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COVID-19 news from SAMED, Government and Abroad.

LISTEN AS SALDA EXECUTIVE OFFICER, SARAH COHEN, ADDRESSES COVID-19 TESTING.

Dial into SA FM for The Weekend View with presenter Udo Carelse on Saturday morning (06:30) as Sarah Cohen addresses COVID-19 testing in South Africa. This will be based on the press release issued by SAMED and SALDA jointly.

[Read the full release here](#)

PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS 23 JULY 2020

On 23 July 2020, President Ramaphoza addressed the nation. The two matters that he focused on was the re-opening of schools and the second was the management of the resources dedicated towards the fight against COVID-19.

While it remained of vital importance that the development and progress of learners not be impeded, Rhamaphoza declared that, after consultation with various stakeholders and expert bodies, Cabinet had decided that all public schools would close for four weeks (27 July to 24 August 2020). Two exceptions were:

- Grade 12 learners and teachers who would only break for a week, returning to school on 3 August, and
- Grade 7 learners who would break for two weeks, returning to school on 10 August.

The President said that as a result of the disruptions caused by the pandemic, the current academic year would be extended beyond the end of 2020.

A historic R500 billion social relief and economic support package was established to direct resources towards our coronavirus response and assist businesses, workers and households. The R500 billion package, Ramaphoza stated, has several parts and focused on giving the greatest assistance to those in greatest need.

- Firstly, it redirects resources to fund the health response to coronavirus.
- Secondly, it provides direct support to households and individuals for the relief of hunger and social distress.
- Thirdly, the package provides assistance to companies in distress and seeks to protect jobs

To date, a total of R1.5 billion in support has been provided to all these businesses.

The President went on to condemn corruption and mismanagement of these public funds. He indicated that several preventative measures had been put in place. Furthermore, Rhamaphoza has signed a proclamation authorising the Special Investigating Unit – the SIU – to investigate any unlawful or improper conduct in the procurement of any goods, works and services during or related to the national state of disaster in any state institution.

Download the Presidential address [here](#).

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FUNCTIONING IN THE AGE OF COVID-19 – RESOURCES FOR BUSINESS

COVID-19 will be a reality for our foreseeable future. To successfully operate under these new conditions, B4SA expresses a need to innovate, rapidly adjust and adopt new ways of working, interacting and taking care of each other. On Tuesday, Business for South Africa hosted a webinar on “Functioning in the age of COVID-19”, with Anglo American and the Return to Work initiative.

During the webcast, Nolitha Fakude, Chairperson of Anglo American’s Management Board in South Africa, Dr Charles Mbekeni, Lead for Health for Anglo American in South Africa, and Tanya Cohen on behalf of Return2Work and Citizens in Solidarity shared leadership lessons and practical tips on how business can adapt and respond to support the lives and livelihoods of employees and communities. B4SA also shared information about resources and tools that can be used by business of all sizes.



To access the presentations and resources mentioned on the call, please follow the links:

- [CLICK HERE TO LISTEN TO THE WEBINAR RECORDING](#)
- [CLICK HERE TO ACCESS RETURN2WORK RESOURCES](#)
- [CLICK HERE TO ACCESS FREE CITIZENS IN SOLIDARITY BEHAVIOUR CHANGE RESOURCES](#)

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SAHPRA UPDATED AND NEW DOCUMENTS PUBLISHED

- [UPDATED! MD001 Regulatory Requirements for Medical Devices COVID-19 - Version 2 Updated 22/07/2020](#)
- [UPDATED! MD002 Regulatory Requirements for Serological Test Kits - Version 2 Updated 22/07/2020](#)
- [NEW! MD003 Testing for COVID-19 - Version 1 22/07/2020](#)
- [MD004 EXTENSION - Use of Acknowledgement Letter in Lieu of Licence - Version 1 31/03/2020](#)
- [NEW! MD005 Expedited Regulatory Pathways for Medical Devices - Version 1 22/07/2020](#)
- [NEW! MD006 Laboratory Testing and Use of COVID-19 Serological Test Kits - Version 1 22/07/2020](#)
- [UPDATED! MD007 Specifications Serological Test kits - Version 2 Updated 22/07/2020](#)
- [NEW! MD008 ISO Standards for Medical Devices and Protective Clothing - Version 1 22/07/2020](#)
- [MD009 Alternative Regulatory Licensing Requirements Alcohol-based sanitisers - Version 1 03/07/2020](#)
- [MD010 Guidance Rapidly-developed-ventilators - Version 1 26/05/2020](#)
- [NEW! MD011 Licence Conditions for COVID-19 Serological Test Kits - Version 1 22/07/2020](#)
- [NEW! MD012 Notice of Contravention of Act 101 of 1965 - Version 1 22/07/2020](#)
- [NEW! MD013 Process Flow Locally Manufactured COVID-19 Test Kits - Version 1 22/07/2020](#)

