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CBE Focus

Quo Vadis our beloved Country?

SA is in a Crisis — all statistics point in this direction according to business leader Cas Coovadia in this special article for CBE Focus

South Africa is in a perilous socioeconomic crisis!

The GDP declined by 1.3% in the fourth quarter of 2023, while inflation and interest rates are rising.

The SARB is doing a sterling job trying to control inflation but administered prices continue to rise well above inflation, thus impacting on inflation.

Unemployment stood at 32.7% in Q422, with 7.8 million people not working. Our logistics environment is putting a severe break on economic growth, with port, rail and road infrastructure in serious decline.

Ongoing loadshedding is wreaking havoc on the economy, particularly amongst SME's.

All of this is exacerbated by a serious breakdown in law and order, with organised crime on the rise and corruption deepening, and the economic cost of crime increasing, not to mention the impact of criminality on the lives of ordinary people, particularly women and children. Finally, the SA Gini coefficient was at 63 in 2022, making us the most unequal country in the world.

We are in crisis!

I refer to these depressing statistics because I am a patriot. I believe in this country, and we must make it work, to the benefit of all our people.

There have been some positive developments in the last year or so. The President lifted the licence threshold for embedded energy from 10MW to 100MW and has removed the ceiling in his Energy Plan.

Since then, the private sector has started over a hundred projects amounting to over R150 billion, representing 9300MW of new generation capacity. The President announced his Energy Plan late in 2022 and it resonates with BUSA's priorities to address the energy crisis. He established a National Energy Crisis Committee (NECOM) in the Presidency, and this is making good progress in implementing the plan.

Businesses in SA are struggling to maintain current business activity under very difficult circumstances.

New business growth is minimal and business confidence fell for the fourth consecutive quarter to a two-year low of thirty-six in Q123, according to the RMB/BER business confidence index. Despite this, business, through BUSA, is committed to supporting government in addressing our crises.

We supported government during the Covid pandemic to manage the pandemic and distribute vaccines, with 600 professionals, in various disciplines, working pro bono for a year on the B4SA platform.

We have raised R 100 million to procure expertise to donate to NECOM to accelerate the implementation of the President's Energy Plan.

We are working on critical interventions government needs to make on logistics and law and order to move the dial on investment and growth and speaking to the President to commit government to work with us in partnership on these.

Broader civil society is also mobilising to protect our democratic gains, pressurise for a more transparent and equitable electoral system and address the serious social issues we have in our country.

This is critical and all parts of society must work with such organisations to make a difference, and business will look to work more closely with appropriate organs of civil society.

The 2023 Edelman Trust Barometer for SA shows that business and NGOs are the most trusted sectors of society, in that order.

Media and government are 3rd and 4th, with a 40-point gap between trust in business and trust in government. It is thus beholden upon business and NGOs to work together.

We fought very hard for the democratic dispensation we won in 1994, and too many people died for our democracy. We have allowed our political system to be criminalised with many politicians seeking personal gain instead of working in the national interest.

It is time for broader civil society, including business, to put our shoulders to the wheel to hold government to account for governance and service delivery, but also to utilise our resources and capacity to demonstrate we can build our amazing country if we work in an ethical, transparent and accountable way in a society that values meritocracy.

We must strengthen and consolidate our democracy and build an inclusive free market economy in which business works in a profitable and sustainable way for business growth and societal development.

We need to leverage off the phenomenal opportunities our country offers, but a critical element of all of this is a political system that is accountable to all citizens.

Cas Coovadia is the Chief Executive Officer of Business Unity South Africa and an Advisory Board member of the CBE.

Veteran Activist Mosie Moola

OBITUARY

Mosie and a story behind his 'Great Escape' from the notorious "Marshall Square"





Veteran freedom struggle activist Moosa 'Mosie' Moola passed away on Saturday 25 March after a long illness. He was 88 and the funeral took place Westpark Cemetery the next morning.

Born in the small town of Christiana, Moola joined the Transvaal Indian Congress (TIC) youth wing, playing an active role in clandestinely putting up posters protesting apartheid in a group that came to be known as the 'Picasso Club' because they produced hand-written posters.

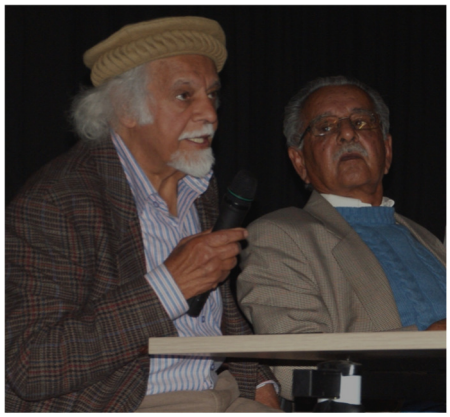
Moola was elected onto the executive of the TIC and also served as its full-time organiser. Moola was arrested and jailed several times before he and three others escaped from the notorious Marshall Square Police Station, where he was being held in solitary confinement.

