

APPENDIX B

Owner pays up after pitbull attack

Author: Athena

WATER WONDER
Pupil's purifier
wins science
expo
Page 6



BACK TO FUTURE
Meet Rhodes'
new black
woman Registrar
Page 10



BORDER'S BEST
Ten women
for SA select
squad
Page 18



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'Dangerous' pair escape from court

Awaiting trials
run off as lawyer
leaves them alone

By MALIBONGWE DAYIMANI
Crime Reporter

TWO dangerous awaiting-trial prisoners escaped from the Mdtantsane Regional Court holding cells on Monday after their lawyer left them unattended when he had finished consulting with them.

The two suspects - Thabani Mkhokheli, 30, and Lulekani Somsora, 25 - were in court to face a charge of murder, four counts of robbery with aggravating circumstances, one of house breaking with intent to rob, one of illegal possession of a firearm and one of being in illegal possession of ammunition.

The two men allegedly terrorised businesses and households in Mdtantsane from last year. They are charged with killing a foreign shop owner during a botched business robbery in N15, and of robbing at gunpoint a woman in N17 of her plasma TV and other household belongings.

On July 24 last year they are believed to have broken into the Nekkaya Butchery in N12 and robbed it at gunpoint after 6pm. The robbers fled with R70 000. In early August last year the two men were arrested, allegedly during a house robbery.

National Prosecuting Authority regional spokesman Tshepo Ndawala said the two had been left in the holding cells by their attorney, who had to rush to another case after consulting with them.

They have been held at the West Bank prison to await their trial since their arrests last year. Eastern Cape provincial commissioner Nkomo said he declined to comment.

Witness to the escape and also a witness in the case against the pair, Strive Masiya, 28, said she last saw the two leaving the court building with a police officer.

"I saw them peeking through the corner while we were sitting in the waiting area outside the courtroom. Moments after that I saw them emerging with a police officer and went out the door."



LULEKANI SOMSORA



THABANI MKHOKHELI

"Moments later I heard that they were missing," Masiya said. Mdtantsane police spokesman Captain Nkomo said a manhunt had been launched for the dangerous suspects.

"A search team has been assembled to search for the missing suspects. Police are following leads. Neither have been arrested yet."

Mziya said Somsora and Mkhokheli "were left in the presence of their lawyer, as he was busy consulting with them."

"Unfortunately when the lawyer was done, he never informed the police that the consultation was over and it is believed that the suspects escaped at that moment," he said.

Mziya said police were treating the incident in a very serious light and would investigate the matter vigorously.

The spokesman said they had also launched an internal probe "to ascertain whether our members have conducted themselves negligently in this matter."

"A case of escaping was opened and currently under investigation, while an additional charge of escaping lawful police custody will be added into both suspect's charge sheets," Mziya said.

The police have warned members of the public not to try and apprehend the suspects as they are "dangerous".

Anybody with information is urged to contact investigating officer Detective-Sergeant Phuthiwe Kwekwe on 078-408-9104 or their nearest police station or Crime Stop on 0800-0111.

■ Chusa erupted at the Mdtantsane

High Court when awaiting trial-prisoner Luthando Mziya, of Payne Farms village near Mdtantsane, attempted to escape after stabbing and injuring a policeman on Monday.

He was shot dead while trying to attack another officer, said Mdtantsane police spokesman Lieutenant-Colonel Mziyisa. Mziya was facing a charge of murder, allegedly committed near the Mdtantsane dam in 2010.

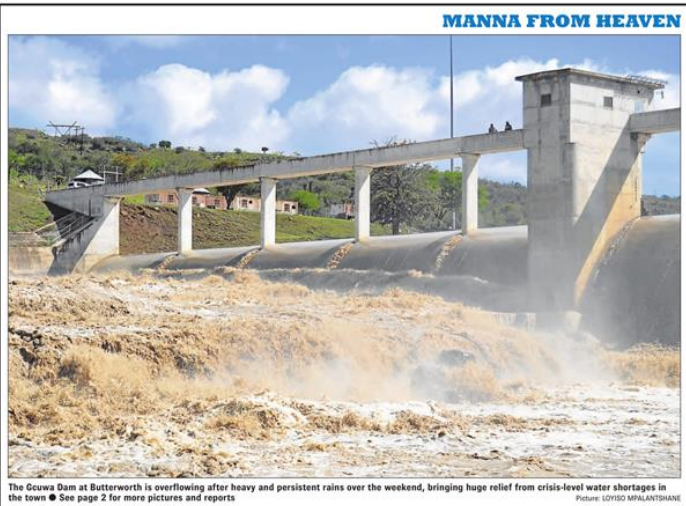
The commotion at 4pm at the rear entrance of the Mdtantsane court adjutant to the judges' entrance left court officials in a panic. Mziya said the incident happened as seven prisoners facing serious charges were to be loaded into a prison-bound van to return them to Wellington Prison.

"One of the prisoners (Mziya) drew a knife and charged at one of the escorting police officers. He stabbed one officer several times in the upper body and badly injured him. He left him a pool of blood and charged at the other police officers aggressively."

"He ignored orders to put down the knife and kept advancing despite warning shots. To protect himself and the lives of others, the officers shot him in the upper body, fatally injuring the prisoner, just near the gate of the guard house," Mziya said.

He said the other six prisoners were taken back to the court. The injured policeman was rushed to hospital, he added. "The other inmates were taken back to Wellington prison."

— malibongwe@dispatch.co.za, with additional reporting by Lulekani Somsora



The Gucwa Dam at Butterworth is overflowing after heavy and persistent rains over the weekend, bringing huge relief from crisis-level water shortages in the town. ■ See page 2 for more pictures and reports

MANNA FROM HEAVEN

Picture: LOYISO MPALANTSHANI

Owner pays up after pitbull attack

By ATHENA O'REILLY

TWO Gumbie pitbulls that escaped from their owner's yard on Monday caused havoc when they attacked other dogs in the neighbourhood.

