

Wits boss under whip over workers' plight

'We are tired of being hungry, of having only R2 000 – that's pocket money for Habib's kids'

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WHILE Wits University remained open for a second day of classes yesterday following two weeks of shutdown, protesters continued to push management for change. After selecting a team of negotiators made up of PhD students, workers and a law student, workers and students held a mass meeting for vice-chancellor Adam Habib to respond to their nine "minimum demands" for the

university to return to normal. Many of the workers still had not returned to work yesterday and, instead, sang and clapped as they marched across campus. The top issue on the table is the outsourcing of workers at the university. At the outset of the Wits protest, workers had joined students in blocking the university gates, and outsourcing quickly became one of the issues the #FeesMustFall movement sought to address. "We are tired of being hungry, of having only R2 000. That

R2 000 is pocket money for (Habib's) children. Every day we live on the leftovers of you guys," one worker told the crowd during the first week of protest. After President Jacob Zuma agreed to the zero percent fee increase that was the students' original demand, some of the workers began to say the students had abandoned them. Both on Twitter and on campus, many students who wanted to continue with the protest cited outsourcing as a reason. By Wednesday, a group of

students had rallied to support the workers. At yesterday's mass meeting, students, workers and academics called on Habib to address what they see as great injustice and exploitation. "The intention is to rehumanise black workers who have been dehumanised by this institution for a long time," said Lwazi Lushaba, one of those selected for the negotiating team. One worker who addressed the crowd mostly in Zulu burst into tears as she switched to English to say: "How can anyone be

living off these wages? I'm so sick of this, Mr Habib." The crowd cheered loudly for her. "I have lost faith in this system," another student added, citing Wednesday's actions of police in riot gear. Three Wits students were also facing an interdict in the high court in Johannesburg following the outburst of violence on Wednesday. Habib said the interdict was necessary to maintain a police presence on standby outside the university gates to ensure other students felt safe.

The academic who addressed the crowd questioned the ethics of a university that put money before social justice. "The starting point must be simple and clear. As each contract ends, those workers must be insourced," he said. Habib spent most of the meeting with his head in his hands. He said he would commit to forming a task team that would take about a month to determine the costs of insourcing, but he couldn't go further. @bgirledukate

UCT rector opposes free education for all

UNIVERSITY of Cape Town vice-chancellor Max Price yesterday reiterated his stance that he opposed students' calls for free education for all. "I cannot support a call for free university education, which is the call of many student formations," Price said during a media briefing in Cape Town. "The call I can support is for free education for the poor or for those in need," he clarified. Price's briefing followed the university's announcement yesterday morning that it – alongside the National Education, Health and Allied Workers Union Joint Shop Stewards Council – had signed an agreement to end all outsourcing. The briefing was to elaborate on this decision and update the media on recent developments at the university. Price's stance on free education, which he had expressed last week, matched Higher Education and Training Minister Blade Nzimande's statement on the matter. Nzimande, during his presentation to Parliament's portfolio committee on higher education and

training, said the government's stance was that education should be free only for the poor. However, despite the matching stance in this regard, Price said the government had reacted to the nationwide demands for the scrapping of all university fees incorrectly. "We reacted and that to me is an indictment on the government because the issue of funding higher education has been discussed at a number of commissions," said Price. "We have known we have this problem, and we have not addressed it. Responding to it in a crisis leads to poor decisions." Price said he was of the opinion that the decision of zero percent increases for everyone needed to be reversed after 2016. "What we should have had was a zero percent increase for the poor and the normal increases for others," he said. "There must be significant and appropriate increases for those who can afford it. Why should relatively wealthy people be subsidised by the government?" – ANA

Vow to continue protests at TUT until demands are met

NTANDO MAKHUBU

TSHWANE University of Technology remained closed for the ninth day yesterday as students continued to protest about many issues, among them security on campuses and student funding. All operations have been at a standstill, and students were adamant yesterday that things would go back to normal only once an agreement was reached. "We want to go back to class but we can't ignore the issues," said Cabanga Maluleka, the regional deputy secretary of the South African Students' Congress. Maluleka, who is from the Soshanguve campus, accused management of being arrogant in the manner in which they dealt with student matters. "All campuses have different challenges but they choose to apply a blanket solution to them all, and that can't work," he said. Among some of the issues most campuses shared was the lack of security and the poor standard of food served in the cafeterias.

