

OPINION AND LETTERS

The Times

Zuma is but a man, a politician, and not beyond reproach

UBABA (our father) must not be embarrassed. *Ubaba* cannot be spoken to by commoners who have nothing to offer. *Ubaba* is the head of state and leader of the ANC — and no one will be allowed to change that.

This is how many in the ANC want President Jacob Zuma to be perceived and treated. They go to the ends of the earth to ensure that he is shielded from the opposition parties, which want him to answer difficult questions in parliament.

Tensions have been rising in parliament since August, when Julius Malema's Economic Freedom Fighters fired the first salvo, demanding to know when Zuma will "Pay back the money", the millions taken from taxpayers and spent on his private Nkandla home.

The ANC needs to understand that being president comes with responsibilities and *Ubaba* needs to account to the nation.

He accepted the job of leading this nation and cannot choose the conditions under which the opposition can ask him questions.

As a leader, he should be brave enough to face his political opponents.

ANC secretary-general Gwede Mantashe yesterday said the attacks on Zuma were, in fact, aimed at the ANC.

"The target of these attacks is the ANC itself, hence the attack is now extended to the deputy president and the chairperson [of the party]."

We must ask Mantashe how difficult it is for Zuma to answer questions put to him. Heckling and shouting come with the job and the sooner Zuma and the ANC understand that the better.

Now that the "political deal" to bring normalcy to parliament has collapsed, the nation is again left in limbo and yearning for sound leadership to prevail.

Former president Nelson Mandela never saw himself as bigger than any of us. He was willing to bend over backwards to accommodate different views.

Where is that leadership today, *Baba*?

WHAT'S TRENDING AT
<http://timeslive.co.za>

AFRICA: Watch hidden camera expose nanny abusing toddler

A shocking video of Ugandan nanny Jolly Tumuhirwe, 22, physically abusing a two-year-old girl has gone viral.



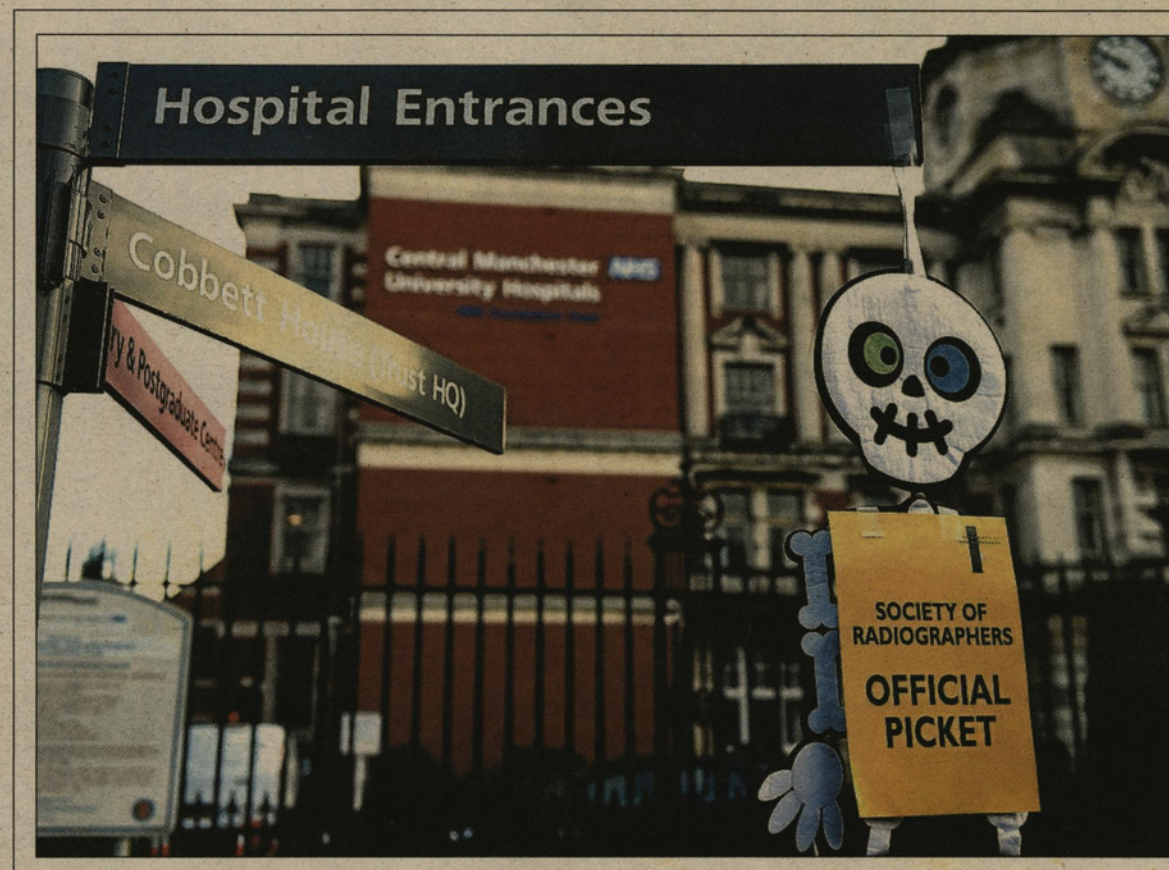
ENTERTAINMENT: Teary Minnie Dlamini spills details on 'heartbreaking' relationship with goalie Mzansi's sweetheart and media darling, Minnie Dlamini, has spoken out about the failed romance she had with Kaizer Chiefs goalkeeper Itumeleng Khune.



