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COVID-19 news from SAMED, Government and Abroad.

AMENDED HEALTH GUIDELINES ON DEATH MANAGEMENT DURING COVID-19

Amendments have been published on directions issued on the Disaster Management Act: Measure to address, prevent and combat the spread of COVID-19. The amendment includes a new insertion with regards to the handling, storage and burial of mortal remains from COVID related deaths.

Download the amendment [here](#).

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COPING WITH COVID: A GUIDE TO MANAGING MILD COVID-19 DISEASE AT HOME

Doctors Aysha Kola and Waasila Jassat have given some guidance on identifying the symptoms and a subsequent mild case of COVID-19. This includes a differentiation between isolation and quarantine, managing symptoms, breathing exercises and when to seek further medical care.

Download the guide [here](#).

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A NEW INCLUSIVE ECONOMIC FUTURE FOR SOUTH AFRICA: DELIVERING AN ACCELERATED ECONOMIC RECOVERY STRATEGY

South Africa will only be able to materially improve the lives of all South Africans and deliver on the promise of 1994 if we are able to kick-start, and sustain, high levels of inclusive economic growth.

South Africa entered a technical recession last year and with the arrival of COVID-19 at the beginning of March 2020, it is clearly evident that the associated economic and social ramifications for South Africa are more severe than previously anticipated.

Business for South Africa (B4SA), established as business' response to the COVID-19 pandemic, expects GDP to decline by between 8% and 10% in 2020, recovering in the next two years to pre-COVID-19 levels, with muted growth thereafter. It forecasts a budget deficit of 13.3% for this fiscal year. Meanwhile, government debt is escalating to record levels in both absolute terms and as a percentage of GDP. In the absence of growth enhancing structural reforms, budget deficits are expected to remain high and government debt is expected to exceed 100% of GDP in 2023 (vs. 26% in 2008), as annual budget deficits remain above 13% of GDP.

It is B4SA's view that the nation has arrived at a fork in the road. Protecting the status quo with only marginal changes locks in an accelerated downward trend, while a committed leadership willing to make difficult, though sometimes unpalatable choices focussed on appropriate policies, which enable investment and thus inclusive growth, can decisively improve the economic and social trajectory of the country.



The devastating impact of Covid-19 presents an opportunity to reimagine South Africa's future. B4SA has adopted a multi-disciplinary approach for an accelerated economic recovery strategy. This harnesses South Africa's potential in the shortest possible time by leveraging all resources – across government, business, and civil society – to address the economic and social challenges which we face.

The devastating impact of COVID-19 presents an opportunity to reimagine South Africa's future, one which we all have to grasp. B4SA, representing the vast majority of South African business, working in partnership and supported by a number of business associations, including the Association for Savings and Investments South Africa, the Black Business Council, Banking Association of South Africa, Business Unity South Africa, Business Leadership South Africa, and the Minerals Council of South Africa, has adopted a multi-disciplinary approach for an accelerated economic recovery strategy. This harnesses South Africa's potential in the shortest possible time by leveraging all resources – across government, business, and civil society – to address the economic and social challenges which we face.

This unique collective can only succeed if all constituents work in unison to address these economic and social challenges.

It is B4SA's view that a coherent economic recovery strategy, which is clearly articulated as well as competently and efficiently implemented and led with visible urgency, will enable a new narrative to be established about South Africa's macro-economic potential and in so doing improve confidence, investment, inclusive growth and unemployment levels. The work prioritises 12 key initiatives, from a list of over 50, some of which can be launched immediately, across 11 high-impact sectors. B4SA has also identified 12 policy focus areas.

B4SA's detailed assessment identifies and addresses key issues and constraints, many of which predate this crisis, and which have now been exacerbated. It sets out recommendations and proposals which business, government, labour and civil society can discuss and, potentially, implement as partners in order to reset South Africa's economic and social development path, and to enable the nation to enjoy a better future.

