# Case load in Lenasia courts crippling justice

SANDF ammunition theft trial postponed after magistrate laments huge court roll and dire lack of resources

**SHAIN GERMANER** 

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HE LENASIA Magistrate's Court has been paralysed by a massive roll and minimal resources, meaning important trials are unable to go ahead at the court.

Last week, the trial of five men believed to have stolen 200 000 rounds of ammunition from the SANDF had to be postponed yet again because the Lenasia court couldn't cope with its case load.

Gareth de Nysschen, Efthi-

THIS MORNING, acid attack

victim Ines Antonio was due to

boyfriend Jan Pieterse, 45, who

was to be sentenced, it is she

will have to relocate, leave the

country or live incognito – and

in fear – for the rest of her life.

the Johannesburg Magistrate's

Court of attempt to do grievous

bodily harm last month, aris-

ing from the attack against her.

by both the justice system and

against Pieterse, as he had been

stalking her for months before

the attack. But he ignored it

and every time she reported

this to the Norwood police sta-

tion, they did nothing. She laid

six complaints, none of which

because he had attacked me

and my daughter several times

in the past. Every time the

police came, they would just

tell us to calm down. He would

"I had a protection order

were investigated.

Antonio says she was failed

She had a protection order

Pieterse was convicted in

Although it was her former

She will know whether she

anna.cox@

know her fate.

the police.

who will be affected.

mios Demis Karamitsos, a director and manager at Dave Sheer Guns, and soldiers Teboho Peter Motaung, Diphang John Motloung and his son Thabang have all been charged with the theft of the SANDF ammunition. But as their case was called before magistrate Maggie van der Merwe, the presiding officer was forced to apologise to everyone in attendance.

Describing the situation as "intolerable", Van der Merwe said the recent demarcation of the court's jurisdiction had more than doubled over the past year.

Acid victim is bracing for

sentencing of her ex-lover

cry and say he was disabled

(his one leg is slightly shorter

than the other) and that it

was my fault, and that I had

attacked him. They believed

told her no one would do any-

thing to him and he would get

away with it, like Oscar Pistor-

Antonio was attacked by

He got so confident that he

him every time," she said.

ius, she said.

and arms.

Pieterse in Novem-

ber last year when

he threw a tin of acid

over her, badly burn-

ing her face, chest

split up a year before

the attack, because of

his constant abuse.

by the police.

The couple had

And after the

attack, Antonio was let down

for him and said they could not

find him. During this time, he

bombarded her with abusive text messages, threatening to

"finish off the job" and telling

when The Star was informed

that he was still on the run and

his photo was printed on the

front page, someone recognised

Some three weeks later.

her how useless she was.

They claimed to have looked

Michael Masutha altered the jurisdiction of the courts and the areas they serve in November last year, criminal cases from other areas outside of Lenasia, among them Sebokeng, now have

The Star noted that more than 200 cases were on the roll at the Lenasia court last Wednesday, and during her tirade, magistrate Van der Merwe said this was the norm.

to be heard in the Lenasia court.

While 200 cases a day might be manageable at a larger court, the Lenasia Regional Court has

him and informed a private

investigator who offered to

help free of charge. It was only

porting her, Pieterse mali-

ciously stopped the R440 a

month child grant that was in his name when they broke up,

Antonio not only lost her

faces

many

years of sur-

gery, she was

forced out of

her home and

temporarily lost

her daughter

who is staying

with a friend, as

She has also

into shelters.

looks, endured great pain and

she is unable to look after her

control of her life after years

of abuse at Pieterse's hands.

She had started working in

a beauty salon as a hairstyl-

ist and studying to complete

her matric, which she gave up

had they arrested him in the

first place, this might never

"I feel let down by the police,

when she fell pregnant.

have happened," she said.

Antonio was starting to take

because of all the surgery.

Although he was not sup-

then that he was arrested.

just to spite her.

Since Justice Minister just four courtrooms on the assigned to her courthouse. premises.

> Van der Merwe told all of the accused that the huge number of first appearances and bail applications took precedence over trials, as dictated by the law. and this meant that many major

> Despite all her efforts to contact other nearby court houses to try to help alleviate the burden at the court, Van der Merwe said she was simply labelled a "troublemaker" for trying to get them to take on some of the excessive number of cases

trials had stalled in the court.