He would recall 50 years later at a commemoration of what became known as the 'Great Escape' in struggle circles how a policeman had been bribed to achieve this. Leaving South Africa illegally, Moola joined other exiled leader of the African National Congress (ANC) in Dar -es-Salaam.

At a CBE Gala Awards Dinner , a story telling segment between Mosie Moola and Abdul hay Jassat had the audience enthralled as both the struggle veterans recollected the details of the escape from Marshall square

After the ANC took up the armed struggle through the formation of its military wing Umkhonto we Sizwe, Moola was sent to Odessa in the Soviet Union for military training, following which he spent six months in Moscow undergoing training in intelligence. Moola also handled the ANC's publicity work on his return to Dar-es-Salaam.

Moola was separated from his wife Zubeida, and their children, Tasneem and Azaad, for many years because they were repeatedly denied passports to leave South Africa by the apartheid authorities until 1968. The separation continued after circumstances forced the return of the children to South Africa to stay with family members.



In 1969, the ANC deployed Moola to the then Bombay, where the ANC's first foreign mission was located. Two years later Molvi Cachalia, the deputy representative of the ANC, retired and Moola replaced him, becoming chief representative a year later.

Moola also represented the ANC in Egypt and Finland, before returning home in 1990 after Nelson Mandela was released following 27 years as a political prisoner.

> *Moola was separated from his wife Zubeida, and their children, Tasneem and Azaad, for many years because they were repeatedly denied passports*

After Mandela became South Africa's first democratically-elected president in 1994, he appointed Moola as the South African ambassador to the Islamic Republic of Iran until 1999. From mid-June 2000 to 2004 Moola served as high commissioner to Pakistan.

In 2013, Moola received one of South Africa's highest civilian awards, the Order of Luthuli in Silver. "We played our part and it's good to get recognition, but the important thing is that the objective of a free South Africa has been attained and we must build on it," Moola said at the time.

Moola's wife passed on in 2008. He is survived by his children Tasneem, Azaad, and Afzal, and a number of grandchildren.

In October 2007, at the inaugural function at the Sivan Gnana Sabhay of Lenasia, Moola joined Dr Essop Jassat, Vishnu Naidoo, Doreen Iyer, Paul Iyer and Gops Veerabadren as the veterans who have given a lifetime of service to the community were honoured with golden shawls draped on their shoulders by the spiritual head of the organisation, the late Guru Somasundaram "Marie" Pillay.

Moola accepted on behalf of Amina Cachalia, who was in hospital. In June 2011, Moola was with Shan Balton, Ismail Vadi and the late Laloo Chiba when the Ahmed Kathrada Foundation got together a wide spectrum of Lenasia community organisations to bid farewell to Indian Consul-General Vikram Doraiswami and his wife Sangeeta at the Walter Sisulu Square in Kliptown.

Role of ANC veteran Mosie Moola in commemorating Nelson Mandela in India recalled

FAKIR HASSEN

The special links that veteran ANC freedom fighter Moosa 'Mosie' Moola had to India, especially his role in getting Nelson Mandela Marg in Delhi so named, were recalled at a memorial service here at the weekend by the Ahmed Kathrada Foundation, named after the late close friend of Moola and fellow anti-apartheid activist.

Former High Commissioner to India Sbu Ndebele recounted that Moola had passed on just before he could be part of a huge statue of Nelson Mandela being erected in Delhi.

"As you enter New Delhi, the Nelson Mandela Marg stands as a proud symbol of the India/South Africa friendship. As part of celebrating 30 years of diplomatic relations between India and South Africa, a huge statue of President Nelson Mandela is in the final stages of being installed on this Mandela Road. This is a tribute to the pioneering work of comrade Mosie Moola," Ndebele said in his tribute.

"For sixteen years of tireless mobilisation of the people of India for active support of the liberation struggle against Apartheid South Africa comrade Ambassador Mosie Moola was an ubiquitous and peripatetic presence in this great nation. It is no wonder that by 1986 the government of India had granted the ANC diplomatic status as it intensified its own struggle to isolate apartheid," Ndebele said.

India had ended diplomatic relations with the white minority government of South Africa in 1947, started the international fight against apartheid from the UN, and remained steadfast in it total boycott of the country for nearly four decades more.

Relations between the two countries were only resumed when Mandela was released in 1997 after 27 years as a political prisoner.

For a long time, Moola served in India, first as Deputy Chief Representative and later as Chief Representative of the ANC in India. Nelson Mandela Marg was inaugurated during Moola's time in the country.