The Covid-19 crisis represents an opportunity for all stakeholders to consider what is required for the country to move ahead successfully and with conviction. This will require ruthless prioritisation and difficult decisions. A new social and economic compact must be forged in parallel, and a cohesive plan will need to be jointly developed and implemented by government, business and other social partners. Committed leadership is needed to drive decisions to conclusion with speed.

The B4SA [ACCELERATED ECONOMIC RECOVERY STRATEGY](#) is being put forward as the basis for an intensive process of engagement, which we hope will lead to increased trust between societal stakeholders, and to a new form of partnership between government and business in pursuit of shared challenges.

To access the full B4SA Accelerated Economic Recovery Strategy, [click here](#).

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COVID-19 DEVELOPMENTS

TRACKING THE PANDEMIC



COVID-19: 129 new deaths, 13 674 new infections, as confirmed cases soar to 238 339

- Health Minister Zweli Mkhize on Thursday announced that South Africa has recorded 13 674 new COVID-19 infections, taking the cumulative total of confirmed cases to 238 339. According to Mkhize, SA also registered 129 new deaths, with the death toll rising to 3 720. As for those who have recovered from the virus, the total now sits at 113 061 – a recovery of 47.4%. South Africa has also conducted two million COVID-19 tests so far.

80% of South Africans who contracted COVID-19 at work are women

- Female workers represent more than 80% of all COVID-19 claims received by the Compensation Fund from employees who contracted the disease on the job, [the department of employment and labour said in a statement](#).
- "We are aware that our frontline workers like nurses and other medical staff have been affected by the pandemic. We would like to send the appeal for employers to ensure that workers are adequately protected and are given the necessary protective gear to do their jobs. Our figures show that most affected employees are nurses who are paying the ultimate price so that we get a second chance and survive the pandemic," said Employment and Labour Minister Thulas Nxesi.
- The Compensation Fund has received a total of 941 claims to date with the highest number coming from the Western Cape. The province recorded 657 claims, of which 533 were from women. In the Eastern Cape, 99 claimants were received and in KwaZulu-Natal, 98 claims.

Global coronavirus cases surge past 12 million

- More than 12 million coronavirus infections have now been recorded across the world, over half in the United States and Latin America, according to an AFP tally on Thursday.
- At least 12 063 425 cases and 549 451 deaths have been recorded, with the number of infections doubling since 31 May. About half of those who caught the virus have recovered.

CLINICAL, MEDICAL, SCIENTIFIC

A new, more infectious - but not deadlier - coronavirus strain is now the dominant global strain

- In just over seven months, there have been more than 11 million cases of the novel [coronavirus](#) that causes COVID-19 globally.
- As the pandemic progresses, scientists are investigating how new strains develop, as this will tell us more about how the virus is spreading, and how it could affect vaccine development.
- New research from Sheffield University, published in the journal [Cell](#) on 6 July 2020, has shown that a new mutation of the viral genome of COVID-19 has improved its ability to infect human cells.
- This means that the virus spreads more easily without necessarily being deadlier.
- The researchers analysed genome samples from SARS-CoV-2 and found that a variant named D614G quickly took over as the dominant strain soon after its first appearance. According to the [study authors](#), geographic samples showed a significant shift in viral population from the original strain of the virus to this new strain.
- There is a small, yet significant difference in the way the "spike" glycoprotein on the surface of the virus enters and infects human cells – making the viral load higher and more likely that someone would test positive for COVID-19.

Africa could have a COVID-19 vaccine in the first quarter of 2021

- Human trials underway in South Africa, said Shabir Madhi, professor of vaccinology at University of Witwatersrand who is leading the South African trial. "A vaccine could be made commercial as early as the beginning of next year. But it is completely dependent on the results of clinical trials," Madhi cautioned, adding that out of the 19 potential vaccines being tried out, the most positive outcome would be if even two succeed.

drugmaker AstraZeneca on development and production.