Van der Merwe said the Department of Justice had pledged it would help alleviate the problem at the beginning of next year, but she believed it would take at least a full year to recover from the demarcation "chaos"

The Dave Sheer Guns case ultimately resulted in a head of the firearms registry in Pretoria, Brigadier Mathapelo Miriam Mangwani, being fired for her corruption in fast-tracking licences for the gun store.

Van der Merwe told the court

she acknowledged what an important case it was, but that the bottleneck at the court had become too severe to continue the trial. The court was told that the case would be transferred to the Kagiso Regional Court this week, but that the trial might

Despite numerous attempts to contact the Department of Justice since Wednesday, its spokesman Mthunzi Mhaga did not respond to e-mail queries, text messages or telephone calls to enquire about the court and its massive backlog.

only continue late next year.



## 4 cops among 15 road fatalities

FIFTEEN people were killed in three major crashes in KwaZulu-Natal and the Eastern Cape at the weekend, the Road Traffic Management Corporation (RTMC) said yesterday. The number of fatalities included four police officers who died when the vehicle they were travelling in collided with a minibus taxi in Harding, southern KwaZulu-Natal, on Friday. Five people died in that incident, the RTMC said. Two other people died in a multiple-car collision on the N2 in Margate on Friday. The crash involved a light delivery vehicle, two sedans and two taxis. A taxi collided with a truck on the N9 between Cradock and Graaff-Reinet in the Eastern Cape on Saturday night. The taxi allegedly hit a cow before the driver lost control of the vehicle and it collided head-on with an oncoming truck. Both drivers were killed. The cause of each of the accidents is under investigation. – ANA

### **Robbers raid Pakistani shop**

POLICE in Sanieshof are investigating a case of business robbery after four people, believed to be Ethiopians, entered a supermarket owned by a Pakistani man on Saturday and robbed him of an undisclosed but substantial amount of cash and valuables, North West police said. "The suspects entered the shop and threatened the victim and his four friends with firearms, a hammer, and a knife," Major Pelonomi Makau said yesterday. They forced the owner's friends to the back of the shop, tied them up with ropes, ransacked the shop and robbed the owner of an undisclosed amount of cash, three laptops, cosmetics, and six different brands of cellphones. The robbers fled the scene in an unknown vehicle, Makau said. Anyone who has any information that can lead to their arrest, can contact Detective Warrant Officer Ferreira at 082 373 8250. –

### **Brothers held for alleged rape**

JOHANNESBURG central police have arrested two brothers for allegedly raping an apparently intoxicated woman at Layton House on the corner of Pritchard and Nugget streets, Gauteng police said yesterday. The two suspects, aged 23 and 25, apparently raped the 32-year-old woman at about 10pm on Saturday, Warrant Officer Xoli Mbele said. The victim's sister allegedly caught one of them red-handed when she got home and he apparently told her that his brother had had "sexual intercourse" with her too. Police were called and they were arrested. The suspects are due to appear in the Johannesburg Magistrate's Court soon, Mbele said. – ANA

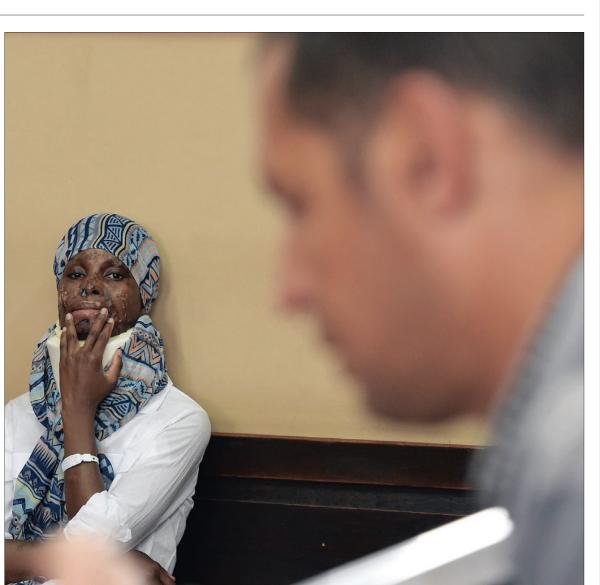
## Suspected cop killer slain

A MAN possibly linked to police killings was shot dead in a shootout with police in KwaMashu, Durban. An alleged accomplice was arrested, police said yesterday. Police officers were patrolling at about 5.30pm on Saturday when they received information about suspects in possession of unlicensed firearms at the men's hostel, spokesman Major Thulani Zwane said. Police raided the place and a shootout ensured during which the suspect was killed. A 9mm pistol was found in his possession and the second suspect was also arrested after he was found in possession of a CZ 7.5mm pistol with ammunition. Both are suspected to be involved in police killings in KwaMashu and were part of the gang that escaped from the Seven Oaks shooting at Greytown last month, Zwane

