given an undertaking to provide an additional train on the Khayelitsha route to ferry up to 3,000 extra commuters.

And Cape Town’s major bus company, Golden Arrow, had agreed in principle to provide additional buses.

But Golden Arrow, in a statement yesterday, welcomed the provincial government’s decision not to support the boycott. Action could intensify violence, it said.

The company would run its buses on “as frequent a schedule as possible”, but its fleet was fully occupied during peak hours when no additional buses would be available to cope with extra demand. Many commuters would be stranded, it said.

Dugmore said the ANC recognised concerns about security measures — several bus drivers were killed during a 1992 taxi boycott in the area — but promised that security would be stepped up around trouble spots. The ANC had asked the police and the army to intensify efforts to confiscate illegal weapons.

He said the boycott would be suspended only when the two associations “unequivocally committed” themselves to lasting peace, agreed that no firearms — legal or illegal — would be carried on taxis, produced an acceptable proposal on routes, convened a mass meeting of drivers from both groups and convened a joint meeting of the associations and affected communities.

In Johannesburg, two rival groups, the Soweto Taxi Association and Soweto Taxi Service, agreed to merge their holding zones at the Baragwanath and Ferreira Street taxi ranks, based on the principle of “first come, first served” — irrespective of association membership.
Soweto's warring taxi bodies agree to end violence

Authorities say they will not tolerate any more trouble, promise tight security

Rival Soweto taxi associations embroiled in a deadly dispute have agreed to end the month-long undeclared war in the area... for now.

A meeting between the Greater Johannesburg metropolitan council, provincial transport and safety and security authorities, and the warring taxi associations, resulted in an agreement to revert to the status quo before July 1 when the associations moved to a new taxi rank on the corner of Commissioner and Ferreira streets in Johannesburg.

Tit-for-tat violence has cost the lives of two drivers, the wounding of several drivers and passengers, and damage running into hundreds of thousands of rands since July 1, when the Soweto Taxi Service (STS) and the Soweto Taxi Association (STA) moved from the Korit Street taxi rank to Ferreira Street.

The meeting, attended by representatives from 23 taxi associations, also resulted in the reinstatement of the Greater Johannesburg Taxi Forum.

STS general secretary Alphus Malo described the meeting, chaired by provincial transport director Lennox Magwaza, as a successful attempt to address the short-term problems besetting the local industry.

"After lengthy deliberation we agreed to jointly get our vehicles back on the road and the departments of safety and security and transport have promised to provide support to normalise the existing situation," Malo said.

STA vice-secretary Ernest Mogan says a 14-member monitoring committee consisting of representatives of all the role players would meet at 10am today to start planning resolutions.

The two associations will also be sharing the Ferreira Street taxi rank as an interim measure.

According to insiders, Gauteng Safety and Security Deputy Director-General Simon Sibeko made it clear that authorities would not tolerate any more violence in the taxi industry and promised a strong security presence along the disputed routes.

A report-back meeting will be held in Merali Square, Soweto on Sunday at 10am.
CHRIS RATENAM

DESERATE efforts by warring taxi drivers to buy “peace-making time” were rejected by both the ANC and the NP-led provincial government yesterday, as the political parties embarked on separate but tough crackdown strategies.

The ANC-led township commuter boycott of Codeta and Cata taxis starts on Monday as police, the army, Metro Rail and Golden Arrow buses brace themselves for the action.

The rival taxi groups broke their 28th successive peace pact last Friday, the longest lasting having come from a commuter boycott in 1992. It held for a month.

Codeta chairman Mr Stephen Williams said of peace talks with Codeta yesterday: “We’ve walked a lot of kilometres together, we’re almost there now.”

Convenor of a committee appointed by the Western Cape government to look into the taxi violence, Tourism MEC Mr Lampie Fick, pledged protection by police and soldiers to taxi drivers and commuters in what he said would be an “expanded and focused” security operation.

Fick said that while the NP majority in the provincial government did not support the ANC-led boycott of taxis, brokered of agreements had “become impractical”.

“The time for agreements has passed — my committee’s recommendations to the cabinet will not be subject to any taxi agreements.”

Fick appealed to the ANC to call off its boycott, because “all the necessary (security) machinery is now in place to maintain peace”, and said that it could spark further violence and retaliation by taxi operators.

“We’ve told the ANC and taxi operators that we don’t support the boycott ... I think the ANC realises we cannot be part of contracting out our powers to support this kind of action.”

Fick threatened to crack down with all the force at his disposal, on any “acts of civil disobedience” such as Wednesday’s roadblocks by taxi drivers in the Paarl region.

Lawyers had been briefed to look into regulations allowing the impounding of vehicles and charging a redemption fee of at least R500, and his committee had the “full co-operation of the provincial and Metropolitan traffic forces”.

The intensified police action had already led to several firearms being confiscated.

ANC provincial secretary Mr James Ngculu said the ANC would brief the PAC and broad ANC alliance today.

Golden Arrow have agreed to run more buses but warned they would not tolerate guards or drop fares because of how this might be interpreted by taxi drivers.
'Taxi bodies need unity'

By Themba Sepotokele

THE Gauteng ministry of public works and transport has urged the feuding Soweto Transport Services and the Soweto Taxi Association to form one body.

Briefing the media in Johannesburg yesterday, Gauteng director of public and urban transport Mr Lemnox Magwaza said representatives of the STS and STA had agreed to bury the hatchet and work towards peace and stability in the industry.

"The officials of the feuding associations emphasised the need to stop all acts of violence and intimidation," Magwaza said.

He said a joint monitoring committee established during a meeting yesterday had resolved to check all the flashpoints, especially the troubled Baragwanath taxi rank.

Magwaza added that the National Taxi Task Team had also emphasised the need for peace and for Soweto to have one taxi association. "Although it will take time to combine all the associations to form one, we hope that peace will reign," he said.

Taxi violence reigned again in Soweto, especially along the Old Potchefstroom Road near Pinnyville, and several people were injured and minibus taxis burnt out. Hundreds of commuters were also stranded.
CAPE TOWN — Former Soviet spy and SA Navy commodore Dieter Gerhardt arrived in SA yesterday for the first time as a free man since his arrest in January 1983 on charges of high treason.

Gerhardt arrived at Jan Smuts at 9am on a Swissair flight from Basle, Switzerland, where he has lived since his release from Pretoria Central Prison two months ago.

On his arrival form Gerhardt stated his purpose of entry was business and that the duration of his stay would be eight days.

ANC spokesman Carl Niehaus said Gerhardt spent yesterday afternoon with "an old political prisoner friend" but declined to name the former prisoner or his or her party affiliation.

The Home Affairs Department confirmed Gerhardt's arrival about seven hours after he had stepped off the plane, and after it had sifted through "thousands" of arrival forms.

Department spokesman Chris Pretorius said Gerhardt was an SA citizen and therefore entitled to the same rights of entry as any other citizen.

Niehaus said Gerhardt made the journey at his own volition and not at the request of the ANC.

He said there was no meeting planned with the ANC, but should he request one the ANC would "welcome it".

"Mr Nelson Mandela has a full schedule, but I am sure he would somehow find time for it (a meeting)," Niehaus said.

He denied speculation that Gerhardt was being groomed for a defence portfolio, and said there had been "no considerations" on the matter.

It is believed Gerhardt is staying in Johannesburg with his brother, Parktown orthopaedic surgeon Michael Gerhardt.

An attempt by a reporter to contact him there yesterday afternoon by telephone was answered by a child who said Gerhardt was "not here at the moment, but he will be back later."
Soweto taxi war flares again, despite leaders’ calls for peace

Andries Kwenaithe is one of only three leaders still alive from the 19 involved in the original association, writes PETA KROST

Andries Kwenaithe has attended a taxi driver’s funeral just about every week for the past five years. This week he helped to bury another driver killed in the latest taxi war flare-up, which began in Soweto last weekend.

Kwenaithe is the chairman of Soweto Taxi Servicess (STS) and is one of only three leaders still alive from the 19 who were involved in the organisation in 1990.

Since then he has lost his wife, two children, and many friends and drivers.

Until 1990 there was peace in the Soweto taxi industry because there was only one association operating in the area.

“I believe violence will continue until the two taxi organisations join and have the same emblem on their vehicles,” said Kwenaithe this week. “I am pleading with the Government to make this happen, so that the violence will stop — we all want peace.”

Kwenaithe said he had always tried to keep the peace in the taxi industry.

When the leaders of the Soweto Taxi Association (STA) and the STS shook hands two weeks ago, he hoped the violence would end.

But last Saturday an STS taxi driver was shot dead, a passenger was wounded, and six minibus taxis were set alight and another nine damaged in renewed violence between the two Soweto organisations.

This week an STA driver was wounded and many more taxis were burnt.

This violence is believed to be the result of a power struggle over taxi routes and ranks, longstanding feuds and a number of underlying reasons which “converged this week”, said a senior official in the National Taxi Task Team.

For Kwenaithe, it was another reminder of how his wife and children were gunned down in the same senseless feud in October 1991.

At the time, he said, he was involved in trying to keep the peace between the established taxi organisation and the group that broke away.

Two days before the attack on his family, leaders from both groups were shot. On the third evening, five combi-leads of people attacked his house.

“I sent my wife and children to the main bedroom, grabbed my shotgun and went out front because I thought it was better to die outside away from the family,” he said.

But while he held his own against the gunfire outside, two men broke through the back of his house and murdered his wife Jemina, 17-year-old son Paulus, and daughter Pinky (16).


Kwenaithe said his efforts to bring the rebels back into the original organisation proved unsuccessful.

After a legal wrangle, the Soweto Taxi Association changed its name to the Soweto Taxi Services, with the rebels taking the name of the STA.

Kwenaithe said that the peace doves brought more violence to the taxi industry, “I am pleading with the Government to make this happen, so that the violence will stop — we all want peace.”

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Rival taxi bodies strike deal

An attempt to end the ongoing taxi violence in Soweto was made yesterday when two rival organisations reached agreement on the use of holding bays.

Gauteng public transport spokesman Anchen Schoeman said Soweto Taxi Services and the Soweto Taxi Association had come to a "first-come, first-serve" agreement. The deal entails the joint use of holding bays, from where taxis are summoned to pick up passengers at taxi ranks. The parties agreed to a system in terms of which the first taxi to arrive at a holding bay will be the first to leave.

Officials of the Greater Johannesburg Transitional Metropolitan Council, the Gauteng safety and security department and the transport department would monitor the implementation. Schoeman said it was also the responsibility of taxi marshals to ensure smooth implementation of the agreement. — Sapa

See Page 7
Council orders

urgent report
on taxis in
Constantia

Staff Reporter

An urgent report on minibus taxis parking in Main Road, Constantia is to be compiled for the Southern Substructure Council "because of instability in the taxi industry".

Constantia councillor Joan Heming introduced a motion at last week's council meeting calling for the urgent report.

She told the council that there had been an increase in the number of minibus taxis using Main Road as a taxi rank. There are no formal minibus taxi ranks in Constantia.

"Because of the present instability in the taxi industry we need to know to which association these taxis are affiliated," Mrs Heming said.

She had been told by the Wynberg Police Forum that the increase in the number of taxis in Constantia had coincided with an increase in Constantia's crime rate. Mrs Heming's motion was accepted by the council.
Cape workers bear brunt of taxi boycott
(332) Mon 6 Jan 21/96
OWN CORRESPONDENT

The ANC-led boycott of warring taxi factions began yesterday, leaving thousands of commuters stranded in some areas and causing havoc in others.

The ANC called last week on commuters to boycott the taxis of warring organisations Cata and Codeta, in an attempt to force the taxi groups to commit themselves to peace.

Taxi operations in Khayelitsha and Nyanga came to a stop yesterday morning while commuters waiting to catch their taxis to work milled in confusion around the rank.

ANC spokesman Brent Simons said: "The taxi boycott started off on a good note. Many commuters did not take the taxis to work. But after a while, Cata started to operate again and forced Codeta to work again too."

According to Codeta spokesman, Roggie Malimba, Codeta started to load passengers only when angry Khayelitsha commuters quieted at the taxi ranks, demanding to be taken to work.

Simons said the ANC would not back down from the boycott until Cata and Codeta signed their peace agreement and called a mass meeting to publicly commit themselves to peace.
Mixed response to taxi boycott call

MELANIE GOSLING
STAFFWRITER

COMMUTERS in Khayelitsha queued for hours for buses as the ANC taxi boycott took effect and scores of taxis stood empty at ranks yesterday.

Drivers and owners, most of them members of Codeta, waited around the vehicles while commuters — including schoolchildren — queued at bus stops and crowded on to buses that were already full.

Said one taxi owner, who did not want to be named: "People are suffering because of the boycott. We are losing money and we are worried."

Most drivers were angry about the boycott, but said they did not want to risk taking passengers.

Taxi owner Mr Wiseman Ngesi said passengers had arrived at the ranks, but Codeta drivers and owners had turned them away.

"We are losing money, but Codeta respects what the ANC said — that people must boycott — so we didn't take any passengers," Ngesi said.

At Nyanga taxi ranks, used mainly by Cata members, the boycott was less effective. Although scores of taxis stood empty during the morning rush-hour, several were taking passengers.

Cata chairman Mr Simon Halmans, questioned at the Nyanga taxi rank, said he would not know the financial loss until the takings had been counted.

"Some people have been a bit fearful of the boycott, so they have stayed away or taken buses, but we are transporting others. The boycott is not really strong here in Nyanga," Halmans said.

Several commuters came up to him while the Cape Times was there and asked if it was safe to use the taxis. Halmans said it was.

Most of the people queuing for buses in Nyanga said they normally took taxis to work, but were afraid of trouble because of the boycott.

"We don't want to be on the taxis because maybe there will be shooting," said one.

In Bellville, where both Cata and Codeta taxis operate, the boycott had no effect and all taxis were operating.

A pamphlet put out by the ANC and calling for all commuters to obey the boycott, said commuters had been victims of taxi violence long enough.

Peace attempts had failed and it was up to passengers to unite and bring the violence to an end by boycotting taxis for one day.

Mr Armand le Roux, a spokesman for the office of the MEC for Tourism, Mr Lampe Fick, said the Western Cape executive had agreed unanimously not to support the boycott.

"We've had negotiations with the taxi organisations and everything is in place to deal with any violence," Le Roux said.

"Police have stepped up their presence at flashpoints and are ready to put up roadblocks if need be."

A spokeswoman for the Golden Arrow Bus Company, Ms Jeanne Welsh, said a taxi boycott would be detrimental to all who relied on public transport.

The company did not have the capacity to fill the gap, she said. It had only 650 buses and, even when the taxis were running, these were full during peak hours.

"After peak hour, buses made extra trips and we cleared most of the commuters by about 8.30am," Welsh said.
Govt releases blueprint to revamp taxi industry

Stephan Bothma

PRETORIA — About 40 000 illegal operators will be legalised and all associations registered as part of an attempt to return SA’s R8bn-a-year taxi industry to viability.

Recommendations by the transport ministry’s national taxi task team to formalise and structure the violence-plagued industry would be implemented on August 13 with the appointment of provincial registrars and a one-off opportunity for illegal operators to apply for permits, Transport Minister Mac Maharaj told reporters yesterday.

The task team, with members drawn from the industry and government, was set up 18 months ago to investigate problems and find solutions.

Government and the industry could not reach an agreement on certain labour relations issues, task team chairman Dipak Patel said. Discussions would continue.

Disputed proposals made by government representatives included instituting a disciplinary code for taxi owners, and penalties such as expulsion and suspension for not paying drivers’ basic salaries, failing to register, reckless driving, ill-treating passengers and using unserviceable taxis.

About half SA’s estimated 90 000 minibus taxis were operated illegally, leading to uncontrolled competition, which bred problems such as violence.

Government would look at the feasibility of setting up a capital guarantees fund to indemnify finance houses against the possibility of taxi owners defaulting on repayments, Patel said.

According to the task team, a national fund of R100m and a cash fund of R10m were required to cover all registered associations. However, Maharaj warned that implementing the recommendations would not automatically halt violence in the industry.

“Unfortunately a small group of people within the industry has a vested interest in violence, and has learnt to profit from violence.” However, government was no longer prepared merely to sign a “peace pact.”

The task team recommended that taxi associations register to create an industry structure making it easier for members to reap benefits, including fair and effective channelling of government assistance, pooling of resources, access to cheaper finance and profit from taxi petrol stations being ploughed back into the industry.

Continued on Page 2

Taxis

Continued from Page 1

From next month, illegal operators would be penalised to protect the interests of their legal counterparts.

Taxi offices run by industry members would be set up in each province to liaise with government, co-ordinate training and give administrative help.

However, the task team has been criticised by at least one taxi body, the task team’s efforts, saying his organisation had “never been welcomed to the negotiation process.”

Sapa reports that there are fears for the safety of six ANC members allegedly abducting taxi drivers while handing out taxi boycott pamphlets at Nyanga East in Cape Town yesterday.

ANC leaders who met representatives of the Cape Amalgamated Taxi Associations at Nyanga police station said the taxi body had promised to cooperate in finding the missing people.

“They are sure their members are going to kill our members,” said Western Cape sport MEC Lerumo Kalako.

The ANC called for the boycott force feuding taxi factions to find a violent solutions to their disputes.
There's no bull from this team. Each week, the Episcopal Diocese of South Dakota announced by "Amma" Cox will have to register in bid to regulate industry and end violence.
Taxi men kidnap 7 from ANC

Sowetan Correspondent and Sapa

ANGRY taxi drivers kidnapped seven African National Congress members at the Nyanga East taxi rank in Cape Town yesterday morning and drove off with their captives in minibus taxis.

There were fears for the safety of the abducted people and ANC leaders met representatives of the Cape Amalgamated Taxi Associations at Nyanga police station and said Cata had promised to help find the missing people.

"We have been given an assurance nothing is going to happen to them. They are sure their members are not going to kill our members," said Western Cape MEC for sport Mr Luramo Kalako.

The abducted ANC members had been handing out pamphlets to commuters to publicise the ANC's call for a boycott of taxis to pressure rival associations Cata and Codeta to end their taxi war.

Western Cape provincial transport minister Mr Leonard Ramafakane, an ANC member, rushed to the Nyanga rank to negotiate with Cata for the release of the kidnapped people.

Senior police officials later accompanied Ramafakane in his negotiations to free the seven ANC members.

At the time of going to press there was no sign of the kidnapped people.

Taxi boycott

Nyanga Police Commander Daniel Daniels confirmed that the ANC members had been handing out pamphlets yesterday morning at the taxi rank to call on passengers to support the ANC's call for a boycott.

Taxi drivers rushed at them and began beating them up and prevented them from handing out the pamphlets.

According to witnesses at the scene, the drivers bundled the seven ANC members into minibus taxis and sped off with them.

The ANC-led boycott of taxis began on Monday, leaving thousands of commuters stranded in some areas and causing confusion and havoc in others.

ANC spokesman Mr Brent Simons said the ANC would not back down from the boycott until Cata and Codeta had signed a peace agreement and called a mass meeting with their members and the community to publicly commit themselves to peace.

"In the past, lack of communication resulted in more violence. Too many people have been killed and we aim now to prevent further loss of life," Simons said.

The taxi organisations said yesterday that they had sorted out their problems and a boycott was not necessary.

Cata president Mr Stephen Williams appealed to the ANC to call off the boycott, which he said could lead to greater violence and loss of life.

He said Cata drivers had chased and beaten the ANC members because they were "chasing people out of taxis", but denied they had been kidnapped.
Fear of conflict, but ANC stands firm on taxi boycott

ANDREA BOTHA
Staff Reporter

The African National Congress (ANC) has decided to continue its Peninsula taxi boycott in spite of reports that the boycott has caused more taxi conflict and has confused commuters.

The boycott’s main aim, to bring the warring taxi organisations Cata and Codeta closer to peace by signing a written agreement, has not succeeded.

Cata President Steven Williams indicated yesterday afternoon that he was “not willing” to sign the agreement. “How many times must we sign a peace agreement, only to have Codeta break it?” he asked.

But spokesman Reggie Malimba said Codeta was willing to sign the agreement and was trying to get hold of Cata to arrange a meeting.

The ANC called for a community boycott of all taxis last week to force the warring taxi associations, Cata and Codeta, to sign an agreement and physically commit themselves to peace. But on the third day of the boycott yesterday, Cata and Codeta reported that their taxis were running as usual.

Mr Malimba said yesterday: “I don’t know what’s going on. We are willing to stop the taxis, but commuters are insisting that we take them.”

Mr Williams confirmed that Cata taxis were also operating as usual.

“But commuters are a little more scared than usual to take the taxis,” he added.

Earlier this week six ANC members were allegedly abducted at Nyanga East taxi rank by members of Cata while they were distributing leaflets publicising the boycott.

All six were later found, most of them badly beaten and requiring hospital treatment.

Afterwards, Mcebisi Skwatcha of the ANC’s Safety and Security Council said the incident only reinforced the need for the taxi boycott, which would not be called off.

ANC spokesman Brent Simons said the ANC would not call off the boycott.

He added that the organisation did not consider it a failure.
Taxi union calls on drivers to register

Stephané Bothma

PRETORIA — SA's estimated 40 000 “illegal” minibus taxi drivers would be encouraged to obtain permits because a formalised industry was the only way to stop taxi violence, SA Taxi Drivers' Union spokesman Maurice Bokaba said yesterday.

The union, representing more than 30 000 drivers, has welcomed recommendations by the national taxi task team that taxi organisations be registered and the industry formalised.

There are currently an estimated 400 taxi organisations, between 110 000 and 140 000 minibuses and 90 000 operators in the country.

“The once-off opportunity given to taxi drivers to register from Monday to legalise themselves is the last chance. After that, drastic measures will be taken by the law enforcement agencies against drivers operating routes illegally,” Bokaba said.

Bokaba expressed his regrets about a decision that labour relations recommendations made by the government component of the task team would not be implemented at the same time as the other recommendations.

The labour issues should have been prioritised by the task team on which drivers were not represented, he said. “Introducing formal labour practices into the industry should have been part and parcel of the restructuring of the taxi industry.” Drivers supported the labour-related recommendations.

These include a basic salary (not merely commission) for drivers, compulsory health funds and safety insurance and minimum wages. Other labour recommendations were that drivers would be punished for reckless driving, incurring traffic fines without informing their employers, ill-treatment of passengers, using unserviceable vehicles and deviating from routes specified by the employer.

The industry component of the task team did give all the labour-related proposals unconditional support.

This could only happen once the industry was formalised and returned to a profitability which would enable it to meet labour requirements.

Industry sources yesterday said that government should experience no problems with implementing the recommendations because of the large number of benefits to registered organisations and legal drivers including economic assistance from government.

Comment: Page 18
Airport Company Spreads Its Wings

Taking the global route: The South African Airways industry is looking to the international market for direction.
Virgin/Sun Air tie-up in the air

Tebello Radebe

The stage is set for powerful foreign interests to play an increasingly dominant role in the domestic air travel industry — first came South African Airways’ (SAA) link-up with Lufthansa, then the Comair-British Airways (BA) franchise deal, and now it is the Virgin Airlines and Sun Air talks.

Virgin Airlines’ South African representative Caroline Ravencall confirmed that talks between British entrepreneur Richard Branson’s Virgin Airways and Sun Air are under way to hammer out a deal with the domestic carrier ahead of Virgin’s maiden flight from London to Johannesburg on October 2. An equity deal between the two has not been ruled out “at this stage”.

Meanwhile, Bert van der Linden, commercial director of Comair, the 50-year-old local private airline, announced a multi-million rand upgrading programme to launch a business-class service next month. This face-lift will tie up with the launch of Comair’s franchise agreement with the global giant BA.

“We shall be repainting our aircraft and signage as well as changing our crew’s uniforms and aircraft livery to those of BA.”

In terms of the Comair/BA franchise agreement, Comair will be able to use BA’s worldwide booking and sales facilities, including the BA Executive Club — highly rated as one of the best frequent-flyer incentive systems in the world.

These investments’ joint venture with SAA — SA Express together with Inter-Air, the independently owned carrier, are two of the other notable regional airlines on the domestic market. Both have also recently reported bold expansion plans.

SAA representative Leon Els described the forays of foreign players in the local market as part of an ongoing global trend similar to the “strong alliance” agreement SAA entered into with the German Airline Lufthansa last September.

No more inefficiency: Dirk Ackerman

The move to create the single Airport Company under one line of authority, the Department of Transport, has cut some of the red tape. But the fact that it is still a public company, accountable to a regulating committee, which imposes a flat rate on aeronautical charges that is 2½% below inflation, is still a limiting factor.

“The现象 vision of giant shopping centres where aeroplanes can park”

that should prove that we are not an anerous bunch of moegoes [Idol],” explains Ackerman. “The airlines realise they are getting preferential rates; we are supporting them and they in turn should play along to ensure that they stimulate tourism.”

Ackerman is also categorical that SAA does not benefit from any preferential treatment from the Airport Company. The relationship is based on a purely transparent business customer relationship, he says. Ackerman believes the Department of Civil Aviation, which controls SAA, should be accountable for whether the airline is playing fairly in the international market.

Nevertheless, new business with international airlines has ensured that both traffic and projected growth rates are increasing exponentially. Statistics show an average 8.2% increase in terms of total passenger growth this year and 7.9% growth in

Set to take off: 'The vision is of giant shopping centres where aeroplanes can park'
Honey industry faces ruin as 900-m bees die

JOHANNESBURG. - About 900 million South African honeybees have died in a year, largely as a result of the meeting of incompatible cousins from different eco-zones.

Beekeepers told a Sunday newspaper that their industry faced partial collapse, with severe consequences for fruit farmers, flowers and trees.

The trouble began in the early 1990s when farmers moved entire colonies of Cape honeybees north from the temperate climatic zone they live in to the harsher interior to feed off plants that bloom at a different time of year.

They wandered into the hives of the more aggressive local African honeybee.

Differences in pheromone levels and breeding patterns throw the local bees into confusion, the Cape bees took over their hives but were then unable to survive themselves, and both colonies began dying off.

Beekeepers said the problem had been compounded by menacing new diseases imported along with foreign honey.

"Many experts consider the extermination of all bees living in infected areas to be the only way to save the industry," the newspaper said. - Reuters

Gauteng vows to enforce deal after new taxi violence

JOHANNESBURG. - The Gauteng and Greater Johannesburg administrations say they will enforce a deal brokered between two rival Soweto taxi associations more vigorously after renewed violence claimed three lives in the past few days.

In addition, all drivers who fail to comply with the agreement clinched last Thursday will be denied operating rights.

The deal to end violence was reached between the Soweto Taxi Association (STA) and Soweto Taxi Services (STS) drivers. But a few hours later an STS driver was killed and on Saturday two more STS drivers were gunned down.

Soweto police spokesman Govindsamy Mariemuthoo said Themba Hlatswayo, 33, was shot in the back of the head by a passenger at the Fred Clark squatter camp in Soweto at 8pm on Thursday.

Police could not confirm the killing of two more STS drivers on Saturday.

Yesterday, provincial and Greater Johannesburg Transitional Metropolitan Council (TMC) officials said drivers of the two organisations who failed to comply with the agreement would be refused operating rights.

"They would effectively be denied business opportunities," said TMC public transport committee chairman Peter Horwitz.

At a media briefing yesterday, Gauteng urban and public transport director Lennox Magwaza said some drivers were refusing to honour the agreement of "first come, first load".

Northern Metropolitan substructure councillor Sibusiso Buthelezi, who helped broker the agreement, said it would be enforced through security measures expected to be announced by public transport and roads MEC Paul Mashatile today.
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**Note:**
- Theodata for the month is not available.
- The total for the month is zero.

**Action:**
- Further investigation is required for the missing data.
ANC suspends taxi boycott -
warns Cata, Codeta to make peace

ANDREA BOTHA
Staff Reporter

The African National Congress
is to suspend its Peninsula taxi
boycott pending a meeting
between rival taxi organisations Cata and Codeta to
finalise the signing of a peace
agreement.

ANC spokesman Cameron
Dugmore said the Western
Cape provincial executive com-
mittee had held a "bosberaad"
at the weekend to assess the
boycott and its results.

The taxi boycott was called
two weeks ago to force Cata
and Codeta to commit them-
selves to peace. During last
week's boycott six ANC mem-
bers were assaulted at the
Nyanga taxi rank while handing
out leaflets about the boycott.

Mr Dugmore denied that the
boycott had been a failure, say-
ing thousands of commuters
had heeded the boycott and
had shown their anger at the
taxi industry.

Previously the ANC said it
would not call off the boycott
until both sides had signed the
agreement.

Mr Dugmore admitted that
the suspended boycott was an
act of concession on the part of
the ANC.

"The ANC has compromised
on the boycott to ensure that
the peace process takes place
as planned," he said.

He also said the boycott
would be called off once an
agreement had been signed and
taken to the community.

Cata and Codeta are to meet
the ANC early this week to dis-
cuss their final agreement.

Mr Dugmore also con-
demned the behaviour last
week of National Party provin-
cial ministers Lampie Fick and
Gerald Morkel over the taxi
boycott.

He said Mr Fick's statement
that a boycott was an act of
civil disobedience was an
attempt to undermine the ANC
initiative to bring peace to the
war-torn taxi industry.

"No lasting peace can be
brought to the taxi industry
unless there is clear regulation
and policing," said Mr Dug-
more.
Crawling into South Africa on a hope and a prayer

Over the fence lies the land of milk and honey

By Sharon Chetty

The suppression in the earth was fresh - not more than a few minutes old. And under the barbed wire coils lay broken branches, ready to be used as firing support so that the fence could be filled up enough for a person to crawl under.

Our ninja approach in our SANDF Land-Rover had obviously snared off the plan - yet another desperate Mozambican trying to cross the border between South Africa and Mozambique. Now he was entering the land of milk and honey - a place with no such roads, hospitals and work opportunities.

The 60-kilometre stretch of electric fencing separating the two countries is probably the most popular area of entry for Mozambicans coming illegally into South Africa.

According to Colonel Dean Loder, of the Border Command Group 31 in Nelspruit, the division responsible for the patrolling and maintenance of the fence, the majority of people crossing are job-seekers who want to get to Gauteng.

Migrants, returning

Every night in January, groups of between 10 and 50 men on as many as 60 who were caught crossing the fence - most were migrants returning for the start of the new work year. In the first 10 days, 912 immigrants were repatriated.

There have been instances where migrant women have gone to the fence and ensured that they have got back to South Africa so that they can get medical treatment on the South African side.

Since October 1992, when the rebel Mozambique and the Pretoria government signed a ceasefire ending two years of civil war, people crossing into the country were no longer regarded as refugees but as illegal aliens.

Last year’s elections have resulted in relative stability in that country, effectively reducing any security threat from that side.

When the electric fence was erected in 1967, it was during PW Botha’s “invasion laws”. The Umkhonto we Sizwe guerrillas, with support from Pretoria, were a major threat.

That remote stretch often saw bloody confrontations between the then SANDF and infiltrating forces. But the tense times are over and whitespace have some difference.

Together with illegal aliens, gun running, drug smuggling and cattle rustling are our main concerns,” explained Colonel Loder.

