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**COVID-19 news from SAMED, Government and Abroad.**

### NOTICE OF EXPIRATION OF REBATE CERTIFICATES

Rebate certificates issued by the International Trade Administration Commission of South Africa (ITAC) under rebate item 412.11 have expired effective midnight 31 May 2020. ITAC will not be issuing new certificates hereafter.

Download the notice [here](#).

### COMPETITION COMMISSION'S RESPONSE TO THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

The Competition Commission recognises that COVID-19 poses a public health challenge. It also presents significant economic and social challenges, particularly on unemployment and the trajectory of our economic growth. The Commission also expects that there will likely be an increasing number of mergers by distressed firms, therefore, competition regulation would need to be refocussed to promote access to markets by small and historically disadvantaged firms and to protect consumers and business.

The regulation on excessive pricing on essential goods and block exemptions in healthcare, banking, retail property, hotels and wholesale liquid fuel was put into effect. Off of investigations of uncompetitive practice, an amount of over 5 million Rands has been donated from the Commission to the Solidarity Fund. The Commission continues to monitor the market and investigate claims.

To find out more about their effort, download their press release [here](#).

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**The SAMED Library is a dedicated resource for all COVID-19 related updates, regulations, notices and news.**

**All SAMED COVID-19 updates and related information can be found [here](#).**

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### HPCSA COVID-19 STAGE 3 GUIDELINES

HPCSA urges Healthcare practitioners to adhere to the [environmental guidelines](#) to create and maintain a safe working space.

The [National Institute for Communicable Diseases](#) (NICD) keeps practitioners updated with information concerning COVID-19, ranging from [frequently asked questions](#), providing [technical resources](#) and [guidelines](#), information on [prevention](#), and [communication resources](#) that can be utilised across settings.

- [Guidelines for symptoms monitoring and management of essential workers for COVID-19 related infection](#)
- [Guidelines for quarantine and isolation in relation to COVID-19 exposure and infection](#)
- [COVID-19: returning back to work](#)
- [Guidance on routine immunisation services](#)

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## COVID-19 STATE OF DISASTER AND LOCKDOWN REGULATIONS

### Lockdown level three

Disaster management regulations for COVID-19 lockdown level three were gazetted on 28 May, among other things:

- requiring organisations with more than 500 employees to 'finalise appropriate sector or workplace arrangements or compacts' on, among other things:
  - staggered shifts
  - staff transport
  - daily COVID-19 symptom screening, and
  - 'high health risks'
- Employment & Labour Minister Thulas Nxesi has confirmed that the 29 April ministerial directive on occupational health and safety measures will be amended to reflect an agreement still being negotiated in the National Economic Development and Labour Council on:
  - employer obligations towards staff members with co-morbidities or older than 60
  - quarantining employees who have been in close contact with COVID-19-positive colleagues
  - free face masks, and
  - the right to 'refuse to work' when there is reason to believe that measures to prevent transmission have not been taken.

### Temporary employer/employee relief scheme (Ters)

- The 26 March ministerial directive on temporary unemployment relief during the COVID-19 State of Disaster was amended on 26 May for the fourth time to provide that all workers who lost income or were required to take annual leave during the lockdown are entitled to relief. This is regardless of whether they have made UIF contributions.
- Regarding potential hotspots, according to Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs Minister Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma, a higher level of restrictions may become necessary.

### Transport

- The 30 May ministerial directive on rail commuter services:
  - makes no reference to 1 July as the target date for reopening lines referred to in Transport Minister Fikile Mbalula's media statement, but
  - simply requires the Passenger Road Agency of South Africa (Prasa) to 'continue with the maintenance, servicing and testing of its fleet and (to) further sanitise and disinfect its stations and hubs'.
- The Gautrain's airport service was scheduled to reopen on 1 June.
- According to the Minister, his 31 March directive on air services has been amended to:
  - allow 'limited domestic air travel for business purposes' between four airports, subject to:
    - restrictions on the number of flights per day, and
    - 'authorisation based on the reason for travel'
  - prescribe drop-off and pick-up points
  - determine who may enter a terminal building and the travel authorisations required, and to
  - make pre-flight COVID-19 symptom screening mandatory.
- The 30 May ministerial directive on road-based public passenger transport confirms that inter-provincial travel is permitted under specific circumstances set out in the 28 May disaster management regulations.
- The Minister's statement confirms that 'time restrictions' applicable to all modes of public passenger transport by road have been 'lifted'.
- 'Capacity restrictions' imposed under lockdown levels five and four remain in place.