"Since being High Commissioner in India I constantly called comrade Mosie Moola telephonically for advice," Ndebele said as he also recalled how Moola had a special affinity with the Springdale School in New Delhi.

Ndebele added.: "As we prepare to celebrate Freedom Day on 27 April it is heart-warming to listen to the student choir of Springdale School in New Delhi sing our National Anthem and many freedom songs in Xhosa and Zulu perfectly.

"This is the school where comrade Mosie Moola's son Afzal Moola studied and this is where he created an unbreakable people to people bond. He may be silent today but a thousand tongues ventriloquise his message of progressive humankind,"

Another speaker at the memorial service, historian and writer Rashid Seedat, said Springdale was one of two schools, the other being Bluebells, where Moola inspired the teachers and learners to pledge solidarity with South Africa.

Moola and his late wife Zubie hosted countless visitors from South Africa and those in exile in Delhi.

"They supported South African students who were studying at Indian higher education institutions," Seedat said.

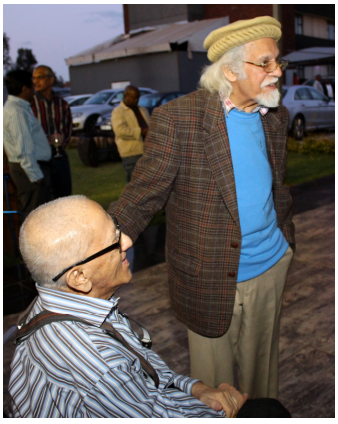
Hundreds of South Africans of Indian origin studied in various fields in India because most places at South African universities were reserved for whites only, and because of a quota system, very few could pursue further studies locally.

Seedat also reminded the audience how Moola had been particularly proud of having met Rajiv Gandhi twice before his assassination.

Seedat quoted Moola from a chapter the latter had written in a book by another ANC veteran, Pallo Jordan: "When OR [Oliver Tambo] paid a visit to India in the 1980s to receive the prestigious 'Jawaharlal Nehru Award for International Understanding and Peace', I had the honour of accompanying him to meet Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi. A known and committed supporter of our cause, Rajiv made it known that he was honoured to have met a great South African freedom fighter."

Tambo had accepted the award on behalf of Mandela, who was then still in prison.

In 1989, Moola was part of a delegation of leaders from the Transvaal Indian Congress and the Natal Indian Congress who met Rajiv Gandhi to brief him on the anti-apartheid struggle in South Africa.







CBE tribute to Kathy on 6th Death Anniversary

CBE Executive Director, Yusuf Moosajee, was one of the speakers at a special tribute at the graveside of veteran activist Ahmed Kathrada at West Park Cemetery's Heroes Acre on 28th March 2023.

One of the prime drivers for the Congress of Business and Economics to decide on an annual 'Tribute to Our Heroes' event since 2016 was comments made by the late veteran freedom fighter Ahmed Kathrada, after whom the awards are now named, at the inaugural Tribute in 2013.

Kathy was among the first veterans whose sacrifices the CBE recognised, alongside those of a number of others, including Mosie Moola, whose funeral took place right here at Heroes' Acre just two days ago; as well as Ebrahim Ismail Ebrahim, also buried near him, and others.

At the event at the Birchwood Hotel in Boksburg, there was also a panel discussion between what became known as the 'Great Escape' from the notorious building that now houses Johannesburg Central Police Station, where several of freedom fighters from our community also died at the hands of the vicious apartheid security establishment.

Kathy reminded the audience: "Remember that these were not the only escapees," as he shared details of many others, besides the few who were being honoured that evening, including himself.

Typical of his efforts to focus on the role of others despite his own in



achieving our democracy, Kathy then gave a number of details of other escapees.

Kathy said too much attention was given to those like him and Nelson Mandela who were part of the Rivonia Trial, while there were many other trials where others too had endured much torture and long prison sentences.

Among those he cited were his inseparable friend Laloo 'Isu' Chiba', who passed on soon after Kathrada and is also remembered at his gravesite in a special way.

He said Laloo had never spoken once during his 18 years on Robben Island with him about the severe torture he had suffered at the hands of security police.

"I heard about this for the first time after we convinced him to testify at the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. We tend to remember the Rivonia Trial but forget that there were other equally important trials that even our organizations do not honour."

I mention this special relationship that Kathy and Isu shared because by all accounts they were inseparable in the last years of their lives as they guided the young, committed people of the Kathrada Foundation that we see here today, as well in their efforts to end

> *"We tend to remember the Rivonia Trial but forget that there were other equally important trials that even our organisations do not honour" — Kathy*

the scourge of racialism, sexism and all the other social ills that just do not seem to go away in our democracy.

It must also not be forgotten that the roots of the CBE lie in the Transvaal Indian Congress, so it is also very significant that there is a memorial to Dr Yusuf Dadoo next to Kathy's gravesite.

