

Modi to meet Gandhi's granddaughter on much anticipated SA visit

Shannon Ebrahim
Foreign Editor

FOR many South Africans of Indian origin, D-day has arrived – Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi is due to arrive at the Air Force Base Waterkloof tonight for his much anticipated visit.

Thousands of South Africans of Indian origin have participated in the SA Welcomes Modi campaign, and over 10 000 will congregate at the Coca Cola Dome tomorrow

night to hear the Indian leader speak and enjoy a cultural extravaganza.

Modi is on an African tour which also includes Mozambique, Tanzania and Kenya, with South Africa as the undoubted highlight.

This is Modi's first official visit to South Africa as head of state, following an invitation to visit South Africa from President Jacob Zuma at the India-Africa Summit, which was held in Delhi in 2015.

Modi has a packed pro-

gramme, with official talks with Zuma at the Union Buildings tomorrow followed by the Dome at night and a visit to KwaZulu-Natal on Saturday.

Modi is scheduled to visit the train station in Pietermaritzburg where Mahatma Gandhi was thrown off a train on June 7, 1893. In many respects, he will be making a pilgrimage in the footsteps of the man who organised passive resistance against racist colonial rule in South Africa, and who went on to become the engine of the

freedom struggle in India.

Modi will also visit the Phoenix settlement near Durban to see the house where Gandhi lived, which he will light a candle. He will be met by Gandhi's granddaughter, Ela Gandhi, a veteran Struggle stalwart who was an ANC member of Parliament with Phoenix as her constituency.

Ela Gandhi is revered by the Indian public, who clamour to see her when she visits India. She chairs the Gandhi Satyagrah and Gandhi Develop-

ment Trust, and produces the monthly paper Satyagraha.

Ela Gandhi told Independent Media she was busy preparing for Modi's visit to Phoenix.

"We look forward to hosting the Indian leader. The Indian government has not only provided funding for some of our projects in Phoenix, but has provided skills training in ICT, which is much needed in our area," she said.

"During the struggle against apartheid, the Indian government always supported

the anti-apartheid struggle – both the Congress Party and the BJP when they were in power. We must respect the position of the Indian head of state from whichever party they come."

Not all South Africans have embraced Modi's visit, with some branches of the ANC and some Muslim organisations writing letters of complaint to the Department of International Relations and Co-operation about it.

The perception among

Modi's detractors is that he has not been an "inclusive" head of state, and was the governor of Gujarat in 2002 when mobs dragged Muslims into the streets, many of whom were raped and killed.

Ela Gandhi told Independent Media Modi is well aware of her criticism of Hindu extremists at the time, when she went to Gujarat and called for the perpetrators to be prosecuted.

"There has finally been some prosecutions, which is

progress, but it took a long time," she said.

The South African government believes Modi's visit will not only strengthen bilateral relations, but provide the opportunity to explore greater opportunities in the areas of trade and investment.

Modi is arriving with a substantial delegation of Indian business people and captains of industry, who will be meeting the South African business community.

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KZN has most registered voters

Quinton Mtyala

SINCE the 2000 local government elections, the Western Cape has increased its percentage of registered voters by 56.8% – the largest increase of all the provinces.

In the Western Cape, 74% (just over three million) of the voting-age population are registered to vote, compared to KwaZulu-Natal's 83.6%, the highest in South Africa.

On average, 77% of the voting age population are registered to vote.

This year there will be 22 612 voting stations, an increase of 8.4% from 2011.

While the ANC has been vocal that 50% of those on its proportional lists, and ward candidates, would be women, the Electoral Commission of SA's statistics show that on average 60% of candidates are male.

For independent ward candidates, this figure shoots up to 86% being male.

KZN is the most contested province, with 10 412 candidates.

Western Cape chief electoral officer Courtney Sampson said contestation and subsequent violence over candidate lists posed problems for party campaigns.

