

. RIVONIA NAIDU

NGRY KwaZulu-Natal
matrics, parentsâ\200\231 and
teachersâ\200\231 bodies have
labelled the Depart-
ment of Education â\200\234unprofes-
sional and irresponsibleâ\200\235 for
marks that are outstanding.

A teacher union said the
number of pupils affected was
17 000, and that the department
was â\200\234toying with the lives of
South Africaâ\200\231s future leadersâ\200\235.

Both national and provin-
cial departments of education
have come under fire for their
handling of the matric results,
in which about 56 000 matric
pupils nationally - nearly 10%
of the 589912 who wrote the ex-
amination - did not receive a
complete statement of results.

Apart from being anxious
and panic-stricken, the af-
fected pupils have also not
seen their names in their local
newspapers, which, they say,
has caused additional stress.

According to the South
African Democratic Teachers
Union, about 17 000 KZN pupils
were affected.

KZN education spokesman,
Ntokozo Maphisa said the de-
partment would not deny or
confirm the number of pupils
with marks outstanding.

â\200\234The reason for this is that
the department is releasing
outstanding results on a daily
basis, so the number of those
without some results is de-
creasing, and it would be diffi-
cult for us to give an exact
number,â\200\235 he said.

The 2008 pupils were the
first to write matric under the
controversial new Outcomes
Based Education curriculum.

Nationally, the pass rate
dropped from 65% last year to
62.5% this year.

And in KZN, the pass rate,
this year decreased from 63.8%
to 57.8%.

The department said the de-
lay was caused by a combina-
tion of factors, including cases

in which pupils wrote only one of two exams for a subject, at least 700 irregularities, and the collection of school-based assessment marks.

DAILY NEWS

MONDAY JANUARY 5 2009

and system off as a success, but itâ\200\231s a big flop,â\200\235 she said.

Tyrell Govender said he was angry because he was offered a bursary by the Durban University of Technology, which he might lose. â\200\234They have asked for all my marks to be in by (today), but I donâ\200\231t think I'm going to have my Mathematics mark, so I might lose that bursary. The department has been careless and I donâ\200\231t know why they changed the way we receive our results in the first place,â\200\235 he said.

National Teachers Union deputy president, Allen Thompson, said the hiccup with the matric results and the fact that so many results were outstanding was an indication of â\200\234incompetence within the departmentâ\200\235.

â\200\234It also shows the level of laziness within the department and the lack of quality and proper implementation of procedures and policies.â\200\235

Discrepancies

He appealed to the institutions of higher education to make room for pupils whose marks were still outstanding.

National Professional Teachers Organisation of SA provincial chief executive, Anthony Pierce, said it was unacceptable for pupils to have to wait so long for the results they had worked tirelessly for.

Sadtu provincial spokesman, KK Nkosi, said he was annoyed that pupils had entered the new year without knowing their results.

â\200\234But I have spoken to director, Barney Mthembu, of the examinations department in our province and he has assured me that all outstanding

results should be in by the end of this week,â\200\235 he said.

However, this is not what the provincial Department of Educationâ\200\231s HOD, Dr Cassius Lubisi, told media at the matric results awards ceremony at the ICC in Durban last week.

He said by January 15 all discrepancies would be sorted out and pupils would receive their complete results.

Irate

Yesterday, irate pupils and parents said the national Minister of Education, Naledi Pandor, and the KZN MEC of Education, Ina Cronje, should publicly apologise to pupils and their parents because they â\200\234deserve that muchâ\200\235.

â\200\234Everyone _deserves answers because our children have been emotionally scarred by this, more especially because their names have not appeared in the paper. These children deserve a public apology and itâ\200\231s sad to see that the minister and the MEC have not done that yet,â\200\235 said parent Stanley Simon.

Anneline Kuppusamy, whose English mark was outstanding, said she had worked very hard and committed herself to her studies.

â\200\234Surely the department knew how hard we had worked, especially with this being a new curriculum. They are irresponsible for not having everything in order I'm also irritated because they're passing this new curriculum

\nger at late results

This was reiterated yesterday by Maphisa, who said the department would release all outstanding results by the middle of the month.

In the Sunday Tribune yesterday, national education director-general, Duncan Hindle, said institutions of higher

learning had been made aware of the causes of the delays and no pupil would be discriminated against. He too confirmed the results would be released mid-January.

â\200\234I want to clarify that no child will be left out of university because of the delay,â\200\235 he said. - _ .

Sapa reports that the national department has come under fire for reducing the quality of the Mathematics exam to inflate the pass rate, according to a statement issued by the Concerned Mathematics Educators.

â\200\234The mathematics targets achieved by the education department should not be misconstrued as indicators of any real improvement in mathematics education in South Africa,â\200\235 the statement said.

KEITH ROSS

HE plight of the poor
and the marginalised
is becoming a major

issue in South African
politics, and it may cause a fur-
ther shift to the left in govern-
ment policies this year.

But no radical changes in
policy - such as the nationalis-
ations espoused by the Com-
munist Party and Cosatu - are
likely, especially in light of the
present worldwide economic
crisis.

These were some of the
views expressed by a panel of
experts who took part in SAfm
Radio's After Eight Debate on
whether major changes could
be expected in the South
African political landscape
this year.

The panel felt it was un-
likely that the country would

'DAILY NEWS
MONDAY JANUARY 5 2009

The year of the poor

Plight of the marginalised will be focus for 2009
experience another year as
tumultuous as the last.

But we can expect some of
the consequences of last year
to manifest themselves in the
coming year, said Prof Adam
Habib, vice-chancellor of the
University of Johannesburg.