The CBE is especially proud that the Ahmed Kathrada Foundation assented to allowing the name of its illustrious founder to be appended to our annual awards.

Many of those who were mentioned by Kathrada at the inaugural CBE 'Tribute to Our Heroes' in 2016 have since been honoured by the CBE.

As we start the seventh year since the passing of Kathy, planning is also underway for the seventh edition of the CBE Ahmed Kathrada Excellence in Leadership Awards to remember the efforts of Kathy and those others who brought us to a situation where we can freely undertake such a project, which might have landed us in the same position of torture and imprisonment in years past.

The CBE would like to believe that in this way, it is playing a small role in remembering the great sacrifice of Ahmed Kathrada that we are recalling today.

Speakers included Catherine Constantinides, Sophie de Bruyn, Zaakirah Vadi, Nonkosi Maleti, Irfaan Mangera and Rethabile Ratsomo













The Silent Crisis facing SA

CBE Executive Director, Yusuf Moosajee, *says SA can ill afford to have schools that produce poor results year after year with no visible intervention from Government, to Principals to teachers.*

Alarming statistics from a recent report about the status of education in SA

2021: after a year of school more than 50% of Grade 1 learners don't know all the letters in the alphabet	2016 (the last time these tests occurred): 78% of Grade 4 learners could not read for meaning – in any language.	2019: 62% of Grade 5 learners do not have "basic mathematical knowledge".	2020/ 2021: Covid 19 lockdowns devastated learning in SA (as elsewhere). Experts believe the average 10-year-old knows less than the average 9-year-old before the pandemic.

The youth unemployment rate, measuring job-seekers between 15 and 24 years old, rose to 61% in the fourth quarter of 2022. A staggering figure to digest, there will certainly be variables on the reasons for this high rate of unemployment.

One of the variables that I would like to hone in on is the state of our education and schooling system.

The Silent Crisis, a series of reports from the Centre for Development and Enterprise on education reform highlights that "only 37% of grade 5 pupils have some basic mathematical knowledge, or that more than half of Grade 1 pupils do not know all the letters of the alphabet after a year of schooling, but the department of education just shrugs its shoulders".

The spotlight has to fall on the quality of teaching. I am by no means suggesting that there is a blanket failure of quality teaching.

There are schools and teachers that are excelling in dispensing quality education and a holistic school experience. The numbers however are not large enough to impact on the overall degradation of the system.

The founder of Future Nations School, Sizwe Nxasana, captures it when he says: "There is no education system that can be better than the quality of its teachers."

Professor Nick Spaull says that, in South Africa, four out of five teachers in public schools lack the content knowledge and pedagogical skills to teach their subjects, and proficiency levels of South African teachers (41%) rank far below that of their peers in Kenya (95%) and Zimbabwe (87%).

Many teachers also lack motivation to do their jobs properly. South Africa has the highest teacher absenteeism rate of all SADC countries.

Government has failed in creating an enabling environment for this much needed paradigm shift in our education system.

The Department of Education (DoE) must engage the services of registered employment agencies to handle all the advertising, shortlisting, interviews and recommendations for appointments. This will avoid all forms of subjectivity and nepotism.

In many instances School Governing Bodies do not have the necessary skills to do this task effectively,

Furthermore, teachers unions should not be a part of this process, as noted during an interview with a researcher who asked a unionist what dictated their actions when observing the filling of posts, their own or the learner's interests.

The answer was that as a labour movement they had to look after the needs of their members before those of the learners.

Schools play a vital role in a learner's learning and socialisation and it is therefore essential that schools offer a safe environment in which authentic learning and development can take place. What is needed is an overhaul of the education system.

Firstly, Government needs to acknowledge its own failures in largely contributing to the state of schooling and education in South Africa. Has Outcomes Based Education been effective, or has it contributed to the lowering of standards?

The fact that South Africa ranks so low in Maths, Science and English must be foremost on the DoE's agenda. We can ill afford to have schools that produce poor results year after year with no visible intervention from Government, to Principals to teachers.

We are doing a disservice to our Children. The high rate of unemployment is as a consequence of our poor education and schooling system.

The myopic and shallow views of Government results in them not seeing that they are creating a powder keg of ill-equipped youth.

The DoE should be concentrating on quality teachers and education, thereby ensuring future generations of leaders and professionals.

If the DoE continues on its current trajectory, South African will continue to be featured in the lower ranks of the Continental and World tables.

Impulsive Buying is dangerous! - Minister Gina

In the current economic climate where prices are rising all the time, many people are struggling to make ends meet and should avoid impulsive buying which would cause them further distress.