As a result, the pitbulls' owner will have to foot medical bills totalling more than R4 000 for one Jack Russell, Bella.

Bella was pulled by her snout through a 7cm gap in the gate by the two pitbulls, Ali and Tyson, which resulted in her jaw having to be rewired and her ear needing several stitches.

The incident took place in Gumbie's 10th Avenue.

After an uproar on social media yesterday, the pitbulls' owner came forward and said he had decided to put them up for adoption at the SPCA.

This was the second attack on the neighbourhood's dogs.

The first time the pitbulls escaped they killed a Jack Russell in Oceanway earlier this year.

Bella's owner, John Brown, who had been living in the area for more than 30 years, said he received a phone call about the attack.

"The pitbulls must have been running around in the streets because they live quite a distance away. They tried pulling our dog through a tiny space in the gate by her snout and she got lodged because of her shoulders."

"People stopped to try break the dogs up and by the time I got home there were so many people here offering to help," he said.

Brown said Bella was doing fine and was grateful to the owner of the dogs who came forward to pay for any veterinary bills he might incur.

"He did the honourable thing and contacted me yesterday (Monday) and we met."

"He said after the first incident he thought it was an isolated one but because this was the second time he had decided to put his dogs up for adoption."

"He was very remorseful about what happened but our fear was just that should this happen again it could be a child."

As it stands we have to pay about



NO MORE CHANCES: Ali and Tyson have been carted off to the SPCA after attacking neighbouring dogs

R4 000 for Bella's surgery and she would have to go back for a checkup, which would probably end up being close to R6 000, Brown said.

In the pitbulls' first escape from their 10th Avenue garden they not only killed the Oceanway Road Jack Russell but injured a number of other dogs.

Ali and Tyson's owner, who would only identify himself as Sybilula for fear of further victimisation after the social media uproar, said it was an unfortunate thing that had happened.

"It is heartbreaking to have to part with my dogs because it is like saying goodbye to a family member."

"Everything is very upsetting and

this is such a bad situation because they were lovely dogs to be around, but it had to be done at the end of the day."

"I was not around when the incident took place but when I got home around 9pm my wife told me what had happened and that the dogs had been taken to the SPCA," he said.

Sybilula said he was glad he met with Brown and they could settle everything in an amicable manner.

"John is a gentleman and paying for his bill was the least I could do after everything that has happened."

"It is just so unfortunate that it would play five games at BCM Stadium."

— oreilly@i20blackstar.co.za

Education boss in hot water over 'bribe'

By ZINE GEORGE
Political Editor

A SENIOR Eastern Cape education manager has been suspended on a charge of soliciting a bribe in the presence of a bank teller.

This was after the suspect allegedly demanded and later received almost a quarter of the victim's R16 000 pension payout. A video clip apparently shows the transaction.

Education superintendent-general Themba Kojana confirmed yesterday the department was investigating allegations of fraud against the deputy director, who was put on precautionary suspension on October 9 "pending the internal investigation."

The victim, a disabled 32-year-old, is a former general worker at a

Mtshana school for disabled pupils. He had been battling to get a pension payout for more than two years.

He reported his case to the suspended official earlier this year. The official allegedly tracked down the fraud victim and informed him that his pension payout had been deposited into his bank account, and for that, he would have to pay her R20 000 for processing the claim.

R20 000 payout was made at a local branch of a listed bank.

"Our investigators have since acquired the video footage showing clearly that indeed the suspect was with the complainant when he made the withdrawal," said Kojana.

"We have since handed over the case to the Hawks for criminal investigation."

The clip, seen by the Dispatch,

shows both the suspect and the victim seated in front of a bank teller.

After signing the paperwork, the teller counts R20 000, which is then divided in three batches of R10 000.

The video shows R10 000 being given to the victim while R20 000 is given to the government official.

"The report we received stated the senior official asked the pensioner how much she will get in return for processing the claim."

"The former employee offered to pay her R20 000, and she laughed him off saying 'I'm not a child. I want R20 000,'" said Kojana.

"This line (R20) is going to help us deal with corruption from all angles. This is just the tip of an iceberg."

For any leads on corruption, call 086-657-7847 or e-mail doe.gov.za

Chippa shun Sisa for PE

By ROSS ROCHE

IN A blow to Premier Soccer League fans in East London, Chippa United confirmed it has asked for its upcoming match next Sunday against Cape Town City to be moved from Mdtantsane to Port Elizabeth.

Chippa chairman Sylvie "Chippa" Mpengele also revealed that the club would this season move all further planned club games from the N12 venue to the Buffalo City Stadium (BCM) in East London.

This comes after the Chilli Boys moved some of their home games from Nelson Mandela Bay Stadium last year to Sisa Dukashe - attracting capacity crowds from the top-flight stadium system, last season.

"The club has made a decision to move the games from Sisa Dukashe to (BCM) Stadium for this season after the ground could not meet the required FSL standards."

"The game between ourselves and Cape Town City scheduled for Sunday 22 October that was due to take place at Sisa Dukashe will now be moved to Nelson Mandela Bay Stadium in Port Elizabeth."

"We apologise to our beloved fans, particularly those in the Buffalo City Metro and surrounding areas," the club boss making a decision on it in due course.

"We are yet to make any announcement about the move to Sisa, although it did admit that it had received Chippa's application to have the games moved there would be making a decision on it in due course."

"We are yet to make any announcement about the move to Sisa, although it did admit that it had received Chippa's application to have the games moved there would be making a decision on it in due course."

— ross@dispatch.co.za

