

THE MERCURY MONDAY, DECEMBER 6, 1999

CAR CRASH UNNOTICED FOR HOURS

# King's right-hand man killed

PHINDILE NGUBANE  
POLITICAL REPORTER

**K**ING Goodwill Zwelithini has been dealt another tragic blow with the death of his legal adviser, Mr Sidumo Mathe, in a car accident at the weekend. The wreckage was only discovered hours after the accident.

Mr Mathe was last seen on Friday night, apparently on his way to Durban after visiting the king's KwaDlamahlahla palaces in Nongoma. His body was discovered on Saturday afternoon.

His death comes soon after the royal family buried two of its members within weeks of each other.

Prince Cyril Zulu was attacked and killed outside his Lamontville home on November 2 and Prince Thokozani Zulu was stoned to death in Nongoma two weeks ago.

Mr Mathe played more than the role of a legal adviser to the king. He was described as a "right-hand man" and accompanied the monarch to social and other functions.

While initial reaction to Mr Mathe's death was one of suspicion, preliminary police reports have suggested that he died after apparently losing control of his vehicle.

KwaZulu-Natal violence monitor Mary de Haas was quoted as saying that Mr Mathe's life was recently threatened.

Police spokesman Vish Naidoo said Mr Mathe had left KwaDlamahlahla about 10pm, but the car wreckage was only discov-



MATHE

ered about 1.30 pm on Saturday.

Indications were that his car had skidded off the road and plunged over a 700m cliff.

His body was thrown out of the vehicle before it hit the foot of the cliff.

One of the policemen who arrived at the scene, Insp Sabelo Zwane, said the car had broken up.

Bad weather conditions - thick fog and rain - and the sharp bends on the road might have contributed to the accident, he said. A motorist led police to the wreckage.

Capt Naidoo said there was no evidence at this stage to suggest foul play, but he said that police were investigating a case of culpable homicide.

He added that this was normal procedure when a person was killed in a vehicle accident.

Mr Mathe's body has been taken to a Durban mortuary for a postmortem today.

Premier Lionel Mtshali released a statement yesterday expressing shock at Mr Mathe's death and he extended condolences to Mr Mathe's family on behalf of the provincial government.

"I earnestly advise all road users, especially during the festive, often wet season, to exercise extreme caution on the roads for the safety of all travellers," Mr Mtshali said.

An official at the king's office said they were waiting for a directive from the king before officially commenting on Mr Mathe's death.

Mr Mathe, who was from Fefe in Nongoma, had served King Zwelithini since 1994.



## President accepts SABC list

MERCURY CORRESPONDENT

JOHANNESBURG - President Mbeki had accepted the list of 12 names for the new SABC board and might announce its chairman soon, a senior government source told The Mercury yesterday.

The source said Mr Mbeki had requested the extension of time to investigate the credentials of at least one person, but had also been infuriated by the expectation of the parliamentary committee.

It was expected that Mr Mbeki would take only one day to look at the list and decide who to appoint as chairman by the following day, which was the deadline for the new board to take over.

Although the source would not name the person investigated, The Mercury can reveal it was Ms Melanie Chait, who is an ex-employee of the SABC in the policy co-ordination division of the commissioning department.

This is the department that was recently investigated by auditors.

The auditors found at least four senior managers to have flouted the rules.

Senior SABC staff members had expressed concern soon after Ms Chait's nomination, saying she had been found guilty of abusing a credit card during a trip to London in 1995. The investigation, however, disproved this.

## DP orders inquiry

PHINDILE NGUBANE  
POLITICAL REPORTER

THE Democratic Party has ordered an inquiry into what appears to be deliberate falsification of the party's membership figures by some of its Gauteng branch leaders, who may face expulsion from the party.

The rigging of membership numbers - dead people have been included - has been blamed on power-hungry party leaders bent on using irregular tactics to make it as top office bearers.

The scandal was said to have surfaced after a membership audit was commissioned by Gauteng leader Peter Leon in preparation for a November provincial congress.

DP chief whip Douglas Gibson said yesterday that after the irregularities had been uncovered by the

initial audit, he had ordered a more substantive second audit led by national assembly member Rudi Heine.

