

TRANSPORT - PRIVATE - GENERAL

1995

JANUARY - MAY



Northwest premier Popo Molefe and transport MEC Frans Vilikazi at a news conference announcing the demise of North West Transport Investment Company and the restructuring of parastatals in the province.

Picture: ROBERT BOTHA

## Northwest legislature moves to restructure bus company

BD 19/9/95

(332)

(257)

**Sello Motlhabakwe**

THE Northwest provincial government has appointed financial experts Michael Katz and Barry Adams as consultants to oversee the restructuring of the North West Transport Investment Company, which was dissolved yesterday.

Premier Popo Molefe said the cost of overseeing the restructuring exercise was provisionally estimated at R200 000. The terms of the consultants' contracts and fees still had to be worked out.

Molefe said although guidelines on the appointment of consultants were still the subject of provincial and national government discussion, the principles of transparency and openness would be adhered to. Any new appointments also had to satisfy commitments to the reconstruction and development programme, affirmative action,

and embrace the spirit of transformation.

Molefe said the North West Transport Investment Company was dissolved as its extended term of office, which was conditional upon a monthly review, had lapsed.

An interim board had been appointed for the next two months. The board's chairman would be paid R1 000 a sitting and ordinary board members would get a R250 stipend for each sitting. No figures were available on the profitability of the company or how much its executive members had been paid.

The company operates passenger bus services in Northwest, Gauteng, KwaZulu-Natal and Mpumalanga. It is 66,2% owned by the North West Development Corporation, with the Public Investment Commission holding 33,3%.

Turnover for the 1995/96 financial year was R1,103bn. Current expenditure was R1,107bn with a R594m asset base.

'CHECK BOOKS', COUNCILLOR URGES

# Bus company asks for R9,5m subsidy

**GOLDEN ARROW** bus company has asked the Cape Metropolitan Council for a R9,5m subsidy to fund concessionary fares for pupils and pensioners. **PETER DENNEHY** reports.

**B**EFORE granting the Golden Arrow Bus Company the R9,5m subsidy it is asking to keep down pupils' and pensioners' fares, the Cape Metropolitan Council is going to ensure that the company is not just "pleading poverty".

Councillor Mr Neil Ross said at the CMC executive committee meeting yesterday that in the past, City Tramways had "made themselves bankrupt in their books" while ensuring, perfectly legally, that profitable aspects of the business were transferred to subsidiaries.

Advertising on buses fell under another company called Moving Media, he said. Bulk petrol was bought through a subsidiary company at a price which was higher than that at which a garage would be legally allowed to sell it.

Even ticket machines were hired to the bus company by another company which made profits. Ways were found to depreciate the value of buses in a way that was legal but beneficial to the company.

"The books of the holding company must be thoroughly investigated," he urged.

## 'Different'

Ms Jeanne Walsh, a public relations officer for Golden Arrow, responded yesterday by saying that although Golden Arrow had taken over the assets of City Tramways, the company was different".

"We have no subsidiaries," she said. The company is 50% owned by the Golden Arrow Foundation (two years ago half the shares were handed over to a board on which

various community representatives serve).

According to documents provided by Golden Arrow, ratepayers in Johannesburg, Pretoria and Durban paid R11,5m, R12,2m and R9,3m respectively in 1993 (the most recent year for which figures are available) to subsidise fares for pupils and pensioners.

Cape Town ratepayers did not pay a cent, although it cost Golden Arrow R9,5m a year to provide this service, it said.

Johannesburg, Pretoria and Durban also paid R33m, R21m and R9m respectively in other subsidies for their bus operators.

In Cape Town, the 60% of bus passengers who use 10-ride clip-cards to get to work are subsidised to an amount of R57m a year (this is the estimate for the forthcoming year). This subsidy comes via fuel levies on motorists which are paid to the Department of Transport and channelled to the bus companies via the CMC.

CT 20/6/95 (332) 201

# 'Poor condition': More taxi collisions

332

279/1195  
Staff Reporter

THE taxi industry has warned that poor tyres and overloaded taxis have caused a sharp increase in collisions on SA roads.

According to statistics for last year released yesterday by city traffic department inspector Mr Gerald Sobotker, 1 445 taxis received fines for worn or smooth tyres and 3 135 taxis were ticketed for overloading.

He said about 1 000 taxis operated daily in the city and about 3 000 to 4 000 taxis travelled between the city and suburbs daily.

Taxi industry spokesman Mr Molefe Rapodile said: "We are experiencing a sharp rise in collisions as a result of tyres bursting.

"This is due to the wrong type of tyre and poor quality tyres being used on

minibus taxis. The result is aggravated by overloading and speeding".

The National Traffic Information Centre said: "We strongly urge taxi operators not to speed and to load their vehicles only with the required number of passengers displayed on the certificate of fitness of the vehicle, which is used to exercise safety on the road and should not be ignored".

City traffic department spokesman Mr Noel van Rooyen said yesterday there was "no doubt" worn tyres — often down to the canvas — combined with overloading were major factors in tyres bursting which caused accidents.

To pass roadworthy tests, taxis required six-ply tyres on their vehicles, but were often found to be driving on four-ply tyres, he said.



# Call for taxi safety

332  
source for  
9/11/95

**By Joshua Raboroko**

TAXI operators have been called on to help reduce taxi-related road fatalities by driving safely, observing speed limits and to exercise patience when overtaking.

Heavy traffic flow was forecast again yesterday as hundreds of motorists made their way home on South African roads.

At least 679 people died in road accidents over the past 31 days, the National Traffic Information Centre said yesterday.

Since monitoring began on December 8 last year, 126 people died on roads in the PWV (Gauteng). In KwaZulu-Natal 106 have been killed, 94 in the Free State, 86 in the Eastern Cape, 81 in the Western Cape, 61 in the North-West, 47 in the Northern Transvaal, 42 in the Northern Cape and 36 in the Eastern Transvaal.

Of those slain so far, 196 were pedestrians and 132 people died in head-on collisions.

Road Safety Coordinator of the Organised Taxi Industry Mr. Molefe Rapodile said taxi organisations should play a responsible and convincing role towards safety.

## 'Changes needed for safety in taxi industry'

Drastic changes should be introduced to reduce the escalating rate of collisions in the taxi industry, Organised Taxi Industry road safety co-ordinator Molefe Rapodile said yesterday.

He was reacting to the death toll on the roads over the festive season, which had reached 695

by yesterday.

Although the percentage of collisions involving minibus taxis was lower than last December, there was a slight increase in the fatalities.

"Efforts of the provincial governments to address taxi violence should be extended to promoting road safety at

all levels.

"Taxi associations should start playing an accountable role in road safety," he said.

■ The fatality rate on the roads has dropped, according to figures released by the National Traffic Information Centre.

This year's death toll

is only slightly lower than the 709 for the same time last year, but represents an improvement considering that the figure this year includes the former homelands.

The centre does not expect the final figure to be greater than last year's number of 963. — Staff Reporter.

Star 10/1/95

(332)

# Minibus taxi men urged to co-operate

332  
ARLT 10/1/95

JOHANNESBURG. — The organised taxi industry has called on taxi organisations to cast aside their differences and work together to improve road safety.

The high rate of accidents should be urgently addressed, the OTI said in a statement.

It appealed to provincial governments not to confine their involvement to taxi feuds, but to give "urgent attention" to road safety in the taxi industry.

"Collisions, unlike taxi violence, are a matter of concern on all roads in the country."

The OTI called on major taxi associations to "start to play a responsible, accountable and convincing role towards road safety." All should make a concerted effort to reduce taxi-related road fatalities.

The safety of passengers was not negotiable and differences among taxi associations should not affect road safety.

The OTI suggested that driver academies be set up to improve communication and to cultivate better relationships between drivers and passengers.

"Drastic and immediate systematic changes should be introduced to improve this industry," the OTI said.

The OTI noted that although the percentage of fatal collisions involving minibus taxis was lower in December than in December 1993, fatalities had increased. — Sapa

# Move towards ending taxi violence

THE Southern African Black Taxi Association yesterday pledged its commitment to establishing a workable strategy to end taxi violence and regenerate the industry in co-operation with the Department of Transport.

It was responding to Transport Minister Mac Maharaj's plea at the weekend for the taxi industry to involve itself in solving problems hindering the industry.

In a letter to the minister, association president Paradise Mahlangu said all stakeholders needed to develop initiatives to stop violence and regenerate the industry as an economic force.

Mahlangu believed a workable strategy could be achieved within the next three months, and said he would resign if his efforts during 1995 failed.

INGRID SALGADO

An industry source said the new structures were likely to take the form of taxi co-operatives in which the industry could use its collective buying power to secure better deals for taxi owners.

Lifting economic pressures on taxi owners would be crucial in ending taxi violence, and co-operatives would enable taxi owners to begin talking to each other.

Meanwhile, Sapa reports that the Organised Taxi Industry (OTI) has called on taxi organisations to cast aside their differences and work together to improve road safety.

The escalating rate of accidents should be addressed as a matter of urgency, the OTI said in a statement.



# Appeal made to end the taxi violence

(332)

Sowetan  
16/11/95

**By Themba Sepotokele**

MEMBERS of the Soweto Taxi Services yesterday handed a memorandum to the Gauteng provincial government asking it to help bring an end to taxi violence.

Memorandums, in which the taximen are voicing their dissatisfaction with members of the Soweto Taxi Association, who they claim stop their taxis and forcibly off-load passengers, were handed to the MEC for Transport, Mr Olaus van Zyl, and Safety and Security MEC Mrs Jesse Duarte.

The STS has asked that the Gauteng

government take effective measures to help in bringing taxi violence to an end before it spills over into the community.

STS chairman Mr Andries Kwenaithe said yesterday that they had made repeated calls to the police to intervene in solving the problem but to no avail.

## **Protection for commuters**

Kwenaithe said the actions of the STA members had made it difficult for them to render services to the public and to operate effectively.

In its memorandum the STS says: "Soweto Taxi Services feels that the community of Gauteng are not sufficiently protected by the government

because we are molested by people from KwaZulu/Natal who are illegally operating in our province."

He said the actions of members of the STA had brought their business virtually to a standstill. Members of the STA had also made it difficult for STS members to run their taxi businesses efficiently.

"The off-loading of passengers also brings misery for our members because they cannot make enough to pay for the premiums on their vehicles," Kwenaithe said.

He said his organisation would not rest until violence in the taxi industry was eradicated.

# Taxi body rejects blame

(332) Sowetan 19/1/95

**By Sibusiso Mabaso**

THE Soweto taxi Association this week rejected the allegations of a rival organisation that STA had prevented it from operating effectively and made it difficult for it to render services to the public.

Reacting to claims made by chairman of Soweto Taxi Services Mr Andries Kwenaitse, STA public relations officer Mr Absolon Dlamini described Kwenaitse's

claims as "far divorced from the truth". Dlamini accused the STS of using delaying tactics whenever attempts were made to resolve the ongoing taxi dispute.

On Monday, members of the STS handed a memorandum to the Gauteng government appealing for help to bring an end to taxi violence, which has claimed many lives and left several people maimed. In its memorandum, the STS claimed members of the STA stopped their taxis and forcibly off-loaded passengers in their taxis.

Dlamini refuted the claims. He accused members of the STS of taking the taxi dispute into the community. Dlamini said his association had always wanted to maintain peace and is prepared to sit down and get into serious talks with STS officials. "We don't want the STS to dictate and lay down terms and conditions. We do not intend doing it to them."

Dlamini dispelled rumours that his association was made up of hostel dwellers who were members of the Inkatha Freedom Party.

# Gauteng govt criticised for failing taxi industry

FEARS of violence rose in the troubled Soweto taxi industry at the weekend as another taxi association criticised government failure to protect taxi ranks.

The Bara-City Taxi Association accusations that Gauteng safety and security minister Jessie Duarte did not honour promises to attend a peace meeting and to provide protection at the meeting, followed a similar allegation by the Soweto Transport Services last week.

But Duarte's office said it had been instructed by the national ministry that it could no longer involve itself in mediation of taxi disputes. A spokesman said taxi leaders "took us for granted" and resumed fighting as soon as a peace agreement had been signed. (332)

Bara-City assistant general secretary Vusi Mtambo said on Friday his association was disappointed by Duarte's failure to attend the meeting and that protection that was promised for the meeting had not been provided. BD 23/11/95

Mtambo said government failure lent weight to the rival body's boast that nobody would stop them from continuing with the violence. "Our taxis are barred from operating at the Baragwanath rank by people who hire assassins. We don't know if government is suggesting that we should take up arms too," he said.

THEO RAWANA

Earlier in the week, the Soweto Transport Services had threatened mass action because of Duarte's alleged failure to attend two meetings. The organisation also claimed that Duarte had failed provide protection for its members against illegal taxi operators.

Sabta national conflict manager Knox Matjila, who had been trying to get the warring groups to reach a peace settlement, said he was giving up and leaving the problem to government and his seniors in the organisation. "I have done all I could to get the groups together."

Meanwhile, the South African Taxi Drivers' Union declared a deadlock with the Witbank Local Taxi Association on Friday because of the association's refusal to recognise the union and firing members who had joined it, the union said.

The union also hinted at a possible national taxi drivers' strike.

The union said the taxi association had failed to attend a meeting with the union earlier this week. The meeting had been arranged by the Witbank Labour Department's conciliation board.

The union had now referred to matter to the Industrial Council.

● Comment: Page 6



# Govt is avoiding Alex's housing crisis

Write to: The Editor, Sowetan,  
PO Box 6663, Johannesburg, 2000

Short letters are preferred and none is considered unless it is signed, with the writer's full address. You may indicate if you want to use a pseudonym but these are not encouraged.

SOWETAN Tuesday, January 24, 1995

The taxi industry in the past year.

The taxi industry should remember the words of Germiston mayor Mr Sarel Naudé, who said: "The time for violent competition is over. This is the period of healthy competition in line with the spirit of reconciliation."

Naudé was speaking at the peace-signing ceremony between taxi operators in the Greater Germiston area.

The historic event came after the lives of hundreds of commuters and taxi operators had been lost in the senseless carnage that has come to epitomise the industry.

Whether you go to Cape Town or Burgersfort in the Northeastern Transvaal, one gets the feeling that taximen believe "war is the answer".

## Taxi wars

Reasons often cited for taxi wars include the fact that there are too many illegal taxis on the road.

Statistics show that there are more than 40 000 illegal operators who have free run of South African roads.

The government, contrary to reports and rumours, is not about to freeze the issuing of taxi permits.

Deputy Director of Administration of Road Transportation Mr Piet Geringer was recently quoted as saying "requests for a moratorium were turned down after legal advice was sought".

However, peace may be in the offing if attempts by Transport Minister Mr Mac Maharaj to end the taxi violence

are anything to go by. His efforts entail encouraging transport MECs to be involved in addressing problems in their provinces.

Following Maharaj's discussions with the MECs, a joint team was established to draw up proposals on the taxi industry.

● Fights over routes. This has become a regular feature on South African roads.

Many taxi associations, be they in Gauteng or the Eastern Transvaal, have experienced fights of unspeakable proportions over this issue. What the government is doing about this can only be left to conjecture.

● There are too many authorities operating in the industry. According to Maharaj, there are more than 480 taxi associations throughout the country. Government believes it would be ideal to negotiate with a stable structure.

Statements from leading taxi bodies such as the South African Black Taxi Association and the South African Long Distance Association are almost all the time predictable: "We condemn this violence in the strongest terms. We will do our best to investigate and ensure that the culprits are brought to book."

For their part, police have suggested that taxi operators use police premises when holding meetings to resolve their differences. This was after several meetings were stormed

100 people at the ceremony that for ensuring lasting peace in the industry, people had to be honest and committed to stability.

"If we don't have those elements, our customers will resort to safer means of transport and business will collapse."

The Germiston taxi peace agreement was one of the many signed in 1994. "What's amazing is why taxi operators wait for people to die before doing something about this war?" a commuter remarked in a letter to a Johannesburg newspaper.

"Why don't they involve commuters at the initial stages of the dispute, because after all they fight over us?"

Many observers believe that unless the industry takes stock of itself, 1995 could be no different from the previous years. Introspection by the taxi industry includes a realisation of the age-old saying that the customer is king. Taxi operators will also do well to respect the message on their bumper stickers and windcreens which reads: "Peace Builds, Violence Destroys."

No self-respecting businessperson would consciously work to destroy his own industry. Only when the industry sheds its terrible image will it take its place among its counterparts in the transport arena.

Failure to do this will lead to people doubting its commitment to peace and prosperity in the industry.

THE Housing Ministry has not been able to deal with the housing crisis in Alexandra, which is bound to reach boiling point this year. The feeling one gets when entering Alexandra is that it has been left to its own devices. Recently an Indian shop owner was shot dead by two intruders. Before she died, she had phoned

It is said that an ex-mayor, a Mr Mokoena, is responsible for the high influx of IFP members into Alex. "If they come to chase me away, I will fight," he says. "They must first give me my house and my two cars back, then I am willing to negotiate."

As Beirut has become an IFP stronghold, will there be a renewal of friction if ANC members move in? Some members of the hostels do not want their families in the hostels. And because of male comradeship, they also do not want the hostels converted into family units.



## English takes over as language of new army

THE SA National Defence Force was phasing in English as a vehicle for communication in its ranks, spokesman Col Brian du Toit said yesterday. **BD 25/1/95**

Addressing a news conference at Wonderboom army base near Pretoria, Du Toit said the move would do away with the past practice of using Afrikaans one month and English the next.

It appeared the common language among soldiers of the new army was English, he said.

Wallmannstal assembly point communications chief Col Connie van Rensburg said a number of former guerrillas were illiterate. The army, he said, had asked Defence Minister Joe Modise for guidance on what

JOHANNES NGCOBO

should be done with these soldiers as they could not read or write English.

Van Rensburg said there were 3 030 recruits who still had to be integrated into the army at Wallmannstal.

The first batch of about 1 600 would be processed next month.

An army instructor said most of the people attending bridging courses were women. These women were taught how to handle automatic rifles, such as R-4s.

The instructor said the women who were being trained at present had shown commitment and a potential to develop into good soldiers.

## Forum hopes to end taxi dispute

A FORUM of representatives from eTshwene, Gauteng's public transport department and the SA Black Taxi Association (Sabta) meets today to try and resolve the Soweto taxi dispute. **BD 25/1/95**

Sabta national conflict-resolution manager Knox Matjila said rival taxi associations were not included in the forum. They would be consulted after a programme had been drafted.

Sapa reports that Matjila suggested strong police action against those involved in the dispute.

"We cannot handle taxi feuds on an ad hoc basis. Unfortunately there is a criminal element in these conflicts. If people don't come to the conference table they must be subject to vigorous police action."

Soweto Transport Services chairman Mmaniki Kwenaita requested government

BONILE NGQIYAZA

to mediate in the dispute. He said his organisation was willing to negotiate with the rival Soweto Taxi Association, but "we cannot come together yet".

Gauteng transport minister Olaus van Zyl reportedly sent a message to rival associations urging them to talk.

Police spokesman Lt-Col Joseph Ngo-beni said there had been few reported incidents of taxi violence yesterday. A taxi dispute in Soweto entered its second day with thousands of commuters stranded at ranks in Chiawelo, Protea, Naledi, Merafe, Phiri and Mapetla.

Inkatha Freedom Party Youth Brigade spokesman Dlangezwa Mvelase said the taxi industry was vital to the country's economy and should be run professionally.

# Taxi war killings spark rampage

## STAFF REPORTERS

Rioting taximen burnt down houses and set cars alight yesterday following the killing of two taxi owners in Mhluzi township near Middelburg.

And in Soweto, the Internal Stability Unit (ISU) patrolled taxi ranks after two days of clashes between rival taxi organisations.

In Mhluzi, members of the ISU brought the rioting under control and promised to continue "visible policing", spokesman Warant-Officer Sakkie van Zyl said.

The violence started after members of the Greater Middelburg Local and Long Distance Taxi Association demanded a meeting with police.

They wanted to discuss the deaths on Tuesday night of taxi owners Felone Jiyane (40) and Muntishi Mahlanga (36), as well as "certain persons who point firearms at taxi drivers", they said.

Jiyane and Mahlanga were shot dead in their homes by unknown gunmen, Van Zyl said.

The meeting was scheduled for noon, but the taximen grew impatient and started burning vehicles and houses shortly after 9 am.

Three taxis belonging to Middelburg Local and Long Distance Taxi Association chairman R.F. Ndlovu were destroyed by fire and his house was set alight. The crowd then moved to the

home of another taxi association member, Simon Macwango, where his two vehicles and house were torched.

A taxi belonging to another member, J Mnguni, was destroyed.

Gauteng safety and security standing committee chairman Mathole Motshekga is due to meet the Southern African Black Taxi Association (Sabta) and the two rival organisations, the Soweto Taxi Association (STA) and the Soweto Transport Services (STS) today in a bid to finally stamp out the Soweto taxi violence.

They will try to pinpoint the "root cause of the problem and to identify remedies which will be discussed at national level".

Gauteng legislature spokesman Ronnie Mamoepe said.

A meeting scheduled for yesterday afternoon between the organisations and Gauteng safety and security MEC Jesse Duarte failed to materialise, because Duarte was called away to a boss' breakfast outside Johannesburg, Mamoepe said.

There has also been taxi violence in the Northern Transvaal and in Tembisa in recent weeks.

In Tembisa, efforts to bring taxi associations together did not bear fruit last week when one association did not turn up for the meeting.

In the Northern Transvaal, there have been reports of several shooting incidents this month.

(332) SAN 26/1/95

ortant meeting

# Bid to end Tembisa taxi war fails

## ■ SECOND CHANCE

Other means to bring taxi groups together worked:

**By Gloria Mogase**

**E**FFORTS to bring together taxi associations in a bid to end violence at the Tembisa taxi rank did not bear fruit last week when one association did not turn up for a meeting.

The Kempton Park, Edenvale and Tembisa Taxi Association (Ketta) failed to attend the meeting.

Only the Johannesburg Taxi Association (JTA) — which encompasses

**Modderfontein and Alexandra — and representatives from Esangweni and Titeng communities in Tembisa showed up for the meeting.**

Officials of the communities said they were worried by Ketta's failure to attend the meeting.

However, the meeting went on and resolved that a taxi association found to be responsible for violence be isolated and exposed.

Mr Brian Ndlovu, who chaired the meeting, said they were very concerned about the lives of their passengers.

"Ketta knew very well that this meeting was important to all of us. We are sick and tired of these senseless shootings of taxi drivers and the killing of innocent passengers," he said.

“We are trying to solve these problems but Ketta members seem less concerned.”

**A community spokesman said other efforts were being made to bring all the taxi organisations together.**

The Esangweni community appealed to various organisations, including the Pan Africanist Congress, the South African National Civics Organisation, the African National Congress and the Azanian People's Organisations to support the meeting's resolution.

Ketta officials could not be reached for comment despite numerous efforts since last week.

# SONNEL MANAGEMENT

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## Taxi services normal again

BD26/11/95  
TAXI services in Soweto appeared to be back to normal yesterday, after a violent dispute about routes between rivals on Monday and Tuesday, a police spokesman said. (332)

The two-day clash between the Soweto Taxi Association and Soweto Transport Services left thousands of commuters without transport. A driver was assaulted.

Gauteng safety and security minister Jesse Duarte rejected allegations that the legislature and police had not done enough to resolve the conflict.

□ At Mhluzi, near Middelburg in the Eastern Transvaal, five taxis and two houses were set alight yesterday — apparently in retaliation for the killing of two taxi owners on Tuesday. — Sapa.



## Soweto taxi body refuses to attend peace meeting

EFFORTS to bring an end to the war between two Soweto taxi associations were being frustrated by "bad blood" between the groups, the Gauteng government said yesterday.

Yesterday's refusal by the Soweto Taxi Association (STA) to attend the a meeting at which its rival, Soweto Taxi Services (STS), was present, was an example of yet another stand-off that has rendered ineffective peace accords signed last year. (338)

Last November, a declaration of intent was signed in Sandton by seven national and regional taxi organisations, with Gauteng safety and security minister Jessie Duarte and transport minister Olaus van Zyl serving as co-signatories. Van Zyl's private secretary Steph Erasmus

THEO RAWANA

said yesterday the STA boycotted this week's peace meeting because they were not prepared to sit at the same table as the STS.

He said the meeting, held in Johannesburg, and which was attended by the transport and safety and securities ministries, Sabta, the provincial standing committee on transport, police and the STS, had set up a committee which would try to get the two factions together. Erasmus said transport standing committee chairman Mathole Motsheka had agreed to chair the meeting. BD27/1/95

Sabta national conflict manager Knox Matjila said he expected the committee to be able to call all parties to a meeting and have a result by Monday.



## Gauteng taxi passengers' safety is 'not guaranteed'

JOHANNESBURG. — Gauteng Safety and Security Minister Jessie Duarte has said the provincial government could not guarantee the safety of commuters travelling on taxis between Soweto and this city. Thousands of commuters were stranded and at least two taxis were damaged in violence between rival Soweto taxi operators this week.

(332) ARG 28/11/95

# Taxi chief in boycott call

ST 29/1/95

(332)

By VICTOR KHUPISO

THE chairman of a Soweto taxi organisation has urged commuters to boycott taxis because passengers' safety cannot be guaranteed.

The call was made yesterday by Andries Kwenaithe of the Soweto Transport Services after a meeting between his organisation and the rival Soweto Taxi Association fell through.

"Things are getting worse. Our taxis are no longer safe," Mr Kwenaithe said.

Each side blamed each other for the failure of the meeting, which was organised by the Southern African Black Taxi Association.

Most members of the STA live at Mer-afe hostel in Soweto, while members of the STS live elsewhere in the township.

Both organisations have licences to operate in the township, but tension has increased since drivers from the STA started operating again after an absence of four years during which political violence made it unsafe for hostel dwellers to work openly in the township.

A number of drivers were injured and 10 taxis were damaged in clashes between drivers this week, leaving thousands of commuters stranded.

Leaders of the STA could not be contacted for comment.

UNDER  
FIRE ...

Alice Ngabeni, 72, of Soweto, sits stunned after the taxi she was in was attacked



## Many stranded as taxi strike bites in Soweto

Many commuters from Soweto were stranded again today by a taxi drivers' strike, with Meadowlands and Orlando particularly badly affected.

About 500 drivers and owners belonging to the Soweto Taxi Services (STS) went on strike last week.

The strike, called in protest against taxi violence and conflicts with the rival Soweto Taxi Association (STA), would continue until the Gauteng government's transport department addressed their grievances, the STS warned last week.

On Saturday, three people were shot dead and another was wounded in a drive-by shooting in Meadowlands. A taxi owner was among the victims, but police have not made a definite link with the taxi war.

Soweto police spokesman Joseph Ngobeni said the situation was relatively quiet in Soweto this morning. — Staff Reporter.

STW 30/11/95





Angry Soweto Taxi Services drivers waited eagerly yesterday to invade the offices of the organisation in Midway, Soweto, when the taxi boycott by the STS entered its third week. They demanded the resignation of the chairman, Mr Andries Kwenaithe, and other members of the organisation.

PIC: SELLO MOTSEPE

# Taxi commuters left stranded

332  
Sowetan  
31/1/95

By Themba Sepotokele

**T**HOUSANDS OF TAXI commuters were yesterday left stranded in Soweto when the taxi strike by the Soweto Taxi Services — in protest at alleged harassment by a rival association — entered its third week.

Commuters, who travel from Merafe and Protea to Baragwanath and Johannesburg, respectively, waited in long queues because the STS had called on its members to stop transporting passengers until the taxi violence had subsided.

STS chairman Mr Andries Kwenaithe has voiced fears of more taxi violence after the Gauteng ministry of safety and security had allegedly failed to protect its members from harassment by members of the Soweto Taxi Association.

## Ongoing boycott

STS taxi drivers have voiced their dissatisfaction about the ongoing boycott and have called for the resignation of

## ■ SPLIT LOOMING Threat to join rival body if dispute is not settled:

Kwenaithe and other members of the association for failing to address the crisis with the STA amicably.

## Peacefully settle

Mr Decker Ngutshane, a spokesman for the STS taxi drivers, said yesterday that a split by other taxi owners and drivers who wished to join the STA was imminent because the STS had failed to settle the dispute peacefully.

He said drivers were "fed up" with the STS's decision to continue with the boycott.

"Commuters are suffering because of problems plaguing the industry. Kwenaithe is not fit for the chairmanship of the association by refusing to accept an offer by the STA to resolve the

dispute," Ngutshane said.

Angry taxi drivers, who tried to invade the STS offices yesterday, said they wanted to resume working.

They also demanded the appointment of an interim committee to be responsible for the running of the association until the two rival associations had merged.

Meanwhile, STA members said they were prepared to resolve the problem with the STS.

An STA source said attempts to solve the conflict had foundered after their members were allegedly chased away at the STS offices.

Late yesterday afternoon Kwenaithe was believed to be attending a meeting with Gauteng MEC for safety and security Mrs Jesse Duarte.

## Popcru protests

ABOUT 400 Soweto residents gathered outside Orlando police station yesterday morning calling for the immediate suspension of district commissioner Brigadier Chris Earle.

The protesters believe Brigadier Earle gave the order for the Internal Stability Unit to open fire on striking policemen at the police station on Friday. One striker was killed.

They wanted Safety and Security Minister Sidney Mafumadi to personally accept their petition.

In Port Elizabeth, about 150 members of the Police and Prisons Civil Rights Union staged a protest at New Brighton police station yesterday against the "murder" of Warrant Officer Jabulani Xaba at Orlando police station last week.

Popcru spokesman Captain Mandisi Marasha handed their demands to district commissioner General Chris Smith.

The union demanded the immediate disbanding of the Internal Stability Unit and the removal of three station commanders in Port Elizabeth accused of racism.

Popcru members vowed to continue their protest if the three commanders were not removed by yesterday.



# 'Illegal taxis hamper efforts to end wars'

(332) BD 3/11/95

ABOUT 45% of taxis in Soweto were operating illegally, making it difficult to end the wars plaguing the industry, SA Black Taxi Association national conflict manager Knox Matjila said yesterday.

He also told a Johannesburg news conference that the Soweto Taxi Association, which had been refusing to enter negotiations with Soweto Taxi Services, had agreed to attend today's meeting of a forum set up to try to end the violence.

Gauteng safety and security minister

THEO RAWANA

Jessie Duarte's weekend announcement that she had asked for a commission of inquiry to investigate policemen who ran taxi businesses was evidence of widespread corruption in the industry, he said.

Duarte said all police staff were being informed that they were prohibited from running outside businesses.

Matjila alleged corruption was rife with the Transportation Board churning out

permits "without regard for the size of the market" and the "licensing department is issuing certificates of fitness to operators who do not have permits".

Matjila, who recently managed to restore peace between two warring factions of the Bara-City Taxi Association, said there had also been reports of shootings on the Meadowlands-Johannesburg route yesterday. This was evidence that there were also too many parties fighting for business on that route, he said.

## NEWS Government advised to take tough line on taxi violence

# New hazards for taxi industry

By Claire Keeton

### TENSE CONDITIONS Field day

*for middlemen making a quick buck:*

**T**AXI violence could escalate to worse levels if new flashpoints of violence are not dealt with immediately, a reliable source in the industry has warned.

The source — who has been in the industry since it took off in the '70s — asked not to be named for fear of reprisals. Many taxi owners, drivers and other players in the industry have died in this war — a war without boundaries. The source identified the appearance of new schemes — petrol rights for operators, redefined provincial boundaries and foreign taxis — as likely sources of conflict.

This would aggravate the already tense conditions in the violence-racked industry.

The source advised the Government to take a tough line now before it is too late. "If a hard fist is needed they must use it. They must do with the taxis what they have done with the casinos."

The taxi industry developed a violent nature, growing on its own under stressful conditions. Fierce competition arose between taxi operators after the market was flooded with permits.

Falling profits due to the declining economy of the '80s heightened this competition. At the same time, rival associations laying claim to particular routes sprang up.



**National Transport Forum member George Negota.**

The source blamed middlemen, who are there for a quick buck, for distorting the industry in their own interests. "These consultants started the war in the industry," he alleged.

"They do not look at loss of lives but at how much money they can make out of the already squeezed industry."

He said the middlemen fostered divisions in the industry. For example, he claimed consultants made sure taxi operators could not agree on one insurance system.

The source said the consultants were responsible for introducing new schemes, like buying schemes, in which

they are stakeholders. But many of these collapse and new schemes are often a source of conflict.

He said taxi owners were afraid to speak their mind at a meeting recently because consultants were present. "Not a single person stood up. They would not express their views as the consultants would take them and sell them."

"The industry has been the playing field of consultants."

The source said he had no vested interest in the industry and had never owned taxis himself. He said he was concerned that selling petrol pumps to the industry could stir up rivalries and violence. "It could lead to violence on an unprecedented scale. To whom will they give the pumps? Who will benefit between the leaders and the members?"

Another possible problem, the source pointed out, was the redefined provincial boundaries that could affect existing associations and routes.

As it is, new bodies are being formed all the time by groups breaking away from their parent bodies. This leads to increased competition as they fight their original body for routes.

The possible issuing of permits to foreign taxis, such as Zimbabwe operators, is an explosive issue.

"This could cause clashes across the

borders. We must review the whole issue of long-distance taxis and remove the source of conflict. Minibuses could be a better option," the source said.

But he emphasised the priority should be the regulation of the industry or it would operate by its own laws — "the law of the jungle".

In his opinion, the Government must adopt the taxi industry and act. "The new Government has the opportunity; however, it is slipping out of its hands. By next year it will not be in a position to do this."

The source accused the Government of lacking a clear policy. "Nothing has happened. They are still thinking while people on the ground are dying."

He said the Safety and Security and Transport ministries should put their heads together to solve this problem.

Moreover, the source alleged the police were not blameless in the running battles between rival associations.

He claimed highly placed traffic officials as well as police officers had stakes in the industry, which meant they favoured or victimised associations in their own interests. But the picture is not all bleak. Recommendations have been made to the Government by experts in the field.

National Transport Forum member George Negota, for instance, has presented a discussion paper to top transport officials on how to reorganise the industry. A lawyer by profession, Negota put forward proposals to the Government along with other con-

cerned players.

He stressed in the paper that he did not exclude any operator but intended including those who were operating illegally. His position suggested how the industry should be regulated — with a compulsory registration system and the enforcement of it through taxi associations and State authorities.

Among his proposals Negota recommended:

- All operators should register so that provinces could be informed who is operating and enable them to decide on subsidies to operators;
- All operators should be members of registered associations with minimum number of members who should pay fees;
- The associations would be issued with stickers that would be proof of an operator's membership and insurance, as well as indicate his routes. The stickers would be valid for 12 months;
- The associations should subscribe to a code of conduct and disciplinary structures, like tribunals, which should be established;
- Taxi ranks should be in the hands of authorities and leased to associations by agreements;
- Each province should declare a moratorium with immediate effect on the issuing of permits until the stock of existing permits are finished; and
- The Transport Ministry should develop a new mission statement with new objectives, including the role of taxis.

332 Source sent 2/21/96



# Drivers wounded in taxi rank shooting

*Sowetan 2/2/95 (332)*

**Sowetan Correspondent**

**T**WO TAXI drivers were shot and wounded in central Johannesburg yesterday in yet another violent outbreak of the Soweto taxi war.

The men were shot by four attackers on the corner of Market and Kort Streets at about 3pm.

One was shot in the head and the other in the abdomen. Both were treated by paramedics and taken to Hillbrow Hospital.

Friends confirmed the men were taxi drivers and named the victims as Nelson Khumalo and the other only as Moss.

They are believed to belong to the Soweto Taxi Association, which is in dispute with the Soweto Taxi Services over routes.

A witness said the four gunmen jumped from a taxi and ran across the

## ■ SEXWALE MEETING Men shot while peace parley was on the go:

street toward the victims.

"I didn't see any firearms, but the attackers had sticks and knobkerries in their hands. They kicked and hit the men and then I heard two shots being fired," the witness said.

A taxi driver later claimed that tensions had been running high at the rank for at least an hour before the shooting.

Meanwhile, the STA and STS held talks yesterday at a meeting brokered by Gauteng premier Mr Tokyo Sexwale aimed at achieving unity between the rival organisations and ending taxi violence in Soweto.

Taxi violence in Soweto has claimed a number of lives in the past fortnight.

The three-hour meeting, chaired by Sexwale in his office in Johannesburg, discussed ongoing problems in the township's taxi industry.

The two groups agreed to hold a mass meeting of interested parties at Regina Mundi Church in Soweto at 10am tomorrow. Taxi drivers, owners and church leaders have been invited to attend and suggest solutions to the dispute.

"The object of Friday's meeting is to unite the taxi industry and to bring peace. We have to make sure that commuters' lives are in safe hands and that the violence stops," Sexwale said in a statement afterwards.



# Taxi feud: police accused of tardiness

(332) star 2/2/95



**Casualty . . . one of the wounded taxi drivers is lifted into an ambulance.**

PICTURE: DUIF DU TOIT

■ BY BOBBY BROWN

Two taxi-drivers were shot and wounded in central Johannesburg at about 3.20 pm yesterday in what appeared to be a spillover of the Soweto taxi feud.

The men were shot by four unidentified men on the corner of Market and Kort streets near the taxi rank.

One had a gunshot wound in the head and the other was injured in the abdomen. Both were treated by paramedics and taken to Hillbrow Hospital.

Witnesses said the two were shot with a weapon carried by one of them. Friends confirmed they were taxi drivers and named one as Nelson Khumalo and the other only as Moss.

They allegedly belonged to the Soweto Taxi Association (STA), which is in dispute with the Soweto Taxi Services (STS) over routes.

At least three people have been killed in the feud.

A witness said four men jumped from a taxi and ran across the street towards the victims.

"I didn't see any firearms, but the attackers had knobkerries. They kicked and hit the men and then I heard two shots," she said.

A taxi driver later claimed in a telephone call to The Star that tensions had been running high at the rank for at least an hour before the shooting.

"Several people called the police when they saw guns and other weapons. Little groups were gathering and we knew that something was going to happen. The police responded only after the shooting took place," he said.

The allegations would be investigated said police spokesman Major Govindsamy Mariemuthoo.

The STA and STS will attend a meeting at Soweto's Regina Mundi Church at 10 am tomorrow to resolve tensions.

ARL 4/2/95 (332)  
**Sexwale in taxi peace plea**

JOHANNESBURG. — More than 1,000 people from two rival Soweto taxi associations yesterday heard an impassioned plea for an end to their fighting from Gauteng Premier Tokyo Sexwale.

Mr Sexwale, who postponed a meeting in Pretoria to address the associations, was attempting to broker a truce between the Soweto Taxi Association and the Soweto Taxi Services.

Mr Sexwale said infighting in the taxi industry not only endangered commuters and other people, but presented a bad image of South Africa to investors and tourists.

■ Reports by Sapa.



# Sexwale pleads for taxi peace

By KHANGALE (332)  
MAKHADO  
SP/2195  
SOWETO taxi commuters could easily wake up with transport problems tomorrow as peace continues to elude the two warring taxi factions in the township.

This is despite the intervention by Gauteng Premier Tokyo Sexwale, who addressed a joint mass meeting at the Regina Mundi Church in Rockville, Soweto, on Friday. More than 1 500 people, mostly from the taxi industry, were present.

In a speech lasting more than an hour, Sexwale urged the two organisations, the Soweto Taxi Association (STA) and the Soweto Transport Services (STS), to stop the feud.

He told the gathering that by continuing with the senseless war which "made us the laughing stock of the whole world", the taxi industry should take note that innocent children and mothers are dying in the process.

"Let us stop carrying on as if we were animals. My appeal to you today is that we should instead sit down and talk."

"The two organisations should form committees aimed at handling the problems because by fighting we are making fools of ourselves and we should be responsible for our decisions," said Sexwale.

He said anti-Apartheid fighters had left the country to fight the war against the apartheid regime and it was tragic that when they returned they were shocked to find that another war had erupted in the taxi industry.

While Sexwale understood that the taxi war



**WAR . . . Cops watch over a mass meeting at Regina Mundi Church in Soweto where Gauteng Premier Tokyo Sexwale urged the STS and STA to unite. Insert: STA president Joseph Sibeko replies to Sexwale.**

■ PEAR TLADI KHUULE

of forcing people "to eat other," said Sexwale, last see the long-awaited one another". warning that police would deal with those who were peace.

The general feeling chance to draw up opera-

happy at the intervention of the Gauteng government, showed little optimism that peace could prevail in the near future.

STS chief Mmaniki Kwenate said it did not help to shake hands in the presence of the premier and the public because the situation would go back to square one once members moved outside the hall.

He urged the industry to isolate those people in their midst who had nothing to do with taxis, accusing them of being responsible for the troubles. STS taxis have not been operating for more than 14 days since the violence escalated.

## Overdue

"The formation of one body is long overdue and in spite of agreements we have signed in the past for that to happen there has not been any movement. We are, however, hopeful that after the government's intervention there may be some positive results," said Kwenate.

Joseph Sibeko of the STA said he hoped the people had listened to Sexwale because it was true that unless the two become one body, nothing would come right.

Sibeko said that it was painful to note that the associations were divided about four years ago after more than 30 years of unity. He called on the STS to agree to a joint conference which would elect a unified body which would once and for all end the violence which had claimed the lives of innocent people.

It was not true that his organisation served the interests of Inkatha in the

## 'Let's all fight taxi violence'

**FORMER taxi driver, THEMIBINKOSI KANXUMALO, gives an insight into the recent flare-up of violence in Soweto taxis.**

WE took a giant leap into the New South Africa last April and thought all would be hunky dory. Unfortunately we did not discard the old, shameful ideologies for new ones befitting our newly acquired status. The recent flare-ups in the Soweto taxis indicate that the ghost of violence that had been wished away is coming back to haunt us.

The taxi industry had survived the apartheid monster at its harshest only to find itself still bedevilled by the violence synonymous with the olden days. Old problems are resurfacing like wild mushrooms after the first summer rains. The expressions of horror at the re-emergence of the violence in the once lucrative taxi industry make one wonder whether the issue has ever been fully resolved.

More often than not the countless peace pacts forged are half-baked temporary compromises. They are never real solutions. Soweto should hang its head in shame in its dismal failure to be the shining beacon of not only Gauteng - the richest province in the country - but the entire country.

Thousands of Johannesburg-bound commuters were left stranded in Meadowlands, Protea and Chiawelo as wrangling over routes exploded into gunfire. At least seven people were killed in the latest skirmishes. In a bloody contest for routes between MDN and Diepsig Association three people were killed near the Modise intersection in Meadowlands last Saturday. Four more people died in an ambush outside the Meadowlands hostel.

It emerged later that they were victims of mistaken identity. But at the core of the conflict is overpopulated routes, dwindling profits and a dissatisfied clientele. Passengers complain that taxis have become moving death-traps. They are never consulted when drivers decide to take one form of action or another. More importantly they are not even treated with respect and courtesy, they allege.

There was never so much violence in the taxi industry, even during the heydays of apartheid. If there was, passengers' lives were not as cheap as taxi drivers and owners alike have made them to be. Although they were not exactly treated as kings, they enjoyed a certain degree of respect. Nowadays they are treated no less than mere garbage.

Taking Alexandra as a small example, the Goldstone Commission reported in 1992 that fierce commercial rivalry over lucrative routes was one of the causes of violence among taxi associations. When it investigated the cause of violence in Cape Town, it

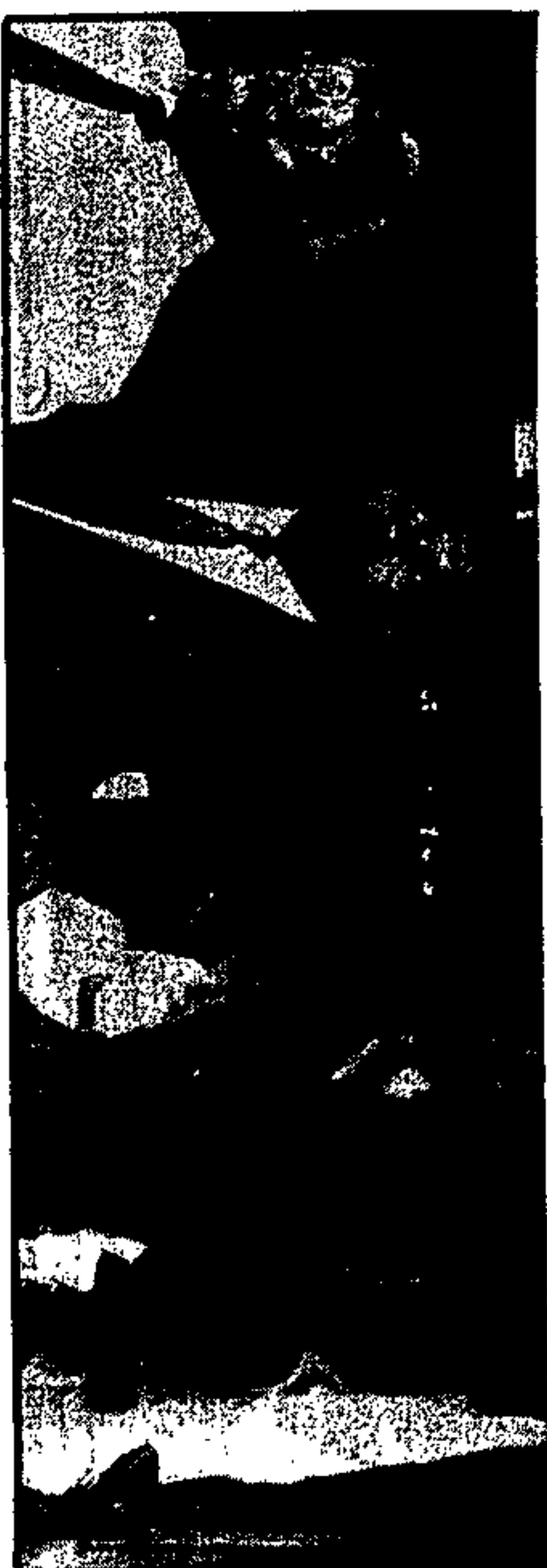


My appeal to you today is that we should instead sit down and talk.

"The two organisations should form committees aimed at handling the problems because by fighting we are making fools of ourselves and we should be responsible for our decisions," said Sexwale.

He said anti-Apartheid fighters had left the country to fight the war against the apartheid regime and it was tragic that when they returned they were shocked to find that another war had erupted in the taxi industry.

While Sexwale understood that the taxi war was "over the bone thrown at the people which had dried up", this could not justify the tendency that had developed



**WAR... Cops watch over a mass meeting at Regina Mundi Church in Soweto where Gauteng Premier Tokyo Sexwale urged the STS and STA to unite. Inset: STA president Joseph Sibeko replies to Sexwale.**

of forcing people "to eat one another," said Sexwale, warning that police would deal with those who were found to be responsible for the mayhem.

Drivers interviewed shortly after the meeting raised serious doubts as to whether they would at

last see the long-awaited peace.

The general feeling among drivers was that the associations should have used the opportunity to convene a special session between both officials and members.

This, they said, would have allowed them a chance to draw up operational guidelines to ensure safe passage of taxis through certain no-go areas.

Leadership of the feuding associations, although

Joseph Sibeko of the STA said he hoped the people had listened to Sexwale because it was true that unless the two become one body, nothing would come right.

Sibeko said that it was painful to note that the associations were divided about four years ago after more than 30 years of unity. He called on the STS to agree to a joint conference which would elect a unified body which would once and for all end the violence which had claimed the lives of innocent people.

It was not true that his organisation served the interests of Inkatha in the township, Sibeko said. In the past few days it had been joined by more than 30 members from the STS, and that alone vindicated its position.

## Whites-only councils in the Cape are no more!

By SEAN JACOBS

**WHITES-ONLY** local government in the Western Cape was effectively ended on Friday this week by a Nationalist Party councillor - but the ANC didn't care to show up!

The MEC for local government, Peter Marais, signed a proclamation bringing into being the Cape Metropolitan Council and a number of local councils for the metropole area.

Blacks will for the first time be able to sit as councillors in hitherto white centres like Cape Town and Bellville.

It was ironic that a National Party official was the one to sign the proclamation, given that it was his party that introduced racially segregated councils in the first place.

"Today is the greatest day of my life, for history has honoured me with the

joyous task of signing the death warrant of all white local authorities," Marais said.

"Justice has triumphed once more," he said.

Transitional Local Councils, appointed on a 50/50 basis from existing white local councillors and community organisations, will now govern the Western Cape till elections are held in October this year.

However, the signing took place without any ANC representatives being present.

### Collision course

They have been on a collision course with Marais this week, accusing him of "manipulating" transitional structures to favour the NP.

The NP, which defeated the ANC in the Western Cape in the elections, already holds the major-

ity in the provincial legislature.

Control of transitional structures is seen by political observers as an important key to controlling ordinary people's lives by political parties.

Earlier this week the regional ANC local government head, David Dhlali, called for Marais' resignation but Marais has denied any abuse of power, attributing ANC attacks to "political inexperience".

According to Marais the call by certain ANC members for his resignation is a measure of "my effectiveness in neutralising and opposing them".

"It has done wonders for my image. Messages of support have been jamming my telephones and fax machine ever since. "I would start getting worried if they praised me to heaven," he said.

## From Mint to museum

By MPHIO KOBUE

**THE OLD Mint** building in Visagie Street, Pretoria, used to be the symbol of South Africa's financial wealth - now it is to be converted into a symbol of the country's cultural wealth.

The building has been earmarked for the National Cultural History Museum (NCHM) for development into a national museum of culture.

The NCHM announced this week that it wanted all South Africans to give input in the development of the museum and to search for the right name.

Dr Udo KuSel, director of NCHM, said changing circumstances in South Africa, and the development of the new museum of culture, presented new challenges such as increased community involvement. This included the

necessity for a more uniquely African character, and the inclusion of an environmental conservation element.

He said the NCHM had outgrown the building it occupied in Boom Street. Over the years, the collections and even certain sections of the museum had to be housed in other buildings in Pretoria.

### Deteriorate

Museum staff had to look on while precious artefacts deteriorated and wore away in parking garages, old factories and damp cellars.

"Our aim now is to finalise the name and corporate identity by March. September 1996 is being mentioned as a possible opening date for the new museum.

"At the moment only R4 million is available for exhibitions and the

the museum in the Meadowlands last year. Four more people died in an ambush outside the Meadowlands hostel.

It emerged later that they were victims of mistaken identity.

But at the core of the conflict is overpopulated routes, dwindling profits and a dissatisfied clientele. Passengers complain that taxis have become moving death-traps. They are never consulted when drivers decide to take one form of action or another. More importantly they are not even treated with respect and courtesy, they allege.

There was never so much violence in the taxi industry, even during the heydays of apartheid. If there was, passengers' lives were not as cheap as taxi drivers and owners alike have made them to be. Although they were not exactly treated as kings, they enjoyed a certain degree of respect. Nowadays they are treated no less than mere garbage.

Taking Alexandra as a small example, the Goldstone Commission reported in 1992 that fierce commercial rivalry over lucrative routes was one of the causes of violence among taxi associations. When it investigated the cause of violence in Cape Town, it recommended that the issuing of permits should be restricted by the number of ranks available.

The erstwhile Local Road Transportation Board that issues taxi permits has also been identified as another contributor to the current crisis. "The board grants permits without regard to the size and demand of the market," complained Sabita's national conflict manager, Knox Majjala.

This indiscriminate handing out of permits has led to the devaluation of the once precious licence. Today it does not even matter whether a minibus has one. A Human Sciences Research Council survey showed that there was an estimated 40 000 pirate taxi operators on South African roads.

### Monopolise routes

The worst aspect of the whole tragedy is that brother is killing brother and we might start hearing things like "black on black violence" coming into the fore all over again. We need to work together and not give cynics the false notion that "Africans cannot live together in peace".

Taxi owners make the fatal mistake of ignoring and sidelining both the drivers and the passengers when making crucial decisions. Passengers also tend to fall into the trap of taking sides between the warring factions.

Further blurring the firing line are fleet owners who monopolise routes. They usually have the money to secretly acquire the services of *izinkabi* - hitmen.

It is even worse because police can offer the public little help.

This is the time when the support of the community, big business and government alike is needed. We are trying to keep the high unemployment rate at bay and can barely make ends meet.

The wily nifty acquisition of permits by professionals and public servants alike is another sore point. Schoolteachers, bank clerks, policemen and traffic officers are known to own and operate taxis while holding down their day jobs. It is bitterly argued that such people only see the taxi business as a quick money-spinning side venture. "Those people do not belong here," one owner said.

Legislation to empower the provincial legislatures to withdraw the permits of owners transgressing the law should be gazetted. Furthermore, associations identified as troublemakers should be dissolved.



(332)

## Commuters stranded as Soweto taxis stay away

Taxi transport in Soweto was still not back to normal this morning after violence erupted on Friday, an hour after a peace meeting, brokered by Gauteng Premier Tokyo Sexwale, between two rival taxi associations.

Soweto traffic superintendent Frank Mdunge said queues of commuters were waiting to get to work today.

Friday's incident occurred after 10 drivers belonging to the Soweto Taxi Services were assaulted and robbed of their fare money, and hundreds of others were chased away when they returned to work after three weeks in limbo.

In the Free State, police assisted by troops yesterday towed away 30 minibus taxis which were blocking the road to the Maseru border post.

The protest was the result of an ongoing feud between Welkom and Ladybrand taxi operators over routes.

Star 6/2/95

## Taxi industry 'can be an economic force'

60 6/2/95 THEO RAWANA (332)

GAUTENG premier Tokyo Sexwale has assured the taxi industry the provincial government would pressure big companies and financial institutions to help it diversify into meaningful business — on condition it ended the taxi wars.

After his address on Friday, the Soweto Taxi Association's Joseph Sibeko and the Soweto Transport Services' Andries Sibeko pledged to end conflict between the groups.

Sexwale said a unified taxi industry could buy sizeable stakes in SA's big corporations. "I gave R10bn to start a Standard Bank account. That is your money — and all the banks must change their lending methods. Their money should not be used solely for putting up the Sandton Sun and Eastgate," Sexwale said.

As a major economic force and with government backing, the industry could force minibus manufacturers to do more than just promise discounts, and take the taxi industry on as a partner. Shell and Engen could contribute more.

Sexwale said taxi entrepreneurs had spotted an opportunity and "created a miracle". But "everyone went for the bone and ate it clean". Now people were fighting over a clean bone — and Mozambicans dealing in AK47s found a ready market.

Meanwhile, Sapa reports that the SA Black Taxi Association said it had found nearly R500 000 owed to members from its collapsed foundation fund. Sabta was investigating who the rightful owners were.

## Loss of 332 700 taxis feared

■ BY ABDUL MILAZI

More than 700 Soweto Taxi Services members could lose their vehicles if a dispute over routes with a rival organisation continues, STS secretary Ben Morabe said yesterday. *Star 7/2/95*

Disruptions in the industry, which claimed at least three lives last week, began four weeks ago when members of the STS stopped work, complaining of harassment by the Soweto Taxi Association (STA).

Morabe said the feud was causing a lot of tension and panic within the organisation, as members feared their vehicles would be repossessed because they had failed to pay January instalments.

Three peace meetings convened by Gauteng Premier Tokyo Sexwale and Safety and Security MEC Jessie Duarte last week failed to resolve the feud.

The STS claimed its members were being assaulted, commuters forced out of their vehicles and drivers robbed of their fares daily by STA members.

The worst seemed over on Friday, when thousands of taxi operators cheered and applauded Sexwale's call for peace and unity between the two warring factions.

But only an hour after the meeting about 10 STS members were assaulted and robbed of their takings and hundreds more were chased from taxi ranks around Soweto.

**THEO RAWANA**

Sexwale challenged the Soweto Transport Services (STS) and the Soweto Taxi Association (STA) last week to form one body on whose behalf he would lobby banks and big business to help the industry become a meaningful business.

A transport department spokesman said yesterday although there was some friction at the taxi ranks, the setting up of a committee — chaired by Gauteng transport standing committee chairman Mathole Motshekga — to facilitate talks between the groups had gone a long way towards easing tensions.

"We are busy with talks on both sides. Two meetings have already been held to determine how to implement the premier's proposed programme," he said.

An STS source said yesterday there was still friction at the Baragwanath taxi rank, where members of his organisation were barred from operating by the STA. **BD 9/2/95**

There were fears that the action might force the taximen to fall behind with their hire purchase repayments.

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**NEWS** Selepe's po

# Chaos in taxi conflict

*332  
Soweto  
10/2/95*

**By Themba Sepotokele**

JOHANNESBURG was plunged into chaos yesterday when more than 150 taxi drivers blockaded key road intersections in the city centre.

It was only the intervention of the police that prevented what had threatened to be a bloody confrontation between two rival black taxi groups.

Police, led by Colonel J Nel, ordered members of Soweto Taxi Services to remove their vehicles from Sauer Street after they had blockaded the street from the morning. The blockade ended around 5pm.

Traffic officers responded to the blockade by closing off-ramps into Johannesburg, leading to a massive build-up on routes around the city.

By noon traffic authorities were struggling to clear the city centre as the protest continued to spread.

The STS launched the blockade in protest at what it termed "the Government's failure to intervene in the taxi wars".

The STS has been locked in a protracted feud with the rival Soweto Taxi Association over routes between Johannesburg and Soweto and attempts by the Gauteng government to end the dispute have proved unsuccessful.

Yesterday Colonel Nel told the taxi operators to remove their vehicles or they would be towed to Brixton police station.

STS and STA members were yesterday locked in a meeting with Gauteng MEC for transport Mr Olaus van Zyl, MEC for safety and security Mrs Jessie Duarte and chairman of the Greater Johannesburg Metropolitan Council Mr Isaac Mogase to resolve the dispute.

# Maharaj pledges on taxi problems

(332)

CT 10/2/96  
JOHANNESBURG. — The "serious problems" in the taxi industry can no longer be ignored, Transport Minister Mr Mac Maharaj said in Pretoria yesterday.

Tensions in Soweto's taxi industry appeared to have abated by late yesterday afternoon after 150 taxis were used to block key intersections in the city centre here from 9.30am.

Without referring directly to the blockade, Mr Maharaj told public servants the problems had arisen because the taxi industry had previously been neglected and disadvantaged.

"We can no longer ignore the serious problems nor can we wait for a perfect solution."

A far-reaching process involving all concerned parties had been set in

motion, Mr Maharaj said.

He said the way in which subsidies had been structured for passenger transportation had to be reviewed.

The blockade was a result of the rivalry between drivers affiliated to Soweto Transport Services (STS) and those from the Soweto Taxi Association (STA).

The STS drivers blockaded a taxi rank used exclusively by the STA, demanding equal access to Soweto taxi routes. They dispersed by 3.30pm on instructions by the police.

By late afternoon Gauteng Safety and Security Minister Ms Jesse Duarte, Transport Minister Mr Olaus van Zyl and traffic officials remained locked in negotiations with STS representatives. — Sapa



# Drive-by killing at city taxi rank

332  
10/2/95  
STAFF REPORTERS

A taxi-driver was killed and four passengers seriously injured this morning in a drive-by shooting at a Johannesburg taxi rank.

SAPS spokesman Warrant-Officer Andy Pieke said gunmen in a vehicle opened fire on commuters on the corner of Sauer and Bree streets at 7.45 am, but police did not yet have a description of the vehicle or its occupants.

According to witnesses, the driver was a member of the Faraday Taxi Association which makes regular use of the taxi rank.

The four injured commuters were rushed to the Hillbrow Hospital.

The shooting follows a protest yesterday by taxi drivers who sealed off parts of the city centre.

The drivers had warned of a repeat of the disruption if the Government did not act swiftly to end the Soweto taxi feud.

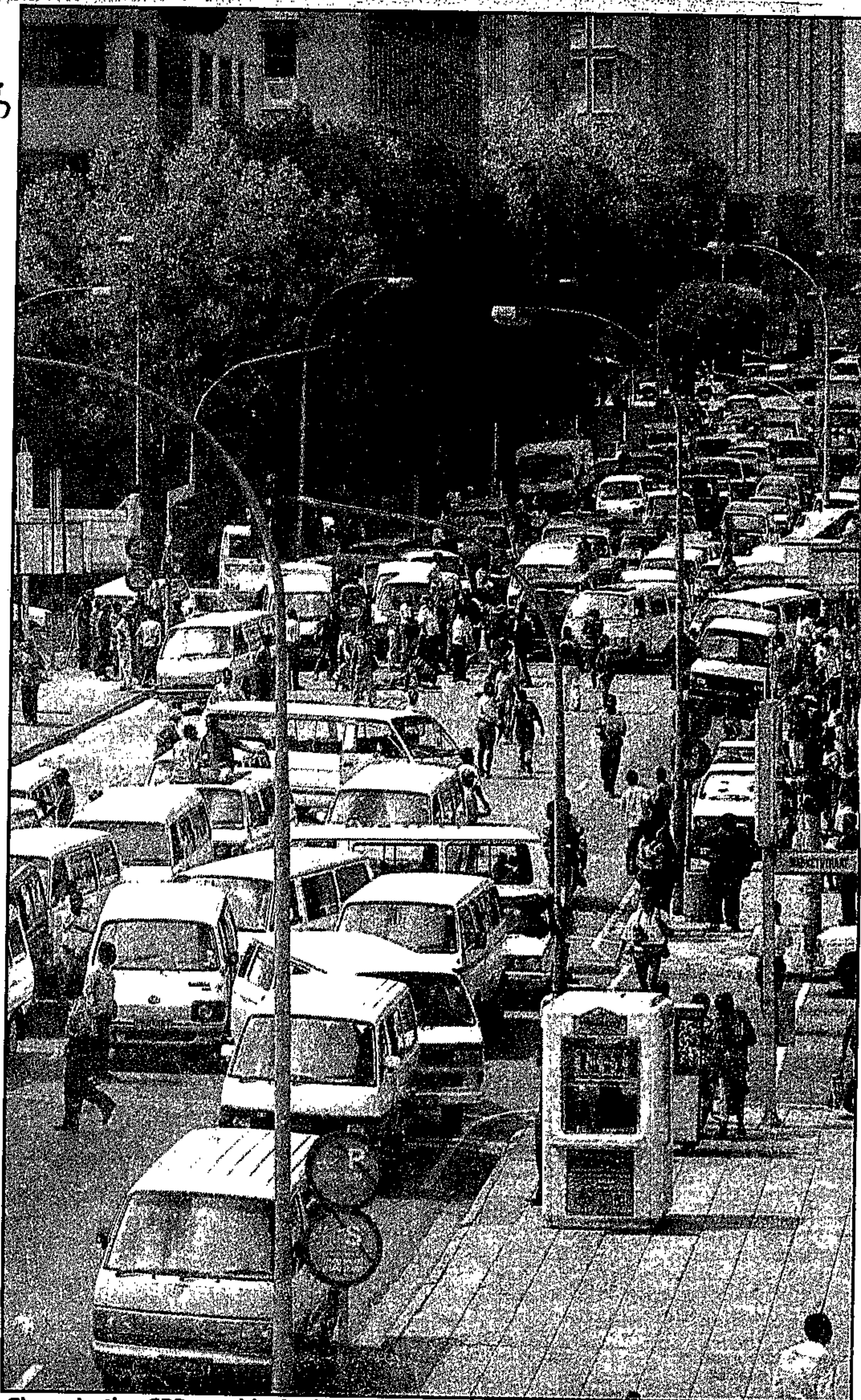
More than 150 Soweto Taxi Services (STS) drivers used their vehicles to block Sauer Street yesterday to pressure the Government into intervening in the war with the Soweto Taxi Association (STA). The protest caused havoc with traffic in a large part of the city centre.

Traffic police responded to the blockade by closing highway off-ramps. There was a massive build-up on routes around the city.

A few drivers even lay flat in Sauer Street to halt traffic.

Motorists were jeered by the taxi drivers as they attempted to squeeze through the blockades. In one incident, a taxi did a U-turn in a one-way street only to collide head-on with another taxi.

► To Page 3



Chaos in the CBD . . . blockading taxi drivers brought traffic in some streets of central Johannesburg to a standstill yesterday. Drivers demanded that the Government take immediate action to stop taxi wars.

PICTURE: RUVAN BOSHOF



# Taxi drivers block city centre

CENTRAL Johannesburg was brought to a standstill yesterday as Soweto Transport Services members blockaded streets to demand that the Gauteng government resolve a war between them and a rival taxi association. (332)

The blockade was lifted by 3.30pm after Gauteng safety and security minister Jesse Duarte agreed to increase the police presence at ranks and on routes, and internal stability division members ordered the protesters to disperse.

Sauer, Simmonds, Fox and Harrison Streets were affected most by the blockade, which included a rank off Commissioner Street used by the Soweto Taxi Association. The traffic department closed all entry routes and motorists were further

THEO RAWANA

frustrated by a huge traffic jam.

Sapa reports that the Soweto Transport Services members demanded equal access to Soweto taxi routes and army protection at ranks and on routes.

Gauteng transport department spokesman Steph Erasmus said the protesters claimed that association drivers were contravening a peace agreement by not allowing their taxis on its routes.

"In addition they demanded that the leadership of the association be arrested, accusing its members of robbing and stealing from other taxi drivers," Gauteng government spokesman Chris Vick said.

□ To Page 2

## Taxis (332) BD 10/2/95

□ From Page 1

The blockade seemed to fly in the face of Gauteng premier Tokyo Sexwale's efforts to bring peace to the industry, and violated an undertaking by the two groups at a meeting with Sexwale last week to stop fighting and work towards a unified body.

Police kept a low profile throughout the protest. Soweto Transport Services boss Sam Masemola was shouted down when he tried to get his men to disperse. An earlier attempt by Johannesburg mayor Isaac Mogoase also failed.

Transport Minister Mac Maharaj said in

Pretoria his department could no longer ignore the "serious problems" in the taxi industry. It had been neglected and disadvantaged, and the way in which subsidies had been structured for passenger transportation had to be addressed. It was important to ensure that passengers benefited from subsidisation.

Vick said the Gauteng government hoped taxi drivers would put as much effort into resolving differences as they did into blockading SA's busiest city.

● Picture: Page 3



Johannesburg and Soweto commuters to remain calm

# Peace pledge by Soweto taxi groups

SOWETO's rival taxi bodies, the Soweto Transport Services and the Soweto Taxi Association, agreed late on Friday night to end violence, threats of violence and intimidation immediately. This is according to Mr Mathole Motshekga, chairman of the Gauteng standing committee on transport and roads.

The meeting, arranged by Motshekga, ended at 11 pm after five hours of discussions at the council chambers of the Gauteng legislature.

He said they had in addition agreed that all taxis should be allowed to operate normally. A follow-up meeting has been arranged for February 15 under a sub-committee with provincial and national Government representation, set up to deal with the problem.

This meeting would include members of the Gauteng government and legislature.

Motshekga appealed to residents of Johannesburg and Soweto to remain calm and said it

was the aim of the provincial and national governments and the two taxi bodies to find solutions urgently.

He said among those at Friday's meeting were Mr Olaus van Zyl, MEC for Public Transport and Roads; and Mr Humphrey Ndlovu, an Inkatha Freedom Party member of the Gauteng legislature. Friday's meeting followed a blockade of Johannesburg on Thursday by about 150 taxis. — Sapa.

# Police patrol Wits after workers riot

MDUDUZI KA HARVEY

WITS University vice-chancellor Bob Charlton has called in the SA Police Service to patrol his campus.

This follows workers' rampage through the institution last week, breaking windows and assaulting security personnel.

Thirty members of the National Education, Health and Allied Workers' Union (Nehawu) were arrested in connection with Friday's rampage and released on bail.

Charlton said: "After members of campus security were assaulted I had no choice but to call in the police."

Police would remain on campus until the situation calmed down.

Nehawu was attempting to force the university administration to reinstate nine dismissed staff members and withdraw disciplinary action against 39 workers and 11 students linked to a hostage drama on campus in October.

Charlton said workers stormed the university campus, breaking glass in the catering department and stealing food and money.

The disciplinary action against the workers and students would not be reversed.

"The union is trying to bully us. The disciplinary procedure was legal, just and in line with the Labour Relations Act," Charlton said.

Students' Representative Council president Muzi Sikhakhane said most students were not clear on what the union members were demanding and did not support them.

Meanwhile, negotiations between Nehawu and the university are continuing. Both parties have selected arbitrators to look into the issue.

Nehawu secretary-general Neal Thobejane confirmed the arrest of 30 members of his organisation.

"It was completely wrong for the police to be called," Thobejane said.

The union had been called on to the campus when workers went on the rampage, he said.

"We talked to shop stewards who assured us our members were not involved," he said.

Nehawu was investigating the circumstances of the destruction of property and would act against members who were found to have been involved.

However, it was considering other forms of action to force the university administration to reinstate the workers who had been fired.

"Mass action will stop only when management decides to adopt a reasonable approach," Thobejane said.

## Taxi industry 'not deregulated'

THE invasion of the taxi industry by illegal operators gave the incorrect impression that government had deregulated the industry when all it had done was invite the pirates to acquire permits, the Transport Department said yesterday.

Responding to claims that deregulation had caused the taxi glut, Transport chief director Theo Naeder said: "All that happened was that at one time government invited the pirates to apply for permits to get them into the process. Statistics show that few permits have been issued lately."