Now, when there are infiltrations, it is in concert with cattle rustlers, smugglers and armed gypsies who drive people to escape from the fence.

Many are on the run and are deputized there. They then make their way overland across Mozambique and eventually into South Africa.

Eric Mkhize, an illegal immigrant who is prepared to work for R80 a month on a banana farm

Eric tries his luck in SA

ERIC Mkhize is 28, has a wife and two children and is an illegal immigrant out to try his luck in South Africa.

In the war-ravaged Mozambique he had heard about the vast farms of the Eastern Transvaal, the roads where there are no bandits and that South Africans are “lucky”. They will work out only for a little money.

There are lots of jobs here but in South Africa people want too much,” he said.

He was arrested a day after he arrived to seek work at the farms around Kranspoort, the border town where the majority of labourers are either illegal immigrants or staying in the country with temporary work permits.

“I will try to come here again. In my land there is no work. We have lots of energy, we can work hard for little,” he said.

As far as Eric is concerned, working on a banana farm for R10 or R20 a month is no problem - he cannot see why SA workers want a minimum wage.

“I want to buy food for my children. In my country you cannot find many things - that is why I must work here,” he said. Meanwhile, Mozambicans are not the only ones trying to enter South Africa illegally via the Eastern Transvaal border. Hundreds of Somalis, Rwandans, Burundians and Ethiopians have been found entering the country illegally.

Desperation from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees said many of these people travelled by ship to Mozambique.

“We did not encourage hundreds of thousands from entering South Africa. This was at an identity crises between four and 12 AK-47s a month,” he added.

And fourthly, this would be the luxury market demand for land transport to the City of Gold, Johannesburg.
**Airlines to resist 'high' fuel prices**

Reinie Booyzen

Airlines operating in and out of SA are to present Mineral and Energy Affairs Minister Pemulwana Maduna with evidence that they pay about 30% more for fuel in SA than at typical airports abroad — boosting oil company profits at the expense of air ticket prices.

A meeting with previous minister Pik Botha provoked a commitment to take action against the oil companies, provided airlines could substantiate their case. Botha resigned in June, and the airlines will have to start afresh.

The airlines, represented by the Airlines Association of SA — which will also represent the International Air Transport Association — will argue that the higher ticket prices are inhibiting tourism, undermining its ability to generate foreign exchange for SA.

Fuel prices represent about a third of most airlines' operating expenses. Airline officials said at the weekend that the root cause of the high price structure at Johannesburg International Airport was Sasol's tight grip on that market. In terms of the secret supply agreement between Sasol and the rest of the oil industry, at least 80% of the 850-million litres of fuel supplied at the airport has to be bought from the Natref refinery, in which Sasol has a 64% and Total a 36% interest, unless Natref cannot supply the full 80%.

In practice, because of the phenomenal growth in demand in recent years, Natref is now able to supply only about 60% of the airport's needs. The rest is railed up from refineries in Durban by other oil companies.

Sasol sets the price for its fuel at in-bond landed cost (IBLC), based on the assumption that finished jet fuel is imported from Singapore and the Middle East. However, oil companies rarely import fuel from Singapore, the world's most expensive market.

After averaging a mix of posted and spot prices from three Singapore refineries and the Bahrain-Caltex refinery, the notional costs of moving the material to Durban are added, including shipping, insurance, warehousing and other fees. This produces the IBLC, to which Sasol adds an 11.695c/l pipeline charge to pump the fuel from Durban to Johannesburg. In truth, no jet fuel passes through state pipeline operator Petronet's pipeline from the coast.

The toll on fuel prices is heavy, as... Continued on Page 2

**Fuel prices**

Continued from Page 1

Fuel prices are actually as the other oil companies — Total, BP, Shell, Caltex and Engen — use the same pricing structure for the fuel they rail up from Durban.

Johannesburg prices are now 25c/l to 30c/l above the levels at large European airports, with SA near the bottom of this range in view of its immense volumes (it buys about 350-million litres a year at Johannesburg and 600-million litres nationwide).

According to one foreign airline fuel buyer, the average visiting airline paid about 100c/l to 105c/l at Johannesburg International last week, against 75c/l to 80c/l at London's Heathrow. While he acknowledged that Johannesburg prices were unlikely to drop as low as Heathrow's, he said the disparity was excessive. "We feel that import parity pricing is outdated and retrogressive," the official said at the weekend.

A Sasol spokesman said Durban prices were "very much in line with international prices, confirming that the import parity pricing system gives fair wholesale market prices". Johannesburg International prices were higher than the international average for two reasons: Firstly its location 600km from the coast necessitates, in the case of Natref, the cost of crude transportation from Durban and the further cost of transporting products from Natref to the airport. The pipeline charge is in fact a very real charge.

Johannesburg International did not enjoy the economies of scale Heathrow did. High quality requirements for jet fuel demanded dedicated and expensive logistical infrastructure. In addition, Sasol's "commercial, not secret, agreement with the other oil companies does not specify the prices they should charge the airlines".
Govt ‘must not pussyfoot around taxis’

Nomavenda Mathiane

THE Gauteng public and urban transport department wanted strong action to be taken against the two Soweto taxi associations that flouted an agreement signed on August 1, resulting in a new outbreak of taxi violence, public and urban transport director Lennox Magwaza said yesterday.

Magwaza said in Johannesburg the Soweto Taxi Association and the Soweto Taxi Service signed an agreement to share ranks and routes, use common bays and to operate on a first-come first-load basis.

However, on Friday, barely a week after the agreement had been signed, taxi violence erupted in Soweto resulting in the deaths of two drivers.

Magwaza said his department had made recommendations to Gauteng transport MEC Paul Mashatile on measures to be taken to deal with associations which violated the agreement.

Proposals sent to Mashatile call on government to come out clearly on policy that will enforce law and order, and not to “pussyfoot with the taxi associations”, Magwaza said.

He said both associations were guilty of reneging on the agreement, supporting his statement last week that a team monitoring progress of the agreement saw drivers from both associations openly defying it.

A monitoring committee chaired by Soweto resident Rev Jonathan Nyathi has been set up.
We will enforce taxi agreement, says Gauteng administration after more

By Stuart Kelly

The Gauteng and Greater Johannesburg administrations say they will enforce a deal brokered between two rival Soweto taxi associations more vigorously after renewed violence is believed to have claimed three lives in the past few days.

In addition, all drivers who fail to comply with an agreement clinched on Thursday will be denied operating rights.

A deal to end violence between Soweto Taxi Association (STA) and Soweto Taxi Services (STS) drivers was clinched on Thursday afternoon.

But barely a few hours later, an STS driver was killed. Two more STS drivers were reportedly gunned down on Saturday.

Soweto police spokesman Superintendent Govindsamy Mariemuthoo said Themba Hlatshwayo (33) was shot in the back of the head by a passenger at the Fred Clark squatter camp in Soweto at 8pm on Thursday.

The unidentified assailant fled in a blue minibus, he said.

Mariemuthoo could not confirm that two more drivers were killed on Saturday.

Yesterday, provincial and Greater Johannesburg Transitional Metropolitan Council (TMC) officials said drivers from the two bodies who failed to comply with the agreement would be refused operating rights.

"They would effectively be denied business opportunities," said TMC public transport committee chairman Peter Harwitz.

At a media briefing yesterday, Gauteng urban and public transport director Lennox Magwaza said some drivers were refusing to honour the agreement of "first come, first load" at the shared Baragwanath and Kort Street taxi ranks.

Northern Metropolitan Substructure councillor Sibusiso Buthelezi said security measures would be directed at the perpetrators and not the associations.

The warring taxi associations have been at war for over a month, from the time the TMC closed a rank in central Johannesburg which they had shared.

As a recognised member of the Greater Johannesburg Taxi Forum, the council gave the STA permission to use the new ranks. But the STS, an unregistered splinter group, has been fighting for the same right.

In an effort to sort out the taxi situation as a whole, the TMC embarked on a series of meetings last month to bring all parties together to create a framework within which the industry could operate.

But Sapa reports that May-
First steps taken to regulate taxi industry in Western Cape

ANDREA BOTHA
Staff Reporter

The provincial government has taken the first steps towards regulating the crisis-ridden taxi industry.

Western Cape Transport Minister Leonard Ramatlahane yesterday announced a new plan to legalise all pirate taxis.

The move follows the recommendations of the National Taxi Task Team (NTTT), which submitted the results of its investigations to the national Minister of Transport, Mac Maharaj, and his provincial counterparts, last week.

The NTTT was established last year to investigate the problems facing the taxi industry.

Mr Ramatlahane said: "We need to regulate the industry so that we can control it."

The first part of this regulation process would focus primarily on the legalising of unlicensed operators.

The NTTT also made recommendations concerning formalisation, training and the establishment of taxi co-operatives.

The minister called on all taxi associations to register themselves and their members from now on.

He said he hoped the process of registering all taxi operators would be concluded within six months.

But representatives of the Western Cape Taxi Task Team (WCTTT) expressed reservations about the new plan.

Chairman Achmat Dyason said that although the WCTTT supported the legalising of illegal operators, he did not believe that proper consultation had taken place.

Although the WCTTT had been established to represent the Western Cape on the national task team, it had never been invited to take part, and had heard of the new legalisation initiative only when it was announced yesterday.

"We, as the industry, have not been consulted," he said.
Meter nearly expired on Gauteng taxi initiative

Bonile Ngqiyaza

THE Gauteng taxi initiative has expressed disappointment over the lack of response from taxi organisations in furnishing it with information before registration in two weeks' time.

Public transport and roads consultant Knox Matjila said yesterday that while the initiative's inspectors were circulating, they were not getting co-operation. Sapa reports that the information required included the number of registered and illegal taxis and drivers linked to associations. Illegal taxis had been promised a reprieve from prosecution if they registered before last month's deadline.

The response in the Vaal Triangle was 8% while 45% of East Rand and Johannesburg associations had responded.
Taxi warriors warned: peace or ranks close

By Derek Rodney and Sello Motlhahloha

The Gauteng government has thrown down the gauntlet to warring taxi associations to heed agreements on the sharing of public facilities by Friday, or face a total shutdown of major ranks.

Thousands of commuters and more than 30 taxi associations using the Baragwanath and Kort Street taxi ranks could face a total shutdown if the provincial government’s hardline approach, announced yesterday by Public Transport, Roads and Public Works MEC Paul Mashatile and Safety and Security MEC Jessie Duarte, is enforced.

A large contingent of police and SANDF personnel will be employed at identified flashpoints from today to ensure that operators adhere to a “first come, first load” agreement at the Baragwanath and Kort Street ranks.

Mashatile said the government had been forced to pressure the bickering Soweto Taxi Association and Soweto Taxi Services after both parties had on several occasions failed to comply with agreements.

“Commuters, residents and drivers have been caught in the crossfire for more than two years now and we are aware of the imminent inconvenience to all parties should we enforce the closure, but we cannot continue to sign agreements which are not adhered to,” Mashatile said.

He added that the doors to his ministry would remain open for further negotiation.

Security personnel, drawn from the East Rand, Johannesburg and Pretoria, will maintain a strong presence at both ranks, as well as conduct roadblocks near Merefa Hostel, Kliptown, Old Potchefstroom Road and Old Jabulani’s Garage.

The roadblocks have been authorised to search taxis for weapons and to check for identification papers, licences and the roadworthiness of vehicles.
Cata and Codeta set to sign peace agreement

ERIC NYABAZAULA
CT 13/87/96

The 32nd peace agreement may be signed today between the two warring taxi associations, Cata and Codeta. Both associations made verbal commitments yesterday to abide by the agreement, which specifies that Codeta will retain operations in Khayelitsha and that Cata will continue operating in Nyanga and Bellville. In the event of any conflict between the two associations, these ranks will immediately be closed and remain so until the conflict has been peacefully resolved.

As per how they could assure the community that this is the last agreement to be signed, Mr. Howard Dyubeni, a spokesperson for Codeta, said yesterday: "The past agreements had been done verbally and this one has been written down with us committing ourselves to it."
The Deputy Minister for Safety and Environment

I, the undersigned, hereby declare that the information provided in this application is true and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief. Any false or misleading information may result in the disqualification of this application.

(1) Name of Applicant:

(2) Position Held:

(3) Address:

(4) Contact Number:

(5) Email Address:

I hereby certify that the information contained in this application is true and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief.

(6) Signature:

(7) Date:

The undersigned certifies that the information provided in this application is true and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief.

(8) Signature:

(9) Date:

The undersigned certifies that the information provided in this application is true and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief.

(10) Signature:

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(38) Signature:

(39) Date:

The undersigned certifies that the information provided in this application is true and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief.

(40) Signature:

(41) Date:
Bara rank closure would be disaster, say hawkers

BY MIKE MASIPA

"Too ghastly to contemplate."

That's what Baragwanath taxi rank fruit and vegetable hawker Nombulelo Ngayana thinks of the provincial government's threat to close the rank if feuding taxi association refused to stop fighting.

Safety and Security MEC Jessie Duarte has threatened to close the rank by Friday should the Soweto Taxi Association and Soweto Taxi Services fail to comply with a peace deal clinched last week.

Speaking while breastfeeding her 2-year-old son, Ngayana (37), who is a single mother, said the taxi rank was her only source of income.

"It would be a disaster not only for myself, but my other son, 11-year-old Elvi," she added.

Ngayana came to Johannesburg 16 years ago and has been working at the Baragwanath rank since 1994.

Life at the taxi rank went on as usual yesterday, with people oblivious to the fate that awaits the place should the notorious in-fighting amongst taxi operators break out again.

Hawkers, selling everything from packets of peanuts to household appliances, sat with their wares waiting for the occasional customers to stop at their stalls.

A trickle of patients on crutches, both young and old, came into the rank from the hospital.

Ngayana said visitors to the hospital usually bought their last-minute refreshments for patients from hawkers like herself.

And now the powers-that-be are contemplating closure.

"Where would such action leave thousands of commuters, and patients coming in and out of the hospital?" asks Ngayana.

Although the R10 she manages to make on a "good" day is not enough, Ngayana said this was well augmented at weekends, when the rank usually teems with commuters from various parts of the township.

But she and her fellow traders are also scared of being caught in the crossfire when the "naughty" taxi operators start their war games all over again.
Taxi industry still simmering
despite ultimatum from Duarte

We threat to close the Baragwanath and Kost Street taxi ranks today has prompted Soweto's rival taxi organisations to get their houses in order and honour an agreement to implement a "first come, first load" system.

The system will come into effect again from Monday, but Safety and Security MEC Jesule Duarte warned the Soweto Taxi Association and Soweto Transport Services that any loss of life or damage to property "advertently or inadvertently" could still result in the closure of the ranks.

Duarte earlier threatened to close the ranks if the two rival groups did not comply with an agreement to share the ranks and routes on a "first come, first load" basis.

The conflict has led to several deaths in past weeks.

In an unrelated incident, a North Rand policeman was shot and seriously wounded when two officers were fired upon after they stopped a minibus in the Sebenza area northeast of Johannesburg.

Staff Reporter.
Taxi drivers kidnap ANC boycott pamphleteers

ANDREA BOTHA
Staff Reporter

ANGRY taxi drivers from the Cata taxi group today kidnapped six African National Congress members at the Nyanga East taxi rank and drove off with their captives in minibus taxis.

The abducted ANC members had been handing out pamphlets to commuters to publicise the ANC's call for a boycott of taxis to pressure rival taxi groups Cata and Codeta to end their taxi war.

Western Cape provincial minister Lerumo Kalako, an ANC member, rushed to the Nyanga rank to negotiate with Cata for the release of the kidnapped ANC members.

Senior police were to accompany Mr Kalako in his negotiations to free the seven ANC members, Nyanga police commander Gantef Daniels confirmed.

Negotiations between Mr Kalako, Cata president Stephen Williams and police at Nyanga police station were still under way this afternoon.

Police Superintendent Splinters of the Priority Crime Unit and Mark Jensen of the Independent Urban Monitoring and Awareness Committee (Umac) also rushed to the rank to help in negotiations with Cata.

Cata taxi drivers blockaded the area surrounding the police station where the talks were taking place.

A crowd of about 150 angry Cata supporters gathered around the police station yelling: "Down with the ANC, Down with the ANC."

Cata members have denied they abducted the ANC members despite eyewitness accounts to the contrary.

Witnesses said Cata taxi drivers rushed at the ANC members as they were handing out pamphlets and began beating them up. According to some ANC members at the scene, the Cata drivers bundled the six ANC members into minibus taxis and sped off with them.

The ANC-led boycott of warring taxi factions began yesterday, leaving thousands of commuters stranded in some areas and causing confusion and havoc in other areas where taxis were running as usual.

ANC spokesman Brent Simons said the ANC would not back down from the boycott until Cata and Codeta signed their peace agreement and called a mass meeting with their members and the community, to publicly commit themselves to peace.

But taxi organisations said they had sorted out their problems in the meantime and a taxi boycott was no longer needed.

Meanwhile, the Pan Africanist Congress has condemned the ANC's boycott.

PAC representative, Mzwabantu Gxolwe, said: "The PAC don't support the boycott because it will only cause more bloodshed."
Fears after Bara bus blocked

STAFF REPORTER

Baragwanath Hospital has expressed fears that the taxi wars might seriously affect health services after 18 staff members were intimidated while being driven to work in a Gauteng health department bus on Friday morning.

The hospital has been sending out clearly marked clinic buses to collect staff members in Soweto for the past two weeks because of transport difficulties caused by the taxi wars, said PRO Hester Vorster.

On Friday morning, the bus was blocked by a Toyota Cressida in Meadowlands Zone 9.

"Men got out of the car and told the driver he was not supposed to be ferrying people to work on the Meadowlands route," said a maternity nursing sister who lives in Meadowlands and did not want to be named. "People were told to get out of the bus. They had to find their own way to work, and the bus came to the hospital empty," she said.

The matter was reported to police, MEC for Safety and Security Jessie Duarte and Transport MEC Paul Mashatile. The hospital has now stopped the service, fearing for the lives of its drivers.

Police taxi violence investigators said yesterday the incident would be investigated by Baragwanath police to establish for sure whether there was a link to any specific taxi association. If a link were established, specialist investigators would look into the latest allegations.

The rank and other flashpoints along the taxi routes are reported to be quiet, with no incidents being reported by the large security contingent deployed to monitor the situation.
By Joe Mdhlela

Research by the South African Crime Overview has revealed that taxi warlords are a law unto themselves and that taxi hit squads will remain a feature designed to violently settle differences in the industry.

Coordinator of the publication Mr Maxwell Nemadzivhani has also revealed that "no taxi organisation can claim to be pure when it comes to sponsoring taxi violence.

"Despite efforts by the government and the police to bring warring factions together and to stem the tide of violence, taxi warlords will always have a hidden agenda to sponsor violence for personal gain."

While the government was aware of the socio-economic problems, including the breakdown of social fabric, the report showed that taxi operators were not serious about peaceful coexistence.

**Behind closed doors**

"Surprisingly, when one gathers representatives of taxi organisations together, one leaves the meeting with a feeling of reassurance that these men are all angels and peace lovers."

"However, after smoking the peace pipe behind closed doors, they all leave only to dig trenches to bury each other."

Nemadzivhani said the the public was tired of "crocodile tears from taxi operators" and that it was time that the law took its course in dealing with those who disobeyed it.

The report said the South African Police Services were in the process of tracking down 10,000 known criminals.

"In announcing the National Crime Prevention Strategies, George Fivas' plan was to clean the communities of the known criminals roaming the streets," he said.
Taxi feud
claims one
more life

By Josias Charle

THE taxi war in Motholong near Garankuwa claimed more victims when a man was shot dead and another had his minibus set alight.

Both incidents took place on Sunday and police are investigating possibilities of a link between the crimes.

Garankuwa murder and robbery unit spokesman Sergeant Aubrey Ruele confirmed yesterday that Mr Johannes Modikwe (51) of 1279 Motholong was shot dead by three men while he was visiting a friend at house number 435. Modikwe, who was in the company of three other men, had just parked his car in front of the house where he was visiting when three men who had been following him approached.

"All three had 9mm pistols and as they approached Modikwe, they produced firearms and pumped bullets into his body at close range. He died on the scene," Ruele said.

Ruele added that police later found 10 cartridges on the scene.
R20m fillip for Interair as five-year plan starts

Stephané Bothma

INDEPENDENT regional carrier Interair had received a R20m financial injection with a recent change in shareholding, the airline announced.

Initiated by the airline’s new shareholding status, a five-year growth strategy aimed at definite and sustainable growth had already been put into place, new chairman and CE Michael Ebeling said.

Ebeling and brother Rupert have joined the Interair board of directors, following their acquisition of 80% of the shareholding from former chairman Robert Schwartz.

Since being granted route licences in 1993, Interair has captured a number of niche markets. They currently operate flights between Johannesburg and Antananarivo in Madagascar, the Seychelles, Ndola in Zambia, Entebbe in Uganda and Reunion island.

The airline also obtained route licences for the Comores, Cameroon and Libreville and applications for a number of new routes had been submitted, Ebeling said.

An agreement had been signed to acquire three Boeing 727 aircraft from an international company. The aircraft will be phased into operation during the next three months.

He said the carrier's existing routes had been confirmed by the Civil Aviation directorate and Interair had recently been granted the status of full IATA membership.

Also, Interair had secured unilateral agreements of Luftsana, Air France, British Airways, KLM and SAA and also had full interline and commercial agreements with Air Namibia, Comair and Air Madagascar.

"Interair is very well positioned to capture the African market and expand its operations to meet the strong need there is for an airline of its standing on the continent," he said.

Apart from increasing its frequencies into Africa, the growth plan would deliver convenience, superior service and the highest level of safety standards, Ebeling said. Interair aircraft could carry up to 6.5 tons of freight.

The airline has offices at all its destinations and employed 140 people.
Taxi drivers threaten to disrupt V&A Waterfront

JUDY DAMON (B32)
Staff Reporter
ARG 24/1/96

A group of irate taxi drivers operating at the V&A Waterfront have threatened to disrupt the vibrant tourist venue if they are refused permission to continue operating in the area.

The threat was made when the Waterfront shuttle services were implemented to ensure a smoother pedestrian and traffic flow.

The minibus taxi drivers claim that they were unfairly "kicked out", in spite of having permits which they claim allow them to operate in the area.

But under the new rules, only taxis with Waterfront permits would be allowed to operate there.

The chairman of the Peninsula Taxi Association, Mr. Ibrahim Albertus, said: “For so long we were operating at the Waterfront with their permission and now we are told to move out.”

Mr. Albertus said six years ago the taxis were operating from the Marine Drive area, which brought visitors from the townships and Cape Flats to the Waterfront.

The drivers claim Waterfront security chief Duncan Cluete granted them a particular space from which to operate at the Waterfront.

One of the drivers said: "The shuttle services will only transport the tourists, but we bring in the most people who do not have transport to get here."

Waterfront public relations officer Maureen Thompson said the drivers had ordinary permits to operate, but did not have the Waterfront permits which were issued this week.

When the minibus taxi operators moved into the Waterfront, their permits apparently included the Waterfront area.

The new rules are being implemented to regulate the number of taxis and shuttles operating in the area to stop congestion and parking problems, said Ms. Thompson.

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Taxi truce for Vredehoek

BY JESSICA BEZUIDENHOUT

VREDEHOEK taxi drivers linked to the Peninsula Taxi Association have pledged not to assault or intimidate drivers of a non-aligned family taxi group which operates in the city bowl suburb.

The agreement, reached last week, is included in an out-of-court settlement which was brokered just hours before the Isaacs family was to have sought Supreme Court protection against alleged harassment by PTA drivers.

It also follows about 18 months of tension and claims by the PTA that the Isaacs taxis were not adhering to permit conditions.

The Isaacs family have allegedly been subjected to constant threats and even assault and intimidation by their PTA rivals, according to Isaacs’ attorney, Nazeem Ebrahim.

Last year, a member of the Isaacs family was allegedly “kidnapped” and taken to the taxi rank on top of Cape Town station, where he was beaten with a sjambok.

Since then, the Isaacs have been barred from the legal pick-up point on the corner of Darling and Corporation streets, says Ebrahim.

While undertaking not to harass the Isaacs’ drivers or passengers, PTA drivers did not admit to any of the allegations against them.

A PTA spokeswoman denied its drivers were “thugs” and said they operated within the taxi group’s rules.
Two die in taxi war revenge hit
Two shot dead in Pretoria taxi war

In what appears to be an escalating taxi war in Pretoria, two men were shot dead last night and two people wounded, one critically, in the second shootout in four days.

A police spokesman said the incident, at the taxi rank at the corner of Dr Savage Road and Boom Street, was believed to be a revenge attack after the shootout between two rival taxi groups in Mabopane on Thursday, which left one man dead and another wounded.

Anyone with information about the incident is asked to contact Sergeant H K Smith at 353-4766 during office hours. Pretoria Correspondent, 26/9/96
Taxi owners to elect executive committee

By McKeed Kotolo  27/8/96

The Soshanguve Taxi Owners Association will hold elections for a new executive committee on Thursday.

The STO has not held elections in the past two years and this has reportedly caused numerous problems within the association itself as well as the taxi industry in the area.

The meeting will be held at the Soshanguve community hall which is adjacent to the Maluleke Spar Supermarket in Block H. It is scheduled to start at 10am.

The meeting will, among other issues, discuss the current taxi violence and the way forward. All members have been invited to attend.
Putco withdraws from Natal

DURBAN — Putco bus service would shut down its KwaZulu-Natal operations next month due to serious financial losses in the province over the past few years, MD Michael Oldam said yesterday.

"Putco Limited regrets to announce the closure of its strategic business unit in Durban and its withdrawal from KwaZulu-Natal," he said. The closure will affect 475 employees and more than 9 million commuters throughout the province.

Putco said it had suffered serious financial losses due to the rapidly decreasing number of passengers and the forced withdrawal of the service in certain areas. In March this year at least one Putco bus was gutted in Lindelani township north of Durban by protesters demanding the withdrawal of the service, apparently because it posed a threat to the taxi industry in the region. — Sapa.
Illegal trends in the taxi industry

Almost half of South Africa’s minibus taxi industry is illegal and this has led to uncontrolled competition and other problems like violence, Gauteng public transport and roads MEC Paul Mashatile said yesterday.

Mashatile urged illegal taxi operators to apply for permits in order to contribute to the setting up of a healthy taxi industry.

His statement followed a summit on Friday and Saturday last week, attended by representatives of the taxi industry and the Department of Public Transport, Roads and Public Works.

The summit aimed to find solutions to the problems plaguing the taxi industry.

Mashatile said the national taxi task team had finalised its recommendations and presented them to ‘Mincom’, which consists of Transport Minister Mac Maharaj and the MECs responsible for provincial transport.

The Gauteng taxi initiative had identified 23 main issues within the taxi industry that needed to be addressed, Mashatile said.

The summit looked at all aspects regarding the regulation and control of the industry with special emphasis on new legislation in the form of a taxi Act.

Mashatile called for the formalisation of the industry with emphasis on the training of taxi operators and financial support.

He also called for the registration of taxi associations, saying this could help structure the industry properly.

Routes and ranks

The summit discussed conflict resolution mechanisms and called for a violence-free taxi industry.

Taxi associations countrywide have been plunged into violence over various issues that include routes and ranks. The violence has claimed hundreds of lives including taxi association executive committee members and innocent commuters.

Several moves had been tried to secure peace in the taxi industry and a number of so-called taxi hitmen had been arrested in the past. — Sapa and Sowetan reporter.
'Brain drain' turns to gain

THE brain drain, the chicken run, rats leaving a sinking ship... it was a phenomenon that went by several names but it all described one thing: when thousands of skilled workers and new graduates packed their bags and left the country.

Virtually every day, the media would record which top businessmen, politicians, academics or professionals were emigrating. The trend represented one of the greatest problems for local industry which had to contend with skill shortages. But new statistics show the tide has turned - despite claims by foreign embassies officials that the flow of emigration applications remains steady.

The average rate of emigration among graduates between 1986 and 1988 was 4,600 a year - a quarter of all graduates from local universities. Researchers for the Association of Personnel Services Organization (APOS) believe the 'brain drain' problem was less than that of foreign new arrivals emigration figures showed. These reflected only citizens applying to emigrate and this was only a small part of the picture.

The figures did not show how many individuals were returning home and nor did they show the thousands of skilled people who had retained citizenship while working abroad.

A primary reason for many students feeling South Africa, Argentina and recently Chile are currently saying their desire to evade national service. Then came the political turmoil in the late 1970s and early 1980s, and South Africans settled overseas. They felt the country in a steady flow and moved primarily to Europe, North America and Australia.

According to the Canadian, British and American embassies the trend has not appeared to have changed in the 1980s. The head of the Canadian Embassy, Mr. Robert Madsen, said the flow had been "steady flow" of applications since the mid-1980s.

Between 1980 and 1982, 1,830 applications were processed by the Canadian embassy in Pretoria each year. About one third of the applicants were not South Africans.

Our office processes applications relatively quickly and no people from other places in the world - like Hong Kong - apply here.

Some South Africans also apply to emigrate to areas elsewhere in the world and they are not included in the statistic," said Mr. Madsen.

A spokesman for the British High Commission said a rise in political turmoil in South Africa would spur a spate of applications. "If there are more possibilities for political relief in South Africa, the figures have not really gone up or down over the past several years, it has more or less been a steady flow," she said.

The foreign embassies may say as many people are making applications to leave South Africa, but Central Statistical Services figures show less than half the number of people who emigrated in 1987 left the country last year.

In 1987, 11,714 people left the country, in 1988 another 7,597 departed. The next year there was a massive drop and only 4,911 left and even fewer, 4,722 in 1990.

Immigration figures have shown an opposite trend. A total of 2,100 moved to South Africa in 1982, 1,400 in 1988, 1,117 in 1989 and 1,440 last year.

Many of the immigrants were people from Europe and North America who saw better opportunities in South Africa. In 1982, 1,100 people were looking for a new life in South Africa. Up to 1,900 people are looking for new opportunities in the South African country every day and gaines formed outside the South African country in the last year.

The increase in immigrants to South Africa brought a variety of skilled professionals from different countries to the country. The increase in immigrants to South Africa was reflected in the number of new graduates who were able to adjust to the circumstances overseas," he said.

Mr. Bradford said it was very difficult to make it through the academic years. He had to leave most of them behind and "try make it from scratch.

Other people simply decided they wanted South Africa - like doctors who came from the UK and the Netherlands. They were given relief and assistance from the government.

 Personnel agents say the return of skilled people is a welcome boost to the economy but finding jobs for many people remains a major challenge.
Duduza taxi feud continues

By Dan Fuphe

THREE people, among them a Duduza, Nigel, taxi driver, were seriously injured when a fight broke out over routes between members of the Duduza Taxi Association (DTA) and the Brakpan Taxi Association (BTA) yesterday morning.

Those injured in the shootout included DTA taxi driver Mr Bafana Mchube (25) and passengers Mr Daniel Tsotetsi and Ms Margaret Bool. Mchube was rushed to the Glynwood Clinic in Benoni.