That was the message reinforced by the Deputy Minister of Trade, Industry and Competition, Nomalungelo Gina, who warned consumers against the danger and negative impact of buying impulsively, saying it leads to over-indebtedness and dire socio-economic consequences.

The minister was delivering a keynote speech at the celebration of the World Consumer Rights Day at Sun City this month.

World Consumer Rights Day is celebrated across the world on March 15 to raise awareness about consumer rights and needs highlighting that these should be respected and protected.

The World Consumer Rights Day was marked globally under the theme, Empowering Consumers through Clean Energy Transitions. However, the South African regulators added another theme, Creating a Fair Marketplace, as a way of reaffirming their commitment to protecting South African consumers.

According to the National Consumer Commission, which spearheaded the celebrations, the theme was a reminder to suppliers of goods and services of their responsibilities when marketing or providing goods and services, to ensure that they do so in a fair and just manner.

Gina emphasised the critical importance of educating consumers to be prudent when making choices to buy products and services.

'All the actors in this sector of consumer rights must scale up their education campaigns to inform both businesses and consumers about their rights and responsibilities when products are being marketed. We have a responsibility as consumer organisations to police the adherence to regulatory compliance by companies marketing and promoting product sales," said Gina.

"The biggest problem is consumers who decide buying through emotions and excitement, and pay no attention to the fine prints and quality inspections. These things tend to catch up with them as the consequences of emotional and impulsive buying, and bad financial decisions, is over-indebtedness and failure to service one's debts. In addition, a bad credit score and the repossession of property by the banks have negative socio-economic impact on the consumers, thereby plunging the entire family into difficulties. We must educate our people that debt is not always good," advised Gina.

She stated that it was imperative for consumer protection authorities to increase their efforts in educating consumers on what to look for before concluding a contract with the companies.

"This is important for consumers, as customers, to be cautious and pay attention to detail in order to inform themselves about the contents of contracts when making purchases, from big items such as buying properties through bonds and vehicle finance, to small items such as a contract with a mobile telephone companies, and clothing store accounts or insurance," stated Gina.

She also said the high levels of unemployment, particularly amongst the youth and women, was making consumers vulnerable and susceptible to cheap and fake products sold to them by unscrupulous retailers.

New African initiative launched to empower women in the energy sector

A new initiative launched here on International Women's Day on 9 March 2023 aims to empower more participation by women in the burgeoning energy sector.

"As the energy industry expands, so is the need for more women inclusion in it. The African Women Business Energy Network (AWBEN) is a platform created to advocate for women towards career advancement in the energy industry by connecting them and women-owned businesses in the African region to highly competitive market opportunities and multinational buyers," the Johannesburg-based African Energy Chamber (AEC) said in a statement.

"This initiative sees the development of women in the energy industry as imperative," it added.

AEC said the low number of women in the sector, especially at management level, were a matter of concern.

It also cited the barriers that women face in the energy sector as being similar to those that they faced elsewhere in the economy.

"However, the challenges of the energy sector are more pressing, since the sector is going through a process of transformation. Clean energy transitions will require innovative solutions and business models to be adopted and greater participation from a diverse talent pool," AEC said.

"AWBEN looks to propagate the advancement of women in energy and women-owned businesses in the African continent as well as drive direct business-money into the hands of women in the region.

Besides encouraging collaboration among African women in the energy industry, AWBEN also plans to host mentorship programs and empower women to take ownership of their personal and professional development.

NJ Ayuk, Executive Chairman of AEC, said women should benefit more from the energy sector on the continent.

"We need to empower more African women to benefit from the oil and gas industry, whether we're talking about opportunities for boots on the ground jobs at drill sites, professional positions, leadership roles or business opportunities for women-owned enterprises," he said.

How to overcome the effects of NEPOTISM in the business world

Business Consultant Ahmed Seedat shares 5 valuable steps



Generational wealth is the accumulation of assets, resources, and wealth from generation to generation within a family.

This type of wealth typically includes property, investments, savings, businesses, and other valuable assets handed down from parents or grandparents to their children and grandchildren.

Generational wealth can provide significant financial advantages to subsequent generations, including access to education, better opportunities for employment and entrepreneurship, and a more remarkable ability to invest in assets that appreciate over time.

However, it can also have exactly the opposite effect, as those who do not have access to generational wealth may face significant economic barriers to achieving financial stability and success.

It's worth noting that generational wealth is only sometimes guaranteed. It often requires careful planning and management to ensure that assets are preserved and passed to future generations effectively.

Who is a Nepotist?

A nepotist is a person who favours and promotes their relatives or close associates, especially in business or politics, often regardless of their qualifications and abilities or merit.

An example of nepotism is the company's CEO giving his underqualified niece a high-paying job.