Meanwhile, tension between Soweto taxi bodies persists. However, Sapa reports, Gauteng transport and roads standing committee chairman Mathole Motshekga said the truce agreed at a meeting he

THEO RAWANA

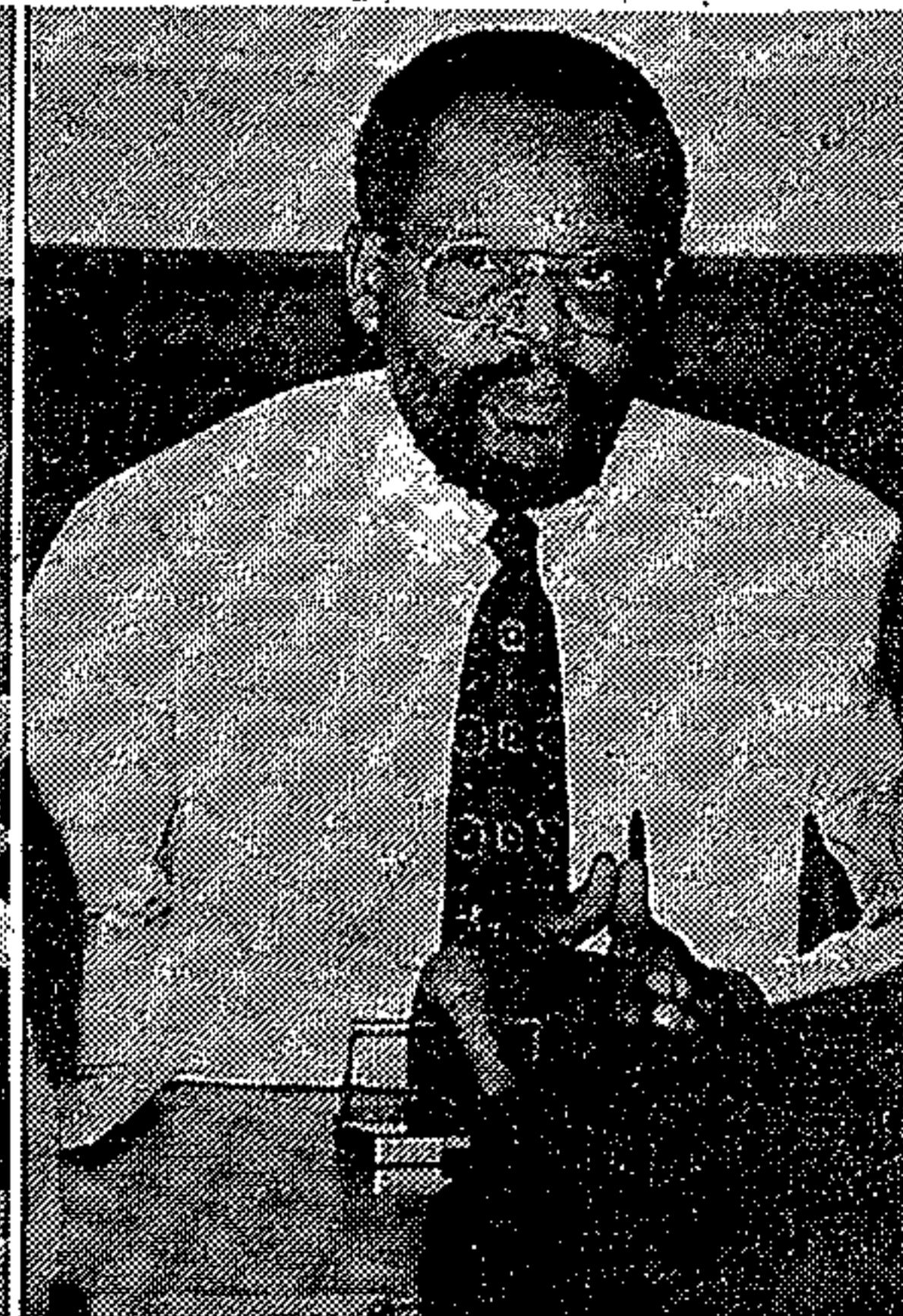
organised was not in danger.

Motshekga was responding to allegations by Soweto Transport Services (STS) spokesman Sam Masemola that Soweto Taxi Association members had prevented STS taxis from operating at the weekend — even after Friday's meeting where both taxi bodies agreed to end violence and intimidation immediately.

Motshekga said the meeting had recognised that isolated conflict could not be ruled out. Commitment to the truce at a leadership level was what mattered.

he said the agreement would be finalised at a follow-up meeting tomorrow and monitoring mechanisms agreed on.





Delegates at a meeting in Johannesburg yesterday to resolve the conflict between the Soweto Taxi Association and the Soweto Transport Services listen to Gauteng transport and roads standing committee chairman Mathole Motshekga, who opened the meeting.

Picture: ROBERT BOTHA

# Soweto commuters propose taxi boycott

BD 16/2/95 (332)  
SOWETO commuters might resort to alternative transport if warring taxi organisations did not resolve their differences, the taxi industry was told yesterday.

The warning came from the Soweto Civic Association (SCA) at a meeting held in Johannesburg to resolve the protracted feud between the Soweto Taxi Association and Soweto Transport Services.

Although civic association general secretary Pule Buthelezi refused to call it a boycott, he told reporters that the 43 branches of his organisation, which were to hold a meeting of its general council on Sunday, might look at "arranging alternative transport".

Greater Johannesburg Transitional Metropolitan Council chairman Isaac Mogase, who is also president of the SCA, said: "The people of Soweto feel the situation must be resolved.

"It is a warning because the community complains they find themselves late for work because of people who do not consult them.

"Let us have a meaningful discussion so as to satisfy Soweto passengers," Mogase said.

THEO RAWANA

Gauteng transport and roads standing committee chairman Mathole Motshekga, who chaired yesterday's talks, said the warring groups had recommitted themselves to agreements to refrain from acts and threats of violence, and said all taxis would be allowed to operate without interference.

Motshekga disputed claims that the taxi feud in Soweto had developed into conflict between the ANC and the Inkatha Freedom Party. "We have investigated this and we found no political feud."

A committee including four representatives each from the provincial government, the SCA, the two taxi organisations and high-ranking police officials, was to be set up to ensure adherence to the agreements.

All parties would report back to their constituencies and submit further proposals at the next meeting — tentatively set for next Wednesday.

Motshekga said delegates had found that neither taxi organisation could be held responsible for violence that had occurred since the previous week's meeting.



# Local airlines fly on a high

WM 17/2/95 (BM) 25 332  
Despite the collapse of USAfrica, the domestic airline business is not saturated, reports

**Andre van Zyl**

**P**ARADOXICALLY, the collapse of United States airline USAfrica has focused attention on the domestic airline business in South Africa. Is there enough room for everybody?

A quick runaround of some of the local airlines suggested that, contrary to conventional wisdom, there is. Comair MD Piet van Hoven said that his airline had a particularly successful December season and he was satisfied with the results. He said there was no doubt that the market had grown on certain route sectors. South Africa's normalised profile abroad is bringing new international tourists and there are also more commercial travellers here.

Van Hoven, however, cautioned that the Johannesburg-Cape Town route serviced by four carriers is being overtraded compared with similar route densities in other parts of the world. On the other hand Durban has three carriers and most of the other routes have either one or two carriers.

South Africa is going through an adjustment phase - as evidenced by the short period of time in which Flitestar entered and left the market. "I am sure that will not be the last carrier to withdraw from the South African market, but that is the function of the market in a deregulated

environment. No question that there will be shakeups ahead", he said.

He said South Africa's market would be characterised by new entries from time to time and other operators exiting, but entry was difficult - as indicated by the way Phoenix Airways had to cut back startup capacity.

Since its inception all eyes have been on no-frills Phoenix Airways. Phoenix manager for Johannesburg, Stephanie de Witt, is pleased about the high load factors the airline is presently achieving - with up to 100 percent full aircraft.

"We intentionally started with four flights because there is more demand in December, but we are a small airline without government backing and if something is running at a loss we are going to put a stop to it."

She said the early morning flights during the two-week DCA official notice period were sold off as "early bird specials". These flights did very well then because of the cut in frequency, the airline's January load factors were slightly higher than that of December.

Sun Air general manager Glenn Orsmond was also pleased with the performance of his airline.

"The return on the expansion of the Johannesburg-Cape Town route has exceeded our wildest dreams. Our load factors were between 85 and 90 percent up to the second week in February", he said and added that all Sun Air business and leisure routes were doing well.

SAA public relations officer Anelda Duvenage says that things are "looking better now".

# USAfrica chief in US fund-raising bid

(332) C/20/2/95

USAFRICA — which suspended its six weekly direct flights from Washington to SA on February 3, when American Airlines repossessed its two leased McDonnell Douglas MD11s — is still fighting for its life.

World Airlines has already requested permission to take over its traffic rights to fly here from the US. And Piet de Jager, GM of Jan Smuts Airport, says other airlines are hoping to take over its offices at the airport.

## Business plan

But USAfrica's president, Gregory Lewis, is about to approach US financial institutions with a business plan completed on Friday, which he hopes will raise the cash for his eight-month-old airline to resume flying.

Douglas Berry, USAfrica's GM in this country, commented: "I imagine a lot of people are interested in getting our slots and parking bays at Jan Smuts and D F Malan Airports but they will have to wait... we are not dead yet."

● Lewis said by telephone from the US that there was already "substantial investor interest" shown during preliminary discussions with institutions, although his reorganisation plan had still to be approved by the authorities following the airline's application for Chapter 11 bankruptcy.

He confirmed that if USAfrica is able to fly again, it may lease DC10s instead of MD11s. These would be more expensive to fly but cheaper to lease.

And it is possible that they would be leased from American Airlines, which has mothballed a number of them. Lewis said that although USAfrica had hoped American Airlines would give it a little more time before repossessing its aircraft "relations remained amicable and they are willing to work with us again".

However, he said, he was looking at a number of possible sources of aircraft.

Lewis said it had not been a mistake to introduce as many as six return services a week between the US and Africa within a few months. Passenger loads had started at well below 40% but had built up to the high 50s in December and January. The

## ON A DIFFERENT PLANE



by

AUDREY  
D'ANGELO

market had huge potential.

But it had taken longer than anticipated to penetrate it because the employee buy-out of United Airlines had delayed the introduction of a code-share agreement and a frequent flyer programme. A frequent flyer programme announced a few days before USAfrica flights were suspended had been introduced too late.

● Comair will change its twice weekly scheduled service between Johannesburg and Harare this week.

From now on flights will leave earlier and the Friday evening service will be changed to Wednesday afternoon.

The Wednesday flight will leave Johannesburg at 3.35pm. The return flight from Harare will be at 6.20pm, arriving at Jan Smuts at 8.05pm.

The Sunday flight will leave Johannesburg at 2.50pm, arriving in Harare at 4.35pm. The return flight leaves Harare at 5.35pm and gets into Johannesburg at 7.20pm.

## Convenience

The change will be more convenient for Cape Town travellers, who missed a connection home when the flight from Harare got into Jan Smuts at 10pm. It has also enabled Comair to introduce an additional return flight between Johannesburg and Durban on Fridays to cater for weekend travel.

● Lufthansa is among international carriers surprised by the continuing strength of demand for seats to Cape Town. Its marketing manager in SA, Karin Duncker, says: "This season is incredible. Generally demand drops off after people have gone back in January but flights are still full with heavy forward bookings for March as well."

Lufthansa has won the Air Transport World magazine's "Airline of the Year" award for the second time. The German airline, which has pressed ahead with a privatisation plan, has reduced unit costs by 15% while productivity has improved by 31%.

## Boeing for new regional airline

ARG 22/2/95 (332)

**The Argus Correspondent**

DURBAN. — Small regional airline Inter-Air have announced they will be flying internationally to Zambia, Uganda and Seychelles and Madagascar from March 5.

Inter-Air have leased a Boeing 727-200 from Safair for their their new venture. The aircraft will be maintained by Safair.

The fully refurbished aircraft seats 119 economy and 18 business class passengers.

Inter-Air will fly to Antananarivo, Madagascar and Mahe, Seychelles on

Tuesdays returning the next day.

The airline will fly to Ndola, on the Zambian Copperbelt and Entebbe, Uganda on Sundays, returning the next day.

Ms Isa Schwartz, spokesperson for Inter-Air said a market survey showed overwhelming demand for travel to these routes, by both businessmen and tourists.

With the entry of Inter-Air into African and Indian Ocean island routes, passengers have a wider selection of airlines and flight frequencies to choose from, said Ms Swartz.



# NEWS

*Katlehong braced for violence*

## Taxi dispute intensifies

332

Star 22/2/95

■ BY ABDUL MILAZI

The East Rand's Katlehong township is teetering on the brink of violence following a dispute between local taxi operators and residents over a 30c taxi fare increase.

The dispute brought the township to a standstill on Monday when hundreds of taxi operators downed tools and marched to the offices of the local civic association after residents refused to pay the new fares and threatened to boycott the taxis.

### Barricades

Residents retaliated by erecting barricades on major roads to the township. Thousands of Katlehong pupils yesterday marched to the local Southern African Black Taxi Association office to voice their rejection of the increase, only to find the office empty.

Katlehong Civic Association chairman Faith Mashiloane said the civics and the ANC's safety and security department had decided to intervene because the

situation was getting very tense and could have become violent.

The ANC's newly appointed head of safety and security for Gauteng, Robert McBride, said he had convened a meeting with taxi operators and residents on Monday, but no agreement had been reached.

Thousands of residents wanting to go to work were still stranded yesterday while members of the civics, the local ANC office, self-defence units (SDUs) and local taxi associations were locked in another meeting behind closed doors in a bid to resolve the dispute.

According to residents, SDU members had threatened to set taxis alight if operators did not bring the fares down.

However, one SDU member at the Katorus (Katlehong/Tokoza/Vosloorus) SDU office denied this allegation.

Residents have insisted they should not have to pay the increased fares but taxi operators who spoke to The Star claimed the increase was reasonable and justified as they had not increased their fares since 1992.

# NEWS

*Disputes over routes and rates escalate*

## Soweto commuters plan taxi boycott

332

Star 23/2/95

### STAFF REPORTERS

Angry Soweto commuters have thrown down the gauntlet to the minibus taxi industry servicing Johannesburg and are due to start a boycott on Monday.

Two other flashpoints near the city are teetering on the edge of violence. In Katlehong on the East Rand, commuters and operators are at loggerheads over a 30c rate hike, and in Randburg operators are squaring up over disputed routes.

The Soweto Civic Association (SCA), announcing the boycott yesterday, gave the violence-torn industry in the township 14 days to solve its problems.

Spokesman Pule Buthelezi

said the decision to launch the boycott followed a bloody dispute over routes between the Soweto Taxi Services and the Soweto Taxi Association (STA).

Negotiations are under way with bus operators to provide transport during the boycott.

Commenting on the SCA's appeal to the Transportation Board for a suspension of the granting of taxi permits, Buthelezi said: "There is no logic in continuing to issue more permits. Too many taxis are fighting for too few commuters."

Attempts to get comment from the taxi organisations were unsuccessful.

Tension is rising in Randburg following a dispute over routes

between the Bryanston Taxi Association (BTA) and the Dietnoot Association.

Robert McBride, head of the ANC's safety and security department, said yesterday the current wave of taxi disputes emphasised an economic crisis in the industry, which could be addressed only through the introduction of a regulatory system. He said the government was researching better ways to regulate the industry.

Taxi violence claimed 127 lives last year and at least five so far this year.

Transport Minister Mac Maharaj could not be reached for comment.

### FOR THE RECORD

It was reported on Tuesday that the new head of the SA Army, Reg Otto, is a major-general and is 55 years old. Otto is in fact a lieutenant-general and he is 51. The Star apologises for the errors.

### Valentine Valley squatters dig in

Star 23/2/95

A South Western Joint Civic Association mass meeting to discuss the organisation's stayaway and march to the Gauteng Legislature today degenerated into an ANC-bashing party last night.

Malebu Makoe, spokesman for

the "Valentine Valley" squatters (Extension 13 in Lenasia was renamed Valentine Valley by squatters after they invaded about 280 homes on Valentine's Day), vowed last night not to move out. — Staff Reporter.

# New milestone for Imperial

■ BY DEREK TOMMEY

The broad-based transport group Imperial Holdings maintained its superb record for strong growth in the six months ended December.

Its turnover rose 39 percent, its attributable income increased by 71 percent and earnings a share rose 48 percent.

Net income before tax rose 60 percent from R50 million to R79,9 million while taxed income rose 69 percent from R30,0 million to R50,6 million.

Earnings a share increased from 33,5c to 49,7c and the interim dividend was raised by 44 percent from 13,2c to 19,0c a share.

Executive chairman Bill Lynch says that the group experienced favourable business conditions in most of its areas of operation.

A new milestone was the rise in turnover to more than R1 billion in the six months period. New businesses were added which created additional growth opportunities.

Good business conditions are expected to continue with strong profit growth.

The relatively high level of business and tourist activities, coupled with increased consumer demand provided impe-

tus to all the group's divisions.

Business and leisure travel saw buoyant conditions resulting in strong growth in car rental and tourism activities and good gains on the disposal of vehicles.

These conditions are expected to continue, particularly as the typical seasonal downturn during the winter months will be reversed by the Rugby World Cup.

## Crime

The unacceptably high level of crime caused the group's short-term insurance company, which mainly underwrites motor-related risks, to absorb higher claims. However, selective and prudent underwriting enabled acceptable results to be achieved.

The group's life insurance business, investment activities, properties and treasury operations performed up to expectations.

Lynch says the outlook for the tourist industry remains positive, indicating good growth in Imperial's rental and tourist business.

The company also expects to be a player in the market for imported cars following the freeing up of the motor industry.



# Okay to take taxi

By NHLANHLA MBATHA

CONFUSION reigned among commuters and taxi owners in Soweto, Johannesburg, this week over a "phantom call" for a two-week taxi boycott that was supposed to start tomorrow.

The Soweto Civic Association (SCA) denied that it had called for such a boycott - with SCA leader Isaac Mogase saying it should be "business as usual" for taxi drivers tomorrow.

Mogase also distanced the SCA from a "face-

less" pamphlet calling for a "boycott of the violence-torn industry" which was reportedly circulated in Soweto last week.

Mogase explained: "The general council of the SCA which sat on February 19 decided that a principled suspension of the use of taxis in Soweto should be the subject of further discussion in a broader forum involving all stakeholders.

"The council decided on this following a month-long crisis in the taxi industry in which five people had already been

killed - a crisis in which the Soweto Taxi Association and the Soweto Taxi Services were at war over routes.

"We decided that warring taxi groups should be given at least 14 days to sort out their problems."

Mogase said the SCA council's decision was to be tabled and debated at a meeting still to be called, which would be attended by commuters, taxi operators, business leaders, police, church leaders, political leaders, students, teachers and all other interested parties.

(332) CP 26/2/95

# NEWS

*Warning to taxi associations using plum route*

(332) SKAN 27/2/95

## Keep fighting and we'll bring in 'buses only' rule

■ BY ANNA COX

If warring taxi associations in Randburg and Bryanston do not adhere to a peace agreement signed in Randburg last week, the Gauteng Legislative Assembly warned that it would ask that buses be instituted on the route to Zevenfontein as the only mode of transport, said MP Mohammed Dangor.

Dangor said there had been a major dispute between the Diepnoot Taxi Association and the

**A SQUATTER camp north of Johannesburg, a source of millions of rands in revenue, may be made off limits to taxis**

Bryanston Taxi Association over the route to the Zevenfontein squatter camp which was a lucrative one, bringing in R5 million net profits a year.

"The situation had become very bad but I think we have averted the outbreak of another taxi war with the signing of the

agreement," said Dangor.

The agreement allows the Diepnoot Taxi Association to operate 10 taxis on all routes currently covered by the Bryanston Taxi Association.

The Bryanston Taxi Association will be allowed to enter Ze-

venfontein to offload passengers with immediate effect.

All future applications for permits will be considered by the Randburg Taxi Liaison Committee.

The dispute recently came to a head in a two-day blockade of the road leading to Zevenfontein.

There have been three drive-by shootings on the route which resulted in the death of a passenger Maria Moshimane in October.



## Do not guarantee jobs, says expert

NOMAVENDA MATHIANE

IT COULD be dangerous to include the right to work in a bill of rights when the state could not offer jobs, visiting German constitutional expert and lawyer Prof Ingo von Munch said at the weekend.

Addressing a Friedrich Naumann Foundation meeting on Friday attended by Gauteng lawyers and journalists, Von Munch said such a clause could give rise to problems, especially when unemployment was rife.

He questioned whether the bill of rights should be written into the constitution and whether the state and party could be separate entities.

Von Munch, who is a constitutional court judge in the German state of Bremen, examined the relationship between the law and individuals.

He looked at whether the constitution was applicable only to the relationship between the individual and the state, or whether it should apply also to relationships between individual citizens, such as those between employer and employee.

Von Munch felt strongly about the separation of the state and the party. "The ruling party is not a state organ. The state is the entity of the people," he said. (332)

Central government and federal powers were another issue that drew a great deal of debate. He did not agree that a legislature should be able to expel from parliament members who had been expelled by their party. He would prefer a situation where members sacked by their party remained in parliament to the end of their term. BD 27/2/95

Von Munch, who had obviously studied SA's interim constitution, is to address local universities.

# Police and army break blockade

PRETORIA — Police and SANDF soldiers on Saturday broke up a blockade of Umtata which had been instituted by recalcitrant Transkeian police.

National Police Commissioner George Fivaz said police and the SANDF moved in at about 3pm.

They split into groups and one group was opposed at a blockade.

A gun battle ensued on the Engcobo road between Umtata and the KD Matanzima Airport.

"It (the group) was fired on allegedly by Transkeian police. They fired back in retaliation and two Transkeian police officials were hit," Fivaz's Johannesburg spokesman Lt-Col Joseph Ngobeni told Sapa.

One policeman died and another was being treated at the Umtata General Hospital for injuries. Another 55 police officials were arrested and a quantity of heavy arms confiscated.

"In consultation with President Nelson Mandela and Safety and Security Minister Sidney Mufamadi, the National Police Commissioner George Fivaz decided strict measures will be taken against police officers involved in illegal actions, which may include dismissal from the SAPS," Ngobeni said.

He said the joint operation would be in place until the National Police Commissioner was satisfied that safety and security had been restored and stabilised in the former homeland capital of Umtata.

"It must be emphasised that credible structures are in place in the

Transkei to deal with promotions and salary matters, but that they are ignored and not accepted," Fivaz said.

"To resort to indisciplined practices to solve problems and this type of behaviour, especially by police officers, will not be tolerated."

The more than 500 rebellious police officers began removing their vehicles shortly before 5pm from road junctions which they had earlier blockaded.

During the blockade several shops in Umtata were looted, while chaos ensued on some major roads leading from the city.

Provincial government spokesman Prince Msutu said the blockade was unacceptable. He said the Eastern Cape government remained open for negotiations with the policemen to try and resolve the issue peacefully.

Transkei regional SA Communist Party secretary-general Rob Nogumla said: "The carrying of weapons and the assuming of combat formations in what should be a simple labour dispute, as well as the misuse of government property and resources during the so-called strike, is totally unacceptable."

He said "this kind of behaviour is tantamount to mutiny and armed insurrection... We cannot understand how the police decided to inconvenience the very community they are supposed to serve."

The blockade of roads was a blatant assault on the rights of innocent members of the public, Nogumla said. — Sapa.

## Vlakplaas trial enters third week

PRETORIA — The Eugene de Kock trial in which the State intends to prove common criminality on the part of the former SA Police elite Vlakplaas C10 anti-terrorist unit, enters its second week today.

The first State witness is still under cross-examination.

Legal teams involved in the case estimated that the hearing could continue for the next 12 months.

The former police colonel and commander of C10 has pleaded not guilty to 121 charges.

These include nine of murder, conspiracy to murder, fraud, assault, and the illegal possession of an arsenal of weapons and explosives.

STEPHANE BOTHMA

Although the prosecution of De Kock was a direct result of investigations by the Goldstone Commission of Inquiry into "third force activities with a political motive", De Kock's prosecutor, deputy Transvaal attorney-general Anton Ackermann SC, stressed at the outset that the trial was not political, but concerned criminality and universally recognised crimes such as murder, theft and subversion of justice.

Former Pretoria Murder and Robbery detective Capt Chris Geldenhuys was the first witness to be called by Ackermann. He has been cross-

examined since Wednesday and will continue today.

He told Judge Willem van der Merwe he had taken part in the cold-blooded gunning down of four unarmed suspected bank robbers outside Nelspruit in 1992.

More than 200 rounds were fired, the court heard.

Geldenhuys said De Kock himself had participated, but could not explain to defence advocate Flip Hattigh SC why none of the shell casings found on the scene could be matched to De Kock's weapon.

He admitted that he had been drinking before taking part in the ambush of the "robbers".



# TWA, United set to take over from USAfrica US airlines vie for SA slots

**Airport to open  
conference venue**

BY JOHN MILLER

A pilot bath on and his and the

BY PETER FABRICIUS  
STAR BUREAU

Washington — Four United States airlines are now competing to fill the slots on the US-South Africa route which were vacated when USAfrica Airways collapsed earlier this month.

Two major US carriers — TWA and United Airlines — the much smaller World Airways, which now only transports cargo, and USAfrica itself, have all applied for the route, a US transportation department source said.

Six flights are available each week. TWA and United have each applied for three and World Airways and USAfrica have each applied for all six. USAfrica has filed for

bankruptcy to protect it from creditors but is trying to raise finances to restart flying.

The US transportation department will decide within the next few weeks which airline or airlines should get the slots, an official said.

He said apart from the applications for permanent slots, World Airways had also applied for temporary permission to fly the SA route from April — starting with cargo only.

## Decision soon

USAfrica did well on cargo but failed to attract enough passengers to cover costs.

The official said the department was keeping in touch with USAfrica to assess whether it was going to be able to restart

But a decision would have to be made fairly soon — within weeks rather than months — as there was a public-interest issue involved in not leaving valuable rights unused.

He said World Airways, especially, wanted a decision soon so it could sell cargo space for its planned April start-up. But a certain amount of time had to be allowed for responses and objections to the applications.

TWA has itself been battling to avoid going under and United has also had financial problems.

As major domestic American carriers, both would offer the advantage of easy connections to domestic US destinations.

When USAfrica failed, it was in the process of entering an agreement to connect its SA flights to United's US domestic

network. Its failure to secure this agreement in the stipulated time has been cited by aviation industry experts as one of the main reasons for its demise.

USAfrica had signed a mutual frequent-flyer programme with United that came into effect just as the airline suspended its operations.

## Only carrier

The immediate cause of the suspension was that American Airlines — which has links with SAA — took back the two aircraft it was leasing to USAfrica when it failed to make the last test instalment.

This left SAA as the only carrier flying directly between SA and the USA.

Jan Smuts Airport is to open its own conference centre at the end of April with facilities for conventions of up to 150 people.

The centre comprises 10 rooms which can be joined or divided, depending on a client's requirements. Part of the project includes a 100-seater restaurant.

This is the first airport in South Africa to offer such a venue on the premises.

When the centre, on the mezzanine floor of terminal 3, opens at the end of April, the Airports Company hoped to attract local and overseas clients, said spokesman Tanya Meyers.

"We are finalising rates and we believe that for one-day conferences, this centre will be the ideal venue because clients will not have to be transported to other venues in Gauteng."

## New airline takes wing

(332) CT 1/3/95  
Special Correspondent

JOHANNESBURG. —

The first South African airline to challenge a 40-year monopoly of the lucrative Johannesburg-London route went public last night.

Avia Airlines begins operation on May 8. It will fly three times a week to Gatwick.

The flight will be 40 minutes quicker than SAA or BA and fares will cost about 15% less than those currently on offer.

## New services to Cape as Phoenix growth continues

Phoenix Airways is to begin twice-weekly flights to Port Elizabeth and George from Johannesburg, and from Durban to Cape Town in May.

At the official launch of the airline in Sandton last night, chairman Richard Gain quashed rumours about the company's performance and future.

He said since December 1 last year, Phoenix had operated 1 098 flights and had carried more than 100 000 passengers.

Departure delays of up to 30 minutes in the first two weeks of December were now under two minutes.

Gain said schedule changes were brought about through necessity.

The airline will take delivery of its fourth Boeing 727 in the next two weeks.

— Staff Reporter

332



## Avia takes to lucrative UK route

JOHANNESBURG. —  
The first South African  
airline to challenge a 40-  
year monopoly of the lu-  
crative Johannesburg-  
London route has gone  
public. (332)

Avia Airlines, which is  
to employ many former  
staff members of the ill-  
fated Flitestar opera-  
tion, begins operation on  
May 8. It will fly three  
times a week — on Mon-  
days, Wednesdays and  
Fridays — to Gatwick  
airport. ARG 2/3/95

The flight to London  
will be 40 minutes  
quicker than the time  
taken by SAA or BA.

Fares are to be  
pitched about 15 percent  
lower than those cur-  
rently available.

# Cheap air travel takes nose dive

By ROGER MAKINGS

THE short-lived era of cheap air travel in South Africa is about to end. Discount airline Phoenix Airways will hike its fares from March 15.

The airline says its new fare structures will remain below those of its immediate competitors — Comair and Sun Air — by between eight and 15 percent.

Forcing up the price of tickets was the airline's decision to pay travel agents a 10 percent commission on ticket sales, upgrading of the no-frills service, introduc-

tion of a business class and an increase in airport taxes on April 1.

Phoenix general manager Stephanie de Witt said this week the public had a negative perception of discounted air fares. "Passengers think that, to offer such low fares, we are cutting corners on aircraft maintenance, which is just not true."

Phoenix previously sold its own tickets or paid a minimal commission to travel agents in an attempt to keep its overheads, and fares, significantly below those of competing carriers.

# Taxi industry chaos 'caused by deregulation'

(332)  
**THEO RAWANA**

UNOFFICIAL deregulation of the taxi industry by government had led to the flooding of the market and the resultant bloody conflicts in the industry, the Organised Taxi Industry (OTI) said yesterday. **BD 8/3/95**

OTI representatives have just returned from leading a study tour to Hong Kong, Singapore and Bangkok, where they went to study how those countries handled problems of "inter-modal transport". The trip was funded by the private sector.

The mission included six government transport leaders, said tour leaders Boeti Letsoela and Theo Schoenefeldt.

The OTI team said they felt more

strongly than ever that action was needed to avoid further chaos in the transport industry.

A meeting of the parties in Johannesburg had been arranged for Friday, and this should be seen as the first step to put ideas learnt in the East into operation.

Drawing comparisons between the Far East countries and SA, Letsoela said in Hong Kong an aspiring taxi operator had to fork out HK\$2m to get a permit, while the previous SA government had "unofficially deregulated" the industry, leading to chaos and killings.

"The SA Transportation Board just went and flooded the market with taxi permits without any regard for the size of the market," he said.

"In Singapore the industry is highly regulated — one must get a certificate of entitlement for S\$800 000 before buying the vehicle."

Schoenefeldt said: "In SA there is no policing, and everybody can get a certificate of fitness for his vehicle for R150 and operate."

Transport chief director Theo Nader said recently the taxi industry had not been deregulated. All government had done was to invite the pirates to apply for permits "to get them into the process".



# R7,2-bn truck hijackings cost by turn of century 'makes mockery of RDP'

BY CHERYL HUNTER  
and NHLANHLA MBATHA

The hijacking of delivery vehicles will cost South Africa R7,2 billion between 1995 and 2000 if calculations based on present figures are correct, according to a trade publication.

Kerry Swift, editor of Fleetwatch — the official journal of the Southern African Transport Security Association — recently said the hijacking of trucks and their cargo had escalated by 110 percent in the past five years.

"SA lost R169,3-million last year in replacement costs of trucks and their loads," Swift said, but in real terms this figure might be four times that.

In an open letter to Minister of Safety and Security Sydney Mufamadi this month, Swift said: "No developing nation can afford to absorb such losses. They make a mockery of the RDP. Your ministry has an obligation to business and to the citizenry to ensure that the infrastructure of the nation is secured."

Swift added that the trucking industry also had to assume some responsibility for the situation because of the high incidence of driver collusion in hijackings.

"They must review pay packages and working conditions for drivers because these employees are often involved in the hijacking," he said.

Trucks are usually emptied of their cargo and taken across the border before there is any reaction to the crime, police said.

Swift suggested that improved technology be better utilised to prevent hijackings, including satellite tracking.

Police have pinpointed the following areas as hijacking hotspots: Sandton, Alexandra/Wynberg, Olifantsfontein, Tembisa, Kempton Park, Germiston and Soweto — areas Swift identified as known trucking routes.

Last year there were 1 620 armed hijackings, including those on private vehicles, in Soweto and 7 668 on the Witwatersrand.

SKAN 8/3/95 (281) 332

## Taxi blockades in Durban

CT 9/3/95

(332)

DURBAN: — Minibus taxi drivers caused chaos during two blockades here yesterday, police said.

About 30 taxi drivers, protesting against a crackdown on minibus traffic offenders, blocked the busy Albert/West Street intersection in the morning, and later a group of drivers jammed the airport off-ramp, causing flight delays.

"Both blockades ended after we brought in tow trucks and warned the taxi drivers their action was unacceptable," a police spokesman said.

About 60 drivers were arrested. — Sapa-Reuter

## Taxi associations vie for the business of <sup>(332)</sup> city centre commuters

ARG 13/3/95

### Municipal Reporter

TAXI associations are vying for business in the city centre following the opening of the Cape Town station-deck taxi rank.

The dispute came to light in a report presented to the new emergency and protective services committee of the city council.

At loggerheads are the Peninsula Taxi Association and others operating in Bonteheuwel, Athlone, Manenberg, Wynberg, Heideveld and Mowbray, who are accusing each other of "poaching" customers.

Traditionally the Peninsula Taxi Association has held the exclusive ranking rights in the central business district but has no ranking rights in outlying areas.

On the other hand, the six out-

lying associations hold rights at ranks in their areas but none in Cape Town.

At present, the six outlying associations bring the commuters to the CBD each morning while the Peninsula Taxi Association transports them home in the afternoon.

The outlying operators "trawl" the main road in the afternoon looking for business.

Peninsula now says it wants the sole right to take commuters out of the CBD, while the other associations are demanding the right to take some of the passengers they bring into town home again in the afternoons.

Alan Dolby, for the city administrator, has recommended that both associations be given a hearing by the emergency and protective services committee.



# New outbreak of taxi war feared

CT 14/3/95 (332)

## **CRIME REPORTER**

POLICE have appealed to taxi industry representatives to return to the negotiating table as they fear a renewed taxi war.

Police were relieved yesterday when taxi violence they were warned about did not materialise.

Codeta and Cata representa-

tives have not attended taxi crisis task group committee meetings for about two weeks.

Western Cape internal stability division chief Colonel Fanie Bower said taxi industry sources warned him on Friday that they "wanted to fight".

The fight for taxi routes was still at the heart of the problem.

"I am particularly worried something is brewing. The representatives seem scared to come to meetings."

Codeta spokesman Mr James Mafuya said he did not believe another taxi war was brewing.

He did not know why Codeta representatives had not attended the meetings.



## NEWS FEATURE *The taxi industry developed a violent nature after it was flooded*

# Innocents die in taxi wars *Sowetans 17/3/95 392*

■ **GREEDY OPERATORS** *Fighting for routes has claimed many lives:*

By Bongani Mavuso

**E**VERY day taxi commuters in Soweto and other areas throughout the country travel in constant fear for their lives because of the senseless and ongoing taxi feuds that are claiming the lives of innocent people who are caught in the crossfire.

Hundreds of people have died — and continue to die — despite attempts by the warring factions and other concerned players to end the fighting.

It appears that innocent people are dying because some greedy taxi operators want to control and operate the profitable routes. These operators use deadly weapons of war like AK-47s to get what they want: lucrative routes that will fatten their bank accounts.

Last week a commuter lost her life and four others were injured when faceless gunmen struck in a morning attack at a taxi rank in Meadowlands, Soweto.

### On their way to work

The commuters, many of whom were on their way to work, were queuing for taxis to town when the gunmen opened fire with AK-47 assault rifles and 9mm pistols.

"Sickening," a spitting resident near the rank said.

In that attack, Mr Godfrey Boikomo sustained two bullet wounds to his body while running for cover.

He said from his Baragwanath Hospital bed: "It was like we were in a war zone. It was gunfire all around us. The gunmen aimed their guns at defenceless and innocent commuters on their way to work. You will never see me near a taxi in my life again."

Thousands of people, especially commuters who depend on taxis for transport, are expressing such sentiments.

The feuding among the various taxi organisations has not only cost lives and limbs. It has also adversely disrupted the lives of thousands of people by bringing

parts of cities to a standstill.

Lately, blockades of cities and major routes by taxi operators appear to be the order of the day. Last month it was Johannesburg and a week ago Durban felt the wrath of the operators.

Over the years — because of a number of problems facing it — the taxi industry developed a violent nature. Strong competition arose between taxi operators after the market was flooded with operational permits.

As a result, rival associations laying claims to particular lucrative routes sprang up leading to the prevailing bloody wars. No solution seems to be in sight.

### Concerned stakeholders

Recently, National Transport Forum member Mr George Negota released a paper on how to reorganise the taxi industry. Among his proposals to the Government and concerned stakeholders, were that:

- All operators should register so that provinces can be informed who is operating and enable them to decide on subsidies to operators;

- All operators should be members of registered associations with a minimum number of members who should pay fees;

- The associations should subscribe to a code of conduct and disciplinary structures which should be established;

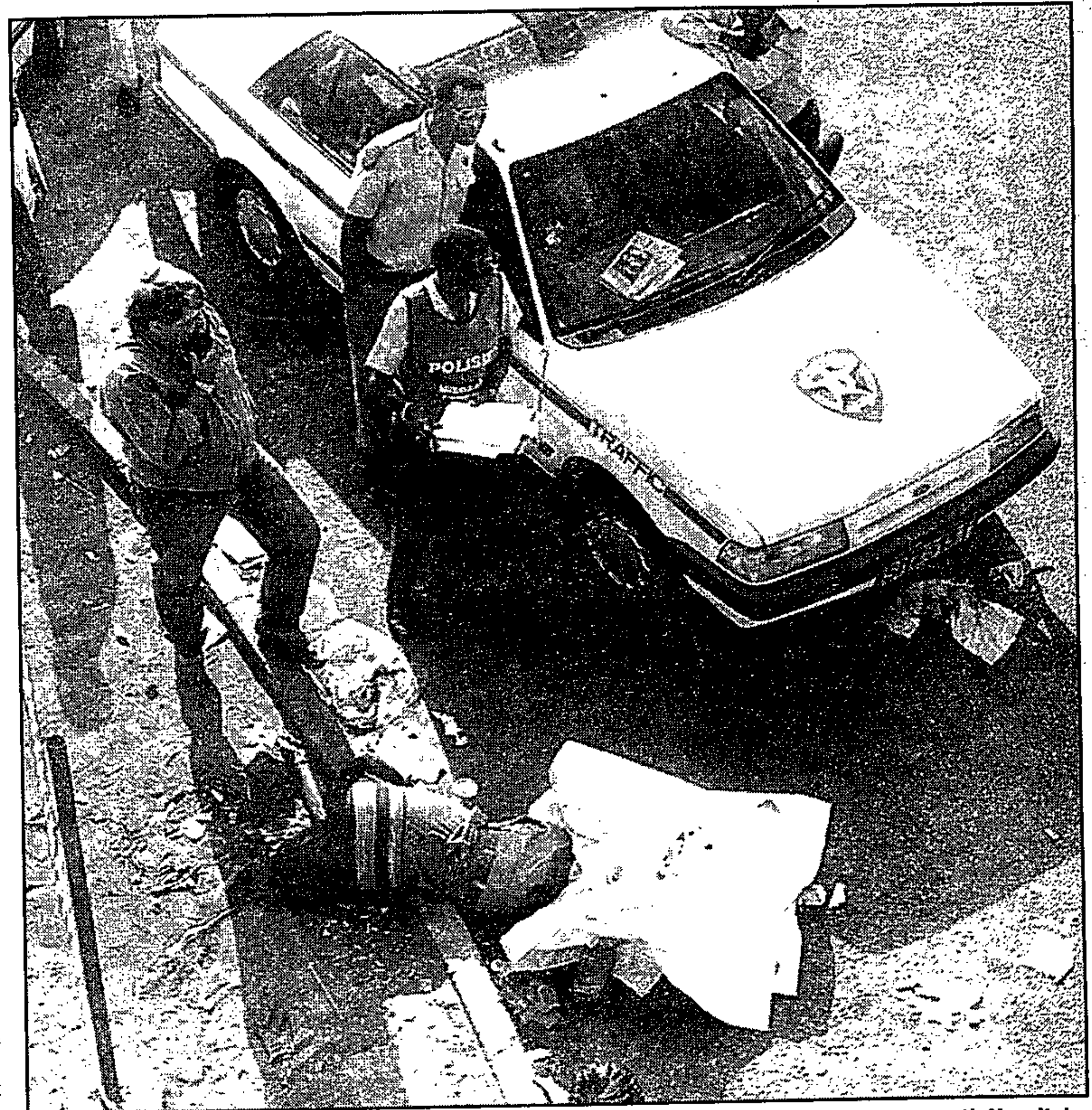
- Taxi ranks should be in the hands of local authorities and leased to associations by agreement;

- Provinces should declare a moratorium with immediate effect on the issuing of permits until the stock of existing permits are finished; and

- The transport ministry should develop a new mission statement with new objectives, including the role of the taxis.

Whether these proposals, if put into practice, will bring an end to the current bloodbath remains to be seen.

In the meantime, stranded taxi users continue to spend their hard-earned money to commute to their destinations, which are for some, their graves.



Another casualty of the on-going taxi war lies in a pool of blood outside Soweto's Baragwanath Hospital



Commuters take a long trek home after being stranded by the taxi war.



## NEWS IN BRIEF

### Taxi task force

ABOUT 250 representatives of taxi organisations throughout the country reached agreement at a meeting with government in Johannesburg to form a joint task group to investigate problems confronting the industry. Issues to be examined include road safety and driver discipline. Transport Minister Mac Maharaj addressed the meeting. **BN 20/3/95**

### Pay talks deadlock

NEGOTIATIONS on wage increases for the year by the Southern African Clothing and Textile Workers' Union (Sactwu) and Pep Stores deadlocked on Friday.

Sactwu said a Conciliation Board hearing would be held this week to try to find a solution.

If the Conciliation Board was unable to resolve the dispute, the union would conduct a ballot on whether to strike. **BN 20/3/95**

### SA eyes arms market

DEFENCE Minister Joe Modise is confident SA can sell locally designed military ware successfully on the international market. Speaking before leaving for the Abu Dhabi Defence Exhibition in the United Arab Emirates, he said SA would display its G-5 and G-6 weapons, laser range-finder, mine detection equipment and an array of naval vessels.

Modise said several countries had approached SA saying they wanted to buy weapons, but he refused to identify them.

Modise was accompanied by Defence Force chief of staff Gen Wessel Kritzinger, Defence Secretary Pierre Steyn and Armscor chairman Johan Moolman.

### Reporter wins award

BUSINESS Day reporter Noma-venda Mathiane last week won a merit award in the essay/fiction category of the Mondi Paper Magazine Writing competition. Mathiane won the award for her short story titled Labour Pains, which appeared in last April's issue of Femina. Her story dealt with the birth of a new society.

REPORTS: Sema, Business Day Reporter.

# French visit leads to trade deals

BN 20/3/95

EDWARD WEST

CAPE TOWN — The R600m of foreign aid pledged to SA by France, including contributions to European Union (EU) aid, put the country among the front-runners of donor countries to SA, French Industry, Telecommunications and Foreign Trade Secretary Jose Rossi said on Friday.

Rossi was speaking at a briefing shortly before his return to France following a four day visit to SA during which he met several national and provincial government and business leaders.

Agreements reached included the creation of a Franco/SA trade and industry commission, a R70m loan from the French Development Bank to the Development Bank of Southern Africa, renewal of the 1992 industrial co-operation agreement with the Industrial Development Corporation and the establishment of a Franco/SA engineering company, Ingerop-Bergman.

During the visit French company Gemplus created a technical development and commercial subsidiary in Johannesburg and signed an agreement of association with a service company in the banking sector.

Rossi also presented SA trade and industry officials with a project to establish a institute of training for

electronics, automation and telecommunications, with the support of the French government and businesses and in liaison with the Pretoria Technikon, for underprivileged students.

Rossi said France had doubled its investment in SA in the past two years, while the number of French companies to have established operations in SA had grown to more than a 100 from only 12 in 1990.

In addition, a R110m financial aid package approved by the French government last week would complement loans from the French Development Agency, donations from the French foreign affairs ministry and from the French fund for the global environment announced by the French president in July last year.

Asked if France, during its chairmanship of the EU, would support SA's aim of joining Lomé now that other development countries no longer objected to it, Rossi said: "France is not trying to block anything. France aims to facilitate the emergence of a sympathetic position."

He said SA's position with the EU would be determined by the 15 member states at the ministers' council in mid-April on the basis of proposals by the EU Commission.

## Probe 'contravenes GATT'

BN 20/3/95  
JOHN BLUDLU

AN INVESTIGATION by the Board on Tariffs and Trade into allegations of dumping of cheap footwear imports by Chinese firms could constitute a contravention of GATT provisions, a lawyer acting for the Chinese companies said at the weekend.

In a Government Gazette notice, the board said an investigation was being conducted into complaints lodged by the Footwear Manufacturers' Federation — representing SA manufacturers — that certain footwear classes originating from Hong Kong and China were being dumped on the SA market.

Webber Wentzel international

trade partner Leora Blumberg, who is representing the Chinese firms, said there were four definitions of dumping in the Board on Tariffs and Trade Act. The board had invoked the fourth, which was contrary to GATT principles and would soon be repealed. "A draft Bill, which amends the definition of dumping to comply with GATT, has been introduced. In particular, the Bill removes the fourth definition of the Act."

A spokesman for the board said on Friday the investigation had not yet been completed.



# Taxi industry confident about policy

A NEW policy for the taxi industry was a certainty by July after agreement was reached at a weekend workshop to set up a national taxi task team, Transport director-general Theo Naeder said yesterday.

The workshop discussed input from the nine provinces and finalised details of the process which would give recommendations to the Transport Minister's committee for the long-term sustainability of the industry.

The workshop, attended by 250 rep-

THEO RAWANA

representatives nominated by the taxi industry at provincial forums and the national taxi associations, agreed on the establishment of a national taxi task team which would take suggestions and make recommendations.

"It was unanimously agreed that provincial taxi forums, representative of all the associations active in the province, will be established within the taxi industry to liaise with

provincial governments.

"A national taxi task team will be established, consisting of nine representatives from the industry and nine officials representing central, provincial and local government.

"These representatives, who must be nominated by April 3, will nominate specialist advisers as required."

The team's recommendations would be presented to national consultative taxi workshops before being submitted for policy formulation.

## Eskom developing electric minibus

ESKOM was developing an electrically driven, zero-pollution, low-maintenance minibus which should be on the urban taxi market in the next few years, electric vehicle programme manager Carel Snyman said yesterday. ~~65~~ (332)

Snyman said a prototype chassis of the vehicle was being manufactured in Cape Town, and Eskom intended to work with taxi associations to develop a final product acceptable to operators. 60 23/3/95

Snyman said Eskom also hoped to

THEO RAWANA

get municipalities to supply electricity — which would be available at taxi ranks for recharging — free or at reduced rates to the taxi industry.

Engineering News said Eskom aimed to capture 2% of the local car market with 100 000 electric vehicles by 2005.

Snyman said the idea would be sold to the taxi industry and other interested parties at a two-day conference at Midrand next week.

PUTCO  
(332) FM 24/3/95  
**Carrying their weight**

**Affordable mass** transport is starting to look more feasible as social upheavals abate and government puts transport among its top five priorities. MD Mike Oldham says government's action "has been a major step forward" in the battle for cost-effective and efficient public transport.

Putco's interim results are encouraging in their steady upward trend. Turnover of

### **SPEEDING UP**

Six months to	Dec 31 1993	Jun 30 1994	Dec 31 1994
Turnover (Rm)	235,4	244,9	269,6
Operating income (Rm)	11,8	12,1	16,2
Attributable (Rm)	7,9	9,7	10,6
Earnings (c)	29,8	36,6	40,1
Dividends (c)	15,0	23,0	17,0

R269,6m for the six months to December is 15% up on the comparable period for 1993 (R235,4m) and a 4,1% gain on the six months to June 1994.

Operating income likewise has moved up 37% over the past 18 months, from R11,8m in the six months to December 1993 to R16,2m in the half-year to December 1994. Operating margin for this period was 6% (six months to December 1993: 5%). Oldham says good management and a lot of effort from all the staff were required to produce these returns, which are, however, still "way below market averages."

Putco is struggling with 10% inflation. Application to the Minister for a 10% subsidy produced 8,5% on March 1, which means a loss of about R4m for financial 1995. Oldham says the subsidy is retrospective to July 1994, and the 1,5% gap will have to be absorbed by the company.

Attributable income is up by 34% to R10,6m, as are EPS (29,8c to 40,1c). Dividends, however, rose only 13% to 17c/share. A positive net cash flow of R32,7m for the half-year to December 1994 compares with a net deficit of R18,8m the year before.

Putco needs to retain funds to finance its bus maintenance and replacement programme, which is expected to cost about R50m this financial year (1994: R44,5m).

*Continued on Page 82*

### **FOX**

*Continued from Page 78*

About 200 buses will be rebuilt. Another R20m will go to buy 50 new buses, which Putco assembles using local engines and gearboxes and imported chassis.

The future is almost upon Putco. At the end of March the Minister of Transport will release the long-awaited draft transport policy document for comment and reveal government's proposals on transport subsidies. Oldham says there is a great need for subsidised transport for scholars, which could expand the market in most areas by at least 30%. Taxis, the main competition, are thought by some to have dubious safety records and are too expensive for students.

"It is important to integrate transport services," says Oldham. For example, he favours "through-ticketing" — a bus-train-bus or taxi-train-bus ticket with each fare properly subsidised.

Oldham is confident that the company has bottomed out and provided conditions remain stable it will continue to do well over the next six months. Attacks on buses are now rare, and negotiations with the labour unions continue — though he would not rule out surprise upsets.

The p/e of 4,8 is way below the sector average and the market is clearly nervous of the inherent risk. Oldham comments: "We are very vulnerable to external factors, since we are affected first by any instability." However, a look at net asset value, considerably higher than the share price, should reassure investors as to inherent value.

*Margaret-Anne Hals*



running costs will be discussed with taxi owners

# Electric taxis for the townships?

By Mzimkulu Malunga

**E**LECTRIC minibus taxis are likely to hit township streets soon. Electricity giant Eskom says it is consulting with taxi associations to explore the feasibility of launching taxis propelled by an electric motor.

Eskom's manager: electric vehicle programme, Mr Carel Snyman, told *Sowetan* yesterday that the company wants to involve taxi organisations in the designing of the proposed minibus so that it fits the industry's requirements. He says details about this facet of the vehicle will be discussed at a conference on electric vehicles to be held on March 28 at Eskom's conference centre in Midrand.

The main advantage of the vehicle is

■ **ESKOM'S PLAN** These minibuses would use no petrol, plugs or oil:

that it was much cheaper than the petrol ones. The running costs, says Snyman, are much lower than that of petrol cars.

The proposed minibus will not use petrol, plugs or oil filters and will not have a gearbox. Its source of energy will be a motor powered by an electric battery. However, Snyman says the main weakness of the battery is that it lasts for only 100 kilometres before it has to be recharged. Eskom is looking into ways of developing the technology that will make the battery last longer.

Administrative manager of the National African Federated Transport Organisation Mr Meshack Makhubele

says the taxi industry will support moves to make electric taxis as long as they reduced the high running costs engulfing the industry. "As long as it meets our requirements and reduces costs, we give it our 100 percent support," he says.

Lack of profitability due to high running costs has been highlighted as one of the major causes of the violence that has wrecked the taxi industry.

In a market that is as highly deregulated as the taxi industry, says Makhubele, competition is literally a matter of life and death, but maybe the electric taxi will lessen the tension.

*Sowetan 24/3/95*

*(332)*

## Four taxi owners shot

The Argus Correspondent

JOHANNESBURG. — Four taxi owners were injured in a drive-by shooting in Soweto today, causing havoc among commuters who then refused to use taxis to get to work.

The occupants of a red Toyota sprayed bullets at a group of taxi owners, a traffic department spokesman said.

Commuters were then too frightened to use taxis.

"A red Toyota drove past and the inmates sprayed bullets at a group of owners gath-

ered to watch the loading of passengers on the corner of Vincent and Van Onselen streets in Zone 7, Meadowlands after 7 am today," he said.

"The vehicle then sped off. But commuters were too frightened to catch taxis to work and gathered in groups demanding more police protection," he said.

The spokesman said it appeared the attackers had been tipped off that the owners were standing in that particular spot.

(332)ARG-27/3/95

## Ambush leaves taxi driver dead

EAST LONDON. — A man has been killed and another has narrowly escaped death in the latest upsurge of taxi-related violence near Queenstown.

Uncedo Taxi Association driver Alfred Siyoko was attacked on Friday and then ambushed on Saturday (330)

A second Uncedo driver, whose name has not been released, died in the ambush.

Police said the attackers appeared to be from the Queenstown Taxi Association — Sapa.

ARCT 27/3/95



# Taximen seek arbitration

**MUNICIPAL REPORTER**

CT 28/3/93

(332)

TWO taxi groupings, in dispute over the use of the Station Deck rank in the city, have asked the council to arbitrate.

Six Cape Flats associations that make up one grouping have the right to bring passengers from the outlying areas in the mornings and drop them off at the Station Deck, but they do not have the right to rank at the Station Deck.

This means that in the evenings the Peninsula Taxi Association members, who do not have ranking rights in the outlying areas, take most passengers home to outlying areas. But they have to use freeways,

not the southern suburbs Main Road.

The Cape Flats associations want ranking rights on the "top deck" and in return are prepared to grant reciprocal outlying ranking rights.

Mr Abduraghman Salaam of the Peninsula Taxi Association said: there was no guarantee his people would get ranking rights in the outlying areas.

Mr Nassauridien Palmer of the Cape Flats Association said the agreement had not been "working successfully".

Emergency services committee co-chairman Mr David Statham asked both sides to abide by whatever decision his committee made.



**BLUE RIBBON  
WHITE TOASTER LOAF**



**SCHOOLHOUSE  
MELLORINE**



**WHEAT FLAKES**



## Six taxi firms to get rank rights on deck

*ARC-28/3/95  
(332)*  
Municipal Reporter

CAPE Flats and southern suburbs taxi associations are to be awarded ranking rights on the station deck for a three-month trial period in an effort to settle a dispute between rival taxi groups.

The decision was made by the city's new emergency and protective services committee.

Co-chairman David Statham said there was evidence that people were having to wait more than five minutes to board a taxi on certain routes.

Consequently, the committee had decided to give six taxi associations, namely Bonteheuwel, Athlone, Manenberg, Wynberg, Heideveld and Mowbray, three permits each to load passengers on the station deck for a three-month period.

Previously this privilege was limited to the Peninsula Taxi Association whose members have Road Transportation permits allowing them to operate within a 35 km radius of the city.

However, the PTA has not been allowed to rank in outlying areas.

Effectively, this meant the six outlying taxi associations would bring commuters to the city in the morning and the PTA returned them home in the afternoon.

Mr Statham said ultimately he would like to see colour-coded taxi routes to replace the current system of radius permits.

# Taxi protesters blockade parliament entrance

332  
Aug 31/4/95  
**ROGER FRIEDMAN**  
Labour Reporter

ABOUT 100 Cape Amalgamated Taxi Association taxis blockaded the main entrance to parliament today to demand the arrest of opponents and the release from jail of Cata's alleged strongman Victor Sam.

The taxis briefly snarled up the Roeland-Plein Street intersection before moving off. The occupants — about 300 people — returned to the gates of parliament on foot.

As they toyi-toyed outside, a Cata delegation was taken inside by Enver Daniels, special adviser to Justice Minister Dullah Omar, to discuss their demands.

Police with riot shields formed a line across the gates as the toyi-toying carried on.

Cata, which was embroiled in a bloody conflict with the Congress of Democratic Taxi Organisations (Codeta) from which it split late last year, is understood to be the predominant township taxi organisation at present.

Cata deputy-chairman Steven Williams said today that the association was mystified about why there had so far been no arrests over the Khayelitsha Stadium massacre in October, in which 10 people were killed and 17 injured.

Most of the victims were Cata members.

Mr Williams said it appeared the police and judiciary concentrated their efforts on "certain" organisations, ignoring crimes allegedly committed by other, ANC-supporting, organisations.

Cata was also demanding the immediate release of its alleged strongman Mr Sam, who was refused bail by a Mitchell's Plain magistrate following a protracted bail application earlier this year.

Mr Sam had various charges against him, including murder, withdrawn by the Supreme Court in February, but faces unrelated charges, including murder, arising from last year's taxi conflict.

Mr Williams said Cata believed the continued incarceration of Mr Sam to be "blatantly unfair".





Picture: ANDREW INGRAM, The Argus.

**TAXI PROTEST:** Members of the Cape Amalgamated Taxi Association (Cata) protest in front of parliament demanding the immediate release of Victor Sam, one of their leaders.

## Taxi protesters blockade parliament entrance

**ROGER FRIEDMAN**  
Labour Reporter

ABOUT 100 Cape Amalgamated Taxi Association taxis blockaded the main entrance to parliament today to demand the arrest of opponents and the release from jail of Cata's alleged strongman Victor Sam.

The taxis briefly snarled up the Roeland-Plein Street intersection before moving off. The occupants — about 300 people — returned to the gates of par-

liament on foot.

As they toyi-toyed outside, a Cata delegation was taken inside by Enver Daniels, special adviser to Justice Minister Dullah Omar, to discuss their demands.

Police with riot shields formed a line across the gates as the toyi-toying carried on.

Cata, which was embroiled in a bloody conflict with the Congress of Democratic Taxi Organisations (Codeta) from which it split late last year, is

understood to be the predominant township taxi organisation at present.

Cata deputy-chairman Steven Williams said today that the association was mystified about why there had so far been no arrests over the Khayelitsha Stadium massacre in October, in which 10 people were killed and 17 injured.

Most of the victims were Cata members.

Mr Williams said it appeared the police and judiciary ig-

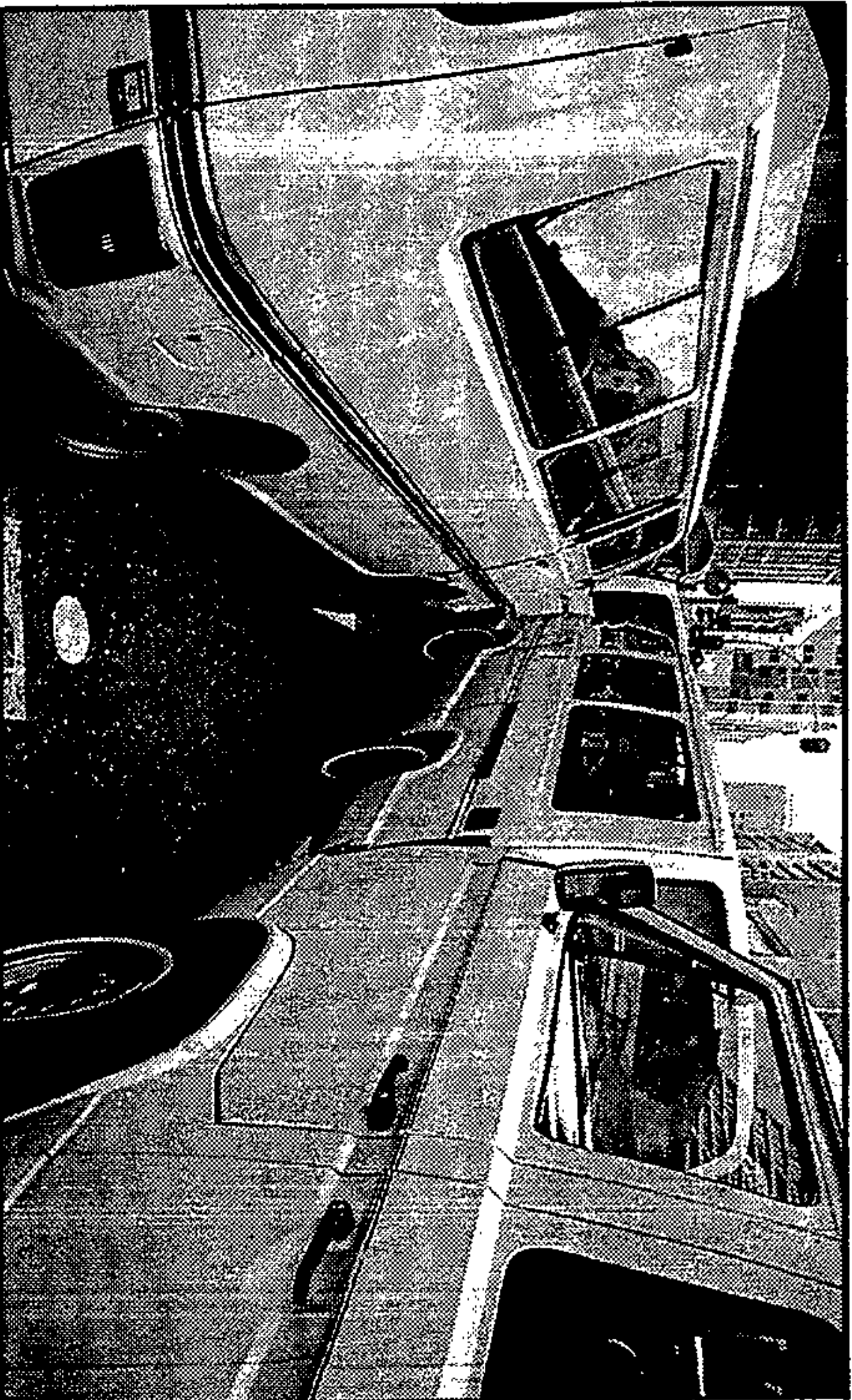
nored crimes allegedly committed by other, ANC-supporting, groups.

Cata was also demanding the release of its alleged strongman Mr Sam, whose protracted bail application was refused earlier this year.

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(332) (332)  
ARG 4/4/95





All-day affair ... a column of minibuses taxis park outside the Carlton Centre on Commissioner Street all day, even though they are allowed to use the space as a loading zone only during the afternoon peak hour.

PICTURE: ANDREAS VLACHAKIS

## Taxis take over bays

BY CHANMEEA BHAGOWAT  
CITY REPORTER

(332) Star 11/4/95

Minibus taxi drivers, accused of disrupting traffic and insulting motorists in Johannesburg's Commissioner Street outside the Carlton Centre, say they will not move from the site until they are given other facilities.

According to Johannesburg traffic chief Mike Davis, the taxis are allowed to use the site as a loading zone during the afternoon peak hours.

However, when The Star visited the area, it found that taxi drivers parked in the bays all day.

One irate motorist who called The Star claimed he was threatened with assault twice while trying to park in a bay outside the Carlton Centre.

Another, who said he visited the centre often, claimed two taxi drivers had prevented him from parking there.

He said the taxi drivers called a colleague to park in the bay and threatened to beat him up if he did not leave.

"They seem to be a law unto themselves in town," said the motorist.

Davis, however, said anyone could park in a bay which was controlled by a parking meter.

"The situation should not be dominated by taxis," he said.

When The Star visited the site at about 2pm on Friday, a column of taxis were parked in the bays, loading passengers to Diepkloof and Rockville.

Many of the drivers did not want to speak about their presence, saying only that they were allowed to be there.

# Talks to stop taxi violence

*sowetan 18/4/95 (332)*

By Joshua Raboroko

HIGH-POWERED talks are to be held by transport owners, top Government officials and financial institutions next month to address the high level of taxi violence in the country.

President of the National African Federated Transport Organisation Mr Peter Rabali said violence, particularly in Soweto and the Northern Transvaal, was continuing unabated and threatening the entire taxi industry.

The ongoing conflict between the Soweto Taxi Association and Soweto Taxi Services has claimed the lives of many people and left commuters struggling daily for transport.

Rabali said several organisations, including taxi organisations, ministries of transport and labour, police and financial institutions, had been

requested to recommend ways of ending problems affecting the taxi industry.

These organisations had been sent documents to that effect.

Discussions in the documents include lack of rank facilities, safe dropping points, law enforcement, the price of petrol and labour relations between taxi drivers and owners.

Rabali said these aspects would be discussed at Nafto's two-day annual conference starting on May 18 in Johannesburg.

He said: "The violence in the taxi industry must come to an end. Our country cannot afford a continuation of these senseless killings and infinite rivalry."

President of the South African Black Taxi Association Mr Paradise Mahlangu said every violent incident diverted attention from the process of reconstruction and development.

## Cawu call on workers

*sowetan 18/4/95*

By Bongani Mavuso

THE Construction and Allied Workers Union has urged members who were allegedly dismissed by Shoredits Construction to report at the union's offices in Pretoria at 8 am on Thursday.

Cawu secretary Mr J Rabothata said the workers were dismissed in September 1990. They are scheduled to appear in the Pretoria Industrial Court from April 20 to May 9.

Rabothata said about 1 200 workers were dismissed after going on a work stoppage because of retrenchments and harassment. "Our members have been without work since then. Their case was postponed on various occasions causing more hardships for our members and their families," he said.

Meanwhile, the National Union of Metal Workers of South Africa at the weekend said about 1 700 union members were dismissed by Iscor in Vereeniging after going on strike last week.

Azasco to



# Three ministers for transport indaba

332  
Sowetan  
20/4/95

By Mzimkulu Malunga

**T**HREE national ministers will speak at the National African Federated Transport Organisation's sixth annual general meeting next month.

Focusing on the integration of all transport modes in the country, the AGM will take place at the Holiday Inn Garden Court, Johannesburg, from May 18 to 19. Of the three ministers, Transport Minister Mr Mac Maharaj will be under intense pressure to give something to the struggling black transport industry. Black transport operators, particularly those in the taxi industry, have been lobbying strongly for the government subsidy scheme which is currently enjoyed by the rail and bus transport to be extended to minibuses. The regulation of the conflict-racked taxi industry also features high on the agenda of black taxi owners who will attend the conference in their hundreds and Maharaj could win himself many friends if he addresses this issue decisively during his talk.

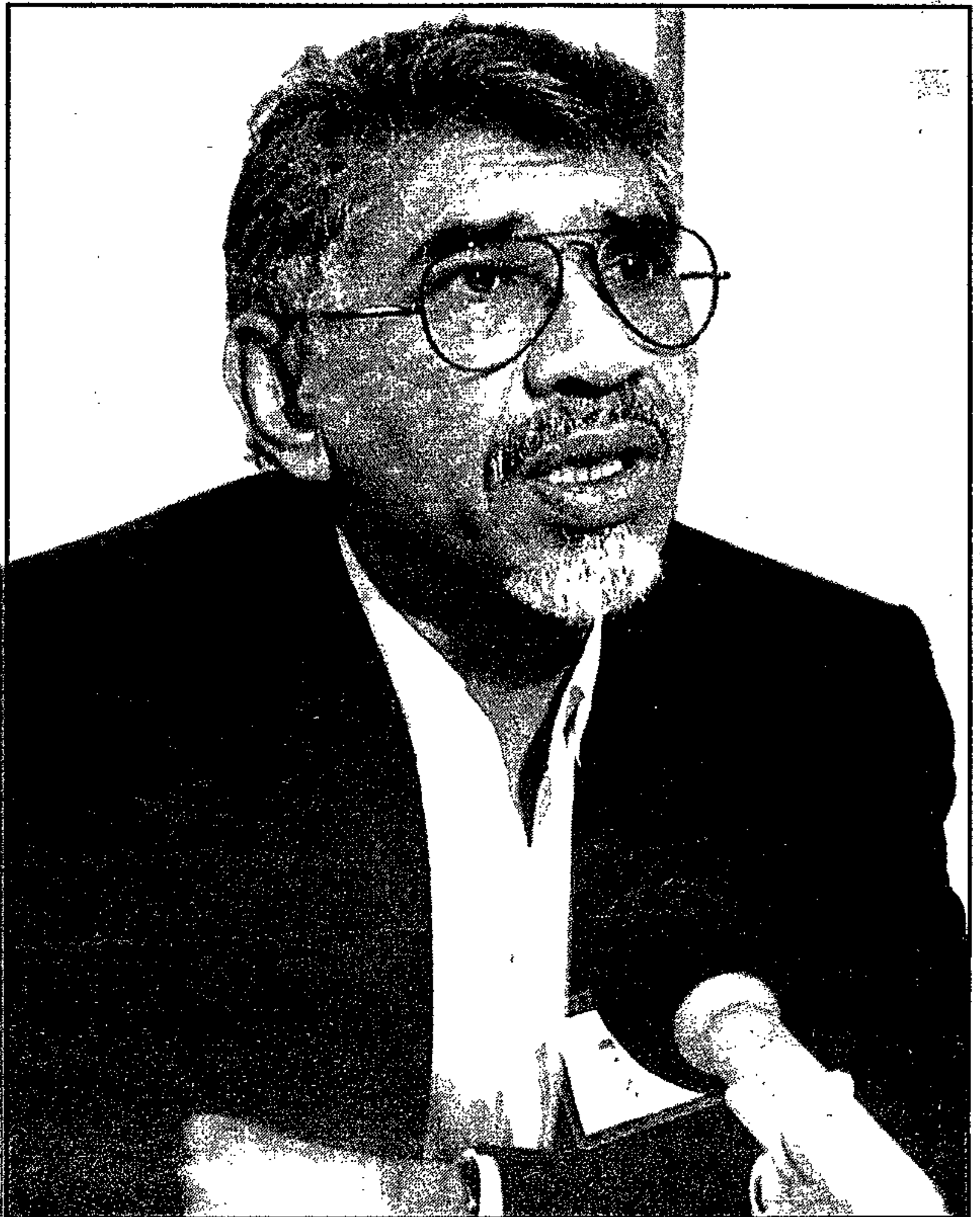
"In our contact with him, the minister promised to look into our problems and we will be looking forward to his speech," says Nafto president Mr Peter Rabali.

Although the organisation's constituency extends beyond the taxi industry, problems which have engulfed the minibus industry since the beginning of the 1990s demand that this issue remains top of the agenda.

For instance, there has been a high rate of vehicle repossessions as a result of the violence. During conflicts the taxis do not operate normally — a factor that affects profits and makes it difficult for taxi owners to pay their instalments. Minister Without Portfolio Mr Jay Naidoo will talk about how black business could benefit from the RDP while Energy Affairs Minister Mr Pik Botha will clarify the new petrol price structure.

Rabali says participants will also explore the possibility of a relief scheme where informal transport operators could buy petrol at a cheaper price. Other leading speakers at the gathering include Gauteng premier Mr Tokyo Sexwale, Nafcoc president Mr Joe Hlongwane, Police Commissioner Major-General George Fivaz, Cosatu's Mr John Gomomo and speaker of the Free State legislature the Reverend Motlalepula Chabaku.

■ **SUBSIDY SCHEME** Taximen will ask to be subsidised like the rail and bus transport:



Mac Maharaj: transport minister.

# 'Good outlook for road freight with RDP'

By Roy Cokayne

RETORTA BUSINESS EDITOR

The benefits of the reconstruction and development programme to the transportation industry could be seen in the forecast of sales of an extra 32 000 trucks (over 5 tons) between this year and 2002.

This was the difference between an RDP scenario and a no-change scenario, where the relatively poor economic policies of the past were projected into the future, motor industry economist and Econometrix director Tony Twine told the Road Freight Association's conference, at Midrand, last week.

Twine said vehicle sales figures, and the derived forecasts for trucks, were a clear barometer of the fortunes of the transport sector and road freight transport in particular.