"We have seen how in some communities there has been an overthrow of the leadership we were engaged with in the past and taken over by younger, more militant leaders like in Sigalo (informal settlement)."

He said issues over demarcation were likely to re-emerge after the elections as new councils take shape.



CENTRE OF ATTENTION: Gwede Mantashe assured Ekurhuleni residents the ANC stays true to its promises.

Picture: BHEKIKHAYA MABASO

Mantashe uses child support grant to woo voters

Thabiso Thakali and Baldwin Ndaba

JOHANNESBURG: ANC secretary-general Gwede Mantashe dangled the government's child-support grant as a carrot to canvass for votes for his party.

Mantashe asked Ekurhuleni residents yesterday to vote for his party because the ANC was responsible for the maintenance of their children under the age of 18.

Mantashe made the remarks while addressing a

group of ANC supporters in Dudutza, where he introduced ANC Ekurhuleni mayoral candidate Mzwandile Masina and three ward councillors in that municipal district.

He was addressing a mini-rally in an open field known as Masichaba Park yesterday.

Those who came to listen to Mantashe were mostly women, some carrying babies on their backs.

Other children accompanied their parents to the rally while another group, who were evidently enjoying their

school holidays, continued to play soccer while Mantashe and his crew canvassed for votes.

The crew also consisted of ANC Gauteng executive committee members Brian Hlongwa and Uthuru Molloa.

Prior to claiming that the ANC was "relieving men" who cannot maintain their own biological children, Mantashe said the ANC was not a "party of promises but commitments".

"We are not like other parties, which come to you to give

you promises. ANC doesn't make promises but commitments... that's a big difference."

"We don't say we promise you this and that. If we say we will build houses, you know that the ANC builds houses and we can point them out."

"When we say we will give you electricity, you know that the ANC does provide electricity."

"If we say we will connect water, ANC does that. Each and everyone will promise you heaven and earth, but we have the track record."

Minutes later Mantashe, speaking in isiXhosa, revealed that the ANC was the only party that looks after children under the age of 18 because their fathers were failing to do their job.

This was in reference to the government support to unemployed and single parents with a R230 monthly child grant.

"In addition, I can tell you that half of children under 18 years are maintained and supported by ANC. Men are hurt because they can't do their job (sic)."

ANGER OVER ECONOMY Boycott brings Zim to halt

Vernon Riva

HARARE: Businesses and schools closed in Zimbabwe's main towns yesterday as citizens staged stay-at-home protests over the government's failure to halt a worsening economy crunch.

Riot police armed with rifles and batons engaged in cat-and-mouse chases with youths who placed barricades and burnt tyres on the streets in some suburbs in Harare to block traffic heading into the city centre.

In the second city of Bulawayo, the streets were unusually quiet, with shops, banks and government offices closed after police, anticipating trouble, ordered shops to shut and fired tear gas to disperse gatherings.

"All the shops are closed. I haven't seen anything like this. This is close to a complete shutdown," said Jeffrey Madona, a local resident.

"There is confusion. People want to go back to their homes, but there is no transport and the police are dispersing even small groups waiting at the bus stops."

Schools in all major towns sent pupils back home after teachers failed to turn up for work.

Internet and WhatsApp connections were jammed in the morning and the government later warned of arrests

for people caught creating or circulating information deemed to cause public unrest.

"Any person caught in possession of, generating sharing or passing on abusive, threatening, subversive or offensive telecommunication messages that may be deemed to cause despondency incite violence and cause unrest will be arrested," the Postal and Telecommunications Regulatory Authority of Zimbabwe said.

Civic groups circumvented tough security laws and used social media to call for a work boycott yesterday to pressure President Robert Mugabe's government to address economic troubles, including high unemployment, hunger in rural areas, cash shortages and a failure to pay its workers on time.

The strike came on the back of similar anti-government protests in recent weeks.