WORLD: Headmaster finds tongue-eating louse in his fish
Paul Poli, a 62-year-old headmaster, is no longer all about that bass.



'Ubaba' took on the job and now needs to account to the nation



A BONE TO PICK

Manchester Royal Infirmary in England during a pay strike yesterday by midwives, nurses, radiographers, cleaners and psychiatric staff
Picture: PAUL ELLIS/AFP

Traffic 'authorities' a dead end

IT SHOULD not surprise anyone that road rage is an increasing menace, and most of the blame must go to the traffic "authorities". Most of the country's traffic departments and metro police do not understand the basics of traffic control.

Anyone who has been stuck on the N1 (De Doorns) and N2 (Grabouw), sometimes for days, because of one or other protest must wonder who is actually in control: the mob or the "authorities"?

Taxi drivers strike and block roads at the drop of a

hat. We have all the laws we need to enforce rules and regulations, yet those in charge have neither the will nor, seemingly, the capability to carry them out.

The police have shown over and over again that they cannot control crowds on the rampage.

We are constantly faced with out-of-order traffic lights, and those that function are not synchronised for green. If anything, the traffic lights are synchronised for red to make sure the traffic does not flow.

The traffic authorities seem

to be determined to make the lives of motorists as difficult as possible.

I drive a public transport vehicle, and every two years I'm required to renew my driving permit. But am I tested for anything? No, it's just a money-making racket by authorities to create non-productive employment.

I don't condone road rage but I understand why it happens.

Don't just blame rogue motorists though, blame a rogue system. — Peter Smulik, Cape Town

Mbete is a victim of sexism

THE Speaker of the National Assembly may have been accused of many wrongs by the opposition in parliament, but her greatest crime is that she is a woman.

The voices in the ANC Women's League calling for a woman president are growing louder, so the opposition sought to prove to us all that women are incapable of handling powerful positions.

Racist and sexist stereotypes have become sophisticated in post-1994 South Africa so one must read between the lines to understand them.

We have all seen the distinction between the opposition's behaviour when Mbete presides and when deputy speaker Lechesa Tsenoli takes the reins. I believe we should give Mbete a chance and allow her to preside freely so she can show she is capable of leading. — Tembisa Magkatho, Tembisa

Reality check on Buthelezi's thinking

IN HIS letter headlined "Democracy falls on deaf ears" (November 18), Cliff Saunders pontificates on the chaos in parliament when riot police were called in to remove an EFF MP.

Saunders describes how he "watched the stately Mangosuthu Buthelezi regarding it all with amazement and probably thinking that a Zulu impi was needed to restore order".

The problem is the IFP leader was not in the House when all this took place. He was en route to KwaZulu-Natal, having attended the Helen Suzman Memorial Lecture in Gauteng.

One can understand Saunders feeling confident in adding Buthelezi to the scene, since he is seldom away from parliament. One can also understand Saunders picturing a "stately" Buthelezi

"regarding it all with amazement" for he has made it clear that the lack of decorum and open insults in parliament are foreign to him and entirely unacceptable.