According to Duduza deputy president of the South African National Civic Organisation Mr Sphiwo Mhlambi, the shooting was a culmination of a long simmering feud between the two taxi groups.

"The feud which started in February this year has impacted negatively on our communities, especially scholars and nurses who commute daily between the two townships," Mhlambi said.

Community attempts

Mhlambi told Sowetan that attempts to resolve the taxi violence peacefully resulted in the community staging a mass stay-away on August 12.

He criticised the Tsakane branch of Sanco for their failure and apparent reluctance to meaningfully mend the dispute by bringing the warring parties together in an attempt to end the feud.

Chairman of the BTA Mr BP Simelane condemned the recent shootings.

"As early as Friday, one of our drivers Mr Sipho Dlamini (25) was killed by unknown persons in what we can only assume was taxi violence.

"Like all peace loving business people, we are against the use of violence as a means of achieving our objectives," Simelane said.

He called on passengers, taxi groupings and all political structures to be calm. Captain Abel Coetzee, of the Police Public Order Unit in Dunnottar, confirmed the shootings but said the Police Taxi Task group was monitoring the situation.
Coup bid soldiers sentenced

EIGHT of the rebel soldiers involved in the abortive coup in Bophuthatswana last year yesterday received sentences varying from seven to eight-and-a-half years' jail.

The sentences, for high treason, were handed down by Mr Justice M W Friedman in the Bophuthatswana Supreme Court.

In all, 142 members of the Bophuthatswana National Security Unit face sentence, 125 having been convicted of high treason and 17 of terrorism under the Internal Security Act.

Sentencing in this mammoth treason trial, which began in April, may last until tomorrow.

MR Amon Ngcobo (48) is one of the thousands of refugees thrown up by the political violence.

In 1986 Ngcobo lost a full-time job. Since then he has been coming into central Durban almost daily looking for temporary jobs to help his wife and four children.

He has been living in Lindelani, north of Durban, since 1970.

Two Thursday ago, on returning from a fruitless work-seeking venture, he and two other men were confronted by a gang of six men as they stepped off a bus at Richmond Farm.

"They said 'what are you? I said 'I am nothing'. They said 'you are a comrade' and shot me."

Ngcobo spent the next week in King Edward VIII Hospital, Durban.

He said he counted 52 other patients there recovering from gunshot wounds inflicted in the political violence.

Ngcobo, who is the brother of a senior KwaZulu political leader, has not been back to his Lindelani home.

He is now moving away as he fears the men will get hold of him again.

"A lot of people are making trouble for nothing. It is not right to kill other people."

His wife does not know what has happened to him. The night he was released from hospital he slept on Durban Station.

Ngcobo was highly critical of the warlords who have set themselves up as undisputed kings in the squatter settlements north of Durban.

Hobo

He said the man who ran his Lindelani area moved in five years ago as a hobo, but was today a very rich man.

He had a police force who demanded R5 from people every month. If they did not pay they were chased away.

The police made people stop talking and going around at 9pm or 10pm, they were fined R30.

He has scars on arms and face because he came home late for work one night and was caught talking to his family.

The warlord's police put him in handcuffs and took him to the warlord's home. The warlord then hit him repeatedly with sjambok.

People in the squatter camps hated the warlord and wanted to shoot them Mr Ngcobo said.
R65m to regulate SA taxi industry

ERIC NTABAZALILA

MORE than R65 million is to be spent on formalising, regulating and controlling the taxi industry nationally, Western Cape Transport MEC Mr Leonard Ramatlakane announced yesterday.

But about 60 taxi associations have said they are dissatisfied with the process and warned that there is a “possibility of bloodshed” if the government goes ahead with it.

“They are causing a split within our Industry. They are not interested in the consequences — whether people are going to die,” Mr Moeam El-Ahmed, coordinator of Concerned Taxi Operators — as the 60 associations have named themselves — said last week.

Ramatlakane gave an assurance that he was not going to declare the election of the present Taxi Task Team — which investigated the formalising, regulating and control of the taxi industry — null and void. This had been demanded by Concerned Taxi Operators, who felt they had been left outside the process.

Ramatlakane said the benefits the taxi operators would derive from the process would be less violence and tension in the industry and more people using taxis.

There would be financial assistance and co-operatives would be formed by the industry and the government, in which the government would invest.

Government-funded taxi offices would be opened in all regions, to be run by the taxi industry.

Through training and strict law enforcement, violence would be stamped out in the industry.

Waterfront shuttle drivers assaulted

CT 29/8/96

CYNTHIA VONGAI

A POTENTIALLY explosive situation exists between the Waterfront shuttle service and some members of the Peninsula Taxi Association (PTA), after violent clashes between members of these organisations.

Fifteen V&A shuttle drivers have allegedly been seriously assaulted by PTA members in an attempt to sabotage the shuttle service.

The manager of the shuttle service, Mr Esa Yacooob, said the Waterfront was trying to maintain an upmarket transport service that was efficiently run and closely monitored, but this was being hampered by unlicensed taxi operators stealing clients and intimidating shuttle drivers.

Fifteen of our drivers were assaulted by PTA members and three of our minibus shuttles were smashed and defaced,” he said. “We have legal licences to operate a shuttle service between the Waterfront and Cape Town and cable car every 15 minutes, and we have an airport shuttle hourly.”

Yacooob said he hoped to settle the problem in a peaceful manner within the next few days.
SA, KwaZulu-Natal govt's bail out Putco

Farouk Chothia

DURBAN — The national and KwaZulu-Natal governments have decided to rescue Putco's KwaZulu-Natal operations by giving it what is believed to be R4,4m to ensure its operations continue until the end of next June.

The governments yielded to the request in last-minute negotiations with Putco and worker representatives after the bus company announced earlier this week that it would close its KwaZulu-Natal operations this week due to losses of R1m a month.

The decision would have resulted in nearly 500 people losing their jobs, and alternative transport arrangements would have had to be made for Putco's commuters.

KwaZulu-Natal transport MEC Sibusiso Ndebele said the national and provincial transport departments would "put together" the required funds to cover Putco's losses.

Ndebele did not disclose the sum, but it was understood to total R4,4m. The national and provincial departments would contribute R2,2m and R1,1m respectively. Durban's council would be asked to contribute the remaining R1,1m.

Putco Durban manager Ricky Stevenson said Putco was delighted by government aid. Putco now planned to remain in KwaZulu-Natal beyond next June, when it would tender for specific routes that it believed were viable.
Nyathi resigns from taxi team

By Thembu Sepotokile

THE chairperson of the Soweto taxi monitoring team, the Rev Jonathan Nyathi, yesterday resigned from the team and accused Gauteng transport department head Mr Jack van der Merwe of racism.

Nyathi said Van der Merwe wanted to replace black taxi monitors with whites. He said he regretted his decision, which had resulted from "an internal dispute in the Gauteng transport department".

"The transport head of department had complained about me being provided with a car, remuneration and a cellular phone," he said.

Nyathi said Van der Merwe had apparently complained to Gauteng transport director Mr Llanox Mgqwaza that he was not entitled to these benefits because he was not a civil servant.

"How does he expect me to perform the government's duties without any resources," he said.

Nyathi played a major role in brokering a cooperation agreement between the Soweto Taxi Association and the Soweto Taxi Service.
6 killed in renewed taxi violence at weekend

Taxi violence seems to have erupted again between rival taxi groups in Soweto after two taxi drivers and four passengers were shot dead in two separate incidents over the weekend.

Three taxis were set alight in Pimville and at the Randganath taxi rank on Saturday, said police spokesman Superintendent Govinda Mothuloo.

On Saturday night, taxi driver Moses Sithole (33) and two passengers - Nicholas Ntuti (26) and a man identified only as Matembo (24) - were shot dead by two gunmen while sitting in a minibus at the Engen Garage in Meadowlands.

AK-47 and 9mm cartridges were found at the scene.

This attack was followed yesterday morning by the burning of a taxi in Kliptown Road, Pimville.

At about 1pm yesterday another taxi driver was shot dead and two other people were seriously wounded in a shooting in Pimville, Mr Mothuloo said.

He added the shootings were a result of an ongoing feud between the Soweto Taxi Services and the Soweto Taxi Association.

He was, however, unable to confirm which body was responsible for the attacks. - Staff Reporters.
Maharaj has plan to regulate taxi industry

Register aims to curb illegal operators

Staff Reporter

MINISTER of Transport Mac Maharaj has announced a plan to regulate the taxi industry.

The drive, called Masibambisane, will centre on the creation of a taxi register and a provincial taxi office to register, regulate and assist the taxi industry economically.

"During a period of nine months, the National Taxi Task Team, through an active partnership with the industry and government at local and provincial level, identified a number of issues which needed urgent attention," said Mr Maharaj.

Firstly, in an effort to formalise the industry, the team instigated a drive to register the taxi associations with the Provincial Registrar.

It was hoped this would help in coming up with uniform rules to be applicable across the industry.

To curb the violence and other problems associated with illegal taxi operators, the government was offering a one-off opportunity for illegal operators to apply for licences.

This involved using a special legalisation procedure involving registration forms available from provincial taxi offices or the Road Transport Board.

Mr Maharaj said apart from the legalisation and registration initiatives, an attempt to control individual ranks would be instituted.

With the help of registration and the legalisation of the industry, it was hoped the control initiative, called rank control, would be an effective policing mechanism.

For legal operators belonging to registered taxi associations, several benefits were to be made available.

The government's economic assistance plan included access to cheap finance to buy vehicles as well as subsidised petrol from taxi petrol stations, the profits of which would be ploughed back into the industry.

Literacy and numeracy, advanced driving, basic vehicle maintenance, business management and customer care were some of the training programmes available.

Mr Maharaj said everyone in the industry, from drivers to rank operators, would be eligible for training.

The government would also be offering protection against the illegal operators to the members of registered associations.
Regulation of taxi industry on its way

Cape Town - Minister of Transport Mac Maharaj has announced a plan to regulate the taxi industry.

The plan, called Mshambisane, will centre on the creation of a taxi registrar and a provincial taxi office to register, regulate and economically assist the taxi industry.

"During a period of nine months, the National Taxi Task Team (NTTT) through an active partnership with the industry and Government, both at local and provincial level, identified a number of issues which needed urgent attention," said Maharaj.

In an effort to formalise the industry, the NTTT instigated a drive to register the taxi associations with the Provincial Registrar.

To curb the violence and other problems associated with illegal taxi operators, the Government was offering a one-off opportunity for illegal operators to apply for licensing using a special legalisation procedure involving registration forms available from provincial taxi offices or the Road Transport Board.

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Maharaj said everyone in the industry would be eligible for training.

The Government would also offer members of registered associations protection against illegal operators. — Own Correspondent.
Police 'involved (332) in taxi violence'  

By Josias Charle

THE Lethlabile Taxi Organisation yesterday implicated police in the killing of two policemen and pledged to work with the authorities to stamp out the ongoing violence in the industry.

In a memorandum submitted to the offices of Safety and Security Minister Sydney Mufamadi and national police Commissioner George Fivaz, the LTO said it was prepared to point out various perpetrators of the violence.

LTO spokesman Mr Jacob Ledwaba told Sowetan: "It is a risk we have to take if we want to save the lives of innocent people. We are aware that those perpetrators can come for us, but while our lives are important, we must think of the greater community."

Ledwaba also alleged that there was a police conspiracy behind the recent murder of two Soshanguve detectives.

Sergeants Michael Baloyi and Richard Khoza were gunned down last week. Khoza was to have given evidence in a taxi-related murder trial in the Pretoria Supreme Court last Wednesday.

"We have been sending letters to the authorities for the last few months in which we highlighted some issues. All we got in response was a message that the matter was receiving attention. "We now want the community to know that we are not just resting on our laurels, we want to cooperate with the police to stamp out the violence."

"We know who is behind it and we are prepared to point them out so that they can be arrested," Ledwaba said.

This information will be given to Mufamadi only.

Meanwhile, there was drama at the Rietgat taxi rank in Soshanguve, near Pretoria, yesterday when scores of taxis "blockaded" the rank.

Ledwaba said it was LTO members who converged on the rank with their vehicles to await Mufamadi's reaction to the memorandum.

Police spokesman Captain Morne van Wyk said the vehicles had not blocked the roads and no incidents were reported.
Rival taxi drivers in rank dispute

The rivalry has flared in Rietgat, north of Pretoria, after Hammurabi, a local branch member of the Limpopo Taxi Organisation (LTO), warned rival South African Taxi Owners' Association (STOA) drivers out of the local taxi rank.

Police were rapidly-deploying members at the Rietgat taxi rank at mid-morning yesterday to create a buffer between angry taxi drivers.

Captain Dave Harrington said Public Order Policing members, backed up by Dog Unit and local police, were at the rank and were keeping apart the angry factions.

By nightfall the associations were still squaring up against each other at the rank although no violence had been reported by police.

Crime Reporter

[Signature]
Five die in taxi violence

By Matshube Mfoloe and Josias Charle

FIVE people were killed and two seriously wounded during an AK-47 rifle attack on a minibus taxi at Klipgat near Mabopane yesterday.

GaRankuwa police spokesman Sergeant Aubrey Ruele said three men in a white Golf with false registration numbers attacked a minibus travelling to Erasmus about 11am.

They opened fire on the minibus with an AK-47 rifle and continued to fire as they drove parallel to the taxi, instantly killing the driver and four passengers.

Two passengers were seriously wounded and were taken to Odi Hospital. Two others survived the ordeal.

Ruele identified the dead as Ms Nthuti Magala, Ms Bosteny Mogamotse, Mr Alfred Hlongwane and Mr Alex Dihakwane, the driver. The fifth victim, a young girl, has not been identified.

In another attack in Soshanguve, near Pretoria, dozens of commuters had to flee for their lives when rival taxi associations exchanged gunfire at the Mabopane railway station taxi rank.

Terrified commuters

Members of the Lethabile Taxi Organisation and Soshanguve Taxi Owners’ Association were involved in a shootout about 8.15am, forcing terrified commuters to flee. No one was killed but two men were wounded.

A police task force from Pretoria arrived on the scene and surrounded the rank. Armed with the new Heckler and Koch submachine guns they defused a potentially dangerous situation.

A helicopter hovered above the rank and thick smoke billowed around the taxi rank where a minibus taxi was burning. Attempts to put out the fire failed.

About 30 other taxis stood in rows with their windows shattered and revealing numerous bullet holes.

Captain Dave Harrington also disclosed that about 12 members of the Taxi Violence Investigation Unit and their families had been moved to a safe place after the killing of two policemen in Soshanguve last week.
Protesting taxi drivers lay siege to airport

JONAH SCHROEN

Hundreds of minibus taxis today blocked the main entrance to Cape Town International Airport, threatening to disrupt air traffic, as drivers from the Codeta taxi association protested against being excluded from some township taxi ranks.

Codeta has been engaged in a taxi war with the rival Cela taxi group.

Several other convoys of minibuses have been spotted in other parts of the Cape Flats.

Police have summoned all available tow trucks to remove the vehicles blocking the main road to the airport terminal.

Armed police were trying to control the crowd, but taxi drivers drove on pavements to bypass them.

Traffic is being diverted from the airport into Bolckers Quarry Road.

Leader figures in the taxi protest group acted as marshals to get about 250 taxis as close as they could to the airport buildings.

Goods trucks, freight companies and national and international passengers are being prevented from reaching the airport.

Several irate air passengers got out of vehicles and carried their luggage to the terminal buildings to catch their flights.

A spokesman for the taxi drivers said they were up in arms about the closure of Cape Flats taxi ranks to Codeta drivers, and were angry about the lack of response from police and other government institutions to help them.

The blockage stretched from the entrance to the airport to the N2 freeway.
Police Victimes of Taxi Wars

Police have been impressed by the case. Mr. 6-13/1976. M.29/7

Police Victhims of Taxi Wars
Court urged to set up programme to protect witnesses to taxi violence

Denis Ngonya
Priests vow to use taxis on danger routes to end violence.

Church ministers on the Par East Rand yesterday vowed to defy warning taxi organisations in the area by using taxis between Duduzi and Tsakan in order to put an end to the taxi violence.

They announced this at a meeting for “Peace and Reconciliation in the Taxi Industry” in Duduzi to call for an end to the taxi violence on the East Rand.

Violence between the Nigel Taxi Association (NTA) and the Brakpan Taxi Association (PTA) has already claimed many lives in the area. On Women’s Day a taxi owner was gunned down and recently a commuter was shot dead.

Addressing about 50 people at the meeting, Tsakanminers’ Forum leader the Rev Jabulani Zitha said priests should set a precedent by using taxis because it was the only mode of transport accessible to their congregants.

Zitha said priests should not just fold their arms while their followers’ blood was being spilled because of taxi violence.

“We will continue to live in fear for our lives unless we do something to show that we are against the rampant taxi violence,” Zitha said.

Greater Brakpan mayor Ace Phiri said his council had received an undertaking from the two taxi associations to co-operate with each other to ensure peace in the area.

Praising the ministers for taking the initiative to say “enough is enough” about taxi violence, Phiri said many commuters were physically assaulted by taxi drivers when alighting from taxis in Dunrobin Road in Duduzi.

He said it was sad that the associations, which he said were fighting over routes, did not attend the peace meeting.
Airport chaos as taxi drivers protest over Cape violence

OWN CORRESPONDENT

Cape Town – Flights were disrupted when hundreds of minibus taxis blocked Cape Town International airport yesterday to protest against the government's failure to end taxi violence in the Western Cape.

Four flights were delayed by up to 30 minutes to accommodate passengers affected by the taxi blockade. No flights were cancelled or diverted.

After a two-hour standoff between police and angry taxi drivers who threw stones at officers and slashed the tyres of a private car, the taxi drivers dispersed.

They had threatened to disrupt air traffic to press home their demands for government intervention in their struggle against rival taxi group CATA.

Drivers protested against their exclusion from CATA-dominated taxi ranks on the Cape Flats. During the standoff, police summoned all available tow trucks to remove taxis blocking the main road to the airport terminal building. At one stage about 250 taxis blocked the road.

Armoured vehicles from the police's Public Order Policing Services arrived at the scene, where some of the taxi drivers were wielding knives. No firearms were visible.
Winnie's
Soweto
plans
unclear

Blackburn, Bishop die in E Cape motor smash

Winnie Mandela's return to Soweto this week is unclear. Her visit to her jailed husband, Nelson Mandela, in Pollsmoor prison, Cape Town, depends on how many more times she will be allowed to visit her. The day set down for an application in the Supreme Court asking for the order banning her from the Johannesburg and Roodepoort magisterial districts to be set aside.

She and members of her family visited Mandela for an hour on Sunday. A further visit was scheduled for yesterday. Any others later in the week will depend on prison authorities.

During some of the visits, Mandela was accompanied by representatives of the family attorneys — Ismail Ayob & Associates. One of the attorneys, Akbar Ayob, who has since returned to Pretoria, refused to reveal details of consultations with the jailed leader, saying they were a purely family affair.

He was further prevented from saying anything about the meetings by the Prisoners Act.

He confirmed that Winnie Mandela would almost certainly be returning to Soweto before tomorrow. He said that at this stage it was uncertain what progress had been made in persuading the police not to arrest her until the court application had been heard.

Winnie Mandela was forcibly removed from her Soweto home on December 23 in terms of her new banning order. She was subsequently released on her own recognisances. She is to stand trial some time in January on, as yet, unspecified charges.

MOLLY BLACKBURN, MP for Walmer and human rights activist in the Eastern Cape, and her husband, Brian Bishop, were killed in a motor accident near Humansdorp. Blackburn's sister, Judy Chalmers, and Bishop's wife, Dolly Bishop, were injured.

Reports indicate that the four were returning to Port Elizabeth from Outshoorn when the accident happened.

A police spokesman said Blackburn's car was involved in a head-on collision at about 6 a.m. on Saturday on the road between Karedouw and Humansdorp. The driver of the other vehicle, who was also killed, has not been identified.

The two injured women were admitted to the Humansdorp hospital and later transferred to the provincial hospital in Port Elizabeth.

Blackburn had been detained several times for entering black townships in the Eastern Cape without police permission. Dr Bishop was a prominent civil rights activist in Cape Town.

In a statement, Slabbert said: "I am deeply shocked by the sudden and tragic death of Molly Blackburn. She was a courageous fighter for justice and had very high credibility and admiration from many black South Africans and colleagues.

"She will be sorely missed wherever communication between black and white is needed." — Sapa.
Police in bid to curb taxi violence

Sunday Times Reporter

POLICE and army patrols have been stepped up at township taxi ranks in the Cape Flats to curb further violence.

During the week a taxi driver was shot dead in Khayelitsha and another wounded at Heideveld.

Western Cape police spokeswoman Superintendent Ciska du Plessis said no arrests had been made in connection with the shootings.

She said the violence could be the result of unresolved friction between rival taxi groups.

An uneasy peace returned to Peninsula minibus taxi ranks yesterday as police and army patrols were deployed at potential trouble spots.

On Friday minibus taxi drivers belonging to Codeta caused chaos on the airport highway when they blockaded the N2 in support of calls for the authorities to intervene in the taxi dispute.
Urgent talks called after death of taxi drivers

Two taxi drivers were killed in the latest attack on a taxi rank in the city. The drivers were killed on the spot and two others were critically injured. The attack was said to have been carried out by a group of armed men.

The police are investigating the incident and have appealed for information from the public. They have also urged taxi drivers to be on the lookout for any suspicious activity.

The taxi association has called for a meeting of all taxi drivers to discuss the situation. They have also warned of further attacks.

The family of the deceased drivers have expressed their shock and grief. They have called for justice to be done.

The incident has sparked outrage among taxi drivers and the wider public. Many have called for action to be taken to ensure the safety of drivers.

The city council has promised to investigate the matter and will take appropriate action.

The incident has also raised concerns about the safety of taxi drivers in the city. The police have been urged to increase patrols in the area.

The taxi association has called for the government to take action to ensure the safety of taxi drivers.

The family of the deceased drivers have also called for a public inquiry to be held.

The incident has caused a great deal of concern among taxi drivers and the public. Many have called for peace and an end to the violence.
Businessmen urged to help solve taxi problem

CHRIS BATeman

c79|9|96

A CHALLENGE to Peninsula businessmen to help relieve pressure on the overcrowded taxi commuter market was made by Transport and Public Works MEC Mr Leonard Ramatlashane when he and fellow MECs met the cream of the local business community recently.

Speaking in the wake of the blockading of the approach road to Cape Town International Airport by Codeta taxis on Friday, Ramatlashane appealed to business people to help create an expanded commuter market by awarding contracts to taxi owners to transport their staff.

He suggested allowing taxis to transport staff “to and from construction sites and from here (Cape Town) to Simon's Town, for example”.

Ramatlashane said he had begun discussions with the sub-structures to involve them in managing the taxi industry. Also, the legalisation of unlicensed taxi operators and training programmes would enjoy priority.
A resurgence in taxi shootings has followed Codeta's blocking of Cape Town International Airport on Friday in an attempt to pressure the authorities into addressing problems at the Bellville rank.

In Wynberg yesterday afternoon, a taxi operator became embroiled in an argument with a Golden Arrow bus driver, took out a gun and fired.

The bus driver, Mr Abdul Matthews, was wounded in the leg and his bus hit seven times.

On Saturday, a taxi driver was shot dead in the Vietnam Camp near Nyanga. A Codeta taxi driver was wounded in Nyanga when the windscreen of his taxi was shot out and another was wounded in Hanover.

In Philippi on Saturday afternoon, a Cata driver was wounded in the head when nine shots were fired at his taxi from a grey vehicle, police spokeswoman Superintendent Ciska du Plessis said. The driver was taken to Groote Schuur Hospital.

In another shooting, also involving a grey vehicle, a woman was wounded in the thigh.

In Mitchells Plain, a Codeta driver and a woman passenger were wounded.

Later, a taxi was found riddled with bullet holes and spattered with blood, but police could not find the driver.

A Codeta driver was shot dead near his home on Friday, hours after Codeta's blockade of the airport.

Spokesman Mr Howard Dyubert said the blockade had been an attempt to get the authorities to respond to Codeta's pleas that they help to restore peace at the Bellville taxi rank by dealing with intimidators.

"We are left asking why, when someone is shot in Salt River, we see something resembling a military operation. People have been dying in the taxi violence and nothing like that operation has happened," he said.

"Mr Dyubert said..."
Drive-by shooting fuels taxi warfare

The N2 highway near Cape Town was the scene of renewed taxi warfare with a drive-by shooting and a high-speed chase by minibus drivers.

Also on the N2 yesterday, motorists found the body of a shotman.

A taxi driver was wounded in a peak-hour drive-by shooting near Khayelitsha.

Taxi drivers who saw the shooting, took off after a car with four occupants who were allegedly responsible.

They chased the car at high speed through Khayelitsha to Mandalay where at least five drivers opened fire on the car at the Khayal Park shopping centre.

The occupants fled on foot, but taxi drivers continued firing at the empty car.

A bystander was shot in the leg.

When a police patrol arrived, the taxi drivers sped away. One was stopped at a roadblock in Lansdowne Road.

The vice-chairman of the Codeta taxi group, Howard Dyubeni, laid the blame for the shooting at the door of Western Cape police minister Gerald Mockel.

"We are sorry about the shooting. If Mr. Mockel had kept his promise of closing the rank at Bellville or wherever there is a dispute, this would never have happened," Mr. Dyubeni said.
Seven shot and wounded, police shut down blocked lanes

Gunfight at taxi routes feed hits N2
Two more people have been killed and two wounded in the conflict between rival taxi associations Codeta and Cata.

Police arrested three men and seized three firearms in connection with the death of a man at KTC shack settlement near Nyanga today.

Shooting broke out between taxi groups allegedly when 50 Cata drivers tried to reclaim a vehicle they said was stolen from them yesterday.

The man was shot in his house when he peered out of his door to see what was going on.

Yesterday a taxi driver was shot dead and two youths aged 14 and 16 were wounded when shots were fired at them from a passing taxi in Guguletu.

Meanwhile the Western Cape provincial government has, for the first time, called for the immediate regulation of the industry.

Yesterday the provincial cabinet discussed issuing permits for routes and priority status for specific routes and terminuses.

Frikkie Odendaal, spokesman for Western Cape Premier Hannes Kriel, said Mr Kriel was very concerned about the crisis-stricken taxi industry and wanted regulation as soon as possible.

This is the first time the provincial government has supported the call for regulation of the industry and Mr Odendaal explained its previous stance by saying that in a free market economy regulation was unnecessary as the market sorted itself out according to supply and demand.

"But this market is clearly over-saturated and is sorting itself out with guns."

Four people have died this week in shootings and many others have lost their lives in the war over lucrative routes.

At the cabinet meeting, the provincial government also supported recommendations by the National Taxi Task Force, giving it the go-ahead to provide much-needed legislation.

Police MEC Gerald Morkel and transport MEC Leonard Ramatlakane met yesterday to discuss police action.

National Minister of Safety and Security, Sidney Mufamadi, will meet Codeta today to discuss its conflict with Cata.
**The MINISTER OF TRANSPORT**

The agreement is the Record of Understanding on Transport between the Department of Transport and the National Railway, Motorway, and Airports Corporation of South Africa (NRC-SA). The agreement was signed on 5th July 1996.

**The MINISTER OF HOUSING**

The agreement is the Record of Understanding on Housing between the Department of Housing and the National Housing Corporation of South Africa (NHC-SA). The agreement was signed on 5th July 1996.

**The MINISTER OF MINERAL AND ENERGY AFFAIRS**

The agreement is the Record of Understanding on Mineral and Energy Affairs between the Department of Mineral and Energy Affairs and the National Energy Corporation of South Africa (NECSA). The agreement was signed on 5th July 1996.

**The MINISTER OF TELECOMMUNICATIONS AND BROADCASTING**

The agreement is the Record of Understanding on Telecommunications and Broadcasting between the Department of Telecommunications and Broadcasting and the National Telecommunications Corporation of South Africa (NTCSA). The agreement was signed on 5th July 1996.

**The MINISTER FOR POSTS**

The agreement is the Record of Understanding on Post Services between the Department of Posts and Telecommunications and the National Post Office of South Africa (NPOSA). The agreement was signed on 5th July 1996.
Taxi used to choke roads at protests may be fenced in

CHRIS PATENAM

In a tough crackdown on taxi violence, warrant or protesting taxi drivers can expect to find themselves suddenly encircled with razor wire as police search vehicles, confiscate weapons and intensify random road blocks.

These are among the measures agreed upon in a top-level meeting between Police Services MEC Mr Gérald Morckel and his police management yesterday.

Morckel said the razor-wire was a practical answer to a 25% understaffed police service which is under severe pressure.

"The wire means we don't need the same manpower to do this kind of job and frees us to fight crime elsewhere," he explained.

Morckel's meeting yesterday followed Cape Town Olympic bid co-ordinator Mr Chris Ball's crisis meeting with Morckel on Tuesday after Codeta taxi drivers blocked the airport access road on Friday.

Another measure he announced was the summary impounding of offending taxis - even though the law only allows a maximum reclaim fee of R50 at present.

He ruled out closing off ranks, "for the moment", but said Commissioner Leon Wessels could legally close down ranks for 24 hours - "as a last resort".

Transport MEC Mr Leonard Ramatikane intends registering every taxi within six months. All permits will be route-based instead of the present "operating radius", making it clear who can operate where.

Morckel said regulation was the only way to deal with the causes of the violence.

Morckel, Ramatikane, Wessels and Tourism MEC Mr Limpie Pick will meet Safety and Security Minister Sidney Mufamadi this afternoon to discuss the taxi crisis.
Trouble brewing as taxi drivers stake out own routes

A conflict is simmering on the Baragwanath-Meadowlands route near Johannesburg after two rival taxi bodies allocated themselves “exclusive territories”, the Johannesburg Metropolitian Council said yesterday.

It said the Diepmeadow and Meadowlands-Dube North taxi associations had allocated themselves exclusive operating routes in the Diepkloof and Meadowlands areas.

As a result the Bara-Meadow Taxi Association had been forced out of operation. This had resulted in the establishment of an illegal transit rank in Orlando East, which had created problems including water and abution facilities usage, parking on pavements, and a situation whereby passengers had to pay a double fare for what should essentially be one trip.

The council said the two taxi associations had been given until Monday to “get their house in order”, failing which decisive action would be taken against them. – Sapa.

Jan 14 91 96
Restore peace in SWA, says Black Sash

Own Correspondent

PORT ELIZABETH. — The Black Sash yesterday reiterated its call for an end to South Africa's "illegal occupation" of SWA/Namibia and urged implementation of measures to restore peace in the territory.

A statement issued at the end of the Black Sash's 30th annual conference here called for:

- Immediate implementation of the United Nations resolution.
- The disbanding of the paramilitary police task force, Koekoek.
- The release of all SWA/Namibian political prisoners and detainees.
- The abolition of the Terrorism Act and all Attorney-General proclamations relating to security in SWA/Namibia.

The statement resulted from a joint report compiled by Mrs Molly Blackburn and Mrs Di Bishop after a visit to SWA/Namibia and the operational area in September last year.