The superior health of the economy translated directly into superior health for the road transport industry and its demand for capital equipment, he said.

Twine said that compared to the scenario that could have developed without the redirection of economic objectives, the other effects of the RDP could be summarised under the following points:

- The RDP produces a counter-cyclical effect on the overall economic performance. It dampens upswings by pulling back on government consumption expenditure, and flattens out troughs or downswings by supporting government fixed investment at crucial times;
- In the medium term, it provided more aggregate growth for the economy as a whole;
- By reducing government consumption and therefore government's borrowing requirement, it reduced inflationary pressure;

- Reduced inflationary pressure implied progressively lower cyclical peaks to interest rate patterns. Real positive interest rates imply relatively high interest rate trough levels until inflation was well and truly conquered;

- Slowly declining inflation and real positive interest rates implied a brighter future for the external value of the rand, but local inflation was still too high to prevent the rand from falling against major currencies;

- The RDP scenario was far more attractive to foreign investment than the no-change scenario;

- The superior rate of growth of the economic aggregates implied a greater requirement for all types of transportation;

- The RDP scenario implied a greater emphasis on competition, particularly between parastatal and private sector enterprises, and the transport sector should not be immune from this change.

Safety and the reputation of trucking operators was a common theme in many speeches, together with the lack of law enforcement and the benefits of self-regulation.

The minister of transport, Mac Maharaj, set the scene when he said the deregulation of the road freight market in 1992 had brought about an even more competitive road freight industry and corner-cutting in respect of safety.

Maharaj said damage to the infrastructure 'as a result of overloaded vehicles cost South Africa about R400 million a

year. He said it was realised that this corner-cutting trend had to be stopped.

Maharaj said a Road Transport Quality System (RTQS) had been introduced to eliminate such corner-cutting.

One of the requirements of the RTQS is that all vehicles with a gross vehicle mass of more than 3,5 tons have to be tested for vehicle fitness at least once a year.

But Maharaj said the first prize was the realisation by operators that proper maintenance of their vehicles contributed to the economic viability of their transport business.

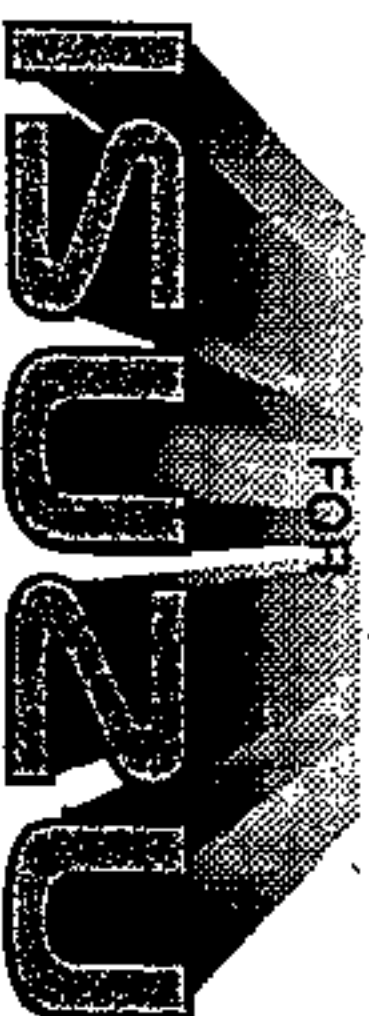
The chief road traffic inspector for KwaZulu/Natal, John Schnell, said RTQS remained the a non-event.

He said there had been a failure to register and ensure vehicle fitness by most operators.

Schnell added that because RTQS was not applicable in the former TBVC states, enforcement was not possible.

(332) CT(BR)24/4/95

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# Foreign airlines get wily to beat the cartel

ETG 24/4/95 (332)

## ON A DIFFERENT PLANE



By AUDREY D'ANGELO

South Africa's rapid growth as an international travel destination shows how much the country has benefited from the limited deregulation of air services.

But, with most international flights booked up for weeks ahead, bilateral agreements protecting South African airlines are preventing some foreign competitors from increasing their services in line with demand.

Some airlines are finding innovative solutions to the problem.

KLM Royal Dutch Airlines, for instance, now has a tie-up with Air Malawi and Air Seychelles, enabling travellers to Europe to leave South Africa on the two smaller airlines and catch a connection to Amsterdam.

Business travellers in a hurry can do this by flying to Lilongwe with Air Malawi on Tuesdays and Thursdays. On Tuesdays the connecting KLM flight to Amsterdam leaves only one and a half hours after arrival at Lilongwe. There is a slightly longer wait for the Thursday connection.

The Air Seychelles flights are not for people in a hurry, because they involve stopovers in the

*Agreements that protect South African carriers can make it hard to increase flights*

Seychelles and Dubai, Abu Dhabi or Singapore.

This seems a lengthy procedure but "our research showed that a lot of people would like to visit the Seychelles or go shopping in Singapore or Dubai," KLM's general manager for southern Africa, Simone Wickenhagen, explained.

"So we are offering a triangular flight enabling passengers to stop at these destinations before going on to Amsterdam. They can fly back directly to South Africa from Holland. Or they can fly the triangle in the other direction with the stopover on the way back."

KLM planners also considered introducing a triangular service between Durban, Bombay and

Europe only to find that British Airways had beaten them to it.

The BA triangle linking Bombay and London with Durban or Johannesburg was introduced this month, with a stipulated minimum stay of 14 days and a maximum of three months.

BA, with two non-stop flights from Cape Town to London a week, started a third service via Johannesburg at the beginning of April but found bookings so heavy that it has decided to make the flight non-stop from November 1.

South African Airways also plans to introduce a third weekly flight from Cape Town to London in June. Its marketing and sales manager in the Western Cape,

Merlyn Powys, said Cape Town was growing in popularity as a point of entry for tourists.

Air France's general manager in southern Africa, David Pegg, confirmed this trend. The airline, which flies three times a week between South Africa and Paris, started its second weekly Cape Town flight this month. "We are doing exceptionally well with it," he said. "Cape Town used to be a seasonal destination but this is no longer the case."

Pegg said the next four Air France flights this month, including one starting in Johannesburg, were "critically full", and there were good bookings for the whole of May.

The new airline Avia, which will launch its service between Johannesburg and Gatwick on May 8, reports that it is already fully booked until the end of August.

And two senior Austrian Airlines executives, Rudi Weri and Wolfgang Scheiner, visiting South Africa to assess the market's potential, found their own airline's flights from Johannesburg so busy that there were no seats available on the day they intended to leave.



# Taxi groups sign peace pact

**Sowetan Reporter** (332)

THE Gauteng legislature, Eastern Services Council and East Rand taxi associations on Friday signed a peace pact aimed at restoring peace and stability in the taxi industry. The ceremony, at the Eastern Services Council premises in Germiston, was attended by the Gauteng

MEC for transport Mr Olaus van Zyl and 80 representatives from taxi associations. The signatories said they were committing themselves to peace in the industry, saying they aimed to work towards the restructuring of the taxi business in order to provide a reliable and efficient service to commuters.

The participants declared among

themselves that they were fully committing themselves to a process of peaceful negotiations to resolve problems the industry may be confronted with.

Van Zyl told the gathering that his office was busy consulting with other taxi associations in the province with the aim of establishing a Gauteng Taxi Initiative Steering Committee.

*Sowetan 24/4/95*

# Truckers 'facing challenge'

332 8025/4/95  
THEO RAWANA

SA's trucking industry faced international competition and a stronger union movement demanding better wages and fringe benefits, a trucking conference was told last week.

Transport chief director (roads) Hennie van Tonder told the Road Freight Association conference in Midrand the US and other countries were dumping second-hand trucks in southern Africa which did not comply with vehicle emissions regulations and were disadvantageous for local truckers.

He said government was addressing the problem with the relevant governments.

Van Tonder said the end of sanctions challenged SA truck manufacturers to fight harder to stay in business. "American and European trucks are becoming increasingly popular. With the end of sanctions more cost efficient electronically controlled engines are available locally.

"These electronically controlled engines need very little attention and it is logical that they will soon

have a substantial market share.

"Foreign trucks will provide challenges to local manufacturers which they will have to meet to stay in business. We have to assume that the local industry will be less protected against foreign competition in future," Van Tonder said.

Labour relations had changed significantly and unions would become more powerful, "notwithstanding the fact that our truck drivers are the best paid in the whole of Africa", Van Tonder said.

The increase in trade with the rest of Africa in itself presented a challenge not only to truckers but also to government. "Government is committed to eliminate all restrictive measures on our trucking industry and we will not be satisfied if the playing field is not levelled and all unnecessary red tape is removed because it is not in the interest of our road freight industry only but also to the benefit of

our economy as a whole," Van Tonder said.

The SA road network had deteriorated rapidly in recent years because not enough money was allocated to maintain it to the required standard.

Van Tonder said road transport was a major factor in spreading AIDS. "Recent studies have shown that a correlation between the spread of AIDS and our major international transport routes exists .... It is the responsibility of our truckers to educate their drivers to make them fully aware about the dangers of AIDS which has the potential to place excessive demands on health care projects as well as to eventually ruin our country."

Van Tonder said SA's biggest challenge was in the field of the minibus-taxi industry, which transported more than 50% of all commuters. "The challenge is to formalise and stabilise the industry as part of the department's reconstruction and development initiatives."

(332) STW 25/4/95

## **Task team focuses on taxi industry**

The National Taxi Task Team held its first meeting last week in an attempt for all role-players to develop policies for the Government on how to regulate the taxi industry. The task team consists of representatives of the taxi industry as well as the Government, and it hopes to develop policy proposals to address various issues, including regulating the industry, its viability and how to introduce it into the formal transport sector. — Staff Reporter.



# Professionalism in transport 'necessary'

THEO RAWANA

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SA NEEDED to concentrate on increasing professionalism and competitiveness in the transport industry if it was to emerge as a serious international player, a transport expert said in Pretoria last week.

Chartered Institute of Transport in Southern Africa president Barry Lessing told a transport meeting: "Professionalism encompasses more than skills and competencies. It contains both elements but transcends both. It implies a higher level of awareness of qualities and values, such as vision, inspiration, drive, standards and ethical conduct."

"A higher standard of professionalism in the transport industry would enable the individual, a business and the country as a whole to become more competitive in the international arena," he said.

"Research in SA has highlighted the alarming 'skills deficit' that our country already has, as well as the increasing 'skills deficit' that will exist at the turn of the century. In SA, with its ever-increasing population and the constantly expanding needs of industry, this situation is set to worsen."

Compounding the problem was the fact that the level of productivity per employee had remained virtually unchanged over the past 20 years, while earnings per employee had increased dramatically.

To overcome the vicious cycle of higher population growth, which led to problems in imparting skills and to lower productivity, lower competitiveness and ultimately lack of economic growth, a sustained effort was needed in education and training in transport.

## FutureBank's fortunes linked to taxi industry

(332)

SAMANTHA SHARPE

FUTUREBANK — established as a joint venture between First National Bank and the Foundation for African Business and Consumer Services (Fabcos) — had suffered from a fall in taxi financing business, the bank said in its annual report.

FutureBank MD Neville Watchurst said new taxi financing business had "all but ceased". This was compounded by a high default factor in existing taxi business.

This had inhibited the bank's ability to increase its assets, despite the volume of other new business written.

FutureBank, which posted a slide in profit to R727 000 for the year to September compared with R2,03m at the same period in 1993, showed an accumulated loss of R622 000 at the start of the year, an improvement on the 1993 loss of R2,65m. **BD 25/4/95**

Watchurst said the bank had continued to trade profitably, despite the cost of establishing new branches in Cape Town, Nelspruit and Pietermaritzburg, which affected the 1994 financial results.

He said it was encouraging that the bank, which offers short-term instalment credit for motor vehicle finance, affordable housing, business finance and personal loans, had made progress in expanding its customer base.

"This year we have been most successful in attracting a wide spread of depositors."

He said recent agreements with USAid, the Small Business Credit Guarantee Corporation and the Independent Development Trust Finance Corporation had helped limited risk exposure.

# Transport industry is 'inefficient'

332  
BY AUDREY D'ANGELO

CAPE BUSINESS EDITOR

CT(BR) 28/4/95  
The transport industry in South Africa is too fragmented and its efficiency must be increased to make it internationally competitive, says Barry Lessing, president of the Chartered Institute of Transport in southern Africa (Citsa).

In a statement issued by the institute, Lessing said it could offer education and training that would bridge the gap between different transport modes.

Criticising the industry for lack of professionalism, Lessing said that, in Citsa's view, the transport industry was hampered by lack of a common vision, fragmentation of the various modes of transport, lack of co-ordination, attempts to find quick fixes, and the fact that "everyone is re-inventing the wheel and there is no single champion for education and training in transport."

The department of education did not understand the special needs of transport or the urgency of the situation.

The department of transport lacked the structures and capacity to tackle the problem.

Trade associations were trying to fill the gap but did not have a broad vision of the industry. Businesses were exposed to questionable training mechanisms and often had to retrain staff.

"The desperate call from the industry is for potential transport employees to have been trained in the ability to compete," said Lessing. "But it spends no time teaching how this knowledge could be applied."

The Chartered Institute of Transport, with headquarters in London, has 20 000 members in more than 60 countries.

It has been represented in southern Africa for 70 years.



# Taximen threaten blockade

**FUEL RISE** 'Address issue of subsidy passed on to competitors':

By Musa Zondi

**T**HE taxi industry has warned of a possible blockade if the Government keeps pushing the petrol price up. This follows the announcement this week by the Central Energy Fund that the petrol price will go up by a further 3c a litre from next Wednesday.

National African Federated Transport Organisation vice-president Mr Simon Mathysen yesterday said the latest increase would hit the taxi industry hard. "We don't want to go on strike. But if this continues, we will park our cars and sit at home. The Government must address the question of the subsidy that is passed on to our competitors," he said.

Mathysen said it was ridiculous that

28/4/95  
taxis pay an extra one cent, which goes to subsidise their competitors — buses and railways which get an estimated R2 billion in subsidies.

"The Government must decide whether they want the taxi industry or not, because at this rate they are going to kill it completely," he said.

The increase was necessitated by the rising international prices of petrol and diesel at the beginning of the year, according to the Central Energy Fund. Diesel goes up by one cent, while paraffin is reduced by a cent. A litre of petrol will cost R1,87 in Gauteng and outlying areas, while at the coast it will cost R1,77 from next Wednesday. Diesel will cost R1,68 on the Reef, while in the coastal areas it will be 10c cheaper at R1,58. Paraffin goes down to R1,01 on the Reef and will be 11c cheaper in the coastal areas at 90c.

# Affirmative action put on ice

**ADELE BALETA**  
Weekend Argus Reporter

PORTNET is to waive its affirmative action policy as an emergency measure to halt the congestion crisis at Cape Town harbour's container terminal.

An inadequately trained labour force, labour disputes and absenteeism have been given as the main reason for the problems at the port.

Portnet management has also come under fire from clients for failing to anticipate and cope with a post-election upswing in container traffic and has resulted in major backlogs at the port.

Shipping line bosses who estimate losses of R80 000 due to delays have threatened to bypass the harbour and take their business to Port Elizabeth. They have also warned of a "congestion surcharge".

Cape Town port manager Neels Hubinger confirmed in a statement that the situation had deteriorated, saying "labour seemed to be the main cause" of the problem.

He mentioned affirmative action, labour disputes and absenteeism as being at the root cause. This has been rejected as "rubbish" by the South African Harbour Workers' Union which has the largest membership at Cape Town harbour.

The union has instead blamed bad management.

Mr Hubinger told Weekend Argus that Portnet had asked its local council to temporarily suspend its affirmative action programme to enable us to employ skilled labour.

He said "100 plus" people need-

ARG 29/4/95 (332) (Fib)  
■ Portnet will abandon its affirmative action policy for the time being to bring order back to the beleaguered Cape Town harbour.

ed to be employed in the next 15 months to get the terminal back on track. Critical work areas that needed to be addressed were gantry train drivers, straddle carrier operators and internal hauler drivers.

Portnet was also buying two gantry cranes and eight straddle carriers to upgrade the facilities. More staff was needed to operate this equipment.

The appointments to be filled by skilled people from within Transnet would bolster the workforce from 300 to in excess of 400. Posts advertised in the Press for crane operators stated that prospective employees had to have experience on wharf cranes, straddle carriers and stacking cranes.

Portnet's affirmative action policy was based on the Turn Strategy Programme whereby 70 percent (or two thirds) of all labour employed comprised people of colour. "Most of this labour is untrained and it takes up to two months training to achieve qualifications," said Mr Hubinger.

He said that in Cape Town the programme was implemented by the local Turn Strategy council which consisted of people of all races and included union and management members. There was also a national council.

Permission to waive the policy in the short term came from the council.

The policy placed an embargo on the employment of white people unless an applicant had special skills that were completely unavailable amongst other pro-

spective employees.

For every three people appointed two had to be people of colour and one white. The Turn Strategy Programme did not discriminate on the basis of gender or disability in certain work categories.

In a statement Mr Hubinger said the port had been hit by a wildcat stayaway this week when workers marched to protest the proposed privatisation of South African Airways on Wednesday.

Last Friday 25 crane drivers were scheduled to work, and only five turned up in the morning and 12 in the afternoon. "How can you work a terminal if you cannot rely on your labour?" Mr Hubinger said.

Sarhwa — which has the largest membership at the port — has denied that labour is the main cause of the problem.

The union's vice chairman Benno Drümmer said the lack of management foresight in terms of preparing and equipping the terminal for increased volume was at the heart of the problem.

He said all labourers were skilled but management had not made a concerted effort to upgrade these skills. "We have put pressure on the authorities for months and they have only now started to do something about the issue."

Sarhwa had proposed creating a labour pool whereby people who were skilled and had been made redundant could be trained to become multiskilled so that they could fill any post.

■ See Business Section.



# Portnet hits back in ship congestion row

AR 29/4/95

(332)

**IAN SHIFFMAN**

Shipping Correspondent

PORTNET has launched a counter-attack on shipping chiefs in the row over congestion in Cape Town's container terminal.

Accused of lack of foresight, Portnet has responded that the shipping lines also did not foresee the dramatic increase in cargo volumes which is at the root of the crisis.

Ro-ro container ships calling at Cape Town this week beat the congestion crisis and berthed on arrival, but other box ships had to wait in the bay for up to 125 hours.

The only two lines operating ro-ro container ships on the South African run are MACS Maritime Carriers and Ignazio Messina.

Captain Piero Pastorino, manager for Ignazio Messina's Cape Town office, said he was very pleased with the turn-round of Jolly Bianco.

The ship docked immediately on arrival and sailed 50 hours later, having discharged 400 cars, 11 excavators and 100 containers. The vessel then loaded 160 containers and 2 000 tons of granite.

But other shipping chiefs in Cape Town do not expect an improvement in container-handling times before September and fore-

cast a congestion surcharge of R720 a container.

Talks between Portnet and Mitsui OSK Line (MOL) to transfer the West African transshipment operation to Port Elizabeth did not succeed and the hubbing operation will remain in Cape Town.

In Durban this week the container terminal came to a standstill when piecework drivers blocked the entrance, preventing the movement of containers in and out of the terminal.

Ron Shires, newly appointed managing director of Atlantis Diesel Engines, said manufacturers were hard-hit by the delays.

"In our specific case a delay in Cape Town harbour eventually translates to an engine not delivered on time and a truck assembly plant literally stopped with consequential loss of orders."

Table Bay Cold Storage MD Raymond Selzer has asked the Minister of Public Enterprises and Privatisation, Stella Sigcau, to improve Portnet's forward planning.

He said cold stores were full and exporters had been forced to shut abattoirs.

Mike Economou, director of the Mediterranean Shipping Company, charged port management with not having prepared for a

46 percent increase in containers handled in March.

The port, he said, did not "wake up" one morning and found container vessels at anchor and a dramatic increase in volumes.

Responding in a statement to shipping chiefs' complaints, Portnet chief executive Neil Oosthuizen said allegations of a lack of foresight were unjustified.

Neither Portnet nor the shipping fraternity had foreseen growth of nearly 32 percent in less than two years.

"The average growth rate for container traffic for the period 1977 to 1992 was five to six percent. When Portnet obtained estimated figures from its clients for the 1994/95 fiscal year, the industry indicated an average figure of 3.5 percent. In reality, the growth rate turned out to be 19.6 percent," Mr Oosthuizen said.

But shippers said they had submitted higher figures, closer to the current increases.

Mr Oosthuizen said containers handled in March had overtaken the budgeted figure by 82 percent.

Portnet was stepping up expansion plans, he said. But much of the equipment was made to order overseas and supplies took up to 24 months to arrive.

An increase in staff levels was a top priority.



# Millions lost by shipping delays

□ *Portnet unable to cope with increase* (332)  
ARL 215145

**JOSEPH ARANES**  
Staff Reporter

MILLIONS of rands in goods are lying uncollected on Cape Town's quays because of authorities' inability to deal with increased business.

Shipping lines, which lose up to R80 000 a day if ships are delayed, have threatened to pass on these costs to end-users if the congestion is not resolved.

Portnet marketing manager Johan Carse said they had taken steps to address the problems.

Stellenbosch wine exporter Larry Jacobs said that for the past few months several of his consignments had been held up in the harbour because ships were bypassing the port, unable to dock because of congestion.

"A lot of ships spend days in the outer anchorage waiting to offload their cargo before moving to Port Elizabeth or Durban in the hope of unloading it there.

"But these ships do not come back to Cape Town to collect our exports and this results in our goods being stuck for weeks, and causes our international clients to cancel the sales."

Mr Jacobs said it seemed as if everyone, except Portnet, had expected the South African market to pick up.

"They are so behind and incapable of coping with the increased volume that it is embarrassing the country, destroying our export markets and costing millions of rands."

Freight operator Robert Bat said: "If Portnet cannot deliver on time they should allow pri-

vate companies to enter the harbour and clean up the mess. This way the goods would reach their destination on time."

Peter Odendaal, Cape Town branch chairman of the Association of Shipping Lines (ASL), said they had been speaking to Portnet for more than a year about the "less-than-efficient" operation of the container terminal, and raised their concerns over the inability of Portnet to provide an acceptable service.

"Our members believe there is little hope of improvement in the short term as Portnet has not adequately addressed the requirements to handle the upturn in container volumes, nor anticipated the increase in cargo flows as the country's economy continues to recover and grow.

"One of the main causes of the problem appears to be their inability to provide sufficient skilled labour to work the terminal efficiently.

"Not only is the workforce inadequate, but recruitment and training have been seriously lacking. The result is the terminal is ill-equipped to handle the long-anticipated upswing in container flows."

Mr Odendaal said the problem was aggravated by labour disputes which resulted in numbers of the already too few workers failing to report for work.

"The direct effect on shipping lines is delays to vessels, often for many days, and often causing the need to bypass Cape Town in favour of Port Elizabeth.

"And we will not be able to absorb the unwarranted costs at-

tached to the delays, about R80 000 a day, and are considering passing it on to the end-users — the importers and exporters."

Albert Schuitmaker, deputy director of the Cape Chamber of Commerce and Industry, said while they agreed that a solution was not readily available, all the parties should get together to find a solution without damaging the image of the harbour.

"Increases in cargo handled at the port have outstripped expectations by 26 percent and last month the number of containers was 45 percent above the monthly average of 20 000.

"While the problem can broadly be ascribed to inadequate forecasting, labour shortage and insufficient equipment, Portnet should start thinking along the lines of getting private companies to help ease their load and will have to work longer hours to clear the backlog," Mr Schuitmaker said.

Portnet's Mr Carse said Portnet had taken steps to improve the situation, which included an accelerated labour training programme, increasing the stacking area and ordering additional equipment.

Port manager Neels Hubinger confirmed the situation had deteriorated and said there was no short-term solution, and that the present situation would continue for the next few months.

He said talks were also being held to switch the operation of Mutsui OSK Line, one of the biggest container transshipments companies using the terminal, from Cape Town to Port Elizabeth.

## SAA profit jumps above R200m — CE

332 STEPHANE BOTHMA

DURBAN — SAA had made more than R200m profit during the 1994/95 financial year, CE Mike Myburgh said yesterday.

Although the figures had not yet been audited, the airline's results had improved vastly compared with losses of R23m last year and R78m in the 1992/93 financial year. The turnaround could be attributed mainly to a change in world perception of SA. Costs had also been cut substantially.

Membership of the airline's Voyager frequent flier programme grew to 200 000 members during the year. SAA Cargo last month launched a similar programme for frequent freight carrying.

SAA corporate communications chief Leon Els said the airline would spend about R4bn during the next five years updating and expanding its fleet. It would also increase its services to the US and Canada this year with extra flights to Miami and New York, and new flights to Los Angeles and Toronto.

A major US airline would introduce a new service to SA before the year-end. While Els would not elaborate on this, he said SAA welcomed the competition.

SAA planned additional flights to London and Frankfurt and a direct flight between Johannesburg and Amsterdam. It would probably lease aircraft to service the new UK and European schedule.

A special committee had been appointed to investigate the need for and viability of a corporate identity change for SAA.

## 'Amnesty' for 11 000 taxi drivers

ARC 9/5/95 (232)

The Argus Correspondent

violations.

DURBAN. — The Attorney-General of KwaZulu-Natal, Mr Tim McNally, has stopped police from acting on 11 000 arrest warrants against taxi drivers facing fines for traffic

Provincial Minister of Transport, Mr S'bu Ndebele, met Mr McNally to resolve unhappiness among taxi drivers who claim to have been hounded by traffic authorities.



# Ships, tourism battle for space in harbour

**ANDREA WEISS, Municipal Reporter**  
CAPE TOWN harbour is becoming the hottest property in town as increased shipping trade jostles for space with the tourism industry.

Urgent moves are afoot to mount a joint planning initiative to ensure that Cape Town does not lose out as an economic boom puts pressure on harbour land.

At odds are Portnet's need to expand to accommodate more ships visiting the Cape with cargo or for repairs, and the city, which has long eyed harbour land for an international convention centre.

This has emerged from a report by the city planner's department, which has pointed out that the success of the Waterfront development is creating a demand for expansion west towards Granger Bay and east towards Duncan Dock.

But the port will not be able to operate at optimum capacity if cargo handling in Duncan Dock is combined with tourism and leisure activities because Portnet also needs to expand its operating capacity.

The Cape Town City Council is seeking a joint partnership with Portnet and the provincial government to decide whether the harbour should place its emphasis on

trade or tourism, and ultimately whether harbour expansion should be shifted to Saldanha Bay.

But economists have also suggested that Cape Town has the potential to become a regional distribution hub of the order of Rotterdam, Antwerp, Singapore or Hong Kong.

"Is Table Bay harbour's core role that of a working harbour servicing the needs of industry or should its major role be as a stimulus to the tourism-leisure industry?" the city's planning department wanted to know.

According to the report, Portnet's prediction of a five percent a year growth in traffic has been far exceeded, with present tonnages expected to grow by between 15 to 20 percent. The number of vessels calling at the harbour has increased by between 25 to 30 percent.

At present, the Ben Schoeman terminal is trying to handle 15 percent more container movements than the capacity of the facility. The delays have compelled Safmarine to divert one of their large container vessels to Port Elizabeth.

Continued congestion could result in a shipping surcharge, which would diminish the price competitiveness of South African exports and raise the price of imports.

ARLT 9/5/95

# Fines for taximen to be shelved

(332)

source: 9/5/95

## ■ UNFAIR TREATMENT Thousands

hounded by traffic cops over 5 years:

**A**TTORNEY-GENERAL of KwaZulu-Natal Mr Tim McNally yesterday stopped police from acting on 11 000 arrest warrants against taxi drivers facing fines for traffic violations.

And the taximen may have fines against them either dropped or reduced after claims of unjustified treatment meted out to them over the past five years.

Provincial minister of transport Mr S'bu Ndebele and other role-players held an urgent meeting yesterday with McNally to resolve unhappiness among thousands of taxi drivers who have been hounded by traffic authorities to pay their fines.

The meeting follows a serious threat recently of another taxi blockade in Durban to publicise the taxi industry's grievances. Ndebele said any disruption of the taxi industry would cause severe chaos to both businesses and passengers.

McNally has placed a moratorium executing the warrants of arrest until the wrangle is sorted out. Just days before yesterday's announcement the Durban City Police said they would act on the warrants.

Asked whether the taxi industry was receiving preferential treatment, provincial traffic chief Mr John Schnell said this was not so. Every case would be examined and treated individually, but all attempts will be made to defuse the emotive situation.

Ndebele said the taxi industry had allegedly been unfairly treated by authorities of the previous government. He said a taxi forum would be established in which taxi drivers would be able to take up their allegations of unfairness with the authorities concerned.

"I am looking forward to the final resolution of these fines over the next few weeks. We intend to wipe the slate clean and the taxi industry has given its assurance that all future prosecutions will be adjudicated timeously through a normal legal process," Ndebele said.

Meanwhile, the taxi industry has been roped in to play a leading role transporting thousands of Rugby World Cup '95 fans to various points in the city and to places of interest.

The Greater Durban Marketing Authority will train drivers to deal with visitors. A programme has been devised to ensure a number of taxis are accredited to transport visitors to rugby matches.

"Selected taxi drivers will be put through a two-day course arranged by the Road Traffic Inspectorate on customer services, defensive driving tactics and first aid.

"The Road Traffic Inspectorate would provide free and reprisal-free roadworthy tests for these taxis after hours to ensure the safety of major items like brakes and steering, and will accredit the successful vehicles with special decals valid until the end of June.



# Sky's the limit as SAA launches R85-m upgrade

IAN SHIFFMAN  
Aviation Correspondent

SOUTH African Airways is to spend R85 million upgrading its Boeing 747 fleet in a bid to keep pace with changing world airline trends.

The first of its newly upgraded aircraft was unveiled in Johannesburg yesterday.

In addition to the physical changes to cabins, SAA has also invested in a whole new range of cabin equipment which will be introduced in phases until the entire fleet, international and domestic, is upgraded — scheduled for April next year.

The airline has adopted a new slogan: "Africa's Warmest Welcome", and passengers will enjoy "a little bit of Africa" during their flights.

Nic Vlok, the airline's senior general manager, said: "Airlines are very much alike, and we have to compete with the best airlines in the world."

"There are 63 airlines providing services to South Africa, compared to only 21 eighteen months ago."

"We had to find some competitive advantage which could not be copied

and we found it in our people."

The Boeing 747-300 (named Cape Town) is the first aircraft in the fleet to have had the complete overhaul.

All 300 and 200 models will be fitted with electrically operated seats in first-class to come in line with the 400 series. The aircraft will also be fitted with new carpets, upholstery, curtains and wall coverings.

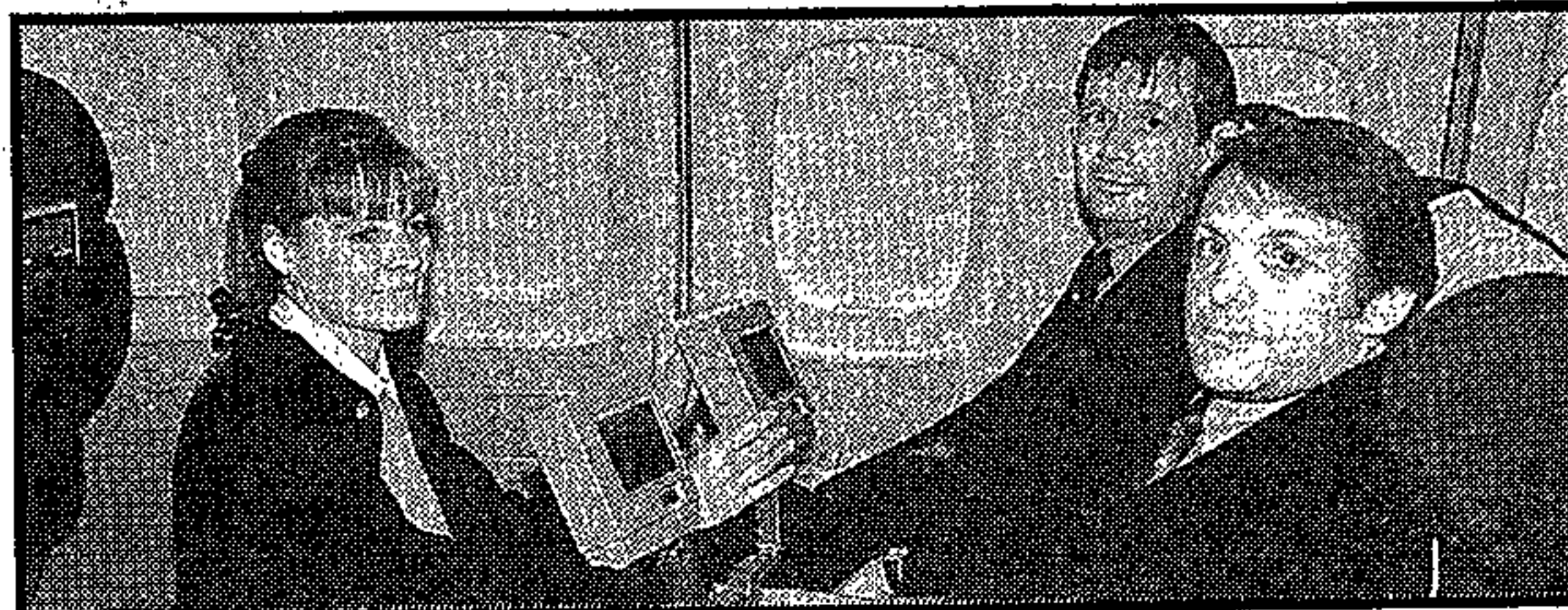
All first class seats will have personal television monitors which will fold out of the seat rests, while all business class seats will have television monitors in the seat backs.

CD music modules will also be installed to improve the quality of in-flight entertainment.

Mr Vlok said economy class passengers would also enjoy improved service.

SAA is considering the installation of personal television screens for economy class passengers, but this will be financially viable only once a reliable inflight entertainment system has been developed.

Other long-term goals include in-flight telephone and fax facilities.



**NEW LOOK:** Flight attendant Celeste Roos demonstrates the new in-flight video systems, to be installed on SAA's 747 fleet, to the airline's senior general manager Nic Vlok and Danie Van Wyk, senior manager product planning.

Picture: IAN SHIFFMAN, The Argus.



# Transnet to launch service for domestic airfreight

Arg. 13/14/5/95  
332

THE consignment distribution and container transport division of Transnet is launching a new product, PX Air, involving a full-scale domestic air freight movement of parcels, similar to other express operations in South Africa.

While PX has concentrated on its normal parcel and mini-container products, it has also been testing airfreight over the past three years.

On the landside operations, the operation will be further enhanced using "Super Drivers" in its road fleet of collection and delivery vehicles. Drivers will be trained to do all the necessary functions, including documentation at airports.

National manager Cobus Herbst said: "It has been a part of our total product line-up that we have tested thoroughly, and we know it can work. We have an extremely good track record from this trial period."

He added, "We are now establishing PX Air nationally as a special business product within our company, focusing on moving time-sensitive, high-value, low-volume products by air."

The new PX Air centres in Cape Town, Durban and Johannesburg should be operative by the end of May, and within the next year other branches will be opened in other centres.

Mr Herbst said PX Air wanted to be in the top five domestic airfreight forwarders within the next year and was currently setting up the necessary management and staff teams to operate the new network.

While the PX Air function will initially concentrate on domestic airfreight, initial customer demand will necessitate operating the service internationally through the use of registered suppliers.

# Sharp drop in taxi violence

Adrian Hadland

(332)

CAPE TOWN — Incidents of minibus taxi violence have fallen dramatically in many parts of the country, according to Safety and Security Minister Sydney Mufamadi.

In a written reply to a question from DP senator James Selfe, Mufamadi said 33 people had been killed and 75 injured in violence-related crimes in the taxi industry during the first four months of this year. This compared with 197 killed and 314 injured for the whole of last year.

In the Western Cape where 29 people were killed and 88 injured last year, no incidents had been reported this year, Mufamadi said.

No deaths or injuries had occurred in the Northern Transvaal this year, compared with 62 last year. One injury had been reported in the Western Transvaal (13 last year). Seven people had been killed or injured in the far Northern Transvaal (58 last year).

In the former Witwatersrand area

17 people had been killed and 36 injured this year compared with 73 killed and 87 injured last year. Proportionally, this marked little improvement.

In response to further questions, Mufamadi said gangs were responsible for 49% of murders committed in the Cape Flats area and 48% of attempted murders.

Gang members had been involved in the deaths of 125 people between October last year and March this year and 307 people were seriously injured in gang-related violence.

Most categories of serious crime had increased between October and December last year. Murder had risen from 1 499 to 1 880, rape from 3 074 to 3 693, child abuse from 187 to 197 and armed robbery from 5 943 to 6 035.

On the decrease were fraud, which fell from 4 510 incidents to 4 016, car hijacking from 606 to 558, theft from 59 969 to 57, 30 and 17 police officers were murdered in December last year compared with 23 in October.

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## Widespread child stress — Naidoo

PRETORIA — Nearly seven of every 10 children living in violence-afflicted areas suffer from deep depression or post-traumatic stress, Minister without Portfolio Jay Naidoo said at a conference yesterday.

He told an Afrikanerbond conference in Pretoria this emerged from a recent government study to produce a comprehensive policy on children's rights and needs.

Government departments as well as non-governmental bodies had been involved in the study.

Reintegrating juveniles into society was one of the issues under examination, Mr Naidoo said.

The policy, an important element of the reconstruction and development programme, would be finalised in two or three months.

On financing the programme, he said the government would make sure that "every single cent" spent by it was linked to the reconstruction and development programme. — Sapa.

AMGOLD



# Countrywide hearings soon on taxi industry controls

BY CLAIRE GEBHARDT

ECONOMICS EDITOR

Countrywide hearings on the taxi industry will be held to determine its economic viability, its future structure and its role in the national transport system, says Transport Minister Mac Maharaj.

Addressing delegates to the annual general meeting of the National African Federated Transport Organisation (NAFTO) in Johannesburg on Friday, Maharaj said the times and venues of the hearings would be publicised widely to ensure broad input.

Only with the support of all the roleplayers could lasting solutions be found, he said. The hearings are

part of a process set in motion last year to regulate the taxi industry.

A special task team was formed earlier this year following a National Taxi Workshop which was attended by 200 representatives of the taxi industry.

Maharaj said the task team consisted of nine representatives of the taxi industry, one from each of the provinces, and nine officials representing the three tiers of government.

Peter Rabali, NAFTO national executive president, called for transport plans to be drawn up for all modes based on the needs of the people at a local level.

With more than 80 percent of South Africans depending on public

passenger transport to get around, public transport was an essential service like housing, health and education, he said.

Rural areas which had been severely neglected needed to be included in all plans introduced by the provinces.

Pik Botha, minister of minerals and energy, said the taxi industry, which carried about 45 percent of all commuters, was also an industry bedevilled by division and strife in the past.

He said the industry was squeezed between increasing competition and rising costs on the one hand and an income which did not increase enough to keep pace with the rising expenditure.

# Crackdown on taxi violence threatened

BD 22/5/95 (332)

Theo Rawana

AT THE National African Federated Transport Organisation's (Nafto) AGM, government ministers sharply attacked disunity and violence in the taxi industry and urged members to join efforts to bring taximen into profitability.

Nafto also used the same platform to make demands for black economic empowerment and pledged support for government efforts.

Transport Minister Mac Maharaj threatened to crack down on taxi violence, Mineral and Energy Minister Pik Botha said disunity was frustrating efforts to help the industry towards profitability, and Minister without Portfolio Jay Naidoo said the industry should be regulated to bring about peace.

Maharaj told delegates that government would have to come down heavily on perpetrators of violence in the event of "any more resorts to violence".

The taxi task team, made up of officials from provincial and national governments and taxi associations, would soon hold a number of countrywide hearings on this and other issues. The task team aimed at setting up mechanisms to ensure the economic viability of the taxi industry and to see that it played a proper role in the country's public transport system.

Although recent figures indicated a drop in the number of people killed in taxi violence, Maharaj decried the continued clashes, largely between rival taxi associations. "Any death through taxi violence is completely unacceptable," he said.

Maharaj urged all role players to assist

the task team in finding lasting solutions to the violence and other problems disrupting the taxi industry.

Botha said he looked forward to the solutions which would emerge from the taxi task team. "But to be frank, it is an industry which has been bedevilled by division and strife in the past. I sincerely hope the taxi task team will be able to overcome these divisions. Unity amongst you will assist us in overcoming the problems of the past."

Botha said his department was promoting the use of diesel fuel in SA and the use of diesel-powered taxis could be one possible solution for the industry's woes. "The diesel engine is far more fuel-efficient and also has a longer operating life."

He hoped Nafto would collaborate in a project his department was funding, in which a driver's training booklet and videos would be available to assist driving schools and other institutions to train more fuel-efficient drivers.

Naidoo said government's small business and community structures would be encouraged to become involved in the reconstruction process, thereby allowing the people to develop themselves.

He asked Nafto to assist government in the restructuring of the transport system in SA. He said the taxi industry had to be regulated because of the violence and carnage on SA's roads.

Nafto said government must show muscle in dealing with the "mafia" in the industry and drive for blacks to have a share in the economy. The organisation called on Botha to speed up the process of finalising the fuel policy.

# Taxi industry talks 'for all'

(332) 8101 22/5/95

■ BY CLAIRE GEBHARDT  
ECONOMICS EDITOR

Transport Minister Mac Maharaj said countrywide hearings on the taxi industry would be held to determine the industry's economic viability, its future structure and its role in the national transport system.

Speaking at the AGM of the National African Federated Transport Organisation (Nafto) in Johannesburg on Friday, Maharaj said the times and venues of the hearings would be publicised widely to ensure broad input.

Nafto national executive president Peter Rabali called for transport plans to be drawn up to cater for the needs of people at local level. "Public passenger transport was an essential service like housing, health and education with more than 80% of South Africans depending on public passenger transport to get around."

Minister of Minerals and Energy Pik Botha said Nafto played a vital role in the transport sector. The taxi industry carried about 45% of all commuters — more than those who travelled by bus and rail combined.



# Chaos and death in ongoing taxi blues

BY SHIRLEY WOODGATE

Many Soweto commuters were left stranded and angry today after two of the three main taxi associations in the south-west staged a stayaway to draw attention to what they claim is official discrimination against operators.

Elsewhere in the country, eight people were shot dead in incidents or ambushes as continuing taxi violence surfaced in Encobo (where taxi occupants fired on a delivery van carrying passengers) and Clarckenbury, Eastern Cape, Pietersburg, Northern Transvaal, and KwaZulu Natal.

In the Johannesburg city centre, a shot was fired at the corner of Harrison and Market streets shortly after 7 am today, and the intersections of Eloff and President streets and Harrison and Market streets were briefly blocked.

The normally bustling Bree Street rank was deserted this morning, although a few taxis heading east were stopping further up the street to drop off and collect fares.

The Noord Street rank was crowded with vehicles but none was operating. There

were long lines of commuters all over the city trying to catch buses to reach work.

Soweto traffic department spokesman Floyd Ndebele said the Soweto Taxi Association (STA) was not involved in the protest. The Witwatersrand Taxi Association and the Diepmeadow Taxi Association were only transporting workers as far as Baragwanath but refused to drive into the city.

Taxi Drivers' Committee member Godfrey Mohlala claimed taxi operators were treated unfairly by traffic officers and magistrates, and a list of grievances would be handed to the legislature today.

Sapa reports a taxi owner shot himself after killing his driver and a policeman at Mqunduli in the Eastern Cape yesterday. The owner arrived at the scene of an accident between his minibus and another vehicle.

Without warning he shot both his driver and a policeman who tried to intervene. Both died on the spot.

The taxi owner fled in his car but realising police were in hot pursuit, he stopped, got out and shot himself.

# 4 die, 2 wounded in ongoing taxi war

*Sowetan 22/5/95*  
By Khangale Makhado and  
Bongani Mavuso

**CROSS SWORDS** War of the

taxis take a heavy toll of life:

**F**OUR PEOPLE WERE KILLED AND two seriously wounded in separate incidents of violence at the weekend in what are believed to be ongoing taxi feuds in the Northern Transvaal and Soweto.

Two taxi owners and a passenger were killed in the Northern Transvaal. In Soweto, a taxi owner was killed.

On Friday police confiscated more than 50 firearms and 105 rounds of ammunition from people in the Northern Transvaal believed to be linked to the taxi industry.

Police spokesman Major Werner Voigt said they searched over 450 vehicles, mostly taxis, and confiscated 55

guns (45 licensed and 10 unlicensed). They also seized eight AK-47s and 97 rounds of R5 ammunition during the operation.

Taxi owner Mr Paulus 'Styles' Manamela was shot dead in Moletji, near Pietersburg, on Saturday morning by gunmen in a minibus.

Police spokesman Captain Phuti Setati said yesterday Manamela was forced off the road and robbed of about R2 000. He was then shot several times in the body.

In another incident taxi commuter Mr Jack Madiba (47), died in a hail of bullets when gunmen fired on a minibus at Ga-Mashashane, near Pietersburg.

The taxi owner escaped through a

window, but was hit by several shots in the body. He was admitted to hospital in a critical condition.

Another taxi owner from Seshego, Mr Rufus Hlako (42), was also killed by unknown gunmen as he was closing his shop.

In Pimville, Soweto, taxi owner Mr Thabang Mokoena (27) was shot and killed and his vehicle hijacked by assailants on Friday morning, his father Mr Gerald Mokoena said yesterday.

Mokoena said he suspected his son's killing was part of the ongoing feud between the Soweto Transport Services and the Soweto Taxi Association.

Police said they were investigating the matter.



*Threatened blockade called off after meeting*

# Reef taxis running normally

SAW 23/5/95

(382)

## ■ STAFF REPORTERS

Taxis were running normally on the Reef this morning after a transport disruption yesterday forced many commuters to walk or stay home unless they had access to trains and buses.

Taxi operators called off a threatened blockade of Johannesburg after a meeting with Gauteng provincial authorities. At a meeting chaired by acting premier Amos Masondo it was agreed further discussions would be held to discuss a range of contentious issues.

Ahead of next Tuesday's discussions to resolve ongoing problems in the taxi industry, Johannesburg security chief Mike Davis appealed to all role players to back efforts to get taxis running smoothly.

"It is a multi-faceted situation involving owners who must ensure that vehicles are road-worthy instead of merely pushing the drivers for revenue, and drivers who should be considerate on the road," Davis said.

The SA Taxi Drivers' Union has threatened that mass action yesterday would spread country-wide unless demands to write off traffic fines were met.

Extra police were on standby today along with a large fleet of tow trucks at certain strategic points to counter any attempt by striking taxi operators to block the streets of Johannesburg.

The action, by two of Soweto's three main taxi associations, is against alleged discrimination by traffic officers and magistrates.

Commuters — many of them schoolchildren — were stranded in the city centre late yesterday while others had to fork out for bus fares to get as close to home as possible.



**A long wait . . . this small child was among a group of commuters waiting for taxis at the normally busy Baragwanath taxi rank in Soweto yesterday.**

PICTURE: JODI BIEBER

All the major taxi ranks in Johannesburg were either empty or drivers refused to operate for fear of their lives.

"Some men came and forcefully took our money (float) and warned us not to work," one

said at the Bree Street rank.

Some drivers outside the Carlton Centre said they were risking passengers' and their lives by running between Johannesburg and Soweto.

The South African Commut-

ers' Organisation (Saco) warned the taxi industry last night to consult commuters before embarking on strike action.

"If taxi associations continue to treat us with contempt they are going to endanger whatever

kind of relationship we might have had so far," said Saco secretary-general David Sekgobela.

"Whatever the reason for this decision, prior consultation should have taken place with taxi users."



# Driver killed, commuters stranded in taxi stayaway

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT**

**JOHANNESBURG:** At least one taxi driver was killed here and many commuters were left stranded today after two of the three main Soweto taxi associations staged a stayaway to draw attention to what they claim is official discrimination against operators.

Elsewhere in the country, eight people were shot dead in incidents or ambushes as taxi violence continuing in Encobo, where taxi occupants fired on a delivery van carrying passengers, and Clarksburg, Eastern Cape, Pietersburg, Northern Transvaal and kwaZulu/Natal.

In the Johannesburg city centre, a man police believe was a taxi driver was shot dead at 8.20am at the West Street rank. And shortly after 7am a shot was fired at the corner of Harrison and Market streets. The intersections of Eloff

and President streets and Harrison and Market streets were briefly blocked.

Police spokesman Colonel Eugene Opperman said four men were arrested after the fatal shooting, one with a stolen pistol and another with a licensed firearm.

The normally bustling Bree Street rank was deserted yesterday morning, although a few taxis heading east were stopping further up the street to drop off and collect fares.

There were long lines of commuters all over the city trying to catch buses to reach work.

On the main road to Johannesburg, frustrated commuters lined the streets trying to hitch lifts.

Col Opperman said the strike has been caused by small groups of younger drivers trying to intimidate others to stop running. But, he said, older drivers had beaten off some of the younger men as

they did not want to strike.

In some parts of Soweto, taxis appeared to be running normally.

Taxi Drivers' Committee member Mr Godfrey Mohlala claimed taxi operators were treated unfairly by traffic officers and magistrates, and a list of grievances would be handed to the legislature today.

Sapa reports a taxi owner shot himself after killing his driver and a policeman at Mqunduli in the Eastern Cape yesterday.

## No warning

The man arrived at the scene of an accident between his minibus and another vehicle. He shot both his driver and a policeman who tried to intervene. Both died on the spot.

The taxi owner fled in his car but realising police were close behind him he stopped, got out and shot himself.

CT 23/5/95

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# Threat of national taxi protests

Theo Rawana

THE SA Taxi Drivers' Union said mass action staged by Johannesburg drivers yesterday would spread nationally if government did not yield to demands that traffic fines imposed on them under the past government be written off.

One man was killed when gunmen in a vehicle opened fire in West Street in the city centre yesterday. Four suspects were arrested and two guns seized after the incident. Thousands of stranded commuters swelled the already long bus queues in the central business district.

No agreement was reached at a meeting between a Gauteng transport ministry del-

egation and the taxi drivers last night.

Sapa reports police spokesman Col Eugene Opperman said police had heard taxi drivers planned to block roads into central Johannesburg today. "We are deploying extra people," he said. Tow-away vehicles would also try to keep the roads clear.

Johannesburg Traffic Department spokesman Wayne Minaar said the ministry delegation and taxi drivers had agreed to continue negotiations today. He could not comment on whether the traffic fines would be written off.

About 500 taxi drivers from various taxi organizations marched to the Gauteng pro-

Continued on Page 2

## Protests

Continued from Page 1

vincial legislature offices to demand that tickets issued for alleged traffic offences be cancelled.

Drivers complained of being targeted by traffic officers and police as potential offenders. They also said they wanted loading bays in the city centre, and the establishment of a forum of drivers and the traffic department to address grievances.

SA Democratic Taxi Union national treasurer Joel Sindane said the mass action was set to go national if government did not yield to demands that tickets and summonses issued under the previous government be scrapped.

The organisation's Pretoria branch had been set to embark on a strike tomorrow, but decided to shelve the action until it heard the outcome of talks.

Sindane said taxi drivers throughout the country were poised to stage marches and

blockades until all the provinces followed the example set by the KwaZulu/Natal traffic authorities, who had agreed to "write off" all tickets and summonses "issued in the old era".

KwaZulu/Natal transport department spokesmen could not be reached yesterday to confirm their reported decision.

At least three people have been killed in the Northern Transvaal since the eruption of violence in the taxi industry in Pietersburg on Friday, police spokesman W/O Arlene Breytenbach said yesterday. Thirteen people were arrested after stone-throwing incidents at taxi ranks which led to the violence. Fifty-five firearms and 105 rounds of ammunition were confiscated.

Our Umtata correspondent reports that a large contingent of policemen has been deployed in Engcobo following the weekend killing of five people in minibus taxi violence. The killings took place in two separate incidents on Sunday.

# Taximen's strike hits commuters

332 ~~332~~ Sowetan 23/5/95

**By Themba Sepotokele**

THOUSANDS of taxi commuters in different parts of Gauteng were yesterday stranded when taxi drivers embarked on a strike to protest against alleged discrimination by the traffic department.

In Soweto commuters used other means of transport to go to work. Some braved the chilling weather and hiked.

Many commuters complained that taxi operators had not announced their strike in good time and people were taken by surprise. "We were not prepared for this kind of thing. We should have been informed earlier," a commuter said at the Baragwanath taxi rank in Soweto.

There were long queues all over Soweto as people waited in vain for taxis to take them to Johannesburg.

In central Johannesburg, commuters gathered at the taxi ranks at Noord and Plein streets but there were no taxis to ferry them home. A commuter, Mr Sam Diale, said he had waited for three hours at the Noord Street taxi rank.

Many commuters went back to the

trains, which they had avoided for a long time because of the train violence.

"I have walked from my home in Plein Street to the Oriental Plaza without any sign of a taxi. I nearly walked to my place of work in Industria but was fortunate to get alternative transport after more than two hours," a woman said.

Late yesterday afternoon and last night hundreds of commuters were stranded at taxi ranks in Johannesburg. People lined the streets trying to get lifts to take them home.

Hundreds of commuters heading for home crammed bus stops as the streets were virtually empty of taxis.

Meanwhile, police reported yesterday that taxi operators plan to block roads into central Johannesburg today.

Police spokesman Colonel Eugene Opperman said: "We have heard among

taxi drivers that they plan to block certain roads leading into Johannesburg and in the city centre tomorrow (Tuesday) morning. We are deploying extra people."

He said "quite a number of tow-away vehicles" would try to keep the roads clear.

"If they (taxi drivers) want to protest peacefully we have no problem, but the minute they obstruct other people's rights we will act."

Yesterday evening a committee of drivers met Gauteng MEC for transport Mr Olaus van Zyl to discuss their complaints of alleged harassment by traffic officers and unfair treatment by magistrates. The drivers say traffic fines issued to them should be quashed and future fines made payable by taxi owners.

Political comment in this issue by Aggrey Klaaste. Newsbills, sub-editing and headlines by Sy Makaringe and Paul Drosdzol. All of 61 Commando Road, Industria, Johannesburg. Printed by The Newspaper Printing Company for the proprietors and publishers, New Africa Publications Ltd of 61 Commando Road, Industria, Johannesburg. The reproduction or broadcast without permission of articles published in this newspaper on any current economic, political or religious topic, is forbidden and expressly reserved to New Africa Publications under Section 12 (7) of the Copyright Act 1978. Sowetan abides by the Code of Conduct of the Press Council of South Africa and accepts its jurisdiction





## A tense moment in the city centre

A policeman with a dog stands guard as an altercation threatens to break out in Commissioner Street, central Johannesburg, when angry taxi operators marched on the offices of the Gauteng Provincial Legislature yesterday to hand in a memorandum. Taximen yesterday protested against alleged discrimination by the traffic department and grounded their vehicles, stranding hundreds of commuters in Soweto, Alexandra Township, the East and West Rand.

PICTURE BY MBUZENI ZULU

# Taxi chaos: 8 die

AT LEAST EIGHT PEOPLE have been killed in separate incidents of the ongoing taxi violence in Johannesburg, Eastern Cape and Northern Transvaal since Sunday night.

In Johannesburg yesterday a man was shot dead by gunmen during a taxi drivers' strike that left thousands of commuters stranded.

In Zola, Soweto, another taxi driver was shot and killed.

Witwatersrand police spokesman Colonel Eugene Opperman said four suspects were arrested and two weapons seized.

At Ga-Matlala near Pieterburg in the Northern Transvaal, taxi owner

Mr Judas Nyako (45) was shot and killed by three AK-47-wielding gunmen while walking to his vehicle at a taxi rank yesterday morning.

Police spokesman Captain Phuti Setati said another two people were injured in the attack.

"As soon as the assailants had made certain the man was dead, they were picked up by a minibus which sped off," Setati said.

### The feuding groups

"We are very concerned about this state of affairs. We think the only answer is to bring the feuding groups around the table."

The latest killing in Pieterburg fol-

lowed the murder of two taxi owners and a passenger, who were shot and killed in separate attacks on Saturday.

In Enagoboko on the Eastern Cape five people were killed on Sunday afternoon when gunmen opened fire on taxis and bakkies loaded with passengers in the township.

Police spokesman Captain Monde Ngandini said the assailants drove around the streets in an unmarked vehicle.

"They opened fire indiscriminately on taxis and bakkies loaded with commuters," Ngandini said.

In one incident the gunmen fired on a bakkie carrying four passengers. The driver and a passenger were killed.

Ngandini said.

In another attack the gunmen fired on a minibus killing two commuters and seriously injuring three. Three other passengers in a bakkie were seriously injured when the same gunmen opened fire on a bakkie, Ngandini said.

Ngandini did not disclose the names of those who were killed as he said their next of kin had not been informed.

### Drivers' grievances

Meanwhile, the Inkatha Freedom Party Youth Brigade yesterday supported the Gauteng taxi strike saying the provincial government needed to address drivers' grievances.

Yesterday, the South African Com-

muters Organisation warned the taxi industry to consult with commuters before embarking on strike action.

It demanded the immediate restoration of taxi services in Gauteng. "I want to warn the taxi industry that if they continue to treat us with such contempt they are going to endanger whatever kind of relationship we might have had so far," said Saco secretary-general Mr David Sekgobela.

He said commuters were most affected by the protest actions. Commuters were "extremely upset by the drivers' unilateral and high-handed decision to strike", Sekgobela said.

See also page 2.

# Taximen may challenge fines

*Sowetan 24/5/95 (332)*

## Sowetan Reporters

TRAFFIC offenders, including taxi operators, have a chance to make representations about alleged unfair treatment by traffic officers, acting Witwatersrand Attorney-General Mr Kevin Attwell said yesterday.

Attwell said such representations should be made to the senior prosecutor in Johannesburg.

"We have an open door policy and are prepared to listen to their grievances, including demands that traffic fines be reviewed," he said.

He doubted whether the fines and warrants of arrest could be written off, adding that "the matter would have to be negotiated by all parties".

Johannesburg Magistrate's Court senior prosecutor Mr Brink Ferreira said it would be unfair to scrap the warrants of arrest of taxi operators alone, without considering other members of the public.

He said warrants of arrest were decided by magistrates on merit.

Meanwhile, the president of the South African Taxi Drivers Union, Mr Norman Prince, said yesterday commuters would in future be consulted by taxi operators when a taxi strike was being planned.

This follows a warning on Monday by the SA

Commuters Organisation that the taxi industry should consult commuters before embarking on a strike.

The situation in central Johannesburg and at taxi ranks in Soweto returned to normal yesterday following Monday's strike, which had left thousands of commuters in Soweto, Alexandra Township and townships on the East Rand stranded.

Representatives of the taxi operators met Gauteng MEC for transport Mr Olaus van Zyl on Monday night to discuss their complaints. The meeting, which lasted about two hours, was emotional but fruitful.

Acting Gauteng premier Mr Amos Masondo told *Sapa* yesterday: "This is a fairly emotive issue and we are trying very hard to get everyone around the table with the hope that by the 30th we will have all the issues on the table."

The Letlhabile Taxi Organisation in Brits, outside Pretoria, has meanwhile pledged that all members of the Long Distance Taxi Association abide by the agreement reached last year to stop taxi feuds.

The North-West government has appointed an interim Road Transportation Board to look into the chaotic transport system caused by the former Bophuthatswana regime.



Star 25/5/95

## Gauteng bid to end taxi wars

(332)

### ■ POLITICAL STAFF

Gauteng should have solid policy proposals on the table by July on key issues which have given rise to the never-ending taxi wars, says MEC for Public Transport and Roads Olaus van Zyl.

He told the legislature on Tuesday that the Gauteng Taxi Initiative Steering Committee was meeting regularly, every four to six weeks.

It comprised representatives of major taxi associations in the province, metropolitan authorities, national government and the province.

Draft policy papers on several issues had already been prepared.



**EAST RAND** Operators angry about 'insufficient consultation' with new bodies

*Sowetan 25/5/95*

# Clash looms over taxi forums

**A** SHOWDOWN is looming between the North West MEC for transport and aviation Mr Frans Vilakazi and various taxi associations over the formation of forums to deal with problems plaguing the taxi industry.

Taxi operators in the area are unhappy about the manner in which Vilakazi is proceeding to launch the forums.

So far, the department has launched

## ■ CLAIMS DENIED Transport (332)

**MEC says he's implementing policy:**

several forums in the North-West.

Vilakazi told *Sowetan* yesterday the forums were discussed at national and provincial levels. "It is now the government's policy. I am only facilitating it in the North West province and I will not

force it on anyone. If people are against the idea they should submit constructive alternatives," he said.

Vilakazi said the taxi industry was beset with many problems and believed the proposed taxi forum would smooth

the way for resolving all the problems. Members from taxi associations in Mabopane, Hammanskraal, Garankuwa and Brits said there was insufficient consultation on the issue.

The general secretary of the Brits United Long and Short Taxi Operators, Mr David Taosuwe, accused Vilakazi of dictating terms to the taxi operators. "We do not believe these talks are going to be beneficial to us," he said.

Meanwhile, Mr Maurice Bokaba,

general secretary of the South African Taxi Drivers Union threatened to launch a taxi strike in Pretoria next week.

Thousands of commuters condemned the strike in Johannesburg on Monday which resulted in at least one person being killed.

Bokaba said all forms of violence were condemned. "A number of people have been killed in taxi related violence country-wide recently, and I call on all drivers to refrain from acts of violence."



# Fabcos calls for taxi re-regulation

By THABO LESHELO

The Foundation for African Business and Consumer Services (Fabcos) has called for the minibus taxi industry to be immediately re-regulated and integrated into the country's public transport system to stop it from sliding further into chaos.

Fabcos secretary-general David Moshapalo said that only through regulation and integration could the industry be returned to profitability, thus avoiding incidents like Monday's bloody protest by taxi drivers in Johannesburg.

The protesters were demanding that "unfair" traffic violation fines be scrapped.

"The drivers' protest is only a microcosm of the bigger problems facing the industry," said Moshapalo.

"Taxi operators are tired of subsidising commuters by continuing to charge low fares when other modes of public transport are subsidised by the government.

"That the taxi industry was the flagship of black business is a historical fact," he added.

## Deregulation

"However, the de facto deregulation of the industry in the mid-1980s has destroyed the viability of the business, resulting in taxi wars, lawlessness, violent competition and hijackings."

The sorry state of the industry is reflected in the poor sales of minibuses by Toyota and Samcor, the only minibus taxi suppliers left in the market.

Roger Houghton, a spokesman for Toyota, the main supplier to the black taxi industry, said only 100 Hi-Ace minibuses were being sold a month compared with 260 for the period 1987-1990.

Samcor spokesman Derrick de Vos said that whereas minibuses had accounted for 20 percent of its sales in the light to medium vehicle category in 1988, this had dropped to 14,8 percent in 1994.

## Minibus sales

Overtrading, the prohibitive prices of new vehicles (a new taxi can cost up to R108 000), unfavourable finance packages and the high cost of insurance were the major reasons for the sharp drop in sales.

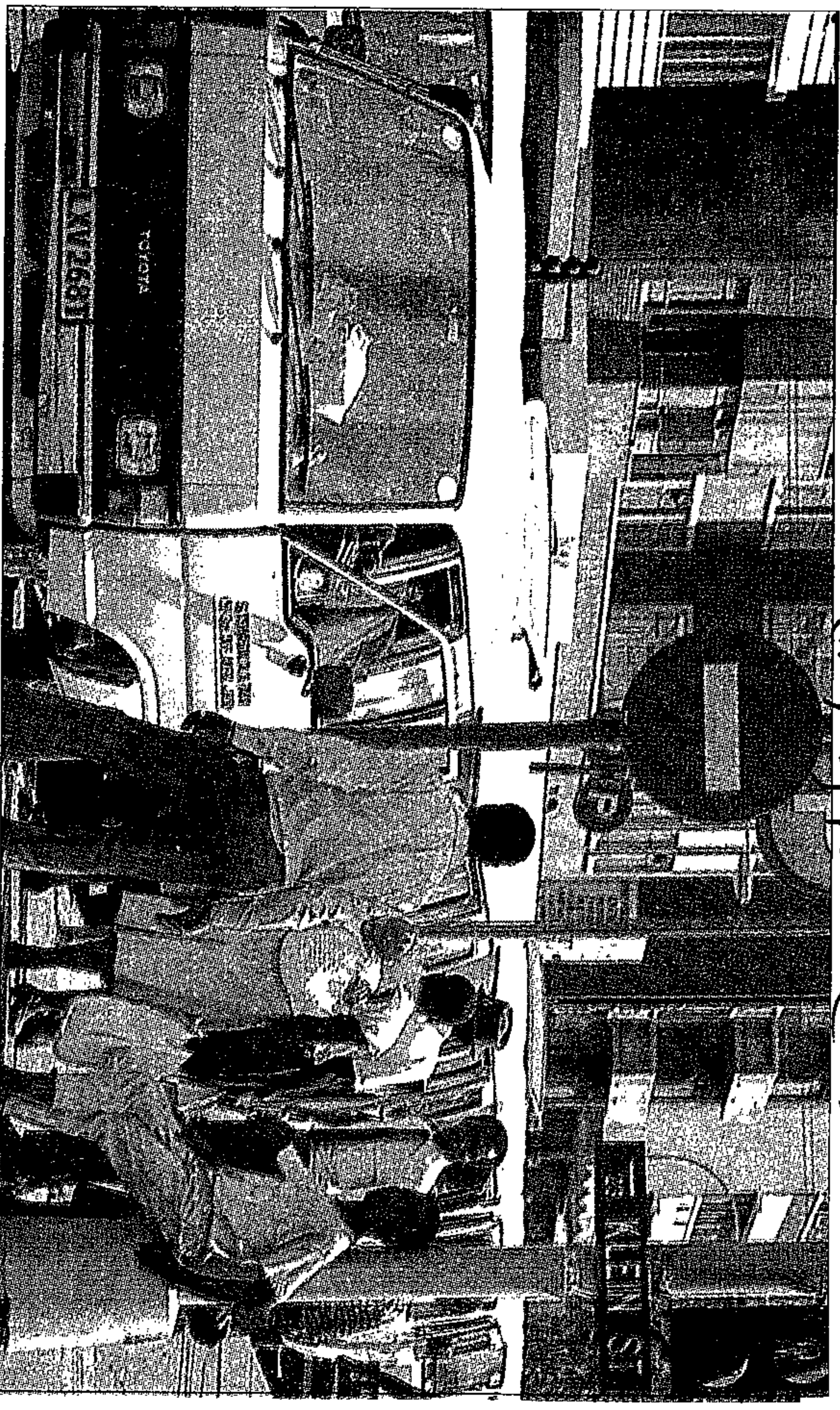
These factors had forced Delta and Nissan out of this market segment recently.

"People are simply not buying new taxis anymore but have resorted to 'recycling' cars (using parts from hijacked cars to keep theirs running)," said Moshapalo.

He urged the government to work together with the taxi industry to, among other things, stop the indiscriminate issuing of taxi licences and to determine routes in order to streamline the industry.

"We cannot afford a free-for-all," he said.

Moshapalo's views were shared by the 200 delegates representing different sectors who attended the National African Federated Transport Organisation's (Nafto) sixth annual conference in Johannesburg at the weekend, reports Ronny Tshabalala.



**THE RIGHT ROUTE** Black business believes the minibus taxi industry should be fully integrated into the country's transport system

Nafto delegates said that to be efficient and effective, South Africa's transport system had to be integrated into a single system, inclusive of all modes of transport, to cater for the country's 13 million daily passengers.

The different modes should complement one another rather than compete for commuters.

Nafto executive chairman Peter

Rabali said there was a need for the black taxi industry to diversify into other sectors of transport because of overtrading.

## Regulations

"We must map out our new role," he said.

Rabali challenged the Gauteng provincial government to assist by

amending existing regulations, policies and procedures that prevented equal participation in business opportunities.

South African Rail Commuter Corporation managing director WP Bulger said an integrated system would optimise the utilisation of the various transport modes and would reduce the "wasteful and unnecessarily duplication of ser-

vices" that existed at present.

The corporation favoured the integration of facilities at "inter-modal interchanges" such as stations.

Fare integration, through the issuing of a single ticket for all modes, would be convenient for passengers changing from one mode of transport to another, Bulger added.

CT(MR) 26/5/95 (332)



# New airline's boss is no virgin

(332) WMM 26/5-1/6/95

The head of Avia Airlines has a shady past, reports **Stefans Brümmer**

**G**ERT DE KLERK, the former airline mechanic whose Avia Airlines has made him South Africa's Richard Branson, built his empire flying clandestine military contracts to war-torn Angola in the 1980s.

Avia, this month became South Africa's first independent carrier to ply the lucrative London passenger route.

Perhaps not surprisingly, De Klerk has been talking to Virgin's Branson about a co-operation agreement. Branson is understood to want to exercise his own rights on the route later this year. De Klerk said this week: "Rather than that we throw bombs at each other, we are talking to each other about strategy and so on."

Avia's inaugural Boeing 747 flight to London's Gatwick Airport took off earlier this month amid great media fanfare. But what the media, including the Argus group of newspapers, neglected to mention, was that De Klerk is involved in one of South Africa's largest defamation suits yet: he wants about R6-million from the Argus' *Pretoria News*, which, he says, implicated his air charter business Wonder Air in post-1992 clandestine cargo flights to the Angolan rebel movement Unita.

De Klerk's court challenge, instituted last year, followed a set of *Pretoria News* articles published early in 1993 when neighbouring countries claimed evidence of clandestine flights from South Africa to Angola. The Pretoria Supreme Court action is on hold pending an application by *Pretoria News* to the Consti-



Gert de Klerk: 'Plays his business quite close to his chest'

tutional Court for a decision on whether freedom of speech guarantees apply "horizontally" between private parties, rather than only "vertically", between the state and private parties.

De Klerk, who started his air career as an apprentice aircraft technician with the South African Air Force (SAAF) in the 1960s, is understood not to dispute assertions by *Pretoria News* lawyers that Wonder Air flew clandestine missions to Unita territory before 1992 on behalf of the

South African military.

South Africa officially renounced its earlier clandestine support of Unita when the rebels rejected their September 1992 defeat in United Nations-supervised elections and went back to war. The UN also embargoed the rebels.

De Klerk refused to confirm any pre-1992 flights this week, but argued there was "a hell of a difference" between "when there is a war where it is government policy to support one side and you are a charter operation and you fly food and things" and "when peace has been brokered by the UN and conflict starts up again ... and you fly against the UN".