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- [NEW! D017 Technical Review Application COVID-19 Molecular Test Kits - Version 1 22/07/2020](#)
- [NEW! MD018 Specifications Molecular Test kits - Version 1 22/07/2020](#)
- [NEW! MD019 Processing of licence applications - Version 1 22/07/2020](#)

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COVID-19 DEVELOPMENTS

TRACKING THE PANDEMIC



Medical Research Council reports estimated 17 000 excess deaths during Covid-19 outbreak

- The South African Medical Research Council (SAMRC) on Wednesday reported an estimated 17 000 more deaths than expected, or "excess deaths", occurred in the country since May this year.
- The SAMRC's Burden of Disease Research Unit, together with the Centre for Actuarial Research at the University of Cape Town, publishes a weekly mortality report that tracks excess deaths. The excess is calculated using the number of reported deaths from the National Population Register (NPR), which is maintained by Home Affairs. A forecast is calculated based on the number of deaths reported from natural and unnatural causes in past years.
- The SAMRC said on Wednesday that, in the past weeks, the number of excess deaths showed a "relentless increase". By the second week of July, there were 59% more deaths from natural causes than would have been expected based on historical data. It also means that reported deaths have shown a pattern that is completely different to those indicated by historical trends."
- According to Professor Debbie Bradshaw, a co-author of the report, the timing and geographic pattern leave no room to question whether this is associated with the COVID-19 epidemic. "However, the weekly death reports have revealed a huge discrepancy between the country's confirmed Covid-19 deaths and number of excess natural deaths," said Bradshaw.

CLINICAL, SCIENTIFIC

Fear of COVID-19 has caused major disruption to SA healthcare

- The coronavirus has infected around 13 000 health workers and killed more than 100 of them, the health department said on Thursday, as the virus takes its toll on frontline caregivers.
- The country has the highest number of infections on the continent, with 394 948 recorded cases and 5 940 deaths as of Wednesday. It is also the world's fifth worst-affected country in terms of diagnosed infections.
- Health Minister Zweli Mkhize's spokesperson, Popo Maja, told AFP that 13 174 health workers had become infected as of Tuesday, including 103 deaths and 6 394 people declared recovered.
- The country's statistics were unveiled as the World Health Organisation (WHO) reported more than 10 000 health workers in 40 countries had been sickened by the virus.
- "The growth we are seeing in COVID-19 cases in Africa is placing an ever-greater strain on health services across the continent," said Matshidiso Moeti, WHO regional director for Africa, at a news conference on Thursday. "This has very real consequences for the individuals who work in them, and there is no more sobering example of this than the rising number of health worker infections," she said.
- A combination of a recent spike in infections, staff shortages and a lack of personal protective equipment (PPE) have been blamed for the infection increases. A recent report by the National

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workers. Those infected included nurses, doctors, porters, administrators, paramedics and laboratory scientists.

ECONOMICS, POLITICS, EDUCATION, ENVIRONMENT, SOCIAL

Ramaphosa declares schools will shut for 4 weeks - but Grade 12s get 1 week's break

- A week after teachers' unions called for schools to close amid the upcoming peak in COVID-19 infections in South Africa, Cabinet has decided to shut all public schools for four weeks - but there are exceptions.
- President Cyril Ramaphosa announced on Thursday while addressing the nation, that public schools would close from 27 July to 24 August.
- Grade 12s will, however, only take a week's break and return on 3 August.
- Grades 7s will get a two-week break, returning on 10 August.
- "Specific arrangements will be made for different categories of special schools. As a result of the disruptions caused by the pandemic, the current academic year will be extended beyond the end of 2020.
- Ramaphosa said the decision was taken following engagement with the Department of Basic Education and more than 60 organisations representing parents, school governing bodies, principals, educators, independent schools and civil society organisations.
- The National School Nutrition Programme will continue to operate during the closure.