Nepotists will control their protagonist or protégé for personal or party benefit. Among the manipulative methods used to do this are using coercion and threat; violence; emotional abuse; isolation and guilt; information abuse; financial abuse; denying family privilege and 'the Blame Game'.

Nepotism can be a deeply ingrained and complex issue within social and organisational structures. Moving towards a culture of altruism, where decisions and actions are made with the well-being of others in mind, requires a deliberate and sustained effort.

How do we change this? Here are some potential steps that could be taken:

1. Increase Transparency:

Nepotism often thrives in environments where decisions are made behind closed doors, and there is a lack of transparency in the decision-making process. By increasing transparency, such as implementing fair hiring and promotion processes, organizations can reduce the potential for nepotism.

2. Foster a Culture of Inclusion:

One way to shift towards altruism is to build a culture that values diversity and inclusion. This includes providing equal opportunities for everyone, promoting merit-based decision-making, and encouraging different perspectives and ideas.

3. Train and Educate:

It can be helpful to provide training and education to help individuals recognize and address their biases. For example, workshops on unconscious bias or cultural competence can help people better understand and appreciate different perspectives, reducing the likelihood of nepotism.

4. Lead by Example:

Leaders within an organization significantly impact its culture. By modelling altruistic behaviour and holding others accountable for their actions, leaders can set the tone for the organization as a whole.

5. Hold Individuals Accountable:

Finally, holding individuals accountable for their actions is essential. Nepotism can be challenging to detect and prove, but appropriate consequences should be enforced when identified.

This conveys that such behaviour is unacceptable and reinforces altruism's importance.

These steps require a long-term commitment and a willingness to change. But by taking action, individuals and organizations can move towards a culture of altruism, where decisions and actions are made for the benefit of all.

Preserving generational wealth is an ongoing process that requires careful planning, vision, mission and values. Diversification, asset protection, tax planning, estate planning, strategic spending, and continuing education are all essential factors that can help individuals and families preserve their wealth over the long term.

By implementing these strategies and remaining vigilant in managing their finances, individuals can safeguard their assets, reduce risk, and ensure that their wealth is passed down to future generations in a tax-efficient and sustainable manner.

Vector Consulting's Preservation of Wealth Series guides families through workbooks, seminars, workshops, individual mentoring and coaching to preserve generational wealth.

Ahmed Seedat, an international consultant and author, has spent years cultivating his knowledge and experience into holistic solutions, empowering a multitude of entrepreneurs globally. He currently holds a Master of Business Administration (MBA) degree exploring the same topic, which has encouraged him to author two books. He is a Board member of the CBE.

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‘S.A. can’t reduce import duties for India’ – senior government official

South Africa’s high import duties on clothing are a safeguard to protect local manufacturers and cannot be reduced for India, a senior government official told a gathering of business people from both countries on 3 April 2023 in Sandton.

“This is the most common question I am asked whenever I meet Indian businesses wanting to export to South Africa,” Jayawant Irkhede, Director: Leather and Footwear in the Department of Trade, Industry and Competition, said at the seminar, aimed at promoting business between the two countries.

“The international partners ask us whether we can reduce the import duties, like the 40%-45% duty on clothing; 30% on shoes and 22% on fabric.

“It is important to understand that these duties are not given by the South African government. These are the same tariffs provided by the World Trade Organisation (WTO).

“Wherever I go in India, I am asked why we cannot reduce this because India is not operating in South Africa’s space. We tell them sorry, we cannot do it, because these are the safeguards given by WTO to all countries, so that they are protected and don’t get wiped out,” Irkhede said.

“It’s a difficult space for us to reduce those duties for a specific country like India. This is absolutely impossible,” he added.

He said where possible, South Africa had reduced duties, such as on leather goods, which are imported from India and Pakistan with excise duties of only 15%.

Irkhede said that India is South Africa’s third largest trading partner, after neighbouring Eswatini. China is South Africa’s highest trading partner.

He said of the R60 billion that South Africa imports for retail distribution, almost 58% is from China.

“India’s trade value is hardly about R3.2 billion,” Irkhede said as he urged Indian business to look at why this was so.

Irkhede highlighted one of the major issues of India not responding appropriately to South Africa in this regard was for business there to compare what China does.

“This comparison should be in terms of the drawbacks that you have. China offers about 16% drawbacks, while India offers only about 5% drawbacks for Indian export. So that is the message that you must take back home – not why South Africa should be reducing duties.

“That disparity between India and China is for the Indian government to sort out, to see if you can leverage and do a little bit better on drawbacks,” Irkhede said, suggesting that perhaps this should be addressed at the BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) bloc.

Irkhede also suggested a dual approach to Indian businesses for South Africa.

“Trade is not only about buying and selling. But that can also be manufacturing in South Africa. We also have very strong incentives, which I’ve not seen with any other government worldwide.”