Production has started on three non-invasive respiratory [ventilators](#)

- They are designed, developed and now manufactured in South Africa through the National Ventilator Programme. The machines provide a mix of pure oxygen and air through a well-sealed mask over the patient's head.
- About 1,000 machines will be made each week until the goal of 10,000 has been met. These numbers will be doubled if more funding is found. The leading engineers are hopeful that this can become a sustainable area of expertise in the medical design and manufacturing industry of South Africa.
- The ambitious plan to build more than 10 000 ventilators in the country by the end of June has been delayed by weeks. The project manager Willem Esterhyse said it has been delayed due to regulatory approval, but that the production had started. Full production capacity was expected to be reached once the Production Readiness Review Meeting took place on 11 July. So far, the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) has been contracted to provide 10 000 units, while negotiations are underway with three other companies whose prototypes received South African Health Products Regulatory Authority (SAHPRA) approval.
- Esterhyse said two of the three other companies had been granted approval to produce ventilators, subject to additional usability testing data being provided within 30 days. "The first batch of 2 000 is expected to be delivered towards the end of this month (July), ramping up to 6 000 units by mid-August, and the balance by the beginning of September," he said.
- The companies involved in possibly manufacturing ventilators in the project are the CSIR, Gabler Medical (Pty) Ltd, Military Marine Onsite (Pty) Ltd, Directech (Pty) Ltd, OSC Marine (Pty) Ltd and SAVEP who have all produced prototypes for the National Ventilator Project.

ECONOMICS, POLITICS, EDUCATION, ENVIRONMENT, SOCIAL

SA now shops earlier in the day.

- An analysis of vehicle movements in South Africa shows a big change in when and where locals do their shopping.
- The study by the vehicle recovery company Netstar and the geospatial intelligence group Geo Intelligence, done over recent months, shows that before lockdown most shopping was done during the evening when people were returning from work.
- At the start of the national lockdown, vehicle traffic was down 90% and few people were out shopping.
- By Level 4 of the national lockdown, drivers were doing most of their shopping closer to the noon hours. This trend persisted into Level 3, despite curfews and restrictions on businesses being lifted.
- The busiest times at grocery stores are now between 10:00 and midday in most provinces. There's a steep drop-off in driving to stores after 16:00.

Gauteng health dept explains comments about 1.5 million graves ahead of COVID-19 spike

- The Gauteng Department of Health (GDoH) has moved to explain Health MEC Dr Bandile Masuku's comments on over 1.5 million gravesites being prepared.
- On Wednesday, Masuku said more than 1.5 million gravesites were being prepared. His remarks were made as COVID-19 cases in Gauteng have been increasing sharply.
- On Thursday, in a statement, the department said it wanted to clarify the confusion about the number of graves dug for expected COVID-19 deaths.
- "The province does not have over a million already open dug graves, the over a million graves refers to the collective capacity municipalities can take," the statement read.
- "The GDoH is continuing to improve and increase both the infrastructure and human resource capacity of the health system to deal with the increasing pressure from the COVID-19 pandemic," the statement read.

Extension tension – Can President Ramaphosa afford to tighten lockdown rules?

- With South Africa's COVID-19 cases having officially breached the 200 000 mark, everyone's eyes are on what President Cyril Ramaphosa's administration will do to get a grip on the health crisis and how it will feed into an economy in its deepest winter since the 1920s.
- While the Western Cape province, especially the City of Cape Town, has carried the heaviest load in terms of cases in the pandemic, Gauteng is rapidly becoming the next epicentre for infections.
- The two richest provinces in the country have had the most cases and, as such, restrictions are unlikely to be without economic consequences. In order to better cope with the disease, government could increase lockdown restrictions this month, which will have a second wave of negative effects on the economy."

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economic activity was brought to a halt under level five restrictions.

[Back clean energy post-virus, UN chief urges leaders](#)

- United Nations chief Antonio Guterres on Thursday urged world leaders to favour clean energy solutions as they pour money into their economies to save them from a coronavirus-induced meltdown.
- Governments should exit coal, stop subsidising other fossil fuels, and pressure polluting industries to clean up their act in exchange for bailing them out, the UN Secretary-General told an International Energy Agency conference by video link.
- "Today I would like to urge all leaders to choose the clean energy route for three vital reasons - health, science and economics," Guterres said.