State documents in possession of *Pretoria News* lawyers confirm Wonder Air flights during the 1980s to several destinations in Unita territory, and a senior officer of the South African National Defence Force's intelligence directorate has confirmed to the *Mail & Guardian* that De Klerk "used to fly for us".

The flights would have formed part of South Africa's clandestine participation in the Angolan war in the 1970s and 1980s. Front companies and sympathetic private companies were used to disguise aspects of the role of the South African military.

Air charter company Pasload Flights, later acknowledged by the government to have been a front, was disbanded together with the SADF's notorious Directorate of Covert Collection in 1992 after a Goldstone Commission investigation.

De Klerk had links with Pasload. A former Pasload pilot confirmed last week that De Klerk had serviced Pasload aircraft, while Directorate of Civil Aviation registration records show that three DC3 transport aircraft were transferred from Wonder

Air to Pasload in 1987 and 1988. Meanwhile, the SAAF has confirmed that De Klerk had been involved in an "embargo-busting" exercise on its behalf, converting two DC3 aircraft from piston engines to turbo-props.

Directorate of Civil Aviation records show that the vintage DC3s, property of the SAAF, were registered in the name of Wonder Air in February 1990, only to be re-registered to the SAAF in November 1993.

A SAAF representative said the aircraft had been the prototypes in a SAAF programme to upgrade the aircraft to turbo configuration and that Wonder Air held the local rights for the conversion. He said the registration of the aircraft to Wonder Air had been necessary "as a result of the (arms) embargo".

The embargo, enforced by the United Nations, would have barred the foreign supplier of the turbine technology from dealing with the SAAF. But De Klerk this week disputed the arms embargo had been broken, arguing the conversions were "a civilian modification".

De Klerk last week visited Harare after an approach by the Zimbabwe Defence Force, which also wants its ageing DC3 fleet upgraded to turbine configuration. He has been reported to have stakes in 17 companies, including a diamond concession in Angola. De Klerk acknowledged this week he was involved in "a few companies ... but I don't know how many".

He owns a private airstrip next to the Pretoria-Pietersburg highway. Already large enough to land DC6 cargo aircraft, the airstrip is being extended and De Klerk hopes it will take wide-bodied jets by next year.

The chief of another air charter operation this week described De Klerk as "a maverick (who) gets the job done ... with initiative and guts". An Avia insider said De Klerk "plays his business quite close to his chest".



# Who is behind the Eastern Cape taxi slaughter?

Brown Roberts

**T**HOUSANDS of Eastern Cape taxi commuters were terrified this week as they rode from one town to the next. Many sang and prayed to God to save them from the very people whose service they were using as a vicious war between rival taxi groups fighting over routes continued unabated. The slaughter has claimed 28 lives so far this year.

With no solution in sight, the Eastern Cape government has threatened to start up its own troop-protected bus service to ensure that commuting, so vital to this remote, labour-supplying region, would continue.

Much of the violence centred around King William's Town — the natural axis point for main regional and national routes — but it also broke out at Alice, Stutterheim, Queenstown, Peddie, East London and in Transkei towns.

One of the claims is that former Ciskeian policemen are deeply involved in the fight — they own fleets of taxis and have a direct interest in securing certain ranks for their own operators, say critics.

A Network of Independent Monitors researcher spoke of local taxi organisations hiring hitmen to rake rival organisations with semi-automatic fire. It was suggested that a gang of these mercenaries had been brought in from the Western Cape and were operating out of the Queenstown area. A King William's Town lawyer who has represented taxi owners seemed to support this idea, saying that the bottom line for most owners was money. He wanted the new govern-

## Praying for safety on the Transkei hell run

sm 26/5 - 1/6/95

(332)

### EYEWITNESS: Mgqobo Nxukume

**W**HEN I arrived at the rank in Umtata I heard a lot of talk about how the terrible taxi war was intensifying. The routes between Umtata, Port Elizabeth and Grahamstown were the worst hit, everyone was saying.

As I was standing there with the other passengers, there was a lot of doubt about whether we should travel. But we all had commitments forcing us to reach our destinations and no other transport was available.

We were waiting to catch an Uncedo (a local taxi association) taxi; the driver told us to wait because he wanted to phone other members of the association along the route to find out what our chances were of getting through.

Eventually our driver got through to King William's Town — he was told to make the trip but to be alert for attacks.

We were delayed for several hours

before we eventually started the journey. Some of my fellow passengers were very nervous. They wanted the police to escort us, but no protection was available.

Our anxiety reached a peak when we heard over the radio that five people were killed that day at Engcobo — we were to travel the same route.

**The taxi driver accelerated hard and, with perspiration dripping down his face, told me how he narrowly escaped death the previous day**

The taxi driver accelerated hard and, with perspiration dripping down his face, told me how he narrowly escaped death the previous day.

He said he was travelling his usual route the day before when he saw a Border Alliance taxi behind him. The

driver wanted to force him off the road and he saw machine guns being kept ready in the rear of the vehicle. He only managed to escape by driving at a suicidally high speed.

My trip to Grahamstown was not pleasant. We kept looking around for potential attackers and the taxi travelled at high speed on those little roads so that possible assailants could not catch us easily.

A traffic officer tried to stop us, but we sped away — we thought he might be one of these angry killers. He came out with his arms waving. When I looked back he was still waving both arms.

The driver told everyone in the taxi that taxi gangsters often dress up as traffic officers to stop rival taxis. Then they butcher everyone in sight.

As we were desperate, most of us kept praying to God loudly and constantly throughout the trip and we thanked God for keeping us safe all the way from Umtata to Grahamstown. — *Ezra*

attaching their signatures to an agreement in which they solemnly pledged to "abide by the rule of the law and at no stage whatsoever ... interfere with, harass, assault, molest or threaten any members of any of the parties involved and the public at large".

They also promised not to take the law into their own hands and to negotiate a lasting solution to the war.

He said the names of certain policemen had been handed to the Goldstone Commission two years ago, but police had yet to receive instructions to investigate them.

The Network of Independent Monitors, which has been researching the Eastern Cape taxi wars, says it has ten names of high-ranking policemen who own taxis. The body believes these men are deeply involved in the violence.

The group's spokesman says these policemen ensure that people are not arrested for the attacks, and that in one case certain taxi associations were given gun licences while licences were withheld from other organisations.

Meanwhile, taximen have been talking verbal shots at the region's Transport MEC, Mandisa Marasha. They accuse her of not taking decisive action and of bias.

On Monday, regional Premier Raymond Mhlaba laid down the government's line on the wars — he threatened to send in the troops. "I'll put every force at my disposal in use to contain the crisis," he said.

And on Tuesday came the suggestion from government spokesman Prince Msutu that Mhlaba was considering starting a government-run troop-protected bus service to protect commuters.

By Wednesday, the Stutterheim Taxi Association was asking for police escorts on the dangerous Stutterheim/King William's Town road, but Stutterheim Police Station Commander Lieutenant Theo Meyer said he would not offer protection. He was nervous about being accused of police complicity in the war. — *Ezra*



# We'll get tough, say taximen

By PETA KROST

Tensions within the country's sprawling taxi industry reached new heights this week and drivers have warned that they will "stop at nothing" to have their grievances addressed.

The South African Taxi Drivers' Union (SADTU) has even warned that it could target the Rugby World Cup final on June 24.

However, a number of taxi protests have been planned and the row could come to a head well before then.

Central to the taxi drivers' complaints are thousands of outstanding traffic fines issued around the country. The drivers claim they have been unfairly targeted and charge they are being left to face the law with no support from their employers, the taxi owners.

They want the outstanding fines to be dropped and are insisting that the owners should be responsible for, and pay, future fines.

On Tuesday SADTU members plan to march on Pretoria's Civic Centre, where they intend handing over a memorandum detailing their demands.



**READY FOR BATTLE:** Tempers flared yesterday as taxi drivers vowed to stop at nothing to get their demands met

PHOTOGRAPH: ANTON HAMMERS

The next step would be a protest in Witbank and then a series of demonstrations in other centres.

On Monday the dispute claimed a life when a man was shot dead at a West

Street taxi rank. Thousands of commuters were stranded on that day when taxi drivers went on strike.

SADTU general secretary Maurice Bokaba told Saturday Star: "The major problem

is the attitude of local authorities to the taxi industry.

"We desperately need a national forum in which our grievances can be heard... taxi drivers are not represented or respected for the work

they do," he said.

Mike Davis, the executive director for public safety in the Greater Johannesburg Transitional Metropolitan Council, said the problem was "much deeper than a conflict between the taxi drivers and traffic authorities".

"The situation is that the industry is controlled by taxi owners, not drivers, who want a return on their investment and are not prepared to put money in. So they will get others to drive vehicles that are not roadworthy and people who can't afford the fines," he said.

"We are not going to get results until the owners come to the party," said Davis.

Bokaba said that if all else failed the drivers would target the Rugby World Cup final for a protest. "One of our options is to stop the final by barricading the roads leading to Ellis Park," he said. "Then they will listen to us."

His warning comes in the wake of appeals by Sports Minister Steve Tshwete for a peaceful tournament.

Police have also indicated that they would be throwing a comprehensive security cordon around all Rugby World Cup games.



# Taxi drivers lay siege to Ellis Park

By PETA KROST and  
TEFO MOTHIBELI

Hundreds of taxi industry members stormed Ellis Park last night and threatened to hold the Rugby World Cup to ransom unless demands for money promised to them by tournament

organisers were met.

"Unless they give us our money, we will stop the World Cup game tomorrow and every time they try to hold a match there," said a spokesman for 200 furious taxi drivers and owners who gathered at the Bezuidenhout Park parking

area in Bezuidenhout Valley.

The day-long crisis was defused late last night only after extensive negotiations with Sarfu boss Louis Luyt, who guaranteed the drivers would get their money.

TO PAGE 2

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## ◆ Taxi siege

However, a spokesman for the drivers said at the end of the negotiations any driver who co-operated with Rugby World Cup and transported spectators today would "be doing so at his own risk".

Earlier, the drivers waited in vain at the park in Bezuidenhout Valley for their representatives to emerge from a meeting with the Greater Johannesburg Transitional Metropolitan Council (TMC), the Gauteng government and tournament organisers.

They said they had an agreement with the three parties on "partaking in the whole process" of the Rugby World Cup but had received no money.

"This just adds petrol to the fire of our anger against the authorities, who are abusing us and showing us no respect," said the spokesman, who asked not to be named.

The drivers blockaded roads around Ellis Park stadium and demanded to speak to Luyt.

A delegation was let into the stadium and told that Luyt was not available, but the delegation was let inside to meet Rugby world Cup organisers.

Danie Malan, director of sport for the TMC, arrived to meet a few of the representatives.

The taxi drivers then allegedly broke into a Telkom vehicle and took some parts from it.

Two police armoured vehicles arrived on the scene and monitored the situation. But the taxi drivers cordoned off the entrance to Ellis Park and made it difficult for anyone to get in and out of the stadium.

A group of security guards was turned away by the taxi drivers. They were ordered to go home.

Shortly after 8pm, Luyt arrived at the stadium and joined the negotiations. About 15 minutes later, a taxi driver delegation emerged from the meeting with an offer of R900 per driver for the three days' work they had lost while preparing for their part in the rugby tournament. They had done a two-day course and had submitted their vehicles for inspection yesterday.

The drivers emphatically rejected the R900 offer, shouting "No money, no rugby" and the negotiations continued.

Eventually, Luyt emerged and told the drivers: "I guarantee you are going to get your money. Transvaal (Rugby Union) and SARFU will keep that promise, even if we didn't make it. I need you guys to make this a success."

Luyt would not specify how much each driver would be paid.

Still not satisfied, the disgruntled drivers dispersed.

Driver spokesman James Maseko said: "Every taximan who operates tomorrow taking people to the stadium will be doing so at his own risk."

Police said in a statement yesterday that they, the SANDF and TMC safety officials had a Rugby World Cup policing programme to protect spectators at Ellis Park games. More than 800 policemen would be on duty in the vicinity of the stadium before and after the matches and helicopters would be on standby. A temporary charge office had been opened, police said.

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## Ellis Park taxi protest disperses

(332) 28/5/95 CP  
ABOUT 140 taxi drivers who gathered with their minibuses at Johannesburg's Ellis Park rugby stadium on Friday night to protest against the city council dispersed at about 8 pm, a security guard at the main gate said.

Earlier reports said the taxis blockaded the entrance to the stadium for several hours in protest against the claimed failure of the city council to pay them for a park-and-ride scheme for ferrying fans to the Rugby World Cup match between New Zealand and Ireland last night.

■ Reports by Sapa, Reuter, AFP and Ecna



# Taxi fares to go up!

By SERUTHU SERUTHU (332)

TAXI fares from outlying suburbs to Bloemfontein will increase by 20 percent as from June 1, according to pamphlets distributed by the Bloemfontein Taxi Federation.

The fare increase is supported by 13 affiliated taxi associations and it is the first since 1992.

CP 28/5/95  
**Expenses**

According to an official of the federation, S Skweyiya, mechanical expenses and spares have gone up in price and these factors have forced up the price increase.

"Taxi owners and operators have been subsidising the commuters since the last increase in 1992," he said. He further added that Bloemfontein had the lowest fares in the province.

The fares from townships close to the city will now be R1,20, an increase of 20 cents per trip.

## Further away

From areas further away, like Rocklands and Pelindaba, the fare to the city will increase from R1,30 to R1,50.

Delivery charges from all the suburbs will be increased from R5,00 to R6,00 while scholars will still pay R1,00 per single trip.



## Zakheni builds on its success

By BLESSING MAMABOLO

ZAKHENI computing school is opening up the

## CRIME BRIEFS

### Transkei taxi war arrests

CT 29/5/95 (332)  
PORT ELIZABETH: Three men linked to the on-going taxi war in Transkei were arrested at the weekend after allegedly killing a man and seriously injuring four in a drive-by shooting at a taxi rank in Sterkspruit.



# Qantas expands air service to SA to cope with extra business

CT(BR)31/5/95 (332)

By THABO LESHILO

STAFF WRITER

The growing number of airline passengers between Sydney and Johannesburg has led Australian airliner, Qantas, to introduce a third weekly service to the route from November 6, Richard Williams, manager for southern Africa said yesterday.

At the same time, flights to Harare would be doubled, with the new service continuing on to the Zimbabwean capital, increasing its frequencies to two a week.

Williams told a media briefing in Sandton that the number of South Africans travelling to Australia had doubled to 30 000 between 1992 and last year. At least

10 000 people visited New Zealand last year.

Qantas believes that the growing tourism between the two countries would be further stimulated by the Rugby World Cup, leading to an increase in services to meet the demand.

The airline is generating extra business by flying rugby fans from Sydney to Perth, from where they fly South African Airways, the official rugby airline, to watch the games in South Africa.

"In recent years, many of our passengers were visiting friends and relatives in Australia and New Zealand. However, over the past 12 months there has been a dramatic increase in both business and genuine leisure traffic," said Williams.

He said the new schedule would provide improved connections to Melbourne and Adelaide while maintaining the existing range of services to Brisbane, Cairns, Auckland and Christchurch.

Williams said all the airline's flights on the South African route would become non-smoking from July 1, in line with Qantas' policy.

Founded 75 years ago in Queensland, the airline is the 10th largest passenger carrier in the world. It employs more than 28 000 people.

The airline resumed its South African operations in January 1992, after an absence of 14 years. It added a second service to the route in July 1993.

**Taxis for Africa:** There are about 70 000 permit-carrying mini-bus taxis with valid roadworthy certificates operating on South African roads, excluding the former TBVC states and self-governing territories, transport minister Mac Maharaj told parliament. In the same area up to 50 000 illegal mini-bus taxis were operating.

ET (BR) 31/5/95 (332)



#### VIEWPOINT

The Maxwell trial will be a serious test of prosecutors' ability to gain convictions against financial fraud, writes  
Ivan Fallon      See Forum



# New forum to address taxi operators' gripes

*Sowetan, 31/5/95*  
(332)

By Themba Sepotokele

THE Johannesburg municipality and taxi operators yesterday decided to set up a forum to address claims by taximen that they were being unfairly discriminated against by traffic officers.

This was announced at a meeting attended by Gauteng MEC for transport Mr Olaus van Zyl, traffic officials and representatives of taxi operators.

The 16-person forum would comprise representatives of taxi operators, the traffic department and Gauteng's transport department. They will report back next Tuesday about taximen's claims of unfair treat-

ment, which led to last week's strike by taxi operators.

Traffic chief Mr Michael Davis said specific grievances would be discussed at next Tuesday's meeting. Until then the parties had agreed traffic officers would be restrained from executing warrants for the arrest of certain drivers.

Yesterday's meeting was initiated by the acting Gauteng premier, Mr Amos Masondo, who said he hoped the forum would find solutions to the taxi operators' alleged problems.

Traffic offenders still had a chance to make representations. Motorists with complaints should contact the Johannesburg senior prosecutor.

TRANSPORT - PRIVATE - GENERAL

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# Plan to bar warring taxi bodies from Soweto

Theo Rawana

BD 1/6/95

**WARRING** Soweto taxi organisations, which between them have violated 46 peace initiatives, could be barred from operating in Soweto.

The greater Soweto community police forum said yesterday it had decided to bar the taxis until peace was achieved. A final decision would not be made until the Soweto Civic Association and the ANC had been properly consulted, but the civic association and Congress of SA Students have indicated they may support the move.

Feuds between the Soweto Taxi Association and Soweto Taxi Services, and between Bara/Meadowlands Taxi Association and Diepmeadow Taxi Association, have claimed many lives.

In February the civic association considered providing alternative transport for Soweto commuters while the taxis were ordered to stop operating. The decision was shelved after some parties — including the forum — asked the association to allow further dialogue.

Forum chairman Weston Shabangu said alternative transport arrangements would

be made. A bus company in Estcourt was willing to provide 90 buses while Putco, the Johannesburg metropolitan council and SA Commuter Rail Corporation could also take part in the initiative. Parent body Sabta's Soweto office had asked that no buses be brought in as it wanted to ensure that other taxi bodies, not affected by the ban, be allowed to operate.

He said the forum had decided to support the taxi ban after more than 200 meetings arranged by the Gauteng government — which resulted in 46 signed agreements — had proved fruitless.



# Taxi crisis task team

**T**HE ESTABLISHMENT OF a task team to look into the problems threatening to tear the country's taxi industry apart is perhaps the biggest step taken so far by the Government to help solve the crisis in this once-powerful sector.

However, it is too early to raise any hopes since the taxi industry is becoming more unpredictable by the day.

The team, comprising 18 people from both the Government and the taxi industry, has an immense task ahead of it as the problems facing taxi operators are wide-ranging and complicated.

The team has already met three times, the last meeting being in Pretoria last Friday.

Transport Minister Mr Mac Maharaj is represented in the task team by one of his lieutenants, Mr Dipak Patel, who is also chairman of the group.

In an address to the annual general meeting of the National African Federated Transport Organisation recently, Maharaj appealed to taxi groups to support the task team and announced that it would soon hold public hearings on the industry's crisis and possible solutions.

Dates and venues of the hearings will be announced in due course and individuals and groups will be allowed to make either written or verbal presentations.

"It is only with the support of all role-players that lasting solutions can be found," Maharaj stressed.

## Economic viability

The overall objective of the establishment of the task team is to come up with mechanisms to ensure the economic viability of the taxi industry, which could enable this battered sector to play its rightful role in the broader transportation system of South Africa.

During its deliberations, the task force will work closely with a team of advisers who are experts in labour relations, safety and security, training and capacity building.

The objective of this close cooperation is to ensure that the task force's recommendations are in harmony with the overall transport policy, which is also currently being developed.

Once hailed as the success story of black business, the taxi industry has been in the doldrums since the beginning of the '90s.

In the mid-1980s, when the phrase "black economic empowerment" was one of the most common clichés in the corporate world, the taxi industry was often cited as an example of black business success.

Ironically, the positive publicity that the taxi industry consistently attracted also contributed to its downfall.

Its much talked about success lured many aspirant black entrepreneurs to the industry, as

(332) source 2/6/93  
Government body tackles the problem of finding ways to restore the economic viability of the taxi industry, reports  
**Mzimkulu Malunga:**



**Transport Minister Mac Maharaj ... the new task team needs the support of the taxi industry.**

many saw owning a taxi as a shortcut to wealth.

But then came the recession. As thousands of jobs were shed in the economic decline, many retrenched workers used their packages to buy kombis, hoping to turn their misfortunes into a golden opportunity.

However, this only served to increase the number of taxis on the road and as the recession bit deeper into people's pockets, many flocked back to cheaper modes of transport, such as buses and trains.

## Dwindling passengers

As a result, taxi operators found themselves competing for a dwindling number of passengers. What complicated matters for operators was that taxi associations were unable to increase fares to compensate for the decline in the number of passengers, as they were threatened with boycotts.

On the other hand, banks showed no mercy to those unable to pay their vehicle instalments.

With the number of reposessions rocketing and competition getting tougher, frustration started building up.



The routes normally shared by various associations became valuable assets for operators and anybody who was seen as an intruder was violently forced off a particular route.

In no time taxi ranks turned into battlefields where rival associations sought to consolidate their hold on particular routes.

Although violence is as old as the taxi industry itself, the economic decline of the late '80s and early '90s certainly played a major role in contributing to the violence.

There are an estimated 70 000 registered taxis in the country. In addition, there are about 30 000 pirate taxis that fuel the tension.

Some of the so-called pirates have licences to operate as taxis, but because they could not find an association to admit them so that they could operate legally, they were forced to turn to unofficial ways of operating.

The underlying economic problems crippling the industry have also exposed other divisions among taxi operators, which were camouflaged during the days when money was plentiful and roads were full of passengers waiting to be picked up.

## Violent clashes

Ethnicity, regionalism and political differences reared their heads more often than ever before, leading to violent clashes.

For instance, the split in one of Soweto's biggest taxi associations, Soweto Taxi Services, was fuelled mainly by ethnic and political differences among operators. The split claimed several lives, including that of senior officials of the organisation.

Against this background, the number of people calling for re-regulation of the industry increases daily. Major taxi groups, such as Nafto and the Southern African Black Taxi Association, now want a say in the issuing of taxi licences.

They are also arguing for statutory powers that will allow them to discipline operators who fall out of line. These groups have also been lobbying vigorously to be subsidised by the Government, as are their major competitors — buses and trains. It is expected that this issue will be among those at the top of the agenda when the task force holds its public hearings.



80 516/95  
**Taxi collapse probed**  
THE SA Black Taxi Association (Sabta) would appoint an independent commission of inquiry into the collapse of the Sabta Foundation, a finance scheme whose fall cost members more than R10m, Sabta said at the weekend. Page 2

# SA's passenger transport 'poor'

Theo Rawana

THE rugby World Cup had shown up the inadequacy and inefficiency of the SA passenger transport system, and the country should address this area to meet more major events which were certain to follow, Fedhasa said yesterday.

Fears for the safety and convenience of tourists have grown in the past week with reports of illegal metered taxis flooding the market, in many cases bribing hotel staff to secure fares from overseas.

Fedhasa executive director Dion Viljoen said the hotel industry was concerned, but this was an extension of an insufficient and inefficient passenger transport system.

SA Metered Taxi Association director Theo Schonveldt said his organisation had found the rugby tour a disappointing event because all types of operators, mostly pirates, flooded the market by engaging in transporting tourists.

"The pirates were bribing hotel staff, even managers, to get them fares, and these passengers were exposed to overcharging and the inconvenience of being transported by untrained taxi drivers," he said.

Viljoen said a survey conducted at matches showed people were highly critical of the inefficiency in public

transport, with numerous informal agreements between transport providers and other hospitality facilities adding to the confusion.

He said SA should immediately set about preparing for future major events. There should not only be regulation and strict licensing rules "but there should be strict enforcement of the laws".

Training formed an important part of these preparations. "There is a business opportunity for an organisation that will stick its neck out and provide training and build up a reputation as a provider of transport."

Transport consultant Paul Browning said the safety of people was the responsibility of the authorities. SA needed to ensure that high standards were maintained. "I do not know if we would have to resort to following the example set in London, where it took three years of learning to become a taxi driver," Browning said.

Schonveldt said his organisation was running courses for members, funded by the manpower department. "But the funding is running out soon, so we need help from the private sector."

Drivers would be granted certificates of accreditation by Satour after courses ranging from business skills to geographic knowledge of areas they operated in.

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# Taxi body probes scheme's demise

Theo Rawana

THE SA Black Taxi Association (Sabta) would appoint an independent commission of inquiry into the collapse of the Sabta Foundation, a finance scheme whose fall cost members more than R10m, Sabta said at the weekend.

Announcing a reconstruction and development programme for the organisation, treasurer Enos Makena said the previous commission, appointed after the collapse was made known in 1993, was "internal, and you cannot investigate yourself".

Makena said Sabta management council secretary Elijah Phali would appoint the commission.

"The findings of this inquiry must be followed by prosecutions; there's no point in just telling people they did wrong and letting it go at that," Makena said.

The collapse of the scheme left many Sabta members holding worthless debenture certificates and the overall tarnished image of the organisation caused sponsors to shy away from Sabta. "This hap-

pened because we had outsiders running the organisation."

Makena said the Sabta executive had appointed a review committee which would prepare a blueprint for the reconstruction and development of the entire taxi industry. The review committee would work with wide-ranging terms of reference.

"This blueprint will have to deal with various issues, such as legislation, violence, safety, subsidies, skills, fare structures, interrelationships between associations and the drivers' union and the Sabta Foundation," Makena said.

He said one other issue the committee would look into was Sabta's relationship with its mother body, the Foundation for African Business and Consumer Services. "We benefit nothing from being affiliated to Fabcos," he said.

Common belief in business circles has always been that Sabta, a founder member of Fabcos, shouldered the financial burden presented by the 12 other affiliate organisations, most of whom were said to be loss-making ventures.



Deputy Defence Minister Ronnie Kasrils on Friday received Amsecor's annual financial report from chairman Johan Moolman. The corporation's net income dropped 87% off the previous year.

Picture: GARTH LUMLEY

## Post workers face long wait

Stephen Bothma

THE integration of 8 000 employees of the former TBVC areas into the state-owned public companies Telkom and SA Post Office was expected to be completed only by March 31 next year, Post, Telecommunications and Broadcasting Minister Pello Jordan said yesterday.

He said the integration process was being monitored by a strategic management committee of which he was chairman.

The committee comprises representatives of the departments of state expenditure, posts and telecommunications, Telkom, the Post Office and the public service commission, as well as union officials.

"The process is expected to be lengthy and complicated," Jordan said.

The salaries of the staff departments had been brought up to the level of their counterparts in Telkom and the Post Office at a cost to the state of R32m.

## Taxis facing Soweto ban

(332) star 5/6/95

■ BY ABBEY MAKOE  
SOWETO BUREAU

The Soweto community police forum wants to ban four taxi organisations it says are contributing to violence in the township's taxi industry.

Chairman of the forum, Weston Shabangu, said: "We have taken these decisions after much pressure from the community."

He said the forum's executive was still thrashing out ways to enforce the ban, effective on June 8.

Asked if the forum — which includes local police and civic association representatives, as well as representatives from the ANC, SACP, and Cosatu — had the powers to impose a ban, Shabangu said: "We might not have a constitutional power to do so, but we definitely have a right to protect our people."

The forum's media liaison officer, Jacob Noe, said the decision to ban the taxi associations was taken as a last resort.

"It seems that in this industry talking does not solve anything."



(332) *Savetran* 6/6/95

# NTV taxi feuds: A new scourge

(332) 6/6/95

**hangale Makhado** reports that violence in Northern Transvaal has taken a new change of direction

IN THE PAST few months, each time a murder was reported in the Northern Transvaal, it would be a forgone conclusion that the murder was connected to witchcraft.

During this time, innocent people are either stoned or burnt to death, or being falsely accused of witchcraft, by enraged mobs at villages in the area.

While these incidents received prominent media coverage, they were by sporadic and isolated cases, and it now appears the situation is under control.

## Witch head

A new scourge, however, has reared its head in the taxi industry and seems to tear apart the Northern Transvaal, which largely depends on minibus for transport.

Hundreds of commuters are often stranded and in fear of losing their jobs as feuding taxis continue to fight or what appears to be squabbles over fares and taxi ranks.

Last month alone, more than seven people died and several were injured.

to meet with rival groups and listen to their problems.

It is high time, they say, for the government and structures of civil society to put their heads together and achieve positive results.

These sentiments are echoed by the provincial legislature, which last month called on the Government, and the Safety and Security Ministry in particular, to take effective measures to stop the violence.

Mr Paul Chauke from the Speaker's office says the legislature has expressed grave concern over the recent escalation of taxi violence in the province.

It has strongly condemned the killing of people and reassured the families and friends of those killed and injured that the perpetrators will be brought to book.

## Perturbed by killings

The Seshego Ministers Fellowship, also perturbed by the killings, has appealed to taxi operators to help restore the free flow of transport.

"The taxi industry is a unique economic development in our communi-



The general feeling is that, unless provincial government intervenes, more people will die.

What are the problems and why are there so many associations? Why is it impossible for the various organisations to come together, smoke the peace pipe and make up, if only for the sake of commuter safety?

The unsuspecting commuters are sometimes caught in the middle of what people have referred to as a senseless war which benefits nobody.

While it may be said the conflict is simply a fight over routes, ranks and power, taxi owners interviewed tend to disagree.

But they could not come up with any reason to justify the continued butchering of people.

### Outside power

Those interviewed say the industry — once the pride of black economic empowerment — has now been infiltrated by outsiders who wield power.

A taxi owner from Seshego accuses a policeman, who allegedly owns taxis, of bias each time the police are called to resolve disputes.

The solution, according to people in the taxi industry, is for the government

cause it alleviates the transport difficulties of our working masses," says fellowship chairman the Reverend MK Boshomane.

"We also support the community initiative to resolve this matter amicably and call on the police to be impartial and uphold the rule of law."

The Seshego branch of the Azanian People's Organisation says it notes with disgust the unwillingness of the police to stamp out the violence.

It says it is convinced some members of the police have a vested interest in the taxi industry because of their failure to act impartially and promptly.

Azapo urges the feuding taxi federations to consider human life above all else and resolve their differences.

As the violence goes on, one recalls the words of Gauteng premier Mr Tokyo Sexwale when he addressed taxi organisations in Soweto earlier this year.

Sexwale said the taxi industry should start looking elsewhere for the meat as the bone was now dry, and it was unfortunate that because there was now no more meat, those in the taxi industry were starting to eat one another.



**FLASHBACK ... (top) A policeman addressing taxi drivers feuding over transport routes in Soweto. Taxis in Northern Transvaal are now also fighting over routes and ranks.**

**Above: Tokyo Sexwale premier of Gauteng province ... urges the taxi industry to look elsewhere for the meat**



### **R2-m in taxi-related fines (322)**

REC-7/6/93 THE majority of prosecutions and fines issued and collected by traffic authorities during 1993/4 involved unauthorised taxis. Taxi-related fines totalled R2 million, out of a total of R2,64 million collected in fines countrywide for a range of traffic offences and misdemeanours. Cape Town produced the highest numbers of prosecutions and convictions — 5 408 and 3 087 — adding R387 000 to the department's coffers.

# Population soars but new job creation is far behind

Star 9/6/95

■ BY PATRICK BULGER  
POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

**Cape Town** — Shock figures detailing South Africa's failure to create jobs for its burgeoning population were tabled in Parliament yesterday.

The final report of the National Manpower Commission which is being replaced by the National Economic, Development and Labour Council said SA's adult population increased from 8,4-million in 1980 to 12,6-million last year.

The increase of about 4-million in the size of the potential workforce was not nearly matched by the increase in the number of non-agricultural jobs available, a mere 168 162.

Of the new job opportunities created, most were in the public

(332) (332) (332)  
sector (370 727). The financial and insurance sectors showed some gains in the period but the number of jobs in the mining and quarrying sector fell by 147 387.

"Total employment in the non-agricultural formal sectors of the economy declined uninterrupted from 1990 up to the fourth quarter of 1993," the report notes.

While manufacturing continued to provide the largest number of jobs at 1,4-million, the public sector remained a close second with 1,31-million. But private sector job creation lagged behind that in the public sector.

Since 1990 there has been a decrease in employment in the private sector and job creation there has lagged behind job creation in the public sector.



## Strong bid to stop E Cape taxi violence

(332) ARG 13/6/95

The Argus Bureau

PORT ELIZABETH — Eastern Cape police, assisted by the Defence Force, have undertaken a major operation to stem taxi violence which claimed at least three lives last week.

Eastern Province Command spokesman Gerhard van Eeden said soldiers from Group 13 in Queenstown and Group Eight in East London had been deployed in at least four towns in the Border, including the major trouble spot of King William's Town.

Their role was limited to patrols only, Colonel Van Eeden said.

Provincial Safety and Security Ministry permanent secretary Dumisani Mafu said the offensive was part of the government's strategy to clamp down on the continuing violence.

Troops would assist in road-blocks and patrols, Mr Mafu said.

# Maharaj to unveil new taxi policy

(332) 8/10/19/6/95

■ BY MANDLA MTHEMBU

The Government's new taxi policy, to be unveiled this week by Transport Minister Mac Maharaj, will not extend subsidies to taxi operators.

The policy was formulated by the National Taxi Task Team (NTTT) which has representatives from the Government, taxi associations in all provinces and community organisations.

The Department of Transport's director-general, Dipak Patel, said the policy would entail the regulation of the industry "so as to resolve conflicts and offer economic assistance in such a way that the industry develops".

Patel explained that the Government would not extend bus subsidies to taxis "as this will kill the (taxi) industry... More people would enter the already oversubscribed industry, creating more violence."

With more than 480 taxi associations, the industry transports half the commuters in the country, while there are over 40 000 illegal operators who have free run of SA roads, according to the department's figures.

Patel, who is also chairman of NTTT, said the policy would entail the setting up of taxi provincial offices to control the issuing

of permits "to alleviate confrontations for routes and struggles for power".

Patel said a training programme on business, driving and safety and administrative skills will be conducted throughout the country.

For the next two years, the programme would be funded by the Government, while in the third year "taxi bodies would be well established to fund themselves".

With petrol price hikes putting taxi operators and commuters at loggerheads due to fare increases, vehicles using diesel would be recommended for taxis as the Government would be subsidising it, said Patel.

A range of public hearings would take place across the country until September.

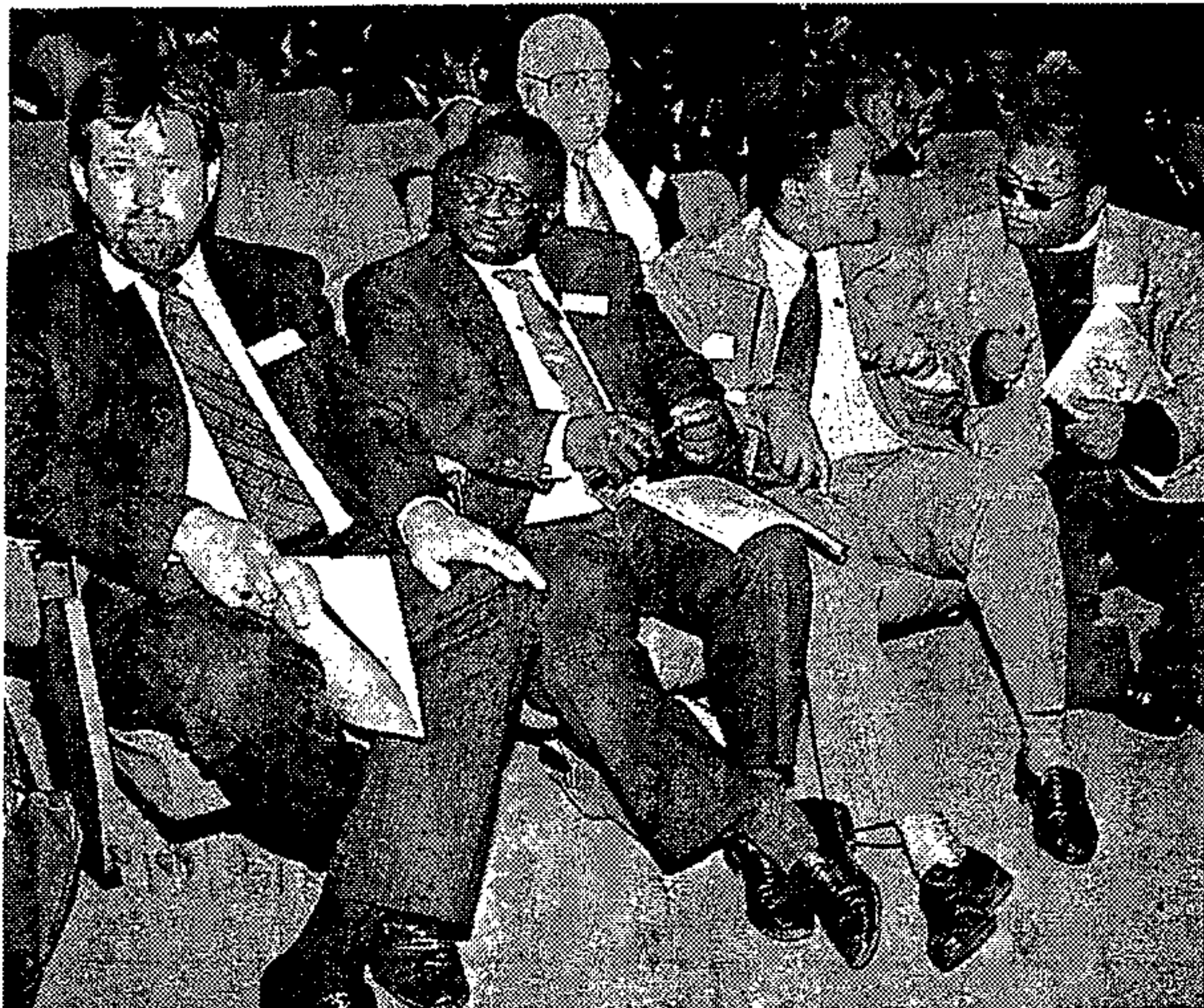
"This will enable us to hear problems encountered by operators and commuters," he told The Star.

Acknowledging that there was a criminal element in taxi violence, Patel said drastic measures would be taken against the perpetrators of violence.

However, he said, the co-operation of taxi associations was needed to resolve the conflicts.

"It is high time that (taxi) associations become mature and condemn the violence," he said.





Delegates at the Gauteng taxi conference included, from left, consultant James Chapman, SA Black Taxi Association president Joe Mabaso, Federated National Transport Organisation president Len Magwaza, Organised Taxi Industry convener Bontle Letsoela and SA Long Distance Taxi Association deputy chairman Simon Mathysen. Gauteng transport MEC Olaus van Zyl, top right, and the SA Commuter Organisation's Stephen Moloketi also attended. Picture: ROBERT BOTHA

## Focus falls on taxi trade

By 20/6/95  
Theo Rawana

THE taxi industry was so important in the SA economy that the Gauteng transport department had decided to set up a dedicated office which would deal with problems facing it, MEC Olaus van Zyl said yesterday.

Van Zyl was addressing a consultative conference of the Gauteng Taxi Initiative in Johannesburg, which seeks to address the multiple problems plaguing the taxi industry.

Van Zyl said Gauteng was ahead of other provinces in efforts to resolve taxi problems and should be able to make input to Transport Minister Mac Maharaj's draft taxi policy by July.

Van Zyl said what was unique about Gauteng's approach was that it was based on consultation with all role players.

Delegates discussed regulation and control, safety and subsidies, industry structures, users' needs and conflict resolution, and cost of vehicles, fare structures and training.

Gauteng recognised the taxi industry as a vital component of its transport infrastructure.

## ANC waiting to set agenda with Inkatha — Ramaphosa

David Greybe

CAPE TOWN — The ANC was prepared to discuss international mediation at a summit with the Inkatha Freedom Party but had not heard a thing from Inkatha in four weeks, ANC secretary-general Cyril Ramaphosa said yesterday.

Inkatha secretary-general Ziba Jiyane welcomed the mediation news. He said: "If that is the case we will attend a summit with the ANC."

However, Ramaphosa said he found it "rather strange" that Inkatha had been silent for a month after its initial rush to get the two sides together in May — their first meeting in more than a year.

The only information the ANC had received was what it gleaned from the media, he said, referring to an Inkatha resolution 10 days ago rejecting the ANC's constitutional proposals. Inkatha also reinstated its demand for mediation on outstanding constitutional issues.

Ramaphosa said the ANC had not been formally notified of the resolution, and was waiting to meet Inkatha negotiators "to set

an agenda for a boseraad where we can ... discuss constitutional matters including international mediation".

He said Inkatha's rejection of the ANC's proposals without discussing them with the ANC "shows they have not fully understood them". The ANC was still studying Inkatha's proposals, but said "there is a lot to talk about".

The ANC chief negotiator said he sensed "a lack of seriousness" on Inkatha's part over a negotiated settlement. Inkatha appeared instead to have opted for political confrontation, as witnessed by its 20-point strategy to seize more power in Kwa-Zulu/Natal. He would contact Inkatha this week "to find out what is going on".

Inkatha chief negotiator and Correctional Services Minister Sipho Mzimela said last week that Jiyane would inform the ANC of the national council resolution before the week was out. However, Jiyane said yesterday it was Mzimela's task, as chief negotiator, to inform the ANC.

Jiyane said Washington Okumu, the Kenyan who brokered the April 19 agreement, should chair the summit.

## Parliament tables Emergency Bill

Adrian Hadland

CAPE TOWN — Draft legislation bringing the declaration of states of emergency into line with the constitution, and providing for greater parliamentary supervision and strength-

ened detainee rights, was tabled yesterday.

The Emergency Bill replaces part or whole of 12 Acts including the Public Safety Act, the Defence Act and the Internal Security Amendment Act as well as legislation still in place in the former TBVC areas.

The Public Safety Act

stitution", a justice ministry spokesman said.

Confirming detailed constitutional provisions, the Bill indicates an emergency may only be declared "where the safety of the Republic is threatened by war, invasion, general insurrection or disorder or at a time of national disaster".



*Commitment to resolve critical issues*

## Gauteng taxi project launched to help solve industry's problems

(332)

Jan 20/6/95

■ BY MANDLA MTHEMBU

The Gauteng Taxi Initiative (GTI), launched yesterday by the Gauteng government and the taxi industry, could shape the way of addressing problems facing the industry, MEC for Public Transport and Roads Olaus van Zyl said.

Speaking at a taxi conference at Eskom's Megawatt Park Centre, Van Zyl said the initiative — expected to be implemented by the end of next month — would help resolve the "taxi problem" to the benefit of the industry, the province and commuters.

The conference was attended by government, business and taxi representatives from Johannesburg, Vaal, Pretoria, and the East and West Rand.

Van Zyl said the government, together with the taxi industry, was committed "to resolve the critical issues facing the industry in the province and to assist the industry in taking its rightful

place within the formal transportation structures".

"We want to have a viable, peaceful and flourishing taxi industry, providing needed services of a high quality to their passengers," Van Zyl added.

He said the GTI was fully supportive of initiatives undertaken at national level to address taxi issues and would contribute wherever possible.

The GTI identifies 10 issues needing urgent attention: regulation and control; conflict resolution; safety; financial assistance; the needs of operators and commuters; the relationship between taxi associations; the cost of vehicles; the lack of skills; fare structures; and provincial structures and liaison.

"Once these problems are resolved, the taxi industry will no longer view bus and rail transportation as enemies," said Van Zyl.

With half the commuters in

the country travelling by taxis and 20 000 small businesses created through the taxi industry in Gauteng, taxi ranks would be improved, Van Zyl said.

Appealing to taxi associations to get their house in order, he said a provincial taxi office will be set up to address daily problems facing operators and commuters.

Taxi industry spokesman Elijah Phali said that since taxi operators knew problems in the industry better, "it was pleasing that taxi people were in the forefront in resolving taxi problems".

South African Commuter Organisation spokesman Steve Moleko proposed a code of conduct for taxis which protects commuters, saying passengers also had a vital role in the industry.

"When operators fight, commuters suffer most," he said. "And without commuters there would be no taxi problems."



## Subsidise us, taxi operators urge

■ BY MANDLA MTHEMBU

Taxi organisations could embark on protest actions if the industry was not subsidised to enable it to take its place in formal transportation structures.

This warning was sounded yesterday during a two-day Gauteng Taxi Initiative (GTI) summit at Eskom's Megawatt Park attended by about 200 delegates from government, business and taxi associations in Johannesburg, Pretoria, the Vaal, and the East and West Rand.

The GTI, launched on Monday, is aimed at addressing problems facing the industry to the benefit of operators, the province and commuters.

SA Long Distance Taxi Association spokesman David Mofokeng said criticisms levelled against the industry had contributed to the negative impression that financial institutions had about taxi operators, often denying them loans.

"Taxi people are taken as thugs and not as businessmen."

Mofokeng said that in past years the industry had been ignored and people "view the industry as something they could benefit from, while taxi people were not also benefiting".

He said the industry was battling to put up proper taxi ranks and that ranks provided by Sasol were not suitable.

He added that insurance pre-

miums for taxis were much higher than those for a car of the same value.

It was recommended at the summit that subsidies should be offered in the form of VAT-free taxi vehicles, cheaper petrol, special prices on vehicle spares, and upgrading of taxi facilities. "This will both help the industry and commuters," said Mofokeng.

Apart from assistance in business and driving skills, it was also recommended that operators be given mechanical skills, "as we have no money to repair vehicles".

Other issues dealt with were regulation and control, safety, conflict resolution and the cost of vehicles.

(332) STW 21/6/95

# Air freight industry grows to meet demand

CT(PR)21/6/95

(332)

Local air freighters experienced a bumper year last year with export and import cargo and, contrary to expectations, demand is holding its own.

Charles Fairweather, chief executive officer of South African Airways Cargo comments: "The usual scenario is rapid fluctuations between boom and bust as the Reserve Bank tries to control the flow of money out of the country.

"But this year we are seeing capital flowing into the country, and this has helped keep the balance of payments steady. For volume and value,

the growth continues to beat inflation.

Fairweather says the bulk of South Africa's air freighted exports is perishable goods which, like many local export products, has limited added value.

By contrast, the major portion of imported goods transported by air are sophisticated electronic units.

Local business people are beginning to look more seriously at the export opportunities offered by such areas as the Middle East and the airlines are gearing up to meet the demand.

"Speed in transportation is an

issue as local business follows the established international trend towards just-in-time delivery.

"The issue is not cost, it is value for money. For items where the value is high relative to the mass, the cost is easily absorbed," he says.

The increasing number of airlines flying to South Africa has created a powerful competitive element within the air freight industry, helping to keep transportation costs within tight margins.

The number of flights to major trading partners has also increased.

"The greatest growth is to the United

Kingdom and Europe, especially Germany. But trade in the Middle and Far East is taking off. Demand for flights to South America and Australia is also growing, and SAA's present bi-weekly flight is insufficient.

Trade with other African countries has also increased, and SAA flies regularly to Harare, Kinshasa, Luanda, Lusaka and Lagos.

"Gauteng is the natural hub for Southern African trade. Locally-based businesses can offer infrastructure — and trade links are needed to succeed in Africa," Fairweather says.





**HELPING HAND** Unicorn assists in securing homes for its staff

CT (MR) 22/6/95 (332)

## Shipping industry 'needs RDP nudge'

By DAVID CANNING

ASSISTANT EDITOR

South Africa's shipping industry is well run, but it could do with "a few nudges" towards reconstruction and development, according to Ivan Clark, president of the South African Ship Owners Association.

The recent recipient of The Mercury/British Airways Annual Business Excellence Award, Clark said there were opportunities in the industry for new entrepreneurs in a number of satellite sectors, like stevedoring, food supplying and ship repair. Encouragement of such activity would enable the industry to grow and to spread its wealth.

One of the industry's most significant opportunities would be to develop crews for the global shipping industry, Clark said.

He said South Africa should pursue a specific long-term strategy to get seafarers properly trained and accepted on international lines. They would not only get good jobs, but broaden their horizons.

Filipinos, Sri Lankans and Poles had all made names for themselves as seamen, and South Africans should do the same. However, this could not be achieved overnight.

Not only was adequate training essential — and the Maritime Industry Training Board was a good start — but an administration needed to be set up within the country to handle turnover of crews. Crew members would also

need to speak English, the international language, and wages would have to be right.

"We need to make schools aware of maritime opportunities," he said.

He warned that experiences in Africa showed it was difficult to launch and run new shipping lines. It was a capital-intensive business and several lines had come to grief on the continent.

Clark also warned that South Africa needed to be careful about the importation of European "experts" who did not understand local conditions. Mozambique, for example, realised that local knowledge was important and was looking to South Africa for help in developing its shipping industry.

He also stressed that housing provision for staff needed to be targeted by the industry. The three most basic needs for "pride of living" were an education, a job and a roof and family to go home to.

Unicorn Shipping Lines, of which he is managing director, had embarked on a programme to help staff to obtain homes, but as a facilitator not a giver of "hand-outs".

He said it was "refreshing" that the transport department was working to redevelop the industry. The maritime transport policy working group had been investigating a wide range of issues like safety, navigational issues, ports and port structures, coastal shipping and bulk shipping.



- (3) Yes. Up to date six warrant vouchers to the value of R49 800, R62 000, R37 000, R24 570, R255 740 and R62 000 were deposited at separate financial institutions on separate dates. At the Department's request no payment was made.
- (4) Yes. The locks of the two safes involved have been replaced and the enforcement of the existing stringent instructions with regard to key control and the safeguarding of warrant vouchers issued to accounts clerks and those in reserve have been intensified.

#### School feeding scheme: misappropriation of funds/corruption

\*18. Sen D M MALATSI asked the Minister for Health:†

- (1) Whether any misappropriation of funds and/or corruption recently came to light in the administration of the school feeding scheme in the Province of Eastern Transvaal; if so, (a) what was the nature thereof and (b) what amount of money is involved therein;
- (2) whether any steps in this regard have been taken against any persons; if not, why not; if so, what steps;
- (3) whether any steps have been taken or are being contemplated to prevent a repetition of the events; if not, why not; if so, what steps?

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH:

- (1) Yes.

(a) The following cases where fraud was suspected have been reported to the South African Police Services (SAPS):

\* Mpheleng Primary School—Mouse Region—Siyabuswa Police CR 49/12/94.

The suspect, who was a member of the project committee at the school has allegedly defrauded the programme of R400 (four hundred rand). The suspect has already appeared in court several times.

\* Kephisi Primary School—Nsikazi Region—Kanyamazane Police MR 23/02/95.

The programme was allegedly defrauded of R9 500 (nine thousand five hundred rand). A signed cheque was allegedly detached from the PSNP cheque book at the school and deposited at the First National Bank in Tzaneen. An amount of R9 000 (nine thousand rand) was withdrawn through an auto bank. No arrests have been made up to date.

\* Vulamethla School—Nsikazi Region

The programme was defrauded of R5 400 (five thousand four hundred rand). A cheque was allegedly detached from the PSNP cheque book and the signatures forged. In this case the First National Bank who has effected payment, has refunded the money in full to the school after agreeing that they were careless.

\* Khanya Primary School

There is a strong suspicion that the former school principal, now principal of the Ntambhale School, has defrauded the programme of R17 000 (seventeen thousand rand).

\* Lobhengula School

The school principal is being investigated for the alleged forging of invoices totalling R1 326 (one thousand three hundred and twenty six rand).

\* Majembeni School

The school principal is under investigation. An amount of R4 200 (four thousand two hundred rand) was transferred to a supplier without the knowledge of the project committee.

- (b) The amount involved is R37 426 (thirty seven thousand four hundred and twenty six rand).

- (2) Yes. Steps have been taken.

All six cases were reported to the SAPS for investigation. Where evidence could be found the accused were to be prosecuted.

- (3) The following steps have been taken:

- \* One bank has refunded the money in full.
- \* A permanent staff establishment will be put into place to manage the nutrition programmes more effectively.
- \* Business managers are made aware of the risk they are taking by cashing cheques marked "not transferable".
- \* Discussions are taking place with Commercial Banks to get as much co-operation as possible to prevent fraud and the mismanagement of funds.
- \* Training programmes involving the staff and the members of the project committees at the school are taking place.
- \* Workshops are being planned to involve the communities and to gain their support for an effective Primary School Nutrition Programme (PSNP).

#### Taxi organisations in Republic

\*19. Sen J SELFIE asked the Minister of Transport:

- (1)

(a) How many taxi organisations currently exist in the Republic and (b) what is the estimated membership of each such organisation;

- (2)

whether his Department intends introducing any measures aimed at regulating taxi organisations; if not, why not; if so, (a) what measures, (b) when, (c) which persons and/or bodies have been or are to be involved in developing these measures and (d) what process has been or is to be followed in developing these measures?

S301E

The MINISTER OF TRANSPORT:

- (1) (a) The Department of Transport has record of approximately 500 taxi organisations throughout the country.

(b) It is not possible to estimate the membership of these organisations as they vary from national organisations with many members to small local organisations with as little as 15 members. It is also important to note that operators often take out dual membership of organisations.

- (2) No. The Department of Transport recognises the important role that taxi organisations can play in stabilising the minibus-taxi industry. It is, however, vital to determine the underlying causes of the current situation in the industry before any measures to regulate the taxi organisations can be developed. Measures aimed at stabilising the taxi industry can not be implemented in isolation and therefore the Department of Transport embarked upon a comprehensive and strategic Taxi Process to address all of the problems associated with taxi transport in our country. This process was initiated in conjunction and with the support of the provinces. The details of this process were extensively consulted with all role players at a National Taxi Workshop which took place on 18 March 1995 in Midrand.

A Taxi Task Team, comprising nine officials of the central, provincial and local government levels as well as nine representatives from the minibus-taxi industry, supported by a panel of specialist advisers had been appointed. This Task Team will investigate all problems, consult on a country-wide basis and propose possible solutions to the problems. It is envisaged that the Task Team will address issues such as the regulatory mechanism, "the permit system", the lack of adequate facilities, the need for improved standards of training and the lack of representational unity and the concomitant rivalry in the minibus-taxi industry. The process will, through addressing the underlying causes of violence and intolerance, contribute significantly to the stabilisation of the minibus-taxi industry.

In the short term, the Department of Transport aims to provide extensive training for the minibus-taxi industry. Included in this training programme would be training in organisational management for taxi



sures that the reliability of audit opinions, be they qualified or unqualified. (In the Private Sector a similar set of standards are referred to as Generally Accepted Auditing Standards (GAAS).)

Generally Accepted Accounting Practice (GAAP)  
(*terms used by Senator Rabinowitz in same question on 9 June 1995*)

The manner in which financial transactions are disclosed in financial/accounting statements (eg income statement, balance statement, etc) in accordance with statements on Generally Accepted Accounting Practice as prescribed by the South African Institute of Chartered Accountants.

Sen Dr R RABINOWITZ: Mr President, arising out of the hon the Minister's reply, I want to ask him if it would be feasible to subject the local government bodies now coming into existence to some form of GAAP?

The MINISTER OF FINANCE: They will be subjected to GAGAS, not to GAAP. [Laughter.]

Sen J A JOOSTE: Mr President, further arising out of the Minister's reply, I have a follow-up question on that. Would the Minister please tell us what the difference is? [Laughter.]

The MINISTER: As far as GAGAS is concerned, the International Organisation of Supreme Audit Institutions has developed a set of standards known as GAGAS, in terms of which the audit processes have to be carried out and complied with and compliance with this ensures the reliability of audit opinions. He they qualified or unqualified.

As far as GAAP is concerned, the manner in which the financial transactions are disclosed, rather than the processes as in terms of GAGAS, in the financial accounting statements, is done in accordance with the statements of the generally accepted accounting practice, which is a practice prescribed by the South African Institute of Chartered Accountants. So the one is prescribed by the South African Institute of Chartered Accountants and relates to disclosure, while the other one is prescribed by the International Organisation of Supreme Audit Institutions and refers to the specific processes.

\*2. Sen Dr R RABINOWITZ—Safety and Security. [Question withdrawn by member in House.]

The DEPUTY MINISTER FOR SAFETY AND SECURITY: Mr President, I am under the impression that this particular question is the one which was withdrawn. Which one are we dealing with here?

The PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE: Order! Could I perhaps guide the hon the Deputy Minister? It is the question which deals with the incorporation of members of uMkhonto weSizwe.

The DEPUTY MINISTER: Mr President, I am ready to answer the question, but that is the one I was informed had been withdrawn.

Sen Dr R RABINOWITZ: Mr President, could I assist in the proceedings? It was withdrawn.

The PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE: Order! It was withdrawn? Well, apparently, the news was kept very closed to the hon Senator's office! [Laughter.]

\*3. Sen Dr G MARAIS—Trade and Industry.† [Question standing over.]

\*4. Sen Dr G MARAIS—Trade and Industry. [Question standing over.]

\*5. Sen Dr G W KOORNHOF—Trade and Industry.† [Question standing over.]

#### Salmonella poisoning: children treated

\*6. Sen C R REDCLIFFE asked the Minister for Health:

- (1) Whether any children were recently treated for salmonella poisoning at the Red Cross Children's Hospital; if so, how many;
- (2) whether she will make a statement on the matter?

S268E

The PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE: Order! I would like Senators around Sen Redcliffe to pay as much attention as he is doing at the moment.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH:

- (1) Yes, 60 confirmed cases;
- (2) No.

Taxi violence: introduction of government-run bus services

\*7. Sen J SELFIE asked the Minister of Transport:

- (1) Whether he or his Department has been approached by any persons and/or institu-

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tions requesting the introduction of Government-run bus services protected by troops to convey and protect commuters in areas affected by taxi violence; if not, why not; if so, what was the response thereto;

- (2) whether he or his Department will consider introducing such services; if not, why not; if so, (a) when, (b) in which areas and (c) what are the further relevant details?

S269E

The MINISTER OF TRANSPORT:

- (1) No, but private operators of the existing services requested that their services be protected on routes threatened by taxi violence and intimidation. Bus operators were protected by the SA Police in co-operation with the Transport Inspectorate to enable them to render a reliable service.
- (2) No. The Department is not in a position to render such services as they have no facilities at their disposal.

- (a) (b) and (c) Falls away.

Locust-combating operations: chemical substances left over

\*8. Sen E K MOORCROFT asked the Minister of Agriculture:

Whether his Department has any stocks of (a) DDT, (b) BHC and (c) Dieldrin or related substances left over from previous locust-combating operations; if so, (i) in what quantities and (ii) what steps does he or his Department intend taking in this regard?

S270E

†The MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE:

- (a) DDT: Nil.
- (b) BHC: 31 600 kg 7% powder and ± 20 000 kg sweepings BHC, Lindaan and Volant powder.
- (c) Dieldrin
  - (i) Nil.
  - (ii) The Department has launched a cleaning operation to store left-over substances since last year.

As soon as this operation has been completed, this stock will be destroyed.

Illegal building of houses along coast of former Transkei

\*9. Sen E K MOORCROFT asked the Minister of Environmental Affairs and Tourism:

- (1) Whether the alleged illegal building of houses within the protected zone along the former Transkei coast has been brought to his attention; if so, on whose authority were these houses built;
- (2) whether the MEC for Environmental Affairs in the Province of Eastern Cape has taken any action against the builders and the persons who authorised the building of these houses; if not, why not; if so, what action;
- (3) whether he or his Department intends taking any action in this regard; if not, why not; if so, what action;
- (4) whether he will make a statement on the matter?

(4) whether he will make a statement on the matter?

Hansard 22/6/95 S271E  
The MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS AND TOURISM (Reply laid upon Table with leave of House.):

- (1) Yes, the alleged illegal building of houses within the protected zone along the former Transkei coast has been brought to my attention. The matter was first brought to my attention when the Chairman of the Council for the Environment approached the Deputy Minister of Environmental Affairs and Tourism to declare a "limited development area" in terms of the Environment Conservation Act, 1989 (Act No 73 of 1989) along the coast of the former Transkei. Studying the Environmental Conservation Decree, 1992 (No 9 of 1992) highlighted the fact that a "coastal conservation area" already existed along the entire coastline of the former Transkei. In this area certain activities are prohibited, including the erection of buildings except for development within municipal boundaries. During informal discussions between officials of the Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism and officials of the former Transkei Nature Conservation it was mentioned that illegal buildings were being erected along the coast. There are also allegations that some of the houses are being built for family

# Taxi owners (332) Sowetan 22/6/95 planned to kill

THREE alleged hit squad members of the Federated Long Distance Taxi Association planned to assassinate Northern Province MEC for safety and security and a senior police officer, it was claimed in the Pietersburg Regional Court yesterday.

The startling revelation was heard during a bail application for the three men, who were arrested on Monday on charges of intimidation, conspiracy and pointing a firearm. They are Mr Reginald Rapotu (37), Mr John Rapotu (35) and Mr Daniel Makoti (33) who are appearing before Mrs MJ du Toit.

Lieutenant Bernard du Plessis of the Taxi Violence Unit told the court that after the three were arrested, the office of the MEC received an anonymous

telephone call from a disgruntled member of the alleged hit-squad who said the three men were members of the squad.

Du Plessis told court that he was approached by the complainant on Monday who told him that he had been attacked by two of the accused in Seshego.

The complainant said that as he was walking in the township three vehicles suddenly stopped next to him. Reginald Rapotu and John Rapotu alighted from a bakkie armed with shotguns. He ran away.

He told court that he had been informed later by MEC Mr Seth Nthai and a Brigadier Makobatsatsi Mphahlele that the three men were members of a hit squad.

## Call for taxi industry to formalise structures

Nicola Jenvey

DURBAN — KwaZulu/Natal transport MEC Sbu Ndebele yesterday urged the taxi industry to establish structures which would determine the number of operators on the roads and to talk to government before embarking on blockades and demonstrations.

Addressing a meeting called by the ministry for the province's local taxi associations, Ndebele referred to a blockade in Maritzburg on Wednesday, when the participants had taken the law into their own hands.

"Issues facing the taxi industry cannot be solved by violence and communication with government is the first step in breaking down the preconceptions the pub-

lic has of the industry, and the taxi operators have of the traffic department," Ndebele said.

He said the industry would have to work hard at ridding itself of its negative image.

In view of the vast role taxis played in SA's transportation network, the industry believed it should receive state subsidies.

However, Ndebele said concessions for fuel and loan repayments were "impossible" without formalised structures.

The permit system was "a great problem" as permission to carry passengers had no meaning. Legitimate operators were competing with drivers not in possession of a permit who, if challenged, could use violence.



# Truth commission comes a step closer

Adrian Hadland

CAPE TOWN — Truth commission legislation will be passed by Parliament next week after an ANC decision not to pursue any further substantial amendments.

ANC Senate justice committee chairman Mohseen Moosa had announced earlier this month the party would be tabling a number of major changes to the Bill possibly including the provision of "automatic indemnity" for senior party and liberation movement leaders.

ANC MPs confirmed yesterday that these major amendments would not be included in the Promotion of National Unity and Reconciliation Bill. One MP said while problems had been raised, no one had come up with a workable suggestion for how these should be tackled.

The Senate committee, which is currently considering the Bill, has proposed amendments mostly of a technical nature. They include the improvement of witness protection and remuneration of commissioners.

The Bill, which has already been approved by the National Assembly after more than 300 amendments, will be debated by the Senate on Wednesday next week.

If the Senate passes the Bill and the National Assembly's justice committee concurs with the amendments, the legislation will be passed on for President Nelson Mandela's signature by the end of next week.

It is believed the process of identifying possible commissioners, who will be appointed by Mandela, has already begun. A formal call for nominations will only be issued once the legislation has completed its passage through Parliament.

The commission, and its three committees — amnesty, human rights violations and reparation and rehabilitation — is likely to be up and running by September.

The December 1993 cut-off date for amnesty applications remains the most controversial outstanding issue.

Mandela has said a postponement, which may only be put into effect through a constitutional amendment, will only be considered once levels of violence in SA had been substantially reduced. Parties calling for a postponement include the Freedom Front, the PAC and the IFP.

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## Loan to Transnet

(332) CT(BR) 23/6/96

Taiwan has agreed to lend Transnet R107,4 million to help upgrade facilities at Pier Number One in Durban harbour.

The low-interest loan, repayable over five years, will help to alleviate the logjam which has occurred in the harbour, according to Gary Lin, Taiwan's consul general in the city.

He said that Taiwan has committed R522,5 million in assistance for the reconstruction and development programme in one year. Of this, R144,9 million is in the form of grants and R377,6 million in loans.



# Taxi commuters form association

(332) 40W 27/6/95

■ BY MANDLA MTHEMBU

In an effort to address problems over fares, safety and interpersonal relations encountered daily by taxi commuters, plans are afoot to launch a commuter body.

The formation of the Commuters' Rights Association of SA (Crasa) was prompted by taxi violence and the high number of accidents involving minibus taxis, according to Crasa interim president Daniel Gqibela.

Police statistics, from July 1993 to January 1995 indicated that 659 dockets were opened on people associated with taxi violence, and that there were 192 incidents of murder, 39 of intimidation, 4 of arson, and 5 of public violence.

Of the 659 cases, 150 had been brought to

court. No statistics were available of the accused who were granted bail. Thirty-three cases had been withdrawn by the court. A hundred cases are still pending. In seven cases the accused were acquitted.

Stressing that the membership would be drawn from different political persuasions, Gqibela said that for a long time commuters had not had a voice.

Some of the organisations' objectives were:

- Improving travelling conditions.
- Striving for reasonable and affordable fares.
- Promoting and facilitating co-operation and peaceful co-existence among commuters and transport operators.
- Instituting legal proceedings for commuters.

# Tackling the 'taxi problem'

(332) *SAW* 29/6/95

**REGULATION and control could save the taxi industry from descending into anarchy and greater violence, writes Mandla Mthembu**

**T**he taxi industry has often experienced severe problems which have made taxi violence part of South African life. The spate of killings since 1987 has left families broken and led to a vicious cycle of revenge.

On the surface, the disputes are the result of commercial rivalry between associations wanting either to penetrate or cling to taxi routes. However, the underlying causes — although related to socio-economic influences — are complex. They are related to the deregulation of the taxi industry and its entry into an economy where it is barely viable.

But the new situation — to devolve controls to the provinces — offers the possibility of formulating focused solutions to taxi problems at provincial level.

In line with this, the Gauteng government and taxi bodies last week launched the Gauteng Taxi Initiative (GTI) to address the "taxi problem" to the benefit of the industry, the province and commuters.

## Regulation

Of the 23 issues identified by the GTI as needing urgent address, regulation and control were described as the most important, as the industry needs to be brought under effective control in the interest of all sections of the community.

Although work is continuing, the GTI has put forward a number of recommendations and proposals aimed at addressing the complex subject of regulation and control.

In view of historic neglect and the current situation regarding regulation and control, "quick-fix" solutions are unlikely. Previously, some authorities used their positions to obtain taxi permits for themselves or to influence the industry.

White ownership of taxis is currently estimated at 30% of

the market. Considering that the taxi industry is regarded as a black preserve, this is quite large. The inroads of whites into the industry have sparked conflict because most whites have no idea about the conditions which face commuters.

The province will have to embark on consultation — especially with taxi bodies — to define its policy, establish structures and adopt appropriate processes.

As the Gauteng MEC for public transport and roads, Olaus van Zyl, has pointed out, the province will be able to provide significant input into the national project. "However, implementation of national solutions — even if these were to be achieved — will not necessarily be always effective in Gauteng," he added. Provision would have to be made for differences in provinces.

The GTI has proposed that legislation needs to be introduced or amended by the province for this to happen. Hence, national legislation would be devolved by the Department of Transport (DoT) with only the necessary amendments required to make developments possible. Thereafter, it would depend upon provinces to review or amend such legislation to suit the province's circumstances. This would be done in consultation with the DoT and other provinces, according to proposals.

Recent discussions between the DoT and provinces on regulation and control brought about a number of agreements, determination of options, and particular positions. However, the focus of deliberations was on passenger transport permits. Many other problems, such as illegal operators, overlapping permits, taxi association registration and recognition, still need to be addressed.



# Alliance to take off despite strike threat

By AUDREY D'ANGELO

CAPE BUSINESS EDITOR

The new Alliance airline, formed as a joint venture between South African Airways, Air Tanzania and Uganda Airlines, is expected to take off as planned on Friday in spite of threats by Air Tanzania's staff to strike and take it to court.

Chris Roodt, Alliance executive director, said yesterday that he and other Alliance staff had a great deal of sympathy with officials of the Tanzanian union who had clearly been "fed grossly inaccurate infor-

mation" and were "being used as pawns for purposes totally unrelated to the purposes of Alliance".

Alliance will fly a looping route connecting Johannesburg with London by way of Kampala, Dar-es-Salaam and Bombay.

Roodt said Alliance would not take business from Air Tanzania and was providing jobs for Tanzanians and Ugandans.

Alliance was a long-haul carrier without traffic rights between Dar-es-Salaam and Entebbe. A proposal to include Dubai in the route still had to be approved by the direc-

tors. "It is absolute nonsense that 90 percent of Alliance employees in Uganda are South Africans and even greater nonsense that Uganda and Tanzania are allocated only 10 percent employment opportunities each.

"Alliance employs two South Africans. The other employees are either Tanzanian or Ugandan citizens.

"This presently includes 29 cabin attendants and 10 sales representatives, all of whom are either Tanzanian or Ugandan citizens. Alliance is in the process of

employing another 30 cabin attendants this month, all of whom will be exclusively from Tanzania or Uganda."

An industry source said the trouble was believed to be politically motivated. Most people in Tanzania and Uganda welcomed the increased tourist business and job opportunities Alliance was expected to bring.

Roodt said he did not expect a strike but if one were called it would not stop the launch of Alliance. Dar-es-Salaam was a short stop on the route.

The platinum industry in South

Africa is expected to be a success story, with platinum prices on their vehicles, to the stan-

dards. The scheme involves placing a

mark over now much smog it will actually extract from the air. The

# Taximen are dressed down

By SIPHO KHUMALO

THE TAXI industry in KwaZulu/Natal has been ordered to clean up its act once and for all in the wake of the latest crippling taxi blockades and the looming tension between Greater Durban taxi operators and authorities over 11 000 outstanding fines.

KwaZulu/Natal Transport Minister Sbu Ndebele told more than 300 representatives of 200 taxi associations at a consultative conference in Durban this week that it was time to clean up the image of the taxi industry.

Ndebele bemoaned the fact that even as he had been preparing for the consultative conference with taxi operators another blockade was under way in Pietermaritzburg, which made it impossible for members of the Cabinet to leave the provincial administration building in the city.

"This blockade was set up although there is a new mayor, a new council in Pietermaritzburg, where all black political organisations operative in this province constitute a leading part of that structure.