The national student fund and its failure to provide sufficient funding for all needy students remained a bone of contention, Maluleka said. "Infrastructure development is also a problem which they refuse to address." He added that those and other issues were in the memorandums handed to management. Twelve students at the main campus in Pretoria West were suspended when students abandoned classes and rampaged on campus last month. Their suspensions were lifted after conditions were set by management, including that they refrain from taking part in protests, but they were suspended again for failing to stick to the agreement. During their protests yesterday, students at the main campus said they wanted their leaders back before they would consider returning to class. They clashed with security and police officers, who wanted to eject them from the campus. University spokeswoman Willa de Ruyter couldn't be reached for comment yesterday.



BATTLEFIELD: Rubble on the road to the entrance of the University of North West's campus in Mahikeng after violence broke out during a "no increase in fees" protest. PICTURES: NOKUTHULA MBATHA

Petrol bombs found on campus

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WHILE petrol bombs were discovered at North West University's Mmabatho campus in Mahikeng, students at the Potchefstroom campus yesterday mobilised community members to help them fight the institution. Earlier on Wednesday, Mmabatho campus students were evicted from residences following violence related to the no fees protest. The university decided to remove them from campus after they vandalised the cafeteria and several stores. Yesterday, vice-chancellor Dan Kgadi said a large number of petrol bombs were found on campus. He said the campus was "under siege". "Our approach has been to take the campus back from students. We had a meeting with parents to explain the situation. We felt the best thing was to close the campus so that sanity can prevail." Some students were still on campus and the institution said it couldn't guarantee



PROTEST TAKES VIOLENT TURN: The exterior of the cafeteria was vandalised by students of the University of North West's campus in Mahikeng. The students also vandalised the bookshop and printing store.

their safety. Students yesterday milled about the entrance, which was strewn with debris and burnt tyres. Police officer stood watch as students were given food by volunteers from the community. The student representative council was locked in meetings with management all day. Mmabatho campus SRC president Linda Mabengwane said their meeting with management agreed exams would

be postponed to November 16, continuing till December 10, with supplementary exams from January 11. "What we did not agree on was the eviction of students from residences until November 15. We are going to approach our lawyers and challenge this." He said the university didn't have an eviction order, so the evictions were illegal. Management and the SRC also agreed that no students would be charged for taking part in the protest. Meanwhile, the situation was different at the Potchefstroom campus, with classes continuing yesterday. In the evening, students from the movement Reform PUK met at the Govan Mbeki Hall in Ikageng township to mobilise the community. Reform PUK's Thembeile Peach said they had held meetings with university management two weeks ago but they weren't receiving the answers they wanted. "We demand parallel medium classes instead of only Afrikaans," he said.



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ANC takes DA members to task for not declaring benefits

MARIANNE MERTEN

THE ANC in Parliament is reporting 11 DA MPs to the joint ethics committee for failing to declare the benefits they derived during the party's contestation for positions in the run-up to the DA's national congress in May. Among them were DA leader Mmusi Maimane, who was elected into the party's top post at the congress, and his opponent Wilmot James, who vied for various party position, the ANC chief whip's office said yesterday. However, just hours later, DA chief whip John Steenhuisen apologised for what he called an "oversight", adding that he had ensured every MP in question had now submitted their full declarations to Parliament. "We acknowledge these declarations (on contributions to the party position election contest) should have also been included in the parliamentary register of members' interests, and we regret this report," said Steenhuisen, adding that all benefits had been declared to the party. Parliament's register of members' interests was published on Wednesday. Every year, parliamentarians must declare gifts, benefits, sponsorships, share and financial interests, property and income outside their job at the national legislature. The information is then published. Yesterday, the ANC chief whip's office said it was concerned about the lack of sufficient disclosure, given that it was common knowledge that some of the campaigns were expensive. "We are mindful that there is no legislation directly regulating disclosure of private funding of political parties.



ACTION: ANC chief whip Stone Sizani's office is reporting the non-disclosure. PICTURE: DAVID RITCHIE



FAILURE: DA leader Mmusi Maimane is among 11 party MPs fingered. PICTURE: EPA

"However, these DA MPs cannot use this fact as a scapegoat, as the benefits they may have received were handed to them personally, a matter which is regulated under the code." If found guilty of a breach of the parliamentary code of conduct and declarations of interests, penalties range from a reprimand in the House, a fine not greater than a month's salary, a reduction of allowances for not longer than 30 days, and/or the suspension of privileges, including the right to attend a sitting, for no longer than a month.