The audit found that "a number of members are referred to as being paid-up members when they are no longer active and in some instances where they have died".

Mr Gibson said the inquiry consisted of three senior DP members. They were expected to complete their work by the end of January.

A DP member of the KwaZulu-Natal legislature and one of the commission's members, Mr Wessel Nel, said a meeting would be held for discussions on the inquiry "within the next three to four days".

Mr Gibson said his party would ensure that the guilty parties "are appropriately dealt with".



DALAI LAMA RESPONDS TO PRESIDENT'S REFUSAL OF PRIVATE TALKS

# 'Mbeki can meet who he wants'

PATRICK LEEMAN

**T**HE Dalai Lama said in Durban at the weekend that it was the prerogative of President Mbeki to meet whichever world leader he chose to. If Mr Mbeki found it "inconvenient" to meet him separately, he did not wish to create any embarrassment about the matter.

Tibet's exiled spiritual leader was replying to a question relating to the reported refusal of Mr Mbeki to meet the Dalai Lama because of

"pressure" from the People's Republic of China.

He said he had consistently been portrayed by the Chinese authorities and the Chinese media as a "liar" and this might have persuaded some political leaders not to meet him.

The Dalai Lama said that China was in the process of economic transformation and he was convinced there would be political change as well.

He was not seeking independence for Tibet but a certain am-

ount of self-rule within the borders of the people's republic.

Asked whether he agreed that Chinese attitudes towards him hardened every time the Western media conveyed him in a good light, the spiritual leader said those journalists were not so much pro-Tibet as "pro-justice".

"The media who support the Tibetan issue usually support other issues of justice as well as the legitimate rights of the Chinese people."

He drew a distinction between the attitudes of the two most popu-

lous countries on earth - China and India.

In the former, every dissident voice was suppressed, he said, while in India there was democracy, the rule of law, and an independent judiciary.

The Dalai Lama said he was looking forward to exploring how transformation in South Africa had worked out in practice since his last visit in 1996.

Yesterday the spiritual leader of Tibet conducted a day's spiritual teaching for 650 people and later

visited the Aryan Benevolent Home in Chatsworth.

He will conduct a second teaching session in Durban today and this evening will give an address at the Durban Art Gallery to mark the anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

The Dalai Lama said in a television interview yesterday that fellow Nobel laureates, former president Nelson Mandela and Archbishop Desmond Tutu, could help to promote talks between Tibet and China.

## Winnie lashes out at media

CAPE TOWN - Mrs Winnie Madikizela-Mandela says that if the media has anything to do with it, her contribution to the country's history will only be remembered for kidnapping and assault.

Interviewed on the *Newsmaker* programme, Mrs Madikizela-Mandela recalled how on a recent flight from Spain she opened a magazine trumpeting the achievements of women this century, but under her name saw only a negative report.

On whether she believed the media had forgotten her personal contribution to the liberation struggle, she said: "Whether they've forgotten or not, I don't care. I care about my people and their perceptions and their opinions."

"The people have spoken two Saturdays ago. They awarded me a humanitarian award."

Describing herself as a "country girl from Pondoland", she again said she owed no one an apology for her role in the liberation struggle.

She had not applied for amnesty and she would never do so.

Anti-apartheid activists had fought a just war and the findings of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission were inconsequential.

She again dismissed the commission's findings that she should be held accountable for the gross violations of human rights committed by her Mandela United Football Club.

The commission found that the club had been involved in criminal activities, including killing, torture, assault and arson.

Asked whether she was worried about being prosecuted, she said: "I

wouldn't give a damn what the attorney-general does. I'm not bothered by what the TRC said, or how it came to its findings."

On claims by Mandela United's former coach, Jerry Richardson, that he had killed teenage activist Stompie Seipei and others on her instructions, she said: "History will prove all that was said is false."

On her trial for kidnapping and assaulting Stompie, Mrs Madikizela-Mandela said it suited the trial judge at the time to ignore evidence that Richardson was mentally unstable.

Mrs Madikizela-Mandela was eventually found guilty of assaulting Seipei and was fined, after the appellate division overturned her earlier convictions for kidnapping and assault. - Sapa