"No attempt was made to negotiate with them beforehand," said Ndebele.

The minister told the operators that for their industry to be accorded the legitimacy and the significance that was its due, it needed to promote itself and get rid of its negative image.

## Blockades

Ndebele reminded the taxi operators that at their last consultative meeting in March the ministry had clearly stated its position against road blockades.

"But more significantly, the people themselves, particularly at Umlazi, were calling for a boycott of the taxi industry as retaliation against the general inconvenience of taxi blockades imposed on them without any consultation or consideration," he said.

Meanwhile tension is mounting between the Greater Durban taxi operators and Durban City Police over more than 11 000 unpaid traffic fines — amounting to almost R3 million.

The transport ministry, in a bid to avert the conflict, has initiated negotiations between the associations and the office of the attorney-general to have some of these fines reduced and others scrapped.

This was confirmed by Dah Ndimande of the Umlazi Taxi Association, who told City Press that the meeting with the office of the attorney-general was to go ahead.

"Our feeling is that some of these fines were unfairly issued against our members. However, we welcome the minister's initiatives which have paved the way for us to enter into negotiations with the office of the attorney-general," said Ndimande.



## ON A DIFFERENT PLANE



BY AUDREY D'ANGELO

*SAA, Air Uganda  
and Air Tanzania  
will use their new  
airline to compete  
with Air India*

ET (NR) 3/7/95

(332)

# Maiden flight for Alliance

**I**t has taken eight years for the idea of a southern African airline run as a joint venture between several countries to become a reality.

The harsh fact that few countries in this part of the world can run a profitable national airline has led to the formation of Alliance, in which SAA, Air Uganda and Air Tanzania are partners.

Its scheduled service started yesterday evening when its Boeing 747 SP was due to take off from Dar-es-Salaam to London via Entebbe.

But the fact that two legs of its proposed route — from Dar-es-Salaam to Bombay and Dubai — will not be flown for at least two months, and that striking Air Tanzania union members tried to halt the launch, is an indication of some of the political obstacles that have had to be overcome.

Chris Roodt, Alliance's chief executive, confirmed at a banquet in Kampala on Friday night to celebrate the launch, that the Bombay route was vital for the success of Alliance. But the agreement giving the airline traffic rights to fly there was only signed on June 12.

Alliance will compete directly with Air India on the lucrative routes between Dar-es-Salaam, Bombay and Dubai, which are used extensively by Indian businessmen. It will not compete with SAA, which flies to Bombay directly from Johannesburg.

Roodt said Dubai would not be a viable destination for Alliance without Bombay. "And although we now have the right to fly there it takes a few weeks to load flight schedules into our booking system and finalise arrangements with travel agents. We shall not be able to do it before the end of August."

Until then, Alliance will fly a truncated route between Dar-es-Salaam, Kampala and London, which should give a fillip to the area's growing tourist trade but will hardly provide an adequate market. It will have two return flights a week, leaving Dar-es-Salaam on Sunday and Thursday evenings and London on Monday and Friday.

For practical purposes the flight will really extend between Dar-es-Salaam and Johannesburg. But the leg

between Johannesburg and Dar-es-Salaam will, officially, be an SAA one, although it will be in the same plane which SAA will lease from Alliance for that stretch.

Meanwhile, the Air Tanzania staff are fearful that it will make their airline unnecessary and lead to the loss of their jobs. Adrian Sibbo, Alliance's chairman, was at pains to explain that in fact it should lead to increased traffic for Air Tanzania, which would act as a feeder for Alliance.

SAA, which leases the SP 747 to Alliance and provides the cockpit crew, is training Ugandan and Tanzanian cabin crew. They said the first batch of trainees scored higher marks than those recruited in South Africa for SAA itself, and were exceptionally keen and enthusiastic.

Belgian national airline Sabena will double its capacity on the route between Brussels and Johannesburg from November 1, to 120 000 seats a year. Sabena flies the route twice a week. From November 1 a third flight will be introduced.

Izzy Etzkind, Sabena's sales manager in South Africa, said demand for both first class and business class seats was high. "We concentrate on business travel rather than tourism. That is why we have no plans at present to fly to Cape Town. Johannesburg is the premier business destination in South Africa."

Swissair has recently bought 49 percent of Sabena and industry sources said the two airlines were likely to start a codeshare agreement on the South African route which would effectively give each of them a daily flight.

Cathay Pacific Airways has a new agreement with Comair which will enable Cape Town passengers to complete all check-in procedures including passport control and baggage handling at their own airport. They will be booked on a connecting Comair flight and, on arrival in Johannesburg, transferred to the international lounge.

Cathay Pacific will increase the number of flights to Johannesburg from two to three a week in November.

# Taximen (332) plan to *some* meet Pik

3/7/95  
By Mokgadi Pela

THE taxi industry hopes to meet Minister of Mineral and Energy Affairs Mr Pik Botha to campaign for the lifting of the veil of secrecy surrounding the multi-billion rand industry.

This concern was fuelled by the announcement that petrol would be increased by 1c a litre from Wednesday.

The taxi industry believes that "the liquid fuel industry has been protected by a blanket of secrecy throughout the years of apartheid because of its strategic trade status. The time has come to bring the workings of this industry into the open".

According to spokesman for the National Taxi Task Team Mr Dipak Patel, the industry was already under severe economic stress. He said one of the measures on the team's agenda was the allocation of "taxi consumer installations or petrol filling stations to the industry".

Meanwhile, a delegation from the Ministry of Transport, police and traffic departments agreed unanimously that all taxi drivers ticketed in Mabopane and Garankuwa, near Pretoria, on Friday should appear in court.

This followed a traffic blockade by taxi drivers on the Lucas Mangope Highway north of Pretoria on Saturday.

The drivers were protesting against "excessive fines".



# Taximen drive for more licences

Theo Rawana

MD 4/7/95

THE National Taxi Task Team, concerned at the 1c/l petrol increase effective from tomorrow, would seek more petrol pump licences for the taxi industry when it met Mineral and Energy Affairs Minister Pik Botha, a spokesman said yesterday.

After talks with Botha last year the taxi industry was granted 25 petrol pump licences to enable it to become more profitable.

But now the task team wanted the "veil of secrecy surrounding the liquid fuel industry" lifted, Organised Taxi Industry convenor Boetie Letsoela said.

The taximen hoped to meet Botha this weekend or early next week, and would drive for more licences to be on par with other modes of passenger transport.

The task team, appointed by Transport Minister Mac Maharaj to look at ways of improving the lot of taximen, said it was concerned at the increase because the taxi industry was already under severe eco-

nomie strain.

Spokesman Dipak Patel said fare increases were strongly resisted by commuters and were sometimes accompanied by boycotts. "The economic viability of the taxi industry, and the need to enhance it, remains high on the team's agenda." One of the measures was the allocation of "taxi consumer installations".

The taxi industry wanted to know how many such installations had been allocated by government, where the other requirements were and where they would be permitted to operate.

A special sub-committee of the task team would investigate this and other issues, he said.

The liquid fuel industry had been protected by a blanket of secrecy throughout the apartheid years of its "strategic industry" status.

"The time is ripe to bring the workings of this multi-billion rand industry into the open," Patel said.

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## Taxi fare hike sparks boycott

(332) CT 5/7/95

A PRICE hike in taxi fares in Parow has lead to a boycott of the service by commuters and a substitute service being introduced — raising fears of violence.

Hendricks Taxi Service announced a 28,5% fare increase this week.

The boycott, which began on Monday morning, was facilitated by a supplementary service provided by Cata and Codeta taxis.

Hendricks Taxi Service said they were negotiating with commuters, but the hike was necessary to "cover expenses". — Staff Reporter

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# Fewer police murdered

CT 7/7/95

21/25

JOHANNESBURG: The number of policemen murdered in South Africa dropped substantially in the first half of this year compared to the first six months of last year.

Ms Sally de Beer, a spokeswoman for the police commissioner, said yesterday the number of policemen murdered by the end of June this year was 94 against 137 in the same period last year — represented a drop of almost a third.

Last year, 241 police officers were murdered, down from 271 police deaths the previous year.

She said this drop over a year was the first in a number of years.

Miss De Beer attributed the decline in the number of police murders to the service's increasing credibility.

"We hope this trend continues," she said.

Witwatersrand community policing chief Brigadier Zirk Gous said fewer policemen were being murdered and attacked and that the nature of attacks on them was changing.

He said individual policemen were now being attacked, mainly for their firearms. In the past, gangs attacked groups of policemen.

Sapa

## Northern Suburbs taxi operator fears violence

STAFF REPORTER

CT 7/7/95

A NORTHERN Suburbs taxi operator has expressed fear that violence may result from rival organisations trying to establish themselves on the same route that he is operating. (332)

Mr John Hendricks, co-owner of Hendricks Minibus Services, said yesterday his company had successfully served a route in Panorama, Platteklief and Welgelegen for the past five years.

The route was not strong enough to support two taxi groups, he said.

# 'Skorokoro' taxis make hell trips

Star 10/7/95

(322)

**TAXI commuters often travel in unsatisfactory conditions with operators who do not treat them like customers, as Mandla Mthembu discovered during a trip to Pretoria.**

Travelling by taxi is hell! The terrible conditions commuters are often subjected to are an experience one would rather forget.

Despite efforts by the Government and taxi industry to formulate policies to resolve the "taxi problem", it seems the protection of commuters is still overlooked.

Many commuters say they would have long deserted the taxi industry if there was a quicker, cheaper alternative.

Yours truly undertook a terrible journey from Johannesburg to Pretoria which indicated how most operators still do not think that the success of the industry lies in the support from commuters.

There were several queues of commuters waiting for taxis a few metres from the Johannesburg Park Station. The area is a "self-made" taxi rank where scores of taxis are lined from head-to-tail. I joined the Pretoria queue, and waited for about 20 minutes before boarding.

I was relieved to be moving away from the queue marshalls who were rudely shouting orders at commuters, but dismayed by the condition of the vehicle: it was a "skorokoro".

The driver had to struggle before the ignition started. Apart from being dusty, the vehicle seemed unroadworthy. The side door had no handles and could not be completely closed, and cold air blew in while the vehicle was going. Some seats were broken, others had no covers.

I seated myself in the uncomfortable front-seat but once we

started to move my buttocks could not bear the heating engine: it was as if we were being baked.

Upon noticing there was no music system, I sighed with relief. But this was not for long as a different kind of music soon erupted. It was an irritating steam-train-like sound made by the engine throughout the 45-minute journey. If my ears had covers, I would have closed them.

The vehicle's complicated gears would have made it difficult for anyone, other than the owner, to drive the vehicle. When the driver changed the gears, I thought the gear lever would pull out. The brakes were no better as they had to be pumped several times before the vehicle could slow down.

The vehicle was travelling at a high speed which I could not assess as the speedometer was out of order. During steep hills on the Ben Schoeman Highway, the vehicle slugged and sounded as if it could stop anytime. But I made a silent prayer that at least we arrived at our destination.

One commuter tried to complain, but was told to "shut up or you will be left in the veld". Fourteen passengers, myself included, simply kept quiet while someone was gambling with our lives. We feared that we would forfeit the R10 we paid. I wonder if R10 could buy a person's life?

When we approached the Pretoria city centre, I felt so relieved I wanted to get out and walk. I was safe after a ride to hell!



## 6 killed in Soweto taxi violence

(332) Star 13/7/95  
Six people were killed and one was injured, possibly by the same group of gunmen, in Soweto taxi violence yesterday.

Three taxi drivers were shot dead and one was injured in four shooting incidents in the afternoon. In further violence last night, another two taxi owners were shot dead and a motorist, David Balazi (88), died when he was hit by a stray bullet while sitting in his car at a service station.

Police spokesman Lieutenant-Colonel Piet van Deventer said those who carried out the attack might have been the same group involved in attacks earlier in the day on the N1 highway near Soweto.

He said earlier that the motives for the attacks were not clear, "but it could be related to ongoing rivalry between different (taxi) groups".

No arrests had been made, but the area was being closely monitored, he said. — Sapa.



# Soweto taxi boss in plea to stop the war

◀ From Page 1

me," he said. His house was burnt down but he and his family survived.

In 1991, after being elected STS chairman, he received a number of death threats and in October his house was surrounded and fired on.

"While I was exchanging gunfire with one group in front of my house, others attacked from behind, got into my home and gunned down my wife. She was hiding under the bed and they killed her in cold blood."

After a series of failed peace talks, the war resumed and

Kwenaithe's group was forced from its usual routes.

"We were driven out of the Baragwanath-Leratong route, Protea Glen, Bara-Kliptown and Zola to Kliptown — routes for which we are licensed, but cannot operate even now."

During that period, Kwenaithe survived five attempts on his life, but tragedy struck again when his son was found shot dead after he was kidnapped in one of Kwenaithe's taxis.

"I spent weeks looking for my son and found him with horrible bullet wounds in the mortuary. He had been tortured before he

was killed."

He is convinced his son's murderers were hit-men hired by rival taxi association members. One of the men speaking to him during one of the regular threats he received by telephone boasted about how they "got his son".

Kwenaithe is certain a lasting peace agreement will be in place by next week when meetings will to be held between the taxi groups, the Soweto Police Forum, the offices of the Gauteng MECs for Safety and Security and Transport and Roads.

Kwenaithe called on the Government to negotiate with the

banks to declare a moratorium on repossessions until there was peace in the industry.

He had applied for a permit to carry an R-5 rifle because a shotgun could not repulse an attack with AK-47s.

Kwenaithe said he was facing problems from within his own STS: "After all the work I have put into the peace initiative, other members of the organisation are calling for a re-election so they can elect a new chairman. I am not interested in power, I only want a chance to complete the peace process and I will gladly step down."

## Taxi boss

## in plea to

## stop war

(332) 14/7/95

BY BRUNO JUBASI

A gun-toting ringleader in Soweto's resurgent taxi war yesterday held out an olive branch, saying he was willing to forgive rivals for the deaths of his wife and son.

Soweto Taxi Services (STS) chairman Mmaniki Andries Kwenaithe, who was toting a shotgun and a 9mm pistol as he spoke, said he wanted to work with the Soweto Taxi Association to form one group.

"Too many people have died from this senseless violence. We need peace, all of us. Passengers are scared of using our taxis; the banks are repossessing our taxis because we cannot pay our bonds, and we are all battle-weary. Peace is the only option," he said.

However, peace prospects in the industry were dealt a blow by Wednesday night's multiple highway killings. The murders — in which five taxi drivers and a motorist were gunned down — brought to eight the number of people who have died in taxi-related violence in the township this week.

Kwenaithe is no stranger to taxi feuds.

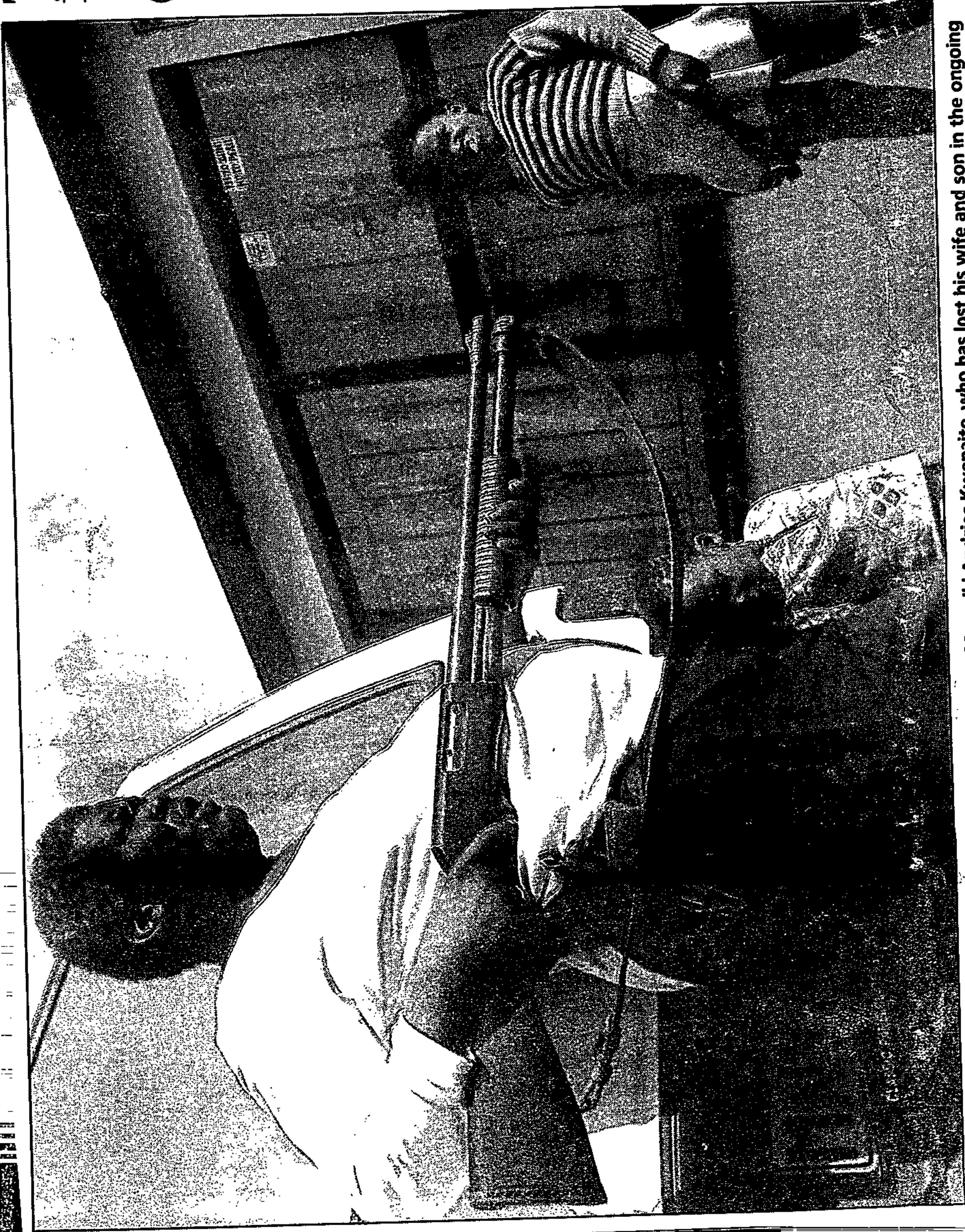
His Phiri, Soweto, home was gutted in 1986 after, he said, he tried to intervene in a feud between two taxi owners. "One of the men involved saw me as interfering and brought 'Marius', a Basotho tribesman and feared gangster, to attack

▶ To Page 3

Double trouble . . . well-armed Soweto Taxi Services chairman Mmaniki Andries Kwenaithe, who has lost his wife and son in the ongoing

Picture: NATASHA PINCUS

Soweto taxi conflict.





# 6 die in taxi war

(332) Sowetan 14/7/95

By Bongani Mavuso

POLICE have established a "special" unit to investigate the ongoing Soweto taxi feud which has left six people dead and two injured in separate incidents on Wednesday night and yesterday morning.

High-ranking police officers will head the unit.

The latest fighting left hundreds of commuters stranded for transport in Meadowlands yesterday morning.

Soweto police spokesman Warrant-Officer John Shiburi could not disclose the names of those killed until their next of kin had been informed.

Shiburi said three taxi drivers were killed in Diepkloof.

A driver and a passenger were also injured.

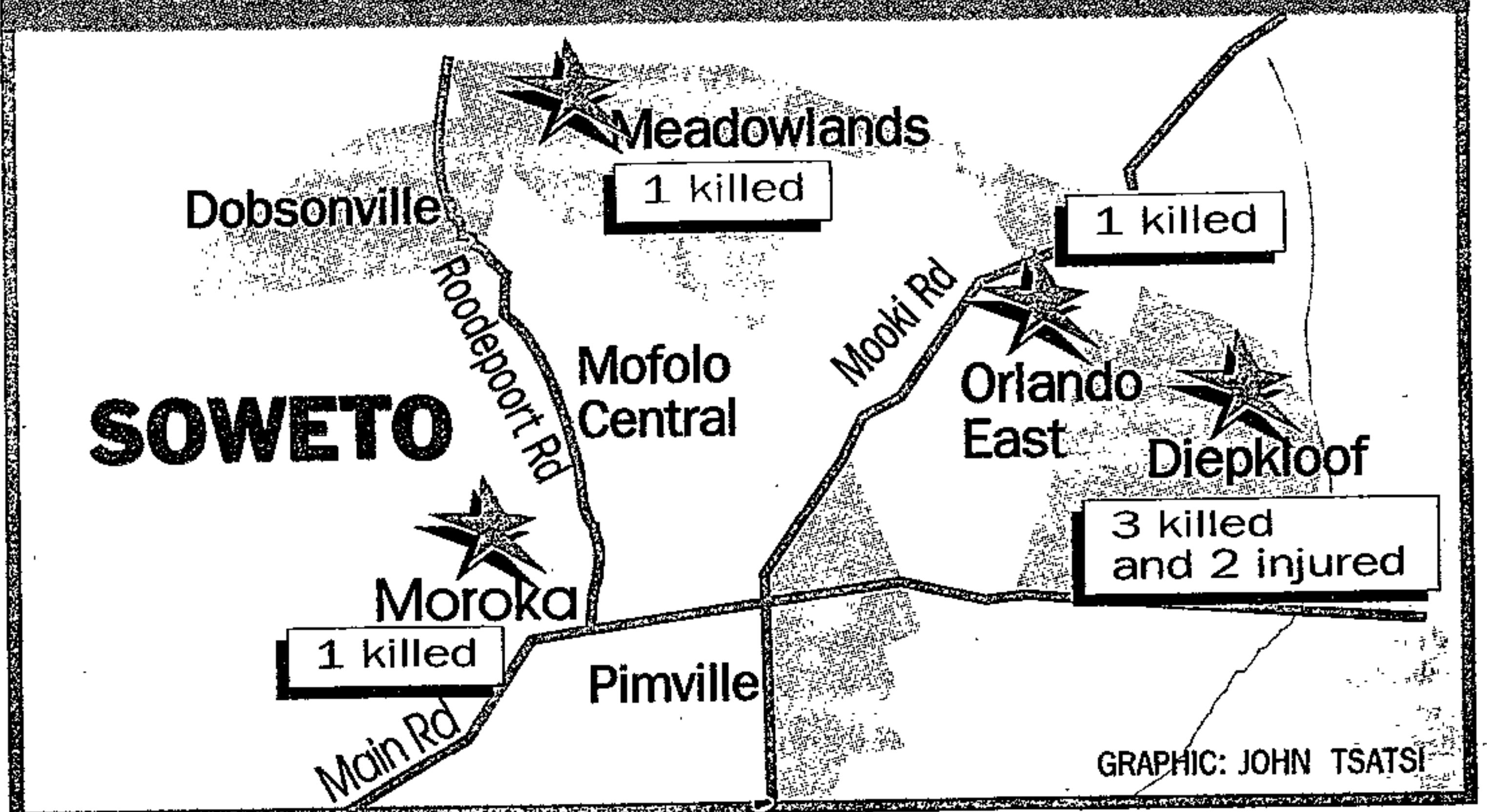
Other drivers were shot dead in Orlando East, Moroka and Meadowlands. Shiburi could not identify the associations the slain operators were affiliated to.

"At this stage it is difficult to determine which associations they belonged to because the attacks took place in different parts of Soweto.

"However, police suspect these latest attacks were prompted by the fighting for lucrative routes. No arrests have been made. Police are investigating," he said.

On Wednesday afternoon taxi driver Mr Mthembeni Vilakazi

## This is where death struck



was shot and injured by alleged members of a rival association on the Soweto Highway near Diepkloof. His minibus taxi was later set alight.

Police suspect the same group of gunmen is responsible for the attacks.

### Stranded for transport

In Meadowlands hundreds of commuters on their way to work were left stranded for transport yesterday morning. Commuters stood in long queues at several taxi ranks in

the township.

"These taxi operators are taking advantage of us. I believe the time has come for a complete boycott of taxis," said an angry commuter.

"These mindless operators do not have the interests of passengers at heart. We are being inconvenienced by greed."

Last month chairman of the Bara-City Taxi Association Mr Mzanzane Makhunga was shot dead with AK-47 rifles in Tshiawelo.

In June about eight people were killed in the taxi violence.

**These mindless operators do not have the interests of passengers at heart. We are being inconvenienced by greed**

# New image for taxi industry

(332) CT 14/7/95

**WILLEM STEENKAMP**  
STAFF REPORTER

THE Western Cape taxi industry is reorganising itself in an attempt to shed its violent and undisciplined image.

Taxi drivers, engineering and transport consultants and members of the University of Cape Town's Centre for Conflict Resolution have been involved in the restructuring bid.

A seminar, to be addressed by regional Transport Minister Mr Leoniard Ramatlakane and other prominent figures, is to be held at the University of the Western Cape later this month to discuss solutions to problems facing the taxi industry.

According to civil engineering consultant Mr Omar Jakoet, the taxi industry was seen by many to be "undisciplined, disorganised, unreliable, dirty and even dangerous".

## **Ethics**

But Mr Jakoet said seminar speakers would show that the Western Cape industry was achieving more success in formulating a code of ethics, systems and order than authorities who tried to impose regulations "from above".

Ms Annemarie Logan, a spokeswoman for the Codeta taxi association, said it was planned that taxi ranks would operate independently of one another, with each rank being run by a representative rank committee.

Taxis operating from specific ranks would be restricted to single routes, and would bear stickers and numbers to that effect. People wishing to register complaints would be able to identify individual taxis, she said.

City traffic manager Mr Wouter Smit said yesterday his department would support any moves to organise the industry.



## Cosatu calls on taxi groups to suspend services

(332) ARG 15/12/95  
A FRESH spate of taxi violence has prompted Cosatu to ask taxi associations to suspend their operations and allow private vehicles to ferry commuters instead.

In a statement yesterday the trade union's Gauteng chairperson, Velaphi Nkosi, said operators should stop ferrying passengers until they had resolved their differences.

The statement came after a flare-up in taxi violence that left six people dead in Soweto.

Mr Nkosi said many agreements had been reached between rival taxi associations "but violence continues to haunt the industry".

Transport Minister Mac Maharaj warned yesterday that the government planned to take strong action against perpetrators of taxi violence.

# Two-gun taxi boss pleads for end to 'senseless violence'

ARG 15/7/95

(332)

**BRUNO JUBASI**  
Own Correspondent

JOHANNESBURG. — A guntoting ring-leader in Soweto's resurgent taxi war has held out an olive branch, saying he was willing to forgive rivals for the death of his wife and son.

Soweto Taxi Services (STS) chairman Mmaniki Andries Kwenaithe, who was totting a 9mm pistol and a shotgun as he spoke, said he wanted to work with the Soweto Taxi Association to form one taxi group.

"Too many people have died from this senseless violence. We need peace — all of us. Passengers are scared of using our taxis, the banks are repossessing our taxis because we cannot pay our bonds, and we are all battle-weary. Peace is the only option left to all of us," said Mr Kwenaithe.

He made it clear he was no stranger to taxi feuds.

His Soweto home was gutted in 1986 after he tried to intervene in a feud between two taxi owners.

"One of the men involved saw me as interfering and brought Ma-Rusia — a Basotho tribesman and feared gangster — to attack me," he said.

His house was burned down but he and his family survived.

In 1991, after being elected STS chairman, he received a number of death threats and in October his house was surrounded and fired on from all sides.

"While I was exchanging gunfire with one group in front of my house, others attacked from behind my house, got into my home and gunned down my wife from close range. She was hiding under the bed and they killed her in cold blood."

After a series of failed peace talks, the war resumed when Mr Kwenaithe's group was apparently forced from its usual routes.

During that period Mr Kwenaithe survived more than five attempts on his life, but his son was shot dead after he was kidnapped while in one of Mr Kwenaithe's taxis.

"I spent weeks looking for him and found him with horrible bullet wounds in the government mortuary in Baragwanath hospital. He had been tortured before he was killed, the bus had been stolen and we found it in Natal after a long search," said Mr Kwenaithe.

He is convinced that his son's murderers were hitmen hired by the rival taxi association, but he was optimistic that a lasting peace agreement would be in place by next week when a series of meetings would be held.

Mr Kwenaithe called on the government to negotiate with the major banks to declare a moratorium on repossessions until there was peace in the industry.

He said the government also had to reinstate the death penalty.

"Many people can now risk mass murder and make huge profits as hitmen. The death penalty used to be a restraint, but now they know that they will get only a life sentence at worst and be paroled after a few years."

He said he had applied for a licence to carry a R-5 rifle because a shotgun could not repel an attack by people carrying AK-47s.

Mr Kwenaithe said he was facing problems from within his own Soweto Taxi Services.

"After all the work I have put into the peace initiative, other members of the organisation are calling for a re-election so they can elect a new chairman."

"I am not interested in power. I only want a chance to complete the peace process and I will gladly step down for new leadership to come in."



# Cosatu, Govt get tough on taxi wars

By BRONWYN WILKINSON

Cosatu has threatened a taxi boycott and the Government has warned of strong action against the feuding taxi industry unless operators resolve their differences and end violence, threatening their commuters.

In a statement yesterday, the trade union's Gauteng chairman, Velaphi Nkosi, called on the taxi associations to suspend their operations and allow private vehicles to ferry commuters instead.

The statement came after a flare-up in taxi violence which left six people dead in Soweto this week and another two killed in Benoni. Police linked all the killings to taxi feuds.

Nkosi said many agreements had been reached between rival taxi associations, "but violence continues to haunt the industry".

Transport Minister Mac Maharaj warned yesterday that the Government planned to take strong action against perpetrators of taxi violence.

Addressing the Federated National Transport Organisa-

tion (Fento) in Port Elizabeth, he said Fento had a critical role to play in seeing the taxi industry put its house in order to make the industry sustainable.

"The development of the taxi industry in South Africa has been a tumultuous and sometimes traumatic one. A few years ago your industry was hailed as the most significant sector as far as black economic empowerment was concerned.

"Today it is plagued with chronic problems such as disunity, conflict, violence and

high levels of business failure. Many people argue that the shining star is waning and is on the brink of economic collapse," he said.

Two men were shot dead and another was seriously injured in a shooting at the Benoni railway station. Police arrested two men.

Six people were killed and one was injured, apparently by the same group of gunmen, in Soweto on Wednesday.

Three taxi drivers were shot dead and one was injured on Wednesday afternoon, and another two taxi

owners were shot dead. Motorist David Balazi (38) was killed by a stray bullet.

The violence began when a group of people pulled a taxi driver out of his minibus and shot him, police said. Then, about 30 minutes later, another taxi was pulled off the N1 highway and the driver was shot dead inside.

A third driver died after being shot in Meadowlands.

On Wednesday night a taxi owner was shot dead in his car at Nancefield. Another was killed in a car at a garage in Meadowlands.

Star 15/1/95 (332)

# Taxi violence now under the whip — Maharaj

(332) ARG 17/7/95

□ *'Time for industry to get in order'*

**Argus Correspondent**

**PORT ELIZABETH.** — Transport Minister Mac Maharaj has warned of the government's intention to take strong action against perpetrators of taxi violence.

Addressing the third national annual conference of the Federated National Transport Organisation (Fento) recently, he said Fento had a critical role to play in seeing that the taxi industry got its house in order to make the industry sustainable.

"The development of the taxi industry in South Africa has been a tumultuous and sometimes traumatic one. A few years ago your industry was hailed as the most significant sector as far as black economic empowerment was concerned.

"Today it is plagued with chronic problems such as disunity, conflict, violence and high levels of business failure. Many people argue that the shining star is waning and is on the brink of economic collapse," he said.

Mr Maharaj said there was hope for the taxi industry but that all the players — operators, government, commuters, drivers and others — had to temper their own interests and agendas for the common good of the country, the economy, and the industry as a whole.

He said the focus in all their



**Mac Maharaj**

endeavours must be the reconstruction of the economy into a sustainable and growing one.

"For South Africa to become a globally competitive player, many areas must be given attention. In transport, the key challenge is to develop a holistic policy for transport in general and public passenger transport in particular. For me and my department this is the main focus. It is our historic responsibility if we are to succeed in our reconstruction and development objectives.

"There have been many questions as to the sincerity of government in the latest initiatives. Let me assure all of you that government is serious, sincere and committed to finding

a solution to the crisis facing your industry," he said.

"At the provincial level, it is imperative that the industry finds unity within itself. The need to bring stability, normality and representativity to your structures is a priority. The conflict and violence must stop. There can be no preconditions to peace.

"The Government has made known its intent, over and over again, to put an end to violence — whatever its reasons and causes. In this regard, I want to use this opportunity to appeal to all associations in the Eastern Cape province and all operators to join the provincial restructuring process. There may be differences in opinion.

"There must be a serious commitment to resolving problems and differences, and there must be a willingness to risk losing power and control. All this is necessary for the health and survival of your industry.

"My appeal: Do whatever is necessary to attain peace, unity and a representative organisation for the industry in your province, and an organisation that is able to transcend inter-association competition and conflict."

Mr Maharaj said the commuter must feel respected, safe and experience a comfortable journey — whether they were travelling to work, home, to do their shopping or visiting family and friends.



# Six alleged taxi (332) *sowetan 17/7/95* hitmen on trial

SIX alleged taxi hitmen will appear in the Benoni Regional Court again today following a shooting incident which left two people dead and one seriously injured at the Benoni Station taxi rank on Friday morning.

The six are Mr Phillip Boroko (26) of Marble Hall, Mr Elias Mahlangu (34) of Pretoria, Mr Samuel Masemola (32) of Daveyton, Mr Lucas Msiza (48) of Siyabuswa, Mr Abram Mahlangu (40) of KwaGuqa and Mr Daniel Msiza (37) of Mamelodi.

The six were arrested shortly after the shooting incident and appeared briefly in a local magistrate's court on Friday night. The magistrate, Mrs E Goosen, postponed the case to today to allow the investigating and defence teams enough time to formulate bail applications.

The State, represented by Mrs AB Schutte on Friday, is expected to oppose the defence's application for bail. All the accused were represented by advocate Dave Joubert and attorney Miss Amina van der Westhuizen.

Police liaison officer Sergeant

Loretta Snyman had earlier told *Sowetan* the police suspected that the shooting incident was part of the ongoing feud between members of Felldta — a break-away group from the Benoni Taxi Association — and a number of unknown people.

She said according to police investigations, 15 minibus taxis belonging to members of the splinter group came under heavy gunfire at about 4am on Friday morning.

According to reports at their disposal, indications were that the ambushers had mounted their attacks from behind a brick wall separating the taxi rank from a school, said Snyman.

She said the investigating team had confiscated three 9mm and three 7,65mm pistols and a variety of rounds. Six vehicles allegedly belonging to the suspects were also impounded.

Snyman attributed the speedy arrest of the suspects to the quick response of the police who normally patrolled the area around the taxi rank. — *Sowetan Reporter*.

(332) 18/7/95 Sowetan

# Taxi boss calls for tough action

THE Government should act firmly against violence in the taxi industry, South African Long Distance Taxi Association chairman Mr Thulani Khubeka said yesterday.

He was speaking ahead of Saldta's annual conference in Johannesburg today, which will be addressed by Gauteng safety and security MEC Mrs Jesse Duarte.

It was time the national and provin-

cial governments acted firmly against anyone committing crime, Khubeka said.

"Offenders must be punished harshly. The public feels the penalty must fit the crime. In recent months the perception has been that murderers and other violent offenders got off far too lightly," he said.

Khubeka urged the authorities to clamp down on illegal drivers.

"The public needs a forum to express their views on these matters. Police and traffic officers should also practise justice and stop treating some groups with kid gloves.

"In fact, anyone found committing any offence should be dealt with severely. The police should be pro-active and taxi owners and drivers should go by the book." — Sapa.



WS

'GOVT COMMITTED TO SOLVING CRISIS'

# Taxi industry told to banish warmongers

CT 19/7/95

**JOHANNESBURG:** Minister of Transport Mr Mac Maharaj says taxi operators must temper their agendas and stamp out violence if the industry is to be saved from collapse.

**T**HE government is committed to finding a solution to the deep crisis in the taxi industry, says Minister of Transport Mr Mac Maharaj.

Disunity, violence and high levels of business failure were leading the industry to the brink of collapse, he told the annual meeting of the South African Long Distance Transport Association yesterday.

He urged members of the taxi industry to involve themselves in the National Taxi Task Team.

"Expel those in your ranks who are involved in violence," he said. "By allowing their behaviour, you will destroy your (industry)."

Mr Maharaj, condemning the attitude of industry members, said they were waiting for the government to act and were concerned only with their own interests.

"The focus of all our endeavours must be the reconstruction of our economy," he said.

"Operators, government, commuters, drivers and other role play-

ers have to temper their own interests and agendas for the common good of the country, the economy and the industry as a whole."

The role of the taxi task team was not to draw up policy but to address issues and problems. It would hold 33 public hearings.

Mr Maharaj asked why there had been a resurgence in violence when there was a forum to which the industry could turn.

"Are there people who benefit from the instability?" he said.

"The government has made known its intent, over and over again, to put an end to violence — whatever its reasons and causes."

— Sapa

# Leaders send out call to end taxi violence

Theo Rawana

(332)

IN A strong call for an end to taxi violence, political and business leaders told the taxi industry yesterday that the sector once hailed as the economic wonder of SA was fast heading for self-destruction.

Transport Minister Mac Maharaj told the SA Long Distance Taxi Association (Saldta) AGM in Johannesburg that he could not understand why there was a resurgence of violence while a structured process designed to improve the industry was well on its way to bearing fruit.

"What is surprising is that not one association has stood up on its own to condemn this violence," Maharaj said.

Attacking the apathy taxi leaders showed towards finding solutions, Maharaj said there was a danger of the industry destroying itself before a solution was found.

Maharaj said the National Taxi Task Team (NTTT) set up last year to look at ways of improving

the taxi industry and make recommendations to government on finding solutions to taxi problems, would be holding public hearings nationally where all people were invited to give input.

He said through the programme of consultation he started last year, government was firmly on the road to developing a sound overall policy for transport, ridding SA of crime, violence and instability.

Gauteng safety and security MEC Jessie Duarte urged industry leaders to chase those people responsible for shootings out of the taxi ranks.

She said numerous meetings, ending with peace pact signings, had not produced results.

Toyota SA chairman Bert Wessels said the taxi industry should not expect government to solve its problems which result in violence.

NTTT chairman Dipak Patel warned that the spiral of violence needed to be stopped before the community stood up and said it could not take it.



# Govt approves taxi industry proposals

(332) Star 19/7/95

■ BY MANDLA MTHEMBU

The Ministry of Transport has approved two proposals to help address problems in the taxi industry and improve operators' skills, Transport Minister Mac Maharaj announced yesterday.

Speaking at a South African Long Distance Taxi Association conference in Johannesburg, Maharaj said the proposals related to the creation of provincial offices for the taxi industry and an interim training programme for operators, drivers and associations.

He told about 200 delegates that provincial offices, intended to regulate the industry, would be funded by the central Government for two

years, provincial government for two years and be taken over by the taxi industry in the fifth year.

Maharaj said the training programme would involve business, administration and driving skills.

"This will help officials to run the industry professionally, and drivers to contribute to improving safety on the roads.

"These initiatives will set the basis for developing capacity and skills in the industry," he said.

Although the industry was worth more than R10-billion in fares alone, the money was not working for it because operators were working individually, said Maharaj. He urged associations to cooperate with one another.

# Taxi hit squads must go — Duarte

*Sowetan 19/7/95*  
**By Sibusiso Mabaso (332)**

GAUTENG MEC for safety and security Mrs Jessie Duarte yesterday warned taxi operators to rid their industry of hitmen and combat violence and criminality or face tough measures.

Duarte, who was speaking in Johannesburg at the annual general meeting of the South African Long Distance Taxi Association, told the taximen: "The Mafia-type of executions carried out by your hitmen have made our country known abroad as the crime capital of the world."

She said her office had instructed the police to do everything in their power to ensure that no bail was granted to suspects in murder cases related to taxi violence. The ongoing taxi violence, which has claimed many innocent lives and left hundreds of drivers and commuters injured, will not be allowed to continue unchallenged, Duarte said.

She said while taxi associations were calling on the Government to assist the taxi industry, they should also call on their member associations to disband their "hit squads". Saldta chairman Mr Thulani Kubheka told delegates that taxi operators should under no circumstances underestimate the power of the community they were serving.

Kubheka said more and more people were beginning to regard taxi associations as gangs of people grouped to establish themselves as authorities to control routes and ranks, and not to regulate taxi operations.

"Let us avoid confrontation at all times, because if we do not do so we will reach a point where the community will say enough is enough," Kubheka said.



## IFP warns taxi operators against hiring hit squads

Theo Rawana

THE IFP has warned taxi operators not to hire unemployed hostel residents as hit squads to kill rivals in their industry.

IFP Vaal regional secretary Mandla Magubane told the SA Long Distance Taxi Association AGM in Johannesburg that killings would go on until the industry itself died, if the practice was not stopped.

His party and the whole community was concerned at the violence gripping the taxi industry, Magubane said, urging taxi drivers to allow commuters to use transport of their choice.

Magubane said taximen should be patient because plans were afoot to make the industry profitable.

Namibian President Sam Nujoma, in a message read on his behalf by Namibian acting High Commissioner Pius Dunaiski, thanked the association for helping Swapo to victory in 1989.

It had despatched 340 taxis to Namibia to help ferry Swapo supporters to polling stations.

□ Sapa reports that the commission of inquiry into taxation yesterday appealed to members of the minibus taxi industry to register as taxpayers and make recommendations for tax reform.

Commission chairman Michael Katz told delegates at the AGM those who had refused to pay tax in the past would be granted amnesty and would not be penalised.

## NATIONAL NEWS

*Sowetan 20/7/75*

# Bid to bring unity in war-torn industry

**By Sibusiso Mabaso**

THE two-day annual conference of the SA Long Distance Taxi Association in Johannesburg ended yesterday with a clear message that solutions should be found to stamp out violence and bring about unity within the industry.

Transport Minister Mac Maharaj told delegates that the development of the taxi industry in South Africa had been a tumultuous and sometimes traumatic one.

"A few years ago your industry was hailed as the most significant sector in black economic empowerment. Today it is plagued by chronic problems, disunity, conflict, violence and high

levels of business failure.

Many people argued that the shining star was waning and on the brink of economic collapse," Maharaj said.

He urged taxi operators, businessmen, drivers, the Government and other role-players to strive for the common good in the country's economy.

In a speech to the conference by Namibian President Sam Nujoma, read by his high commissioner to SA, Mr Pius Dlamini, Nujoma said: "Everyone in the taxi industry needs to be convinced that by peacefully cooperating, they would reap the bigger and sweeter fruits of stability and growth."

He expressed his sincere regret that he could not personally attend due to other pressing national commitments.



# IFP leader accuses taxi drivers of using hitmen

Star 21/7/95

(332)

■ BY MANDLA MTHEMBU

Taxi operators used hostel dwellers as hitmen in taxi violence, an Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) leader in Gauteng claims.

Speaking at the SA Long Distance Taxi Association (Saldta) conference in Johannesburg, Gauteng IFP spokesman Mandlakayise Ndlovu alleged taxi operators used hostel dwellers to "kill whoever they disagreed with" and called on feuding taxi associations to do their own "dirty work".

Although he acknowledged there was a high

unemployment rate in the hostels, Ndlovu protested that it was improper for inmates to be "paid for doing the dirty work" of feuding taxi operators.

"Why don't you do it yourself? Stop involving hostel dwellers in this violence."

Ndlovu then urged operators to heed calls for peace "as no one will be left to do the business".

Saldta itself strongly condemned the violence plaguing the industry and has undertaken to contribute to combat it.

Saldta chairman Thulani Kubheka said the organisation was committed

to restore the image of the industry, and would "root out elements fuelling the on-going killings."

"It would be better to have fewer members who have the future of the industry at heart," he said.

Kubheka also urged operators to take part in training programmes "to improve customer relations and safety on the roads".

He called on the Government to help the industry in addressing its problems, saying the industry was still not regarded as part of the transport industry.

# Arrests lead to optimism on taxi war

(332) Jan 21/7/95

■ BY ABBEY MAKOE  
SOWETO BUREAU

The Soweto police called yesterday's arrest of four taxi operators a "definite breakthrough" in the townships taxi wars.

Police believe the men were involved in a drive-by shooting at commuters in Meadowlands earlier in the day.

"We can confidently say this is a definite breakthrough. All facts suggest we have at long last nipped taxi violence in the bud," said Soweto police spokesman, Major Govindsamy Mariemuthoo.

He said they expected to make more arrests soon.

The four suspects were to appear in court today.

"The swift arrest of the four will restore the confidence of the community in the police. I am happy that we must be seen to be doing something to bring an end to these bloody clashes," Mariemuthoo said.

In yesterday's indiscriminate shootings along Vincent Road in Zone 1 and 2, men with AK-47 assault rifles opened fire on commuters. They travelled in a BMW and a red minibus, witnesses told the police. A pensioner and a little girl were among the three people admitted to Baragwanath Hospital with gunshot wounds.

Only last week, the entire Soweto Highway, of which Vincent Road was a part, was turned into a highway of madness as irate taxi operators exchanged gunfire. Seven people, including two commuters, were killed in the 24-hour battle.

The violence has been attributed to the two rival taxi organisations, the Diepmeadow Taxi Association and the Meadowlands-Noord Taxi Association.



# Taxi warriors face Duarte's wrath

WM 21-27/7/95

332

Gauteng's Security MEC Jessie Duarte is ready to defy the Constitution — if that's what it takes to halt the spiral of taxi warfare, reports **Jonathan Ancer**

**W**ARRING taxi drivers were warned this week that they would be denied bail if arrested.

Speaking at a conference of the South African Long Distance Taxi Association (Saldta), Gauteng Safety and Security MEC Jessie Duarte said: "By appealing to the Attorney General not to grant bail to people involved in the taxi war, I am going against the constitution."

"But," she said, "if these people come out of jail they just continue killing."

Since the beginning of the year, at least 111 people have been killed and 135 injured in the ongoing battle for supremacy among rival taxi associations.

Duarte called on members of the association to stop bribing policemen, to get rid of their hit squads and to weed out those who were perpetrating violence.

"Our main concern is for the passengers. The taxi industry has left people wondering whether they are going to reach their destinations alive."

The Minister of Transport, Mac Maharaj, also sent a scathing message to the taxi industry.

"You waited for us to come to you. I was deeply hurt by your attitude, because you put the interests of a particular sector of the community above the national interests."

He asked for the industry to explain why there was suddenly a resurgence of taxi violence.

Maharaj said that the bottom line for ending the conflict was to expel those responsible for the violence.

Their comments highlighted the urgent need to transform the industry, which millions of South Africans rely on daily.

Saldta chairman Thulani Khubeka said the violence would continue until there was unity in the taxi industry.

"The industry must speak to Mac Maharaj with one voice. It is essential that lines of communication be



**A concerted drive: Police attempt to halt the escalating taxi violence**

PHOTOGRAPH: STEVE HILTON-BARBER

opened between passengers and operators."

Gauteng Public Transport MEC Olaus Van Zyl pointed out that the taxi industry, which accounts for 50 percent of all public transport, does not get a government subsidy.

Yet the bus and train services receive an annual allowance from the government of R2,3-billion.

"We will be looking at financial assistance because costs like insurance, fuel and the maintenance of vehicles are high," he said.

The Department of Transport is setting up 33 public hearings spread over the nine provinces.

According to Maharaj, these hearings would give every role player an opportunity to voice grievances.

"From the hearings, we will be able to sift through options and find solutions to ensure a sustainable, economical taxi industry," he said.

A National Taxi Task Team (NTTT) was set up in March by Maharaj to consult with stakeholders to identify problems in the industry.

"The job of the NTTT is not to make policy — it is take all the issues, analyse them, and bring them back to the role players. These will then be taken as recommendations to government," Maharaj said.

The NTTT has proposed setting up an office for the industry in each province, and a training programme. The provinces will be looking at the details of implementing these proposals.

**A**ccording to Depak Patel, chairperson of the NTTT, the purpose of setting up offices around the country was to build the infrastructure for rival associations to start talking to each other.

"Only a few years ago, the taxi industry was regarded as an example of black economic empowerment. Today, there is serious concern about the future viability of the industry. What happened over the last few years?" he asked.

The cause of the violence,

according to Professor Peter Marcuse, a Fulbright scholar from Columbia University who recently visited Wits University, is that, having publicly created the need for mass transportation, the apartheid government then privatised a response that should have been a public one.

"This brought on the cut-throat (often literally) private competition whose results we see today."

He also claimed that government subsidies were necessary.

Randall Howard, secretary general of the Transport and General Workers Union (TGWU), said the taxi industry has to be regulated so that proper permit systems are put in place and routes are determined effectively.

"Taxi drivers are not registered with the Department of Manpower, they are not entitled to unemployment insurance and there is no minimum wage. Taxi drivers should be covered by the new Labour Relations Act."



Star 22/7/95  
**Jessie backs police  
in opposition to  
bail applications**  
(332)

The Gauteng government is to support the police in their opposition to bail for anyone arrested in connection with taxi violence.

MEC for Safety and Security Jessie Duarte said yesterday she would do whatever she could to support police applications opposing bail because of community concern about people on bail being involved in taxi attacks. The move is part of a radical clampdown on taxi violence contained in the Community Safety Plan released yesterday by Duarte and provincial police commissioner Sharma Maharaj.

Aspects of the plan which directly affect the taxi industry include joint police and traffic department patrols on all taxi routes. Taxis also stand to be targeted at roadblocks, where the vehicles, as well as the driver and passengers, will be searched. "I don't care if they don't like it," said Duarte. "It is time for the Government to govern."



■ WYNBERG

# Taxi meeting to stop wheels falling off ...

□ Violence looms in battle over turf  
*AR 624/7/95 (332)*

GILL TURNBULL  
Staff Reporter

WYNBERG taxi operators will meet today with police, the traffic department and the Transportation Board in an attempt to avoid a violent confrontation with pirate operators.

Frustrated taxi drivers are calling on the traffic department to ticket drivers who operate outside their legal routes.

Last Thursday about 200 taxi operators met three senior traffic officials at Wynberg police station in an attempt to resolve problems caused by taxis from outlying areas encroaching on Wynberg United Taxi Association's (Wuta) territory.

After a two-hour debate in

which no agreement was reached the group resolved to meet again today at Wynberg town planner Ivan Sasman's office in Brisbane Road.

An issue under discussion today is likely to be Wuta chairperson Hassan Parker's proposal that taxi operators from other areas "follow the correct channels" and apply for permission to join the Wynberg group.

Several drivers have claimed that a "linesman" in charge of the Wynberg rank is causing conflict by favouring some operators.

Wynberg taxi operators complain they are losing business because of pirates.

Meanwhile, drivers from Grassy Park, Lotus River and Hanover Park have demanded the right to operate in areas

of greatest commuter demand.

Some operators lay the blame for the conflict at the door of the Transportation Board for issuing permits indiscriminately.

Wuta members have called on traffic officers to ticket "illegal" operators in Wynberg. A traffic official explained that deregulation had taken away the traffic department's powers to fine taxis operating outside their routes.

The meeting, under the chairmanship of Wynberg station commander Alwyn van der Riel, pledged to continue to work for an amicable solution and called a follow-up meeting today to include a representative from the Transportation Board.

# Minibus taxis success story, says minister

(332) ARL 26/2/95  
SABATA NGCAI, Staff Reporter

THE minibus taxi industry is a South African success story, says Western Cape Transport Minister Leonard Ramatlakane.

He was speaking at a meeting of taxi operators from rival taxi organisations at the University of the Western Cape yesterday to look into the future of the industry.

The taxi industry "became the main point for the entry of the African, coloured and Indian communities in the transport business," said Mr Ramatlakane.

It was government policy that the taxi industry should become an equal partner in the transport business. The playing fields would have to be levelled for the taxi industry to take its rightful place in the provision of transport generally, and he supported subsidisation of the industry to this end.

The seminar was organised by the Western Cape branch of the Southern African Road Federation (SARF).

SARF chairman John Onraet said the aim of the seminar was to bring the taxi associations together to look into the future of the industry and give "some sort of consolidation and co-ordination" in an industry which was "extremely divided and over-subscribed".

One of the seminar organisers, Omar Jakoet, said the South African taxi industry was seen by many people as "undisciplined,

disorganised, unreliable, dirty, violent and even dangerous".

There was concern about the "arrogance of the drivers" towards other road users.

The drivers said they were operating under "extremely difficult and unfavourable" conditions which were responsible for their problems.

They said they were worried about the "biased system" used by the Local Road Transportation Board to grant permits to operators, and giving permits to people who did not deserve them.

Members of the Cape Organisation for a Democratic Taxi Association (Codeta) and the Cape Amalgamated Taxi Association (Cata) said the "undemocratic and unprofessional" permit system had resulted in an orgy of taxi violence which had engulfed the region in the past few years, leading to deaths and damage to property.

The operators said the board no longer granted special permits to people who wanted to drive to remote areas for special purposes. They were not given reasons for that.

When defiant drivers went to those destinations without permits they were fined hundreds of rands.

Plein Park Taxi Association in Mitchell's Plain was also angry about the permit system.

They accused the board of "enforcing apartheid laws to destroy the taxi industry".



## Taxi industry told to clean up

CLEAN up and diversify or lose out, the mini-bus-taxi industry was told at a city seminar yesterday.

Operators were told the industry was becoming over-traded and less profitable and they should diversify.

• See Page 7

(332) CT 26/9/95

ROUTES 'OVERTRADED' AND LESS PROFITABLE

# Taxi industry told to improve image if it wants subsidies (332)

CT 26/7/95

**TAXI OPERATORS** will have to give passengers better treatment if they want to survive, speakers at a seminar have warned. **CLAIRE BISSEKER** reports.

**T**HE once-thriving minibus-taxi industry is becoming overtraded and unless taxis, seen as a "menace", improve their image, the government will be reluctant to dole out subsidies.

This was the sobering message to taxi operators at a seminar hosted by the Southern African Road Federation at the University of the Western Cape yesterday.

Research by the City Council's transport planning branch has found that although the number of taxis and passengers in the Western Cape has more than trebled in the past eight years, the average number of trips by each taxi has almost halved.

Fares had not kept pace with inflation and the industry was becoming less profitable, said city transport engineer Mr Abdul Bassier.

Western Cape Taxi Task Team chairman Mr Basil Nagel said there had been a slow trickle of passengers back to bus and rail transport where there were better levels of customer care, but the trend towards private cars was the industry's greatest threat.

The public believed taxis were a "menace" and the industry would have to make major changes in the way it treated passengers if it wanted to survive competition, he said.

## Standards

Although buses and trains received annual subsidies of R60 million and R110m respectively, "at least they provide a tolerably safe and acceptable service", Mr Nagel said. It was "reasonable" of the government to insist that financial support for the industry be tied to an improvement in discipline and standards.

Codeta spokesman Mr Morris Noemala said the association was trying to shed its image of being associated with violence.

He supported the idea of community liaison forums to encourage dialogue between taxi opera-



**ROUTE OF PROGRESS:** Regional Minister of Roads, Transport and Public Works Mr Leonard Ramatlakane (left) and his private secretary, Mr Dumisani Ntuli, attended a seminar on the taxi industry hosted by the Southern African Road Federation at the University of the Western Cape yesterday.

**PICTURE: ALAN TAYLOR.**

tors and passengers. He suggested that taxi associations be required to register as Section 21 non-profit companies and that a code of conduct be drawn up for the industry.

Taxi drivers should receive specialist training, he said.

Mr Noemala agreed that the industry had become saturated and blamed the Road Transportation Board for not having exer-

cised proper discretion in granting permits. This had also led to some routes being oversupplied and others neglected, he said.

Regional Transport Minister Mr Leonard Ramatlakane said all modes of transport needed to be integrated into an efficient service.

The government believed the taxi industry should play its rightful role in national transport.



# 500 taxis blockade roads

*Sowetan 26/7/95 (332)*  
**By Sibusiso Mabaso**

KRUGERSDORP was plunged into chaos yesterday when more than 500 taxi operators blockaded key roads on the West Rand town, demanding fair and equal treatment from council officials.

The Greater Krugersdorp Taxi Association launched the blockade in protest against what they said was "local government interference in the recent taxi hike".

*Sowetan* was told that the simmering anger over the 50c taxi increase burst into an open clash between commuters and taxi operators last Thursday.

Taxi operators have accused Krugersdorp mayor Mr Stephen Motingoa of running a rival taxi industry in the town. Motingoa has denied the accusation.

The GKTA has also accused Motingoa of instigating residents to boycott their taxis and make use of alternative transport.

## **Demanding too much**

Residents in Munsieville, Swanieville and Kagiso said the taxi association was demanding too much from them and they had vowed to intensify the taxi boycott until "the association comes to their senses".

Secretary of the GKTA Mr Norman Mosetloa said his office had re-

ceived complaints that taxi operators were being assaulted and robbed of their day's takings by residents who are opposed to the increase.

Traffic officers responded to the blockade by closing off-ramps into Krugersdorp, leading to massive traffic jams on roads around the town.

Police, led by Colonel Isak Ludick, ordered the blockading taximen to remove their vehicles from where they were parked. The blockade ended just after 4pm.

Officials of the taxi association were yesterday locked in a meeting with the town's mayor Motingoa and other council officials in an attempt to resolve the dispute.

# Taximen fight for city ranks

**M**INIBUS-TAXI zones in East London city centre remained tense yesterday as a tussle for access to ranks halted traffic in a main street every day this week.

East London acting traffic chief Mr Rick Andrew said traffic officers assisted by riot police were patrolling the area yesterday after the taxi conflict disrupted traffic in Buffalo Street on Monday

**The conflict was sparked by drivers' reluctance to use the official taxi rank**

and Tuesday. "There is also a meeting with the Eastern Cape Peace Initiative this morning where one of the aspects to be discussed is taxi operations from Taxi City," he said.

The conversion of city parking space into the Taxi City rank earlier this year is behind the conflict between the Mdantsane, East London Taxi Association (Melta) and the East London Taxi

Association (Elta).

Melta general secretary Mxolisi

Sonshasha explained the reasons for this week's disruptions which have left thousands of passengers stranded.

"From May 1 it was agreed four taxi associations would move from the street and operate from Taxi City.

"We went there and have waited for three months for the other associations to join us but we discovered they are still

pulling passengers from the street while we are starving."

On Monday Melta decided to resume loading passengers from its old informal rank in Buffalo Street which has since become a no-stopping zone. Elta members, disgruntled at losing passengers to the provocative Melta members, promptly blocked the road and forced police intervention. *Eena.*

332) Sowetan 27/7/95



# Putting the customer first makes for healthy profit

By John Spry

The commercialised Airports Company, having already wiped out losses previously incurred under governmental control, will shortly be releasing healthy profit figures for the year to February.

Piet de Jager, general manager, said that since business-orientated managers took over nearly two years ago, the company's fortunes have improved dramatically.

From a R50 million loss, the new management generated R19 million in profit for the eight months to February last year.

Airports Company achieved still better figures in the last financial year, said De Jager.

Formerly a consulting engineer specialising in turnaround situations, De Jager has gathered around him a team recruited from the private sector.

"The effect has been immediate and highly positive. Airports Company now has a businesslike approach to its activities. Before we took over, the group was run along civil service lines, with its accompanying inefficiencies.

"We have weeded out many of those administrative shortfalls via

our prime objective of stressing that the customer is our most valuable asset whose needs should be quickly satisfied."

In keeping with the company's business orientated approach, it has set itself onerous financial targets, one of which is to achieve a return on assets of 8 percent. With the current figure standing at around 4 percent, it has a long way yet to travel.

De Jager is nevertheless confident it can be achieved: "Why else should a parastatal commercialise if not to eventually privatise?" he asks. "I reckon that two years

down the line we will be in good enough shape to exercise the privatisation option. Whether this materialises hinges on our only shareholder, the government."

De Jager has ambitious plans for Johannesburg International Airport, among them the construction of multi-level parking garages and shopping centre complexes along the lines of London's Heathrow.

While Airports Company is currently ungearred, De Jager predicts that its expansion plans will necessitate its having to tap the capital market.



**TURNAROUND** Piet de Jager, streamlining the airport parastatal

# IFP warns taxis to avoid boycott

■ BY MANDLA MTHEMBU

Soweto taxis would be boycotted if feuding associations did not co-operate with the Government and political organisations in their attempts to resolve the disputes, IFP Gauteng spokesman Mandlakayise Magubane has warned.

Safety and Security MEC Jessie Duarte, provincial Police Commissioner Sharma Maharaj, the IFP, the ANC and taxi associations are expected to meet next week to find ways of addressing Soweto's taxi disputes.

Magubane said the IFP would call for the deployment of police at Soweto taxi ranks and for alternative transport, should commuters embark on a boycott.

But he stressed that the co-operation of operators would help to end the violence: "Taxi owners have the power to stop the violence, as they are hiring people to do their dirty work," he claimed.

He claimed that taxi owners, who were involved in the fighting were often not killed,

saying the people mostly affected by the violence were the drivers and commuters.

Acknowledging that taxi operators were partly to blame for the violence, SA Long Distance Taxi Association spokesman Boeti Letsoela said action should also be taken against certain SAPS members who are "working with the gangsters causing the mayhem"

Enforcement

"This is not a transport or a taxi matter but one of adequate law enforcement," he said.

Soweto police spokesman Major Govindsamy Mariemuthoo said claims that police were involved in taxi violence cover-ups would be investigated and action would be taken.

Commuters' Rights Association of SA president Dan Gqibela said commuters should be consulted when decisions affecting them were made "as some of the violence erupted because commuters were not part of agreements".



Call to (244)  
(332)  
put wheels  
on RDP

Star 31/7/95

■ BY MANDLA MTHEMBU

The taxi industry could be a leader in the economic empowerment process if it were prepared to change and grasp the opportunities provided by the RDP, according to the SA Long Distance Taxi Association.

Spokesman Boeti Letsoela said the Government also had a major role to play in transforming the industry by developing strategies based on the RDP.

This would enable the reconstruction of the taxi industry as well as a linked development of the investment in the industry "into the mainstream of the SA economy".

Letsoela said the taxi vehicle fleet nationally represented some R7-billion at current replacement values and had an annual turnover of about R4-billion, but lamented that the investment barely created income.

If the industry were one combined undertaking it would be one of the largest on the Johannesburg Stock Exchange, he added.

## Taxi feuds: Moz link probe soon

PIETERSBURG: Northern Province police said yesterday they would probe claims that former Mozambican guerillas were being hired to eliminate rivals in taxi industry feuding in the province.

Taxi unit commander Major Pieter Swanepoel said the alleged Mozambican connection was a cause for great concern.

"We know former Mozambican soldiers have a thorough knowledge of AK-47s, Makarov

and Tokareff pistols. The killings here were carried out by skilled assassins using these weapons, as well as R4 and R5 rifles," he said.

There was evidence that unemployed Mozambicans were paid large sums by taxi owners to "protect" their fleets on busy routes.

He said these "taxi patrol officers", travelling in fast cars, became killers if rival vehicles poached passengers or infringed on their routes. — Sapa

332 CT 1/8/95



# Ex-soldiers *Sowetan 1/8/95* suspected of taxi terrorism *(SPL)*

SAPS blames skilled gunmen in fast cars for Northern Province taxi violence

**N**ORTHERN Province police are investigating suspicions that former Mozambican soldiers are being hired to eliminate rivals in the region's taxi industry.

Taxi Unit commander Major Pieter Swanepoel said an alleged Mozambican connection was cause for great concern.

"We already know that former Mozambican soldiers have a thorough knowledge of weapons such as AK-47s, as well as Makarov and Tokareff pistols.

## Skilled assassins

"The latest killings in the province were carried out by skilled assassins using these weapons, as well as R4 and R5 rifles," he said.

Evidence was emerging that unemployed Mozambicans were being paid large sums by taxi operators to "protect" their fleets on busy routes.

Swanepoel said these "taxi patrol offic-

ers", travelling in fast cars, became killers if rival vehicles poached passengers or infringed on their routes.

Hit squads were sustaining a reign of terror that was difficult to counter.

## Fear of revenge

Swanepoel said it was almost impossible to arrest the criminals and to secure convictions in court, as witnesses invariably refused to testify for fear of revenge by the killers' associates.

In the most recent incident in Northern Province, Soweto taxi driver Mr Jerry Ramannye was shot dead behind the wheel of his vehicle at Moletjhe, near Seshego, on Friday.

District police spokesman Captain Phuti Setati said Ramannye had stopped his taxi to allow a passenger to alight when a car drew up alongside and two occupants opened fire.

Setati said this was the eighth taxi death in the Seshego area since May 20. — *Sapa*.

## Breakthrough on Soweto taxis near, says Matjila

Theo Rawana

(332) BD 2/8/95

NEGOTIATIONS to unify feuding Soweto taxi groupings were at such an advanced stage that an announcement of a single association was not far away, Soweto taxi relations officer Knox Matjila said yesterday.

Matjila, who as Sabta taxi conflict manager had been trying over the past two years to get the Soweto Taxi Association, the Soweto Taxi Services, the Diepmeadow Taxi Association and the Meadowlands/Diepkloof Taxi Association to stop fighting and form one organisation, is now Gauteng government taxi relations officer.

Matjila said talks were "going very well" and there was no chance of "another uprising" such as the one that erupted in Meadowlands about two weeks ago.

Matjila said Northern Province reports that former Mozambican soldiers were being hired to eliminate taxi rivals could be true because taxi warlords used the services "of anyone who will kill for money".

Northern Province police said this week they were investigating these allegations of taxi owners hiring of former Mozambican guerillas versus rivals. They said the allegations were backed by the hitmen's professionalism in handling weapons such as AK-47s and Makarov and Tokarev pistols.

"This could also be backed by the fact that in massacres such as... in Benoni recently, only one out of the six men to appear in court was a local man," Matjila said.

He said moves to unify the taxi industry — as Gauteng province was doing — were certain to make it difficult for taxi warlords to use hired gunmen.

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# Anger as SA airline folds

(332) CT 3/8/95

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT**

JOHANNESBURG: Hundreds of angry passengers were left stranded last night at the International Airport here after the provisional liquidation of Avia Airlines, which is R21 million in debt.

The company's Boeing 747, which is leased from South African Airways, was due to depart on a scheduled journey to Gatwick at 7.50pm.

An airport spokesman said the flight had been delayed indefinitely and advised passengers to phone Avia's emergency lines for information.

However, both these numbers plus the airline's head office line remained unanswered.

Director and sole shareholder of the airline Mr Gerhard de Klerk had applied in the Pretoria Supreme Court yesterday for the airline to be placed in provisional liquidation, saying it was not able to service its debt.

SAA financial director Mr John Hare confirmed that Avia was in financial difficulties, and said the cheque for the July lease on the 300-seater aircraft had been dishonoured.

## Undercut rivals

He said SAA would meet the liquidators today for discussions. It was at the request of the liquidators that the plane's flight was cancelled.

Liquidators Cooper Theron du Toit Trust of Pretoria could not be reached for comment last night.

Avia Airlines started its Johannesburg-Gatwick service on May 8 this year, undercutting the cost of return fares offered by rival operators by 15%.

The company's sole aircraft flew to London on Monday, Wednesday and Friday, returning the following day. Travel agents, who were caught unawares by yesterday's crisis, were not able to warn passengers of the cancellation in time.

Mr André Geldenhuys, managing director of Seekers Travel, Sandton, said: "We are trying to establish how many clients we have in London awaiting the return flight. We will do everything possible to get these people home to South Africa."

# Hundreds stranded as newest SA airline folds after just three months

Stephané Bothma

(332)

PRETORIA — After operating for just three months, SA's newest international carrier, Avia Airlines, halted all flights after having itself urgently provisionally liquidated in the Transvaal Supreme Court yesterday.

About 300 angry passengers booked on Avia's flights to London were stranded at Johannesburg International Airport last night as a result of the move. There were moves to get some of the passengers on board a Sudan Airways flight today.

Avia had liabilities of R21m, which could still increase, airline director and sole shareholder Gert de Klerk said in the ex parte liquidation application.

Despite full flights on its Johannesburg-London route, Avia had been operating at a loss because control of discounted ticket sales had been ineffective when booking opened six months ago, De Klerk said.

One of the main reasons for the urgent liquidation was to avoid inconvenience to prospective Avia passengers, who might have been stranded overseas, Avia lawyer Braam van der Walt said last night.

However, negotiations with two prospective overseas and one local buyer would continue this morning. Reports that negotiations were under way with Virgin Atlantic could not be confirmed.

"A good possibility exists that the provisional liquidation will not be made final and Avia will relaunch its service in the near future," Van der Walt said.

Arrangements would be made for other airlines to carry passengers booked on Avia's three weekly return flights between Johannesburg and London.

De Klerk said that before Avia was

launched, feasibility studies showed the airline would be "profitable and a success", but Avia had later been required to pay R5.5m in additional guarantees. This money would otherwise have been available as operating capital.

He said because Avia's ticket reservation system had not initially been computerised, all tickets were sold at a lower price, instead of a limited number.

Avia was still flying passengers at these low fares, he said.

In addition, Avia's former general manager had entered into contracts at "high

costs", including logo design for R550 000 and a promotional video for R500 000. Lost cabin equipment also had to be replaced at a cost of R600 000.

De Klerk said SAA, which leased out the Boeing 747 Avia used, had demanded an additional R2.9m this week for the aircraft's lease and operation.

De Klerk said it would have cost "several hundred thousand rands" to operate last night's flight to London.

"It would be reckless and in contravention of the law for Avia to continue with flights in its insolvent state," he stated.



# AVIA AIRLINES



All their bags are packed, they're ready to go . . . but they're not leaving on an Avia jet plane. The provisional liquidation of the airline left hundreds of angry London-bound passengers stranded at Johannesburg International Airport last night.

PICTURE: NATASHA PINCUS

## Avia Air collapse angers the passengers

(332) Star 3/8/95

■ BY NIALL AITCHESON

Hundreds of angry passengers have been left stranded in Johannesburg and London following the provisional liquidation of Avia Airlines, which faces debts of R21-million three months after it came into service.

Attempts were made last night and today to find seats on other airlines for passengers booked on yesterday's Johannesburg-Gatwick flight and for those booked on the return flight, due to leave tonight. Travel agents were caught completely unawares by the crisis.

An airport spokesman said would-be travellers should phone two Avia emergency lines for further information. But both these numbers plus the airline's Johannesburg head office line remained unanswered. Attempts to contact management also failed.

In papers before the Pretoria Supreme Court, Gerhard de Klerk, director and sole shareholder said creditors, directors, shareholders, third parties and the public would suffer huge losses if the airline continued operation.