“If you register for manufacturing in South Africa on your capital expenditure, we can give you 15% government grant and then we give you another 50% term loan completely interest free, which is a very substantial incentive,” he said.

Irkhede said that when he shared this in India, government officials were surprised at how this could be done.



Yaseen was always late for work because he struggled to get up early in the morning. After his boss gave him a final warning for his repeated late coming,

Yaseen went to his doctor, who prescribed a tablet to take before going to bed. After taking the first one, Yaseen slept very well and even woke up an hour before his alarm clock went off for him to get ready for work.

So he took a leisurely shower, made himself a big breakfast, which he usually had to skip, slowly ate it, and then left his flat with enough time to spare to get to work well before his starting time of 8 o’ clock.

He waited for his boss to arrive to congratulate him on his early arrival. He told his boss how the doctor’s prescription had worked for him. “I’m glad it worked for you,” his boss replied. “But where were you yesterday?”

Fiona, a new employee at a florist, caused a bit of a stir when she accidentally mixed up some deliveries. She sent flowers ordered by a customer of a new hairdressing salon that had moved t a new shop with a card that said: “Rest in Peace”.

When the angry owner called the florist to complain about it, Fiona apologised and tried to calm the caller down: “Auntie, I’m really sorry about the mistake, but rather don’t get so angry, because there’s a funeral service taking place somewhere where there are flowers with a card that says ‘Congratulations on your new location.'”

Hitesh was very upset at the office during 4.5 hours of loadshedding yesterday. The backup generator also failed, so his computer was down and he had to shuffle his cards for Solitaire manually with the deck in his draw.

The struggle for "normal sport" continues 50-years later...

FAROUK ARAIE

It's almost five decades since SACOS was established in 1973. It's cardinal and pivotal aim at the time, was to enable national sports federations to be able to compete in international events on a non-racial basis.

Non-racial sport in rainbow South Africa has still not been realised in 2023. Complete equality in sports today has been hampered by brazen acts of corruption, and a plethora of hurdles that stymie the development of sports in many avenues.

The SACOS slogan "No normal sport in an abnormal society" is still as relevant today as it was 50 years ago. Many marginalised communities are still struggling to secure sports facilities to enhance and level the playing fields.

The struggle to deracialise South African sport is still an ongoing process. Nearly 29 years have passed since the country returned to the International playing field, but important issues as to why they were globally banned in the first place, remain.

SACOS is acutely aware of the critical imbalance that exists in our society, which as a result has a huge impact on sports across the racial divide.

The well-funded white section of the sporting fraternity has access to better facilities, are able to afford better nutrition and have better preparation which is ahead of non-white players due to the historic legacy of apartheid.

Many efforts to change the face and culture of sports have largely not been effective in bridging the gap. Cricket and rugby still have to be exploited to accommodate talented players from other racial groups whose talents are being ignored.

According to the British newspaper the Economist, during 2014-2015, black South Africans accounted for 10% of international appearances. It is a proven fact the economic situation impacts everything and its impact on sports is an important factor in the sports equilibrium despite intense efforts by NGO's and sports institutions to restore normality in sports in an abnormal economic and social environment.

Racism in sports has declined, but this does not necessarily mean that racism has evaporated. Many racial incidents in our sporting arena have made countrywide news headlines. We still do not live in a society on an equal footing with the wealthy class.

Sports journalists agree that sports is a reflection of society. Sports acts as a "microcosm of society" and thus racial incidents in sports have been, and continue to be, brushed away as "nothing unique'. It takes outrageous conduct for the reality of racism in sports to come to the forefront.

SACOS has gone a long way in bringing together all races, using non-racial sports as a bonding force to sow the seeds of harmony in a fractured world.

In 2000, at the inaugural Laureus World Sports Awards, iconic leader Nelson Mandela offered these prophetic words: "Sport has the power to change the world. It has the power to inspire. It has the power to unite people in a way that little else does. It speaks to youth in a language they understand. Sport can create hope where once there was only despair."

These beautiful lyrics resonate through SACOS and its assembly of supporters.

Farouk Araie is a community activist who also comments in local media about a wide range of societal issues.

Call for sport to revert to the heydays of SACOS era

FAKIR HASSEN

Sporting activities, especially at schools, should revert to the way in which it was run by communities during the South African Council on Sport (SACOS) era.

That was the plea put out as veterans got together at various venues across the country last month to mark the 50th anniversary of SACOS.

"We should take the values of sport back to how it was run under SACOS. The tournaments we had; the people that stayed with us; those are the values," said Ajit Gandhabhai, former Treasurer of SACOS and an executive member of the Non-Racial Sport History Project (NRSHP) in Gauteng at an event in Bosmont to support the project as part of the Golden Anniversary of SACOS.