### Health

- A ministerial directive gazetted on 25 May prescribes the procedures to be followed when handling the mortal remains of people who succumb to the COVID-19 virus.

**STAY SAFE** **EMPLOYMENT & LABOUR**  
SAVE SOUTH AFRICA **EMPLOYER OBLIGATIONS**

**LEVEL 3**

- appoint a **COVID-19 compliance officer**.
- undertake a **risk assessment** of the workplace, and develop a plan for the return to work.
- This must be done before re-opening their businesses - in consultation with representative trade unions and health and safety committees.

**Minister Thulas Nxesi**

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employment & labour  
Department of Employment and Labour  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

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0800 030 007

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**STAY SAFE** **EMPLOYMENT & LABOUR**  
SAVE SOUTH AFRICA **UIF INCOME SUPPORT**

**LEVEL 3**

- UIF has committed over **R17-billion**, and paid out just over **R15-billion** in COVID19 relief benefits to **3 million workers**
- Each of those 3 million recipients have **families and dependents** - greatly increasing the reach of the COVID19 benefit scheme
- We will continue to process the **April applications** as well as resolve outstanding queries

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**STAY SAFE** **EMPLOYMENT & LABOUR**  
SAVE SOUTH AFRICA **EMPLOYER OBLIGATIONS**

**LEVEL 3**

- Ensure the correct number of employees return.
- Ensure that office space and factory floors are in the **desirable state**
- Ensure that cleanliness & hygiene are top of mind with workplaces having been deep-cleaned & vehicles disinfected.

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**LEVEL 3**

- Workers who have had close contact involving a high risk of transmission with a worker – or workers - diagnosed with COVID-19 must be placed on **14 days quarantine with paid sick leave**.
- All persons must wear masks in the workplace and that each employee must be given, **free** of charge, at least **two masks** are retained

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**STAY SAFE** **EMPLOYMENT & LABOUR**  
SAVE SOUTH AFRICA **EMPLOYER OBLIGATIONS**

**LEVEL 3**

- Employees **have a right to refuse to work** if they have a **reasonable belief** that the necessary precautions have not been put in place to prevent the transmission of COVID-19.
- Employers **may not deduct** the cost of Covid-19 precautions from **employees' wages** or require them to pay for these.

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**STAY SAFE** **EMPLOYMENT & LABOUR**  
SAVE SOUTH AFRICA **ECONOMIC RECOVERY**

**LEVEL 3**

"We are also committed to **economic recovery** and **job preservation** as required by section 5 (d) of the Unemployment Insurance Act. Labour Activation Programmes will remain a critical part of the mandate of the Fund along with other job creation programmes."

**Minister Thulas Nxesi**

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BUSINESS FOR SA | COVID-19

## B4SA'S EFFORTS TO INCREASE SHARE OF LOCAL PROCUREMENT

The pandemic has exposed the global risk of an over-reliance on single markets for the supply of PPE. South Africa, as a historic net importer of PPE, is no different. At the onset of the pandemic, PPE represented less than 2% of the overall medical equipment sales in the country, with surgical gloves



While B4SA's PPE procurement efforts in the early stages of the response to the pandemic was to secure urgent, bulk quantities of product from a highly constrained global PPE market, its focus over the past four weeks has been to pivot its procurement efforts to identify, capacitate and source from local manufacturers, and Black-owned suppliers. This will not only provide opportunities for local manufacturing but will also contribute to the country's economic recovery plan and the preservation of jobs.