He said liquidation was needed because SAA had demanded R2,9-million this week for the rental and maintenance of Avia's only aircraft which it leased from SAA.

SAA financial director John Hare confirmed that Avia was in financial difficulties, and revealed that the cheque for the July lease on the 300-seater aircraft had been dishonoured.

"Avia applied for voluntary liquidation at the Pretoria Supreme Court on Wednesday afternoon. A provisional liquidation order was subsequently granted," he added.

Liquidators Cooper Theron du Toit Trust of Pretoria could not be reached for comment last night.



# Carry mail to rural areas, taximen urged

ARL 5/8/95

(332)

BLOEMFONTEIN. — Transport Minister Mac Maharaj has again urged the minibus taxi industry to "clean up its act" and to be united in improving its image.

And he has urged them to diversify and even take mail to rural areas.

In a speech read on his behalf in Bloemfontein yesterday, Mr Maharaj said it was vital that something was done to aid the industry, which carried almost half of South Africa's commuters daily.

Mr Maharaj's speech, marking the opening of the Free State's transport policy-making body, was delivered on his behalf by provincial transport director Daan Visser.

Mr Maharaj was hospitalised this week after complaining of

chest pains and was unable to attend.

His speech said public transport operators provided support to emergent entrepreneurs and should be encouraged to expand their services to include postal and parcel deliveries to rural areas.

Mr Maharaj said operators should diversify and not see themselves just as carriers of passengers.

Operators could provide contract services for companies in off-peak hours and the industry could create job opportunities in panelbeating and vehicle service workshops.

Free State transport MEC Louis van der Watt said the economic viability of passenger transport was a major reason for the violence in the taxi industry. — Sapa.



# Unexpected liquidation of Avia leaves hundreds stranded

The unannounced closure of Avia Airlines this week caused headaches for travellers and top management of the erstwhile airline.

**CAROL LAZAR** reports

When Avia Airlines folded this week and owner Gert de Klerk filed provisional liquidation papers in the Pretoria Supreme Court, nobody at Avia - including the most senior executives - was aware of the situation. Managing director Doug

Berry was totally unaware of De Klerk's actions. "I was told at 3.50pm (on Wednesday)," said Berry. "Until then, none of us were aware our plane would not be flying that night." Avia was South Africa's first independent international airline and flew the lucrative Johannesburg-London route. This week's development left hundreds stranded here and in London and thousands more deprived of booked flights.

De Klerk filed for provisional liquidation on Wednesday afternoon in the Pretoria Supreme Court. The papers stated his assets were R21,4-million, his

liabilities R21-million - which, according to the liquidation papers, could rise once further contracts entered into by the former general manager and other personnel come to light.

Avia leased its only plane, a Boeing 747, presently grounded at Johannesburg International Airport, from South African Airways. According to John Horn, financial director of SAA, two cheques bounced, the last for R2,7-million last Friday.

The *Saturday Star* attempted on several occasions to reach De Klerk but without success.

At the beginning of this week,

rumours were rife in the travel industry that Avia had problems. The *Saturday Star* asked the Association of SA Travel Agents (Asata) why it had not warned members there might be possible problems with Avia. "Last time we did that," said Roger Mackie, chairman of Asata's Retail Travel and Congress, "we found ourselves involved in a court case".

In recent months, Asata has urged the public repeatedly to deal only with travel agents or tour operators who are members of Asata. However, it has not urged its travel agent and tour

operator members to deal only with the International Air Transport Association-registered airlines. Avia was not an IATA-registered airline. All IATA carriers have interline agreements with each other, meaning that, if an airline cannot fly for any reason, other IATA carriers would be bound to accommodate those passengers on their airlines.

Mackie said Asata was looking into the problem.

According to the Department of Civil Aviation (DCA) any new airline has to register with the International Air Services Council of the Department of Trans-

port. Johan Bierman, assistant director of the Department of Transport and secretary of the IASC said: "Avia met all the initial and strict requirements including the financial ones when registering, which is why they were granted a licence."

Avia's pre-bookings were heavy. This was confirmed by Munroe Deyssel, managing director of Travel Assistance, who has been called in by various tour operators and travel agents as many of Avia's passengers held travel insurance. Deyssel said: "The print-out of passengers booked on Avia's future

flights is more than 50 metres long.

"Insured passengers will be fully recompensed," said Deyssel.

However, because Avia was selling flights for a low cost, passengers who wish to replace their tickets will have to pay other airlines almost R1 000 more for a return flight to London.

According to a senior executive at Avia, the crew in London is stranded and has been kicked out of the hotel because the account has not been paid.

Another question being asked in the travel industry is why sev-

eral agents and operators continued selling Avia tickets until Wednesday morning.

Andre Geldenhuys of Seekers Travel, who has flown at least 1 500 passengers on Avia and had pre-booked several thousand more, said: "You cannot go on rumours. The product was good, prices competitive and our clients demanded to fly on Avia."

Geldenhuys maintains that between 80 and 90% of his booked clients had taken out default travel insurance. "If they refused to take out insurance, we made them fill in a form stating it had been offered."

## here and abroad

(332) Star 5/8/95

# Phoenix gets new lease on life

Stephané Bothma

(332) 00 10/8/95

A CAPE Town-based charter operation has bought the beleaguered Phoenix Airways amid speculation that the no-frills carrier was about to go out of business.

Atlantic Air, which has been operating in the Cape for the past nine years, took Phoenix over on Monday, but would not disclose details of the purchase deal or the amount of money that changed hands.

Phoenix's existing timetable will be adhered to and remain unchanged for the time being and all bookings made prior to the takeover will be honoured according to the conditions under which tickets were issued.

Additional flights will be introduced in the near future.

The two men who engineered the takeover, Atlantic Air chairman Johan Crouse and MD Del Colussi, envisaged that certain major changes would be made to Phoenix to dispel any "misconceptions that the public may have unjustly had in the past" about the airline.

Crouse, newly appointed as Phoenix chairman, said this week that many totally unfound-

ed rumours and allegations had been made since the inception of Phoenix eight months ago, a sad tendency in the aviation world. He could only assume this was an attempt to kill yet another privately owned airline.

Crouse was of the opinion that a definite need existed in SA for private airlines to ensure that fares remained reasonable and that overall standards in the industry improved.

"Phoenix considers other airlines not as competitors, but rather as colleagues," he said.

The decision to buy Phoenix followed plans by Atlantic Air to expand their operations.

Traditionally a charter and cargo operation, Atlantic launched its first scheduled service, the so-called Garden Route service from Cape Town to Port Elizabeth with stops in Plettenberg Bay and Oudsthoorn in October last year.

Crouse said Phoenix would strive for punctuality and the best prices.

He said the Boeing 727 aircraft used by Phoenix would at all times comply with all airline safety regulations.

According to Crouse, Atlantic Air and Phoenix would strive to continue to keep their individual identities.

## Officials in driver's licence scam appear in court

CAROLINA — Six government officials, including four traffic officers and two justice department clerks, are scheduled to appear in the Carolina Regional Court today in connection with the sale of drivers' licences to the public.

The court appearance is the culmination of almost one year of investigation by law enforcement agencies in KwaZulu-Natal, KwaNdebele, the Eastern Transvaal and KaNgwane.

The officials have been charged with operating a licence sale syndicate in conjunction with

a number of driving schools based in the former homelands of KwaNdebele and KaNgwane.

Investigations have revealed that driving school operators would tour areas in KwaZulu-Natal and the Eastern Cape, collecting prospective applicants' identity documents to forward to the centres.

Applicants were charged between R500 and R800 for their licences.

More arrests are expected in the coming weeks. — Africa Eye News.



## AVIA AIRLINES

# Who's next to belly flop?

**Alarmed by** the collapse of Avia Airlines last week, and the possibility that a domestic airline could soon follow, SAA Airways (SAA) CE Mike Myburgh and Comair chairman Dave Novick want legislation introduced to protect passengers.

They want rules compelling airlines to lodge guarantees so that passengers who book and pay in advance, will either be flown to their destinations or receive their money back in the event of financial failure.

Myburgh also wants the public protected against new entrants who are under-capitalised or don't know the intricacies of the business. "It's a difficult industry, it is highly sophisticated, but it never fails to attract those who believe the guys who failed were stupid. It costs R400 000 to fly a plane to London."

Myburgh's and Novick's concern is that aviation in SA seems to be following the international trend, where only one in every 10 new airlines survives. Flitestar's collapse in April last year was followed by the repossession of two DH-7 aircraft leased by Inter Air, and the collapse, last week, of Avia Airlines, three months after its first commercial flight.

The demise of USAfrica earlier this year can be included in the sorry list. Though it was a US-registered airline and filed for bankruptcy there, its failure left many South Africans stranded in the US, or with useless prepaid tickets.

And now there is talk that another local airline may follow suit, possibly this month. If it goes, "it will make Avia's collapse look like a Sunday picnic," says an industry pundit. It is believed the airline already has to honour 20 000 prepaid tickets and coupons. Coupons are issued in lieu of tickets when a passenger has not decided on an exact flying date.

Officials of the airline have had discussions with SAA. Myburgh confirms: "They spoke to us several times in the last 10 days. We are not interested." He refuses to divulge the nature of the discussions. But insiders say it apparently wants SAA to mount a Flitestar-type rescue, if it goes belly-up.

The Department of Civil Aviation licensing board has also demanded guarantees that, should new domestic airlines fail, pas-

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sengers who book and pay in advance will be reimbursed, or be able to fly on another airline.

The department has asked Phoenix Airlines for similar guarantees, but it refused, claiming it isn't a newly registered airline. A court case is pending. Phoenix acting MD Hugo Smit says: "There's still too much antagonism towards Phoenix in the market, but there is nothing wrong with it."

He confirms the airline has had discussions with SAA about stopping services between Johannesburg, Cape Town and Durban. If it does so, Phoenix will insist its passengers are protected. "If we get off the domestic routes, SAA will have to honour our vouchers (coupons)."

He adds it's difficult to estimate how many vouchers have been sold. "We could be looking at 15 000-18 000." The coupons were sold with conditions and are valid to the end of 1996. They are not refundable.

"There are a limited number of seats



available for those who bought vouchers. We're clearing them at a rate of 3 000 a month," Smit says.

Novick argues airlines should be treated like deposit-taking institutions which must assure the Registrar they can meet a number of legal obligations before he will allow them to trade. "A financial institution takes a person's money in return for a promise that it will pay him interest and, if necessary, his money back on a given date. An

airline takes his money and promises it will fly him to his destination on a given date."

Myburgh says the unhindered entry of financially sound, knowledgeable new carriers must be allowed in the public interest. He says he doesn't want the market overregulated as it was in the past, because it is not in the public interest. ■

## SORGHUM BREWERIES

## United they stand

FM 11/8/95 (102)  
A leading Indian beer company, United Breweries (UB), has announced it will inject R70m into ailing National Sorghum Breweries (NSB). The R70m will buy 30% of NSB, with an option to increase this to 50% later.

In terms of the deal, UB will nominate its own executives for the posts of MD and CE. NSB executive chairman Mohale Mahanyele will remain in his position "for a mutually agreed period." But both Mahanyele and UB chairman Vijay Mallya are adamant that the relationship will be a "full partnership, not a takeover."

It will also allow NSB to introduce UB's beer and spirits brands into the SA market.

The Indian group, comprising over 60 companies in petrochemicals, pharmaceuticals, engineering, electronics, fertiliser, aviation, plastics and paints, agrochemicals and information technology, already boasts an annual US\$300m foreign business turnover. Total turnover for the group is \$1.1bn a year.

Mahanyele says the cash injection will be used "to retire existing debt, as well as providing NSB with much-needed cash flow." Unlisted NSB's debt is standing at about R150m. And he is bullish about the injection of proven technologies and management expertise.

Adds Mallya: "UB intends exercising the 50% equity option and will use NSB's Vivo Brewery to introduce our popular Kingfisher beer into the SA market, early in the new year. I would like to see NSB's current R650m a year turnover reaching R1bn within the next three years."

Both groups confirm that NSB will consider listing "as soon as financial conditions are improved." While the deal is subject to approval by shareholders, the Reserve Bank and NSB's bankers (Nedbank, Absa and NBS), Mahanyele foresees no problems with shareholders, who were kept informed of the negotiations. ■

# Taxi violence: 'Firm action necessary' (332)

CT 15/8/95

PRETORIA: Firmer action by the government and taxi associations against perpetrators of taxi violence should underpin attempts to solve problems in the industry, Transport Minister Mr Mac Maharaj said yesterday.

Briefing reporters on the work of the National Taxi task team, Mr Maharaj said there had to be a "national solution".

"The premise of that solution is underpinned by the acceptance by the industry that the government will steadily firm up its security action against those involved in violence," Mr Maharaj added.

He said he expected taxi associations to realise it was in their own interest to suspend or expel members involved in violence.

"I believe that would be an important step, going beyond all the peace agreements signed and which have disappeared into the wastepaper basket."

Mr Maharaj also said the government was examining the possibility of replacing petrol with diesel in the taxi industry to bring down operating costs.

The task team will begin with a series of 32 public hearings to obtain input from interested parties. The last hearing will be December 6.

Recommendations by the task team will also be considered by a special cabinet committee.

The task team has already submitted two short-term recommendations. — Sapa



## Govt considers converting taxis to diesel

Stephané Bothma

(332)  
130 15/8/95

PRETORIA — The conversion from petrol to diesel fuel for the country's minibus taxis was one of the possibilities under discussion by government to ensure the viability of the industry, Transport Minister Mac Maharaj said yesterday.

Announcing the start next week of 32 public hearings throughout the country to obtain extensive input on the problems facing the taxi industry, Maharaj said violence was not the only crisis it faced.

"The industry has also reached an economic crisis. Government will act," he told a news conference at the Union Buildings.

A national taxi task team was established in March to investigate problems and issues within the industry and to formulate solutions and policy options for recommendations to the transport minister and provincial transport MECs for their consideration.

Legislation would be implemented wherever it was needed to ensure the short- and long-term sustainability of the industry, Maharaj said. The public meetings would continue until December 6. All role players, including commuters, taxi associations, operators, owners, drivers, law enforcement officers and government officials, were encouraged by Maharaj to participate in the hearings.

On the conversion to diesel for taxis, Maharaj said it was only a possibility under discussion. The matter, including the cost and the local industry's ability to convert minibus taxis to diesel, was being looked at by government.

Task team chairman Dipak Patel said it would be more economical for taxis to run on diesel fuel.

Sapa reports Maharaj also said firmer action by government and taxi associations against perpetrators of taxi violence should underpin attempts to solve problems in the industry.

# Police set to provide security at taxi industry public hearings

■ BY NORMAN CHANDLER

The police will ensure violence-free meetings when role-players in the embattled taxi business voice their concerns at public hearings to be called by the Government to find a solution to the industry's problems.

Transport Minister Mac Maharaj made it clear in Pretoria yesterday that ending violence was a government priority.

The first hearings — arranged by the National Taxi Task Team (NTTT), established in March — take place in Welkom on Monday and will be followed by others in all nine provinces.

The police would be on hand to provide security "in order to ensure everybody's peace of mind", Maharaj said.

An attempt to sort out the controversial industry, which has seen regular gunbattles between rival operators and poor driving standards that have resulted in horror crashes in which hundreds have died, was initiated by Maharaj.

Earlier this year he travelled

in taxis to talk to commuters and to get a first-hand impression of the industry.

As a result of his experiences, the NTTT was set up. It includes representatives of taxi organisations and the Government as well as specialist advisers, and has so far held seven meetings.

It has been recommended that provincial offices be set up and an interim training programme initiated.

The NTTT is also undertaking a study of subsidies for taxis, metered taxis, taxi consumer installations (petrol stations) and formation of taxi forums. It has also identified regulation and control, cost of vehicles, labour relations and safety as being among issues to be probed.

## Unsafe

Maharaj yesterday said public hearings were important as it was vital to ascertain "the true needs of the people". Taxis transported more than half of all commuters.

He added: "The problems are

well known. Every day, commuters are faced with hard conditions. You feel unsafe, you are not taken seriously, you are afraid. Operators feel the effects of business failure. Drivers are not well organised and feel they are hated by the community and law enforcement officers. The time has come to find lasting solutions.

"The purpose of these hearings is to give all people involved in or associated with the industry a chance to have their say. Commuters are desperate and fed-up with the violence and say they will not use the taxis any longer. There is a great danger the industry will destroy itself."

Maharaj urged all role-players to participate in the hearings.

"Provision is being made for interpreters to ensure that language barriers do not prevent anybody from having their say."

Hearing dates in Gauteng are: September 26-28 (Vereeniging), October 9-11 (Johannesburg), November 20-22 (Randfontein), November 27-29 (Benoni) and December 4-8 (Pretoria).



SHAPING A CELL From left, Alan Kunt-Craig, the managing director of Vodacom, and Theo Rutstein, the would help facilitate the group's

CAPE TIMES

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# BUSINESS REPORT

SOUTH AFRICA'S NATIONAL FINANCIAL DAILY

FRIDAY AUGUST 18 1995 17

## Taxi task team wants to cut prices on minibus taxis

By Roy Cokayne

RETORTA BUSINESS EDITOR

The prices of minibus taxis will fall by 30 percent if proposals submitted to the National Taxi Task Team are adopted.

The proposals make provision for the scrapping of the 15 percent excise duty and 14 percent VAT on minibuses.

Motor industry sources are confident that the team, formed last year to help find solutions to the many problems in the taxi industry, will look favourably on the recommendations.

The team is scheduled to start its public hearings next week. It comprises nine taxi industry representatives (one from each province) and nine government

officials representing the three tiers of government.

The cost of vehicles is one of 10 major issues affecting the taxi industry that have been identified by the Gauteng Taxi Initiative.

Olaus van Zyl, the Gauteng MEC for Transport, said the taxi initiative was in the process of finalising its proposals before submitting them to the team.

He said the cost of vehicles comprised the price, excise duty, VAT, fuel and the cost of money, which included interest and insurance rates. "We are looking at what can be done to reduce the cost to the taxi operator," he said.

Little or no provision was being made for the replacement of vehicles. Van Zyl said Toyota SA had estimated that 2 000 to 3 000 vehi-

cles would have to be sold each month — compared with the current 200 to 300 vehicles — to replace South Africa's ageing taxi fleet.

Financial assistance, which included subsidies, was another issue identified by the taxi initiative.

Jay Naidoo, the minister without portfolio, told Nedlac this week that transport subsidies cost the government R1,2 billion a year.

Van Zyl said the taxi initiative would have a final round of consultations with stakeholders, and hoped to have finalised its proposals and made them public by September 15.

This would still allow time for comment on its proposals before the Gauteng hearings. The public hearings are scheduled to last until December 6.

(332) CT (PR) 18/8/95



# R80m — a runway success

AK419/8/95

27(332)

■ In the 12 months to March 31 this year the Airports Company registered a remarkable after-tax profit of R80,7 million, compared to R16,9 million for the eight months ending March 1994.

## TYRONE SEALE

Political Staff

**EXTENSIVE** renovations are being undertaken at Cape Town International Airport as the Airports Company celebrates an R80 million after-tax cash bonanza flowing from the commercialisation of facilities and services at the country's airports.

In August 1993 assets of state airports were transferred to the Airports Company Ltd and in January last year business unit managements were appointed to run the nine airports countrywide.

In the company's annual report, tabled in parliament, chairman Jan van den Berg says the founding of the company has ushered in a new era of airports administration, which represented a rapidly changing marketplace following political transformation.

Heavy losses had been incurred at the state's airports over many years until 1993. The Airports Company, still in its infancy, had been among the first to be tested by the effects of South Africa's return to world markets and a surge in air traffic, on both international and domestic levels.

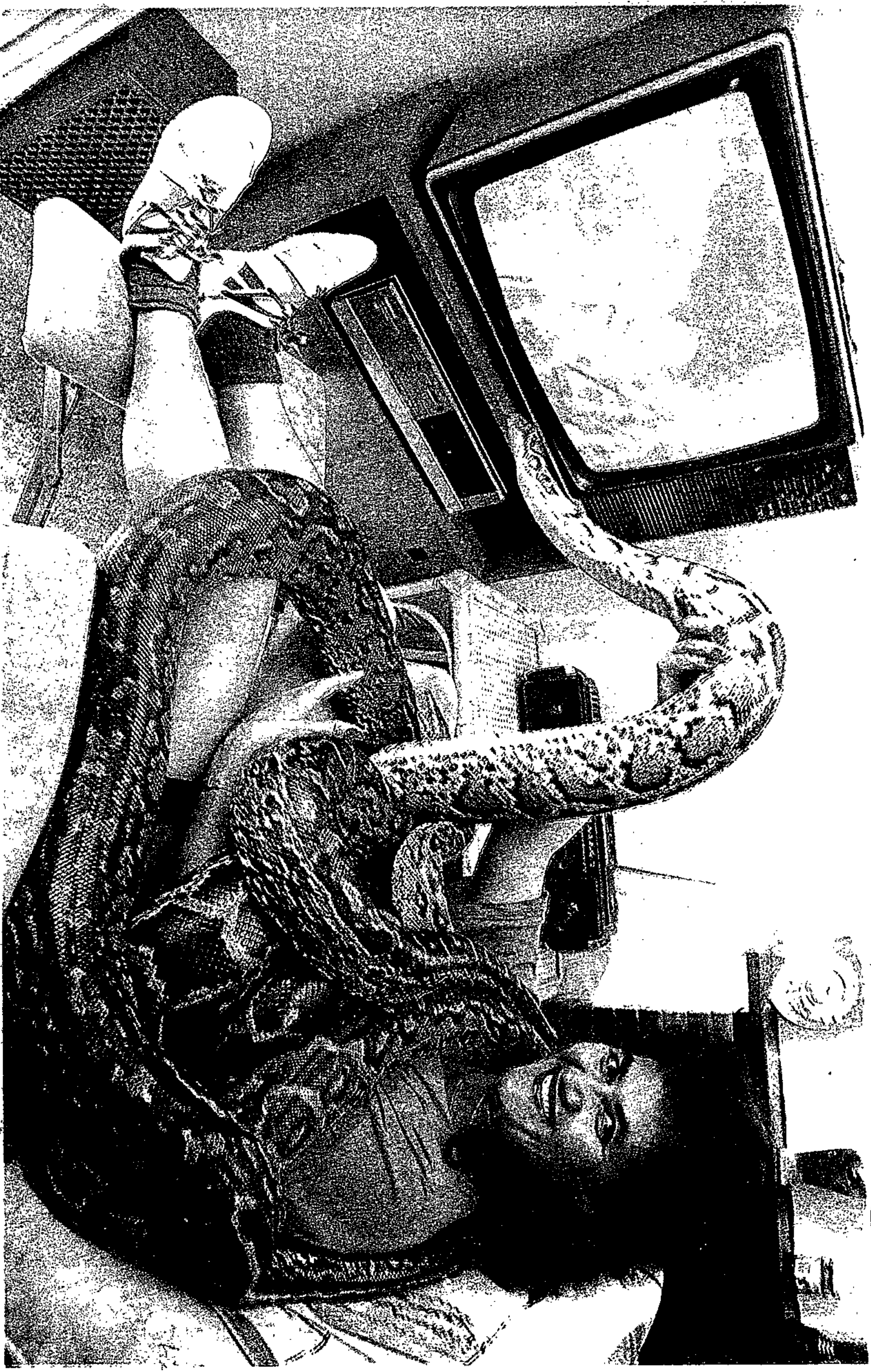
The lifting of sanctions had also given rise to significant increases in international airfreight.

Intense worldwide interest in South Africa had been reflected in the number of foreign airlines serving this country: up from 21 in 1991 to the present 50 at Johannesburg International Airport, from two to 11 at Cape Town, and from three to nine at Durban.

International passenger volumes had risen sharply as South Africa's lure as an international business and tourist destination proved attractive, and major tourism-related developments were in evidence throughout the country.

Dealing with airport upgrades, the annual report notes that tourism to Cape Town and its hinterland has grown dramatically and has led to sharp increases in domestic and international traffic — as shown by the 11 foreign carriers serving the city.

In the 1994/5 financial year Cape Town handled 417 520 international passengers, an increase of 42 percent over previous



□ **ALL IN THE FAMILY:** Neville and Hester Rigby of Vrizee in Goodwood have never had an intruder, never mind a burglary and it's not hard to see why. They keep 103 snakes on their property, seven of them huge pythons, two of which are shown here with Hester. The collection includes puff-adders, Egyptian cobras, king snakes, egg eaters, night-adders, rat eaters and others. The snakes have been registered with the department of nature conservation and there are plans to build a specially equipped building for them. At the moment they are kept behind glass in a garage. Anyone wanting advice on snakes can call the Rigbys at 591 5507.

levels, while domestic passenger traffic increased five percent to almost 2½ million.

The company's permanent staff complement at Cape Town is 284, supported by a further 40 people serving in subcontracted security services. In all, nearly 3 400 people are employed at the airport.

Projects under way to improve facilities include two more aircraft parking bays and extensions to parking areas which already exist for about 70 light aircraft. Also, 20 additional check-in counters are being installed in each of the

domestic and international departure halls.

"Central to the company's approach is the belief that time spent at an airport should not be a dreary necessity, but a pleasant and positive experience," Mr Van den Berg says.

"To that end, and in recognising that our company's primary purpose is to transfer passengers safely and efficiently, efforts will be concentrated on extending retail and entertainment facilities."

Cape Town's share of this promise also means that the existing car park of 1 700

bays is being extended by 135 bays during the first phase and 265 bays during the second phase, and has been enclosed by a security fence. The entire airport property has also been fenced.

Continuing upgrades to other facilities, to ensure that Cape Town airport meets world standards, include new first and business-class lounges for the international terminal, a duty-free shop and upgrading of VIP facilities.

Non-aeronautical business is being actively pursued and has been boosted by the improvement of existing retail outlets

and the introduction of new outlets, says the report.

It also notes that at Cape Town airport all taxis previously belonged to white-owned companies.

This situation has now been re-negotiated by the company and changed to 17 operators, of whom 13 are "affirmative action operators".

With the recent upgrading of the domestic terminals, "affirmative action entrepreneurs" were allocated the new bar and the new restaurant on a concession basis.

Picture: HANNES THIAFT, Staff Photographer.



# Airline puts up R14m to protect passengers

By ROGER MAKINGS

A MAJOR domestic airline says it has put up R14-million in guarantees to assure its passengers of protection in the event of a financial collapse. ST 20/8/95

Comair's managing director, Piet van Hoven, said this week that the airline was putting up the money to help regain the trust of the public which has seen two airlines cease operations in as many weeks, leaving thousands of passengers stranded and out of pocket.

Mr van Hoven said Comair's demise was unlikely, but "we want to give our passengers peace of mind, and also save them the cost of taking out default insurance."

"An unhealthy trend has developed, particularly with new start-up airlines who are using advance ticket fares paid by the public to fund their operating costs."

He said Comair had R14-million deposited with its bankers which would be transferred to the trust upon its registration within a week or 10 days. "Other domestic carriers should, in the public interest, follow our example, but some may find it difficult to come up with the money."

## HANG ON TO YOUR C TOOTHBRU



## 3 die as Pretoria taxi war erupts again

### ■ PRETORIA CORRESPONDENT

Three people were shot dead at the weekend in two incidents that appear to be a renewal of the long-running taxi war around Pretoria.

A man died and two passengers were seriously wounded when six men travelling in a BMW opened fire on a taxi about two kilometres from the Murray

Hill offramp of the N/1 Pietersburg highway on Friday night.

Resenga Piet Hlongwani (39) died instantly of a single head wound while two other passengers were rushed to hospital in a serious condition shortly after the shooting occurred.

The taxi belonged to a Lehlabile Taxi Association (LTA) operator. Police have reason to believe the BMW may have be-

longed to the rival South African Long Distance Taxi Association (Saldta).

Less than 24 hours later in what police believe was a revenge shooting, unknown gunmen travelling in a Toyota Cressida sprayed the Mabopane taxi rank adjacent to the railway station with gunfire killing two people and injuring up to 15 bystanders.

Star 21/8/95

(332)



# Commuters asked to climb aboard

■ BY MANDLA MTHEMBU

The Federated National Transport Organisation (Fento) has urged commuters to take part in public hearings on the problems of the taxi industry.

The first hearings — organised by the National Taxi Task Team — will be held at Welkom's civic centre today, followed by others in all nine provinces.

The hearings are not only aimed at taxi owners and drivers. Commuters, too, will be given a chance to better their travel conditions, Fento spokesman Lennox Magwaza said.

Urging commuters, taxi owners and drivers to attend the hearings, Magwaza said the outcome would enable the

industry to regain its credibility.

Magwaza was optimistic that the hearings would provide guidelines to resolve the taxi crisis as stakeholders would have a platform from which to express their views.

Commuters' Rights Association of SA (Crasa) president Dan Qgibela said the hearings would help to bring a "drastic change to the industry".

He said commuters specifically should be encouraged to express their concerns.

Qgibela said Crasa would call for the involvement of community police forums in resolving taxi disputes, saying the safety and security of commuters and vehicles was important.

"If commuters feel unsafe operators lose profits," he

said.

(332) Star 2/8/95  
The ANC's Dr Mathole Motshega — who is also chairman of the Provincial Taxi Task Team (PTTT) — said no one could bring a lasting solution to the taxi problems but the parties most affected.

"As the taxi problem is rooted deep in communities, the public now gets a chance to come up with solutions," he said.

Hearing dates in Gauteng are: September 26-28 (Vereeniging); October 9-11 (Johannesburg); November 20-22 (Randfontein); November 27-29 (Benoni) and December 4-8 (Pretoria).

Anyone experiencing problems in attending hearings can contact Fento's office at (016) 225751/2/5/8 or the PTTT at (011) 339-2751.

# Row over honouring tickets Sudan airline and SA travel firm do battle

A bitter row broke out between Sudan Airways and Airline Liaison yesterday over who was responsible for honouring tickets issued on the London-Khartoum-Johannesburg route.

Sudan Airways said it was not responsible for tickets issued by Airline Liaison on the route before it cancelled its contract with the local company last week.

"All tickets issued by Airline Liaison, and other expenses for operating flights to Johannesburg via Khartoum, are the liability of Airline Liaison, pursuant to an agreement between Sudan Airways and Airline Liaison dated June 21 1995," the airline said in a statement.

But the local company said it had only bought seats on the London-Khartoum-Johannesburg flights after Sudan Airways awarded the contract for operating the route to Air Operations of Europe (Air Ops), a Swedish company.

The only binding agreement between Sudan Airways and Airline Liaison was the original general sales agent deal, said Airline Liaison.

"In terms of this agreement all passengers' liabilities are ultimately the responsibility of Sudan Airways.

"Pursuant to the agreement between Sudan Airways and Air Ops of Europe, Airline Liaison purchased seats on these flights from Air Ops. At no stage was

Airline Liaison ever shown this contract.

"Air Ops ceased to operate the services for Sudan Airways after a commercial dispute. In an attempt to resolve this impasse which would have resulted in stranded passengers, Airline Liaison and Sudan Airways agreed to co-operate to find an alternative party to temporarily perform the services," the company said.

It said a new agreement had been reached with the airline on June 21 1995 but "never became operable since neither party met all preconditions".

Airline Liaison had not filed for bankruptcy or liquidation but had ceased operations, it said.

It would defend itself against any possible legal action by Sudan Airways, which earlier said it planned to sue the local company for damages.

"Sudan Airways intends to instruct its lawyers in Johannesburg and in London to take legal action against Airline Liaison for the damage and inconvenience caused by misrepresentation or false information published by Airline Liaison which is detrimental to Sudan Airways," the airline statement said.

It did not give further details.

The airline said it planned to resume flights to Johannesburg on November 1 and that all other Sudan Airways flights were operating normally. — Reuter.

## No protection for travellers

BY NIKKI WHITFIELD  
CONSUMER REPORTER

Have ticket, will travel. That should be the case, but unfortunately the reality seems to be far from it.

Last week saw the collapse of the London-Khartoum-Johannesburg route flown by Sudan Airways, the latest in a series of airline debacles affecting South African travellers.

Insurance companies pulled the plug on default travel insurance by announcing a moratorium at the weekend, after losing about R8-million following the Sudan Airways incident and the recent closure of Avia. No new insurance policies are being sold, but any insurance bought before Friday is valid.

The Commissioner for the Department of Civil Aviation, Japie Smit, said a study group has been formed to determine what steps can be taken to protect passengers in future.

Floundering airlines seem to be becoming "a global trend", according to the Association of South African Travel Agents.

"In 1994, airlines racked up \$15,6-billion (about R56-billion) in losses in the United States," said Asata's Chris du Toit.

"It almost seems silly to get default travel insurance. You want to go on holiday, so you arrange your tour, buy your ticket and off you go. But unfortunately, airlines which don't make money are becoming almost a

worldwide trend."

One solution to the problem, he said, would be to introduce a levy which would be built into the cost of a ticket.

"We tried to do this in 1991, but had no luck.

"What we ended up with was Section 22 of the Tourism Act which stipulated that service providers must offer clients default insurance when they buy a tour package. Now that there is a moratorium on that, we are back to square one."

He appealed to the Government to issue some form of licence which stipulates that part of the cost of a ticket goes into a fund in case of problems.

Johannesburg businessman Ray Frittelli was one of hundreds of South Africans to lose his holiday abroad when the route flown by Sudan Airways closed.

"It was to be my wife's first trip overseas. I paid R8 500 for our two tickets and for our two kids. Because I had insurance through a bank, I lost all the money — banks will pay out only if something goes wrong after the flight has already left."

Frittelli is now appealing to fellow passengers to contact him. "I am looking for somewhere to hold a meeting so we can think of ways to safeguard against something similar happening in the future. People interested can call me on (011) 804-2569, or fax me on (011) 804-59440."



# Laser Transport share price drops to 50% of last year's peak

ET(R) 23/8/95

(332)

By MAGGIE ROWLEY

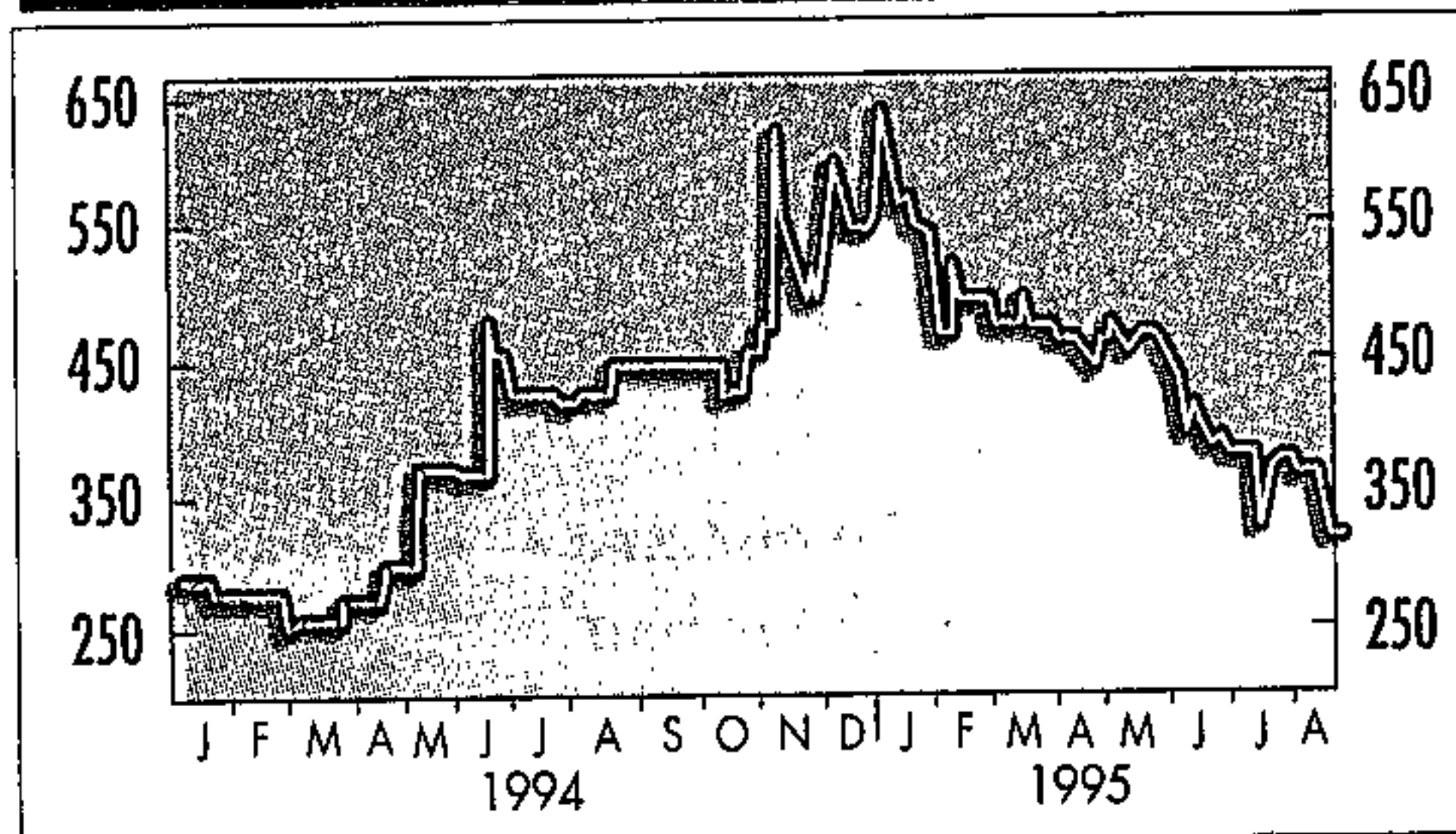
The share price of Laser Transport Holdings, the Cape-based transport services group, has taken a battering in recent months and is trading at about R3,20, exactly half of its peak price late last year.

The group, which diversified its operations into the commercial transport sector with the acquisition of Mainline Carriers and Dolphins Cartage last year, reported a drop in earnings a share of 33,6c (40,2c) for the six months to the end of March.

This was due in part to the enlarged issued share capital following a rights issue in December and a sharp hike in the interest bill to R7,8 million (R2 million) as a result of the group opting to purchase property and in so doing reduce rental costs.

Concern over how successful the bedding down of the acquisitions would be, coupled with the relatively high gearing and the fact

## Laser share price



that no interim dividend had been declared, were behind the drop in the share price, said analysts.

While they expressed mixed feelings for the outlook of the share price, some felt that its relative strength was right down and some resurgent interest could fuel the share price upwards.

Much, however, would depend on the results for the full year to end September.

The price-earnings ratio was at about 4,95 times against more than 10 times when the share price peaked late last year.

Eric Puccini, the financial director of Laser, said he was disappoint-

ed with the drop in the share price as no company announcements had been made following the interims.

"We suspect that as we did not pay a dividend at the halfway mark some small shareholders have been taking profits although there has not been very heavy trade."

## Turnover

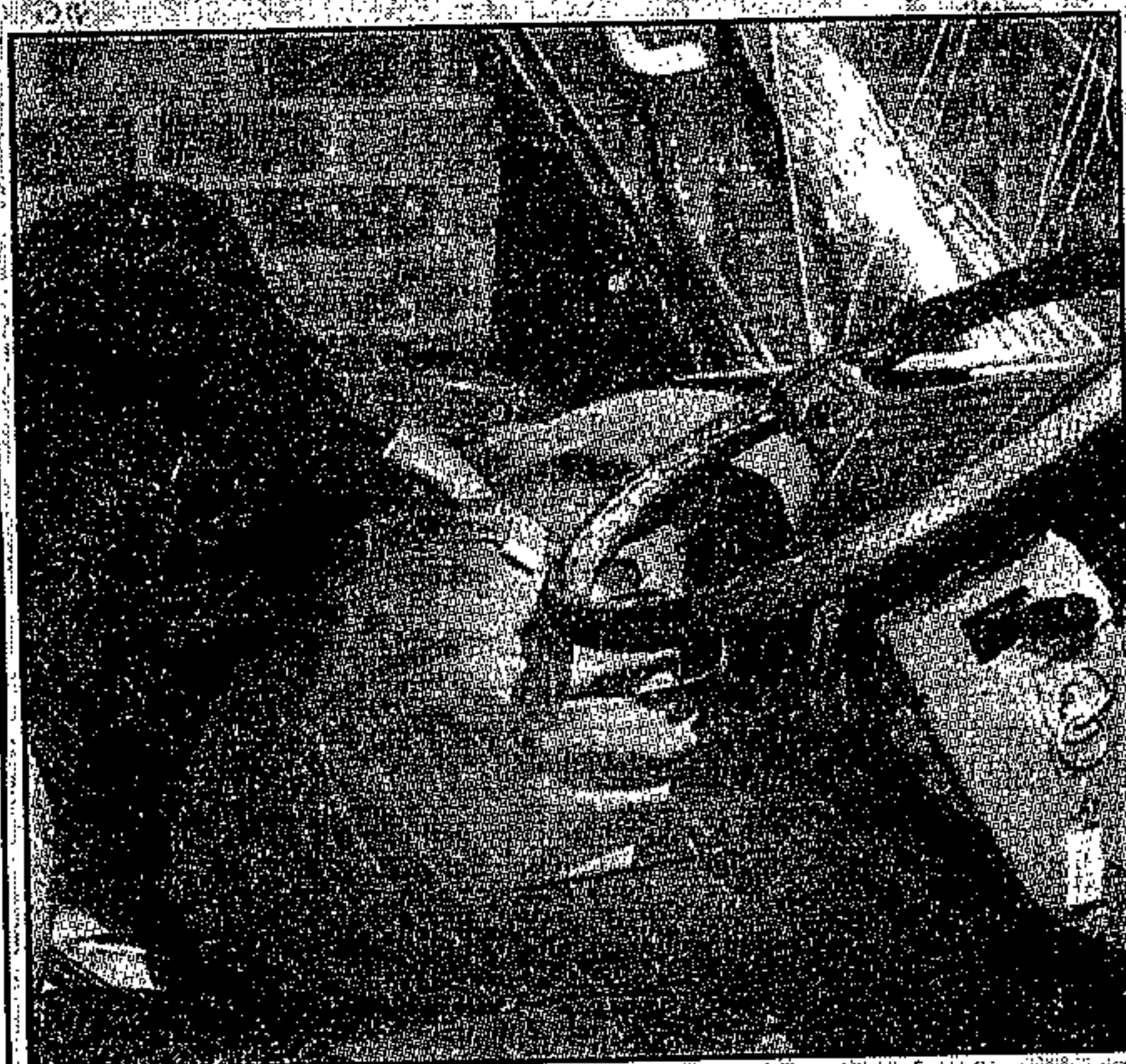
Puccini said while the first half of the financial year was more profitable for the cyclical removal business, the second half, particularly the three months to end September, was the most profitable for the commercial transport division.

"Turnover for July was on budget but it is too early to tell how the commercial business will fare as potentially the best period is still ahead of us."

He said benefits of the rationalisation programme should start feeding through in this financial year, with further benefits accruing next year.



# TAXI TERROR



Images of the taxi war . . . the shot-up taxi (top) and above, a firearm is tucked into the belt of the murdered driver. PICTURES: ETIENNE ROTHBART

## Three more die as 'war' rages

■ BY NIALl AITCHESON  
CRIME REPORTER

Star 23/8/95 (332)

Three people died when khaki-clad gunmen raked a minibus with AK-47 fire in Fourways, Sandton, yesterday.

In a dramatic escalation of the conflict racking the Greater Johannesburg taxi industry, a minibus belonging to the Faraday Taxi Association was attacked as it drove north along William Nicol Drive shortly before midday.

As the vehicle, carrying six passengers, approached the Bobby Verwey driving course entrance, a Toyota Corolla with four men inside overtook it.

When it drew parallel with the taxi, the car's occupants opened fire, killing the taxi driver, his front-seat passenger and another woman. A passenger managed to bring the minibus under control as it veered off the road before coming to a halt against a garden wall.

The Corolla sped off, but smashed into a Honda Ballade several hundred metres from the scene. The gunmen abandoned the car and fled on foot, leaving behind two AK-47s and ammunition. They were not caught.

The driver of the Ballade was unhurt.

Police spokesman Warrant-Officer Andy Pieke said the suspects were wearing khaki military-style clothes.

Terrified survivors of the gun attack sat in shock beside the bullet-riddled taxi while detectives sifted through it.

One woman who emerged from the carnage unharmed told The Star the taxi had been travelling from Johannesburg's Bree Street rank to Fourways when the gunmen struck.

"I was sitting on the left side looking out of the window when there was a sudden burst of gunfire. Next second a woman who had been sitting behind the driver fell across in front of me, covering me with her blood," she said.

■ Police Commissioner George Fivaz said yesterday he would issue a national order barring policemen and their immediate families from the violence-ridden taxi industry, reports

Patrick Bulger. A police team would also meet Transport Minister Mac Maharaj to consult on tough new legislation to curb corruption in the issuing of taxi permits.



# as Logans fails

(332) Star 25/8/15  
From Page 1

have been paid or who they are," he said.

"There is no doubt that the amount lost runs into tens of millions of rands," he said.

Lawlor hoped that many of those people who booked to travel later this year had paid only deposits and not the full amount.

He believed it would not be long before tour operators ended up with a bonding scheme — an insurance cover scheme based on potential turn-over.

It has been reported that six major tour operators withdrew from Asata five weeks ago in protest against Logans continued trading, while

aware that the company was experiencing problems.

Logans' troubles were first highlighted in The Star last week when Logans had problems paying for an SAA charter flight to the Maldives.

Its deadline was extended by the airline and it managed to pay the outstanding balance in time. But Logans then failed to hand over a cheque on Monday and SAA decided yesterday to cancel the agreement with the company.

SAA spokesman Leon Els said its aircraft would leave this weekend to pick up the 243 passengers who flew on the Logans trip to the Maldives last weekend.

## RESPONSIBLE & RELIABLE TOUR OPERATOR!!

If there is anything else you think We may be responsible for, why don't you give us a call so We may put it right!

In their own words . . . Logans newspaper ad.

## Dreams of lazy days on island beaches shattered

BY LEE-ANN ALFREDS

When Hanneli Marx and her brother Wian of Standerton set out for Johannesburg at 1pm yesterday, they thought their dreams were about to come true.

But two hours later their dreams were in tatters as they arrived at the offices of tour operator Logans to find it deserted. And with the abandoned building went their plan of spending six days lazing on the beaches of Mauritius.

"We came to fetch our tickets," was all Hanneli said as she arrived at the Logans offices. "We booked tickets to go to Mauritius on September 9 for six days and they told me telephonically this morning that I could come pick them up this afternoon."

A little later, after the Marxes had been informed of the closure of Logans, she was too upset and too busy to talk to The Star.

But her brother, taking

some time off from his frantic calls to try to cancel the payment, told The Star that Mrs Marx had paid about R4 000 for the two tickets after coming across a Logans advert in a newspaper.

"She phoned me and asked if I wanted to accompany her to Mauritius. When I jumped at the chance, she booked the tickets and paid for them on Tuesday," Mr Marx said.

He said that all they had been told was that Logans had closed and that they could put in a claim for their money.

They also tried, but were unable, to reverse the payment for the tickets.

"We drove 90 minutes to pick up tickets, and now this. Of course I'm very disappointed. It was supposed to be the first time that I was to go overseas. We don't know what to do now," Wian said.

According to a staff member at a neighbouring travel agency, several other customers arrived at the Logans offices yesterday.



Stunned . . . Wian Marx prepares to leave the Logans premises, and his dream, behind. PICTURE: THEMBA HADEBE



Travel insurance companies must meet claims of 2 000 passengers

# Huge payouts as Logans collapses

Star 23/8/95

(332)

**IT HAS** been called 'the darkest day in the history of the travel industry in South Africa'

■ BY JOHN MILLER  
SHIRLEY WOODGATE  
NIKKI WHITFIELD  
and LEE-ANN ALFREDS

Travel insurance companies face more claims for millions of rands following another collapse in the industry — this time of Logans Tour Operators.

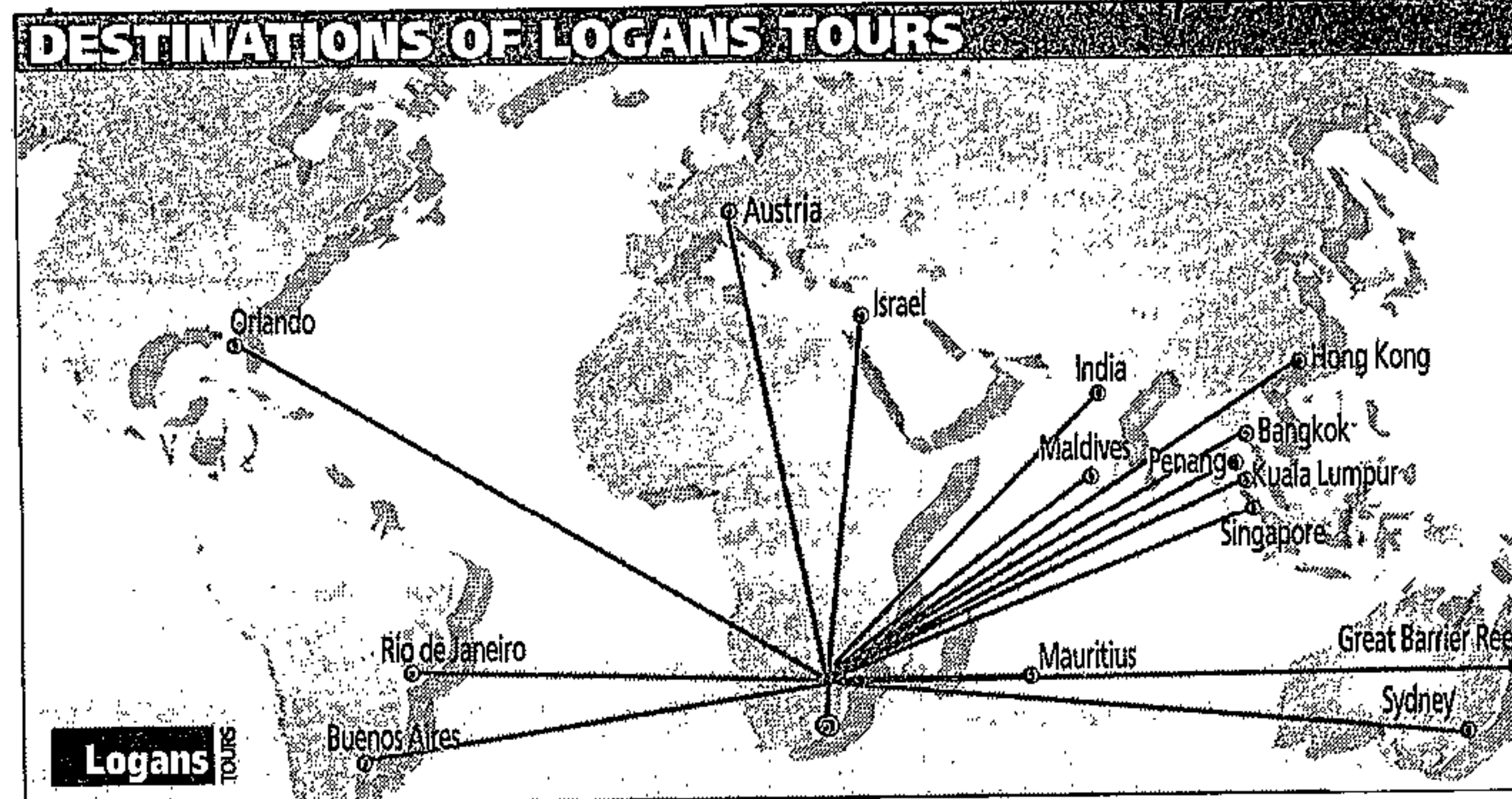
It went bust yesterday in what is described as the darkest day in the history of the travel industry in South Africa.

The reasons for Logans collapse are listed as withdrawal of support by its bankers, non-payment by certain debtors and an erosion of confidence in it within the industry.

The company also said last week's closure of Airline Liaisons — whose directors included Russel Gain and Colin Loubser, both of them Logans directors — and the suspension of Sudan Airways flights between Johannesburg and London — also last week — had contributed to its collapse.

Hundreds were stranded in London and Johannesburg by the Sudan Airways suspension, but Logans has promised that its clients will be brought back home.

All of them had taken out default insurance as part of the company's standard policy,



it said.

A trail of Logans' debts was uncovered by The Star.

Phoenix Airways managing director Johan Krause said Logans owed his company in excess of R2-million and Airline Liaisons owed it R1,5-million. He assured The Star his company would not be threatened or compromised by the debts.

Logans ran into trouble because of its cut-rate approach, according to insiders. And a Government stipulation that charter flights be handled by home-registered aircraft had forced Logans to switch last May from Swedish-registered cheaper aircraft.

Logans' workers at its Johannesburg head office were addressed by the directors at 1pm yesterday and told that

jobs for between 90% and 95% of them had been found at other agencies.

Insurance companies, already reeling from the multi-million-rand payouts after a Sudan Airways route and Avia Airlines collapsed recently, placed a moratorium on all new default travel insurance at midnight on Saturday.

But thousands of travellers have policies taken out before that date which the insurers will have to honour.

Europ Assistance Worldwide estimated yesterday it had about 2 000 people under its insurance umbrella, in destinations around the globe.

Their trips were insured for between R3 000 and R15 000, depending on the tour.

The company, like others in South Africa, had to pay out

millions of rands after the closure of Avia and the collapse last week of the London-Khartoum-Johannesburg route flown by Sudan Airways.

George Novis, of Travel Insurance Consultants, said South African travel insurance companies were on tenterhooks since Logans announced its liquidation.

"We are carrying a large portion of risk of people who have prepaid tours booked with Logans," he said.

Rupert Lawlor, president of the Association of South African Travel Agents, said damage control was being hampered because Logans had shut off all communication.

"We don't even know which overseas hotels or operators

'They grew too fast'

## ■ STAFF REPORTERS

Logans was trying to "fly where angels fear to tread" and had its wings clipped by the tough trading conditions of the cut-rate travel business, industry sources said yesterday.

Thompsons Tours and Travel managing director Anton Thompson said chartering at cut-rate prices was a high-risk enterprise that had never really taken off in SA, mainly because established operators would have nothing to do with it.

"They (Logans) grew too quickly over the last three or four years and did not understand the business thoroughly."

Logans chiefs Russel Gain and Colin Loubser refused to speak to The Star yesterday. Both have interests in a number of other travel operations, including Sandton-based Wisdom Travel, where staff said yesterday they did not know whether they still had jobs.

Industry sources said it appeared Logans had traded right up until yesterday's announcement it had ceased operations.

It still advertised its tours to exotic locations in a major Sunday newspaper, along with an advert assuring customers that Logans was a reliable firm that would honour its commitments. Four days later the phone were going unanswered.

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P.T.O.



# Commuter slams taxi operators

By Dan Fuphe

A FORMER Daveyton councillor has blamed the prevailing feuds and killings within the Benoni Taxi Association on the greed and the selfishness of operators.

In a fax addressed to several influential people and organisations in the area, Mr Absolom Mkwanazi said the move was not

(332) Sowetan 23/8/95  
intended to run down the industry but was done in good faith and to promote good relations.

Among the recipients of the fax were the Benoni Traffic Department, the mayor of Benoni, police, the Greater Benoni Chamber of Commerce, the management committee, various political structures, civic associations and the media.

Mkwanazi became the first commuter to throw caution to the winds and come out strongly against what he termed, "the intimidation, victimisations, hijacking of bus drivers and burnings" by members of BTA.

Reacting to the allegations, BTA chairman Mr Bhekokwabo Radebe said his office was not aware of any complaints by Mkwanazi or any other person.

### 3 die in taxi war <sup>(332)</sup>

JOHANNESBURG. — Three taxi passengers were killed north of Johannesburg today in continued taxi violence, police said.

*ARG 24/8/95*  
The driver of a taxi lost control and crashed into a wall in Randburg after being fired at from another taxi. Two women and a man were found dead in the taxi. Two others were wounded, police said.

Police were unable to say if the three had died of gunshot wounds or crash injuries.

The attackers abandoned their vehicle about 700m from the scene, leaving behind several AK-47 assault rifles. — Reuters



# Top SA travel firm collapses

(332)

CT 25/8/95

JOHANNESBURG: Travel insurance companies face tens of millions of rands in claims following the collapse of Logans Tour Operators yesterday, described as the "darkest day" in the history of the industry in South Africa.

Logans cited the reasons for its collapse as being the withdrawal of support by its bankers, non-payment by certain debtors and erosion of confidence in the company within the travel industry.

Bad publicity surrounding Airline Liaison, co-directed by Logan directors Mr Russel Gain and Mr Colin Loubser, and the suspension of Sudan Airways flights last week, also contributed to its collapse.

In a statement, Logans said passengers would not be left stranded overseas as all its clients had taken out default insurance as part of the company's standard policy.

Industry insiders believed over-ambitious plans had led to Logans "flying where angels fear to tread" in the sophisticated business of charter flights.

A recent government stipulation that charter flights be handled by South African-registered aircraft forced Logans to switch in May from its Swedish-registered aircraft to a higher-priced local one.

Insurance companies placed a moratorium on all new default travel insurance at midnight last Saturday, but thousands of travellers have policies taken out before that date which the insurers will have to honour.

Mr George Novis of Travel Insurance Consultants said travel insurance companies were "on tenterhooks" since Logans announced their liquidation. "We are carrying a large portion of risk of people who have pre-paid tours booked with Logans," he said.

Mr Rupert Lawlor, president of the Association of South African Travel Agents, said damage control was being hampered as Logans had shut off communication.

He said the directors of Logans would have to co-operate with the industry and say what had been booked and paid for and how many people were involved.

A spokesman for Travel Assist, which has 75% of the travel insur-

ance market, said he did not yet know the extent of its liabilities.

"We think about 1 000 people have cover from us and their claims are likely to total in the region of R4 million."

But Mrs Kay Smith of Travel Vision said people who thought they were insured because they had paid for their tickets with credit cards were not covered.

Mrs Smith said the credit card insurance gave no cover against insolvency. "These people are not covered unless they took out addi-



**NO MORE TOURS:** Travel agent Ms Hayley Greenspan throws out Logans Tour Operators brochures.

PICTURE: CLIVE SMITH

tional default insurance."

Western Cape travel agents said they believed hundreds of local people had booked holidays with Logans Tours, and many might be stranded overseas.

● About 100 angry citizens last night formed the Travellers Victims Association to bring criminal and civil charges against Sudan Airlines and Avia Airlines.

"We have been conned by the airlines and the agents," said one.

Most present complained that they were never told that their flights were booked through a chartered airway — Airline Liaisons. Many had booked their flights through Logans. — Special Correspondent, Business Staff

# Police to reveal info on taxi violence

By JEFU MOTHIBELI  
and PATRICK BULGER

The office of provincial police commissioner Sharma Maharaj

will on Monday disclose information uncovered by police on taxi violence, SAPS spokesman Lieutenant Azwindi Nengovhela told the *Saturday Star* yesterday.

This followed the dramatic escalation of taxi violence in the Greater Johannesburg area this week. Police had followed up several leads given to them by members of the public, he

added. In an attack on Thursday, three people died when khaki-clad gunmen sprayed a minibus with AK-47 bullets in Fourways, Sandton.

The minibus, belonging to Faraday Taxi Association, was carrying six passengers at the time. Police said that by yesterday afternoon there had not been any further incidents.

"We are hoping that there won't be any further attacks and are working around the clock following up information," he said.

Police Commissioner George

Fivaz said on Thursday he would issue a national order barring policemen and their immediate families from having a stake in the violence-ridden taxi industry.

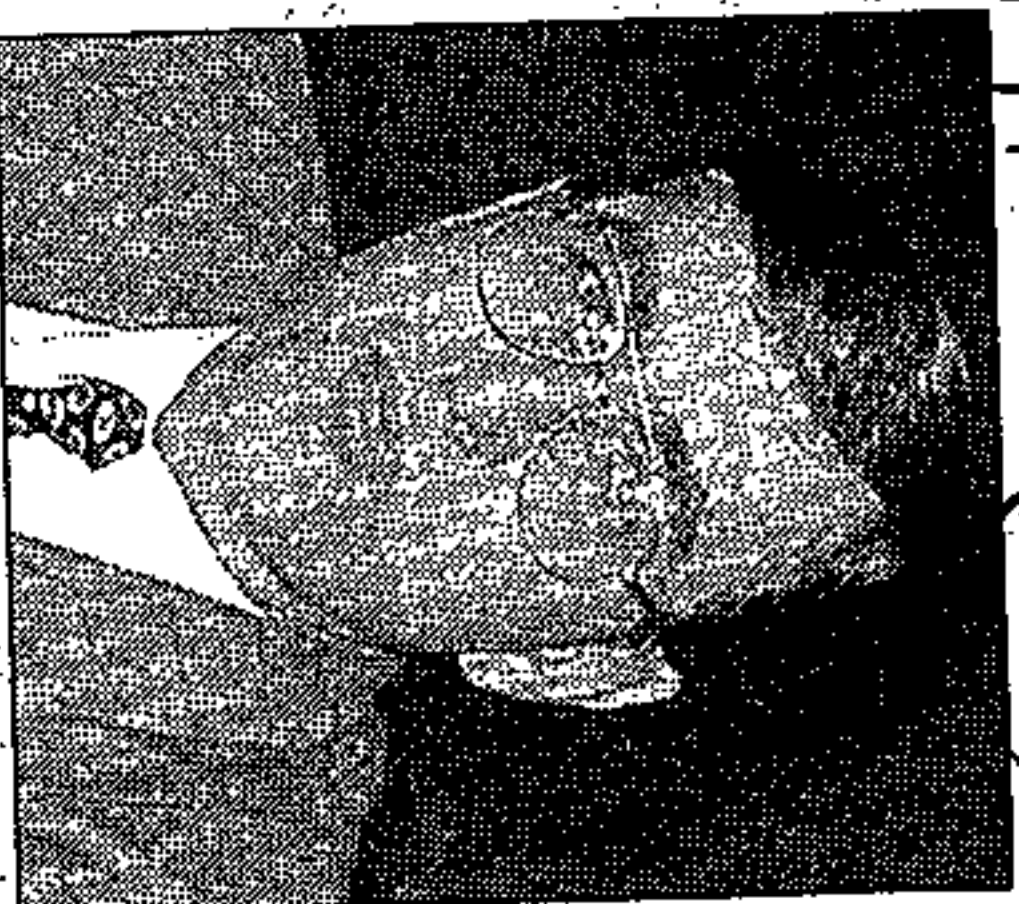
Fivaz made the announcements during a briefing to Parliament's portfolio committee on safety and security.

"We have information that many police officers are involved in the industry. We will have to identify them and they will have to make a choice whether they want to be taxi operators or police officers."

Fivaz said "prominent personalities" were involved in taxi violence and that they would be exposed. He also alleged there were "high levels of corruption" in the taxi licensing sector.

New anti-corruption squads in all the provinces would probe the role of policemen in the taxi industry and in taxi violence.

A police team would also meet Transport Minister Mac Maharaj to consult on tough new legislation to curb corruption in the issuing of taxi permits, he said.



GEORGE FIVAZ

Star 26/8/95

(332)



# 'No evidence existed of Logans imminent crash'

By BRONWYN WILKINSON

Industry regulators were unable to protect passengers against the Logans Tour Operators' crash this week because there had been no evidence that the company was about to collapse, the Association of Travel Agencies (Asata) said yesterday.

However, rumours about Logans Tour Operators' liquidity had circulated in travel agencies for some time.

Asata executive director Chris du Toit told the *Saturday Star* that the industry had only had genuine cause for concern when Air Liaisons collapsed last week and left hundreds of Air Sudan passengers stranded. Logans directors Colin Loubser and Russell Gain were also directors of Air Liaisons.

When the air charter company crumbled, major hotel groups

and airlines supplying service to Logans became jittery about the link between the companies, said Du Toit. The groups put pressure on the tour operator to fund their operations up front.

Logans was unable to come up with any cash to support this and their bankers refused to help and the company went into voluntary liquidation.

Neither Loubser nor Gain could be contacted yesterday. Telephones at Logans and its many subsidiaries went unanswered and Asata president Rupert Lawlor said the company had shut down all communications, ignoring faxes, e-mail and telephones. He said that because of this it was impossible to know how many people were affected.

TO PAGE 2

## ◆ Logans

Lawlor added that a statement by Logans this week that "all Logans passengers have undertaken, by accepting Logans' standard terms and conditions, that they have taken out default insurance, and therefore these passengers should not be compromised in any way" was fundamentally untrue.

Logans' default insurance policy with Europ Assistance had lapsed on June 21. Anyone booking a tour through a travel agent could have bought default insurance through that agent. But people buying direct through Logans after June 21 would not have been so lucky.

"Because we cannot contact Logans, we have no idea how many people bought their tickets directly through them. But because of their very strong marketing campaign, the figure is probably pretty high," said Lawlor.

The position of Logans' subsidiary companies, including Logans Sports Tours, is still not clear. It is likely that a curator will be appointed on Monday to sort out some of the details.

One company that is likely to be severely affected by the collapse is the SABC. Its series *Wish You Were Here*, sponsored by Logans, still has 20 episodes to run. A spokesman for the corporation said a new sponsor would have to be found for the remainder of the series. The programmes were one aspect of Logans' intense media marketing campaign.

Lawlor said that the folding of Logans had been part of the "domino effect" started when Air Liaisons collapsed. Air Liaisons owed Phoenix Airlines R1.5 million and Logans was in the red to the airline to the tune of R2-million.

Logans began operations about three years ago, headed by two young maverick directors in Gain and Loubser. Both were shareholders in Beachcomber Tours, but they were bought out by the other shareholders, said Beachcomber managing director Terry Munro.

Lawlor said Logans' soaring success had caused friction and jealousy in the travel industry. The company had begun its operations with tours to the Maldives, a new and relatively cheap destination. Rumours about Logans' financial position flew around the industry, but it had been impossible to tell if these had their roots in sheer jealousy or not, he said.

Asked about reports that Asata had known for nine months that the company was in financial dire straits, Du Toit said fights between Asata and Logans then had been about the association's constitution and not about money.

# Lufthansa flying high in SA market

CT(DR) 28/8/95 (332) (33)

By JON BEVERLEY

SPECIAL WRITER

The South African market has developed so well for the German airline Lufthansa that the capacity framework envisaged in the German-South African air accord "is no longer sufficient", the 1994 Lufthansa annual report says.

The growth of this market is demonstrated by the 71,4 percent utilisation of the 858,6 million

ton/kilometre capacity available.

In 1993 capacity was 750,9 million ton/kilometre with a 66,2 percent utilisation.

African passenger traffic was 10 percent up on 1993 and cargo and mail traffic was up 27 percent. South Africa provides the bulk of the business in the African zone.

Africa's operating results are slightly ahead of South America's, much higher than the Middle East but well below the main markets of

Europe, Germany, North America and the Asia/Pacific region.

Lufthansa is talking to South African Airways after agreeing to a co-operation agreement earlier this year that will cover passengers and cargo services.

Task teams are busy examining each aspect.

The agreement, which will include the two airlines' frequent-flyer programmes, is expected to come into operation early next year.



# Regional airline mooted

ET 28/8/95

(332) ~~278744~~

JOHANNESBURG: Southern Africa will eventually get a regional airline along the lines of the now defunct East African Airways, it was reported yesterday.

Zimbabwe's Transport and Energy Minister Mr Simon Moyo said here the establishment of the Southern Africa Regional Air Transport Authority (Sarata) presaged the eventual forming of a Southern African Development Community (SADC) airline.

Mr Moyo said the accord to establish Sarata, to be signed by heads of state at their summit here today, was a major breakthrough

in the transport sector.

Sarata's aims include standardisation of matters relating to flight safety, air transport policy, fair competition, and consumer and environmental protection.

## Transport

"As we proceed with integration, this accord forms the basis for a SADC airline," he said.

Member states have also approved an EU-sponsored integration study starting next month of the regional transport sector.

SADC states have decided to

appoint an expert to co-ordinate the transport for drought relief after erratic rains last summer caused a regional shortfall of seven million tons of cereals and grain.

International donors, mainly the EU, have already provided about half of the Z\$2 295 billion (about R997 million) sought by the region in food aid.

SADC agriculture ministers will meet in November to discuss ways of combating the effects of future droughts.

The ministers have also recommended the formation of a water resources section. — Sapa

# Travellers' faith sorely tried

(332) 80 28/8/95

Stephané Bothma

THE collapse of Logans Tours is the latest blow to confidence in the SA travel industry.

Barely had local air travellers recovered from the demise last year of three independent carriers which offered alternatives to the ubiquitous SAA, than they were hit by two more shocks.

Ironically, the most recent airline crisis,

which could finally destroy all consumer faith in independent operators, comes just when the International Air Transport Association (Iata) is predicting huge growth in the civil aviation industry, with its 230 member airlines collectively showing their first profit in five years.

In the past month international carrier Avia Airlines, operating between Johannesburg and London, and local

general sales agent Aviation Liaison, operating under the Sudan Airways banner between the same two destinations, suspended operations with immediate effect, leaving thousands of passengers stranded.

The latest debacle came within months of the collapse of USAfrica, Flitestar and Luxavia and resulted in a moratorium being placed last week on the inception of any new inbound and outbound default insurance risks.

Withdrawal until further notice by Europ Assistance (SA), International Insurance Travel Brokers, Protea Insurance and Travel Insurance Consultants of cover against financial collapse or non-performance of any travel agent or transport provider, leaves especially budget travellers in the lurch, since mainstream carriers and up-market travel agencies continue to offer their own insurance, though at a price.

While SA travellers enjoyed the superior service on Flitestar and the more affordable fares on Avia all too briefly, major international carriers such as SAA are reaping the benefits of a public that will think twice now before making reservations on any new independent airline.

Although Transport Minister Mac Maharaj and the directorate of civil aviation have set the wheels in motion for implementation of tighter entry requirements for local carriers

into the market, it will be a while before legislation aimed at protecting travellers is passed.

The adoption of stricter laws could also face strong opposition by those who have fought for deregulation of the skyways.

The biggest problem facing start-up carriers seems to be undercapitalisation, which forces newcomers to use advance ticket fares paid by the public to fund their operating costs. If an airline fails, the likelihood of passengers recovering these advance fares is remote.

Recent months have seen the entry into the market of a host of new domestic carriers including the SAA-aligned SA Express, Phoenix Airways and Sun Air. Since the emergence of Phoenix late last year, the no-frills, low-fare domestic trunk operator has been plagued by rumours of a pending financial collapse.