But Saunders's mind-reading is wrong. Buthelezi has been a champion of peace and non-violence throughout his life, and would never wish for a military intervention. — Liezl van der Merwe, MP, press officer to the IFP president

SMS COMMENTS

On 'Oscar's prison birthday bash to be probed':

● YOUR article made me laugh. Will Oscar Pistorius face charges for the incident, not prison authorities? Since when do prisoners decide who visits them and what visitors bring into the prison? Sounds like the authorities are trying to set him up so they can extend his jail term. — Jay

● INSTEAD of making a circus

out of his birthday, perhaps the question should be: How can we make it safe for all prisoners to celebrate birthdays? — Anon

On 'Addicts milk SA Inc':

● WE NEED a full-scale war on druglords. — Baba Saloojee

Is the president safe at Nkandla?

● WHO cares if he is safe? He

should resign. — Gabby

● JACOB Zuma is safe because he is never there. — Anon

● THE quality of the Nkandla security fence is matched by the quality of the absentee president. — Dave, Glenvista

On 'Malemaville invaders move into misery':

● EDUCATE these people so they

know when they are being taken for a ride by parliamentary fools who claim to care for the poor but push them further into poverty. — Crystal Kitty Kilian

On 'Eskom blight hits Xmas':

● ESKOM is going to cause unemployment. But who cares as long as fatcats keep getting fat salaries and bonuses? — CK

Each SMS costs R1.50



COOL DUDE: Ivan Abrosimov, 78, a member of a local winter swimmers' club, after bathing in the Yenisei River in sub-zero temperatures in Krasnoyarsk, Siberia

Picture: ILYA NAYMUSHIN/REUTERS



MAKING IT IN HER STRIDE: An exploded shell in Krasnyi Pakhar village near Donetsk, eastern Ukraine. About 10 shells hit the village early yesterday
Picture: ANTONIO BRONIC/REUTERS



MEAT AND GREET: A dock worker cooks for colleagues in Antwerp's harbour during a strike in Belgium
Picture: JULIEN WARNAND/EPA

TUNISIA Presidential vote heads into close run-off

AN OFFICIAL under former hardline ruler Zine el-Abidine Ben Ali appears set for a close run-off in presidential polls with a rival who says he represents the 2011 "Arab Spring" uprising that toppled him. Beji Caid Essebsi, parliament chief under Ben Ali, will face off with Moncef Marzouki, the current president, who warned against the return of one-party era figures like Essebsi. Both candidates will be seeking backing from the liberal, left-wing Islamist parties that emerged after Ben Ali's rule. — Reuters

UK World scrabble champ makes rivals look sick

IT WAS not the most auspicious of words with which to clinch the World Scrabble Championships. But Craig Beevers was crowned the best player with "barfs", the plural of the slang word for vomit. In doing so, the 33-year-old from Guisborough, Teesside, became only the second English player to claim the title and the first since Mark Nyman in 1993. Beevers, who organises Scrabble tournaments for a living, beat the American Chris Lipe in the final game. — © The Daily Telegraph

GERMANY Michael Schumacher 'is making progress'

MICHAEL Schumacher is "making progress" but faces a "difficult and long" recovery, his manager has said. Sabine Kehm spoke out after recent reports that the injured racing driver was out of a coma but paralysed and in a wheelchair. "Michael is making progress appropriate to the severity of his situation, but it will be a difficult and long process," Kehm said. "You have to give it time. I think you really have to just be patient." — © The Daily Telegraph

TANZANIA President vows never to expel Masai people

PRESIDENT Jakaya Kikwete has vowed never to evict the Masai people from their traditional lands, which activists claimed were threatened by plans for a hunting reserve for the wealthy. "There has never been nor will there ever be any plan by the government of Tanzania to evict the Masai people from their ancestral land," Kikwete said. Tanzania last week dismissed as false the claims by global activist group Avaaz it had ambitions to grab 1 500km² of land in Loliondo. — AFP

CHINA Beijing declares war on 'bizarre' architecture

THE days in which architects were allowed to create buildings resembling penguins, pianos or even male genitalia appear numbered after a top Communist Party official announced plans for an offensive against "bizarre architecture". Beijing will soon unveil rules making it harder for "strange buildings" to be given planning permission, Yang Shichao, a senior official in southern China, was quoted as saying by the Guangzhou Daily newspaper. — © The Daily Telegraph