Habib spoke of the dismis-

sal of former president Thabo

Mbeki and said the ANC had
overplayed its hand, causing a
split in the party and creating
the potential for the country's
first non-racial opposition.

He said this and other
events, such as the xenophobic
attacks, had exposed struc-
tural fault-lines in the coun-
try's socio-economic structure.

In the past 12 or 13 years
our transition has done well for
the middle- and upper-middle-

class people, but the poor and marginalised have felt particularly vulnerable and disadvantaged

as the middle- and upper-class have done well.

“The consequences manifested at the end of last year in Polokwane,” said Habib. “It manifested itself in conflicts this year. It manifested itself in xenophobic attacks in the middle of the year.

Shift

“Unless we create a more inclusive transition with all of our people, including the most marginalised, we are going to have political tumult such as we have had this year.”

. Habib said the ongoing shift -

to the left of the governing party was likely to continue.

“It is not going to be a radical jump. We are not going to have nationalisation of Sasol and Mittal, and all that, like the Communist Party wants.”

His views on the plight of

the poor were shared by panel member Prince Mashele, of the Institute for Security Studies, who said it was the fundamental challenge that had to be addressed.

He felt the decision by Judge Chris Nicholson that charges against ANC president Jacob Zuma had not been brought procedurally was the pivotal

event for South Africa in a tumultuous year.

South Africa was a “different country” after the judgment, with the president removed, prominent ANC members resigning and a new party, the Congress of the People, formed.

“Much of what we witness in 2009 will be a spill-over of that judgment,” he said.

A third panel member, Steven Friedman, director of the Centre for the Study of Democracy at the University of

Johannesburg, said two things
would drive politics in 2009.

â\200\234The first is going to be the
global financial crisis, which
affects all of us,â\200\235 he said. â\200\234The
second is the fact that we have
more competition in our poli-
tics this year. We have, for the
first time, the prospect of an
election where the ANC may
actually lose votes and may ac-
tually lose the Western Cape.

â\200\234It creates an opportunity
for the voices of ordinary
South Africans to be heard. We
are entering a phase where
politicians will have to worry
more seriously about what
ordinary people think.â\200\235

A fourth panel member,
Somadoda Fikeni, an independ-
ent political analyst, said party
manifestos would not only
speak of service delivery, but
also of values, principles and
leadership.

DAILY NEWS
MONDAY JANUARY'_5 2009

Top politicians at burial of Helen Suzman

ANTI-APARTHEID activist Helen Suzman who died on New Year's Day was yesterday buried in a private Jewish ceremony attended by family, top politicians and close friends in Johannesburg.

Among the mourners were apartheid South Africa's last president, FW de Klerk, President Kgalema Motlanthe, Winnie Madikizela-Mandela and the leader of the Democratic Alliance, Helen Zille.

I spoke to her a few weeks before her death and she was very concerned about the present state of politics in our country," said De Klerk.

She is one of South Africa's great icons," he said.

Suzman; a daughter of Jewish immigrants, served in South Africa's legislature from 1953 to 1989 - a lone voice of parliamentary dissent against white minority rule.

She died peacefully on Thursday at her home in Ilovo, Johannesburg. She was 91.

Suzman was my mentor, she was opposed to the abuse of power by the old apartheid government and was also opposed to the present abuse of power by the ANC government," said Zille, '

Prominent human rights lawyer George Bizos described Suzman as an icon who fought relentlessly for equal rights

PRESIDENT
yesterday

during a difficult period.

She knew that she may not solve all the country's problems, but she never gave up," said Bizos.

The diminutive Suzman

was born in the mining town of

T Kgalema Motlanthe and Winnie Madikizel

Germiston, east of Johannes-
burg on November 7, 1917, to
Samuel and [rieda Gavronsky,
Jewish immigrants from
Lithuania.

She used her debating time
to rail against forced removals,

racial inequalities, the erosion
of the rule of law, capital pun-
ishment, torture, censorship,
police abuses and other trade-
marks of white minority rule.

Suzman was twice nomi-
nated for the Nobel Peace Prize

A

a-Mandela were among the high-profile guests at the funeral of Helen Suzman

PICTURE: MUJAHID SAFODIEN

and awarded the United Na-
tions Award for Human Rights
in 1978.

A public memorial service
in her honour will be held in a
few weeksâ\200\231 time, her family
said. - Sapa-AFP

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DAILY NEWS

MONDAY JANUARY 5 2009

Top Indian award for Rajbans

THE MEC for Sport and Recreation, Amichand Rajbansi, has joined an elite group of people to receive a coveted achievement award for his lifelong and outstanding contribution towards nation building.

The award, from the India International Friendship Society (IIFS), was also for uplifting the lives of disadvantaged people in KZN.

It was presented to Rajbansi, the leader of the Minority Front, at the Indian Habitat Centre in Delhi by the chief minister of Delhi, Sheila Dikshit. The IIFS acknowledges the contribution of people of Indian origin

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AMICHAND
RAJBANSI

g/ around the world and seeks to unite and foster closer working relationships between all in the diaspora.

i Rajbansisaid it was an immensely proud moment to be acknowledged, particularly as there are only six people around the world who have received the honour. The others include Dr Bhagwan Sani, a renowned neurologist and lecturer at Oxford and Harvard Universities, Dr Althaf Hoosen of Wales for his contribution to advancements in orthopaedic surgery and Dr Abdul Razzak Rumane of Kuwait for his contribution to engineering. - Daily News Reporter

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