Two weeks ago Phoenix was taken over by Cape Town-based Atlantic Air and, anxious to dispel misconceptions and rumours which so easily give rise to public panic and consequent disaster for an airline perceived to be on shaky ground, newly appointed chairman Johan Crouse immediately dismissed as "unjust" past public concerns about the financial viability of the operation.

Comair, the largest and longest operating privately owned airline in the country, seems to have found the winning

recipe for trading successfully alongside SAA. The carrier keeps its operating costs low, offers a reliable service and does not try to compete directly with the national airline — probably the biggest single mistake that Flitestar made.

From its position as the most financially sound of the independent local airlines, Comair this week took a positive step to strengthen public confidence and continued support in the local aviation industry. It introduced a guarantee programme for all advance fares paid to the company by passengers, in terms of which the money will be paid into a trust to be administered and controlled by independent trustees led by Comair's auditors.

Comair's advance bookings currently stand at R14m.

The establishment of similar trusts by all new airlines applying for an operating licence in SA is one of the options under discussion by the Civil Aviation directorate.

A working group has already been established between the transport department's legal experts and local licensing authorities to find mechanisms to protect passengers as well as airline staff.

For, at the end of the day, when a fledgling airline's wings are clipped, the passengers suffer the inconvenience of lost fares and postponed travel, but it is the employees who bear the brunt of reckless ventures in the long term.

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CEMENT



GRIFFIN

ING INCOME

ABLE INCOME

4 CENTS

## OLIDATED BALANCE SHEET

	30 JUNE		31 DECEMBER
	1995	1994	1994
	(UNAUDITED)		(AUDITED)
	R000	R000	R000
funds	257 875	145 240	243 224
	1 529	64	1 097
	238 388	156 905	181 824
	497 792	302 209	426 145
	467 730	269 235	399 141
ash	46 911	46 039	47 740
	13 516	11 594	10 328

(000)

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(041)



# 24 held over taxi violence

Jan 29/8/95

(332)

■ BY MANDLA MTHEMBU

Sixty people have been killed and 71 injured in taxi violence in Gauteng since the beginning of the year, the SAPS said yesterday.

Acting provincial commissioner Major-General Barry van der Walt said 123 incidents of taxi violence, which he described as "senseless killings", had been recorded in the province this year.

He said 24 people allegedly responsible for the violence had been arrested in Johannesburg, Soweto and on the East Rand in the past two weeks.

Bail applications for eight of the suspects had been successfully opposed to prevent the hampering of investigations and to protect commuters, Van der Walt said.

"The possibility that these suspects are involved in several other cases of taxi violence is

also being investigated," said Van der Walt.

He explained that Gauteng was unique when it came to taxi violence. In Johannesburg about 70 000 taxis are operating from as far as Zambia, Botswana, Namibia and other provinces.

The SAPS investigations indicated that the main causes of taxi violence were a lack of discipline and intolerance between taxi associations and owners, the possession of unlicensed firearms, and revenge attacks, Van der Walt said.

He urged taxi operators "not to take part in these senseless attacks, but to co-operate and support police in combating this violent conduct".

He also appealed to the public to help the police by furnishing information that could lead to the arrest and conviction of members of the community involved in violence by making use of the Crimestop toll-free number of 0800-11-12-13.

## Taxi rank cost is forced up by squatters

ARG 30/8/95

Municipal Reporter

SQUATTERS who took over land earmarked for a new minibus taxi rank at Site C in Khayelitsha have pushed up the price of the project by about R400 000.

A report to the Cape Metropolitan Council reveals that the estimated cost was R1,8 million but a delay in construction has increased this to an estimated R2,2 million.

The original estimate was made about 16 months ago, but work could not proceed after squatters moved in.

The land is still occupied by squatters but residences alongside the N2 have been earmarked for the occupants.

The report says: "The Lingeletu West Transitional Council intends moving the people to this area shortly before the contract is awarded.

"Apparently it is inadvisable to move the people too soon as the taxi terminus site could be invaded once again before the contractor is able to commence his operation."

## Prepaid water meters proposed

Staff Reporter

PREPAID water meters should be combined with those already used for electricity to allow developing communities to control their water consumption, it has been proposed.

Researchers from the Water Research Commission said it was necessary for the private sector to develop a single unit for electricity and water prepayment. ARG 30/8/95

This would ensure people in developing communities paid for water through an acceptable system because they were "highly suspicious of account systems, especially when the meter is not read regularly" and debt for water payments continued to rise.

## Rail line planned

Municipal Reporter

A RAILWAY line for commuters living north of Milnerton is being planned.

This was confirmed by Metro manager Andre Harrison, who said R25 000 had been set aside for the conceptual planning of the line, which would run along the current Atlantis goods line.

But the new line was unlikely to operate for another five years.



## Taxi chief blames offences on bad roads

Theo Rawana

130/8/95 (332)  
BAD roads in townships meant taxi drivers were spending much of their profits on vehicle repairs, leading to their driving at breakneck speed to recoup losses from extra fares, breaking road regulations and often ending in bloody street battles.

This situation was exacerbated by inadequate ranks both in townships and cities, Federated National Transport Organisation chairman Lennox Magwaza said yesterday.

Magwaza said the transport department should stop pleading "nothing can be done until transport policy has been formulated".

"They should get something done even while the talks on a new policy are going on. People are there willing to throw in their lot behind RDP programmes such as rank and road maintenance and building. Government should use them," Magwaza said.

"The poor quality of road construction leads to potholes. Passengers complain not only of bumpy taxi rides but also of always being late for work, because these vehicles have to pick their way around potholes," Magwaza said.

He said people were seeing improvement in all other sectors, but the transport department seemed blind to the woes of the taxi drivers.

Road building should focus not only on cities but also on townships and rural areas, where rain made gravel roads even more dangerous.

Department comment could be reached.

'No need to destroy Armscor'

# Alleged hitman linked to cops

By Mongadi Mafata

POLICE are holding a suspect who could help expose police involvement in taxi violence which has claimed several lives and led to the temporary closure of a Johannesburg taxi rank.

The man, whose name is known to *Sowetan*, was arrested while driving a police vehicle with false registration numbers in Alexandra on Saturday afternoon.

The man had earlier been stopped by local taximen after his car almost collided with a taxi in the township. He was rescued by a police patrol which arrived on the scene minutes later. A police source said yesterday the suspect was driving an Opel car with registration numbers LEB 41800 when he was arrested.

After a routine check, it turned out the vehicle belonged to the Alexandra Internal Stability Unit (ISU) and its original registration was BHG 673B.

The suspect allegedly revealed his security force connections and claimed to have carried out orders to eliminate Gauteng taxi drivers who were deemed to be "dangerous".

The source said when police called the control room, they received a radio message from a former security policeman known only as Jordaan that the suspect be taken to the ISU base in Kew.

"The strange thing about the whole incident is how Jordaan intercepted our radio message when it was not on his channel," the policeman said. The suspect was taken to Kew. They were

later joined by three senior policemen who interrogated the suspect through a police interpreter.

"The man told us he got the vehicle from a policeman to use to attack and kill taxi drivers," the source said.

## Killing of five policeman

He also confessed to have taken part in the killing of five policemen while in the company of two other policemen. He was later taken to Brixton police station for "further questioning".

"When he was brought back, his face was swollen. He claimed he was assaulted and warned not to talk about his involvement in the taxi violence," the source said.

Police spokesman Captain Wikus Weber confirmed the arrest and said the hit squad allegations would be investigated.

There are fears that a major cover-up of police involvement in taxi violence could be concealed if the suspect is not placed under the witness protection scheme.

Safety and Security Minister Mr Sydney Mufumadi told Parliament last week that no policeman would be allowed to own a taxi unless by prior arrangement with the Deputy Regional Commissioner.

● A weekend newspaper yesterday reported that two police constables from Pinelands, Cape Town, have been charged with murder and attempted murder for their part in taxi violence.

● More reports on page 2.



of rand by the passengers it left stranded.

Department of Transport assistant-director of international affairs, Johan Bierman says Sudan Airways, as the carrier, is liable — and not Airline Liaison, which acted as its SA agent.

"The tickets were issued on Sudan Airways' ticket forms and the contract is between them and the passengers left in the lurch, not between the passengers and Airline Liaison," says Bierman. "Any contract that exists between Sudan Airways and Airline Liaison is of a commercial nature and cannot detract from Sudan Airways' obligations to its passengers."

He says Sudan Airlines' stance on the matter is that it is prepared to go to court.

Attorney Mia Ahmed Loonat, who says he has been instructed by Sudan Airways' London office to represent it, says counsel has been briefed on the agreement with Airline Liaison and the airline's obligation to the stranded passengers. "We may take the matter to court, but that depends on counsel's advice," says Loonat. Neither Bierman nor Loonat have been able to ascertain how much money is involved.

Representatives of other airlines say Sudan Airways, which halted only its Johannesburg-Khartoum-London flights, is liable because "although aircraft were chartered, its licence was used." The airline is operational and continues to fly other routes.

A well-known business consultant says: "The point at issue is that those who booked and paid for tickets with Sudan Airways sincerely believed they were the principals. Sudan Airways did nothing to correct this impression."

He adds that if an appointed agent goes insolvent or the agency contract is terminated for any reason, the principal remains bound by commitments already entered into with its clients."

To beg the point, if a travel agent issues a ticket on an SA Airways flight, with the knowledge and approval of SAA, and then goes insolvent a week later, the SAA ticket remains valid.

One legal opinion is that Sudan Airways cannot escape liability by citing any agreements with Airline Liaison. Even if it had allowed Airline Liaison, acting as a principal, to charter flights with a third party (flights were flown on aircraft not owned by Sudan Airways) and represent those flights as Sudan Airways' flights, that would be a purely internal arrangement which cannot exonerate it from the responsibility of honouring tickets. ■

## SUDAN AIRWAYS

### In a flap

*(232)*  
*FM 4/9/95*  
Sudan Airways, which withdrew its service between SA and Britain two weeks ago, could yet find itself being sued for millions

# Mandela on affirmative action

OUdTSHOORN — Affirmative action applied to all who had been disadvantaged during apartheid years, President Nelson Mandela yesterday told hundreds of people at an ANC local government election rally.

He was speaking for the first time at Oudtshoorn, where the rally for the whole southern Cape and Little Karoo was held.

In a mainly Afrikaans speech, Mandela said "coloureds" should contact the ANC if some employers implemented affirmative action so as to benefit only certain groups.

"I want to make it clear that it is the policy of the ANC and the government of national unity that affirmative action includes all who have been denied opportunities under apartheid. This means 'coloureds', Africans, Indians, women and handicapped people."

Referring to, what he called, "an unfortunate perception" among a sector of the "coloured" community who were afraid and believed they did not have a future, Mandela said he regretted this as people of SA could now for the first time jointly determine their future.

"There is a wonderful positive spirit among the overwhelming majority of South Africans to build a nonracial and democratic South Africa."

"It must never again happen that one South African is discriminated against by another, that one South African oppresses another," he said.

The best way to bury racism once and for all was dedication to the reconstruction and development programme.

In this respect the upcoming local government elections were an opportunity to continue democratisation and develop the country. Democratic local government would be the "hands and feet of the RDP".

Meanwhile senior IFP negotiator Sipo Mzimela pledged Inkatha support for the Kleurling Weerstandsbeweging a coloured separatist movement, at the KWB launch at the weekend.

Mzimela, correctional services minister, told the 80 delegates at the launch congress in Wellington that Inkatha stood side by side with the KWB against "the monster of domination of the ANC".

Mzimela's presence at the congress indicates Inkatha is seeking ethnic allies in its battle for Zulu self-determination.

The KWB, led by former ANC guerilla Mervyn Ross, is demanding a coloured homeland, arguing that coloureds are descendants of SA's original inhabitants. — Sapa.

## Taxi ranks closed after shootings

POLICE have closed two taxi ranks in central Johannesburg after gunmen on Saturday shot and killed three people and wounded 13 others in two separate attacks at taxi ranks.

The King George and Noord/Quartz streets taxi ranks were cordoned off and minibuses searched for weapons on Saturday after Gauteng MEC for Safety and Security Jesse Duarte and police decided to close off the ranks.

Lt-Col Eugene Opperman said yesterday the closure of the ranks was taken in the "interest of public safety" as lives were being lost and property damaged by the conflict between rival taxi groups.

There were heavy police and army patrols at the taxi ranks yesterday as police waited for tempers to cool.

Opperman said the ranks would remain closed until the police were satisfied the feuding taxi groups were making positive

moves towards finding peaceful solutions to problems at the source of the conflict.

The taxi industry and the rival taxi associations had to find the solutions together.

"It is an internal matter that needs to be urgently addressed by those involved in the taxi war," Opperman said.

Duarte said on Saturday after inspecting the scene of shootings near ANC headquarters: "We cannot take any more chances with people's lives."

Opperman said on Saturday that two people were killed when gunmen opened fire indiscriminately at about 4:10pm.

The victims were mostly passengers caught by the gunfire as they sat in the minibuses on the corner of King George and Noord Streets.

Police believe it was a revenge attack for the Saturday morning shooting at a nearby taxi rank in which one person was killed. — Sapa.



*Ranks open under police guard*

# More talks on taxi violence

Star 4/9/95  
(332)

BY NIAL AITCHESON  
CRIME REPORTER

Two of Johannesburg's busiest taxi ranks were reopened this morning under the scrutiny of police after weekend violence in the city centre claimed the lives of three people.

Nervous passengers — many of whom were caught in the crossfire in the shootings between rival groups on Saturday — hurried from taxis to get to work this morning.

Officers from the Serious Violent Crimes Unit hunting the perpetrators of attacks at the Quartz Street and King George Street ranks were working on several leads in the case, said police spokesman Lieutenant-Colonel Eugene Opperman, but witnesses had been slow to come forward. Allegations that white policemen who own taxis were involved in the attack on Saturday were unfounded, he added.

One man was shot dead and two taxis were set on fire when gunmen attacked the Quartz Street rank on Saturday morning. In a suspected revenge attack, men armed with AK-47s and 9mm pistols raked taxis with gunfire as they drove down King George Street at 4.45pm.

## MEETING delayed in the hope that third taxi association will turn up for today's peace talks

A man and a woman were killed and 21 other passengers wounded, according to medical staff who rushed to the scene. Police, however, said 13 had been reported wounded.

An uneasy peace descended on Johannesburg's taxi ranks yesterday when negotiations between warring operators were put on hold until today.

Gauteng safety and security MEC Jessie Duarte met officials of the SA Long Distance Taxi Association (Saldta) and the Federation of Long Distance Taxi Associations for urgent talks at her Braamfontein office following Saturday's attack.

The talks were put on hold when a third taxi body, the Letlhabile Taxi Association (LTA), failed to turn up for the meeting, which ended inconclusively after three hours.

Duarte said the talks would resume later today.

The razor-wire barricades

placed around the flashpoints on Saturday had been removed by 8pm last night.

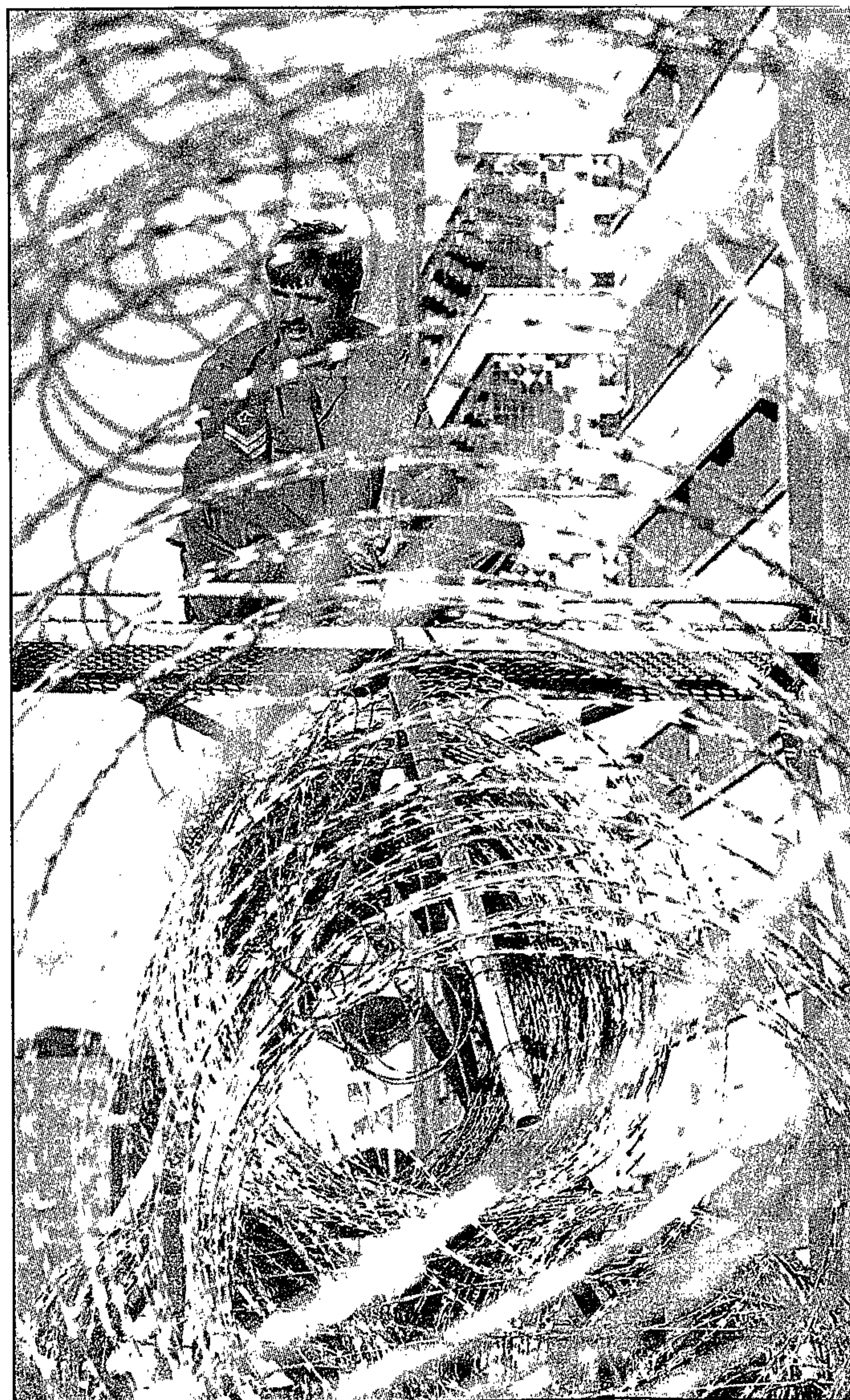
After visiting the ranks with provincial police commissioner Lieutenant-General Sharma Maharaj, Duarte said: "We cannot afford to take any more chances with people's lives."

On Saturday police blocked off various intersections around Joubert Park and Park Station. Pedestrians were allowed through the cordons but vehicles were not. The cordons led to a number of streets being clogged with traffic, and taxi drivers displaced by the rank closures simply moved their business to other areas.

Opperman said two men had been arrested within minutes of the Quartz Street attack. They are due to appear in the city's magistrate's court tomorrow. The King George Street attack appeared to have been well planned, with the suspects making their move seconds after a police patrol left the street.

Said Opperman: "The feuding taxi groups must surely realise that the majority of those killed and wounded in the taxi war are commuters and other innocent people. They are chasing their own clients and

► To Page 3



Fenced out . . . a policeman helps erect one of the barbed wire barricades at a taxi rank in central Johannesburg on Saturday.

PICTURE: JODI BIEBER

and roads standing committee will also hear public submissions on a new provincial transport policy during the week starting September 18.

■ A taxi driver was seriously wounded in the second shooting at taxis this weekend on the N1 near Centurion, Pretoria. The attack occurred at about 9pm yesterday.

Police believe the driver came under attack as he was returning to Northern Province after dropping off passengers.

Bleeding from a throat wound, the driver tried to cross over to the south-bound lane but lost consciousness.

Another taxi driver was shot dead on Friday night in an attack on the N1 near the Botha Avenue turn-off.

► From Page 332  
Star 4/9/95

used acts of violence can cause irreparable damage to the taxi industry."

Sapa reports that Saldta was granted a court interdict late on Saturday night prohibiting the LTA from operating any taxis from the Quartz Street rank.

The LTA may operate only from rank 29 on the corner of Noord and King George streets.

The Gauteng legislature is set to release its proposals on how to deal with taxi violence.

Public transport and roads MEC Claus van Zyl said yesterday the proposed solutions on nine serious issues affecting the industry would be released on September 15.

The public transport



# Taxi ranks reopened after weekend carnage

□ *Passengers caught in crossfire in shootings between rival groups*

ARL 4/9/95 (332)

**The Argus Correspondent**

JOHANNESBURG. — Two of the busiest taxi ranks here were reopened today under the scrutiny of police after weekend violence in the city centre claimed the lives of three people.

Nervous passengers — many of whom were caught in the crossfire in the shootings between rival groups on Saturday — hurried from taxis to get to work this morning.

Officers from the Serious Violent Crimes Unit hunting the perpetrators of attacks at the Quartz and King George street ranks were working on several leads in the case, said a police spokesman. He said witnesses had been slow to come forward.

Allegations that white policemen who own taxis were involved in the attack on Saturday were unfounded, he said.

A man was shot dead and two taxis were set on fire when gunmen attacked the Quartz Street rank on Saturday morning. In a suspected revenge attack, men armed with AK 47s and 9mm pistols raked taxis with gunfire as they drove down King George Street at 4.45pm.

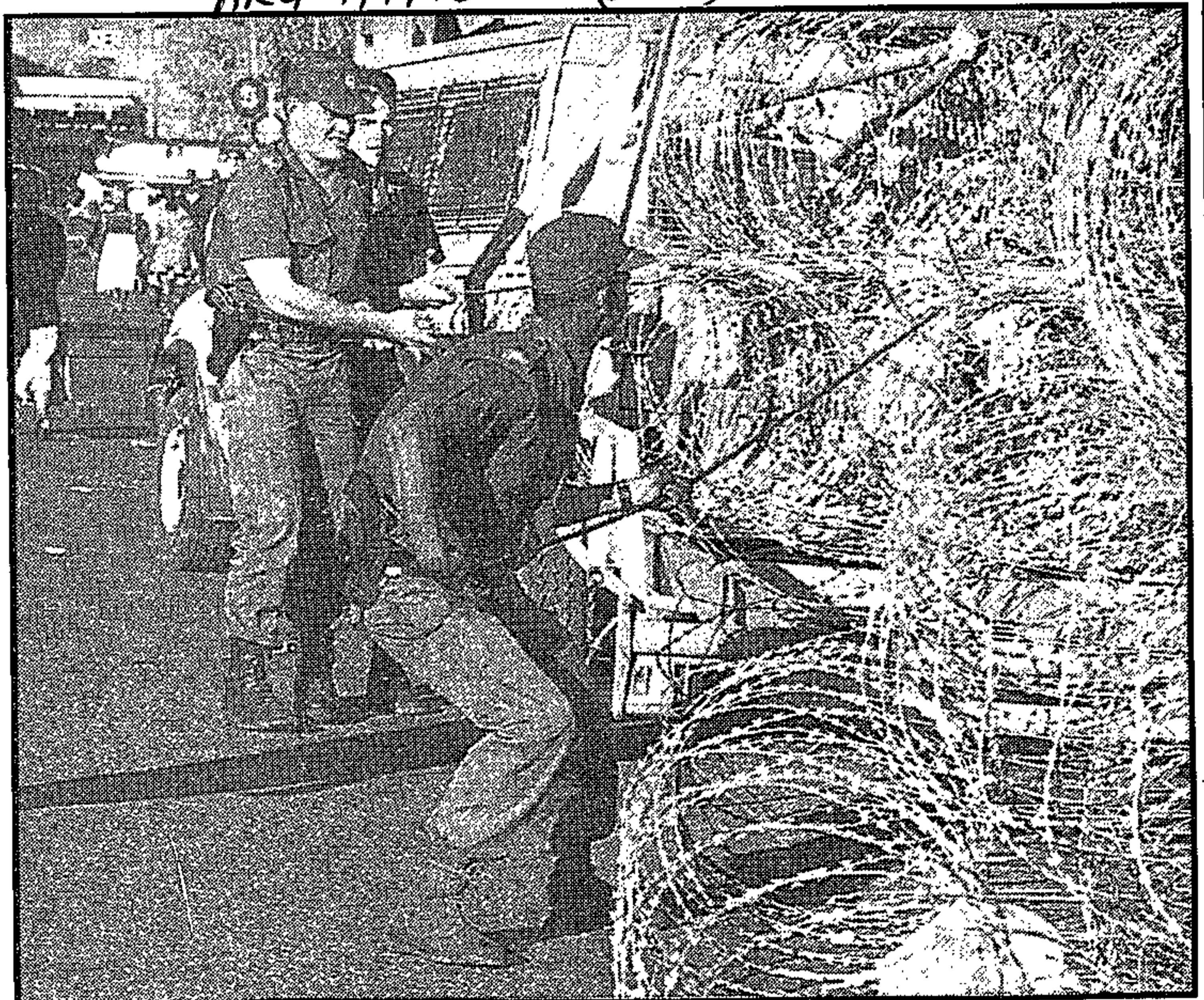
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The talks were put on hold when a third taxi body, the Letlhabile Taxi Association (LTA), failed to turn up for the meeting, which ended inconclusively after three hours.

Speaking to the press after-



**FENCED OUT:** Policemen erect barbed-wire barricades at the taxi ranks in Johannesburg where warring factions clashed at the weekend.

wards, Ms Duarte said talks to resolve the conflict would resume later today, hopefully with LTA input. The last of the razor-wire barricades placed around the flashpoints on Saturday were removed by 8pm yesterday and traffic began to flow again this morning.

After visiting the ranks with provincial police commissioner Lieutenant-General Sharma Maharaj, Ms Duarte said: "We cannot afford to take any more chances with people's lives."

On Saturday police blocked off various intersections around Joubert Park and Park Station. Pedestrians were allowed through the cordons but vehicles were not. The cordons led to several streets being clogged with traffic, and taxi

drivers displaced by the rank closures simply moved their business to other locations.

The police spokesman said two men had been arrested within minutes of the Quartz Street attack. They are due to appear in the city's magistrate's court tomorrow. The King George attack appeared to have been well planned, with the suspects making their move seconds after a police patrol left the street.

"The feuding taxi groups must surely realise that the majority of those killed and wounded in the taxi war are commuters and other innocent people. They are chasing their own clients and business away. Continued acts of violence can cause irreparable damage to

the taxi industry," the police spokesman said.

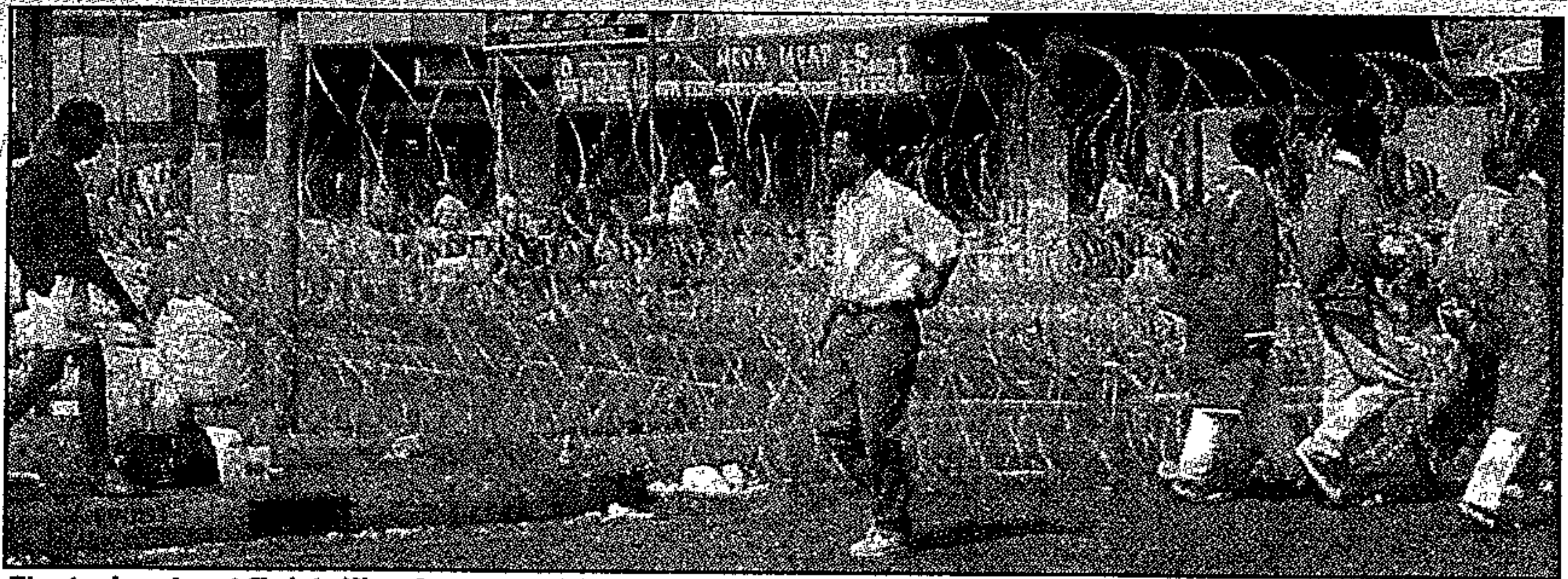
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The public transport and roads standing committee will also hear public submissions on a new provincial transport policy during the week beginning September 18.





The taxi ranks at Twist, King George and Quartz streets in Johannesburg were cordoned off by police and army personnel yesterday. They searched minibuses for weapons after gunmen killed three people and wounded 13 others at the weekend.

PIC: ELIZABETH SEJAKE

# New turn in taxi killings

By Joshua Raboroko

A RAND Supreme Court judge has ordered the Lethabile Taxi Association to stop operating from a "new" taxi rank in Johannesburg after gunmen shot and killed three people and wounded 13 others in two separate incidents at the weekend.

The application was brought before Mr Justice Goldstein by the South African Long-Distance Transport Association and the Federation of Local and Long-Distance Taxi Associations in a bid to end the violence at taxi ranks.

In papers before the court the applicants said the violence erupted on Saturday after the LTA opened a "new" taxi rank at Noord and Quartz streets. This was in violation of an earlier agreement that the three associations would operate from the King George Street rank.

The LTA is expected to respond by September 26.

Police spokesman Lieutenant-Colonel Eugene Opperman said yesterday

day the victims of the tragedy were mostly passengers caught in the cross-fire as they sat in minibuses on the corner of King George and Noord streets.

Bullets shattered the windows of several taxis. Empty cartridges from AK-47 rifles were found on the scene. Police arrested three people.

A witness told *Sowetan* that gunmen travelling in a red car fired indiscriminately at passengers.

## Cordoned off

Police and the South African National Defence Force cordoned off the two ranks after an agreement with the Gauteng MEC for safety and security Mrs Jesse Duarte.

In another attempt to resolve the violence, lawyers acting for Feldta and Salta met with Duarte to discuss the court action and to demand the reopening of the King George Street rank.

And another meeting is scheduled to take place today between the feuding groups and Duarte.

She said at a Press conference yesterday that the closure of the ranks was taken in the "interest of public safety".

She said the ranks would remain closed until the police were satisfied the warring groups were making positive moves towards finding peaceful solutions to their problems.

There was a heavy police and army presence at the ranks yesterday. Scores of commuters were confused and left stranded as they did not know where to get transport, mainly to Northern Province.

Duarte said she did not believe the court order was a solution to the problem.

Mr Kobus du Plessis, a lawyer representing Feldta and Salta, told *Sowetan* yesterday that his clients intended to apply for court action if the King George Street rank was not reopened soon.

A spokesman for the National Taxi Drivers Organisation, Mr Gadi Sibanyoni, expressed concern at the shootings.

(232)

*Sowetan*  
4/9/95



# Airports Company plans major upgrades

(332) CT(BR) 5/9/95

BY AUDREY D'ANGELO

CAPE BUSINESS EDITOR

Widely divergent forecasts had been made of the growth in tourism to South Africa, Jan van den Berg, the chairman of the Airports Company said in the annual report.

Based on the opinions of its own planners, the company expected to handle 40 percent more domestic passengers and 66 percent more international passengers by 2000.

It has plans to spend about R1,4 billion on major improvements over the next five years, mainly at South Africa's three international airports in Johannesburg, Cape Town and Durban.

## Improvements

"Apart from increasing the airports' capacities these improvements will make them more user-friendly."

Van den Berg said the time needed to build completely new terminals on greenfield sites meant that they would not be ready before existing capacity was exceeded.

"The company has therefore chosen to find alternative ways to relieve capacity constraints by incremental improvements.

"Nevertheless peak-hour traffic at our international airports remains an area of concern."

Van den Berg said the company was taking the view that "time spent at an airport should not be a dreary necessity, but a pleasant and positive experience".



**RUNNING THE AIRPORTS** From left, standing, Connie Mueller, (GM National Airports), Hennie Taljaard, (GM Cape Town International Airport), Jan Spies, (GM corporate division), Piet de Jager, (GM Johannesburg International Airport), Francois Rossouw (GM corporate division). Seated from left Stuart Huckwell (GM corporate division), Francois Swanepoel, (GM Durban International Airport), Jan van den Berg, (chairman of the Airports Company)

Efforts would therefore be made to extend retail and entertainment facilities.

Pointing out that the airports had made heavy losses over many years until they were privatised in 1993, Van den Berg said that the company's after-tax profit of R80,7 million for the year to March represented only a nominal return

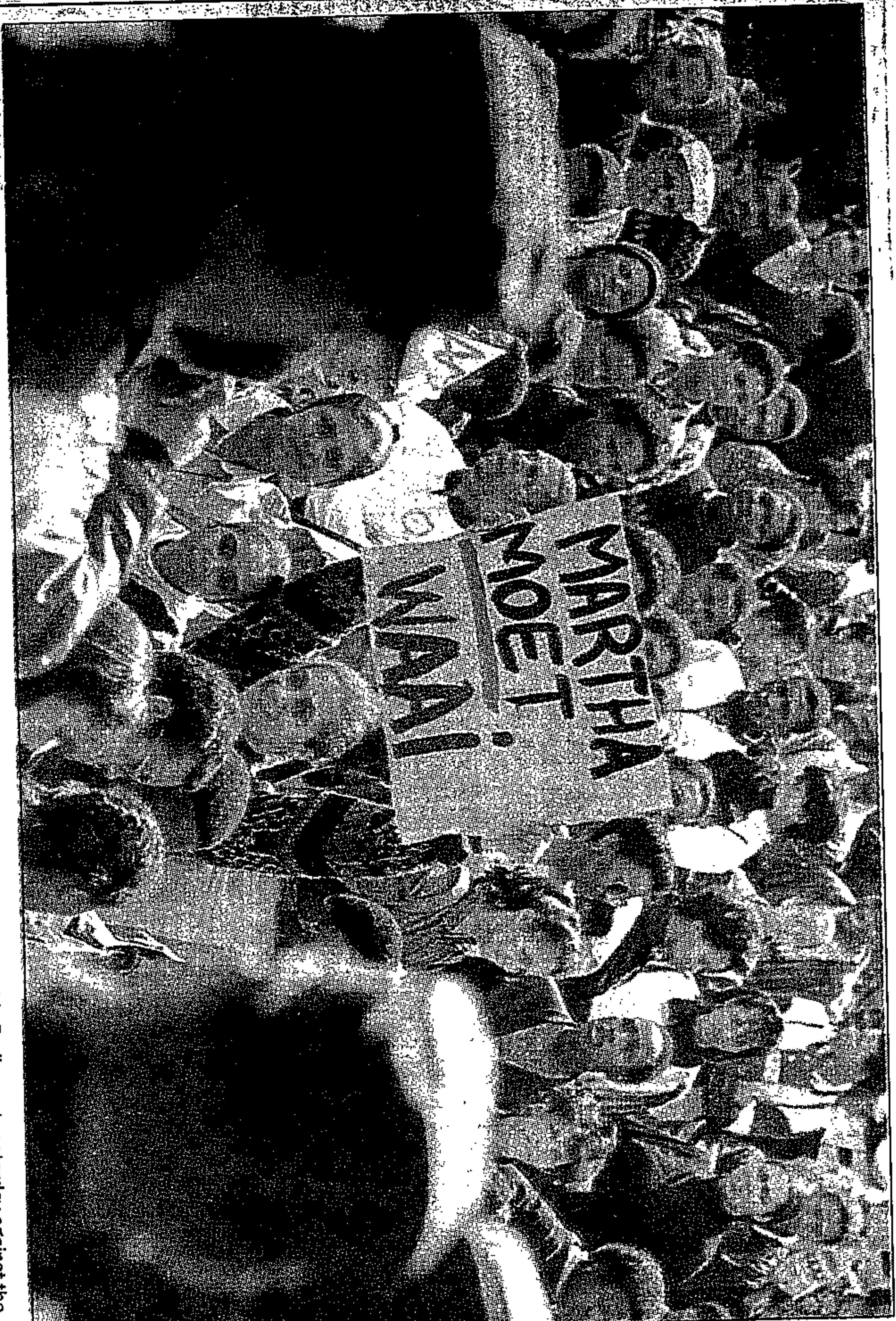
of 9,5 percent on its share capital and reserves of R848 million. Taking inflation into account, this was marginally negative in real terms.

"In order to achieve a truly commercial basis of operation, a sustainable level of earnings and the capacity to borrow in the markets to finance a major portion of

planned expansions over the next five years, the company will have to progress consistently towards earning a rate of return acceptable to the financial and investment markets.

"Without such a track record the company's ability to borrow independently will be impeded and privatisation hardly possible."





**EQUAL TREATMENT:** Student teachers from the five colleges of education in the Western Cape protest outside Parliament yesterday against the unequal treatment of student teachers at colleges attached to former education departments.

PICTURE: NIC BOTHA

## Trainee teachers in protest

STAFF REPORTER

21 5/9/95

TRAINEE teachers from five Western Cape teachers training colleges marched to Parliament yesterday to demand equal treatment for students in all the old education departments.

They were protesting against former House of Representatives students having to write two sets of final exams and having to wait for a year before they can write supplementary exams.

Student spokesman Mr Clayton Turner said the department had "done nothing" since last month's march.

Meanwhile, all was quiet at the Good Hope College of Education, where protests over bursaries led to staff being held hostage last week.

The rector, Mr Willie Scholtz, said the provincial education department was slow in paying bursaries because it had not received the bursary money from the students' provinces.



## Strydom's wife 'saw' him kill

Deborah Fine

HELENE Strydom, wife of double murder accused Frans Strydom, denied in the Rand Supreme Court yesterday that she had made a statement to police incriminating her husband because she had wanted to stop him from exposing her love affair with a married colleague.

She testified that her husband had strangled to death one of his employees, Jan McPherson, in 1988.

Strydom, a taxi driver for a Bloemfontein escort agency, has pleaded not guilty.

Strydom said she, her husband and McPherson had undertaken a trip from Bloemfontein to Germiston in November 1988. En route Strydom had drugged McPherson with beer laced with sleeping tablets. He had strangled him and dumped his body in a ditch near Boksburg.

In 1991 her husband had gone to jail for fraud and cattle theft and she had begun an affair with a colleague. Released in 1994 her husband had threatened to kill her and expose the affair unless she got him a car.

She had then gone to the police and made the statement because she had feared for her life.

Adv W Edeling, representing Strydom, said she had not feared for her life as her husband had forgiven her for another affair in 1990.

# Three held after taxi rank killings

Theo Rawana

THE special police unit investigating taxi violence at the weekend arrested three people in a white Toyota Cressida and seized handguns from the vehicle.

Lt-Col Eugene Opperman said yesterday that police were looking into the possibility that the Cressida could have been the vehicle described after at least one of the attacks in Johannesburg on Saturday.

One unlicensed pistol was also found at the Bree Street taxi rank after a police search yesterday.

At least three people had been killed and 21 injured since Friday in drive-by shootings involving long-distance taxi operators.

Three people were killed and 13 injured in shootings at Johannesburg's Noord Street and King George Street taxi ranks on Saturday.

One taxi driver was killed and another injured in separate shootings on the N1 near Centurion on Friday and Sunday.

Opperman said people had offered to give information on the involvement of SA Police Service (SAPS) members in the latest taxi violence.

SA Long Distance Taxi Association president Thulani Kubheka called for people from other provinces to get involved in talks to find a solution to the feuding.

A solution lay in involving people from other provinces because the feud was among long-distance operators from as far afield as Northern Province, he said.

There were strong signs of the presence of a third force in the shootings, he said.

Sapa reports that the ANC has urged police to speed up the investigation of alleged police involvement in the taxi industry.

The party pledged its full support for police action intended to end taxi violence.

"The police, and in particular Gauteng safety and security MEC Jessie Duarte, need to be applauded for their speedy intervention in the Saturday incident at Noord Street in which three people were killed.

"If it were not for them more lives would probably have been lost," the ANC said.

Duarte said a meeting between the feuding organisations was set for tomorrow.

## Draft Bill to protect HIV-infected workers

Susan Russell

THE SA Law Commission believes there is scope for specific AIDS legislation and has drawn up a preliminary draft Bill which would prohibit unfair discrimination against employees infected with HIV.

Writing in the latest issue of the attorneys' journal De Rebus, commission secretary Willie Henegan said the commission's preliminary conclusion was that an AIDS-specific Act could be a solution to the problems infected people faced relating to health care, employment, confidentiality and social discrimination.

The draft Bill will be published for comment together with a working paper. Henegan said the health department asked the commission to

probe the legal aspects of AIDS.

There have been widely divergent views expressed by lawyers in the past on the needs for AIDS-specific legislation. Some believe legal problems raised by AIDS can be properly dealt with under existing law, while others argue that current legislation does not adequately protect people with HIV or AIDS.

The commission has recommended legislation be enacted confirming that HIV testing may only be done with the fully-informed consent of the individual, but allowing for testing without the necessary consent in an emergency where the consent cannot be reasonably obtained.

It has also suggested that legislation be introduced in terms of which no employee would be obliged to

form his or her employer that they are HIV-infected.

It has also been recommended that new legislation should allow for AIDS-related information to be disclosed only to the infected person. Henegan said the commission was opposed to the blanket testing of all hospital patients. The commission has recommended that segregating prisoners on the basis of their HIV infection be prohibited by law.

Dealing with the insurance industry, the commission has recommended that the Life Offices' Association would have to inform people when AIDS-related information about them was recorded in the Life Register and give them the opportunity to obtain this information, verify it and have it rectified if incorrect.



# 'Early warnings of taxi violence went unheeded'

stars/9/95 (332)

■ BY NIALA AITCHESON  
CRIME REPORTER

The police and provincial government failed to heed early warnings of Saturday's gun attacks at Johannesburg's Quartz and King George street taxi ranks, the South African Long Distance Transportation Association (Saldta) has claimed in a sworn affidavit.

Meanwhile, police say that three more people have been arrested in connection with the attack on the Quartz Street rank.

## Stopped

The suspects were stopped in a white Toyota Cressida in Johannesburg on Sunday afternoon and found to be in possession of three handguns. "We are investigating the possibility that this vehicle was used in the attack," he said.

Two other men were arrested within minutes of the attack on Saturday morning. They are expected to appear at the Johannesburg Magistrate's Court today.

Taxis continued to operate normally from the Quartz and King George street ranks today. Yesterday, police searched vehicles using the city's Bree Street rank and found one unlicensed

9mm pistol.

The affidavit, presented to the Rand Supreme Court on Saturday night, says calls for action went unanswered following the kidnapping and murder of two of Saldta's drivers on August 25 – seven days before the attacks in which three people died and 21 others were wounded.

In the 24-page affidavit, Saldta executive member Obed Ncube says trouble had been inevitable after the Letlhabile Taxi Association (LTA) opened a "new" rank at Noord and Quartz streets in violation of a nine-month-old agreement between themselves and the Federation of Local and Long Distance Taxis (Feldta).

The accord was first threatened when, says Saldta, its drivers were "chased away" from the Plokwane taxi rank in Pietersburg immediately prior to the Easter holiday weekend.

"The situation was defused and no further incidents were reported until August 25, when the LTA started occupying the Quartz Street rank in breach of our agreement," states the affidavit.

On August 26 Gauteng Safety and Security MEC Jessie Duarte told Saldta that the matter had been delegated to a

Colonel Naude.

"Colonel Naude came to our offices that day and told us that the Brixton Murder and Robbery Unit would investigate the matter.

"Two officers from the unit later arrived and informed us that they could not immediately help as they were busy with a 'big robbery'.

"They said a Colonel Marks would deal with us," the affidavit states.

"Later that day Colonel Marks arrived accompanied by three other officers. They listened to our grievances and informed us that no repetition of what had happened on August 25 would occur".

## Contacted

SAPS members were contacted again on August 29. "We urged them to intervene since the on-going occupation of the Quartz Street rank by LTA could result in the loss of lives."

"On September 1 we tried to get hold of Ms Duarte and her deputy, again without success."

In granting Saldta the interdict on Saturday to prohibit LTA from operating any taxis from the Quartz Street rank, Mr Justice Goldstein said the allegations levelled by Saldta gave grave cause for concern.



# Taxi killings: four released on bail

■ BY DAISY JONES

Four men arrested in connection with central Johannesburg's taxi shootings at the weekend have appeared in the Johannesburg Regional Court and have been released on bail.

The two shootouts claimed three lives and wounded 21 people, causing the busy Noord Street rank to be closed for two days.

Berthwell Pakhati (22) of Jabulani Hostel, appeared briefly on Monday. He reappeared on Tuesday when he was granted R5 000 bail. The case was postponed until September 26 for further investigations.

The current charges against him are attempted murder and the illegal possession of a

20/7/95 332

Three other men, Solomon Buthelez, Moses Megana, and Sipho Zangweni, were arrested on Sunday morning and were released on R1 000 bail later that afternoon.

Police spokesman Colonel Eugene Opperman said the trio had been driving a white Toyota Cressida which fitted the description of an eyewitness.

The men were arrested for the illegal possession of firearms.

Opperman said the investigations into the killings were continuing, adding ballistic tests and identity parades still had to be held.

Pakhati had been arrested with another man, but he had been released after giving a "satisfactory" explanation to police, Opperman said.

# Fivaz to probe claims of SAPS failure to act

■ BY NIALA AITCHISON  
CRIME REPORTER

Claims that police failed to act to prevent Saturday's violence at two Johannesburg taxi ranks despite allegedly receiving warnings in advance will be fully investigated, SAPS Commissioner George Fivaz has promised.

He reacted to statements made in a sworn affidavit by the South African Long Distance Taxi Association (Saldia).

The allegations against the police are especially disturbing, Fivaz said.

"The SAPS is making a major effort to increase its intelligence capacity on taxi violence, including the expansion of former networks and the creation of a taxi violence unit," he said.

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The affidavit, presented to the Rand Supreme Court on Saturday night, claims calls for police action went unheeded following the kidnapping and murder of two Saldia drivers on August 25, seven days before the latest violence.

The affidavit was filed in support of a successful interdict application to prevent the Lehiabie Taxi Association (LTA) from operating from the Quartz Street rank.

Saldia executive member Obed Ncube says trouble had been inevitable after the LTA opened a "new" rank at Noord and Quartz streets in violation of an agreement between Saldia and the Federation of Local and Long Distance Taxis (Feldta).

Feldta is the third taxi body operating on the lucrative

Johannesburg to Pieterburg route.

Saldia claims the LTA inflamed an already volatile situation by using a megaphone at the Quartz Street rank to advertise lower fares.

Attempts to contact Gauteng Safety and Security MEC Jessie Duarte on August 31 and September 1 were unsuccessful, the affidavit states, and the police failed to deploy 100 extra officers as promised to patrol the rank the day before the attacks.

However, "ISU members were in place (in the area) when the attacks occurred and apprehended several suspects afterwards," Fivaz said.

Talks with Gauteng government officials to resolve the crisis have so far been unsuccessful.



# Death knell tolls for taxi industry

*Sowetan 8/9/95*

The taxi industry is busy destroying itself instead of solving its problem

By Khathu Mamaila

**D**OZENS OF MOURNERS around a grave hum a song: "Wamashudu a sa fhele ndi a sa tevelitho ndila khulu ya vha xeli..." Loosely translated, the lyrics mean: "Blessed is the one who doesn't follow the wide road used by those lost in sin".

This is Mukula village, about 15km from Thohoyandou, where dozens of villagers are burying Mr Nthuleni Eric Siala. A suspected taxi hitman, he died as he lived - by the gun.

This is an unusual funeral for Mukula. Never before were police deployed to guard mourners as they buried their dead at this peaceful village.

The presence of the police made the situation more tense and added more

fear to the hearts of many villagers.

Hours before the funeral, Siala's aunt was shot and wounded by unknown gunmen. This led to fears that his killers might harm those mourning his death.

Siala might have been a taxi hitman, as he had told many in his circles, but if so, he was just a pawn in some people's dirty and lethal game.

He was unemployed and needed to support his small family. The fact that he was desperate made him a suitable candidate for recruitment into hit squads.

He didn't have a car, but each time he was on a mission he would be pro-

vided with one. Even on his last alleged mission, he was driving a Cresta.

His "career" was steeped in the dangerous terrain where only the fittest survive. Siala had survived many attempts on his life but this time he fell into the deadly hands of others who, like him, worked for the callous rich.

Almost everybody at the funeral knew who Siala's killers were. And they knew who Siala worked for. But no one was willing to take the information to the police.

"There is no reason for me to tell the police about the attackers. Do you think if the warlords are known by every second person in

Venda, the police are so ignorant that they are not aware?" asked one man.

"Police are trained to get information under very difficult circumstances. Nobody can convince me that police don't know the killers."

Even the MEC for safety and security of the Northern Province, Mr Seth Nthai, believes that police are involved in the taxi war.

Nthai said he has the names of several policemen involved in the taxi feud.

National police commissioner Mr George Fivaz also says there is evidence that policemen are involved in the taxi war, and feels police should not be allowed to be involved in the taxi industry.

Policemen who try to end the carnage are threatened that they and their family members will be severely dealt with.

Given that most policemen are demotivated because of their poor working conditions and low salaries, few will risk their lives to combat the taxi violence.

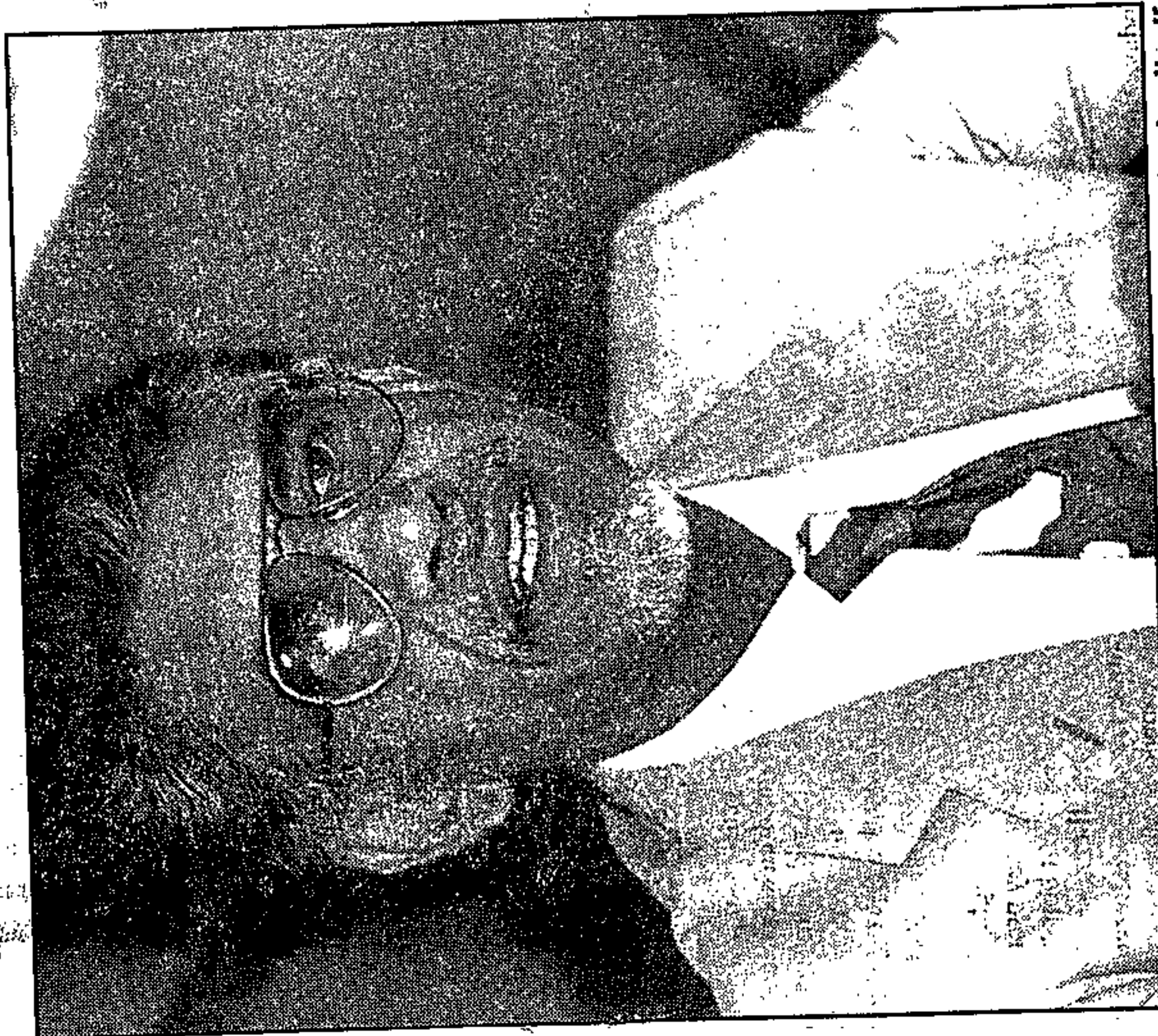
Said one policeman: "You can risk your life and arrest a taxi hitman but the court will grant him bail. In most cases these gunmen have no fixed addresses as some of them are former Mozambican soldiers."

Police in Pietersburg confirmed that they were investigating reports that prominent taxi operators hired former Mozambican soldiers as hitmen.

As we buried Siala, I remembered what Transport Minister Mr Mac Maharaj once said at a conference in Louis Trichardt.

He told taximen and Government officials that "by the time a solution to the taxi war is found, the industry will have destroyed itself".

"I do not doubt that a solution to the problem will be found but my worst nightmare is that the solution will come at a time when there will be no more taxi operators."



Transport Minister Mac Maharaj ... the taxi industry is destroying itself



ARG 8/9/95

## Policemen probed over taxi violence

(332) (332)  
Political Correspondent

TWO Pinelands policemen are being investigated in connection with charges of murder and attempted murder relating to taxi violence, says Safety and Security Minister Sydney Mufamadi.

He was replying to questions in the senate by James Selfe (DP).

He also said four policemen in Gauteng faced charges including intimidation, car theft, obstruction of justice, kidnapping and assault with intent to do grievous bodily harm.

At least 204 policemen were taxi owners and at least 37 were members of taxi organisations.

Areas in which policemen were known to be taxi owners or members of taxi organisations included Belhar, Elsies River, Bellville and Grabouw.

Asked about policy on policemen owning taxis or being members of taxi organisations, Mr Mufamadi said prior authorisation would be needed from the regional commissioner or his deputy.



# Taxi groups willing to ~~talk~~ talk to end ~~bloody wars~~ bloody wars

Star 8/9/95  
■ BY NIALL AITCHESON  
CRIME REPORTER

Operators involved in the Johannesburg taxi war have agreed to independent mediation in a bid to end the violence, Gauteng Safety and Security MEC Jessie Duarte announced yesterday.

Peace talks in the wake of Saturday's attacks on two city ranks have so far proved fruitless, with officials of the Letlhabile Taxi Association (LTA), who feared for their lives, refusing to attend. Three people died and 21 were injured in the attacks.

The LTA is embroiled in a bitter struggle with the South African Long Distance (Saldta) and Federation of Local and Long Distance (Feldta) taxi associations for control of the lucrative Johannesburg to Pietersburg route.

Said Duarte: "The LTA has now informed me that it sees independent mediation as an acceptable way of resolving differences among the three taxi organisations. Saldta and Feldta have also indicated that they are agreeable."

She said tempers had cooled after LTA's withdrawal from the Quartz Street rank last night in terms of a court interdict granted to Saldta.

Duarte strongly defended the police against criticism that they did not do enough to prevent the violence, and said: "Numerous allegations of police complicity in taxi violence have come to light. Names made available to me have been referred to the Gauteng Commissioner of Police for investigation. However, no sworn affidavits or written statements have been made available to substantiate these allegations."

■ Police yesterday searched 150 minibus taxis for illegal weapons at Johannesburg's Noord Street rank.

They arrested two people for illegally possessing firearms and recovered two suspected stolen vehicles.

The crackdown was prompted by Saturday's violence. — Sapa.

(332)  
Sawetani 8/9/95

# Trouble looms for cop-taximen

By Joshua Raboroko

**P**OLICE ARE INVESTIGATING the alleged involvement of policemen, traffic officers and magistrates in taxi-related violence and corruption.

They are in possession of names of certain officers and have referred them to Commissioner of Police George Fivaz for investigation.

These revelations were made by the MECs for safety and security in Northern Province and Gauteng in the wake of violence at taxi ranks in central Johannesburg last week.

At least two taxi operators, Mr Chris Molepo and Mr Albert Hlagala, and a commuter died tragically and 21 other people were seriously wounded in two separate attacks at King George, Noord and Quartz streets, Johannesburg, taxi ranks.

They were in taxis ferrying people from Johannesburg to the northern Transvaal.

The attacks apparently took place

## Policemen who own taxis are being probed for taking part in violence

after police were warned about the imminent outbreak of violence following a dispute between Lethlabile Taxi Organisation, the South African Long Distance Taxi Association and the Federation of Local and Long Distance Transport Association.

Northern Transvaal MEC for safety and security Advocate Seth Nthai said yesterday that they were in possession of names of policemen who owned taxis.

● Warrant-Officer Jerry Magoro, stationed at Lebowakgomo, used two taxis after obtaining permission from the Commissioner of Police in the former Lebowa government. He has since sold his taxis.

● Lieutenant William Baloyi of Malamulele owned a taxi which he rented to a cousin for a fee, but sold the vehicle on hearing that severe action

might be taken against policemen who owned taxis.

● Lieutenant JB Chauke, stationed at Seshego, owned two taxis and his wife owned three. After several threats and fears of being victimised in the ongoing violence, he sold them.

● Warring taxi associations claimed they feared the first black mayor of Pietersburg, Mr Lawrence Mapoulo, who owns taxis, might influence decisions when granting taxi permits.

Nthai said the policemen were warned to either resign or remain in the force provided they cancelled their businesses.

Gauteng MEC for safety and security Mrs Jesse Duarte said there were allegations of bribery of traffic and senior police officials, and magistrates involved in bringing taxi related offences to court.



## Turning a blind eye

A *laissez faire* attitude by law enforcement officials, combined with a dearth of up-to-date statistical information, has seen the taxi industry get away with murder.

Deaths and injuries caused by the continuing violence involving the various taxi organisations is well reported but those caused by driver error and overloading rarely rate a mention.

Department of Transport acting director of traffic safety Frikkie Mulder says the Road Traffic Act uses manufacturers' specifications to determine the number of passengers minibus taxis can carry safely. Local and provincial traffic authorities, and the DoT's inspectorate, are expected to enforce the legislation — but they don't. The spate of accidents is blamed on speeding as minibus drivers rush to complete as many trips a day as possible. But no specific State body is responsible for prosecuting offenders or mandated to develop a culture of safe driving. Only during peak holiday periods, such as Easter and Christmas, are checks made for overloading.

"At those times of the year," says Mulder, "we conduct campaigns to let taxi drivers know they don't have the same control over their vehicles on a highway as they do in

## BUSINESS

town, particularly when they are travelling fast and their vehicles are overloaded."

Though DoT statistics are not up to date, they reveal that last year 1 027 people died in minibus accidents, 5 745 suffered serious injuries and 10 791 were slightly injured. Minibuses were involved in 60 102 accidents in 1993 but no comparable figures are available yet for 1994, says the DoT information division's Myrtle van Vuuren.

The DoT says that there are 70 000 registered minibus taxis and 8 000 registered four-seater vehicles for hire in SA. The figures exclude the former homelands and the TBVC areas, where numbers are still being determined. The DoT believes most accidents involve illegal, unregistered taxis but it is not known how many there are.

Council for Scientific & Industrial Research traffic safety technology programme project manager Rudolf Opperman says 500 accidents involving minibus taxis have been studied. Many were caused by a combination of factors but speeding was the main contributor (52%), overloading (32%) another major factor and defective tyres were cited in 24% of incidents. Driver error was evident in 79% of accidents and traffic offences were noted in 74%.

Most of the accidents took place during the day and in fine weather. Alcohol played a small role. No correlation could be found between the age of the vehicles and their roadworthiness and there was no evidence to prove that owner-drivers were more cautious than nonowners.

Seatbelts were worn by only 21% of drivers and 15% of front-seat passengers. Opperman says that though drivers' vision was not researched specifically, defective eyesight must have played a significant role as only 3% of drivers in accidents wore spectacles or contact lenses, which compares poorly with the national average — 18% — of drivers using visual aids.

Opperman says the studies "reveal minibus taxis cause more than twice as many — and often more serious — collisions than other vehicles. The penalties for moving traffic offences are often disproportionately low, considering the seriousness of the offence, and do not act as a deterrent." ■

## 200 policemen are taxi owners

By ESTHER WAUGH  
POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

Cape Town - More than 200 policemen are taxi owners - and the actual figure could be higher, according to Safety and Security Minister Sydney Mufamadi.

He told the Senate this week that at least 37 policemen were members of taxi organisations, and a total of 204 owned their own taxis.

But, he added: "It must clearly be stated that the actual numbers can be much higher."

Replying to Democratic Party Senator James Selfe, the minis-

ter said that policemen needed prior authorisation from their regional commissioner or deputy regional commissioner before they become involved in business.

The areas where policemen were involved in the taxi industry included Johannesburg, Katlehong, Sebokeng, Atteridgeville and Soshanguve.

Mufamadi said complaints of murder, attempted murder, intimidation, car theft, obstruction of justice, kidnapping and assault with intent to do grievous bodily harm have been lodged against six policemen.





**PULL OVER! ... Sydney Mufamadi**

# Brakes on taxi cops

By RAFIQ ROHAN

POLICEMEN illegally linked to the taxi industry are either being charged or investigated on allegations relating to murder, attempted murder, kidnapping and intimidation.

This was confirmed in Parliament this week by the minister of safety and security, Sydney Mufamadi.

"It is taken for a fact that members of the South African Police Service are members of taxi organisations and taxi owners. The exact numbers are not known," Mufamadi said.

He said a number of places in SA were listed as "known areas" for police involvement with taxis.

These included Atteridgeville,

CP 10/9/95

*Mufamadi confirms probe*

le, Sebokeng, Soshanguve, Johannesburg, Katlehong, Kwa-Mashu and Bellville.

Two police members, Constable E Arends and Constable L Lawrence, both from Pinelands in the Western Cape, are facing murder and attempted murder charges.

Mufamadi said cases of intimidation, theft of motor vehicles and the obstruction of justice were being investigated.

In addition, Lance-Sergeant

(332)  
M Majaja had been suspended in Klerksdorp following the outcome of an investigation into a case of kidnapping and assault with intent to do grievous bodily harm.

Senator James Selfe (DP) wanted to know from the minister whether members of the SAPS were allowed to be members of taxi associations or to own taxis.

Mufamadi replied: "The South African Police's policy pertaining to gainful employment, remunerative enterprises or business involvement determines that no member may involve himself as stated unless prior authorisation is obtained from the Regional Commissioner or Deputy Regional Commissioner."

# Police charged in taxi violence

**BARRY STREEK**  
POLITICAL STAFF

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CT 11/9/95

TWO Pinelands policemen had been charged with murder and attempted murder through their involvement in taxi violence, Minister for Safety and Security Mr Sydney Mufamadi has disclosed.

Constable E J Arends and Constable L B Larence had been arrested and suspended from the police service.

A trial date in the Supreme Court still had to be determined, he said in reply to a question tabled in the senate by Mr James Selfe (DP).

Mr Mufamadi said members of the police were known to be taxi owners and members of taxi associations in Belhar, Elsie's River, Bellville and Grabouw. Although the exact number was not known, it was estimated 37 were members of taxi organisations and 204 were taxi owners.

A Force order stated that police members could not be involved in activities such as "remunerative enterprise or business involvement" unless they received permission.

This means that police members who own taxis without official permission could face disciplinary action.

Mr Mufamadi added that complaints of intimidation against two Mtubatuba constables, theft of a motor vehicle and obstruction against a Pretoria warrant officer and kidnapping and assault against a Klerksdorp lance-sergeant were being investigated in connection with taxi violence.



# Sun Air likely candidate for early privatisation

CT (BR) 11/9/95 (332) (255)

By AUDREY D'ANGELO

CAPE BUSINESS EDITOR

Sun Air, the regional airline which has been owned by the government since the homeland of Bophuthatswana ceased to exist, was profitable and was almost certain to be privatised within six months, said Dirk Ackerman, the chairman, and Johan Borstlap, the managing director.

It would be considered for privatisation, along with other parastatals, by a Cabinet committee and Borstlap and Ackerman believed it would be among the first to be found suitable.

"It is a compact operation and stands on its own feet without a subsidy," said Ackerman.

He said the airline was worth "about R60 million as it stands now, but we could push it up to R80 million".

It had made an after-tax profit of R2 million in the past year.

He said approaches had already been made by investment groups wanting to take a stake in the former Bop Air, which now offered scheduled services between Johannesburg and Cape Town, Durban and Cape Town, Johannesburg and Sun City and Sun City and Livingstone in Zambia.

If this happened shares would be allocated to all the airline's 320 employees, of whom 50 percent were black.

"This would be a way of empowering them in line with government policy," Ackerman said.

Sun Air started trading under its present name in May last year. It traded as Bop Air for 14 years, when its main business was ferrying tourists between Johannesburg and Sun City.

Since then it had expanded its fleet from one to five DC-9 jet aircraft and offered a total of 142 scheduled flights a week.

Its newest route, introduced last week, was between Cape Town and Durban on which it offered two return flights a day.

Borstlap said the next route to be introduced would be between Johannesburg and Durban, completing the triangle which attracted most business travel.

Borstlap said 60 percent of passengers were on business.

"The ratio has changed. When we started it was only 30 percent business travel."

He said he did not believe that the government would allow control of Sun Air to be bought by another airline only wanting to

strip its assets.

It was successfully serving a niche market, concentrating on offering a high standard of service and comfort in two classes, at prices on average 35 percent below those of SAA.

It could do this profitably because its jet aircraft were smaller and more economical to run than those of SAA or Phoenix.

And unlike SAA, it flew only at peak hours and did not have to provide under-utilised late-night services.

It was not in the same market as SA Express, in which Thebe Investments had a major holding and SAA an interest. SA Express provided a stopping service linking destinations between major cities.

Sun Air did not compete with Airlink, which served the same market as SA Express, but on different routes.

Borstlap said when Bophuthatswana ceased to exist he and his management committee held a meeting "at which

we considered whether we had a future and what we should do to ensure the continued existence of the airline".

They decided expansion into a regional airline was the answer.

Borstlap went to discuss the matter with Popo Molefe, premier of the Northwest province, who wanted the airline to continue to exist and to widen its scope.

It would expand its fleet further by leasing two more DC-9s formerly used by Iberia Airlines and being refurbished at Shannon in Ireland.

Borstlap said it would expand its operation slowly, making sure first that sufficient demand existed. Additional routes would initially be



**TAKING OFF** Dirk Ackerman, the chairman of Sun Air

in South Africa. Port Elizabeth would be the next destination.

At a later stage Sun Air would serve major destinations in neighbouring countries.

"There is a great need for flights taking business people to cities in neighbouring countries at times that will enable them to go and return in one day."

Recalling the Bop Air days, Borstlap — who is himself a pilot and took the controls on a scheduled flight at least once a week — said he flew Lucas Mangope to destinations including Europe and the United States in an executive jet the airline no longer had.

"Once I flew him to Riga in Latvia, where Bophuthatswana set up an unofficial embassy," he said.

Bophuthatswana had several such "embassies" in countries all over the world, he said.



**HIGH FLYER** Johan Borstlap, the managing director of Sun Air



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**HIGH FLYER** Johan Borstlap, the managing director of Sun Air

**Expansion of Bop Air into a regional airline was undertaken with the demise of the homeland**



# Cops to probe taxi killings

By Russel Molefe

**T**HE COMPLAINTS Investigation Unit yesterday promised to probe "to the bone" allegations that some policemen were directly involved in the taxi fighting which has claimed a number of lives.

This followed the arrest at the weekend of a man in Alexandra Township, north of Johannesburg, driving a car, with false registration numbers, belonging to the ISU.

The man allegedly claimed that he had connections with the security force and that he was under orders to kill Gauteng taxi drivers pointed out to him.

He also allegedly confessed to hav-

## Fears of a cover-up as taxi killer suspect implicates policemen

ing taken part in the killing of five policemen while in the company of two other policemen.

Head of the Complaints Investigation Unit Advocate Jan Munnik said the matter would be thoroughly investigated.

Sources within the police force said the docket concerning the case was yesterday removed from the Alexandra police station and handed over to the Sandton police.

"The possibility of a cover-up in

Alexandra is very high and the removal of the docket can confirm that. This matter has to be thoroughly investigated and the policemen involved in the taxi killings brought to book," the sources said.

The sources also called on authorities to place the man under the witness protection programme to prevent the suspected cover-up of police involvement in taxi violence.

When policemen who arrested the man radioed the control room, they

received a message from a former security policeman known only as Jordaan that the suspect should be taken to the ISU base in Kew.

The sources said they found it strange that Jordaan intercepted the radio message when it was not on his channel.

However, the suspect was taken to Kew and later to Brixton police stations.

He returned with his face swollen, sources said.

Witwatersrand police spokesman Lieutenant-Colonel Eugene Opperman yesterday promised *Sowetan* at about 11am to send a "detailed statement". He failed to do so by the time of going to press despite persistent calls.

The spokesman for Gauteng's

# Gauteng to push for regulations on taxis

Theo Rawana

THE Gauteng government would push hard for the regulation of the taxi industry because the fight against violence was frustrated by the absence of laws, the legislature's transport standing committee said yesterday.

Committee chairman Mothole Motshekga also said his committee, shocked by reports of police complicity in taxi violence and the existence of hit squads, had established a provincial Taxi Violence Monitoring Committee which would complement those set up by

(332)  
the national ministries of transport and safety and security.