Full op-ed published in the [Daily Maverick is available here](#)

[Ethical clothes: shoppers are open to making the switch – retailers must seize the moment](#)

- The fashion industry has been struggling with sustainability long before the COVID-19 pandemic. Low-price garments became more attractive to shoppers after their spending power was weakened by the financial crisis between 2007 and 2009.
- Yet amidst what this pandemic brings, there is an opportunity for the fashion industry to help factory workers and put sustainability at the heart of its business.
- A trend that should be encouraged is the initiatives that expand the lifecycle of clothing.
- The decisions by fashion retailers like [Burberry](#) and [Prada](#) to divert into making medical gowns and masks for healthcare workers are a good starting point. If companies can make positive changes to help manage coronavirus, they can also address fast fashion.
- One fashion entrepreneur that has developed a different way of helping garment workers during the pandemic is Edinburgh-based Cally Russell. He set up the [Lost Stock initiative](#), which sells the garments from orders cancelled by UK fashion retailers by purchasing garments directly from manufacturers in Bangladesh.
- [TOMS \(Tomorrow's Shoes\)](#) is an example of a fashion business with giving at the core of its strategy: for every pair of shoes sold, a pair is donated to a child in need. Since 2006, 100 million pairs of shoes have been donated, and TOMS [has since branched](#) into areas like eyewear

[Most SA houses are now worthless due to COVID, but these are selling at the above asking price](#)

- In a new report, FNB predicts that property prices will fall by around 5% this year – but properties that cost less than R750,000 should be more resilient. They said that while the prices of houses above R750,000 should fall, relative resilience in the affordable market is expected.
- In the past three months, only 39% of properties below R750,000 were sold below asking price – compared to a whopping 92% of pricier houses, an FNB survey among estate agents shows. In fact, 5% of these affordable properties were sold *above* asking prices.
- On average, for all SA properties, the final selling price was 12% below asking price in the second quarter, from 13% in the first quarter.

LEGAL

[High court decision – small restaurant against insurer](#)

- In a recent judgment handed down by the Western Cape High Court, an urgent declaratory order was successfully obtained against GuardRisk Insurance ("Guardrisk") by Café Chameleon ("Chameleon") ordering Guardrisk to pay out Chameleon's business interruption (BI) claims arising from the COVID-19 pandemic
- Chameleon's claim was for loss suffered as a result of the interruption to its business following the imposition of lockdown regulations in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The BI section of the Policy provides coverage for "interruption or interference with the business due to notifiable disease occurring within a radius of 50 km of the premises".
- Guardrisk argued that Chameleon's BI Claim does not fall within the Infectious Diseases Extension clause of the Policy. They denied that a competent local authority had stipulated that COVID-19 shall be notified to it as required in terms of the Policy and that Chameleon's business was interrupted by the Lockdown Regulations promulgated to curb the spread of COVID-19 and not because of an outbreak of COVID-19 in a particular area.
- The court considered both factual and legal causation. Factual causation entails a "but for" enquiry where the question is asked: "but for the COVID-19 outbreak, would the interruption or interference to Chameleon's business have occurred?". The test for legal causation involves considerations of legal policy, reasonableness, fairness and justice.
- The court found that both factual and legal causation had been established by Chameleon and accordingly that Guardrisk was liable to indemnify the insured for its BI Claim.

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IHRM: Webinar Update on the Impact of COVID-19

IHRM invites you to join them for a webinar on 31 July at 09h00 when Christoff Raath, Joint CEO of Insight Actuaries and Consultants, will provide an updated analysis on the Impact of COVID-19 on Medical Schemes and Private Hospitals, as South Africa reaches the peak of the pandemic.

For more details or to register [click here](#).

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SAMED is the voice of the South African medical technology industry. The not-for-gain-association was formed in 1985 and aims to provide members with a collective, objective and credible platform to engage with stakeholders. SAMED's members include individual medical technology companies, associate members and associations.

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