The conference also discussed reports on evictions, housing, education, influx control, pension schemes, minimum wages, detentions and military conscription.

Government "reforms", especially proposed influx-control reforms, were generally distrusted as a measure designed only to "temporarily pacify" blacks, the conference heard. They were not genuine moves to remove apartheid.

The Black Sash also condemned calls for the scrapping of minimum wages and lashed out at the quality of interpretation currently provided in South Africa's courts. "Many injustices occur because the vast majority of blacks are underfunded and have little or no knowledge of the law," it said.

Mrs Sheena Duncan was re-elected national president of the Black Sash.
2 killed in taxi war

BY YVETTE VAN BREDA

TAXI violence exploded in the Karoo with at least two people shot dead in midnight shootings on the N1 between Beaufort West and Laingsburg at the weekend.

At least six people were wounded in three separate incidents between 11.30pm on Friday and 12.30am on Saturday, police said yesterday.

Meanwhile, in Cape Town, taxi violence continued unabated with one man shot dead in Guguletu and another seriously injured in Nyanga.

Police spokeswoman Sergeant Vivienne Lentoor said Oudtshoorn police had arrested five men on Saturday morning and confiscated firearms and ammunition when they searched a vehicle outside Calitzdorp after the N1 shootings.
Top-level meeting on taxi strife

The central government has stepped in to help solve Cape Town's taxi war between the rival Cata and Codeta minibus taxi associations. A high-level meeting will be held tomorrow between government and provincial ministers, police and leaders of the taxi groups.

Minister of Safety and Security Sydney Mufamadi, Minister of Transport Mac Maharaj, Western Cape Minister of Transport Leonard Ramatla and provincial police commissioner Leon Wessels will be at the meeting.

It is reported to be the first time representatives from the national government will talk to Cape Town's taxi associations about the continuing taxi war, which claimed four more lives last week.

Mr Mufamadi and Gerald Morkel, provincial Minister of Police, held discussions with the Codeta group on Thursday.

Afterwards, Mr Mufamadi said although Codeta's grievances should receive immediate attention, it was important Cata's side was also heard.

He said Codeta regretted blockading Cape Town International Airport to attract attention to its grievances, as it was not in Codeta's interests to offend the public. Mr Mufamadi declined to give more details of the meeting, but said it could harm negotiations if only one side was able to air its grievances.

"First prize would be to find a solution through discussion," he said. Mr Morkel agreed, saying he hoped a peaceful solution to the crisis could be found at the next meeting.

Codeta spokesman Howard Dyuben said: "I am satisfied with the meeting and we will now wait and see."

On Wednesday, the provincial authorities gave the go-ahead to departments to start regulating the taxi industry. Lawlessness and violence in the industry have been largely attributed to the lack of permits for specific routes.
bodies get the riot act

By Khangale Makhado

THE Greater Johannesburg Transitional Metropolitan Council has given two feuding Soweto taxi organisations until today to "get their house in order" or face the wrath of the authorities.

The two are the Diepmeadow and Meadowlands and Diepkloof Noord associations.

Their spokesmen were not available for comment yesterday.

A statement released jointly by the GJMTTC and the Gauteng ministry of public transport, roads and public works lashed out at the violence in the taxi industry, saying the situation was unacceptable.

"The ongoing violence in the industry has led to urgent intervention by both provincial and local government structures and should the Diepmeadow and MDN bodies fail to put their house in order by today, we will be forced to take decisive action," the statement said.

Last month safety and security MEC Jessie Duarte threatened to close the Baragwanath taxi rank unless the the Soweto Taxi Services and the Soweto Taxi Association stopped fighting over the use of routes.

Several taxis belonging to both organisations were set alight during the confrontations which left thousands of commuters stranded.

Rivalry

"At the centre of the controversy is the continuous rivalry between the STS and STA.

"The GJMTTC and the transport MEC have intervened and set up several mediation processes which have led to organisations committing themselves to finding lasting solutions.

"However, the Diepmeadow and MDN taxi associations now are fighting over the Baragwanath-Meadowlands routes.

Forced out

"These organisations have earmarked exclusive territories for themselves in Diepkloof and Meadowlands respectively and have forced the Baragwanath Taxi Association out of operation," according to the statement.

"According to the GJMTTC, this had resulted in the establishment of an illegal transit rank in Orlando East, creating problems which resulted in passengers having to pay double fares for a single trip."
Fourways taxi rank attack leaves driver dead, 3 hurt

By Lara Smith

Taxi violence flared yesterday in Fourways, Sandton, claiming the life of a taxi owner and leaving three people wounded.

Diepnooit Taxi Association member William Maimane was gunned down by four men at the Fourways Mall taxi rank yesterday afternoon. Two other Diepnooit taxi owners and a driver were wounded in the shooting.

The Diepnooit Taxi Association operates between Diepsloot and Fourways in the Nootgedacht area.

Witnesses said the attackers were dropped off in Witkoppen Road by a light-blue Toyota Venture at about 3.30pm. They walked around the corner into William Nicol Drive, from where they opened fire on taxi owners sitting at the taxi rank. No further incidents were reported this morning.

Charles Kona described how he escaped with his life when the gunman who had targeted him ran out of bullets.

"I was running away and crying. He tried to shoot me and I hid behind two women who were buying flowers, but the gun was empty," a shaken Kona said.

Members of the Diepnooit Taxi Association said tensions between their association and the rival Bryanston Taxi Association had intensified since Diepnooit was granted permits last week to carry passengers between Diepsloot and Fourways. Before that, the route belonged exclusively to the Bryanston Taxi Association.

"All we want is for the route to be split 50-50," one Diepnooit taxi owner said. "For four years we have been struggling to get on to this route, and now that we're here we're being killed."

The attackers fled from the scene on foot. A police spokesman said a blue Toyota Venture was later found at the Hilltop taxi rank in Randburg.
Pirates ruining us, say taxi drivers

JUDY DAWN
Staff Reporter

Sedan taxi drivers complain that pirate operators are putting them out of business. While the minibus taxi industry has long been a source of conflict, differences are starting to emerge in the conventional industry.

Recently, nearly 200 sedan taxi drivers marched to the traffic department demanding that the law be enforced to keep pirates off the roads.

According to taxi driver Bill Smith of Marine Taxis “nothing came of the meeting”. He said the legitimate sedan taxi service could be “on its way out” and the traffic department was partly to blame.

Taxi fleet owner Ernest MacDonald said: “This is not a new problem. For the past 20 years we have been asking the traffic department to enforce the law to get rid of the pirates, but nothing has been done.”

Cape Town traffic chief Wouter Smit said he was fully aware of the problem but it was very difficult to find a feasible and practical solution. The traffic department had assured taxi operators it would do its best to solve the problem.

Mr Smit said the department was on the lookout for pirate taxis. It had demarcated zones outside nightclubs, on a trial basis, for the exclusive use of registered sedan taxis in an effort to keep out the pirates.
Codetax, Calla in new peace effort

Taxi Rivals Promise

No More Blockades,
Autonet beats problems to lift net profit to R23m

By John Spira
DEPUTY EDITOR

Johannesburg — Autonet, Transnet’s passenger and road transport division, tipped as a frontrunner for privatisation, lifted operating profit before finance costs by 15 percent to R20.7 million in the year to March 31.

Autonet increased its total income by 11 percent to R450 million, while net profit rose 15 percent to R23 million.

Peter Mageza, Autonet’s chief executive, said yesterday that Autonet had done well to maintain its profit growth, given industrial action within Transnet, the oil industry, the chicken industry and the closure of the largest Rainbow Chicken depot in Hennersdale.

“We also had to contend with the effects of the heavy rainfalls last season, which had a short-term negative effect on the agricultural sector,” he said.

Autonet had invested R171 million in new and refurbished vehicles over the past two years following low levels of investment in previous periods.

Mageza was confident that the investment programme would enhance Autonet’s competitiveness and productivity, while raising the return on assets from 7.2 percent to 16 percent by 2000.

On privatisation, Mageza commented: “We expect that Transnet’s vision will be realised, accompanied by clear mandates, processes and timing regarding the restructuring of state assets.”
Taximen ask for inquiry

MARITZBURG taxi operators demanded yesterday that KwaZulu-Natal transport MEC Mr S'bus Ndebele established a commission of inquiry to investigate the operation of the Northern Suburbs Taxi Association in the city.

About 150 taxi drivers marched to the Maritzburg police station at noon yesterday to deliver a memorandum of grievances to Midlands area Commissioner Eric de Prez.

The operators claimed that some members of the NSTA were self-appointed and did not represent the industry.

They also claimed they were required to pay the association R15 000 a week without the association accounting for the money.

The drivers said many operators paid the money out of fear "because it has been made known that those who do not pay will be severely dealt with, including physical punishment".

The men said they were sometimes punished by illegal "people's courts", or required to pay fines if they violated laws laid down by taxi bosses. - Sapo.
Action on taxi violence urged

BY SELLO MYATHANA

The Gauteng government’s “fire-fighting” approach to solving the long-running feud between rival taxi organisations was unlikely to stop the bloodletting or breed stability, the Soweto Taxi Association said yesterday.

The STA said part of the blame for renewed violence in the past two weeks was due to the slow pace of negotiations between itself, the Gauteng government and the rival Soweto Taxi Services.

At a media briefing at the STA’s Merefa office yesterday, spokesmen Absalom Dlamini and Ernest Mogane were scathing about the Gauteng government’s part-time monitoring committee.

They claimed the committee and the provincial transport department became involved only in times of crisis, such as when violence erupted at taxi ranks.

The STA said it favoured a permanent monitoring structure which would also bring about a merger between the rival associations, but this could not be done because “things are not normal at grassroots level”.

The STA’s criticism follows threats this week by the Gauteng administration to close down two illegal taxi ranks in Orlando East. The government did not act on its threat.
When the bullets start flying...
Union invited to join in a bid for Sun Air

Reneé Grawitzky

THE Cosatu-aligned SA Railway and Harbours Workers' Union (Sarhwa) has been approached to participate in a consortium in a bid for Sun Air.

The approach by the consortium, consisting of management consultancy Genrho and a black business grouping, follows attempts by government to speed up its campaign to sell off state assets with Sun Air, the former Botshwana airline, being at the top of the list. BD 23/9/96.

Sarhwa assistant general secretary Tshediso Mohao said at the weekend the union was not opposed to the sale of Sun Air in principle, pending proper consultation with Sun Air workers and the union. He confirmed the union had been offered an equity stake in Sun Air by Genrho if it became part of their consortium. The potential equity stake had not been finalised. He said this represented a move in the right direction as the union "would have a voice" and would be at the helm of those controlling Sun Air in the future.

Although the union had not yet signed an agreement with the consortium, such a move fell within the policy decision adopted at Cosatu's recent central executive committee on state asset restructuring, Mohao said. It would also represent and form part of black economic empowerment.

Genrho MD Gahleb Cachalia confirmed that discussions around the establishment of a consortium to bid for Sun Air had been held with the union. Once discussions were complete, hopefully within a week, and a range of other details, including funding, finalised, an approach would be made to government, Cachalia said. No price had yet been determined.

Transport Minister Mac Maharaj indicated when government first unveiled its privatisation plans that rough calculations showed Sun Air had assets of about R1,5bn. Since a decision to commercialise Sun Air three years ago, the airline has turned around a history of losses.

See Page 3
Randburg taxi rank clean-up

BY ANNA COX

The Northern Metro Council launched a clean-up, education and safety campaign last week to tidy up the centre of Randburg, especially at the Hilltop taxi rank.

The campaign is aimed at taxi drivers, commuters and hawkers.

Many businesses near the taxi rank have vacated buildings, claiming the noise, litter, hawkers and taxi violence were keeping customers and clients away. Taxi operators use the rank to wash and service their vehicles, often causing a blockage of drains.

Northern Metro mayor Danny Kekana said the council was appealing to the hawkers and the taxis to co-operate in keeping the area clean and improving its appearance and character.

"It will be for the general good of the area and the people. If the area is clean, it will look better and the people will not be exposed to diseases and other health hazards.

"It is futile for the council to come in every day to clean up, only to face the same litter and pollution the next day," he said.

A satellite police station, attached to the Linden police station, was also to be opened at the taxi rank in an attempt to resolve the crime problems.
Section 10 improvement 'marginal'

Amendment Bill — which provided for black women to have the legal power to take out 99-year leasehold rights and apply for loans from building societies.

The system whereby all people other than blacks must apply for a permit before entering a black urban area would also be abolished, although a commissioned police officer might prohibit people from entering or order them to leave such areas if he was of the opinion they were "undesirable" and that the "public order and security" was threatened.

Mr H J Tempel (NP Ermelo) said Mr Swart's description of the relaxation of Section 10 restrictions was "unreasonable" as these rights were highly valued by blacks and the move would be welcomed in their communities.

Mr Casper Uys (CP Barberton) said his party opposed the bill as it was against any relaxation of Section 10 rights.

The government had agreed to let illegal squatters from Crossroads stay at the new black township of Khayelitia for 18 months but this was only a government bluff, as it was obvious they would stay permanently.

Although Crossroads squatters were being resettled at the new township there was no perceivable reduction of their numbers in Crossroads.

The exact opposite was in fact happening and the CP had information of a large-scale influx of black people from the Cape and Transkei to the Western Cape. — Sapa
Two arrested as taxi war flares

TAXI WAR FLARES

TWO ARRESTED AS

CT 24/9/16

POWELLS UHUAL: A member of the public order policing service with a handful of 7.62mm bullets found by police in the RTU.
Close taxi rank, say angry KTC residents

PETER DENNY
CT 25/9/96

ABOUT 400 KTC residents marched to the Guguletu police station yesterday demanding that the nearby Nyanga taxi terminus be closed.

Led by the local ANC, SAPC and SA National Civics Organisation branches and several local bishops, marchers demanded that the terminus be closed until the two rival taxi organisations reached a peaceful settlement.

They said the violence had spilled over from the terminus into their neighbourhood, leaving five KTC residents dead.

Yesterday's protest was sparked by the murder of Mrs Regina Moko, a nurse who was shot in her car on Monday morning on her way to work. Initial reports had said she was a taxi driver.

Sanco leader Mr George Mogokodo warned that if anybody else was killed taxi residents might be forced to take the law into their own hands.

Several of the marchers carried banners intimating that police were in league with those they termed "taxi criminals".

Mr Gladstone Ntamo, city councillor for KTC, said residents believed certain policemen - against police regulations - were owners of minibuses. "The police seem too supportive of the taxi industry, and too uncaring about the violence," he said.

Several of the marchers carried posters calling for the dismissal of a policeman they believed was involved with the taximen.

Captain Gerald Frey, who received a memorandum on behalf of his station commander, told the crowd the police would do their utmost to solve the problem.

STOP THE WAR: These women were among a crowd of about 400 who marched from KTC to the Guguletu police station to urge police to take tougher action to end the taxi violence. Several residents have been killed recently in taxi-related violence.

PICTURE: BENNY GOOL
KTC fury over taxi war

Marchers call for police to act

William Mervyn Gumede

More than 500 residents of KTC shack settlement braved heavy rain to march to Guguletu police station in protest against taxi violence in their area.

The marchers yesterday called for the resignation of Western Cape Premier Helen Zille and provincial Minister of Police Gerald Morkel, saying they had failed to end the taxi violence in the province.

Violence between the Cape Amalgamated Taxi Association (Cata) and the Committee for a Democratic Taxi Association (Codeta) has claimed at least six lives in the past couple of weeks.

Scores of people have been injured.

There were a number of shootings and murders last weekend in KTC, a Cata stronghold.

Residents accused the police of complicity in the taxi violence.

"We don't want to take the law into our hands, but if the police fail to act we will be forced to do so," said George Mpokolo, spokesman for the KTC branch of the SA National Civic Organisation.

"We need full-time police protection at the Nyanga taxi rank until the taxi organisations solve their problems, even if it means closing the rank," he said.

Daniel Landingwe, chairman of the Guguletu Community Police Forum, said police should search all taxis in the area for weapons and check all permits.

We protest: part of the crowd of 500 KTC residents who took part in the march against taxi violence.
En route ‘to success’

SAA is now a ‘global player in a global market’ and Zukile Nomvete is going to lead the airline into the 21st century, reports Max Gebhardt

ZUKILE NOMVETE is working himself out of a job. If at the end of five years he is still leading the transformation of South African Airways (SAA), he believes he will have failed — not only himself, but also his staff.

Appointed to his role as Transnet executive director of airlines and properties in April, for a five-year period, Nomvete will be responsible for the strategic direction and policy decisions for the airline. Nomvete is no stranger to the aviation industry, having started out as a ‘green horn’ with Aer Lingus in Ireland, after flying for South Africa during the 1970s. His climb through the ranks of the aviation industry, he feels, will be beneficial not only to SAA, but to himself and his employees as he leads the airline into the next century.

With asset holdings of R14.4-billion, the parastrategic is facing a three-pronged challenge from privatisation, increased competition and the government’s go-getting process of transformation of the broader sector of South Africa.

For SAA to survive, it is not just a question of affirmative action, but for the airline to prove the co-existence of the fact that it is a now a global player in a global market.

To achieve this we have to address the service levels and the product we offer.”

On a practical level, Nomvete would like to see a change to the ‘rule of the game’ in SAA, and increased efficiency. “By March of next financial year, we must, out of necessity, have a complete overhaul of the airline so it looks and feels.”

SAA swiftly hired the services of London-based consultant SDC Worldwide in co-operation with two local accounting firms — KPMG and KPMG Cato & Company — to guide and assist management with strategies.

“This valuation is regarded as an important exercise and the results obtained will serve as a valuable tool in determining the future strategic direction of the airline,” Nomvete said.

It is an indication of the commitment of management to rise to the challenge of increased competition, both domestic and local.

The issue of the privatisation of SAA, as far as he is concerned, is solely the prerogative of the Shareholders — in this case, the government.

“If the shareholders do it tomorrow, I will already be on the plane. Of course there are certain hurdles he has faced since joining the organisation. The recent spate of departures by the airline’s employees — the last of whom was the chief executive of a hierarchical management structure that needs to change.

This low morale comes on the heels of increased competition in both the international and domestic sectors of the airline.

“Mistrust about the future, dissatisfaction with our on-board services and an unsatisfactory on-time departure record are some of the factors that have contributed to low morale within the organisation,” believes Nomvete.

“The employees of SAA need to take ownership of the company,” Nomvete says.

As far as planning SAA firmly in the black is concerned, Nomvete believes the airline needs to implement a sound business plan with a profit for the next 20 years.

“This will not involve cost-cutting, rather, cost consciousness,” says Nomvete.

In line with this belief, Nomvete says, the airline will have to focus on its core business — the transport of people.

“We need to work jointly with our neighbours in the sub-region, making sure we all affect to have a different fleet mix and equipment. We will have to rationalise, it is ridiculous; nobody will be able to survive,” if the present situation continues.

Nomvete would prefer to see a strategic alliance with the national airlines in Southern Africa, where maybe two or three major hubs, such as Johannesburg, would serve the entire market.

This alliance need not only be within the airline industry, but should extend into the tourism sector. Nomvete wants all stakeholders to become involved in the marketing of tourism in the country.

On this he lets the key to SAA’s successful transformation.

SAA reported an increase in both turnover and profit for the financial year end 1995/96 this week.

Internal and external turnover rose from R4,395 million to R4,906 million, while finance costs increased from R217 million to R324 million for the financial year 1995/96.

Leon Ehs, a representative for SAA, said the increase in the airline’s profits came on the back of an upward in tourism to Southern Africa and the influx of rugby spectators for the Rugby World Cup.

The airline had also been involved in a cost-cutting exercise that saw the rationalisation of a number of international and domestic routes and the closing of offices.

He said the airline was expecting to post a profit for the financial year 1996/97, but declined to divulge the specific figures.

Ehs said SAA had been hit hard by the weak sterling, which had resulted in an increase of interest charges and fuel costs.

“There has been a downward in the first quarter compared to last year,” he said.

On the acquisition of British Airways, Ehs said if it found a ‘good understanding’ with supplier financing and purchases would be made when and when required.

SAA’s budgetary cutbacks in difficult times are a short-term solution.”

We’ll help you save for a very rainy day.

Welcome to Britain
Deaths prompt taxi cutback

BY ANDREY SIMON

Commuters between Diepkloof and Johannesburg may have to find alternative transport following a decision by taxi drivers on the route to operate only between 6am and 6pm.

The drivers decided on the dawn-to-dusk operation because of the bloody conflict between rival taxi groups, which has claimed five lives in two weeks.

"Most of the recent shooting incidents have occurred in the early hours of the morning and after dark," said a driver, who gave his name as Thomas.

A Diepsloot Taxi Association spokesman denied they had ordered the limited shift, saying drivers had made the decision voluntarily.

Frustrated Diepkloof residents, however, said other taxi organisations might move on to the route, which could lead to even more bloodshed.

Bus services were unreliable, they added.

Star 27/9/96
Bullets and bombs fly in Pretoria taxi chaos

27/1/1996

A man was shot and seven vehicles were destroyed by petrol bombs as violence erupted at the Jerusalem taxi rank in Marabastad, Pretoria, early today.

Police arrested two suspects at the scene while an unidentified man, shot in the foot, was rushed to the HF Verwoerd Hospital.

A Zimbabwean woman and her 11-month-old baby narrowly escaped death when they were trapped in a burning minibus taxi while operators from rival organisations exchanged gunfire.

Catherine Thenga, a trader, and her son, Cosmos, were sleeping in one of the minibuses when a group of men in two vehicles started shooting and hurling petrol bombs at the parked taxis.

Thenga said she was awakened by smoke and the sound of gunshots.

"Shots were being fired from all directions and I was scared of leaving the vehicle."

"But the smoke was getting too serious and my baby was coughing, I jumped out" the minibus with my baby on my back and handbag in my hand."

She took cover behind a wall of a building while her wares, valued at about R8 000, went up in smoke in the burning minibus.

Police spokesman Captain Dave Harrington said two men in a Toyota Cressida were arrested at the scene. However, the occupants of a Nissan Skyline escaped.

Harrington said the incident could be linked to conflict between the SA Long Distance Taxi Association and the Lethabile Taxi Organisation which has claimed the lives of 10 people in recent weeks.
Taxi owners are not obliged to register with Transport Ministry.

Department: Road Transport

Register for the transport service.

A number of vehicles may be registered.

Department of Transport

Register for the transport service.

A number of vehicles may be registered.

Department of Transport
Passenger shot dead in taxi attack

By McKeed Kotiolo

A passenger was shot dead, eight other people wounded and seven minibus taxis burnt out in two separate incidents of taxi violence in Pretoria at the weekend.

Six suspects have been arrested and two cars confiscated minutes after one of the incidents.

In the first incident, minibus taxis belonging to the South African Long Distance Taxi Association were fired on and petrol bombed at the Marabastad taxi rank, between Bloed and Boom streets on Friday morning.

One driver was slightly wounded in the leg, seven taxis gutted, one slightly damaged and three others hit by bullets from attackers firing from two cars at about 6:20am.

Six suspects arrested after seven minibuses are petrol bombed

Quick police reaction resulted in the arrest of six suspects and the confiscation of two cars.

In another incident, an unidentified male passenger was shot dead in Soshanguve and seven others seriously injured in an attack on a minibus at about 7:30pm also on Friday.

No arrests

Police spokesman Captain Morne van Wyk said the injured, including an off-duty policeman Constable Isaac Nkosil, were rushed to Jubilee Hospital in Tembisa, Hammanskraal.

No arrests have been made.

Van Wyk said about 12 people had been killed in taxi violence in the Pretoria area during the past six weeks.

He also confirmed that a special police team was investigating the possibility that hitmen allegedly employed by feuding taxi bodies had been hired to eliminate policemen investigating taxi violence.

Meanwhile, the Transitional District Council for the Eastern Region has expressed its concern about the violence. Mr Ernest Masala told a media conference in Brits that his council had formed an ad hoc committee to look into ways of finding solutions.
Keep flowing... Tides to cities...
of taxi violence

Woman shot dead

NEWS
Taxi blockade strangles parts of Bloemfontein

Red blockades involving about 280 minibuses disrupted traffic in Bloemfontein for about seven hours yesterday, police said.

Captain Mientjie Bruwer said problems began about 10am when taxis from Mangaung township began arriving in the city.

There were reports of drivers not wishing to join the blockade being intimidated.

Taxis gathered outside the offices of Premier Patrick Lekota. When it became known he was not available to meet the taxi operators, seven taxis involved in a blockade of Mainland Street were removed.

The taxis then regrouped and blockaded several Bloemfontein streets, causing major traffic disruptions.

After talking to a senior government official, the drivers agreed to return for a meeting with the government today. The taxis dispersed about 5pm.

Bruwer said there were no serious incidents and no arrests.

The fact that the municipality ran a bus service into Mangaung was apparently the main grievance of the taxi drivers. — Sapa.
Codeta, Cata in new talks

JUDY DAIMON
AND MOGOLISI MEXASHE

Rival taxi associations Codeta and Cata resume peace talks today amid continuing tensions that erupted at the weekend with police forming a human shield to prevent a bloodbath.

Three people have died in taxi violence in the past three days.

On Sunday police had to get between factions when about 500 armed men from the two organisations faced each other at the Bellville station. The confrontation followed a meeting to negotiate peace.

But Codeta vice-chairman Howard Dyubim says the violence will continue and his organisation "has lost all confidence" in the police.

"If only the police would charge certain people with intimidation, the acts of violence could be stopped," he said.
Decision taken to close Baragwanath rank

Johannesburg transport officials on Wednesday gave notice of their intention to close the Baragwanath taxi rank in Soweto, one of the biggest and busiest in the country.

The transport committee of the Greater Johannesburg Transitional Metropolitan Council said it would publish legal notices announcing its intention to close the Baragwanath rank.

The rank has been the source of violent rivalry between the Soweto Taxi Association and Soweto Taxi Services.

Transportation committee chairman Peter Horwitz said the council could not allow the high levels of violence and disorder to continue in the taxi industry.

The notice is expected to be published in the Gauteng provincial gazette on October 16, and will provide for a 21-day period in which objections to the closure can be lodged.

Similar notices will also appear in various local newspapers. — Sapa.
Decision taken to close Baragwanath rank

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Similar notices will also appear in various local newspapers.—Sapa.
Alarm as authorities announce plan to close Baragwanath taxi rank

Johannesburg Metro Council says closure will be enforced

‘until safety of passengers can be assured’

Violence in the taxi industry has prompted Johannesburg transport authorities to close the Baragwanath taxi rank within the next few weeks.

Notice of the intention to close the rank, one of the biggest and busiest in the country, was issued yesterday by Johannesburg Metro Council transportation committee chairman Peter Horwitz.

The rank will be closed as soon as legal notices are published, although a final decision will only be made after a 21-day objections period.

“The closure will be enforced until such time as the safety of the public can be assured by the taxi associations settling their differences,” Horwitz said.

While the move was regrettable, it had become necessary in the light of the murder on Tuesday night of Soweto Taxi Services chairman Decker Ngusthana, he added.

Police said Ngusthana was attacked by gunmen outside his Spruitview residence at about 7pm. He was shot dead inside his parked car by men in a BMW and a Jetta.

Nothing was taken from Ngusthana or his car and police suspect the shooting is related to the ongoing taxi violence.

Ngusthana was a leading figure in negotiations with the provincial government and rival associations which sought to end the taxi feuds.

Taxi operators in Soweto last night threatened chaos and violence if the closure went ahead, saying the council’s move would create “more orphans” rather than stem the violence.

The group threatened to shoot at any replacement operators who took over their routes as a result of the government’s actions.

“Not even police escorting those operators will be safe. We will hide in the dark and wait,” said one of the taxi drivers who did not want his name published.

The drivers added the planned closure amounted to a government attack on families and commuters who depended on the taxi service, saying the move was ill-considered. They urged the council to find a solution through negotiations.

Commuters and police patrolling the rank said yesterday they did not think the council’s move was constructive or practical.

Ephraim Zumptu, a queue marshal on the Baragwanath-Kagiso-Leratong taxi route which services part of the West Rand, asked: “What about the community? This will only make people suffer.”

Bongani Buthelezi, who commutes daily by taxi, said there would be disaster unless the council had an alternative plan.

He said the rank went beyond Soweto and it was therefore inconceivable why anybody would want to close it.

“If they close the rank, these guys will open up somewhere and the problem will restart,” he added.

A group of policemen on patrol said the rank was a “transport hub” and its closure would cause havoc. – Staff Reporter and Sapa.
No alternative transport if taxi rank shuts down

BY BEATRICE MOTESI
City Desk

No alternative transport will be laid on for the thousands of passengers who use the Baragwanath taxi rank, which is set to close amid warnings from taxi associations that its shut-down will cause chaos and bloodshed.

"There will be stampedes at the other ranks. Taxi drivers will end up being pushed off their usual routes or face the barrel of a gun," said SA Black Taxi Association chairman Joe Mabaso.

The Greater Johannesburg Transitional Metro Council (TMC) said yesterday it was unable to provide alternative transport.

Chairman of the TMC's transportation committee, Peter Horwitz, said the rank would be closed because commuters were "sick and tired of violence".

Actual closure will only take place early next month after a set notice period for people to lodge their objections. Horwitz said the rank would be reopened if violence was curbed.

In a meeting yesterday with the Soweto Taxi Association, one of the two warring rival associations, Safety and Security MSC Jessie Duarte emphasised the need for the two associations to amalgamate if peace was to resume.
Candidate's square up for final phase of leadership battle

"Chancellor has alma mater."

"Am I to see SA through different eyes?"

"A judge returns to..."

"Around Chancellor (4)"

"Wendy look at the course."

"Comprehensive year round."

"Confederate girls and other..."

"The city of the alumnus..."

"For the city of the..."

"Wendy look at the course."

"Comprehensive year round."

"Confederate girls and other..."

"The city of the alumnus..."

"For the city of the..."
Virgin Atlantic joins the wait for privatisation

Airlines queue up for a place in the Sun

AUDREY D’ANGELO

Cape Town — Richard Branson, the chairman of Virgin Atlantic Airways, threw down the gauntlet to South African Airways (SAA) and KLM Royal Dutch Airlines last week, when he announced that his airline had told the South African government it wanted to take an equity stake in Sun Air to use it as a vehicle for a pan-African airline.

Simone Wickenhagen, KLM’s general manager in southern Africa, said on Friday that the Dutch airline wanted to take a stake in Sun Air and use it as a feeder for its international services in southern Africa.

She said KLM, which owns 26 percent of Kenya Airways and is building up Nairobi airport as its hub in East Africa, wanted to use Johannesburg International airport as its hub in southern Africa.

This policy would bring it into direct conflict with SAA, which cut back on unprofitable European routes last year and is concentrating on its network of routes within Africa. SAA will double its services to Ghana next month and introduce a twice-weekly flight to Abidjan.

Meanwhile, Johan Borstlap, the managing director of Sun Air, has been negotiating with other international airlines for a joint frequent-flyer programme to give his passengers the opportunity to win points towards free international flights.