On Monday, police arrested at least 100 residents and minibuses taxi drivers in Mabvuku suburb and the shanty town of Epworth during protests by transporters over police roadblocks.

Zimbabwe Lawyers for Human Rights said several people were arrested in various parts of the country during yesterday's protests.

The government warned civil servants they risked losing their jobs if they joined the protest.

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Personal transformation guru shares wisdom at breakfast talk

Nicolette Dirk

PERSONAL transformation was the theme of a lecture by renowned academic Shadrick Mazaza at a Cape Times business breakfast at the Table Bay Hotel yesterday.

The founder of the African Consciousness Institute described personal transformation as self-knowledge and self-observation. And he should know: he has been studying, researching and teaching the nature of transformation for over two decades.

While practising medicine, Mazaza realised the one void in his pursuit of knowledge of human existence was the mystery of the human mind. He set out to study Western and Eastern philosophies to understand the mind-body connection.

During his discussion yesterday, Mazaza described personal transformation or mastery as a quest.

"You need to understand who exactly you are, where you are coming from and where you are going. When you do that, everything you want to achieve is going to be much easier."

He added that a level of knowledge, plus a level of "being", equals a level of understanding. "Your level of understanding at any stage is wisdom. The more you understand, the wiser you become."

Mazaza said the level of knowledge is the easy part. You can gain this knowledge at any university or school. "But in order to become wise, we need to increase our level of 'being'. Our level of 'being' is our level of consciousness. Personal transformation is about that."

He added that personal transformation was needed to live in a world that has become both complex and chaotic.

"We live in a world of VUCA – volatility, uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity. This is manifesting in everything you see around you. Terrorism, the rise of Donald Trump, Brexit, Rhodes Must Fall, Fees Must Fall. Then there is racism, xenophobia and lack of social cohesion."

He added that the current state of the globe was also very uncertain.

This required people to engage in personal transformation to be able to navigate through this complexity.

"The answer to VUCA is Vuka – the Zulu word for wake-up. When we wake-up to our personal power and show up to everything we will be able to engage and form useful relationships, we will be able to develop our continent. We need these things to contribute to ourselves, our family, our cities, our nations and of course the continent."

INSPIRED: Renowned academic Dr Shadrick Mazaza (left), Maddie Mazaza, Sandy Naude and Takudzwa Hove at the Cape Times business breakfast at the Table Bay Hotel.

Picture: BRENTON GEACH

ANC supports NFP's bid to take IEC blow to highest court

DURBAN: The ANC in KwaZulu-Natal voiced its support yesterday for the embattled National Freedom Party's (NFP) bid to exhaust all legal avenues to try to get back into the voting ring.

"The ANC is a party that believes in political plurality and the absence of the NFP from the upcoming elections will make the province poorer in terms of electoral choices presented to the voters. As the ANC we therefore support the NFP's decision to exhaust all legal avenues," said Super Zuma yesterday.

The Electoral Commission of SA (IEC) barred the NFP from taking part in the August 3 local government elections because it failed to pay its registration fee on time.

This was first blamed on an administration error made by the party's treasurer, but since then NFP president Zanele KwaMagwaza-Msibi and other leaders have said that a "third force" has been trying to destroy the party. It took the matter to the Electoral Court, but it was dismissed last week.

The NFP will now take its disqualification to the Constitutional Court to fight its way to the vote.

NFP acting national chairperson Bheki Gumbi said yesterday the party's national executive committee had decided to approach the highest court in the land and that legal papers would be filed by tomorrow.

"We will be doing so because of our strong belief that the NFP's exclusion from the elections would render the elections unfair, because over 1.2 million members and supporters of the National Freedom Party would not be able to exercise their constitutional right to vote."

He said the party believed the Concourt would come to a different conclusion from the Electoral Court because of the public interest.

"We would persuade the Concourt to take into account that it's not the NFP that failed to comply with the IEC processes, but it was a few individuals whom we had entrusted with the responsibility of dealing with this matter."