The committee, which would comprise all role-players, would conduct a proper investigation into violence and ensure legislation addressed the crisis.

Motshekga said "ill-conceived deregulation policies and legislation", lack of infrastructure, and lack of clarity on the role of government and taxi association on public transport had resulted in a chaotic taxi industry.

To address this the Gauteng government had developed guidelines which had to be transformed

SD 14/9/96  
into a final transport policy.

He said his office had successfully negotiated with various departments for the establishment of a mechanism to address taxi drivers' complaints about penalties for traffic offences.

Motshekga invited all interested parties in the industry to give evidence on future public transport policy at public hearings to be held from September 18 to 22.

Sapa reports meanwhile, that dissatisfied QwaQwa taxi drivers threatened to prevent an Interstate bus from entering the former homeland yesterday morning.



## Police links to taxi strife probed

(332) Star 14/9/95  
■ BY MANDLA MTHEMBU

The Gauteng government plans to set up a committee to monitor police investigations into the causes of taxi violence.

This follows claims of police complicity in the taxi violence and the existence of hitmen allegedly linked to police officers.

Public transport and roads committee spokesman Dr Mathole Motshekga said yesterday the formation of a provincial vio-

lence monitoring committee (VMC) would ensure proper investigations on taxi violence were made.

"This would enable the government to deal with the causes and symptoms of taxi violence," he said.

The VMC comprises representatives from the ministries of safety and security as well as transport and roads. Motshekga said it would study the situation with a view to making legislative changes. "We would help to ad-

dress the crisis situation of the industry that contributes to taxi violence."

Commissioner George Fivaz earlier said steps aimed at halting police involvement in the taxi industry, including an SAPS code of ethics, were on the cards. The code would include principles aimed at "avoiding conflicts of interest on the broadest possible basis", he said.

Any involvement in the industry by police officials would be forbidden.

## Public defender to hear taxi drivers' grievances

(332) Stan 14/9/95

The moratorium on the execution of warrants of arrest for Gauteng taxi drivers who have not paid their traffic fines will be lifted by mid-October and drivers will soon be able to request senior prosecutors to consider withdrawing summonses, reducing fines and cancelling warrants of arrest for traffic violations "which can be justified".

The Gauteng standing committee on public transport and roads has created a "mechanism" whereby drivers' grievances can be heard by the Office of the Public Defender.

This came after drivers complained to the committee about fines and offences relating to the condition of their taxis, stopping where facilities for loading and

offloading have not been provided, driving without licences, and moving violations.

Committee chairman Dr Mathole Motshekga denied, however, that taxi drivers would be treated more leniently than other drivers on the road. Drivers have to supply the Public defender with their names, ID numbers, residential and business addresses, driver's licence and registration number of their cars.

Matters that cannot be resolved by the senior prosecutor would be referred to a magistrate in chambers. If drivers are not satisfied with the outcome of these arrangements, they "will be free to have recourse to the normal court hearing". - Staff Reporter.



# New traffic offence rules for taxi drivers

(332) ARG 14/9/95  
JOHANNESBURG. — Taxi drivers will be allowed to use special mechanisms to deal with grievances about traffic law enforcement, a Gauteng government spokesman said.

"The standing committee negotiated with the Department of Justice with a view to establishing a special mechanism to deal with the grievances of the taxi drivers regarding traffic law enforcement," Moshale Motshekga, Gauteng public transport and roads standing committee chairman, said.

Taxi drivers had voiced grievances over offences relating to conditions of vehicles, stopping where facilities for loading and offloading were not provided, operation of taxis without roadworthy certificates, driving without licences and "moving offences" such as speeding, he said.

In terms of the new proce-

dures, drivers would supply the Public Defender's office with their personal details, licences and taxi registration documents.

The Public Defender would consult the drivers and make representation to senior prosecutors on the offences, asking for withdrawal of some summonses to be considered, reducing fines or cancelling warrants of arrest.

Matters which could not be resolved would be referred to magistrates, Mr Motshekga said.

"This is no favour or special treatment of taxi drivers," he said.

"The problem is poor town planning and no parking facilities for taxis. Drivers are being ticketed for the errors of apartheid, (rather) than of their own doing." — Reuter.

## Inquiry clears Groblersdal taxis

■ BY NIAL AITCHESON  
CRIME REPORTER

A top-level inquiry has cleared the Groblersdal Taxi Association (GTA) of involvement in taxi violence on the Northern Province-Mpumalanga border.

Northern Province MEC for safety and security Seth Nthai and commissioner for tribal authorities Benny Boshelo met in Pietersburg with ANC delegations from the Groblersdal area to discuss allegations of hit squad activities levelled at the GTA.

Said Boshelo: "The GTA put it clearly that they have no interest in border issues and that they are not and have never been involved in road blocks and hit squads. The allegations against the organisation were viewed by all as wild and baseless. In this regard, it was agreed that the GTA was unfairly accused.

"We also agreed that channels of communication be opened between the GTA and community organisations. All those present committed themselves to bringing peace and stability."

(332)

stan 15/9/95



# Blockade to protest taxi killing

(332) 4/15/95

■ BY MANDLA MTHEMBU

About 100 angry taxi operators in Rabie Ridge, Midrand, marched to the local police station yesterday demanding to question four suspects arrested earlier in connection with the killing of a local taxi operator whose hijacked vehicle was recovered in Soweto.

The drivers protested by blockading the police station entrance with vehicles, but later withdrew after assurances that they would be involved in the investigations.

Police said Ian Tysaak was shot dead on Wednesday at Rabie Ridge's extension 2 and his vehicle hijacked and taken to a scrapyard in Phefeni where police recovered it.

Police believe the suspects had a criminal motive, but said they would also search for links to the ongoing taxi violence.

It is alleged the men were to be paid R8 000 for the vehicle by a Soweto taxi operator.

"We want the mastermind behind the hijackings in our area to be brought to book," said Amsta (Alexandra, Midrand, Sandton taxi associations) spokesman Nicolas Mphokeng.

He said they had "lost faith" in the police as many hijacking cases were still outstanding, and criticised lenient bail grants.



# Taxi blockade

## 100 vehicles disrupt traffic for 6 hours

By Khangale Makhado

TRAFFIC came to a standstill for almost six hours in Soweto along the Old Potchefstroom Road near Baragwanath Hospital yesterday when about 100 taxis belonging to the Soweto Taxi Association (STA) blockaded the road.

The blockade was part of the ongoing feud over control of a portion of the giant Baragwanath Taxi rank between main bodies SFA and the Soweto Taxi Services (STS).

Although the organisations were

reluctant to spell out what was the best solution to unravel the impasse, police and government said it would be better if the rank was shared between the two organisations – a suggestion which did not seem to go well with the two organisations.

Police spokesman Major Assie Van Aswegen said the blockade which started at 11am yesterday prevented unsuspecting motorists from using the route which is one of the main entry points into Soweto.

According to Aswegen it appeared the STA were protesting against sole

use of the taxi rank previously shared by the two rival organisations, as well as other public transport concerns.

He said that although shots were fired there were no reported incidents where people were injured. Police, he said, had maintained a heavy presence on the scene to prevent possible confrontations between the rivals.

Safety and Security spokesman Mr Mokgomotso Mogodiri said yesterday the government would force both organisations to reach consensus on the issue.

Mogodiri said the government's

main concern was public safety and would go all out to disprove that the government had no power to act in stopping the ongoing violence.

"We wish to apologise to all motorists for all the inconvenience and promise that this type of behaviour would not be tolerated and therefore we are to ensure that the situation will not repeat itself," said Mogodiri.

The government, he said, would unearth a plan which would once and for all curb the behaviour of the taxi people.

Towards the close of the day, long queues of stranded commuters lined the empty Old Potch Road alongside the empty Bara Taxi rank.

Buses, private cars and taxis not involved in the feud also helped to ease long queues of commuters by ferrying them to respective destinations.

After protracted negotiations between the authorities and STA members, which lasted until around 6pm, traffic officers finally allowed traffic to flow – a move that forced the taxis to give way.

(332) *Newsfile 15/9/95*



# Police uncover taxi 'hit squads'

Sowetan 17/9/95

(332)

**Sowetan Correspondent**

**P**OLICE HAVE UNCOVERED evidence that warring taxi associations use "hit squads" — sometimes composed of "mercenaries" from neighbouring states — to protect their routes from rivals.

Confidential police documents in the possession of *Spectrum*, an investigative unit of Independent Newspapers, say these gangs have become so powerful they now control certain taxi associations.

The killers are said to be paid up to R80 000 for a kill.

Police have also unearthed evidence that taxi owners fear for their lives because the monster they helped create has turned on them.

Since January this year 145 people have been killed and 208 injured in taxi-related violence.

There is also evidence that close to 200 policemen operate taxis as owners.

## Scourge of killings

The South African Police Service has allocated R308 million to the recently formed 372-man Taxi Violence Investigation Unit to combat the scourge of killings at taxi ranks nationwide.

Police also revealed that they are to

## There is evidence that whites and cops are also in the taxi market

expand their "intelligence component" — a network of informers within the industry — to break the murderous syndicates.

Major Blackie Swart of the new unit said more information was needed to stop the taxi violence.

"The taxi industry has been disgraced by the killings and they have to take responsibility for working with the Government to solve tensions. The SAPS needs information. People who come forward will be protected at all costs. If they give evidence we will place them in a witness protection programme," he said.

## Illegal immigrants

Swart said certain taxi associations employ professional armed units, acting either for bona fide purposes or as hit squads for sums ranging from R5 000 to R80 000.

He said some of the hit squads operate from Zimbabwe and Mozambique and move around, striking within a 400km radius.

"There are indications that illegal immigrants from further north have

also entered the taxi business. It's a volatile cocktail and we have to stop it," Swart said.

Police are getting results. Twenty alleged killers have been arrested and are awaiting trial. Contrary to popular belief, police have been unable to uncover any evidence that some taxi hit squads are composed of white men.

"We have never arrested a white for a taxi killing and we have no evidence that they are involved," Swart said.

But there is evidence that whites — and policemen — have entered the taxi market.

Meanwhile, the case against six alleged taxi hitmen accused of killing two people at the Benoni Station taxi rank on July 14 appeared in the Benoni Magistrate's Court on Friday.

Their case was postponed to September 22.

The men are on a bail of R10 000 each.

At the time of the killings, police said they were related to a feud between members of the Federated Local and Long Distance Taxi Association and the Benoni Taxi Association.

# Gun-carrying taximen talk of peace

STAN 18/9/95 (332)

Hidden away in the back room of an inconspicuous house in Pietersburg's Kruger Street, officials of the local Felldta taxi organisation gather round an imposing oak table to talk business.

In the darkened corridor outside, a burly "minder" stands guard, the telltale bulge of a pistol butt beneath his shirt evidence of the fear which has gripped the industry.

Around the table itself, more firearms are almost certainly concealed under jackets and trousers.

Felldta's regional chairman Petros Mahlela, has much to talk about. "You know, in the last year there have been about 200

attacks on Felldta taxis, and more than 20 people have lost their lives," he said.

"That is unacceptable. Indeed, there has been a sustained campaign to put Felldta out of business in Northern Province since 1988.

"We say to our customers that we are prepared to work together with other organisations to achieve a lasting peace, and I personally believe that peace can be achieved in the short-term."

Mahlela points to the success of a peace accord made with Saldta in November 1994, since when the two former rivals have ranked alongside each other without prejudice to each

other's business. "The doors are open for the LTA to come and talk to us. We all want an end to this violence."

He said he had no knowledge of hit squads, adding: "When one of our drivers is killed it is like losing a brother, but we don't believe in taking the law into our own hands."

Across the city, at the LTA's Polokwane rank, the mood was hardly conciliatory. "We don't kill people, but if someone kills one of us, we will take revenge," said a rank marshal. "We believe that policemen who own taxis are behind the violence, and they are siding with Saldta and Felldta.

"Things have got so bad that we ensure that our last taxis depart for Johannesburg before 3.30pm each day, as most attacks happen when it gets dark. Yes, some of our drivers carry guns, but those are purely for self-protection."

Northern Province Safety and Security MEC Seth Nthai told The Star that allegations of police involvement in the violence would be fully investigated.

"The provincial government is aware that there are some policemen who own taxis. We don't see how policemen can run taxis and still be policemen. That constitutes a clash of interests."



# Hit-men's sliding scale

**L**ife to the criminal is cheap in South Africa. And in Northern Province, it can be bought for just R3 000.

That's the cost put on the lives of taxi drivers in a bloody battle for control of routes centred on the provincial capital Pietersburg.

And fast-moving hit squads from Alexandra in Gauteng are at the sharp end of the conflict which has already claimed 21 victims this year.

Intelligence gathered by the SAPS Pietersburg Taxi Violence Unit, the only one of its kind in the country, has revealed a shocking sliding scale of "hit" prices charged by the out-of-town killers who are waging a reign of terror. These include R6 000 to eliminate a taxi owner, R15 000 for a taxi association official and R90 000 for police investigating officers.

But efforts to bring the elusive assassins and their paymasters to book are being hampered by a Mafia-style code of silence enforced by threats and intimidation.

"These hit squads are not faceless. People know who these murderers are, and who employs them," said Lieutenant Michael Vermaak, head of the unit's investigative branch. "However, we're dealing with a highly-developed form of organised crime and potential witnesses are in fear of their lives. As a result, we've not been able to nail the Mr Bigs of the taxi industry who are behind the violence."

Vermaak said the taxi "Godfathers" covered their tracks via a chain of coded telephone messages and middlemen when

arranging for contract hits. They prefer to hire gunmen from Alexandra because of their "availability and expertise", and insist the killers provide their own weapons, further reducing the risk of being traced.

"It is a measure of how rapidly the criminal underworld has become flooded with killers-for-hire when only last December you could pay up to R60 000 to take out a taxi owner," he added.

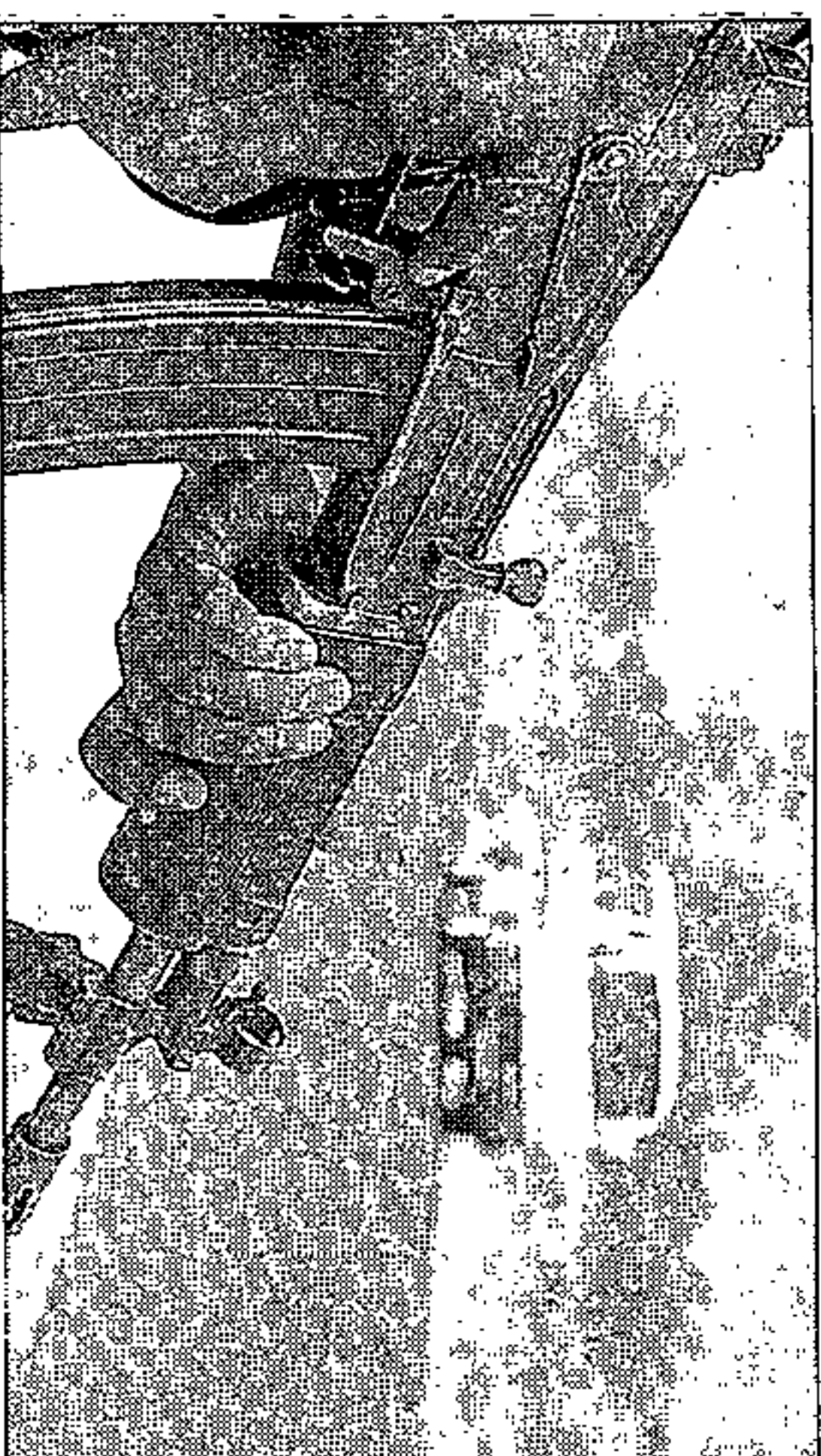
Taxi violence in the former Far Northern Transvaal has been simmering since 1989. Initially the responsibility of the SAP Crime Investigation Service, an increasing caseload prompted the establishment of the investigative branch in September last year.

In April, the proactive branch was formed to provide a high-profile deterrent to taxi violence. Lieutenant Paul Kilian commands a 61-strong team of uniformed officers drawn largely from the former Lebowa police, who are responsible for securing taxi ranks, conducting road-blocks and other crime prevention duties linked to the taxi industry.

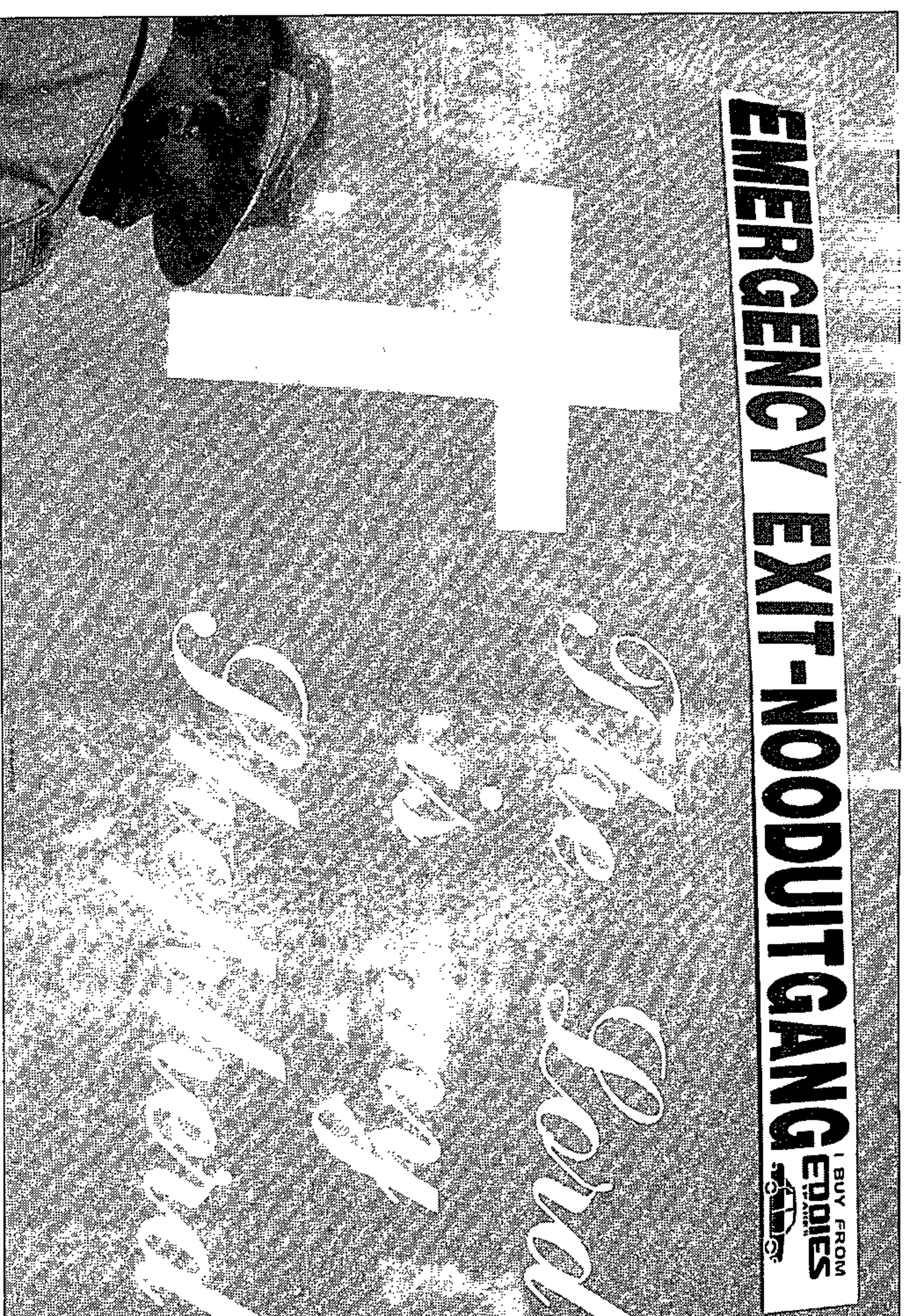
Up to 6 000 minibuses pass through Pietersburg on the lucrative Johannesburg to Zimbabwe route each week, many of whom stop at the city's three main ranks.

The Sasol and Indian ranks are shared by the South African Long Distance Taxi Association (Saldia) and the Federation of Local and Long Distance Taxists (Fellita), while the Lehlathile Taxi Association (LITA), uses the Polokwane rank.

It was the LITA's alleged illegal



Under the shadow of the gun ... road blocks on major taxi routes form a key element in police strategy.



**On a wing and a prayer ... taxi commuters face the ever-present threat of attacks by hit squads.** PICTURES: JODI BIEBER

occupation of a joint Saldia and Fellita rank in Johannesburg's Quartz Street last month which triggered a series of bloody attacks in and around the city.

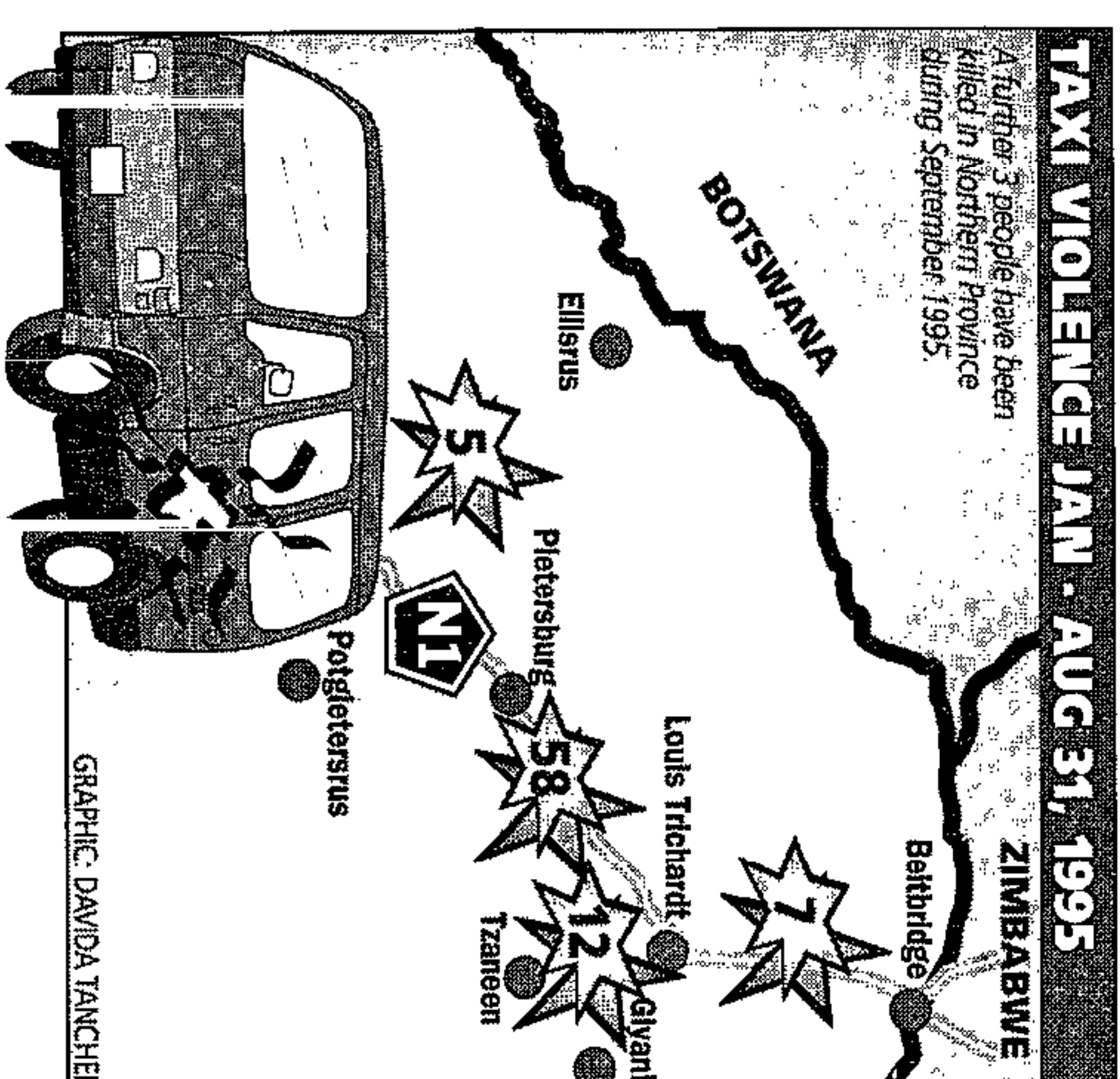
The fear which has gripped the taxi industry in Northern Province has been heightened by the assassination of local Saldia chairman Frans Makoka while visiting a dry cleaning shop in Louis Trichardt in July. Through an ever-expanding informer network, police have established that the killers received R15 000 each. "We have identified the suspects and expect to make arrests soon," said Vermaak.

Violence at the Pietersburg ranks has dramatically tailed off since the installation of satellite police stations, but drivers and their passengers remain vulnerable on the open roads.

The 10km stretch of the N1 highway immediately south of the

Beitbridge border crossing to Zimbabwe has in recent months witnessed numerous ambushes. "There are serious cross-border problems, with the local Beitbridge Taxi Association (BTA) in conflict with the Zimbabwe Long Distance Taxi Association (ZLITA)," said Kilian. "The BTA feels ZLITA should drop its passengers at Beitbridge, but ZLITA already has a permit from the SA Department of Roads to go straight through to Johannesburg."

A skilled hostage negotiator, Kilian has tried to arrange a number of peace talks between the major taxi bodies, but still the groups maintain a mutual distrust of each other. When The Star went to one of the negotiation venues, the Pietersburg Stadium, members of rival groups were seen handing over an assortment of firearms to police at the site.





## Hired killers terrorise taxi drivers

star 18/9/95 (332)

Hired killers from Johannesburg townships are conducting a reign of terror on Northern Province taxi drivers, an investigation by The Star has found.

Hit squads travelling in stolen vehicles are behind many of the attacks on minibuses in the area. This year, the gunmen have murdered more than 20 drivers and their passengers on orders of taxi "godfathers" vying for control of routes.

Police efforts to trace the assassins and their paymasters are being stymied by fearful witnesses refusing to speak out. A conflict, which had simmered for six years, has erupted into an all-out struggle, spurred on by personal greed.

Such has been the scale of the crisis recently that Northern Province was chosen as the base for the first dedicated SAPS taxi violence unit.

A Star team visited the unit in Pietersburg to find out how police are combating a phenomenon peculiar to this country.

► **Hitmen's sliding scale**  
- See Page 15



# Taxis want lower tax, cheaper fuel

(332) CT(BR) 19/9/95

By ROY COKAYNE

PRETORIA BUSINESS EDITOR

The possible reduction of the taxation element of vehicle prices — such as customs and excise duties — are among proposals made by the Gauteng Taxi Initiative (GTI) to resolve urgent and serious concerns facing the taxi industry in Gauteng.

It has also proposed cheaper fuel for taxis, possibly through taxi fuel installations.

The GTI said, among other things, that urgent attention must be given to improving the financial viability of the taxi industry "which is falling into such decline that many, if not most businesses, are operating on or below the bread line".

Proposals by the GTI to make the taxi industry more viable included:

- Skills development and training at all levels: association officials, owners and drivers with particular emphasis on business, professional and driving skills. It is hoped that up to 5 000 people will be trained in the first year of operation of the scheme and this initiative will be largely funded by the government and the private sector;

- A vehicle operating cost model, which for the first time provided user friendly management tools for taxi operators to determine whether they were making a profit or a loss;

- Proposals on ways to reduce financing and insurance costs;

- Further investigation into the

complex issue of financial support mechanisms, including subsidies and;

- The development of new markets for taxis, especially in off-peak periods.

At a press conference in Johannesburg yesterday, the GTI spotlighted factors which it said had a negative impact on the financial viability of the industry. These were:

- Inadequate fare structures which were seldom based on sound business principles and, combined with consumer resistance to fare increases, had resulted in many of the problems associated with the industry such as overloading, inadequate vehicle maintenance and ageing vehicles, and driver fatigue contributing to a high incidence of collisions;

- High vehicle prices, financing and insurance costs and a lack of professional expertise of owners and operators and;

- The fact that the unsubsidised taxi industry had to compete against subsidised bus and rail transport.

The GTI includes representatives from all taxi associations in the province, metropolitan taxi forums, taxi passengers and all three levels of government and specialist advisers, headed by transport MEC Olaus van Zyl.

Its task has been to investigate and consult as widely as possible on these issues and to make informed recommendations. These recommendations were presented to the National Taxi Task Team last week.

## Taxis: Gauteng has a 9-point priority plan

A taxi road safety awareness campaign aimed at reducing taxi-related collisions will be launched on Friday as part of the Gauteng government's drive to clean up the troubled industry, authorities announced yesterday.

The campaign, to be headed by the Gauteng taxi safety task force, is one of several initiatives announced by Public Roads and Transport MEC Olaus van Zyl during a meeting of the Gauteng taxi initiative (GTI).

Van Zyl said the GTI's task had been to "investigate and consult as widely as possible on the issues - and then to make necessary recommendations".

Of the 23 critical problems originally identified by the GTI, nine had been earmarked as priorities, namely regulation and control, conflict resolution, financial support, traffic safety, fare structures, skills development and training, the relationship between associations, passenger needs, and the overall cost of vehicles.

The recommendations were presented to the national taxi task team last week, and some of them would soon be implemented in Gauteng, Van Zyl said.

"Taxi violence is the most serious manifestation of long-stand-

ing and deep-rooted problems in an industry which has been marginalised for many years," he said.

With 40% of taxis operating illegally, taxis would be expected to display their permits and road-worthy certificates. Taxi routes would be numbered and route numbers displayed on vehicles travelling those routes.

Van Zyl said there would be a transitional period for prenent permit holders to obtain new ones.

Van Zyl said the financial viability of the industry would be addressed, adding that the industry was falling into decline, with some businesses "on or below the breadline".

To address the problem, about 5 000 people would be trained annually in skills development at all levels - including association officials, owners and drivers - with the emphasis on business, professional and driving skills. The initiative would be funded by the provincial government and the private sector, Van Zyl said.

In order to address the needs of commuters, a number of surveys had been undertaken. A toll-free hotline dealing with consumer complaints would soon be introduced.

Star 19/9/95



# Govt plans to solve taxi wars

*Sowetan 19/9/95 (332)*

**By Joshua Raboroko**

FAR-REACHING plans to solve urgent and serious conflicts, including violence in the taxi industry, were released by Gauteng MEC for transport Mr Olaus van Zyl in Johannesburg yesterday.

Speaking at a Press conference, Van Zyl said all Gauteng taxi associations had formed a forum that would address 23 critical problems – nine of them most urgent – in the province with immediate effect.

He disclosed that 94 people were killed and 135 seriously wounded in taxi-related tragic incidents in the province last year. The forum resolved to stop the carnage before more people were slain.

More people have died during violent incidents this year, although no offi-

cial statistics have been revealed so far, he said.

Van Zyl added that solutions acceptable to all roleplayers had to be found.

Some of the problems identified included regulation and financial support or subsidies, a lack of conflict resolution committees, the involvement of senior security and police personnel; fares structures; training and safety; relationships between associations; passenger needs and taxi ranks.

The Gauteng Taxi Initiative's task has investigated and consulted, as widely as possible, all these issues and made recommendations to the National Taxi Task Team with the aim to resolve problems nationally.

The GTI has recommended that the taxi industry be regulated, and the existing Local Road Transportation Boards be replaced with a new Gauteng Permit

Board. All vehicles must have permits.

A subsidy scheme and financial aid would be considered in due course, depending on the National Cabinet's decision. The Government subsidised rail and bus transport for R2,2 billion and "there is a strong feeling that taxis should be subsidised", Van Zyl said.

A democratic process which would ensure conflicts were resolved would be established at metropolitan and provincial levels. Taxi associations would be expected to register. Skills development and intensive training would be embarked upon.

A number of focus groups, including a toll-free hotline where consumers' complaints would be dealt with, have been undertaken in order to address the needs of passengers. A traffic safety awareness campaign would be implemented.

# New regulations and training will make Gauteng taxi industry

Theo Rawana

TOUGH taxi industry regulations were announced by the Gauteng transport department yesterday.

All Gauteng taxis will have to obtain legal permits, entry into the industry will be made far more difficult, employees will undergo advanced training and taxi associations will have to adhere to a code of conduct. It is estimated that at least half the taxis in Gauteng are not properly licensed.

Outlining far-reaching plans to re-

solve industry problems, Gauteng transport MEC Olaus van Zyl said at a news conference strict enforcement by inspectors, assisted by traffic departments, the police and taxi associations, would be an integral part of the new measures. Local road transportation boards, long accused of causing conflict by issuing permits without regard for the size of the market, would be replaced by permit boards.

Van Zyl said 94 people were killed in taxi violence last year. The Gauteng taxi initiative — which included all —

had for the past nine months conducted workshops and consultative conferences to find solutions to pressing problems. "There was an unanimous call from all role-players for the industry to be regulated." The measures would succeed because the process had been inclusive and structures to be set up included all role-players. "For the first time the taxi industry has been listened to."

Under the new measures, taxi routes will be numbered and corresponding numbers displayed promi-

nently on vehicles working the routes. Taxi associations would be registered and "must adhere to a code of conduct".

Other initiatives included a conflict resolution structure, advanced training, a toll-free consumer line, a taxi safety task force and a taxi office liaison between the Gauteng transport department and the industry.

During the "transition period" when new permits would be issued, non-permit holders would have to prove they complied with the criteria. But, we will not encourage newcomers, we can't af-

ford oversupply," said Van Zyl.

Stressing that violence was only a symptom of deep-rooted problems in an industry which has been marginalised for many years, he announced that about 5 000 existing taxi personnel would get special training in driving and business skills in the next year. The formal conflict resolution structure and process would include a panel of mediators and an arbitrator, possibly a retired judge.

Picture: Page 4



## Taxi chairman arrested

4/20/95 (332)

Police arrested the Pietersburg chairman of the Letlhabile Taxi Association (LTA) yesterday in connection with charges of murder and attempted murder relating to taxi violence, a spokesman said.

Phineas Makgopya was arrested in Pietersburg by members of the police unit fighting taxi violence in Northern Province, said police spokesman Ronel Otto.

Makgopya was to have appeared in Pietersburg Magistrate's Court late yesterday for a bail hearing.

"The warrant for his arrest was issued after an incident on

August 23, where a taxi driver was killed and a passenger was seriously wounded in a shooting incident involving an AK-47 assault rifle on the road between Dendron and Pietersburg," Otto said.

Police arrested LTA national chairman Isaac Serete last week for armed robbery when he appeared in the Pretoria North magistrate's court on other charges.

He is to appear in court on September 28 in connection with the armed robbery charge, linked to the theft of a vehicle in Pietersburg's Seshego township earlier this year. — Reuter.

# Upgrading roads will smooth the way for beleaguered taxi drivers

Star 20/9/95

(332)

Taxi commuters blame drivers for the bumpy ride they get in townships, but taxi drivers can only improve their service when roads are upgraded, says Lennox Magwaza, chairman of the Federated National Transport Organisation (Fento), an umbrella organisation representing 20 000 taxi, truck and bus owners countrywide.

"The roads in the townships tend to develop potholes very quickly and are often washed away after the rain," he says.

Commuters then blame the drivers for the bumpy ride, saying they are reckless and inconsiderate.

Magwaza has called on provincial authorities and local

leaders to take heed of the problems of taxi drivers mistakenly demonised by township dwellers. He says they are tired of taking the blame for inconveniences suffered by passengers.

"The situation is also bad in the rural areas, where thousands of kilometres of roads have not been proclaimed and will therefore go without maintenance. Gravel roads become muddy and slippery when it rains. This, and the resulting potholes, cause a lot of accidents," says Magwaza.

"The Department of Transport cannot expect the taxi industry, which must make a profit under appalling

circumstances, to absorb all the negative effects of bad roads. We are footing the bill for the fact that there is no decent public transport system in place."

It's not only the bumpy ride that gives Magwaza and his members cause for complaint. Their vehicles are subject to punishing wear and tear.

"If people had more insight into these issues, they might have a better understanding of the conflicts that have arisen among the various groups. There are too many taxis for too few roads," he says.

"Bad roads result in very serious wear and tear for the vehicles. The taxi starts to rattle,

screws come loose, doors fall off and the windows slip down. It's impossible to maintain a vehicle properly under these conditions. Sometimes a vehicle has fallen apart even before it has been paid off.

"Thousands of people die on the roads every year, but no one bothers to look beyond the obvious.

"We want better roads in the townships and we want roads to be built and surfaced in the rural areas so we can improve our service."

Magwaza says better roads will prevent taxi drivers from overloading their vehicles and speeding, which they are now forced to do to show a profit.



# Cameras, cops for high-crime stations

**JACKIE CAMERON**  
CRIME REPORTER

CT 22/9/95  
SURVEILLANCE cameras are to be installed at high-crime railway stations and about 50 rent-a-cops will be used in an effort to combat crime.

This emerged yesterday at a top-level meeting at Groot Constantia between the police and Metro consumer services management.

These steps will cost Metro millions.

About 50 new police members trained in community safety will be paid from a Metro trust fund and are expected to commence work on a trial basis before the end of the year, Metro manager Mr André Harrison said.

He said if the experiment succeeded, the "rented cops" would probably be phased in country-wide to replace security guards.

"The rent-a-cop approach will be more successful than the use of security guards because police members have more power to act against criminals."

Metro also plans to install surveillance cameras at a number of stations around the Peninsula to help police identify crime suspects as well as deter people from committing crimes.

The cameras, expected to be introduced before the end of the financial year, would photograph individuals entering and leaving stations. The footage would be wiped out after about two days.

Mr Harrison said other changes to crime-combating strategy would also include joint crime prevention operations with police and projects, including perhaps a toll-free telephone number, to encourage commuters to report crimes immediately to facilitate swift action on "hot spot" areas.

Other changes include free travel for uniformed, off-duty members of the police mobile unit.

He said: "This is the first time a top police team has been involved in planning a strategy."

# Commuters to tell drivers their gripes about taxis

■ BY PATRICK WADULA

Taxi commuters on the East Rand are to meet Katlehong taxi-owners to express their concerns over what they describe as poor service.

The commuters under the auspices of the Amalgamated National Commuters' Organisation (Anco) marched recently to the offices of the Katlehong People's Taxi Association.

There, they presented a memorandum which highlighted the plight of passengers.

The organisation's president, Joel Mageza, said commuters could not afford the high fares for short distance

trips to Katlehong, Vosloorus and Spruitview.

He said other issues raised in the memorandum included the "unnecessary" exchange of passengers between these three townships.

The roadworthiness of minibuses, the overloading of passengers and the lack of proper communication between commuters and drivers were other concerns raised in the memorandum, said Mageza.

Katlehong Taxi Association chairman Nkosinathi Mchunu said the executive was discussing the issues raised by the commuters.

"It is not possible for us to come with a resolution overnight," Mchunu said.

(332)

STAR 22/9/95



# R15 000 bail for official connected to taxi murders

(332) star 22/9/95

■ BY NIALL AITCHESON  
CRIME REPORTER

A prominent Lethlabile Taxi Association (LTA) official yesterday appeared in court in connection with charges related to the taxi war in Northern Province.

Pietersburg LTA chairman Phineas Makgopya was charged

with one count of murder and one of attempted murder when he appeared in the city's magistrate's court.

He was released on R15 000 bail with conditions, and will stand trial later this year.

The charges against him follow an attack on a taxi travelling from Pietersburg to Dendron on

August 23, in which the vehicle's driver was killed and a passenger seriously wounded.

Meanwhile, the association's national chairman, Isaac Sereti, will remain in police custody in Pietersburg until Thursday, when he is due to appear in court on charges of armed robbery and attempted murder. He was ar-

rested in Pretoria following a court appearance there on other charges.

Lieutenant Michael Vermaak, head of the Pietersburg taxi violence unit's investigative branch described the arrests of Makgopya and Sereti as a major breakthrough in the fight to curb rampant taxi violence.

# Taxi study: Smarter doesn't mean safer

Staff Reporter

UNLICENSED and less literate taxi-drivers are said to be safer and more careful than better-educated drivers, according to new research into South Africa's notoriously accident-prone minibus taxi industry.

This startling finding has emerged from research by the Centre for Adult and Continuing Education (CACE) at the University of the Western Cape, and confirms earlier research on South African drivers by the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC).

The research revealed the strange anomaly that success and literacy in South Africa did not necessarily go hand-in-hand and that illiterate people could sometimes do better than those who could read and write.

"In the (taxi) industry, drivers without licences and/or without schooling are often regarded as safer drivers than those with education and the necessary legal paperwork," according to a CACE statement published in the official UWC newsletter On Campus.

This finding by the CACE confirms earlier HSRC research. In a study of 197 black drivers, the HSRC found that the "less literate" drivers in the study (Standard 2 or less) had been involved in fewer accidents than the "more literate" drivers.

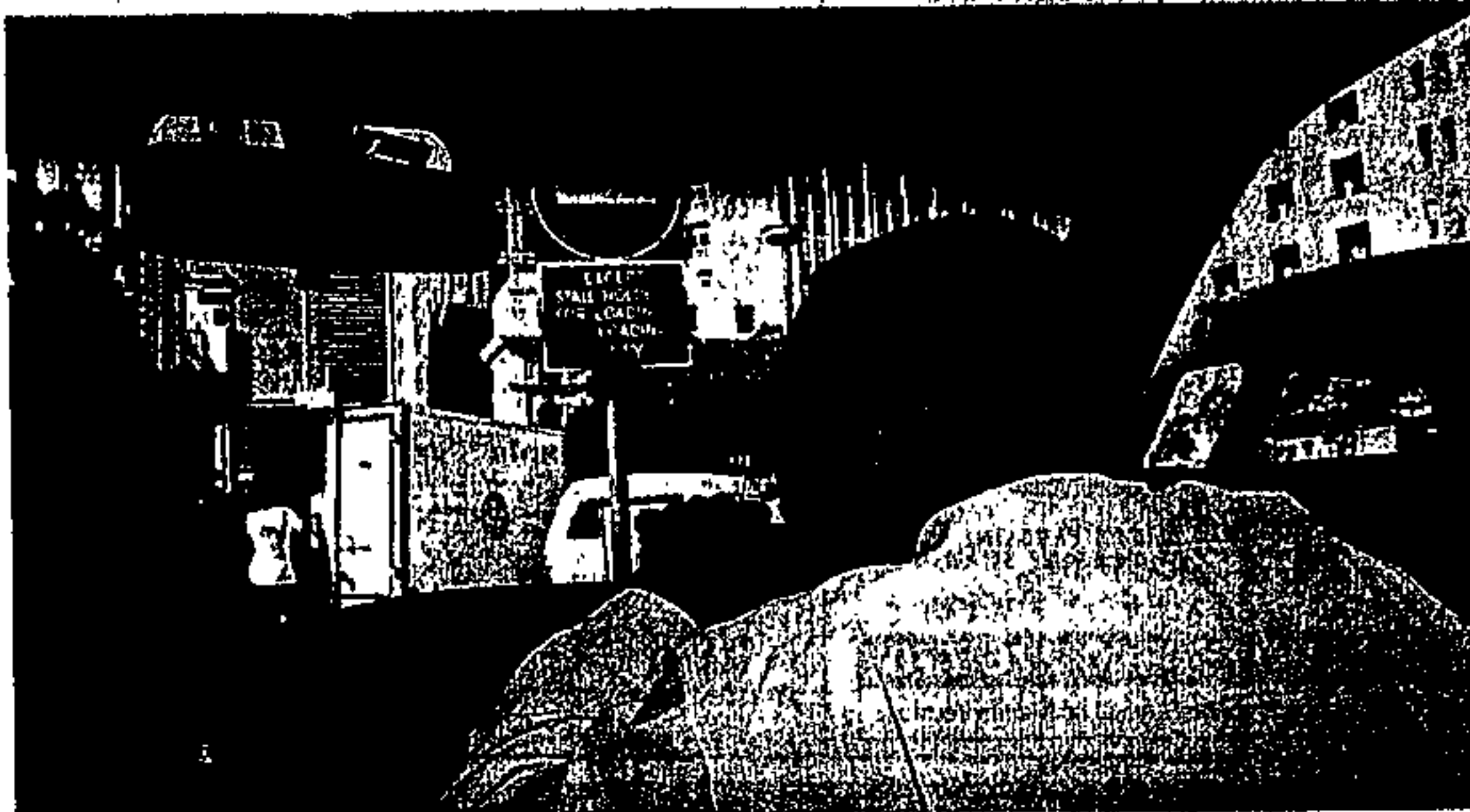
The HSRC study recommended that "less literate" people should not be prevented from obtaining drivers' licences.

Research by the CACE found that taxi-drivers who were unable to read and write, could still obtain licences by means of oral rather than written tests.

"Others avoid the literacy demands of the licensing process by operating illegally," the CACE found.

The minibus taxi industry,

■ The safest minibus taxi-drivers are often those least able to read and write — and the most dangerous drivers can be those with the most schooling



Picture: LEON MÜLLER, Staff Photographer.

□ WHICH WAY? Minibus taxi-drivers who can't read and write properly have problems making out traffic signs — but they are said to drive more carefully and safely than better-educated cabbies, according to new research.

which is the major form of transport for millions of workers, has become a source of employment mainly for men, many of whom have little or no schooling even though taxi work involves much written matter.

The CACE illustrates the extraordinary carefulness of illiterate black taxi-drivers who have devised ingenious strategies to cope — but these strategies have their limitations.

"Pheto, a Sagolburg taxi driver who has never been to school, relies on his passengers to assist him with direction signs.

"He says he has learned to read signs himself but he has to bring his vehicle to a standstill to read them. This takes time and can cause accidents. The system of using passengers

to help him works well — up to a point.

"During one trip to the Transkei all his passengers fell asleep. He found he could not read the names of places on his own and had no alternative but to park his car and sleep too!"

The CACE quotes a Xhosa taxi driver with a Standard 2 education who says: "The one who is educated feels that there is nothing which can disturb him. He knows that if he meets the traffic cops he will be able to speak English. He then drives in whatever manner he likes because he will be able to speak for himself."

"We who are not educated drive carefully, bearing in mind that if the traffic cops come we will not be able to understand them... we will not be able to answer them."

The CACE research also illustrates other anomalies which show that literacy sometimes has limited use in South Africa.

"On a farm where the uses of literacy were researched, some of the highest paid workers are men who have had no schooling and perform complicated tasks such as the building of wagons and the laying of irrigation systems."

"Women on the same farm who have been to school perform lowly-paid manual tasks that require no literacy."

In most workplaces that the CACE researched, written documents were used mainly as a means of control and workers were given little chance to exercise their literacy skills in the course of their work.

"Literacy in itself is associat-

ed with bureaucratic texts designed to constrain and contain worker discourses rather than to communicate.

"At the same time managements place the blame for low productivity, poor industrial relations and communication issues on workers' illiteracy," the CACE reports.

CACE project co-ordinator Mignonne Breier said the research arose out of concern at low enrolment and high drop-out rates in adult literacy classes.

"We came to the conclusion that the needs of the unschooled adult would sometimes be served best by having classes that do not promote literacy as such, but other skills — such as business or management skills — with literacy introduced where appropriate," she said.

She recommended that educators and trainers stop talking about "illiterate" and "unskilled" workers.

Unschooling people had developed ingenious ways to cope and educators and trainers needed to take this into account. However, she also pointed out that the coping strategies of unschooled people had their limitations.

The HSRC research found that "barely literate people" did not experience problems in understanding the consequences of driving behaviour and traffic situations, any more than more literate people did.

"Nor do they have problems with the interpretation of traffic rules."

"The effect of the inability of less literate people to read the information on traffic signs would be — at most — getting lost in unfamiliar places and having frequently to ask for directions," the HSRC found.

The HSRC suggests short training courses for less literate drivers to help them understand the meaning of traffic signs.



# Group of SA farmers consider putting down fresh roots in Uganda

By JOE KHAMISI  
INDEPENDENT FOREIGN SERVICE

More South African farmers are considering relocating - this time to Uganda.

A group of 23 farmers, with the approval of the Transvaal Agricultural Union (TAU), went on a reconnaissance visit last month. The delegation was headed by Hans Herbst, a leading Brahman farmer from Roedtan, near Naboomspruit.

TAU president Dries Bruwer said the high commissioner for Uganda in SA had taken the initiative and invited the farmers to visit his country.

"The farmers were met by President Yoweri Museveni and government officials. We are insisting on a government-to-government agreement before farmers belonging to the TAU decide to settle in other countries.

"We are about to sign an agreement with the Mozambican government which will act as a blueprint for future accords," said Bruwer.

However, before land can be granted to the farmers it will have to be approved by the cabinet since Uganda bars ownership of agricultural land by foreigners. Officials say cabinet approval is possible as long as the project is large, export oriented and beneficial to the economy.

In releasing details of the discussions recently, the Uganda Investment Authority (UIA) said the South Africans had made a request for a large tract of land for dairy farming, game ranching and traditional crop farming.

Their request was for either a joint venture with local farmers or a long-term lease arrangement of more than 45 years with automatic renewal.

During their visit, the UIA organised a one-day workshop attended by representatives from the government, financial institutions and local farmers.

At least 200 local landowners expressed interest in joint ventures with the South Africans.

The visitors also raised the possibility of acquiring Ugandan citizenship.

"They felt this was the security an investor needed to justify transfer of large investments into the country," the UIA said.

The South Africans indicated they would like to settle in groups to allow them to maintain their culture and language.

The entry of the farmers into the Ugandan economy is likely to have far-reaching economic and political repercussions, observers say. Economically it would help to transform vast tracts of virgin land into a useful reservoir of food.

Agricultural production, now

accounting for half of the gross domestic product, would most likely increase through the use of modern farming techniques which the South Africans would offer.

It would also bring a diversification of agriculture from traditional to non-traditional crops and create employment for thousands of Ugandans.

The country has fertile soil and plenty of rain. However, most of the 19-million Ugandans live in poverty.

Perennial famine, especially in the north-eastern region, is turning out to be one of the government's biggest headaches.

And politically the entry of South Africa could plunge the already embattled Museveni into a fresh crisis.

With the history of apartheid fresh in the minds of most Ugandans, the white farmers could create problems.

Museveni himself faces immense internal pressures.

Six months from now, he goes to the polls to fight for his political survival, the first time since he came to power in 1986. And at least five guerilla movements are fighting to topple him.

With these problems it is unlikely that any decision on the South African farmers will be made soon. - Independent Foreign Service

## Task force formed to help lift taxi industry's poor record

A task force to address traffic safety issues in Gauteng's taxi industry was formed in Johannesburg yesterday, the province's department of public transport and roads said.

The task force's aim is to reduce taxi-related accidents by at least 5% a year.

The Gauteng Taxi Safety Task Force was established following recommendations on road safety made by the Gauteng Taxi Initiative, the department said.

It is the first major step towards implementing proposals made earlier this week on the

most pressing issues in the industry.

In a speech prepared for delivery at the launch of the task force, Transport and Public Roads MEC Olaus van Zyl referred to the widely held view that the taxi industry was responsible for many accidents.

"The overall South African national road traffic safety record is acknowledged to be very poor. There is widespread concern that the taxi industry is especially culpable.

Issues such as overloading, speeding, condition of the vehicle, and driver fatigue need to be

addressed urgently."

The task force was formed after consultation between major parties in the taxi industry and will be headed by Van Zyl.

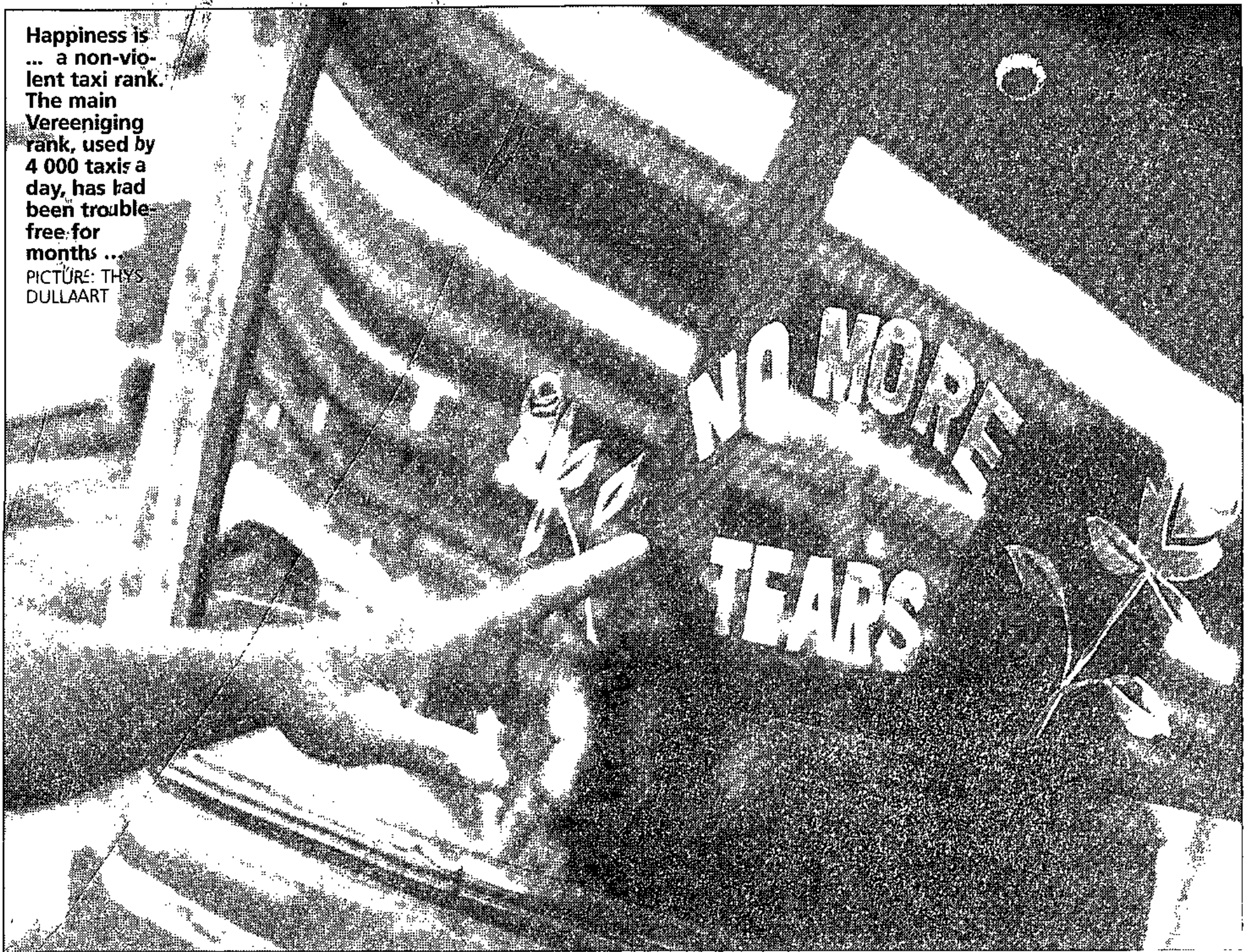
It will be responsible for designing and implementing safety awareness campaigns and implementing a programme to improve the relationship between taxi owners, operators, drivers and traffic officers.

Its other functions include monitoring the violation rates among taxi drivers and setting up an anonymous telephone hotline to report negligent and reckless taxi drivers. - Sapa



Happiness is ... a non-violent taxi rank. The main Vereeniging rank, used by 4 000 taxis a day, has had been trouble-free for months ...

PICTURE: THYS DULLAART



■ BY MANDLA MTHEMBU

Taxi bodies have pledged their support to the Gauteng Taxi Safety Task Force, which is aimed at curbing taxi-related collisions by at least 5% annually.

The task force, established after recommendations by the Gauteng Taxi Initiative, is a major step towards implementation of proposals made by the GTI last week on the nine most urgent issues in the industry.

Taxi associations said they would involve drivers, owners and commuters to address the

## Support for efforts to curb taxi collisions

problem.

SA Long Distance Taxi Association president Thulani Kubheka said: "We commit ourselves to stop the carnage tearing the industry."

Taxi Transport Forum spokesman Jabu Malaza expressed confidence that the industry was heading in the right

direction.

But he warned that support for initiatives was not enough. Active steps had to be taken to implement them.

Gauteng Transport and Roads MEC Olaus van Zyl said there was widespread concern about the taxi industry's contribution to the country's poor traffic

safety record.

He said issues such as overloading, speeding, the condition of vehicles and driver fatigue needed to be addressed.

Last year there were 63 000 minibus taxi collisions in South Africa, which killed more than 1 000 people, said Van Zyl.

He said the task force would implement a programme to improve relations between taxi owners, operators, drivers and traffic officers.

An anonymous telephone hotline to report negligent and reckless taxi drivers would also be set up.

(332) star 25/9/95



## New minibus safety plan (332)

Theo Rawana

THE Gauteng government, having identified road traffic safety as an important component of the empowerment of the taxi industry, launched the Gauteng Taxi Safety Task Force last week.

The task force will be responsible for designing and implementing safety awareness programmes. It will also promote the mentorship of taxi safety representatives by traffic officers.

It will set specific safety targets and monitor their achievement. And it will implement a programme aimed at improving the relationship between taxi owners, operators, drivers and traffic officers.

The task force will facilitate joint patrols by taxi representatives and traffic officers.

20 26/9/95

## Taxi war drama continues as accused appears

■ BY DAISY JONES

One of the four men arrested in connection with taxi shootings in central Johannesburg earlier this month appeared briefly in the Johannesburg Regional Court yesterday.

Berthwell Pakhathi (22) of Jabulani Hostel, Soweto, was arrested on September 2 following an armed attack on the Noord

Street taxi rank which left one man dead. Two taxis were burnt out in the incident.

Another three men were arrested the following day. They were charged with illegal possession of firearms.

Solomon Buthelezi, Moses Megama and Sipho Zangweni are being linked to the second attack on a taxi rank on September 2 in King George Street.

Two taxi passengers lay dead after gunmen in moving cars opened fire on commuters in what is thought to have been a revenge attack.

Pakhathi is charged with attempted murder and illegal possession of a firearm.

His R5 000 bail was extended yesterday, and the case was postponed to October 17 to allow for further investigations.

(332) Star 27/9/95



# Vereeniging taxi rank highest for peace

(332)

BY MANDLA MTHEMBU

Star 29/9/95  
amid the violence which has turned many taxi ranks in South Africa into danger zones, taxi operators and commuters in Vereeniging have reason to be happy.

"We have no problem with taxi violence," said taxi owner Seiso Kutwane. "It's a miracle."

Although hundreds of drivers and passengers have lost their lives in taxi violence countrywide, Kutwane said Vereeniging's taxi rank had been peaceful, with not "a single taxi-related attack" in the rank, used daily by more than 4 000 taxis. He attributed this to the "resolving of problems with the mouth and not the gun."

## Negotiations

Kutwane said operators were the only ones who could stop the violence gripping the industry.

Headed a number of problems had cropped up in the past, "but we managed to resolve them through negotiations, which saved hundreds of lives."

He cited an incident in which an operator threatened to "call his gang" if he was not allowed to operate on a certain route.

"We sat down with him to hear his problem," said Kutwane.

"The operator was allocated a route and he made a sworn statement that he would refrain from violence."

"He now operates peacefully at this rank."

## Differences

Driver Tebogo Mabula sympathised with operators caught up in the violence, but pointed out that it was high time operators resolved their own differences.

"Since problems are known, it is easy to find solutions," he said.

Vereeniging SAPS spokesman Colonel Piet van Deventer confirmed there had been no taxi-related incidents in the area.

He also appealed to taxi operators to co-operate with police in order to maintain their peaceful record.

## COMPANIES

**Activities:** Road freight and passenger transport.  
**Control:** Murray & Roberts 77%.

**Chairman:** A M van der Colff. MD: E Gutierrez-Garcia.

**Capital structure:** 38,1m ord. Market capitalisation: R876m.

**Share market:** Price: 2 300c. Yields: 1,7% on dividend; 7,4% on earnings; p/e ratio, 13,5; cover, 3,9. 12-month high, 2 300c; low, 1 600c. Trading volume last quarter, 1,2m shares.

Year to June 30	'92	'93	'94	'95
ST debt (Rm)	7,8	18,3	19,1	33,0
LT debt (Rm)	16,9	38,9	91,6	159,8
Debt/equity ratio	(0,14)	0,19	0,18	0,38
Shareholders' interest	0,68	0,65	0,59	0,53
Int & leasing cover	7,2	5,0	5,2	4,0
Return on cap (%)	15,7	14,1	13,6	15,1
Turnover (Rm)	327,5	357,2	436,1	491,0
Pre-int profit (Rm)	53,0	55,8	67,6	100,4
Pre-int margin (%)	16,2	15,6	15,5	20,4
Earnings (c)	88,9	99,5	125,1	169,8
Dividends (c)	27	30	34,5	43
Tangible NAV (c)	436	507	602	750

\* 15-month accounting period, annualised.

being the result of a vastly stronger trading performance.

During 1993 and 1994 earnings were being kept on the boil by essentially non-trading factors such as a lower tax rate (which was entirely responsible for 1993's earnings gain) and, in 1994, a significant reduction in the net depreciation charge (after taking into account profits on asset disposables) which accounted for more than 80% of the gain in pre-interest profit that year.

In 1995, elimination of under-performing contracts and activities led to a sharp uptick in the trading margin from 15,5% to a post-listing record of 20,4%. Notwithstanding minimal turnover growth (another effect of the discontinuations), this allowed the group to absorb a virtual doubling in net finance charges and lift earnings 36% — well above its long-term average.

Enhanced growth reversed the slow drift of profitability ratios which has been

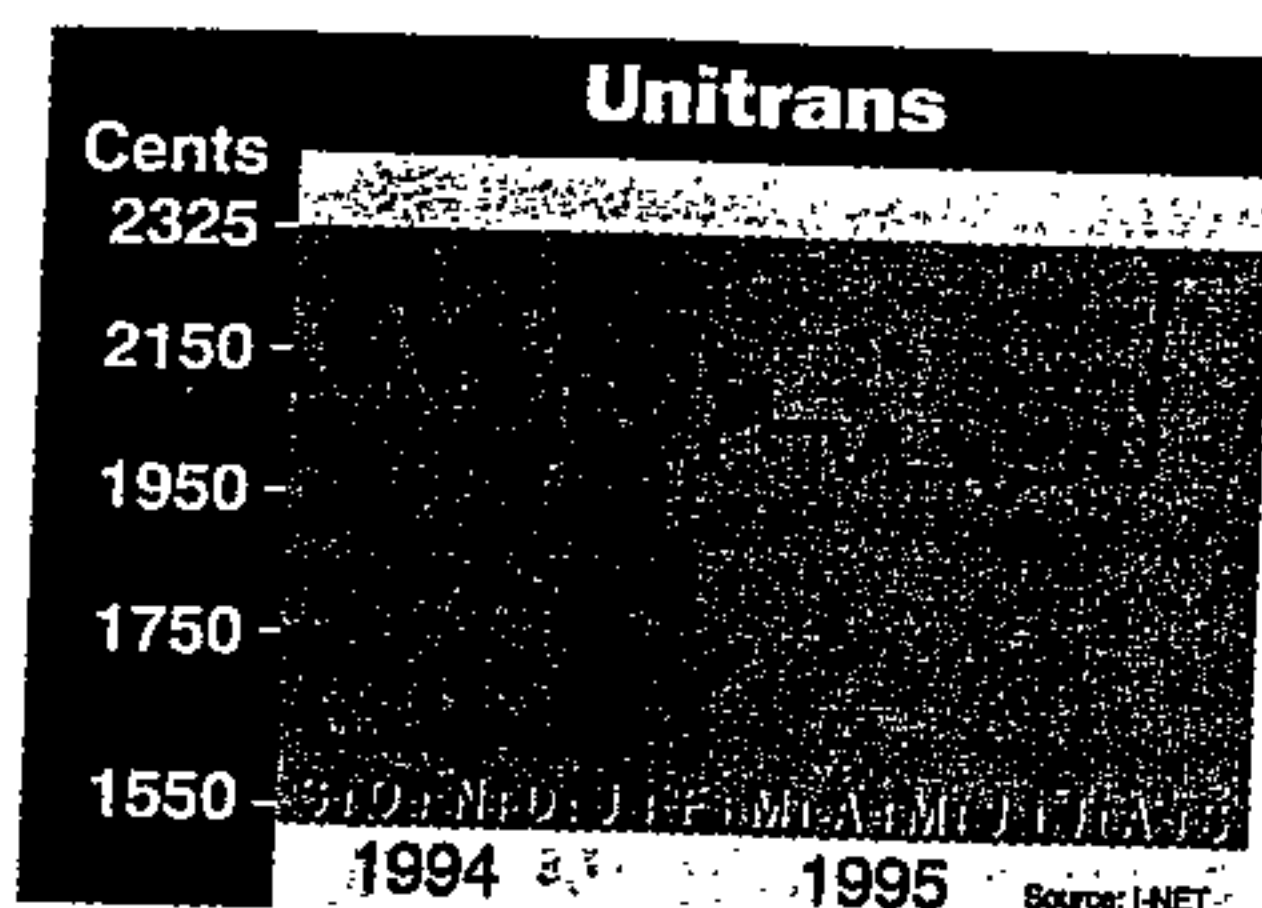
## UNITRANS

(332)  
FM 29/9/95  
Better quality

Since its listing in 1987, Unitrans has enjoyed an enviable profit record. Only once in this period (1991) has it reported lower annual earnings, and it has shown a compound growth rate of more than 34%.

So the fact that 1995 produced another strong improvement would have come as no surprise to the market. What has obviously impressed investors, however, is the enhanced quality of that growth and of earnings: this has prompted a further rerating of the share, now on a p/e ratio of 13,5 (12,8 when the FM reviewed the 1994 annual report), while the yield on the well-covered dividend has fallen from 2,2% to 1,9%.

Reasons for the market's improved perceptions of the group can be summed up as



evident in recent years. Pre-interest return on total assets recovered to 15,1% (1994: 13,6%), while ROE rose to 22,6% (20,8%).

Unitrans operates in a difficult industry which is characterised by over-capacity, depressed rates and limited organic growth. It has countered these factors successfully by concentrating on top-quality business; typically long-term contracts in which dedicated transport fleets are deployed, thereby achieving acceptable asset usage.

The state of the freight industry has also persuaded Unitrans that it should broaden its operating base into peripheral areas: examples include diversification into passenger transport through the 1993 acquisition of Greyhound and the more recent purchase of Matthysen Bus Transport, and motor trading which has expanded into related

areas such as vehicle leasing and engineering.

Accepting that Unitrans operates at above-average efficiency — it could not have grown as it has if it did not — the necessity for its diversification programme becomes evident when one digs further into the annual report.

While the 1995 results were a vast improvement in 1994, in absolute terms the picture is less rosy. The 15,1% return on total assets is unexciting, especially as the group is pursuing a substantial expansion programme requiring a considerable increase in debt: last year net borrowings rose from R52,6m to R132,8m, doubling the debt:equity ratio to 0,38. With year-end capital commitments of R293m, up more than R100m from 1995's gross capex (before taking into account asset disposals), this trend will continue in 1996.

Structurally, Unitrans is not heavily borrowed. As chairman Andre van der Colff and CEO Eduardo Gutierrez-Garcia note, borrowings are comfortably within self-imposed limits and limits agreed with the lending banks.

As regards prospects, they add that the current financial year should see a continuation of the trend seen over the past two years, pointing to the likelihood of another healthy earnings increase — indeed, with

the continued rapid expansion of the group's asset base, it would be disappointing if this did not happen.

Brian Thompson



# Transport strike threatened

■ BY GLENDA DANIELS

A national transport strike is on the cards if the Turning Wheel union's demands — still pending from last year's Mool River toll road blockade — are not met.

Turning Wheel chairman Richard Madime said in Johannesburg on Friday that none of the union's demands since the August blockade had been met.

"We are consulting workers nationally, and as soon as consensus is reached we will go on a national strike," he added.

The union, responsible for a second blockade in September, is a breakaway group from the Cosatu-affiliated Transport and General Workers' Union.

The TGWU had criticised Turning Wheel, saying it was divisive and led workers into unnecessary militant action.

Madime said that apart from setting up the National Industrial Council, a forum to resolve drivers' and workers' problems had not yet been attained.

"To date, workers from Lehmeckers Transport have not

been reinstated, and conditions for truck drivers have not improved," Madime said.

Turning Wheel national coordinator Ben Petersen said the union was formed about five months ago in response to grassroots demands from truck drivers who were disgruntled with their old union, the TGWU.

A manager from the Lehmeckers company, who refused to be named, said: "We believe Turning Wheel is anti-RDP. It is power hungry and is not a recognised union. We deal only with the TGWU."