## Cops seize AK47s and ammo

PHOENIX tactical response team members were patrolling in the KwaDukuza area when they followed up information about a suspicious vehicle in the area, spokesman Major Thulani Zwane said. A vehicle fitting the description was spotted and stopped. "The driver was searched and was found in possession of a 9mm pistol with ammunition. It was established that the vehicle was earlier reported stolen in the Hillcrest area. On further investigation, the suspect took the members to his homestead at Maphumulo area where they recovered two AK47 assault rifles and ammunition hidden under his bed." The suspect, 35, was due to appear in court today. – ANA

NO SCHOOL was entitled to withhold the report cards of pupils if their parents have not paid outstanding school fees, Western Cape Education MEC Debbie Schafer said yesterday. Schools would issue report cards to pupils across the province this week when the academic year ended on Wednesday, she said. "My office received a number of complaints from parents last year that schools had refused to release their children's report cards. This practice is unacceptable and will not be tolerated,' she said. If the reports were then withheld for any reason, the department would investigate and take further action if needed, Schafer said. – ANA



AWAITING HIS FATE: Ines Antonio looks at her former boyfriend Jan Pieterse who was convicted of assault for throwing acid at her. PICTURE: CHRIS COLLINGRIDGE

## Missing initiates reunited with their parents

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EIGHTEEN boys allegedly kidnapped and taken to illegal initiation schools around Gauteng last month, have

been reunited with their parents. The boys, aged between 13 and 17, were found in places such as

Poortjie near Orange Farm, Boksburg and Tembisa in Ekurhuleni and Dobsonville in Soweto. Police were initially not sure if the boys had been abducted or went willingly.

"The 18 were not officially reported missing, but the police reunited them with their families," police spokesman Captain Johannes Motsiri said yesterday.

He said that most of the boys, among them a 13-year-old from Orange Farm, who was reported missing last week, were found with injuries. The Star reported on Thursday seven boys were recovered from initiation schools.

No arrests have been made.

## 14 fahfee players lose out in court

**KATE MORRISSEY** 

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FOURTEEN Chinese fahfee players, who pleaded guilty last week to illegal gambling in Bramley, Joburg, were sentenced to six months in jail.

Their sentences were suspended provided they don't commit a similar offence in the next five years. Three of them, including

the one woman arrested, have previous gambling or lottery-related convictions.

According to the accused's statements, at about 4am on November 27, they were playing fahfee in a house on Beryl Avenue in Bramley Park when they heard a knock at the door.

their game that they yelled to the visitors that the door was unlocked. They did not realise the call-

ers were police.

It's one of the biggest illegal **lotteries in SA** 

Odaho Sengani of the National Lotteries Commission said fahfee, also known

as "mochaina", is "one of the biggest illegal lotteries in the country"

ancestry. Their ages range from 22 to 43. According to Sengani, police were investigating the illegal rhino horn trade when they discovered the fahfee game. She

also said that the alleged leader managed to flee while the 14 players were arrested.

As the matrics have started writing their final exams, The Star would like to ship to get their matric certificate, let celebrate this special time by publishing articles of their success. If us know. We're looking for names of children and their schools, the



## Reports for fees a no-no



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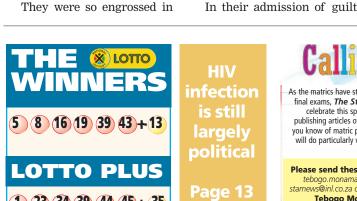
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statements, the accused said the

R60 000 police confiscated was

seized 11 armoured vehicles

during the arrest, but the SAPS

communications officer for

Bramley was unable to say what

are Chinese according to court

documents. The other is a South

African citizen with Chinese

All but one of the players

had happened to the vehicles.

Sengani said police also

part of their game.





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