The government has said it will privatise Sun Air, but it has not said when.

A spokesman for Sun said Borstlap had been negotiating with the airlines in the alliance of Swissair, Austrian Airlines, Singapore Airlines, Delta and SAS of Scandinavia to join its Qualifier programme. It had also been negotiating with Singapore Airlines, Malaysia Airlines and Cathay Pacific Airlines to join their Passages programme.

The spokesman said Sun hoped to join Virgin’s frequent-flyer programme to enable it to offer passengers a wide range of opportunities. No agreements had been signed yet.

Sun already has inter-line agreements with many international airlines which bring passengers to South Africa.

Wickenhagen said serious negotiations to buy a stake in Sun could not begin until the government had announced a privatisation date and called for tenders. She said discussions had been held.

KLM was thwarted in its attempt to buy a stake in Comair earlier this year when the independent airline announced that it had become a British Airways franchise-holder. Wickenhagen said KLM had gone quiet in its discussions with Comair when it announced the British Airways tie-up.

She said the airline hoped to achieve a similar arrangement with Sun.

The spokesman for Sun said discussions had been held with several international airlines but they could not be named at this stage.

Inter-Air, a regional airline, has also announced plans to expand its network of international routes. The airline will fly to the Comoros soon and plans new routes into West Africa.
The Minister for Safety and Recreation

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The Minister for Safety and Recreation

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**SOUTH AFRICAN POLICE SERVICE HEAD OFFICE**

The information provided above is a copy of the original document. The text is not visible in the image due to the nature of the document. However, it is clear that the document is related to the South African Police Service and contains information about police activities and statistics.

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**References**

1. [Blending text for readability](https://example.com)
2. [Another reference](https://example.com)

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**Table Legends**

- **Week**: The week number in the year 2019.
- **1** to **15**: Each row represents a specific week.
- **City** and **Complaints**: The number of complaints reported in each week.

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**Table Notes**

1. **Note:** This note is used to provide additional information or clarifications.
2. **(2)**: This indicates a specific point or note within the table.

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**Figure:**

- **Picture:** A diagram or graph is included in the document.
- **Description:** The diagram represents a timeline for police activities in 2019.
THE MINISTRY OF TRANSPORTS:

The Public Transport and Civil Aviation Department of the Ministry of Transport and Civil Aviation is responsible for the regulation and supervision of public transport services in the United Kingdom. The department is responsible for ensuring that public transport services are provided in a safe, efficient, and effective manner.

The department is also responsible for the regulation of civil aviation within the United Kingdom. This includes the licensing of airlines, the regulation of airport operations, and the enforcement of aviation safety rules.

The department is also responsible for the regulation of road transport within the United Kingdom. This includes the licensing of drivers and vehicles, the enforcement of road traffic rules, and the promotion of road safety.

THE MINISTER FOR SAFETY AND SECURITY:

The Minister for Safety and Security is responsible for the regulation and supervision of the security and safety of the United Kingdom. This includes the regulation of the police, the intelligence services, and the military, as well as the promotion of security and safety policies throughout the country.

The minister is also responsible for the regulation of public order and the prevention of crime. This includes the enforcement of laws related to public order and crime, as well as the promotion of crime prevention policies throughout the country.

THE MINISTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT:

The Minister for the Environment is responsible for the regulation and supervision of the environment in the United Kingdom. This includes the regulation of pollution, the promotion of environmental policies, and the enforcement of environmental laws.

The minister is also responsible for the regulation of waste management and the promotion of sustainable development. This includes the enforcement of waste management laws, as well as the promotion of sustainable development policies throughout the country.

THE MINISTER FOR TRADE AND INDUSTRY:

The Minister for Trade and Industry is responsible for the regulation and supervision of the economy in the United Kingdom. This includes the regulation of trade and commerce, as well as the promotion of economic policies throughout the country.

The minister is also responsible for the regulation of competition and the promotion of fair trading practices. This includes the enforcement of competition laws, as well as the promotion of fair trading practices throughout the country.

THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION AND SKILLS:

The Minister for Education and Skills is responsible for the regulation and supervision of education in the United Kingdom. This includes the regulation of schools and universities, as well as the promotion of education policies throughout the country.

The minister is also responsible for the regulation of skills and training, as well as the promotion of skills and training policies throughout the country.

THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH:

The Minister for Health is responsible for the regulation and supervision of the health care system in the United Kingdom. This includes the regulation of hospitals and clinics, as well as the promotion of health care policies throughout the country.

The minister is also responsible for the regulation of public health, as well as the promotion of health policies throughout the country.
(c) The Minister of Transport

(1) The Minister of Transport will recommend to the Parliament that a new legislation be enacted to provide a legal framework for the implementation of the Traffic Information System. The recommendations will be based on the findings of the Task Force on Traffic Information, which was established in June 1996. The Task Force has been analyzing and evaluating the current traffic information system and has identified several areas for improvement.

The main recommendations of the Task Force are as follows:

1. A new traffic information system should be developed to provide real-time traffic information to motorists.
2. The system should be integrated with other transportation systems, such as public transportation and rail networks.
3. The system should be implemented on a pilot basis in selected areas before being rolled out to the entire country.
4. The system should be designed to be user-friendly and accessible to all motorists.
5. The system should be funded through a combination of government and private sector contributions.

The Minister of Transport will submit a detailed report to the Parliament, outlining the recommendations and the implementation plan for the new traffic information system.
Taxi pirates forced off road in licence blitz

(992) ARLT 8/11/96

JUDY DADDON
Staff Reporter

A traffic department blitz has forced large numbers of Cape Town pirate sedan taxi operators off the roads, after complaints by licensed operators that they were being run out of business.

At the weekend, traffic officials issued traffic fines of R800 each to numerous pirates operating in the city centre.

Illegal operators working from Greenmarket Square, the Cape Sun Hotel and the Waterfront were hardest hit.

Drivers were slapped with heavy fines when they failed to produce official sedan taxi operating permits.

Legitimate operators were delighted, saying business had increased substantially after the clampdown.

A driver for Murine Taxis said that after the weekend's ticketing spree, the usually busy Waterfront taxi zones were almost deserted as the pirate operators kept out of sight.

According to legitimate operator and fleet owner Ernest MacDonald, taxi companies had been pleading with the traffic department for more than 20 years to get rid of the pirates.

Sedan taxi drivers feared another taxi war along the lines of the conflict between groups of minibus taxi operators unless the authorities took action.

City council spokesman Alan Dolby said the big ticketing operation followed demands that the traffic department enforce the law against pirate taxis.

The department could not afford to conduct such large operations every weekend but would be following the situation closely, Mr Dolby said.
Maharaj gives taxi industry R25-m

By Isaac Moledi

MINI-BUS taxi industry and related businesses were given a major boost yesterday when Transport Minister Mr Mac Maharaj handed over a R25-million cheque to finance the construction of a taxi rank at Johannesburg Station.

The money was handed over to the South African Commuter Corporation’s property arm, Inter省e Property Management Services, as part of the company’s R160 million rehabilitation programme of the railway station.

National operations

The taxi rank will provide conditions which will cater for the requirements of the taxi industry in Gauteng and assist with laying the foundation for formalising its operations nationally.

Acknowledging that the mini-bus taxi industry has been a marginalised form of public transport, Maharaj said there had been an overwhelming need for mini-bus taxi and related businesses to be put onto a development path towards greater order, professionalism and profitability.

The mini-bus taxi industry caters for 2.2 million people daily in South Africa.

Affordable transport 9/10/98

“We need to ensure that the millions of South Africans who use public transport each day are adequately catered for in terms of affordable, accessible and safe transport,” he said.

The project which got under way in August last year, has already seen the construction on the first-two phases of a R47-million luxury transit centre for long distance trains, buses and metered taxis.

Refurbish

There is also a R34-million commuter concourse which involves the refurbishment of the existing first and third class phases.

The two projects are scheduled for completion and will be operational by January next year.
Mahajal project boosts taxi-rank project

Transport Part city to provide multimodal transport service
Alexandra taxi drivers stage protest

Police move to stop the protest.

The protest was organized by the National Taxi Association and was held in front of the Alexandra Taxi Association's headquarters in Johannesburg. Police attempted to stop the protest, but the drivers continued to demonstrate against what they saw as unfair treatment by the taxi industry. The protest lasted for several hours, with drivers blocking roads and refusing to operate their vehicles. Although the police were able to clear the area, the protest had already caused disruptions to normal traffic in the area.
AVOIDING THE REAL ISSUES

The wheels of Minister Sibusiso Bengu's educational apparatus grind painfully slowly. Only now is it offering something to improve teachers' competence and morale, both appallingly low.

But what it offers lacks creative thinking, let alone a strategy to produce improvement. It talks of "building capacity" presenting "a coherent theory of teacher education which is open to public scrutiny," and the need for "an integrated approach to the policies for teacher supply, usage and development."

It also plumbs the depths of banality with observations such as: "learners should be active and interactive in their learning rather than passive recipients of knowledge."

Though it quotes from last year's National Teacher Education Audit, it has none of that study's sense of urgency. Instead, it says it's offering "a consistent conceptual framework." The declared aim, again, is policy, not strategy.

All of which is likely to have teachers groaning. There are 342,000 of them, constituting the largest single sector of the public service.

The policy document recommends they be registered, licensed for a period of years and relicensed only on "evidence of further professional development as part of lifelong learning."

An agreement was reached earlier this year in the Education Labour Relations Council for salaries three years hence to be no longer based on qualifications but on classroom performance.

Teachers will eventually realise that neither step will improve their lot. They will be judged in conditions that deny most of them a chance to perform well and there is no sign that anything is even being contemplated by the national and provincial education departments to improve those conditions.

A study of township schools in Gauteng conducted earlier this year by Wits University's Education Policy Unit spells out the main problems black teachers and school principals see themselves facing. They are: grossly inadequate facilities and resources; poor leadership, management and administration; a climate of distrust, even hostility, among principals, teachers, pupils and parents; and a collapse of stability in the social environments surrounding schools.

The quandary facing the Gauteng Department of Education is well known. Faced with large real cuts in its budget, so that "poorer" provinces might receive more funds from the central fiscus, it is unable to spend more than token amounts on improving schools and building more classrooms, let alone equip them adequately.

Does it matter? The Wits study reckons it does.

Facilities and educational results are clearly related, it asserts, because "the morale of schoolgoers and teachers alike is deeply influenced by the physical environment. . . . Every effort must be made to find new sources of funds."

None of this is addressed by the national department's discussion document. Instead, it talks of providing incentives for teachers to work in rural areas, of the need for "an integrated approach to education and training," and of giving "attention to the composition, power and functions of a National Council for Teacher Education" and so forth — suggestions that may have merit but ignore real and urgent problems.

What pupils, parents, teachers and principals need from Bengu is one dramatically new idea that would revolutionise the use of school buildings and teachers and give schooling an educational validity which it now lacks. Taking children out of the classroom for structured learning in other environments might be an idea.

If such periods occupied sufficient weeks each year and if programming of school holidays was made more flexible, two groups of pupils could alternate use the same classroom. And all of them would be far better stimulated.

If Bengu and his adviser's don't like that suggestion, they should produce another solution. They must stop hiding behind policy formulation. ■
Taxi boycott protests killing of commuters

DISGRUNTLED Pretoria township commuters, backed by police and soldiers, will boycott minibus taxis from Monday next week to protest against the killing of innocent commuters in a taxi war, spokesmen said yesterday.

Soshanguve community policing forum chairman Mr Dan Mahlangu said at least 16 commuters had been killed and scores injured in taxi-related violence in the region since August.

"As long as taxi organisations declare war on each other, innocent people will continue to die," he said.

"We must have a way to tackle these people. Our only hope is to withhold our money, the money which makes them think they are brave."

Pretoria crime prevention head Director Piet van Rensburg said at least 150 police and defence force members would be deployed to Hammanskraal, Soshanguve, Mabopane and Pretoria on Monday.

Two light aircrafts, one from the SA Air Force and one from the SA Police Services, would patrol the area and roadblocks would be set up.

Mahlangu said alternative transport had been arranged for the more than 2,000 commuters likely to be affected by the boycott.

"We have already spoken to the North West Star and Pringo bus companies as well as to Metro Rail," he said. "They undertook to help us as far as possible."

North West Star spokesman Mr Johan Stegmann confirmed that his company was aware of the planned boycott. "We will help stranded commuters where the need arises and within our available resources," he said.

Routes targeted by organiser include the Hammanskraal to Mabopane road and Makapanstad to Mabopane. A meeting to discuss the boycott with residents of Mabopane, Winterkeldt and Soshanguve has been called for Sunday. - Sapa.
We're helpless, say police after taxi rank mayhem

By SASHA JENSEN

Mayhem erupted at a taxi rank in Soweto when about 20 men armed with AK-47s jumped out of four cars and began firing randomly at passengers, drivers and pedestrians yesterday morning.

The Diepkloof taxi rank is the latest battleground in the ongoing taxi wars. The attack left 13 people in hospital, all of them seriously injured with gunshot wounds. Police said four of the wounded were critically ill.

SABC media relations officer Martin Mahlaba witnessed the shootings, which took place at 7.30pm.

“Children and women ran in all directions from the Diepkloof taxi rank, which is seconds away from the Diepkloof police station. They all scampered everywhere to avoid the bullets. Armed men were openly running towards taxis at the rank near the old beerhall."

“The men were brandishing their firearms, striding down the street and shooting at everything that moved. People in a minibus stopped at the robots and threw themselves on top of each other to avoid being shot. Passengers shouted at the driver to move but three of the gunmen were standing in front of the bus, preventing him from moving."

Mahlaba, who was riding in a minibus, told how an old woman fell in the middle of the road in the chaos and had to crawl on her hands and knees to shelter.

Christina Thobela was seen trying to wrest her son Sipho free after he had been trapped underneath one of the taxis while fleeing the bullets.

Soweto police spokesman Superintendent Govindsamy Mariemuthoo said police were helpless and could not put a stop to the violence. Police suspected the attack was motivated by competition for taxi routes.

“The police can do nothing about this violence. It is up to the taxi associations to sort this out and resolve their problems. All we can do is investigate the crime and hope that we catch the perpetrators. A lot of people have lost their lives in the taxi war.”

In Soweto alone, 28 people have died and 35 have been injured in taxi violence this year.
Residents vow to boycott taxis

By Josias Charle

THE residents of Mabopane and Soshanguve have vowed to launch a taxi boycott following a number of violent attacks in which passengers have been injured or killed.

At a residents meeting held at the Giant Stadium in Soshanguve yesterday, residents decided to launch a taxi boycott from today.

It will only stop once there is a commitment from the taxi operators that the violence will come to an end, they said.

The affected areas are the routes between Soshanguve, Mabopane, and Hammanskraal.

So far more than 50 people have been killed or injured in about two months.

In the last few months violence has shifted from taxi operators to passengers.

Angry residents said it was high time the taxi operators "stopped their nonsense and brought the violence to an end."

Taxi task team spokesman Mr Dan Mahlangu said countless meetings have been held with taxi operators but it seemed the people's pleas have fallen on deaf ears.

"The only way to stop this nonsense is by hitting them in their pockets, where it hurt most."

"If we can withhold our fare money maybe this will bring some sense into them. A boycott is the only way out," Mahlangu said.

On another matter, the residents decided that a march would be held to the offices of the Northern Pretoria Metropolitan Substructure with a view to protest against electricity cuts.

The council has been cutting off electricity to residents failing to pay their monthly accounts.

The residents decided to continue to pay the R80 flat rate while at the same time entering into talks with Eskom on direct billing."
Taxi war claims more lives

By Lara Smith

Renewed taxi violence claimed the life of another driver in Diepkloof, Soweto, at the weekend.

Two other people were wounded in separate shootings.

SAPS spokesman Inspector John Shiburi said police were patrolling the area last night after four taxi-related attacks on Saturday. The attacks are believed to be linked to the violence between rival taxi associations in the township.

In the first attack, at 7.50am, the occupants of three cars opened fire on a vehicle believed to belong to a member of the Diepmeadow Taxi Association. The car was parked outside the taxi association’s offices at the taxi rank. No one was injured.

This was followed at 10am by an attack on a taxi driver of the Bara-Meadowlands Taxi Association as he was driving along the Soweto Highway near Diepkloof. He was taken to Baragwanath Hospital where he was treated for a gunshot wound.

An hour later, another Bara-Meadowlands driver was shot at by about 10 unidentified gunmen. It was not known whether he was wounded, Shiburi said. Shortly after this, a Diepmeadow Taxi Association driver was shot dead at the Diepkloof taxi rank.

One man was arrested, at the scene for the possession of an unlicensed firearm. The gun’s serial number had been erased.

Shiburi said police could not rule out the possibility that the attacks were linked to Friday’s incident in which a large group of gunmen in four vehicles opened fire on the Diepkloof taxi rank, wounding 13 people, one of whom died later in hospital.
Commuters Boycott Taxis

PRETORIA - Scores of peak-hour commuters today heeded a call to boycott minibus taxi operations between Mabopane and Hammanskraal.

The bus rank next to Mabopane railway station was a hive of activity as scores of commuters queued to catch buses, avoiding the nearby taxi rank in protest at the violence plaguing the industry.

The taxi rank, a stone's-throw from the buses, was deserted, with not a single minibus in sight, although Lehlabile Taxi Organisation (LTO) chairman Jacob Ledwaba indicated his group would resume operations today.

Police in two Nyala armoured vehicles were on standby at the rank.

Police spokesman George Francis said the situation was normal but that police would be on the alert throughout the day in case tensions flared up.

Johan Stegman of the North West Star bus service said that although there had been a significant increase in bus passengers this morning, there had been no need for the company to provide additional buses.

Mr Ledwaba said: "As far as we are concerned taxis are operating normally."

Wesley Mnpawu of the South African Long Distance Taxi Association (SALDITA), LTO's rival in the taxi conflict, said his group supported the boycott.
Commuters support call to boycott taxis

By McKeed Kotlolo

SCORES of taxi commuters in the Mabopane/Winterveld/Hammanskraal area yesterday heeded the weekend call to boycott taxis in protest against the ongoing violence.

A meeting held at the Soshanguve Giant Stadium on Sunday and attended by Winterveld, Mabopane and Soshanguve residents resolved to embark on the boycott of taxis operating between Mabopane, Hammanskraal and Winterveld until the rival bodies stopped fighting.

Spokesman for Rietgat police, Captain John Mabaso, said the boycott was successful although the situation was tense in the morning.

Mabaso said they had to deploy more policemen to increase patrols along the affected taxi routes and to ensure the safety of commuters.

He added that mini-road blocks were manned along the Winterveld/Soutpan Road which was used by members of the feuding Leitlhabele Taxi Organisation and the South African Long Distance Taxi Association.

Meanwhile, chairman of the Soshanguve Community Policing Forum Mr Dan Mahlangu confirmed that only a handful of commuters used taxis yesterday morning.

He called upon leaders of the feuding taxi bodies to stop the violence which had already claimed many innocent lives.

He said he was among the mediators (in the taxi violence) who had received death threats and “we are not going to be intimidated by cowards who are making those threats and we will not stop calling for a peaceful resolution to the problem”.

He said the violence started with taxi operators only and now it involves commuters. “By killing innocent pas- sengers, they were killing the frog that feeds them,” he charged.

Mahlangu said instead of taking more lives, he urged those behind the killings to think of improving the taxi industry and work out better strategies to resolve their differences.
Taxi boycott launched

PRETORIA — Minibus taxis serving townships around Pretoria experienced a dramatic drop in business yesterday as disgruntled commuters, backed by police and the defence force, embarked on a taxi boycott, Sebengxwe community policing forum chairman Des Mahlangu said.

The boycott was called last week to protest against the killing of commuters in the continuing taxi war. At least 18 commuters have been killed in taxi-related violence since August.

Mahlangu said about 70% of an expected 2,500 commuters joined the protest which affected the routes between Hammanskraal and Mabopane, Sebengxwe and Sebenzisa and Mobopane.

Local taxi owners also supported the boycott.

Mahlangu said bus companies were supplying alternative transport. — Sapa.

Zwelithini, Buthelezi meet in bid to heal rift

Farouk Chattha

DURBAN — King Goodwill Zwelithini of the Zulus and IFP leader Mangosuthu Buthelezi are scheduled to meet at the monarch’s Nongoma palace today in a fresh bid to resolve differences between them.

This will be the first meeting since President Nelson Mandela’s effort to mediate between the two collapsed earlier this year as a result of differences over Buthelezi’s status within the royal family.

IFP spokesman Thembu Njinande played up the significance of today’s meeting, claiming the initiative to hold it had come from Zwelithini.

However, KwaZulu-Natal government sources said the provincial cabinet had initiated the meeting as part of the ANC-IFP peace process.

The sources said chiefs and members of the royal house had been asked to attend. It was in this context that Buthelezi, as provincial house of traditional leaders’ chairman, was invited.

The sources said the meeting was nevertheless significant, since for the peace process to succeed, Zwelithini and Buthelezi would have to resolve the contentious issue of whether the latter was the monarch’s traditional prime minister.

Meanwhile, Land Affairs Minister Derek Hanekom and KwaZulu-Natal premier Frank Mdlalose took a major step towards resolving differences over the Ingonyama Trust by agreeing at a Pretoria meeting to the establishment of a board of trustees to administer land falling under the Act.

Land Affairs director-general Geoff Budlender said there was agreement that only tribal land would fall under an amended Act.

Budlender said Zwelithini would no longer be sole trustee of tribal land. A board, acceptable to both governments and traditional leaders, would administer the Act.

In a day of truculent debate in the parliamentary educational committee, NP education spokesman Renier Schoeman presented a legal opinion which said the committee had no right to make changes to the Bill.
KTC schools caught in the crossfire

SABATA NGCAI

Economic Review

ARQ 16/10/96

Teachers and pupils at schools in KTC near Nyanga fear for their lives after indiscriminate shooting in the taxi war, which resulted in two homes being petrol-bombed.

A teacher at John Pama Primary School said it was like living in a war zone during the violence yesterday.

"When we heard gunshots from the classrooms, children and teachers started crying," the teacher said. "Within seconds a shack was enveloped in a ball of flame.

"We told the caretaker to lock the school gates because we did not want to expose children to danger. Their parents came to fetch them later."

John Pama and Mkhanyiseli primary schools are in the heart of the settlement and whenever the taxi violence erupts, they are caught in the crossfire. Few pupils went to school today, most staying at home for fear of more violence."

The schools are between the Nyanga taxi rank, known to be the stronghold of Cape Amalgamated Taxi Association (Cata), and KTC, which is known to be dominated by the Convention for Democratic Taxi Association (Codeta).

A 10-year-old girl is in a state of shock after her home was petrol-bombed yesterday.

The Standard 3 girl said she was left with only her school uniform after the fire destroyed all her family's possessions.

"My mother saw the Cata taxi driver who petrol-bombed my home," she said. "He did it and hid in the nearby bush."

John Pama principal Koliswa Scopapa said there would be no afternoon classes from today for the safety of pupils and teachers.
Man dies as homes burn in new taxi violence

ANDREA BOTHA AND ANDREW SMITH
STAFF REPORTERS

A man died and another was injured in new violence between the rival taxi associations Cata and Codeta which wreaked havoc in KTC.

Yesterday several homes were destroyed after being set alight by two petrol bombs, allegedly thrown by Cata minibus taxi owners.

Moments earlier, KTC residents allegedly fired shots at a Cata taxi. Witnesses said shots were returned from taxis.

The new outbreak of violence came days after a fragile peace was brokered by ousted African National Congress parliamentarian Bantu Holomisa.

Police superintendent Ciska du Plessis said: "It's all very confusing. It seems that the driver of a Cata taxi was shot at by unknown gunmen and his home in Khayelitsha petrol-bombed from a car bearing the Cata insignia."

In the first incident Moses Prins was shot at while driving a taxi in KTC. Ten shots hit the vehicle, injuring a passenger, but Mr Prins was unhurt.

The body of a man who had been shot was found later in KTC. Police have yet to release his name.

Superintendent Du Plessis said the two petrol bombings followed the shootings.

Codeta spokesman Howard Dyubeni said: "This is not a new outbreak of violence - the violence has never stopped."

Cata leader Stephen Williams said that he did not know what had happened at KTC.
Rising costs result in big drop in minibus sales

Edward West (292) 11/10/96

MINIBUS sales have slumped to 1 200 a year from 18 000 in the late 1980s, affected by spiralling vehicle and maintenance costs, violence and an inability to raise fares, industry sources said yesterday.

SA Black Taxi Association president Joe Mabaso said government-spearheaded Taxi Task Team proposals were being implemented by provincial governments, but industry prospects were unlikely to improve in the short term.

Toyota SA's Hi-ace was one of the last locally produced minibuses being sold. Samcor's Marathon and Spectrum minibuses never sold well and Nissan's E20 ceased production, Econometrix economist Tony Twine said.

Toyota's George Foster said new minibus taxis were "prohibitively" expensive. Manufacturers had enjoyed margins of up to 20% in the past while dealers had taken up to 18.25%.

Mabaso said the financing and insurance premiums for a move to bigger 23-seat vehicles in the industry were being investigated. Also being studied was the introduction of diesel taxis, which government was ready to subsidise, but no decision had been made on the rand value of the subsidy.
Three people, including a senior policeman's daughter, were wounded in Pretoria city centre when a gunman opened fire with an AK-47 on two taxis yesterday.

Nina Williams (19), daughter of National Service Evaluation head, Commissioner Tim Williams, was wounded in the leg while waiting for a taxi. Two members of the South African Long Distance Taxi Association were also wounded.

Rifle shots rang out in the vicinity of Dr Savage Road and Boon Street, with police initially stating that at least 32 bullets had been fired from a block of flats overlooking one of the main taxi ranks in the CBD.

The sniper was apparently aiming at two minibuses which had stopped to pick up passengers at the corner of Bloed and Prinsloo streets.

Fifteen suspects were taken into custody and questioned by police. An AK-47 and a 9mm pistol were found at the scene.

Police set up early morning roadblocks in Shosangve today and continued to monitor the city ranks.

The boycott of minibus taxis on the Molopoane-Hammanskraal route continued yesterday.
Holomisa steers taxis to peace

Eric Ntarazula

The umpteenth peace agreement was reached between the warring taxi associations, Cata and Codeta, after a five-hour meeting chaired by expelled ANC MP Mr Bantu Holomisa at a city hotel yesterday.

However, proposals already approved by the executive committees of the two factions had to be tabled to members before it could be said that peace had been achieved, Holomisa said.

Holomisa, who paid for the conference room where the meeting was held, said: "I'm not going to be paid for what I'm doing here though the taxi associations are aware that I'm unemployed. I'm doing all this for free and for peace."

Yesterday's agreement was concluded after the taxi violence had spread to KTC this week leaving one man dead and several homes destroyed by fire.

"There are certain proposals that need to be tabled to the taxi members before we can say we have a conclusive agreement that will help to bring about peace in Belville and Khayelitsha — we will know by Friday, he said."

The taxi associations had approached Holomisa to mediate in the dispute.

Codeta's lawyer Mr Frans Coetzee said Holomisa was approached because he was a Xhosa and had military experience as the situation was "turning into a war."
Passersby hit by
sniper in taxi clash

ARGUS CORRESPONDENT

Pretoria—Three people were
wounded in the city centre here
when a man with an AK-47
opened fire in a battle between
rival taxi groups.

A sniper apparently aimed at two
minibuses which had stopped to pick
up passengers. The vehicle was dam-
aged, but the three people wounded
were walking along the pavement.

The shooting caused widespread
chaos, with motorists and taxi com-
muters delayed for over an hour.

Three suspects were taken into
custody. Police seized an AK-47 rifle
and a 9mm pistol. The AK-47 was
found in the hallway of a filling sta-
tion after police had surrounded the
building, suspecting a gunman was
trapped inside.

A businessman in the area said a
stranger had warned him to leave the
area as there was to be "war" about
4pm.

"The man just came to me and said
I should clear out quickly because
there was to be war," he said.

Police said there was conflict
between the South African Long Dis-
tance Taxi Association (Saldia) and a
rival taxi organisation.
Violence

Shack blaze

ANDREA BOTHA AND MARLO WINGARD

South Rand

Continuing violence in KTC was the backdrop for peace talks between the warring taxi groups Cata and Codeta and ousted African National Congress deputy minister Bantu Holomisa.

The taxi association representatives and Mr Holomisa met for several hours in a city hotel yesterday to discuss the latest outbreak, reaching a peace agreement late in the afternoon.

Cata and Codeta agreed to share the Bellville and Khayelitsha taxi ranks and to honour the other points of the 28th peace initiative, which they signed weeks ago.

But in KTC, meanwhile, a man was seriously wounded in a drive-by shooting and a shack was set alight.

The man was shot in the stomach and back as he stood in front of his shack.

A witness said six taxi's drove past the shack and two shots were fired.

He could not tell to which taxi association the taxis belonged.

The man was rushed to the local clinic but his condition deteriorated and he was taken to Groote Schuur Hospital.

Later a taxi driver's shack in Terminus Road was set alight.

A neighbour said a blue car stopped in front of the shack and two men asked her if anyone was home.

"I told them nobody was home and then I left. Later I saw the shack burning."

Patience Zumanu, wife of the owner of the shack, and her baby Athule were at a neighbour's house. "When I returned I saw my house burning and people trying to put out the flames."

She said her husband was a private taxi driver and did not work for Cata or Codeta.

Codeta spokesman Howard Dytubeni said he did not know of any new shooting incidents since talks with Mr Holomisa.

"I don't know if the new agreement will work but we had to agree on something because people were dying," he said.

Cata president Stephen Williams could not be reached for comment.

Meanwhile in Mitchell's Plain yesterday, police confiscated 26 licensed guns for ballistic tests after a stand-off between Cata and Codeta during which members of both sides drew their guns.

The police reaction unit, assisted by soldiers, escorted Codeta members away from the scene. Cata members dispersed peacefully after the guns were confiscated and Codeta members returned to Khayelitsha.
MARS TAXI PEACE TALKS

ANDREA MABU

S, MAN HURT IN DRIVE-BY SHOOTING

In vain: A KTC resident tries to douse flames engulfing a shack after more taxi violence erupted in the area.

Taxi war victim: A man hurt in a drive-by shooting lies in the KTC clinic.

Shocked owner: Police talk to Patience Zumena, owner of the burnt shack.
Taxis block off streets

PROTESTING taxi operators brought traffic to a standstill, threatened to petrol bomb Joubert Park post office and to take Telkom employees hostage if their telephone lines were not restored in Johannesburg's Joubert Park by yesterday evening.

More than 60 meter taxis from Maxi Taxi blocked streets at Joubert Park post office after Telkom technicians refused to work overtime and restore lines.

A Maxi Taxi manager said the decision to block traffic at the post office was taken after futile attempts to have lines restored.

She said when the drivers tried to contact Telkom, they were told the public relations officer was out of town and would be back only on October 28.

Telkom and post office employees at Joubert Park could not leave the premises because all the exit passages were blocked.

Tension was defused after the chief technician said he was sending technicians immediately to restore the lines.