The SIU was just let loose on coronavirus corruption – here's what it will investigate

- The Special Investigating Unit (SIU) will be looking into fraud and mismanagement of money intended to combat the coronavirus and its economic and social impact, President Cyril Ramaphosa said on Thursday. But the scope of its work will be broader than that, [the formal proclamation of the SIU's scope of work](#), immediately published on Thursday, shows.
- He mentioned six ways in which money was being misdirected, misused, or stolen:
 - fraudulent Unemployment Insurance Fund (UIF) claims
 - overpricing of goods and services
 - violation of emergency procurement regulations
 - collusion between officials and service providers
 - abuse of food parcel distribution
 - setting up fake non-profit organisations to access relief funding
- The SIU's mandate is extremely broad, covering officials or employees of state institutions – "or any other person or entity" – in their actions during the national state of disaster, which was declared on 15 March and is expected to continue for months more.
- Within that disaster period, the unit must investigate procurement or contracting for any "goods, works and services", with a specific mention for "the construction, refurbishment, leasing, occupation and use of immovable property".
- It is due to look for fraud or actions by people "to corruptly or unduly benefit themselves or any other person". But Ramaphosa also wants it to investigate failures to apply rules, from legislation right down to "circulars or instructions issued by the National Treasury or the relevant Provincial Treasury".
- Payments that were "not fair, competitive, transparent, equitable or cost-effective" are also part of the SIU's work.
- Where there are such breaches, the SIU has the power to follow contracts, companies, and people back as far as it needs to, and there is no limit on how far into the future it can pursue relevant leads.

OTHER

Coronavirus lockdowns reduced human 'rumble'

- Everything we do - from driving our cars to operating our factories - produces high-frequency ground motions that can be detected by seismometers. An international team of researchers says this noise fell by up to half when coronavirus restrictions were enforced.
- The period March-May represents "the longest and most prominent global anthropogenic seismic noise reduction on record", [they tell Science journal](#).
- The group obtained their motion data from a global network of 268 seismic stations in 117 countries. Their information reveals how the quieting started in January in China, the origin of the COVID-19 crisis, and then spread like a wave to the rest of the globe.
- As people were ordered home, travel restrictions were imposed, and places of work came to a halt - the usual vibrations put into the ground were abruptly dialled down.
- The biggest reductions were recorded in the most densely populated areas, like Singapore and New York City, but drops were also observed in remote areas like Germany's Black Forest and Rundu in Namibia. And the phenomenon wasn't confined just to the surface; the quieting was evident even at stations placed in boreholes hundreds of metres underground.

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announced an extension to the COVID-19 TERS relief payments scheme.

- Speaking under the theme Protecting Workers and Jobs in the era of COVID-19, the Deputy Minister of Employment and Labour, Ms Boitumelo Moloji announced: *“Following due diligence and consultation with the Unemployment Insurance Fund actuaries, and in line with the President’s decision to extend the life of the Disaster Management Act until 15th August, we have taken the decision to similarly extend the COVID-19 TERS benefit until 15th August 2020.”* The benefit structure and existing criteria remain the same, says the Department of Employment and Labour Media Statement.
- According to Lawtons Africa: This will be a welcome relief to all employers. We now await the law underpinning the public announcement made by the Ministry

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COVID-19 EVENTS



BHFinvite you to the first webinar in the BHF Dialogue 20/20 series, scheduled to take place on Wednesday, 29 July 2020. This session forms part of a six-series of virtual dialogue that seeks to connect the healthcare industry to enable engagement and facilitate collaboration on issues impacting the healthcare ecosystem now. The theme of the first session is: Reorganising our healthcare ecosystem – Putting the patient first. It takes a closer look at efforts underway in the healthcare sector to reorganise and sustain the ecosystem, in order to meet the needs of the health citizens in the wake of COVID-19.

This session consists of a multisectoral panel, which will be facilitated by Professor Khama Rogo, Lead Health Sector Specialist at the World Bank. It will address current concerns from each sector and explore innovative solutions to balancing priorities in a pressured and high-risk environment.

DATE: 29 July 2020, 09:00 - 11:30

Download the draft programme [here](#).

[Click here](#) to register.

For any queries, please contact Mary Manamela| on marym@bhfglobal.com or 011 537 0270

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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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