B4SA has conducted two order phases to date, and is currently entering its third. In the first phase, where it needed to urgently bolster bulk stocks for the country, 28% of orders were from local and, or Black-owned suppliers. In the second phase, it procured 60% of stock from local and, or Black-owned suppliers and as it progresses into the third phase, it is aiming to procure up to 80% of PPE orders from local and, or appropriately empowered suppliers.

The fundamental criteria that underscore B4SA's procurement strategy is price, quality, availability and empowerment. All suppliers are vetted through the B4SA procurement portal, where they undergo a two-part vetting process: the first stage is the vetting of supplier companies, and the second stage is the vetting of that supplier's products.

B4SA's PPE procurement platform is one of many initiatives that are assisting the country to procure critical PPE for frontline health care workers. All parties involved in B4SA operate on the premise that they do so on either a pro bono or not-for-profit basis.

Download the B4SA Update [here](#).

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### A NON-EXHAUSTIVE LIST OF RECENT MEASURES AIMED AT CURBING THE SPREAD OF COVID-19

- **Angola:** The government declared a 15-day State of Public Calamity, from 26 May, which maintained travel restrictions into and out of Luanda province. The State of Calamity replaces a State of Emergency, relaxing various COVID-19 preventative restrictions. *Source: IHS Markit*
- **Cabo Verde:** The Government adopted a motion for a resolution on the second amendment of Resolution No. 97/2017 of 22 August by resolution No. 32/2020 of 24 February, which establishes the Programme to Promote Micro-Entrepreneurship, taking into account the effects of the COVID-19 crisis on the economy. *Source: Government of Cabo Verde*
- **DRC:** Prime Minister, Sylvestre Ilunga Ilunkamba, announced government's plan to set up COVID-19 laboratories in provinces affected by the pandemic. *Source: IHS Markit*
- **Equatorial Guinea:** The Senate Plenary met on 20 May to adopt and approve submission for the next stage of Equatorial Guinea's proposal to join the World Customs Organization. *Source: Government of Equatorial Guinea*
- **Ethiopia:** Finland has approved an additional extension of the CoWASH III project in support of Ethiopia's COVID-19 emergency response. The extension, to run until the end of 2020 at a cost of USD2.67-million, is intended to contribute to COVID-19 emergency response activities in 45 woredas. *Source: Fana Broadcasting Corporate*

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number of cargo airlines now standing at almost 12 from a low of three when the COVID-19 outbreak struck, pushing the cost of freight down to KES236 for a kilo from KES525 for the same quantity previously. *Source: Business Daily*