The drivers gave Telkom an ultimatum: restore the lines or they would return and block the streets. — Sapa.
14 in court over taxi rank shooting

Spokesman for LTO says boycott has not had an effect on their business

By McKeed Kotolo

Fourteen members of the Pretoria United Long Distance Taxi Association appeared in the Pretoria Magistrate’s Court yesterday on charges relating to Wednesday’s shooting at the main city taxi rank.

They appeared before Mr M Killian but were not asked to plead. The case was postponed to October 24.

They are Mr Amos Mahlangu, Mr Moses Kgabe, Mr Jeremiah Mahlangu, Mr Apie Mashiene, Mr James Kgomo, Mr Jacob Mahlangu, Mr James Magula, Mr Bonani Dladla, Mr Nene Makwenda, Mr John Skhosana, Mr Samson Thembu, Mr Hendrik Mahlungu, Mr Zolani Mahlangu and Mr Alfred Msiza. They are all in custody.

Their appearance followed the shooting and wounding of several people at the Bloed Street taxi rank.

A spokesman for police investigating taxi violence in Pretoria, an Inspector Cronje, yesterday refused to give any information. “I do not give information over the phone. This is an instruction from above.”

However, Captain Morne van Wyk confirmed the arrest of 15 people but could not say if all of them would be charged. An AK-47 rifle and seven 9mm pistols were confiscated and taken for ballistic tests.

Van Wyk said the police, supported by the army, used a helicopter and manned roadblocks yesterday in their campaign against taxi violence.

Meanwhile, the Ledhabile Taxi Organisation, which operates in the Mabopane, Makapanstad/Hammanskraal routes, has claimed that the boycott is having no effect on their operations.

LTO spokesman Mr Jacob Ledwaba said: “Up to now we are not affected by the so-called boycott. It is business as usual.”

Ledwaba said the violence in the Mabopane/Hammanskraal area, which has claimed 15 lives so far, “is not between various taxi bodies, but between certain members of the associations hiding behind the taxi groupings”.

He, appealed however, to the affected parties to meet and resolve their differences.
Families flee amid fears of new taxi war attack

STAFF WRITER

About 20 Black City families vacated their shacks yesterday fearing an attack from neighbouring KTC. This followed reports of a white sedan circling the camp with its occupants taking down the addresses of Cata taxi owners.

Mr Lungile Mgcina of the Sanco Black City committee said the community was expecting an attack from KTC in response to several shack burnings and shootings in KTC earlier this week.

The fleeing families were not involved in the taxi industry, but feared that if one shack were torched, the entire camp would burn.

One person has been killed and several seriously injured in drive-by shootings over the past few days.

Mgcina said he had received reports from Cata members that the white car carried three Black City women who were pointing out the houses. A meeting was to be held last night to discuss the issue.
**Danger paves the route to success**

**ST 20/10/96**

**OWNING a minibus taxi is a dream cherished by many South Africans who have little education and few job prospects.**

In the US, many young men see success in sport as their escape route out of the gutter; in South Africa owning a taxi is the road to self-empowerment and riches. It means being your own boss, wearing a suit, driving a BMW or Cresta, and living in a large house.

For many taxi owners and drivers, however, the road to success is paved with hard work and danger.

Frank Sambo, a taxi driver aligned to the Lethalblive Taxi Association, has been driving a taxi from the Hammanskraal taxi rank in the North West Province to Pretoria for five years.

A father of three, he works 15 hours a day and earns about R1 000 a month.

His job has put him in the line of fire more often than he cares to remember. "I have ducked more bullets than many soldiers in a war zone, but I won't give up," he said.

He is adamant, however, that the taxi industry is his life-line.

He starts work at 4am when he wakes up, gets dressed and checks his taxi before driving from the taxi rank in a squatter camp in Hammanskraal to Pretoria.

"If I leave home at 5.30am and pick up early-morning commuters at the rank, where I join the queue and wait my turn for the first trip to Pretoria," he said.

Sometimes he spends the night at the rank in his taxi to be first in line.

His taxi, originally a 12-seater, has been modified with a middle seat that takes four more passengers and - to make more money - Sambo squeezes three more passengers in the other seats to make it 19. Because of the extra seats, passengers cannot move their legs during the 45-minute trip.

But it is the only way Sambo can pay all his rates and make ends meet.

He has to pay the owner of the taxi R180 a day between Tuesdays and Thursdays, and R200 between Fridays and Mondays.

Transport payments known as "cheques".

He has to fork out money for oil and petrol and pay his own parking tickets and traffic fines. The owner is responsible only for the cost of repairs.

The taxi violence has taken its toll on his income. "I used to make between R500 and R300 a day for myself, but many people have turned to buses and it is difficult to meet my obligations," he said.

Peter Mohale, a 25-year-old taxi owner aligned to a rival body, the Southwedge Taxi Owners Association, started saving money to buy a taxi while he was in high school.

"To raise the cash, he sold sweets and peanuts.

He dropped out of school in Std 9, got a driver's licence and secured a job as a driver for the owner of a taxi fleet.

He stayed in the job for four years, leaving in 1991.

"I studied the way he was running his business and, when I was sure I could run my own business as well as him or better, I bought my first minibus taxi," he said.

He bought a second minibus in 1992 and a third this year.

Today, he is the proud owner of an Audi 5000SE, and his young wife is studying towards a law degree.

He has no desire, however, to rise in the ranks of the Southwedge taxi association.

"Being a taxi official is like waiting in a misery," he said.

He said the violence was caused by overcrowding on routes. All kinds of people were buying minibuses and taxis were flooding the road, he said.

"The taxi business is in a terrible mess because of the violence," he said. "If it continues, the industry will collapse in five to 10 years."
The former pope commissary in Rome, who was later Pope John Paul II, is being held in the Vatican as part of a $100 million corruption probe. The Vatican has denied any wrongdoing.

According to work...

Bomba posanza...

From President Pyi

F

By Michael Hedges

Khotso Blast

PW Orerdad,
Army moves into KTC to quell taxi violence

By KEN VERNON and JESSICA BEZUIDENHOUT

POLICE patrols backed up by army units have moved into Cape Town’s troubled KTC squatter camp to control violence between rival taxi groups.

The move comes as the Peninsula steels itself for a long hot summer of violence from taxi rivals who have turned to using arson to intimidate township residents caught in the cross-fire of the warring groups.

Monitors from the Urban Monitoring and Awareness Committee (UMAC) issued the violence warning this week after gunmen from one of the groups attacked residents of the sprawling KTC squatter camp, setting shacks alight with firebombs and then shooting at residents trying to put out the flames.

In another outbreak of arson early yesterday, the young mother of a four-week-old baby was forced to flee as her make-shift house was set alight.

The woman, who did not want to be named, believes she was targeted because her boyfriend is a member of the Cape Organisation for Democratic Taxi Association (Codeta).

An ANC councillor for the area, Gladstono Ntamo, claimed members of Cata, (Cape Amalgamated Taxi Association) have threatened to kidnap school children in their bid to force community support.

After attacks earlier this week residents retaliated by setting up street barricades and shooting at taxi hit squads cruising the area.

He said the violence had broken out when gunmen from Codeta had attacked the taxi rank of Cata, and then hid among local residents.

Cata gunmen in turn burnt the houses of residents suspected of hiding the Codeta gunmen.

Residents yesterday braved the rain and marched to the nearby Guguletu police station, where they delivered a memorandum calling for an end to the violence.

Station Commissioner Andrew Langweiler and a meeting between police, taxi associations and mediators was scheduled to take place tomorrow.

Codeta spokesman yesterday confirmed that the organisation had obtained a Supreme Court interdict allowing members to pick up passengers without being harassed or intimidated by Cata drivers.

All of this violence has been predictable and we have warned the police on numerous occasions, sometimes very specifically, but they seem unable to act,” said Steff Nel, a UMAC monitor who has been dealing with the Cape taxi wars for the past 10 years.

In this week’s outbreak of fighting in KTC one taxi driver was shot dead, another wounded and at least three homes destroyed by fire, smashing a fragile peace agreement brokered by former ANC deputy minister Bantu Holomisa earlier this week.

According to Nel this was the 41st such agreement to be dishonoured in the past three years.

He said that in the past three years more than 500 shacks had been destroyed in taxi-related violence, while 21 people had been killed and another 24 wounded.

Sources close to the industry say that while Codeta is closely aligned to African National Congress elements in KTC, an ANC stronghold, Cata is a conservative organisation, but is known to be courting the Pan-Africanist Congress.
Save the minibus taxi industry!

There are several vital areas relating to the South African minibus taxi industry that require urgent attention. Should these areas not be addressed, the minibus taxi industry as we know it today could die, which will undoubtedly impact very severely on this country's already hard-hit economy.

This is the view of leading businessman George Foster, who is dealer principal of Foster's Toyota (the dealership which sells the single largest number of taxis in this country), and chairman of the Foster's Group.

Fifty percent of the Foster's Group is owned by McCarthy Retail.

"The minibus taxi industry in this country is under extreme pressure for a number of reasons. 'Government must address this situation. With this country's poor public transportation infrastructure, workers rely on the minibus taxi industry to get to and from work. The service provided by the minibus taxi industry is therefore essential to the well-being of the economy of this country,' Foster pointed out.

The problem areas to which Foster refers include the price of minibus taxis, servicing and maintenance costs, fuel costs, the availability of finance and the cost of insurance.

It is common knowledge that new minibus taxis are prohibitively expensive, a situation which has seen new taxi purchases spiral downwards from R180,000 in 1998 to R120,000 in 1999. Foster said a Toyota Hi-Ace 16-seater costs R120,000 (including VAT) and that an Iveco Turbo Daily, 24-seater, for which he also has the agency, costs R53,900 (including VAT).

"For the taxi operator who wishes to update his fleet, these costs are crippling," Foster commented.

He said that, ideally, the Hi-Ace should cost R85,000 and the Turbo Daily R115,000.

"This could be accomplished by eliminating the VAT and excise duty payable on these vehicles. Manufacturer and dealer margins also need to be drastically reduced. 'Manufacturers have enjoyed margins of up to 20 percent in the past, while dealers have taken up to 18.25 percent. Dealers were meant to treat taxi owners as fleet operators and therefore only take a margin of 8.25 percent, but in many cases, they ignored the guideline and took the full 18.25 percent.'

He said that he'd like to see the dealer's margin reduced to 6.25 percent while the manufacturer's margin should drop to a mere 5 percent. 'This obviously applies to existing models where the set-up and tooling costs have been amortised. There's no need to introduce new models into this market. The current models are more than ideal for the job,' he said.

The second aspect of the taxi industry which must be addressed, according to Foster, is that of servicing and maintenance costs.

"There is a perception that franchised dealers are expensive and, to a certain extent, that's true," Foster pointed out.

"A taxi driver going to a dealer to have his vehicle repaired can be charged the outrageous price of R180 an hour just for labour. Add to that the price of parts and the mileage a taxi does and you can see why it becomes unthinkable for the taxi owner to take his vehicle for professional repair. And it is this professional repair which is so sorely needed within the industry."

At Foster's Toyota, the labour rate is only R90 (including VAT). "I'd like to call on other dealers to follow our example," urged Foster.

"He added that yet another recent innovation which should assist the taxi operator is the introduction of reduced parts prices by certain vehicle manufacturers.

Another major cost to the taxi operator is that of fuel. There are over 200,000 minibus taxis operating in the country and each taxi has an average monthly fuel bill of R2,704 (for 1,300 litres). This translates into an annual fuel bill of R34,080. If bus companies enjoy government subsidies of R8 per litre, a subsidy should also be applicable to the taxi industry. "This would mean a saving of R235.30 per taxi per month, which would benefit the industry enormously."

A fourth factor that Foster would like to see addressed is the availability of finance.

"This has always been a major obstacle as the financial institutions are wary of providing finance to taxi owners and operators as they are viewed as a high risk. I'd like to see the government establishing a fund which will provide collateral security to the financial institution."

Finally, Foster would like to see the aspect of insurance being addressed.

"The taxi industry is viewed as a high risk area because of the proliferation of accidents, violence and hijackings. But government must put pressure on the insurance industry to reduce its rates. "Even taking these factors into account, insurance companies are charging double what they should be. Up to R22,000 is being charged a year on a Hi-Ace. A private individual wouldn't pay any more than R10,000," Foster said.

In conclusion, Foster pointed out that these changes would not only benefit the minibus taxi industry, but also the commuter.

"It's a fact that the bulk of commuters are being transported to their places of work by taxi. The survival of the taxi industry has important implications for our economy."
Workers to get stake in Airports Company

THE government is to offer employees a 10% stake in the Airports Company when it takes the first steps towards privatisation of the state transport sector, writes CAROL PATON.

Randall Howard, secretary-general of the Transport and General Workers' Union, said this week proposals put forward by the government and still to be considered by unions suggested the government would split 49% of its shareholdings between employees, a strategic equity partner and a black group. The government was likely to remain a majority shareholder.

He said the employee stake also raised the possibility of seats on the board. The government's package would have to satisfy union concerns such as human resource development. Time frames had yet been discussed, but Howard said "an enterprise restructuring committee had been set up and the real work would now begin".
Schools can hire additional teachers

BY ADAM COOKE

Schools will have the right to increase their complement of teachers with private income. Gauteng Education MEC Mary Metalifa has said.

In a move to rebut perceptions that the redeployment of teachers would force schools to reduce their pupil to teacher ratio, Metalifa said governing bodies could hire more staff.

"According to the present funding model, private money can be used to supplement a school's income," she said.

The comment comes at a time when many (mainly historically Model C) schools have expressed concern at the policy of rightsizing. This policy is an attempt to address an inherited unequal distribution of teachers which sees certain schools having up to 70 children to a teacher while others have around 20 children per teacher.

According to the department, 85% of the budget for schools is spent on salaries, which needs to be more evenly spread across the province.

To correct the problems of distribution, teachers will be redeployed and voluntary severance packages introduced.

Schools will be able to maintain a high number of teachers per pupil by employing teachers at their own cost to replace those lost through rightsizing.
Foreign aid for teacher training

By Rafiq Rohan
Political Correspondent

PRESIDENT Mandela is confident that multi-million rand foreign funding to aid education in South Africa has been secured.

However, this money will not be used to provide for voluntary retrenchment packages.

Mandela said in Parliament last week that on many occasions, in meeting with foreign leaders, they offered assistance in achieving South Africa's goals of transformation.

He said that due to the "critical" shortage of funds in the national budget to take care of education priorities, he wrote a number of letters to several heads of state asking for support for the important educational tasks.

"I am pleased to report that the response was overwhelmingly supportive. For this we are deeply appreciative.

"While funding for voluntary retrenchment packages will not be possible from foreign donors, specific pledges towards the capacity building of our teacher corps as well as the retraining and redeployment of teachers have been received."

Some of the more significant confirmed donations come from countries like America, Canada, France and Taiwan.

The USA has donated about R650 million to support teacher training; Canada has given R60 million for teacher training initiatives; Germany has given about R15 million also for teacher training; about R65 million from France was received to be used for the redeployment of teachers to less favoured areas; the Swiss have donated R4,8 million to transform the education system; the Irish have given over 2 million Irish pounds while Taiwan has offered R25 million for education support.
SAA left standing on runway

AURDEY D'ANGELO

Cape Town — A last-ditch attempt by South African Airways (SAA) to prevent the launch of the British Airways-Comair franchise on October 27 has come too late, Johan Biermann, the deputy director of transport regulations, said on Friday.

SAA lodged a complaint with South Africa's international and domestic licensing councils last week that the agreement allowed British Airways to operate a domestic air service in this country without the appropriate licence.

Biermann said on Friday that the complaint obliged the International Air Licensing Council to call a meeting with the national carrier and Comair, but 21 days' notice was required for this, which meant it would be held after the launch.

Leon Els, SAA's senior public relations manager, said the complaint had been made following talks with the civil aviation authorities and an approach to Mac Maharaj, the transport minister, in an attempt to stop the franchise.

Mike Myburgh, the chief executive of SAA, said on Friday that the franchise could lead to the loss of foreign exchange earnings and jobs in the South African aviation industry.

It set a precedent which would "allow any international operator to franchise a nominal South African operator and become a full participant in the South African aviation market".

Myburgh said franchises of this nature had not been allowed anywhere else in the world "other than between European airlines within the European Union where a unified air space is only months away from implementation".

The national carrier's complaint said the franchise would mean that active and effective control of Comair would "no longer (be) in the hands of a licensed South African operator".

But Piet van Hoven, the managing director of Comair, said this was not the case. He said full and effective control would remain in the hands of Comair's management, which would not be changed. British Airways had not taken any equity stake in Comair, which was still South African-owned. He expected the tie-up with British Airways to result in more tourism to South Africa and more jobs.

SAA's complaint, if upheld, could have serious implications for plans by foreign airlines to buy an equity stake in Sun Air and develop it as part of their own system. Sun Air is due to be privatised early next week.
Three people were shot dead and three injured when gunmen opened fire on a KwaZulu Natal registered taxi in peak traffic on the Soweto Highway today.

The Sinwwe Taxi Association driver, who asked to remain anonymous, said he pulled off the highway to speak to another taxi driver at about 7.30am.

"I had just stopped when a white Nissan Sentra drove up alongside us. The next minute they opened fire," he said.

Police investigators said the taxi operated on the route between Johannesburg and Dundee in KwaZulu Natal.

"We have found several spent 9mm and Tokarev cartridges on the scene," a detective said.

The body of one man lay sprawled next to the taxi, a second lay in the back seat and a third lay on an embankment nearby.

Crime Reporter
(332) Mon 22/10/96
Staff might get a place in the Sun

Cape Town — Sun Air is likely to be privatised by March or April next year and, although its strategic partner will be chosen by the government, the staff are expected to have a say in the matter, Johan Borstlap, Sun Air's managing director, said yesterday.

"I am sure the staff will be offered a stake in Sun Air, and they will align themselves with whatever prospective partner looks best for us," he added.

Borstlap was reacting to news that South African Airways (SAA) had lodged an objection with South Africa's domestic and international licensing councils to British Airways' franchise agreement with Comair on the grounds that it would enable a foreign airline to enter this country's domestic market without an appropriate licence.

Mike Myburgh, SAA's chief executive, said it would set a precedent for other foreign airlines to compete in the domestic market through a franchise.

Borstlap said he did not believe Sun Air would be swallowed up by an international airline after privatisation. "This brand is well-established and well-accepted in the marketplace."

He said more than one foreign airline had shown an interest in taking a stake in Sun, including Richard Branson's Virgin Atlantic Airways. "But Richard will have to stand in the queue like everyone else. It is possible that our strategic partner might not be an airline at all."

Borstlap and David James, Virgin's new general manager in southern Africa, said there could be no objection to their present code-sharing agreement enabling passengers to travel on both airlines using one ticket. This was an accepted practice and SAA had a similar arrangement with a British domestic airline.

Borstlap said he expected the international aviation market to divide into groups of allied airlines, with Sun becoming part of one group.
Five people killed, three wounded in taxi shootings

PRETORIA — Five people died and three were wounded in shootings yesterday related to taxi feuds, police said.

Sapa reports that a Mabopane, Pretoria, couple were killed in a drive-by shooting near their home while three people were killed and three wounded in a taxi-related shooting on the Soweto highway southwest of Johannesburg.

Spokesman Sur-Supt Hannes Joubert said taxi owner Sam Masemola and his wife were in their car about 1km from their home when four shots from an AK-47 rifle were fired at them by occupants of a silver Jetta.

Masemola, who was in his late forties, died on the scene. His wife was taken to the nearby Legae Clinic where she died.

Police suspected the incident was related to taxi violence in the Mabopane area.

In the Johannesburg incident the occupants of two minibus taxis opened fire on a third minibus taxi as they drove past it on the highway just after 7am. Three people were killed and three wounded.

Bonile Ngqiyaza reports that police and community representatives said a lack of information on how planned financial assistance by government to the minibus taxi industry would work, might have sparked recent clashes between taxi associations in Pretoria and Northwest.

SAPS and greater Pretoria community police board representatives said yesterday associations were competing for influence over routes and taxi operators in the "misguided assumption" numbers would be the overriding factor when finance was allocated.

Pretoria community leaders and civic organisations called last week for a boycott of minibus taxis after numerous meetings failed to put an end to taxi violence in the area. Greater Pretoria Community Police Board chairman Brutus Mamusa said.

"We think it is greed which is driving them. There is intimidation and violence from all sides."

SA Long Distance Taxi Association (Saldita) Region 1 president Wesley Mpawu denied yesterday impending financial assistance had anything to do with the killings. The industry had experienced the same problems for years, before there was talk of financial assistance.

Areas affected by the boycott are Soshanguve, Mabopane, some parts of Garsfontein and Hamanskraal in Northwest, Mamusa said.

SA Taxi Drivers Union (Satdu) spokesman Maurice Bokaba blamed the carnage on government's slow pace in implementing the National Taxi Task Team recommendations and suggested strict law enforcement would solve the problem.

SAPS spokesman Capt George Francis said 26 people had been apprehended in connection with taxi violence this year, but lack of evidence and the unwillingness of witnesses to come forward meant many would be acquitted.

Only five people had been prosecuted successfully this year, he said. All were fined from R400 to R4 000 and released because of the minor nature of their offences.
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BA and Comair expect boom

Johannesburg — Air travel to South Africa could double within the next five years, Pieter van Hoven, the managing director of Comair, and Robin Renwick, a director of British Airways (BA), said yesterday.

Renwick said South Africa should have one of the biggest tourism industries in the world, but tourism only accounted for 3 percent of the country's GDP.

He said BA and other carriers would have to increase their frequencies to South Africa to cope with the expected demand. Comair also expects a 15 percent rise in feeder traffic from BA's international flights because of its new franchise with BA, which will take effect on Sunday.

Van Hoven presented the new look Comair at the World Trade Centre yesterday.

He said Comair would enlarge its fleet as more capacity was needed on main South African routes, but the airline's fares would remain competitive.

Its route network would link with BA at Johannesburg, Cape Town, Durban; Harare and Gaborone.
Taxi war may be spreading to city centre

STAFF WRITER

THE simmering township taxi war seems to be spreading to the central business district, with several shootings on the Cape Town station deck earlier this week.

About 200 taxi drivers and industry officials held a relatively low-key demonstration to the provincial buildings in Deor Street yesterday, where they told Health and Welfare MEC Mr Ebrahim Rasool — standing in for Transport MEC Mr Leonard Ramatlakane — that they would not allow the Cata group to run them off the deck.

The delegation included representatives of the National Taxi Task Team, the Western Cape Taxi Task Team, the Peninsula Taxi Association (PTA) and members of the Mitchells Plain, Kensington, Hanover Park and Atlantis taxi organisations. Unofficial talks in the early 2000s were of a major taxi demonstration to Parliament, possibly on Monday.

The station deck taxi operators claimed Cata was responsible for shooting at a pair of PTA taxis and a Codeta taxi on Wednesday at the deck terminus.
17 000 teachers take retrenchment option

Andy Duffy

EARLY 17 000 state school teachers have applied for voluntary retrenchment, most of them senior experienced staff disillusioned with government’s education shake-up.

More than 13 000 of the voluntary severance applications come from teachers in Gauteng (severance requests from 9% of its teachers), the Western Cape (requests from 17% of its teachers) and KwaZulu-Natal. The requests have to be approved or blocked by the province’s education departments by year-end.

The figures are the first the national education department has received from the provinces since teacher redeployment and cutbacks started earlier this year.

The staff shake up is central to government’s drive to redress post-imbalances in education funding — proposals agreed by the Education Ministry and teacher unions in February.

Department officials say the numbers suggest few teachers are accepting redeployment. But the resignations will allow new posts to be created in areas deemed understaffed.

The door has also been left open to re-employ those leaving on temporary contracts, running for up to a year. “We don’t want to paint ourselves into a corner,” Reclif du Preez, the department’s deputy director general of human resources, says.

The cost of the departures has still to be quantified. But Du Preez says an average severance package will be more than R370 000 — most of it paid by the state pension fund.

“The losses are mainly among the older people because [the package] is more viable for them,” Du Preez says. “With the option of redeployment one can expect this kind of reaction.”

The largest teachers’ union, the National Association of Professional Teachers of South Africa, says the level of retrenchment requests underlines the impracticality of teacher redeployment. Many of those going are setting up in private education.

“Redeployment has not been taken to by teachers because it’s impractical,” executive director Huw Davies says. “We’re disturbed at the loss of a high level of expertise.”

Gauteng, the Western Cape, the Free State and the Northern Cape are trying to marry the severance requests with staff cuts forced by government’s drive to equalise teacher/pupil ratios. Staffing requirements mean matching the two is not assured.

More than 6 800 of Gauteng’s 48 000 teaching posts are to be shed by December 1997 — 3 300 are supposed to go by the end of this year. The Western Cape is expected to shed 12 000 of its 44 200 teachers — 6 000 by the end of next month.

A task team of education department and state expenditure officials will go to the provinces next month to cost the resignations. The take-up of redeployment offers, and the prospect of creating new posts with the funds freed up by the resignations, will also be assessed.

Davies says it is unlikely new adequately trained teachers can be found to go into understaffed areas, even if such new posts were to be created. Government has undertaken to cover the cost of severance packages only for the four provinces deemed to have excess staff.

Much of the cash is being sought from foreign donors. Du Preez says the UK, US, Germany, the European Union and the Republic of China have all shown interest in funding the programme. But it is not clear whether the donors want to fund severance packages or other parts of the education programme.

Gauteng education department chief co-ordinator for right-sizing Dennis Moluba says there is broad support from the province’s 1 552 schools for its three-year reshuffle. There has been opposition from the coloured community, with schools in Eldorado Park refusing to establish committees to draw up right-sizing plans.

But he says it is unlikely reallocation of staff resources will be completed by 1998, which could force compulsory retrenchments.

The Western Cape’s education and cultural affairs MEC, Martha Olckers, says many of the voluntary severance applicants applied “because they don’t want to be redeployed somewhere haywire.”
Bus petrol-bombed as taxi war widens

A Golden Arrow bus has been gutted in a petrol bomb attack at the Bellville taxi rank in what is apparently an extension of the taxi war between Cuta and Codeta.

Golden Arrow spokeswoman Jeanne Walsh said no one was injured in the attack on the bus. The vehicle was standing at the company's terminal at the time, she said. "The driver was pulled out of the bus by the attacker who then threw the bomb into the bus," she said. The interior of the bus was destroyed.

"The fire department got the blaze under control very quickly but nobody has had a chance to assess the damage," Ms Walsh said. - Staff Reporter
SAA launches price war as Comair flies BA

By Priscilla Singh

SAA started a price war yesterday by reducing 12,000 air fares over Christmas on domestic flights by up to 60% as Comair took to the skies in British Airways colours.

Comair's franchise agreement with BA means the UK airline's passengers can use Comair for local travel instead of SAA and the national flag carrier is responding by selling - only from today until Thursday - the 12,000 discounted tickets which will be valid from December 16 to January 19.

Economy-class return fares between Johannesburg and Cape Town will cost R599 and return fares between Johannesburg and Durban R342. The normal economy-class trip costs R889.

Comair has called SAA's claim that it is guilty of industrial espionage "nothing but a dirty tricks campaign".

SAA claimed in a newspaper yesterday that a Comair employee had broken into its computerised reservations system and stolen vital passenger information.

SAA alleged that the Comair employee, whose name was known to SAA and the police, had used an SAA employee's code to enter the system.

SAA spokesman Leon Els said the matter had been reported to the police and the business practices committee, which is chaired by Professor Louise Tagg, who is also chairman of Transnet.

Comair commercial director Bert van der Linden said yesterday SAA's "campaign to smear Comair's name" was likely to backfire. "It is clear that SAA regards our franchise agreement with British Airways as a major threat and has thus resorted to underhand techniques to try to maintain its advantage in the marketplace.

"We regret that SAA released the allegations to the press on the date the Comair-British Airways franchise became effective," Van der Linden said.

Els denied this allegation and said SAA had first discovered the Comair employee tapping into the system in August and put out a surveillance operation to monitor the situation.

"Auditors Coopers and Lybrand confirmed that a Comair official had tapped into the system and extracted vital information."
Five more die in ongoing Cape taxi war

Cape Town - Five people were shot dead in ongoing taxi violence in the Western Cape at the weekend, police said yesterday.

The body of Golden Arrow bus driver Oscar Mulder (60) was found next to his burnt-out vehicle at Nyanga bus terminus on Saturday. Shots were fired at a taxi in Guguletu at about 6pm on Saturday. The driver, Zandile Mbonje (35), and a woman passenger, Nothini Gedile (23), were fatally wounded.

Two hours later, shots were fired at two taxis on a road near Manenberg. One driver was shot in the head and died at the scene. The other was wounded in the back. A boy (15) who was a passenger in one of the taxis was fatally wounded.

About 15 minutes later, shots were fired at a taxi in Nyanga, wounding the driver. - Sapa.
Bus firm targeted as six die in bloody weekend

Six people died and four were injured in a bloody weekend of taxi violence in the Peninsula.

A Golden Arrow bus inspector, 60-year-old Oswald Mulder of Kensington, was found dead beside his burnt-out car at Nyanga bus terminus.

Police said Mr Mulder had a fatal injury in the chest, believed to have been a gunshot wound. The possibility that the killing was related to the taxi war is being investigated. Four 9mm spent cartridges were found at the scene.

In another attack, stones were thrown at a Golden Arrow bus at the terminus, injuring three passengers and causing damage of nearly R3 000.

A minibus taxi driver, 35-year-old Zandiile Mbuye, and his 25-year-old passenger, Nothini Gedile, were shot dead when their vehicle was fired on at the intersection of NY103 and NY1 in Gugulethu.

Three people were killed when shots were fired at two taxis, one of which was being towed, on the Bishop Lavis-Heidelberg offramp near Manenberg.

Both drivers were killed and Simphiwe Cecil Mzowana was shot in the head. Police said he was 15.

The names of the other two have not been released.

Police superintendent John Sterrenberg said the incidents were related to the war between rival taxi associations Cata and Codeta.
Riot police and armoured vehicles move in

Taxi foyer heads for more strike
Taxi attack: woman shot
(332), ARG 29/10 1996
A pregnant woman was seriously wounded
and at least one minibus taxi was damaged
when a man opened fire on the Cape Town
Station deck taxi rank today. The injured
woman, a hawker in her thirties, was shot
in the back and was taken to hospital for an
emergency operation.
Police found at least one vehicle dam-
aged by the gunfire. A policeman on the
scene said the attack appeared to be related
to the taxi war. – Crime Correspondent

See page 3
Finding shutdown -- the Greater Jonestown Mission Project says the engineering team

ASF

WARING OF

Rank closes

Chaos at Bara
Sadatu blames former officials

Sadatu Mousma’s Assistant General Secretary and party wraps profound education campaign for by treaty and other rule.

