



ON THE NEWS TODAY

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VISION

"A safe, vibrant city in which to
live, learn, raise a family, work,
play and do business"



MISSION

"To ensure that the Municipality
functions effectively and in a
sustainable manner in order to
deliver service of excellence to



MSUNDUZI NEWS UPDATE



Covid-19 helpline: 0800 029 999 'I'm much better'

"I BELIEVE I'm on the path to recovery and am feeling much better than I was a few days ago. I remain in self-isolation until I have been given the all-clear. I trust the worst is over and I'm coming to grips with it. "These were the words of the 38-year-old Hilton businessman who was confirmed positive with South Africa's first case of Covid-19 yesterday. The father of two spoke exclusively to The Witness last night from his home at an upmarket estate in Hilton, after Health Minister Zweli Mkhize had announced earlier that the country had recorded its first case of the virus.

The announcement set off a flurry of rumors and incorrect speculation on social media however, the man who asked not to be named , said he, his wife and eight friends returned from a skiing trip to Livigno, northern Italy on Sunday, March 1. He said he could not pinpoint where and how he got infected, but suspected it could have been on the way to or from Livigno. The man confirmed that the others in their group had since been isolated and were being tested, as well as his wife and sons.

"i started feeling a bit ill with usual flu-like symptoms on Sunday evening. It got progressively worse on Monday. On Tuesday morning I saw the doctor here in Hilton. She was quite vigilant and said that because i have been to a highly-infected area and have travelled, I should get a swab test done," he said. He said that he got a call yesterday at about midday from the NICD to confirm that he tested positive.

Dr Robyn Reed, the Hilton doctor who saw the man, has also self-isolated herself as a precautionary measure. The man said he had also self-isolated himself since he started feeling ill. "My wife and sons are not showing any symptoms as yet."

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witness**



Soon after news broke of the confirmed case, the man's wife sent a WhatsApp message that was widely circulated on social media. It read, "Hello friends and family. [He] has tested positive to coronavirus. We have been home in quarantine since Tuesday. The kids and I don't have symptoms, but will be tested. We are trying to deal with all of this, obviously it's a big shock as we didn't for one minute think he had the virus. We are in constant contact with the NICD [National Institute of Communicable Diseases] and if you've been in contact with him you will be contacted by them."

Cowan House Preparatory School in Hilton, which the man's children attend, confirmed in a letter to parents late last night that the school will be closed today and weekend extra-curricular activities have been cancelled. An executive employee from the Independent Schools Association of Southern Africa (Isasa), who asked not to be named due to their internal media protocols, told The Witness they did not have a protocol in place dealing with coronavirus cases at schools but had sent memos to schools alerting them about the virus. This will include what Minister Mkhize had covered and what schools should do in case of a confirmed Covid-19 case at a school.

THE
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'Keep calm: Risk to the general community remains low'

KEEP calm and get the flu vaccine. That's the word from the National Institute for Communicable Diseases (NICD), a division of the National Health Laboratory Service, which yesterday said the Covid-19 case found in KZN indicates the strength of their surveillance and South Africa's health systems to detect and rapidly identify cases.

"It is important to note that the identification of a single imported case in a traveller from an area with widespread community transmission does not mean that Covid-19 is currently spreading in South African communities. The risk to the general community of acquiring Covid-19 remains low," said the NICD.

The NICD said the influenza season is approaching and the influenza vaccine will soon be widely available. They encourage the public to get the influenza vaccine to reduce the chance of illness which may be confused with Covid-19, as influenza presents similar signs as Covid-19.

**THE
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Parties blast 'empty' Sopa

OPPOSITION parties yesterday tore into KZN Premier Sihle Zikalala's State of Province Address (Sopa) tabled in Pietermaritzburg on Wednesday, with the DA labelling the speech "empty promises".

DA KZN Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs (Cogta) spokesperson Mbali Ntuli said Zikalala missed an opportunity to come up with viable solutions to the province's troubled municipalities.

In his Sopa, Zikalala said the provincial government was currently fixing problems at most of the municipalities, including Msunduzi and eThekweni. Further, he said that the provincial government was addressing some of the pressing challenges such as unemployment and crime. However, the IFP was not convinced Zikalala's plans would work. Said IFP MPL Blessed Gwala: "We have heard all these plans before but what the people of this province are expecting from the provincial government is the actual delivery. Our concern as the IFP is that the new plans are being announced while we were still waiting to hear whether the targets of the previous plans had been achieved."

However, the ANC said it was impressed with Zikalala's Sopa. ANC MPL and Economic Development MEC Nomusa Dube-Ncube hailed Zikalala's Sopa as "pro-poor". "Yesterday, the premier spoke at length about the importance of SMMEs and co-operatives. He identified these as instruments aimed at fast-tracking the entry of previously disadvantaged communities into the mainstream economy," she said.

Zikalala said his Sopa spoke to the province's realities and priorities.

**THE
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Sobantu mob attack: Man arrested

A 37-year-old man was arrested yesterday morning for the murder of a man who was allegedly masquerading as an Msunduzi Municipality employee at Sobantu on Wednesday.

Mountain Rise SAPS spokesperson Warrent Officer Joshua Maistry told The Witness that, acting on information, police had detained a man at Mountain Rise police station for questioning. The murder victim was allegedly killed after he was reported to have approached Sobantu residents' homes, claiming to be carrying out disconnections and checking if residents were illegally connected, or had tampered with their meters.

The trouble started when he allegedly asked some residents to pay him a fee of R150 to R300, or else threatened they would be disconnected. He was subsequently beaten and taken to Sobantu satellite police station where he died shortly afterwards. Maistry said that the man is expected to appear in court soon.

**THE
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No need to panic, says Mkhize

HEALTH Minister Dr Zweli Mkhize yesterday assured KZN citizens that there was nothing to suggest that the patient who tested positive for the coronavirus in KZN may have infected any other people. While the patient had contact with other people during his flight from OR Tambo to King Shaka Airport, at that stage he had not shown any symptoms, making it highly unlikely that he might have passed on the virus.

However, Mkhize said the man's family will be put in quarantine for 14 days as they have had close contact with him. Mkhize said that there is no need for students who have been in contact with the man's children to be quarantined. "As things stand there has been no coronavirus reported in any South African school," he said.

Meanwhile, KZN Health MEC Nomagugu Simelane-Zulu, who was waiting for the green light from the national Health Department before making any public announcements, was by late last night still in a meeting with officials from the National Institute of Communicable Diseases (NICD). However, KZN Premier Sihle Zikalala said the province was well prepared.

While the DA welcomed the arrival of NICD team to the province, it cautioned Simelane-Zulu against keeping crucial information about the virus from the public, saying she must "commit to absolute transparency".

**THE
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According to the Health Department's protocols, people who are suspected of being infected with the coronavirus are quarantined at home while those who have tested positive for the virus can be taken to a designated treatment centre, depending on the severity of the infection.

Currently the four treatment centres in KZN are: Grey's Hospital in Pietermaritzburg, Addington Hospital in Durban, Ngwelezane Hospital in Empangeni and Manguzi Hospital in the Mkhanyakude District. Meanwhile, Mediclinic, Life Healthcare and Netcare groups confirmed yesterday that all their hospitals can treat patients with Covid-19.

**THE
witness**