- **Kenya:** Private sector players, banks and analysts expect Kenya's inflation to remain within the preferred Central Bank of Kenya (CBK) range for the rest of the year, with weaker demand and lower oil prices helping mitigate any COVID-19-related price increases. Inflation stood at 5.62% in April, up from 5.51% in March. The CBK's preferred range is 5% plus or minus 2.5 percentage points. *Source: Business Daily*
- **Kenya:** The Central Bank of Kenya (CBK) has reached out to four international lenders in its effort to craft a credit guarantee scheme to help small and medium enterprises (SMEs) survive the COVID-19 crisis. The institutions involved in the credit guarantee scheme include the World Bank, International Finance Corporation, European Investment Bank and the African Development Bank. The four international financiers are expected to provide technical expertise and may contribute funds on top of the KES3-billion seed capital that the National Treasury has set aside to cushion banks that lend directly to SMEs. *Source: Business Daily*
- **Malawi:** The World Bank has tipped Malawi and other developing countries to improve on transparency if they are to build confidence among potential Foreign Direct Investors. The Bretton Woods' institution says a stable investment climate is also crucial to woo investors. The suggestions are contained in a recent news release by the Bank where it has also committed to support 100 countries in their response to COVID-19. The Bank has pledged USD160-billion in grants and financial support over a 15-month period to help developing countries respond to the health, social and economic impacts of COVID-19. *Source: The Times Group*
- **Namibia:** The negative impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the Namibian economy, combined with the rigidities of the Namibian economy and the government's budgetary position, underlined Moody's change in Namibia's credit risk ratings' outlook to Negative. Moody's expects Namibia's GDP to contract by 7% in 2020. Subdued global commodity prices and COVID-19 lockdown measures are expected to curtail mining production and exports during 2020, while tourism proceeds, contributing around 12% of GDP, are also expected to trail down as a result of the cessation of international travel. The weak growth combined with health-related spending on the COVID-19 virus outbreak are expected to widen the fiscal deficit to an estimated 10% of GDP in 2020, moderating only slowly to 8.5% of GDP in 2021. *Source: IHS Markit*
- **Nigeria:** Rivers State government has cancelled its former decision to resume lockdown of the capital city, comprising Obio/Akpor and Port Harcourt local government areas, as part of its strategy to contain the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic. The governor imposed an 8pm to 6am curfew in the 23 local government areas of the state from 2 June until further notice. He said "all land borders, including all exit and entry routes into Rivers State shall remain closed to human and vehicular traffic, except those on essential services and duly exempted". *Source: The Nation*
- **Rwanda:** The government of Rwanda announced on 21 May, the disbursement of USD152-million to support the national airline – Rwandair – in this pandemic. Up by USD17-million from the initial plan, this financing should enable the company to sustain its cash flow, which has sharply declined since the suspension of scheduled flights on 19 March due to travel restrictions. *Source: Ecofin Agency*
- **Rwanda:** The waiver of fees on all mobile financial transactions by telecoms during the COVID-19 lockdown has led to fast growth in the value and number of mobile money transactions in Rwanda. Data compiled by resource centre insight2impact, and released by open forum for development NextBillion, indicates that the money transacted grew from RWF10.7billion (USD11-million) on 15 March, when the lockdown began, to RWF24billion (USD25.6-million) just a week later. The number of mobile money transactions has since grown exponentially, hitting RWF40.3billion (USD43-million) by 19 April, a 485% growth in value from 16 February, and 397% growth in transactions. The National Bank of Rwanda instructed mobile network operators to waive charges on all transfers with bank wallets, person-to-person and merchant fees on payments. *Source: Rwanda Today*
- **Uganda:** President Yoweri Museveni launched a certified surgical mask factory in Mukono. The President also noted that money has been injected into the Uganda Development Bank to support manufacturers with low-interest loans in order to enhance production. So far, five companies have been certified by the Uganda National Bureau of Standards (UNBS), to produce masks for both local use and export. *Source: New Vision*

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## KING IV GUIDANCE PAPER: RESPONSIBLE LEADERSHIP IN RESPONDING TO COVID-19

During a webinar hosted by Elsabe Klinck and Associates, Michael Judin from Judin-Combrink Inc. mentioned that a sub-committee (of which he is a member) appointed by the main King Committee was writing a paper under the above rubric, "King IV Guidance Paper".

For queries and comments, please contact Michael Judin 083 300 5000 or [michael@elawnet.co.za](mailto:michael@elawnet.co.za)

Download the guidance paper [here](#).

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## REPORT UNLICENCED COMPANIES TO SAHPRA

Several members have contact SAMED about companies trading medical technologies without a SAHPRA Medical Device Establishment License. These companies are trading illegally and it is essential that they be reported to SAHPRA for investigation.

SAHPRA has published a list of licenced companies under documents on their [medical devices page](#) which you can use to check if the company has a Medical Device Establishment License before sending a report. You can download this list as at 26 May 2020, [here](#). Please ensure that you visit the SAHPRA website to obtain updates as this is an evolving list.