"I can only do what I am told to do," he said, "and I can only do what I am told to do."
Two passengers killed

in taxi war crossfire

SHOOTING IN CITY CENTRE

Cynthia Vora and Eric Nkabula

In taxi war crossfire two passengers killed

Cynthia Vora and Eric Nkabula
Hired hitmen linked to new taxi:

Wrong man: police search a student caught up in the taxi conflict which flared anew on the Cape Town station deck yesterday afternoon.
The Peninsula taxi war has erupted again, with eight hours of clashes between rival taxi associations in which two more people died and six were injured.

Police have linked at least one of yesterday’s killings to taxi assassins who sell their services to the highest bidder.

The link between hired gunfights and several taxi war deaths has recently been the focus of police investigations in the Western Cape and nationally.

Anton van der Merwe of the priority crimes unit said that a passenger in a taxi linked to the Cata group and who was fatally wounded near Phillipi yesterday may have been the target of professional hitmen.

“It is clear from the pattern of the bullet markings on the taxi that the person who fired at the vehicle was a very good shot,” Inspector Van der Merwe said.

Four people had been wounded in the shooting, which was apparently a revenge attack for the slaying of a Codeta taxi owner barely two hours earlier, he said.

Codeta and Cata taxi drivers took their battle to the streets of the Cape Flats yesterday after a strong police contingent at the Cape Town station taxi rank deterred them from attacking each other there during the morning.

Around 4.20pm Codeta taxis left the deck, pursued by taxis affiliated to Cata.

At 4.30pm the body of a Codeta man was found in a taxi at the Melbourne Road exit from the Eastern Boulevard.

The Cape Argus Political Correspondent reports that resolution of the bloody taxi wars could be in sight after plans for the issuing of new permits by February.

Announcing this today, Transport Minister Mac Maharaj said it was simplistic to suggest the solution to the taxi war was just to enforce the law.

“That is not feasible given what we inherited and the anarchy in this industry,” Mr Maharaj said.

He said the taxi industry had become a byword for violent lawlessness.

Implementation of reforms was starting in all provinces, but a lot remained to be done by the transport department in conjunction with police and the justice system, to end violence.

The process of registering until-now illegal taxis had already started and in the Western Cape so far 1,000 applications had been processed, Mr Maharaj said.

By February, the provincial department of transport would have compiled a database of taxis and by then the permits which would have been issued could not be the subject of disputes.
Natal taxi industry improving

Task team set to restructure the taxi operations in the province

By Ntokozo Gwamanda

A new spirit of co-operation has embraced the KwaZulu-Natal taxi industry and it is well on its way to becoming a force to be reckoned with within the public transport sector.

In response to national Government initiatives to restructure the taxi industry, KwaZulu-Natal MEC for transport Mr S'Bu Sisulu established the KwaZulu-Natal Taxi Task Team to drive the restructuring and formalisation process in the province.

The task team was divided into economic assistance; regulation and control; conflict resolution and education and training committees.

With the help of the task team, strong partnerships developed between the taxi and government representatives, as well as among the taxi representatives themselves.

This has led to the successful implementation of the restructuring process in KwaZulu-Natal.

Provincial registrars
The National Taxi Task Team recom-
The taxi industry has successfully been restructured in KwaZulu-Natal.

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The taxi industry has successfully been restructured in KwaZulu-Natal.

Bara taxi rank may get reprieve

BY SELLO MOTHIBA

Soweto Bureau

May 31/10/96

The Greater Johannesburg council said a long-term solution might be found to the ongoing taxi feuds in Soweto, following yesterday's five-hour meeting with six taxi operators.

Co-chairman of the Greater Johannesburg Council negotiating team, Sibusiso Buthelezi, said they were optimistic that the Soweto taxi operators would present workable proposals which might pre-empt the planned closure of the Bara taxi rank on November 7.

The council recently announced plans to close the rank due to ongoing violence between warring taxi associations.

Buthelezi said broad agreement had been reached on the process to be followed. All the parties, including representatives of the taxi associations, would brief their principals before submitting proposals.
Man killed in taxi shooting on N2

ERIC NTABAZALI AND RONALD MORRIS

AN OBSERVATORY man was shot dead last night when Cata and Codeta taxi factions opened fire on each other on the N2 during rush-hour traffic.

Police spokesman Captain Wicus Holtzhausen said Mr Francois du Plessis, 40, of Norfolk Road, was driving his bakkie on the N2 near the Langa turn-off at about 6pm when he was struck in the chest by a stray bullet. He died later in Groote Schuur Hospital.

Also last night, eight people were seriously injured when 20 Codeta taxis opened fire on a city-bound Cata taxi on the N2.

The driver of the Cata taxi, Mr Rixon Dull, said he had picked up 13 passengers in Langa at about 6pm and was heading towards the city when 20 Codeta taxis travelling in the opposite lane started shooting at him.

Police said 31 cartridges were found at the scene of the incident, and seven passengers and one bystander were shot and taken to Tygerberg Hospital. Minutes after this shooting the factions again shot at each other in Borchards Quarry Road, Nyanga, but it was not known if there were casualties, Holtzhausen said.

Earlier, a march by taxi operators almost turned ugly when one of its leaders told the marchers that Transport MEC Mr Leonard Ramatlakane regarded the Western Cape Taxi Task Team (WCFTT) — which organised the march — as an illegitimate structure.

The marchers demanded to meet Ramatlakane and Safety and Security MEC Mr Gerald Morkel, but the MECs declined, saying they would study a memorandum from the marchers before setting up a meeting on Monday.
Concerns as thousands of teachers apply for severance
War zone: Traffic halts and soldiers patrol the N2 near Athlone — the freeway once again becoming a hell run. A gun battle killed a motorist yesterday.

JOHANNESBURG TIMES

The N2 highway, one of Cape Town's main arteries and its link with the outside world through the airport, has again become a deadly hell run — this time because of the taxi war.

But today a top-level police meeting thrashed out a plan to "smother" the conflict by beefing up policing on the ground, intensifying patrols at flashpoints and using more air surveillance.

The N2 became known as the hell run in the early 1990s when there were many stoning attacks on motorists.

Now feuding taxi factions have turned the highway into a war zone where they wage sporadic gun battles.

The latest one yesterday claimed the life of sportsman François du Plessis of Observatory, who happened to drive through the flying bullets. Six people were wounded.

And as taxi war chaos spilled into the city itself, emergency talks got under way at national and provincial level.

Commissioner George Pivaz today held an urgent planning session in Pretoria on taxi violence in various regions, including the Western and Eastern Cape.

And an urgent meeting, led by provincial commissioner Leon Wessels, thrashed out the latest moves for a big clampdown...
on taxi violence in the Western Cape.

Senior police spokesman John Sterrenberg said in addition to extra police on the ground, the air wing would also be used more frequently for surveillance.

"The various area commissioners are to make available more members, assisting the public order police, who have their hands full with the taxi war and Pagad."

To page 2
Waterfront shuttle wins order against taxi body

ARG 31/10/96

The Peninsula Taxi Association has been ordered by the Cape Supreme Court to stop assaulting, harassing or intimidating staff and passengers of V&A Waterfront Shuttle Services.

Shuttle Services director Esa Yacoob yesterday obtained an interdict against the PTA and 22 of its members after alleging they had subjected his staff to a campaign of harassment and abuse. He said they had damaged the service's taxis and prevented tourists and commuters from using them.
Mafia-style tactics used in taxi violence

57 suspected hit squad members, including police, among 363 arrested

P

erpetrators of taxi violence were increasingly making use of mafia-style hit-squad tactics, Commissioner George Fivaz said yesterday.

"This is illustrated by the arrest this year of no fewer than 57 suspected taxi hit-squad members among the 363 suspects arrested in general for taxi violence," Fivaz told reporters in Pretoria.

Four suspected hit-squad members arrested were policemen.

Fivaz said the police were working covertly to expose hitmen, and closely with those involved in the taxi industry to expose police members involved. Intimidation was, however, a major problem.

"People are complaining about the involvement of police members, but they are not coming forward with information," Fivaz added.

"Possible witnesses are terrified by their situation."

The police had requested the Department of Justice to consider setting up a witness protection programme.

Fivaz said 136 people had been killed and 208 injured this year in 335 incidents of taxi violence.

Last year, 195 people were killed and 281 injured in 530 incidents.

Families and innocent bystanders were increasingly becoming the victims of taxi wars.

"Although taxi violence has declined sharply in general, the latest violence shows that underlying tensions and rivalry outside South African Police Service control can still ignite widespread taxi feuding," Fivaz said.

He said renewed taxi violence in recent weeks had been sparked by monopolisation drives by big taxi associations and intensified internal rivalries.

"Such factors are beyond the control of the SAPS and will require urgent government intervention."

Fivaz called for the firmer implementation of taxi regulations. He said this task was mainly the responsibility of the Transport Ministry.

"Everything possible, on both governmental and policing levels, must be done to prevent the latest violence from again igniting full-scale taxi warfare as seen in 1995," he said.

To this end, the SAPS and the South African National Defence Force were planning to beef up existing covert and overt operations to contain taxi violence in the run-up to the holiday season.

National Standards and Management Services divisional commissioner Andre Pruis said the nine provincial joint security committees would meet today to make proposals to this end.

Possible additional steps included the use of light aircraft and helicopters, the setting up of a reaction force, and the installation of video cameras at large taxi ranks.

The joint security staff committee, comprising top police and defence force officials, would meet again on Tuesday to discuss and evaluate the proposals from today's meeting. Pruis said.
conflicts still lead today

Kingdoms in past bloody
No traffic officers in townships

ROGER FRIEDMAN
AND PETER DERNERY

UNROADWORTHY taxis, unlicensed taxis, warring taxis, taxis full of guns ... but nary a traffic policeman in sight.

"We don't have traffic jurisdiction in those areas," said deputy city administrator Mr Alan Dolby. "The old Ikapa administration never appointed any traffic officers. So there has never been any traffic enforcement in those areas."

"Redeploying staff to the old Ikapa areas (including Langa, Nyanga and Gugulethu) will mean reducing services in other areas."

The only traffic services being offered in these areas are the painting of street markings and traffic education in schools, said Dolby.

Early this week he turned down a request from the police, army and communities affected by the taxi war to deploy traffic officers at roadblocks near the Nyanga terminus.

Since the roadblocks went up without traffic officers — on Monday, the taxi conflict has spread away from the old Ikapa areas to the N2 freeway and central business district.

Dolby said the proclamation making local government substructures a legal entity included a clause stipulating that traffic offi-
TRANSPORT UNDER SIEGE

Will another task

THE Western Cape’s taxi business has become an industry of death. This year there have been at least eight widely publicised peace agreements between rival factions. They have been broken time after time, resulting in at least 45 deaths. Jackie Cameron, Eric Ntabazalila and Chris Bateman report.

As this year’s taxi violence death toll rose to at least 45, Western Cape Premier Heman Kriel yesterday proposed yet another task force to try to stem the blood flow.

At least 12 people have been killed around the Peninsula this month in taxi-related violence. More than 127 people have also been injured this year.

There have been at least eight peace pacts between the major taxi factions Codeta and Cata this year, and politicians estimate there have been as many as 40 agreements brokered between the two groups in the last two years.

There have also been repeated announcements of government, city council and police “crackdowns” on taxi violence — and taxi organisations have also vowed to get “ruthless” with members who ignore peace pacts.

Despite all the public promises, handshakes and meetings, the violence has continued and many commuters are now refusing to take taxis out of fear that they will join the growing list of innocent bystanders and passengers who have fallen victim to the feeding.

Despite all the public promises, handshakes and meetings, the violence has continued and many commuters are now refusing to take taxis out of fear that they will join the growing list of innocent bystanders and passengers who have fallen victim to the feeding.

The fighting has moved from taxi ranks and spilled onto major highways and the city centre, sparking fears that the city’s tourism industry has been dealt another serious blow.

Transport MEC Mr Leonard Ramatlakane said he had brokered at least 25 of the 28 failed peace agreements so far and that he took “the strongest exception” to people claiming he was not giving enough attention to the problem.

There were “strong indications” that hired and paid assassins carried out “dirty missions”.

Cata and Codeta should arrest trigger-happy operators and then move for the refusal of bail — a step he would personally back, Ramatlakane said.

Both Cata and Codeta yesterday again committed themselves to peace.

Cata spokesman Mr Phillip Mboja said: “Our solution ... is that every taxi association must be allowed to operate on all the routes.”

Codeta spokesman Mr Reggie Malimba said: “We are very much committed to peace, that is why we have asked the court to intervene in protecting our members as well as the public.”

At a press conference yesterday, Kriel unveiled yet another series of talk sessions aimed at solving the problem.

He said taxi groups, police, intelligence services, the army and the relevant provincial MECs would be invited to join a task group that would meet twice weekly, from next week.

“They’ll have to do three things: secure the safety of the public, evaluate what’s happening, and advise me on what we can do,” Kriel said.

He would also ask police to ensure that “heavily armed” personnel “guarded” Nyanga and Bellville taxi ranks.

When asked what would make this task force more effective than any of the others that had been assembled over the past two years, he said: “This one will be more representative and will meet on a more regular basis.

“I can’t guarantee that this will solve the problem. After a month, if we haven’t solved the problem, we’ll take a harder line.”
Force bring tax peace?
DRIVING IN THE DARK
FM 11/11/90

Managing Putco under present conditions must be like driving a bus along a dark country road at night without headlights. To make matters worse, the road has a number of potholes.

Activities: Mass transport service operator.

Control: Carleo Enterprises 52.5%.

Chairman: A Carleo. MD: E M R Oldham.

Capital structure: 26.4m ords. Market capitalisation: R64.6m.

Share market: Price: 320c. Yields: 7.5% on dividend; 19.8% on earnings; p/e ratio; 5:1; cover, 1:8. 12-month high, 515c; low, 300c. Trading volume last quarter, 198 000 shares.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year to June 30</th>
<th>'93</th>
<th>'94</th>
<th>'95</th>
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<td>ST debt (Rm)</td>
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<td>Return on sales (%)</td>
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<td>10.7</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Pre-tax profit (Rm)</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Dividends (c)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tangible NAV (c)</td>
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<td>534</td>
<td>708</td>
<td>848</td>
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The big hole Putco hit in financial 1996 was, to use the words of chairman Albinio Carleo, the “nonincrease in the passenger subsidy for the first nine months of our financial year.”

It came close to taking the wheels off. Turnover fell in real terms, operating profit was halved and EPS hit a low not seen since 1991, when Putco recorded a small loss.

The operating numbers also took a knock, particularly disappointing after signs of recovery at operational level a year ago. Passenger numbers declined by 2.3% to 85m (up 6% in the previous year) and kilometres travelled increased by only 1% (7%).

Growth of 4.7% in group bus operating revenue was wiped out by an 8.7% increase in operating costs, apparent in the paper-thin pre-interest margin of 2.5%.

Fortunately, Putco’s traditionally strong balance sheet did not suffer too much damage, though the previous year’s net cash holding of R10.6m turned to net debt of R19m. However, Putco still earned interest of R5.3m over the financial year.

There are a few flickers of light on the horizon, but much remains unclear. Government is still finalising its transport policy review process (perhaps by year-end), which will lay the policy framework for the future management of public transport.

Carleo sees two positive factors which he believes could lead to “slightly better” results this year: an increased subsidy to be announced in February — “for the past 18 months, the subsidy increase has only been 8%, so the next increase should be more” — and increased revenue from Putco’s 10% fare increase announced in October.

He also believes that the introduction of new, interim contracts for an average of three years — negotiated between the Transport Department and the SA Bus Owners’ Association — could have a positive, more stable effect on the industry.

But none of these factors can realistically offer much comfort to investors in the short term. The potential for recovery is there, but remains clouded by politics on the one side, as government tries to formulate a new policy, and by a vibrant, if chaotic, private taxi industry on the other.

For now it’s hard to regard the share as anything but speculative. Shaun Harris
Lock up drivers found with guns, says Ball

Cape Town's chaotic taxi situation is "simply an absurdity" and taxi drivers found carrying guns should be locked up, says Olympic Bid chief Chris Ball.

"There is no reason taxi drivers should carry guns. In fact, if I had the power to do it, I would ban guns," he said yesterday. "Any taxi driver carrying a gun should be locked up for five years at least," he added.

His strong comments followed another day of taxi strife in the city, the international perception of which could harm Cape Town's bid for the 2004 Games.

International Olympic Committee evaluators will visit Cape Town in a month's time to assess the technical aspects of the bid and the suitability of the city as host.

Addressing a select group of 15 school pupils recently nominated as Olympic Bid "ambassadors", Mr Ball noted that the bid had served as a catalyst for the most constructive anti-crime initiative yet launched in Cape Town. The initiative was forged at a top-level meeting in the city this week. A multi-disciplinary group is to meet within two weeks to draw up strategies and set targets.

He said Cape Town was a lot safer than many of the other 10 cities bidding for the 2004 Games but a decisive action plan to deal with lawlessness was still needed.

"People need to know that if they break the law, someone will jump on them."
End taxi war or face shutdown, Kriel warns foes

Groups given a month

ASHLEY SMITH AND JUDY DABSON
Staff Reporters

Western Cape Premier Hernus Kriel has given the taxi industry a month to resolve the escalating conflict between Codeta and Cata or face permanent closure.

He warned yesterday that if the bloodshed and mayhem between the rival taxi associations continued, his government would have no alternative but to encourage the wholesale use of buses and trains by commuters.

Mr Kriel's office and representatives from townships affected by the latest wave of violence have announced several strategies to stop the conflict.

But neither Codeta nor Cata has made any new moves to end the violence which has claimed nine lives this week and turned the N2 highway past the airport into a hell run.

The tense stand-off between Cata and Codeta over which has the right to operate from the Cape Town station deck taxi rank in the city centre remains unresolved.

The situation is on a knife-edge, with Cata and Codeta strongholds being guarded against possible attacks.

The police community forum in Guguletu has announced moves to help the army set up roadblocks to stop taxi drivers with unlicensed firearms.

People in areas such as Nyanga and Philippi would also be approached to help, said forum chairman Daniel Ladingwe.

Mr Kriel has appointed a task team headed by provincial Police Minister Gerald Moriel and Transport Minister Leonard Ramatla.

Two senior members each from the police, the national defence force, National Intelligence, Cape Amalgamated Taxi Associations (Cata), the Cape Organisation for a Democratic Taxi Association (Codeta), the Golden Arrow bus company, and Metrorail have been invited to be on the team, which will meet every Monday and Friday.

Their tasks are to ensure public safety, meet regularly for evaluations and to advise Mr Kriel on what can be done.

Heavily armed police have been assigned to watch the Nyanga and Bellville taxi zones under instruction to "act without leniency" against perpetrators of violence.

Although 40 peace initiatives have crashed in the past two years and several similar task teams have failed, Mr Kriel was hopeful this team would succeed.
Taxi chaos brings them out in force

ANDREA WEISS and JENNY SCHROENEN
Star Correspondents

Police, soldiers and traffic police are being deployed in areas affected by Cape Town’s taxi war.

As authorities moved to stop the growing conflict, the Cape Town station deck taxi rank was calm but tense today after violent clashes this week.

Traffic officers at the old Strand Street taxi rank, where it is now illegal to pick up and drop commuters, were today directing taxis to the station deck which has been declared safe after a shooting there on Wednesday.

On the deck, at least 30 policemen, some with shotguns and wearing bulletproof vests, searched for firearms and other dangerous weapons and checked registration and public driving permits.

The operation caused a slight delay in the traffic flow on the deck but commuters and a large number of operators accepted it in the interests of their own safety.

A senior traffic officer on the deck said the situation was calm but he feared “just one spark in the barrel could cause havoc”.

The police have unveiled a contingency plan to increase visible policing in conjunction with the defence force.

They said they would increase presence at taxi ranks and deploy additional members of the public order unit. The effect of

Police, army traffic cops fight ‘war’

From page 1

this would be to increase joint police and defence force patrols. The police helicopter and municipal and provincial traffic police would also help.

And in a further move, Cape Town municipality is to ask Western Cape Premier Hermie Kriel to allow traffic police to be deployed across municipal boundaries.

The Cape Town council decided at its monthly meeting to urgently address the issue of the deployment of traffic officers.

Outside the civic centre where the council met yesterday, the station deck rank was deserted as visible evidence of the war in which nine people were killed this week.

The council said it reversed the continuing violent conflict in the minibus taxi industry and offered its support to provincial Minister of Transport Leonard Ramatla and Minister of Police Gerald Morkel who are heading a new task team.

The council said an “all-out effort cutting across party-political lines” was needed to resolve the problem in the long term.

Traffic officers are restricted to certain areas because of a provincial proclamation that until unbundling of local authorities in July, work should continue to be carried out within the old municipal boundaries.

This means traffic officers employed by the former Cape Town city council are not deployed in the Ikapa area, which has no traffic officers of its own.

The council also resolved yesterday that trade unions and other municipalities be consulted on implementing the resolution.

Police Commissioner George Fivas has warned that renewed taxi violence was a blow to major police “successes” against perpetrators of violence.
Now's time for mindfulness men to legitimate industry
Hit squads a feature of taxi violence

Preforia — Preparations of taxi drivers, who have been arrested over the past few days for murder, have left the police cordoned off the scene of the shooting. The police said that the shooting took place near the taxi rank on the corner of Pretoria and Park Street. The taxi drivers claimed that they were attacked by unknown men with knives and that they had to defend themselves. The police said that they had been on the lookout for the suspects since the incident. The taxi drivers said that they had been attacked by a group of men who were armed with knives and that they had to defend themselves. The police said that they had been on the lookout for the suspects since the incident. The taxi drivers said that they had been attacked by a group of men who were armed with knives and that they had to defend themselves. The police said that they had been on the lookout for the suspects since the incident. 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Hit squads a feature of taxi violence

Fremantle police were working on a fingerprint-based operation to catch taxi drivers who had been arrested for violence. They said the fingerprints of taxi drivers, who had been involved in recent violence, were being collected to help identify them.

Fremantle detectives were investigating a number of cases involving taxi drivers who had been involved in recent violence.

A witness protection program was also under way to protect informants.

Chamber of Commerce to appeal for peace.
ICCKOWN LOOMS IN TAXI WAR
BA threatens to jettison SA flights

Cape Town — British Airways (BA) has warned it will cut its four weekly flights to Cape Town unless it is granted extra flights to South Africa to compete with Virgin Atlantic's plans to expand its own South African business.

The threat heightens the competition between the British carriers and will probably put local authorities under great pressure to license further flights between South Africa and Britain, irrespective of South African Airways' (SAA) ability to use them.

John Hanlon, BA's general manager in Africa, said yesterday that BA's 47 flights to South Africa would probably be cut back to 14 to accommodate Virgin's plans if the request for extra flights was refused. The cuts would probably include all four of BA's non-stop flights to Cape Town, which bring in 1,600 passengers a week.

"Cape Town is undoubtedly the top tourist destination in South Africa and we have been marketing it in the UK. We hope ultimately to have a daily flight there because there is scope for tourism to grow," he said.

He said stopping the flights would affect jobs in the Cape Town area but BA would not be able to cut its Johannesburg flights because Johannesburg is its main business destination and thus attracts most premium-class passengers, bringing in a higher yield.

Britain and South Africa allow each other's airlines 21 flights a week between the countries. BA has 17 and Virgin three, so one of them can get another flight. Virgin, however, wants six flights a week by next year and is aiming at a daily flight.

If BA is allowed extra flights, a similar number would have to be allocated to a local carrier, but SAA, which flies 13 times a week, including two non-stop flights to Cape Town, does not have the aircraft to handle extra flights so other local carriers could be tempted onto the routes.

Britain's civil aviation authorities will look at the position later this month. "Since they favour competition they are likely to make us cut back to allow expansion by Virgin," said Hanlon. "But this could be avoided if the South African licensing authorities make more frequencies available.'"

BA and Virgin have a long history of gloves-off competition, culminating recently in a British libel case that won Richard Branson, Virgin's owner, millions of pounds. The companies are still fighting in US courts.

Leon Els, SAA's senior public relations manager, said the airline did not regard BA's application for more frequencies as a threat. He said SAA did not have BA's capacity but in any case it had "not been part of SAA's planning" to take up its full allocation of 21 frequencies to London.

Hanlon said BA did not intend to increase the number of its flights this year, but it wanted eventually to have two flights a day to Johannesburg and one to Cape Town. He was confident the market could absorb expansion by BA and other carriers.

David James, Virgin's general manager in South Africa, said: "We are quite happy for British Airways to have 21 frequencies provided we have seven. This country should be moving towards completely open skies to build its tourism industry."
Transport department to seek court order for taxi operator information

Bonile Ngqiyaza

The Western Cape transport department will file an urgent application in the Cape Town Supreme Court today forcing rival provincial taxi associations to provide a complete list of taxi operators and their routes.

The move followed failure by the Cape Amalgamated Taxi Association and Cape Organisation for a Democratic Taxi Association to comply with a department deadline on Monday to submit the information, spokesman Douw Steyn said yesterday.

He said a taxi task team set up last weekend by premier Hennie Kriel had resolved on Monday to investigate the possibility of outlawing the carrying of firearms on public transport.

It had also been decided to bar people with criminal records from participating in the team’s proceedings.

Steyn said the transport and public works MEC Leonard Ramatlakalane had given notice that proposed amendments to the province’s Road Transport Act would be discussed today.

The department had also given taxi association operators until the end of this month to surrender their old permits and apply for new ones — in line with the recommendations of the national taxi task team.

An SAPS spokesman said a sting operation last week had led to 64 minibuses being declared introadworthys and 169 fines, of which R18 000 had been paid, being imposed.

Meanwhile, an Eastern Cape meeting on taxi violence attended by transport department representatives, the safety and security MEC and local government representatives last weekend has recommended that local authorities take over the allocation of taxi ranks to taxi operators.

Provincial transport department spokesman Cingga Nokwe said transport MEC Mandisa Mashele had requested a meeting with the provincial commissioner of police where the taxi violence issue would be discussed.

The conference followed Eastern Cape safety and security MEC Dennis Nee’s statement that authorities were aware of hit squad camps where operators were trained for attacks.
Western Cape Transport Minister Leonard Ramatlakane has applied in the Cape Supreme Court for an order forcing warring taxi organisations Cata and Codeta to comply with a peace agreement and have their permits amended.

The minister is asking that the organisations be interdicted from operating outside routes agreed upon in an agreement brokered in September.

He is also calling on them to have their area or radius permits amended to route permits as agreed.

In an affidavit he said some operators' bad area permits and others radius permits.

Conflict resulted because their routes were not defined.

December 4 has been provisionally set for the application to be heard.

Mr Justice G A Kuhn said the strife and mayhem involving taxi operators had to be resolved urgently.

However, Judge Kuhn said he was not prepared to make an order yesterday as the taxi bodies had to have an opportunity to present their case.
Bara taxi rank won’t close just yet

BY SELLO MOTLHABAKWE
Soweto Bureau

The threatened closure of the Baragwanath taxi rank — scheduled to have taken place tomorrow — has been shelved for the time being while discussions on its future take place.

Greater Johannesburg Council traffic committee deputy chairman, Sibusiso Buthelezi, said after a meeting between the committee and Soweto Transport Services, Diepmeadow Taxi Association (DTA), and Baragwanath's Taxi Association (BMTA), that further meetings had been scheduled.

He said he was unable to disclose details of the talks until he had reported to the Johannesburg Metropolitan Council and Gauteng Transport Ministry.

Yesterday’s meeting was overshadowed by a shooting yesterday at the Diepmeadow taxi rank, about 5km north of the Baragwanath rank. Police arrested two men, believed to be from the DTA and the BMTA, in connection with the shooting.

The council has said that a taxi association agreement on peace and operating schedules is a prerequisite for revoking its threat to close Baragwanath.

If the associations fail to convince council they have a workable plan, police backed by the army would be deployed to enforce the closure.
PE taxi driver gunned down in unceasing war for territorial control

Port Elizabeth – Ongoing taxi violence in Port Elizabeth has claimed another life, with an Uncedo taxi driver being shot in the head by an unknown gunman. It was reported yesterday. The incident comes only hours after the resumption of operations by Uncedo.

The taxi association surprised mediators and other taxi operators by operating again yesterday after eight weeks of being off the road as a result of its taxi feud with rival taxi group, Bata.

Earlier, Bata taxi operators warned that the move by Uncedo to resume operations would result in innocent commuters suffering in the ongoing conflict between the two groups.

Police said they have no further information relating to the death of the 35-year-old taxi driver yesterday morning. – Sapa.

3 taxi drivers shot, attackers arrested

Three Pretoria taxi drivers were injured when gunmen opened fire at a taxi rank in Rietgat near Soshanguve yesterday morning.

Police spokesman Captain Morné van Wyk said the three attackers, allegedly members of the SA Long Distance Taxi Association, were arrested at the scene.

Those injured were apparently members of the Federated Long Distance Taxi Association, and were admitted to the Soshanguve Clinic.

Van Wyk said one of them was seriously hurt.

About eight taxis were hit in the shooting which occurred at 10am.

The three suspects were expected to appear in the Pretoria North Magistrates’ Court before the end of the week, Van Wyk said. – Sapa.
Two arrested for taxi rank killings

By Josias Charle and Bernard Sathekge

Two suspects were arrested after five people, including a woman taxi driver, were killed during an AK-47 rifle attack in Mabola near Brits at the weekend.

Four of the victims included three passengers and a taxi driver. More than 10 other people were injured during the attack.

Police arrested two men and it is understood they have confessed their involvement in the attack.

According to police, four men in a Nissan Sentra drove into Mabola taxi rank and one of them opened fire with an AK-47 rifle spraying 31 rounds around the rank.

Two of the dead people have been identified as taxi driver Ms Elizabeth Pholosi (38) and passenger Ms Nswazi Moko (32).

The three other passengers, including a riots, a woman and a schoolgirl, have not yet been identified.

In another taxi violence-related incident, Pretoria police arrested three men and confiscated stolen weapons allegedly destined for a hit squad hired by the South African Long Distance Taxi Association.

Police spokesman Captain Morne van Wyk said the taxi violence unit and flying squad, reacting to information from a source, stopped a Saldia taxi in Muckleneuk, Pretoria, after following it from Mamelodi.

Two suspects were arrested and a .38 special revolver, a .22 pistol, a handgun and ammunition confiscated.

Van Wyk said the other suspects told police they had been on their way to deliver the weapons to an unidentified Saldia official at the Dairy Mall taxi rank in Pretoria.
WHERE NOW?

Our previous discussion on the government’s road map to 2026 has laid the groundwork for understanding the current state of affairs. The government has set ambitious goals for the future, aiming to transform the country into a modern and prosperous nation by 2026. This vision is encapsulated in the government's 10-year development plan, which outlines specific targets and strategies to achieve this goal.

The current administration has embarked on a series of initiatives aimed at realizing these objectives. These initiatives include reforms in the education sector, the promotion of entrepreneurship, the expansion of infrastructure, and the enhancement of social services.

However, despite these efforts, there remains significant challenges to overcome. The economy is still struggling, and unemployment rates remain high. Infrastructure development is lagging, and the government has been criticized for corruption and inefficiency.

