



- The Seriti Commission report on the arms deal was released on Thursday, with chairman Judge Willie Seriti stating that the commission found no evidence of fraud, corruption or bribery in the R46.7bn procurement package. The 737-page report took four years to compile and cost R113m. The arms deal has dogged the African National Congress (ANC) for nearly two decades and the 783 counts of corruption the Democratic Alliance is seeking to have reinstated against Mr Zuma are centred on the deal. Campaigners against the deal criticised the findings as a whitewash and said they were exploring legal avenues to set the report aside.
- ANC leaders blamed internal 'sabotage' for the poor attendance at last weekend's launch of its election manifesto in Port Elizabeth. Commentators say the fallout over the dismal turnout showed the depth of the conflict in the party, which is trying to manage tensions over a range of issues including calls for President Zuma to resign after he was found to have violated the country's Constitution in terms of the Nkandla scandal. ANC officials blamed the poor showing – it could not fill a 46 000-seat stadium – on its leaders in the Eastern Cape.
- Mineral Resources Minister Mosebenzi Zwane defended unexpected changes to the Mining Charter and his unilateral release of the draft. The draft was gazetted last Friday, a month after the start of a court case by the Chamber of Mines, seeking a declaratory order on the 'once-empowered, always-empowered' clause in the 2010 version of the charter. Mr Zwane pointed out that the provision that 26% of the ownership of mining companies should be in black hands remained unchanged. Embattled by poor demand for minerals, low commodity prices, and higher input and labour costs, miners have argued that the ownership requirement is onerous. Analysts caution against policy changes that may fuel uncertainty and scare off investors.
- The board of Denel needs to explain to Parliament and Public Enterprises Minister Lynne Brown why it spent about R3.4m to force the removal of CE Riaz Saloojee, even though he was never charged with an offence. Mr Saloojee, along with his predecessor Shaun Liebenberg, is credited with the spectacular turnaround of Denel. Mr Saloojee removal also raised suspicion in political circles as it occurred shortly after the installation of a new board, which went on to form a questionable joint venture with a Gupta-associated company.
- Science and Technology Minister Naledi Pandor says South Africa is not investing enough in innovation. The Department of Science and Technology's budget is R7.43bn for 2016-2017. Another area of concern is the percentage of gross domestic product spent on research and development (R&D). For the three years to 2012-2013, it remained at about 0.76% – barely halfway towards the state's 1.5% target for 2019. Ms Pandor said Cabinet should redirect resources to R&D that were not being spent in other parts of the economy.
- Data released this week show that SA's poor black youth are falling behind their peers in other population groups despite government attempts at transformation. Releasing StatsSA's 'social profile of youth' report, statistician-general Pali Lehohla said that the findings indicated a very difficult future and that SA remained stuck in its apartheid past. Youth unemployment remains high at 39.5%. Black youth have been less able than other groups to translate educational opportunities into skilled jobs.
- Metrorail is counting the cost of damage to its trains and infrastructure in the Western Cape following days of mayhem that disrupted train services. Rail is the backbone of public transport in Cape Town. Metrorail spokeswoman Riana Scott said on Monday the cost of the losses so far this year as a result of the vandalism and arson was about R70m (2015: R128m). The South African Transport and Allied Workers' Union dismissed allegations that it orchestrated the recent incidents of train vandalism.
- Ratings agency Ratings Africa says most of SA's 100 largest municipalities are in financial trouble, and only two provinces scored more than 50% in 2015, according to its financial stability index. The Western Cape (60%) and KwaZulu-Natal (59%) were the top-performing provinces, while the worst were Free State (25%) and North West (26%). The index rated the City of Cape Town (75%) as the most financially sustainable metro, followed by Buffalo City (73%) and Ekurhuleni (70%). Tshwane scored lowest (24%), followed by the City of Joburg (37%) even though these two cities had the highest income per household.

The Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP), the state-subsidised housing project, has successfully expanded the housing stock available in the country, providing access to decent housing to vulnerable groups, according to a new report by StatsSA. The report also states a decrease in the urban population of SA living in informal settlements (from 17% in 2002 to 11% in 2014). Nationally, the percentage of households living in formal dwellings increased from 76% to 80% between 2002 and 2014. **End**