The NRSHP was formed in June 2015 at Wits University with its objectives including reviving the concept of community sport compared to professional sport.

SACOS was formed in 1973 with a two-fold mission – to lobby internationally for apartheid South Africa's isolation from world sport because it allowed only white players on its international teams; and to promote sport at all levels between the Black, Coloured and Indian communities.

The success of its local efforts saw local, provincial and national tournaments being run by SACOS in sports as diverse as soccer, cricket, rugby, volleyball, netball, tennis, table tennis, darts and a lot more.

Particularly successful was amateur sporting activities at schools, especially athletics, through the SA Senior School Sports Association affiliated to SACOS.

All of this has fizzled out, former officials and administrators of SACOS lamented, some even accusing the democratic government of South Africa after 1994 of having sold out SACOS's original objectives.

National Orders for Ebrahim and Dangor

FAKIR HASSEN

Struggle icon **Ebrahim Ismail Ebrahim,** a recipient of the CBE/Ahmed Kathrada Excellence in Leadership Award, and scientist **Dr Aboubaker Ebrahim Dangor** were among the many recipients of National Orders when President Cyril Ramaphosa hosted the annual event in Pretoria on 28 April 2023. In Ebrahim's case, it was made posthumously.

National Orders are the highest awards that South Africa bestows on its citizens and eminent foreign nationals who have contributed towards the advancement of democracy and have made a significant impact on improving the lives of South Africans.

The National Orders also recognise the contributions made by individuals towards building a non-racial, non-sexist, democratic and prosperous South Africa as envisaged in our Constitution.

Popularly known as "Ebie", Ebrahim passed away after a long illness in December 2019, shortly before his autobiography "Beyond Fear – Reflections of a Freedom Fighter" was released by his wife Shannon.

The Congress of Business and Economics, an offshoot of the erstwhile Transvaal Indian Congress, honoured Ebrahim with the Award in 2018 for his lifelong contribution.

"Comrade Ebie, as he was fondly known, recalled at the time how he had spent half of his adult life in prison but that he would do it all over again if he had to because of his firm belief in struggling for peace, justice and the end of the scourge of apartheid and racism across the world," CBE Executive Director Yusuf Moosajee recalled.

Ebrahim served time on Robben Island as a political prisoner alongside Nelson Mandela, Kathrada and others. After his father was arrested twice for defying laws that restricted the movement of Indians in South Africa, he joined the liberation struggle at the age of 13.

Ebrahim often shared how he had been inspired by the Satyagraha style of Mahatma Gandhi, which he used in his passionate representation of the ANC in global conflict situations in Sri Lanka, Palestine, Rwanda, Kosovo, Bolivia and Nepal.

After his release, Ebrahim went into exile to continue his work with the ANC, but was abducted by apartheid-era security police from neighbouring Swaziland, tortured and sentenced to a second term on Robben Island. He obtained two university degrees while on Robben Island.

Ebrahim served in various capacities, including as Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs and Parliamentary Counsellor to Mandela.

Ebrahim' citation said he was receiving the Order of Luthuli in Gold for his lifelong commitment to the liberation of all South Africans.

"He lived by the courage of his conviction and became a formidable opponent to the repressive apartheid government," it read.



Ebrahim Ismail Ebrahim (late) receiving the CBE/Ahmed Kathrada Leadership in Excellence Award in 2019. His daughter and son joined him on stage to receive the award.

Shannon Ebrahim described her late husband as a "gentle giant, even to his family."

"He inspired us with his undiluted moral values, his absolute commitment to transform South Africa for the better (even beyond political liberation), and his willingness to engage warring factions in conflicts around the world as a peacemaker.

He was the essence of humility and never expected recognition for any of the hardships he endured throughout his life in the cause for freedom.

"His one hope was that South Africans would read his memoir "Beyond Fear" to better understand what revolutionaries of his generation went through to bring about a new South Africa. (Our children) Sarah, Kadin and I miss him dearly, but will always cherish his legacy," Ebrahim said.

Dr Dangor was awarded the Order of Luthuli in Silver "for his admirable and distinguished contribution to the field of science through his ground-breaking research in physics," his citation read.

Once a resident of Lenasia, Dangor has been based in the UK since he went there to continue his studies after getting his first Honours degree at Wits University in 1961. He could not return home permanently because the apartheid government would not allow his wife from Bermuda as she was of Black descent.

Widely published in academic journals, Dangor has also overseen scores of doctorate candidates in his career.

"I hope that being the recipient of this award will encourage the youth in the sciences in South Africa," Dangor said.

Dangor's niece, Zubeda Dangor, founder and director of Nisaa Institute for Women, said he was very shy and did not like the limelight. His award was accepted by his grandnephew Mohammed Raees Dangor, a lecturer at Wits.