In light of these challenges, the government must continue to work diligently to achieve its goals. This requires a strong commitment to transparency, accountability, and effective governance. The future of the country depends on our ability to overcome these challenges and build a better tomorrow for all South Africans.
Taxi’s blockade Darjeeling entrance

By Dan Pinge
Hopes for taxi peace as task team gets tough

Drive to get Cata, Codeta signed up

Almost 40 peace accords signed by the warring taxi associations had been violated. About 120 taxi-related crimes, including 24 murders and 48 attempted murders were committed between January and October this year.

In its effort to demonstrate that it meant business, the task team instructed Cata and Codeta to register all their members with the Provincial Taxi Office by 9pm on November 4, the day of the task team’s first meeting, failing which the team “would take action”.

“By 4.30pm they had not complied and we immediately got hold of our senior advocates and served papers with the Supreme Court to issue an interdict to Cata and Codeta restraining them from operating outside of the routes stipulated in the agreement of September 20,” Mr Morkel said.

The Supreme Court interdict called on members of the two taxi associations who had area or radius permits to surrender them to the local Road Transportation Board (LRTB) for amendment to route permits by no later than Monday December 1 to give effect to the September 20 accord.

“We have also instructed our legal representatives to investigate legislation that will empower us to exercise gun control on taxis and other forms of transportation. We are also compiling a database of violent incidents relating to public transport. And I’m happy to report that all representatives of the taxi associations have promised cooperation and to work for peace and stability in the minibus taxi industry,” Mr Morkel said.

In an interview Cata president Steve Williams indicated a preparedness on the part of Cata, usually seen as the more aggressive of the two, to comply with the task team’s wishes and register most of its 2200 members by December 1.

Mr Williams said the calm that was now reigning in the taxi industry promised commuters a much more peaceful festive season than before.

But Cata’s rivals are not impressed. A member of Codeta’s executive, James Tafa, said Cata had in the past violated the peace accords.

“We are not convinced that this government means what it is telling us about ending this violence. We’ll accept their orders but we will not be hoodwinked. We must see strong evidence of seriousness,” he said.

However, the last violent taxi incident reported was said to be nine days ago when two shots were fired in Mowbray. No one was injured. Mr Morkel expressed confidence in a lasting solution, saying: “It seems the leaders of Cata and Codeta are now getting the message down to their people at the grassroots.”
Taxi group threatens blockades on roads over the festive season

Pearl Sebolai

THE Leakesville Taxi Organisation and its affiliates yesterday threatened to embark on “mass blockades” of roads next month, after four of its members were killed and 10 others injured in taxi violence at the weekend.

The organisation’s media officer Jacob Ledwaba said the blockade would start on December 2 and continue throughout the festive season if government did not act within 14 days to curb taxi violence. The organisation was protesting against the courts’ and the government’s “reluctance” to deal with the violence, he said.

He criticised the granting of R2 000 unconditional bail to three alleged hit-squad operators last week, and the “arrogance displayed by Justice Minister Dullah Omar when he responded to the granting of that bail”. Omar said “the function to decide whether bail should be granted is vested in the courts”.

The organisation was demanding “Gestapo arrests” and the raiding of homes and offices of those implicated in the violence. They should not be granted bail and should be remanded in custody and denied legal access until police investigations were complete, because if they were released witnesses were threatened and killed.

Meanwhile, Ecnor reports that taxi hitmen murdered seven drivers in the Eastern Cape at the weekend, raising fears of a tourism downturn for Port Elizabeth during the festive period.

Most of the murders happened in the city, where feuding between the Uncedo Taxi Association and the Border Alliance Taxi Association has prompted an informal marketing boycott of the industry. However, hitmen also killed drivers in King William’s Town, East London and Port Beaufort.

Port Elizabeth administrative director Carl Fisher said the city council was concerned at the effect of the war on commuters and tourists. He said the council would formulate a package of proposals aimed at providing safe transport for commuters.
agent from the Gauteng organised crime unit, Inspector Jacobus

was scared to tell him, believing

she would have to move out of

the house.

Marymount maternity home and

own needs, rather than the need

though she said she remembered

The case continues today.

Government told to stop taxi violence or face blockades

By Patrick Poole

For 14/11 96

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Ramathakane ordered to reopen team's office
May 11/74

to get rid of taxi task force
Court battles as minister tries
GIVE tax! packs legal support

Take action or conflict will continue - expert
Taxi Violence Threats, Agreement Between Warring Groups Ignored
Omar seeks tougher court action over taxi hit-squads

Suspected perpetrators of hit-squad activities in the taxi industry should be refused bail, Justice Minister Dullah Omar said yesterday.

"I am deeply concerned about the situation," he told reporters after meeting the Lohlabile Taxi Organisation (LTO) in Pretoria.

"I am informed that there are hit-squad elements shooting and killing innocent people, who appear in court and are often granted bail. My own policy is that people committing such serious crimes should be refused bail," Omar said.

Magistrates should use their powers over this.

Omar said taxi violence was often not properly investigated because of police corruption.

"There are elements in the police who are unfortunately not doing their duty. I will be speaking to the minister of safety and security in that regard to indicate the concerns," he said.

The meeting was attended by Transport Minister Mac Maharaj and the chief magistrates, Regional Court presidents, and attorneys-general of Pretoria and Johannesburg. A number of senior prosecutors were also present.

Omar said a team comprising two justice officials and LTO representatives had been set up to ensure continued cooperation in the fight against taxi violence.

Magistrates had undertaken to examine ways to deal more effectively with cases arising from taxi violence.

The attorneys-general and prosecutors would do the same, and create a core of trained prosecutors to handle cases related to taxi violence.

Sapa.
Bid to unite rival taxi bodies

By Mike Masipa

Gauteng MEC for public transport, roads and public works, Paul Mashatile, has launched a taxi registration initiative aimed at uniting rival taxi organisations, formalising and regulating the industry.

Speaking at the launch of the registration programme in Germiston yesterday, he commended the Eastern Gauteng Taxi Body, an amalgamation of taxi organisations on the East Rand, Cullinan and Bronkhorstspruit, east of Pretoria, for taking the lead in taxi registration.

The goal was to get taxis registered in the rest of Gauteng and countrywide, he said.

He told a gathering of taxi drivers, traffic department officials and local government representatives that a metro taxi office would be opened in the city soon. This would oversee the granting of permits, a controversial problem and a source of conflict within the industry. In the meantime, the department would facilitate the establishment of an interim registrar.

Mashatile said that taxi registration would make the industry a formal business, which would make it easy for the Government to assist taxi operators with finance. Information, like how many taxis were on the road legally or illegally, would be welcome in formalising the industry.

Mashatile said R200,000 would be set aside for training taxi operators in business knowhow and conflict resolution.
War of words as new team tries for taxi peace

Setback before holidays

ASHLEY SMITH
Staff Reporter

Initiatives by the new leadership of the Western Cape Taxi Task Team to end the Peninsula taxi conflict before the festive season have had a setback with a war of words between the leadership of two rival taxi associations.

Outbursts by leaders of Cata and Codeta at a press conference in Western Cape Transport Minister Leonard Ramatlakane’s office yesterday came as the task team was trying to restore peace before the holidays.

The meeting, aimed at presenting a united front after the recent row over the legitimacy of the task team, turned into a verbal battle with accusations and counter-accusations.

Cata head Steve Williams rejected the task team’s announcement that if any shooting happened at a taxi rank it would be closed until the person responsible was arrested by other taxi operators.

Mr Williams, who arrived almost an hour after the meeting began, also said the present leadership of the task team was not legitimate as there had been irregularities in the election process.

Achmat Dyason, who was elected chairman of the team barely four weeks ago, came under heavy verbal attack from Mr Williams, who rejected him as the head of the team.

Codeta secretary Reggie Malimba reacted by saying Mr Williams was not sincere in his attempts to end the conflict and said his own organisation was willing to do anything to stop bloodshed.

“If anyone dies tomorrow Mr Williams will be responsible,” Mr Malimba said.

Mr Malimba also voiced his support for the task team’s initiative in spite of the prospect of “considerable financial loss” if a Codeta driver was to be involved in a shooting at a taxi rank.

He added that Mr Williams was not in control of his drivers at grassroots level and therefore would be unable to point out perpetrators of violence to the police.

Earlier in the meeting, Mr Ramatlakane said that the task team had decided that both Cata and Codeta should take responsibility for their members.

“Both associations will instruct their members to cease fighting forthwith. Those who are identified as responsible will be handed to the police by their leaders,” he said.

Mr Ramatlakane has asked the Urban Monitoring and Awareness Committee to facilitate a workshop in which the major groups in the taxi war could make suggestions on how to implement rank management committees.
Money set aside to train taxi operators

More than R200 000 has been made available to empower Gauteng taxi operators and owners with business skills, Transport MEC Paul Mashatile said yesterday.

He announced this to journalists at a press conference in Germiston that was called in order to encourage taxi operators to register their taxis with the Transport Department and be issued with route permits.

About 2 000 taxi operators had received training in business management, Mashatile said.

He added that the department aimed at training 5 000 people a year.

He appealed to taxi operators to register their vehicles, a move which could reduce the number of taxi-related murders in Gauteng.

He added that taxi registration would make the industry a formal business, which would make it easy for the Government to assist the industry with finance. Mashatile said he would meet all taxi associations in two weeks to launch a provincial registration campaign.

The Eastern Gauteng Taxi Body said that it had committed itself to the registration process, and believed it would help operators to get legal permits, control the routes, and further empower them with conflict resolution skills.

Sapa.
New off-street ranks will help curb taxi violence

Development is expected to benefit drivers, passengers and operators.
Taxi associations hail call for peace

The Lehlalele Taxi Organisation's call for taxi associations to unite against violence has been welcomed by the other organisations.

LTO spokesman Jacob Ledwaba said his organisation had already lost 22 members since August this year through the senseless violence.

Speaking at a rally in Hammanskraal north of Pretoria yesterday, he said the taxi industry should not rely on the Government alone to bring peace.

"Taxi associations should make sure that those who committed acts of violence were brought to book," he said.

He added that the LTO would organise a meeting of community organisations, including youth groups, commuter unions and taxi associations, to confront the problem of violence.

"People using taxis have a right to travel comfortably and safely," he said.

South African Long Distance Taxi Association chairman Thulani Kutheka welcomed the call for peace.

South African Black Taxi Association spokesman Reggie Mutsi said any means of reducing the violence which scared potential commuters, must be welcomed.

A South African Taxi Drivers' Union representative said all right-minded people should salute Ledwaba for making the call.
Western Cape moves on its own way on elections

Western Cape DA leader John Steenhuisen said the party would be ready to enter negotiations to form a coalition government if the DA could offer a credible alternative to the existing administration.

Steenhuisen said the DA had already begun preparations for the negotiations, which could only start once the election results were known.

He also expressed confidence that the DA would win enough seats to form a government on its own.

"We have already started working on our negotiation strategy," Steenhuisen said. "We will be ready to enter negotiations if the DA can offer a credible alternative to the existing administration."
Plans to merge taxi associations

By Themba Sepotokile

PLANS ARE at an advanced stage to bring the various feuding taxi associations in Soweto under one umbrella in an attempt to bring about peace to the trouble-torn industry.

Sowetan learnt yesterday that the move, which might lead to the merging of the associations, was initiated by the transportation committee of the Greater Johannesburg Transitional Council following the killing of scores of people and injury to many more in the ongoing taxi violence in Soweto.

Councillor Peter Horwitz of the GTMC transportation committee confirmed yesterday that a series of meetings were underway but declined to comment further, saying the meetings were being kept confidential.

"Most of the Soweto taxi associations are involved in the meetings and good progress has been made. Unfortunately the meetings are kept confidential," Horwitz said.

According to sources, progress has been made and the formation of one taxi association was imminent. They sources said the merger could see feuding organisations such as the Soweto Taxi Association, Soweto Transport Service, Diepmeadow Taxi Association and the Bara-City Taxi Association burying the hatchet.

The sources also believe that the formation of one major association would instil and restore confidence in commuters, most of whom have lost hope because many have been caught in the crossfire in the feuding.

Contacted for comment yesterday, STA spokesman Mr Absalom Dlamini said his association was in the dark about the impending meeting. He said they had not been consulted and were thus not participating.

Meanwhile, former chairman of the Gauteng Taxi Monitoring Team the Rev Jonathan Nyathi said yesterday a meeting with Gauteng MEC for transport and public roads Mr Paul Mashatile and his director Mr Lennox Magwaza to discuss his role in brokering peace in the industry was on the cards.

Nyathi revealed that a meeting was scheduled for today. He resigned from the monitoring team in October, citing racism as the reason.
We hire taxi hit men'
By ELIAS MALULEKE

TOP executives in the multimillion-rand taxi industry admitted this week that they hire hit squads to kill commuters and taxi bosses in their fight for supremacy.

Executive members of the South African Local and Long Distance Taxi Association claimed there were hit men working for all taxi bodies in the country.

"The existence of taxi hit squads can no longer be swept under the carpet because innocent people are dying," said Salida's national marketing manager, Mmanikile Kibeka.

The industry is under increasing pressure to clean up its act but it is in a quandary over what to do with the killers it helped create.

Salida wants them to be offered amnesty. The marketing director of the Lebhalie Taxi Organisation, Jacob Ledwaba, agreed, but said it was important that every organisation first submit a list of hit-squad members.

Paul Setsetse, a spokesman for the Justice Minister, Dullah Omar, said taxi bodies had not raised the issue of amnesty in talks with the minister, but that Omar would continue to meet taxi bosses to find a way to stop the killings.
Taxi Killings Witness Found Dead, Another Missing

A witness to the taxi killings has been found dead, and another witness is missing.
Hit squad witnesses killed

Police

Blamed for killing witness violence of tactics handled

November's...
farmers settle in Niassa

The first South African farmers to settle in Mozambique's remote Niassa province arrived last week, organisers said yesterday.

The initial 14 farmers will settle on a government farm near the provincial capital Lichinga to produce seed for SA farmers due to move to Mozambique in May.

The organizers, the SA Chamber for Agricultural Development in Africa (Sacad), said the farmers had been promised the support of Mozambican authorities and the local inhabitants.

"Sacad plans to settle a few hundred farmers during the following three years. Through this, the socio-economic and economic potential of Mozambique can be uplifted," it said in a statement.

The farmers' move to Mozambique follows an agreement signed in May by Mozambican President Joaquim Chissano and President Nelson Mandela.

Under the agreement, land farmed by the South Africans will remain the property of the Mozambican government while control of it will be vested in a joint company, Mosagris.

The 10-year renewable agreement gives the farmers the possibility of settling in areas with few land disputes - mainly in northern Mozambique.

Sacad said the farmers would initially settle on the government farm because they would not be able to clear permanent land of trees before the start of the rainy season.

"Following this, economic farming units will be measured out for permanent settling of these farmers," it said.

Many SA farmers, facing reduced government subsidies and higher interest rates, have expressed interest in the Mozambican resettlement scheme and similar ones in Angola, Zaire, and Zambia. - Reuters.
Tough laws tabled to curb taxi violence

CHRIS RATHEMA

LAWS aimed at regulating the strife-torn Western Cape taxi industry and making it safer were aired for the first time yesterdaywhen the province’s Road Transportation Amendment Bill was tabled in the provincial legislature.

The bill, approved for tabling as an "urgent measure" by Premier Herman Kriel, assigns each taxi to a specific route with a specific rank and forces operators to register before they can legally pick up a single fare.

Transport MEC Mr Leonard Ramatlabakane said one of the main causes of the violence — which has claimed about 70 lives this year and has forced police to introduce witness protection programmes to charge taxi warlords — was a loose radius permit system.

This resulted in operators breaking agreements to keep to their routes and bitter feuds over who had rights to operate there. Among the compulsory measures contained in the bill are:

- The registration of all minibus taxi associations and their operators.
- The replacement of existing route and area-based permits.
- The prominent display of permits by identifying marks on the taxi.

Taxi operators will have to register before being re-issued with a permit to operate legally.
NEW LAW NOT CONSTITUTIONAL — DP

Stick-on solution to control of taxi routes

TOMORROW sees the first chapter in a new bid to control who gets to take taxi fares where at the Peninsula’s six most bloody and chaotic taxi ranks.

In a bid to stem years of terror and death for both commuters and drivers, the Western Cape legislature passed an emergency amendment to the local Road Transportation Act yesterday.

There was extended debate on whether the amendment was constitutional with the Democratic Party and Freedom Front voting against it and the NP and ANC voting for it.

Brightly coloured stickers displaying the start and end point of taxi routes are to be stuck over the logos of Cape and Codeta taxis at the strife-torn ranks of Bellville, Nyanga East, Khayelitsha, Wynberg, Claremont and Mowbray.

By the time the weekend begins the provincial authorities intend to have “marked” every taxi at the six ranks with their route identification stickers.

Transport MEC Mr Leonard Ramatlakane said the stickers were a temporary measure and would be followed by permanent markings on the sides of taxis (and possibly roofs for helicopter observation) as route permits were re-issued.

For 1 500 of the Western Cape’s estimated 7 000 taxis had voluntarily re-registered and the aim was to register the remainder by the end of January.

Thereafter yesterday’s amended legislation will give police wide ranging powers to act against drivers operating illegally.

Traffic police have been instructed to warn taxis not carrying temporary stickers to register by the end of January.

Chiel director of the Department of Transport and Public Works, Mr Mike Spence, said that from January 24 next year and every Friday after that, 100 route permit applications would be heard by the local Road Transportation Board until all 7 000 taxis were “done”.

“We’ll begin with the problem areas because at present the cops can’t tell whether a guy’s allowed to operate a route or not — and that’s a central problem.”

Ramatlakane said the major thrust behind the hasty legislation was Cape Town’s Olympic Bid and the inherent transport planning, plus the impending tourist season.

The bill gives Ramatlakane what the Democratic Party’s Mr Hennie Bester described as “the power of economic life and death over taxi operators, making the registrar prosecutor, judge, jury andailer”.

Bester was howled down by the NP and ANC when he described the amendment as illegitimate on “legal bungee jumping with an untested rope.”

He warned of costly litigation and greater uncertainty, and less control over the taxi industry.
Taxi industry players pledge co-operation to end violence

Bonile Ngqiyaza

TAXI industry players yesterday re-committed themselves to rooting out internecine violence and its perpetrators from their midst and pledged to work to establish peaceful competition with commuters' interests as a focus.

The meeting in Pretoria — called by President Nelson Mandela after a fact-finding mission into taxi ranks in Johannesburg last week — was attended by hundreds of representatives from Gauteng, Mpumalanga, Northern Province and North West.

While he noted high levels of corruption in the police services and the problems government was meeting in its efforts to regulate the industry, Mandela made it clear he intended to ensure the industry was rehabilitated.

Taxi representatives present criticised the destructive role of the previous government in tolerating high levels of violence and said its adoption of a deregulation policy had amounted to abdication of all responsibility.

The meeting pledged to offer aid and full co-operation to provincial transport and safety and security MECs and the justice ministry in their efforts to remove violence by a “minority with a vested interest in conflict and chaos”.

It resolved to extend full co-operation to the government/taxi industry partnership, expressed in the form of the National Taxi Task Team and its joint structures in the provinces.

Representatives also expressed an intention to work towards rebuilding the industry into a viable economic entity which would again become the “proud and shining star” of black economic empowerment.

The meeting came soon after recent media reports indicating the apartheid government had planned violence on trains and the transport industry.
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Surviving the horror of taxi war

This week's guest writer

Mandla Lunga looks at one of the human tragedies behind taxi violence.

A year ago, Charles Dlamini was an ex-soldier turned taxi driver. He had been shot twice when he refused to pay a bribe at a military checkpoint, and said he had since lost all respect for the police. Dlamini said he was now the best in his field, earning £60 a day.

The taxi drivers work in rows of four cars, each row consisting of a driver and a passenger. They ride on the back of the car, as there is no front seat. The drivers wear police uniforms and carry guns.

A police officer said that in recent months, the taxi drivers have become more aggressive, attacking each other and other drivers. They have been arrested for murder, armed robbery, and assault.

In June, a taxi driver was shot dead in Pretoria. The police said that the driver had been killed by a passenger who had been refused a fare.

Dlamini said that the police were not doing enough to control the situation. "The police are doing nothing," he said. "They should be doing more to stop these attacks."

Dlamini said that the police had not been effective in stopping the violence. "They are not doing their job," he said. "They should be doing more to stop these attacks."

The taxi drivers said that they were being targeted by the police. "The police are after us," said a driver. "They are trying to stop us from driving."
PE police out in force as taximan dies in clashes

Short-lived truce comes to an end

**NEWS**

ARGUS CORRESPONDENT

Port Elizabeth — The worst taxi violence yet has erupted here with one person killed, four people shot, six taxis set on fire and petrol bombs thrown in several parts of the city.

Police said a new pattern seemed to be emerging with violence “popping up everywhere.” Taxis have stopped operating.

The violence within a two-hour period yesterday which had police rushing to flashpoints comes after a short-lived truce.

Beverley Garson said 90 percent of the police service was yesterday deployed on taxi routes and at ranks to monitor the situation and prevent the increase of violence.

Visible policing had Dawid Flemmert said all available policemen were being used.

Last week, the Supreme Court granted an interim interdict preventing the Uunda Service Taxi Association from interfering with Border Alliance Taxi Association (Bata). Bata taxis started operating again on Friday.

The shooting of a taxi driver in Cotrell Street, Korsten, has brought the death toll since September to 30.

A reporter on the scene at Njoli Square yesterday said that a man had been shot in the mouth and taken to hospital.

Six Bata taxis were burnt and two others damaged at the Bata rank at Njoli Square.

The Uunda Service Taxi Association has blamed the shootings on a red Toyota Cressida which the association claims belongs to Bata.

Public Order Policing Service (Pops) unit spokesman Andre Beeshe confirmed the shootings saying a man died in Cotrell Street.

He said in the incident at Njoli Square shots were fired into the taxi rank from the side of the Kentucky Fried Chicken store in Njoli Road.

Inspector Beeshe said Pops members were on the scene investigating the shootings. He said two people were injured in Motherwell and one person on the M17.

He said there was also some shooting at the Strand Street taxi rank where a Bata driver was shot six times in the chest and taken to hospital in a critical condition.

Pops spokesman Johan Snyman said one person was wounded in a taxi-related shooting at the Strand Street taxi rank.

A petrol bomb was also thrown at a taxi near Walmer Park.

Uncedo chairman Anele Adonis said two of their drivers were shot at Njoli Square taxi rank yesterday.

Bata public relations officer Zolile Bambeni said he had heard some of their members in a red Toyota Cressida were shot at Njoli Square.

He said it appeared Uncedo was violating the court order because the association continued using Bata ranks.

Conflict between the two taxi associations started on September 12, and was followed by a suspension of taxis operating from the townships to the city and northern areas.

People had to rely on buses and bakkies. On November 6, Uncedo resumed operations while Bata still suspended its own.

After obtaining an order from the court, Bata invaded Njoli Square taxi rank demanding the other association should move away from it.

But when police pointed out the order did not contain a takeover instructions, Bata withdrew.
Taximen threaten siege at IOC team's hotel

ANDREA BOUTH
Staff Reporter

Drivers of a Cape Town sedan taxi company are threatening to disrupt the visit of the International Olympic Committee's evaluation team because of a row with the Mount Nelson, which has dumped them for a rival company.

Yesterday, 15 drivers of Marine Taxis used their cars to block both entrances to the luxury hotel, where the IOC visitors were to check in today.

They are upset about what they term "unfair" treatment by the hotel management, which has terminated their services and employed a rival company to transport guests to and from the hotel.

Traffic authorities and the police flying squad were called and the drivers were dispersed within minutes.

But the drivers said they were not satisfied with the response of the Mount Nelson management and threatened to blockade the hotel again at the weekend.

"We want the people staying at the Mount Nelson to know that the hotel supports pirate taxis ... those taxis are not properly licensed or insured nor do they have the required permits," claimed an anonymous spokesman for the drivers.

Mount Nelson manager Luis Pinheiro called the accusations "absolute hogwash".

He said it was not a dispute between the hotel and the taxi company but a problem between taxi firms. The hotel had decided to switch to the rival company because it offered a better service and the hotel had to consider the best interests of its guests.

George Todd, co-owner of Marine Taxis, said the drivers were acting in their personal capacity.
Tension high following E Cape taxi-rank killing

Port Elizabeth – The situation at the Motherwell taxi rank here was “quiet, but tense” after a man was shot dead.

Police said the shooting was apparently related to a feud between the Umcezo (a Xhosa word meaning help) taxi association and the Border Alliance Taxi Association.

The dead man’s name was not available and it was not clear if he had been a member of one of the associations.

The body was found at about 2:30am yesterday at a bus stop in front of a doctor’s surgery by policemen patrolling the area.

Shots were fired throughout the night as association members gathered around a rank in Njoli square and the Beit taxi rank.

Taxi violence in the area has claimed 31 lives in three months. – Sapa
Askaris cops linked to taxi killers
Taxis must display route
MOVE TO CURB VIOLENCE

Stickers from Tuesday

The observer for your resident EKG machine

Please check the charts on the door and the facing page.

Decision to perform EKG

If the correct procedure is followed, the EKG machine will record the rhythm and the patient's heart rate. This information will then be analyzed by the doctor to determine if further medical treatment is necessary.

The EKG machine is a valuable tool in medical diagnosis, allowing doctors to monitor the patient's heart function and detect any abnormalities.

The correct procedure to follow:
1. Ensure the patient is comfortable and at ease.
2. Apply the electrodes to the patient's chest, following the manufacturer's instructions.
3. Connect the electrodes to the EKG machine and ensure all connections are secure.
4. Start the EKG machine and record the data for the prescribed duration.
5. Review the recorded data with the doctor or healthcare provider for analysis.

By following the correct procedure, you will ensure accurate and reliable heart rate data, which is crucial for proper medical diagnosis and treatment.
Taxi sticks must display route
Moved to Court violence
Route stickers first stage in drive to clean up industry

W Cape crackdown on taxis begins
Drivers go for green to gear up for Games bid

SNARKEY ISAACS
TRANSPORT REPORTER

Minibus taxis operating on the route between Cape Town and Wynberg are being painted green to colour-co-ordinate them with Cape Town's 2004 Olympic bid.

The Wynberg Main Road Taxi Association has introduced commuters to the first five taxis in its new livery - similar to the green in the multi-coloured logo of Cape Town's 2004 Olympic bid.

The step has been hailed by community leaders as one of the most innovative to dampen friction in the taxi industry, which has often led to clashes and township taxi wars.

The guest speaker in the Southfield Civic Centre at the introduction of the new colour, Gadijah Heuwel, chairwoman of Wynberg's Community Police Forum, praised the step.

She described it as a clear indication of economic empowerment and development in efforts by operators to bring peace and prosperity to the city's taxi industry. She said the green could also be interpreted as a new development in the taxi industry.

Another speaker, Phila Shiempo Maunhu, general secretary of the Cape Amalgamated Taxi Association (Cata), said the green look was a step in the right direction for the taxi industry, which began as a backyard business and mushroomed into a vibrant enterprise.

He said: "Commuters will naturally identify the colour with the route of the Wynberg Main Road Taxi Association."

"I hope other taxis will eventually also take steps to introduce their own colours on other routes."

"It is high time we pulled our act together and put the taxi industry's past history behind us."

The councillor for Wynberg in the South Peninsula council, John Mathene, hailed the colour concept as a step in the right direction for the taxi industry.

WMTA chairman Ebrahim Hassan-Parker said pegging drivers to parameters of specific routes was designed to bring about equity in the taxi industry.

The association had propagated the concept of equity within the taxi industry.
City tackles traffic mess

Major new developments, including cameras to trap motorists using the N2 lane set aside for buses and minibus taxis illegally, and extending the lane as far as Main Road in Mowbray, are in the pipeline to boost Cape Town’s public transport initiative.

In another development, brightly coloured route identification stickers, which will later become permanent markings, have been affixed to taxis to begin the process of permanently reorganising and stabilising the taxi industry.

Cape Town’s transport facelift is vital to the city’s bid to host the Olympics in 2004, and minibus taxi operators servicing the route from the city to Wynberg are showing their support for the bid by painting their vehicles green.

The step has been hailed by community leaders as one of the most innovative to dampen friction in the taxi industry.

Yesterday, provincial Transport Minister Leonard Ramatlakane announced that planning for the extension of the N2

New moves to police N2 traffic

lanes reserved for taxis to a more logical termination point in Main Road, Mowbray, was scheduled to begin next year.

Mr Ramatlakane said negotiations were in progress with the office of the Attorney-General to explore more effective ways of policing the year-old lanes, including the use of cameras.

Answering criticism about why the median lane, rather than the shoulder or outside lane, had been used for the pilot project, Mr Ramatlakane said this was because general traffic needed to enter and exit the N2 freeway at interchanges.

If the bus lane were to be located on the shoulder, it would need to be interrupted at all on and off-ramps to allow general traffic to enter and leave the freeway. When the lane was eventually extended to Main Road, this would result in 10 interruptions in the 5.8km stretch from Vanguard Drive.

Mr Ramatlakane said the existing 5.7km stretch had been operating in the morning peak period for a year and had been evaluated twice during that period. Findings were that general traffic volumes had increased by about 10 percent and taxi volumes by up to 65 percent.
Police close in on taxi war hitmen

By YVETTE VAN BREA (332) SCM 22/12/96

POLICE are close to catching the culprits who hire hit squads in the Cape's brutal taxi wars. This was said this week by Captain Tikkie Theart, commander of the Taxi Unit.

"We have targeted key players and are closing in on them," he told Cape Metro.

The hitmen, he said, "are paid, ruthless killers, who want to see the taxi war go on because it keeps them in business and it's easy money. They make about R5,000 a hit."

Police hoped to see their investigation culminate in a trial next year, he said.

A crucial factor in the investigation was the witness protection programme, which guaranteed safety for witnesses. One important witness who had elected not to join the programme had been murdered, said Theart.

The Taxi Unit's information officer, Superintendent Mark Splinters, said the hitmen were former policemen, former Umkhonto we Sizwe members and former APLA members.

Hitmen were shared in the industry and often operated all over the Western and Eastern Cape, and sometimes nationally.

Splinters said the hitmen were paid by leaders of CATA and Codeta, who collected money from members, saying it was for bail or legal fees.

Commenting on the crisis in the taxi industry, Theart said: "There are too many pirates on the road and too many unroadworthy vehicles."

He said in one morning in Bellville police had stopped 78 illegal or unroadworthy taxis at a road block.

The industry was "over-saturated" and for almost a decade the Peninsula's black townships had been ravaged by taxi-related violence. It had caused 92 deaths this year alone.

Although there were 152 taxi associations in the province, the conflict over routes and ranks has been mostly confined to the black townships.

For the past two weeks there had been no taxi-related violence, and investigators expected "no heavy battles" until after mid-January, when holiday mania had died down.

Taxi-related statistics for the Western Cape showed that this year there had been 92 murders, 171 attempted murders, 124 arrests and 121 arms had been seized.

Last year there were two murders and five attempted murders. In 1994 there were 29 deaths and 88 people had been injured.

This week taxi operators welcomed the first regulatory step to ease the conflict — the display of colored stickers on different routes can be identified more easily.