Report unlicensed companies by emailing: [mokgadi.fafudi@sahpra.org.za](mailto:mokgadi.fafudi@sahpra.org.za)

## IMPORTANT SAHPRA MEDICAL DEVICE NOTICES

- [MD010 Guidance Rapidly developed ventilators 26May2020 v1](#)
- [PCR Tests Authorised for Listing by SAHPRA – 19.05.2020 Specification criteria for COVID-19 serological test kits](#)
- [Joint Communication-Regulatory Status of Equipment Used to Help Prevent COVID-19](#)
- [NRCS media Release – Standards for Masks and Disinfectants](#)
- [Regulatory Requirements for the manufacture, distribution or wholesale of Serological COVID-19 Rapid Test Kits](#)
- [SAHPRA clarifies the issue of COVID-19 Rapid Test Kits](#)
- [MEDICAL DEVICES INCLUDING IN-VITRO DIAGNOSTICS \(IVDS\) REQUIREMENTS FOR SUPPLY OF MEDICAL DEVICES IN LIGHT OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC](#)

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## SAHPRA MEDICAL DEVICE CONTACTS

SAHPRA has launched a COVID-19 Medical Device Hotline to deal with COVID-19 related queries.

- 084 220 8037
- 072 993 2273
- 078 281 6334

For queries on COVID-19 please email [mdcovid@sahpra.org.za](mailto:mdcovid@sahpra.org.za) and all other regular medical device queries can be sent to [MDnotifications@sahpra.org.za](mailto:MDnotifications@sahpra.org.za)

For general licensing queries: June Searela [june.searela@sahpra.org.za](mailto:june.searela@sahpra.org.za) / 072 828 2416  
For COVID-19 related applications: Matlapeng Shabalala [Matlapeng.Shabalala@sahpra.org.za](mailto:Matlapeng.Shabalala@sahpra.org.za) / 071 302 0409 or  
Khanyisile Nkuku [Khanyisile.Nkuku@sahpra.org.za](mailto:Khanyisile.Nkuku@sahpra.org.za) / 081 854 7109

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Please visit the [FAQ Section](#) of our library as it provides answers to many of the frequently asked questions we receive.



### What must I do to prepare my workplace and have staff return to work?

There are now Occupational Health & Safety Measures that all businesses, apart from health facilities and practices, must adhere to. This applies to those who have been supplying essential goods this far, as well as those that may partially re-open from level 4 and down.

Download the directive [here](#)

You can also find useful tools on the [Return2Work website](#).

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## PARTICIPATE ON B4SA COVID-19 PROCUREMENT PORTAL

The information collected on the B4SA [covid19manager.co.za](https://covid19manager.co.za) platform will be used to ensure supplier verification, regulatory compliance, product availability, reasonable pricing and providing the accurate and most up-to-date logistical information to the procurement department division at BSA to place orders from you and/or assist with ramping up local production. It is an automated process to help facilitate the overwhelming demand currently being experienced in South Africa during the weeks to come.

**NOTE: THIS IS A LIVE SYSTEM SO PLEASE UPDATE YOUR STOCK QUANTITIES AND LEAD TIME AS AND WHEN THEY CHANGE.**

Please see the following [link to the video](#) for an explanation of how to use the portal and click on <https://covid19manager.co.za/> to add your company and product information.

You will most likely be contacted by a member of the BSA procurement team should your information provided need to be verified or an order need to be placed.

If you have any questions about the status of your registration, on the types of PPE and medical equipment that B4SA are procuring, if you are struggling to complete your application, or if you have any other queries, please get in touch with the B4SA support team via [covid19portal@businessresponsecovid19.co.za](mailto:covid19portal@businessresponsecovid19.co.za). If you are not receiving feedback from the administrators, please check your spam/junk folders.

SAMED is appreciative of the support and commitment of our members in fighting this pandemic.

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## THE SOLIDARITY FUND

The Solidarity Fund provided more details on its purpose and mandate of mobilising and coordinating efforts and resources from all South Africans and the international community to assist most vulnerable South Africans to deal with the impact of Covid19 and the consequences of measures intended to slow its rate of infection. One of its key focus areas is a Health Response with direct support for the healthcare system, augmenting both the private and government healthcare sectors to ensure they have what they need, as well as enabling emergency supplies.

Details on how to donate are available on the Fund's website [www.solidarityfund.co.za](http://www.solidarityfund.co.za)

For more information email [info@solidarityfund.co.za](mailto:info@solidarityfund.co.za)

For offers of supply of Medicines and Medical Devices send

to [covid19supplies@businessresponsecovid19.co.za](mailto:covid19supplies@businessresponsecovid19.co.za)

If you are seeking PPE for your hospital, clinic, or NGO please email your request

to [covid19requests@businessresponsecovid19.co.za](mailto:covid19requests@businessresponsecovid19.co.za)

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## PTCMA WEBINAR: INSIGHTS DURING COVID-19

Measuring the impact of COVID-19 on our healthcare environment - what about our economy?

- Where is the Ministerial Advisory Committee (MAC) coming from?
- A vaccine needs to be developed sooner rather than later for COVID-19 but what happens in between?
- Where do we stand with the treatment development for COVID-19?

**Date:** 5 June 2020, 09:45 - 12:30

**For more information or to register,** [click here](#).

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## OMMIA HEALTH COVID-19 VIRTUAL EXPO

Omnia Health Live are bringing together the global healthcare industry, for the largest virtual gathering ever seen before, a whole new concept planned from the ground up to be more diverse and accessible, **taking place 22-26 June 2020.**

[Join the experience here](#)

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## COVID-19 DEVELOPMENTS

### TRACKING THE PANDEMIC

	24-hour change	Total
<b>Confirmed cases</b>	1 716	32 683
<b>Deaths</b>	40	683
<b>Recoveries</b>		16 809 (51.4%)

An article in the Sunday Times by Prof Salim Abdool Karim, Chair of the Ministerial Advisory Committee on the COVID-19 epidemic, noted that the doubling time for coronavirus cases was:

- Two days before the first lockdown.
- 15 days during the strict Level 5 lockdown.
- 12 days since we moved to Level 4 of the lockdown.

So, the rate of infection slowed dramatically during Level 5 and has increased again under Level 4.

### HEALTH DEVELOPMENTS

During a virtual briefing to the South African National Editors Forum (SANEF) yesterday, President Cyril Ramaphosa indicated that health scientists had advised government to move directly to Risk Level 1, but government had also taken note of the WHO guidance to proceed cautiously in relaxing restrictions. Accordingly, It had chosen the **“middle road” of Level 3.**

The President also conceded that the availability of **ICU beds for COVID-19 patients was well below target.** On Friday Health Minister Zweli Mkhize said there were only 2 309 ICU beds presently available for this purpose, while the COVID-19 modelling consortium estimates a peak need for 35 000 ICU beds if the epidemic peaks as early as August. Currently, there are 169 individuals receiving ICU care. (News24)

Western Cape Premier Alan Winde said the Western Cape now had 9 516 active COVID-19 cases and that **additional treatment facilities were nearing completion:** 850 beds at the Cape Town ICC, 60 beds in an MSF facility in Khayelitsha, and 150 at Sonstraal Hospital in Cape Winelands District.

A joint article in Daily Maverick by four prominent health experts (Marc Mendelson, Shabir Madhi, Jeremy Nel and Francois Venter) argues for a **more strategic approach to COVID-19 testing**, in light of the shortage of testing supplies. Given the backlog in testing, an emphasis on testing outside of hospital settings was endangering good patient management and healthcare worker safety, they said. A “course correction” in testing strategy was needed, to confine testing to situations where it could influence a change in management of a patient or inform the public health response. They opposed generalised testing of groups of workers (for example, mine workers) and groups like sportspeople returning to action.

Daily Maverick also carries an in-depth interview with the **new Director-General of Health, Dr Sandile Buthelezi**, who assumes the position today. The interviewer is Mark Heywood.

<https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2020-05-31-new-health-chief-dr-sandile-buthelezi-takes->



The Ministry of Basic Education made a last-minute announcement last night that **schools would not be opening** for grade 7 and 12 learners today and would instead open on 8 June. This followed meetings with teacher unions and national school governing body structures at the weekend. South African Democratic Teachers' Union official Zolani Fakude and a spokesperson for the Federation of School Governing Bodies of South Africa both indicated that the original date had been unrealistic in view of measures needed to make school environments safe for teachers and learners. (News24) There has been scathing criticism on the radio this morning of the last-minute reversal.

## BUSINESS & ECONOMY

During his SANEF briefing, President Ramaphosa said he believed the COVID-19 pandemic had provided "a stronger rationale to transform and restructure the economy". In addition, it had afforded an opportunity to **"reset, reposition and even repurpose" state-owned enterprises** like SAA and Eskom. The business rescue plan for SAA was now expected on 8 June. (Fin24)

Under the new regulations applicable from today, there are no time restrictions on the **operation of public transport**, but limits on passenger loads will continue to apply: 70% of the usual load for minibus taxis and 50% for buses, metered taxis, shuttles and e-hailing cabs.

The Gauteng Health Department has cautioned suppliers of personal protective equipment to be **alert to fraudsters posing as health department officials** in search of PPE.

Labour Minister Thulasizwe Nxesi has indicated that there will be **new regulations for workplace safety**. It is not clear when these will come into effect but they will include the following:

- Workers – including healthcare workers - who may "reasonably" conclude it is unsafe to work may refuse to do so.
- Employees who have been exposed in a manner that involves a high risk of transmission must be given 14 days' sick leave.
- Employers must provide two face masks per worker but are no longer required to launder masks at work.
- More detail on how to approach workers over the age of 60 years and/or with underlying health conditions.

[Woolworths issued a trading statement that indicated a 17% year-on-year decline in group revenue for the period of March and April due to the epidemic. While demand for food soon normalised to pre-COVID growth of 7.2%, demand for clothing crashed and analysts cautioned that Woolworths would need to manage its liquidity carefully.](#)

[The BBC reports that more than 200 top firms and investors – including Lloyds, Siemens and Sky – have called on the British government to develop a coronavirus recovery plan that prioritises the environment. It calls for backing for low-carbon innovation and the use of financial incentives to encourage enterprises that benefit the environment and create jobs at the same time.](#)

[BBC Chief Environment Reporter Justin Rowlett comments on the "green" stimulus package announced by the European Union last week, which is the biggest of this kind in history and also represents a major step towards European federalism. It features a huge investment in activities to make homes more energy-efficient, decarbonises electricity development and phase out petrol and diesel vehicles. Comments Rowlett: "The idea is to turbo-charge the European efforts to reduce carbon emissions to net-zero by 2050."](#)

## RESEARCH DEVELOPMENTS

[A study on the prevalence of COVID-19 among passengers on a cruise ship \(published in the journal, Thorax\) has suggested that "invisible" – or asymptomatic – cases are more common than believed. After eight passengers and crew who had contracted the virus were evacuated, the remaining 217 were all tested. Of these, 59% tested positive for Covid-19. Eight out of 10 positive cases had shown no symptoms. \(Health 24\)](#)

[A recent online poll of more than 16 000 South African residents, conducted by Ipsos in May, showed various mental health problems and unhealthy behaviour were common, such as anxiety \(reported by 31%\), overeating \(29%\), and under-exercising \(29%\), insomnia \(25%\), and depression \(20%\). On the bright side 17% reported decreasing alcohol use. Only three in every 10 online respondents indicated that they did not experience any of these problems. It is unclear whether participants of the poll were suffering from these conditions before the pandemic.](#)

While **COVID-19 does not increase the risk of stroke, there is a greater likelihood of infected patients dying** if they experience a stroke. A study of 32 stroke patients in New York revealed that fewer than 1% of COVID-19 patients had a stroke, but the small number who did were seven times more likely

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New York University.

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