



OUTRAGE: Visvin Reddy

Row over Indians: official welcomes the opportunity to defend himself

LEANNE JANSEN

SUSPENDED ANC Chatsworth branch chairman Visvin Reddy says he remains a "disciplined cadre" of the party, respects its censure and "welcomes" the opportunity to defend himself in the ensuing disciplinary process.

Yesterday, Reddy attended

an ANC rally in Richards Bay, in his capacity as treasurer of the SA National Civic Organisation, he said.

The ANC's provincial leadership suspended Reddy at the weekend following an earlier statement by KwaZulu-Natal secretary Sihle Zikalala in which Reddy's "offensive anti-Indian" remarks (made on

Facebook) were condemned.

Last week, Reddy told The Star's sister paper The Mercury that his comments that "whiners" should leave the country and go back to India had been misinterpreted.

"I was responding to people who were saying horrible things about the ANC. Yes, I was angry, but I did not say they

must go back to India." Reddy said he had been speaking in general, because people could be "vicious".

"Life is better here than in India, and people should look at the strides made by the government," he said.

He said the comments were his personal views.

Reddy would not be drawn

on whether he believed the ANC had acted appropriately in suspending him, but said the ruling party was a democratic organisation which would give him a fair chance to defend himself.

"I appeal to everyone in the Asian community not to marginalise themselves, but to come out in their numbers and

vote for the ANC."

The ward 73 (Chatsworth) branch of the ANC yesterday issued a statement regarding the Facebook controversy, in defence of its chairman, saying it was shocked and disappointed at the decision taken by the provincial powers. "The statements made by (Reddy) on Facebook addressed

to a DA supporter (were) his own and not of the ANC. At no stage did Comrade Reddy state that 'Indians should go back to India'. He merely compared life for Indian people in India, in general, to that of South Africa."

The branch argued that Reddy's statement was "deliberately distorted" to benefit the DA.

Bekkersdal community scolded for rioting

Areas where it's worse have faith in ruling party, rally told

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THERE are areas worse off than Bekkersdal when it comes to a lack of service delivery where residents have not resorted to rioting.

This is the view of Cosatu deputy general secretary Bheki Ntshintshali.

He was part of a high-powered Gauteng ANC delegation, which included Struggle stalwart Winnie Madikizela-Mandela, to the strife-torn township west of Joburg on Saturday.

They eventually addressed a rally under a heavy police presence, in marked and unmarked vehicles, as ministers from the security and justice cluster went about their mission separately, investigating whether voting would be under threat in Bekkersdal on Wednesday.

To ensure free electioneering, various specialised police units were deployed in the area.

In the past few months, some of the residents had prevented the ANC from openly campaigning for votes in the area, while other parties, such as the Economic Freedom Fighters, PAC, Azapo, DA and United Democratic Movement, were allowed to campaign.

At the centre of the conflict was Gauteng Premier Nomvula Mokonyane's comments. She reportedly told residents during service delivery protests in the area the "ANC did not need their dirty votes" – a comment she later retracted.

The residents were protesting under the banner of the Concerned Residents Association over alleged acts of corruption in the Westonaria local municipality.

They also wanted the municipality placed under administration, claiming that an amount of R1.3 billion set



GETTING PERSONAL: Police Minister Nathi Mthethwa greets Bekkersdal residents during ANC door-to-door electioneering on Saturday.

PICTURE: ITUMELENG ENGLISH

aside for the Bekkersdal Urban Renewal Project in 2001 was misappropriated by individuals in the municipality.

Saturday was the first time the ANC was allowed to campaign openly in Bekkersdal.

Madikizela-Mandela was clearly the drawcard but did not give an address, saying she was still mourning the death of

Nelson Mandela.

Addressing more than 1 000 ANC supporters, Ntshintshali said Bekkersdal was better off than many other areas.

"There is an area, Duncan Village, in the Eastern Cape. Duncan Village is worse than your area. The people of Duncan Village never lose hope. They love the ANC and they

know change will happen."

Duncan Village residents never got involved in violent service delivery protests because they believed the ANC would improve their lives in the future, he said.

ANC Gauteng secretary David Makhura also assured ANC supporters and other residents that Auditor-General

Kimi Makwetu's office was investigating their claims of corruption.

Makhura said Minister of Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs Lechesa Tsenoli had asked the auditor-general's office to conduct the investigation.

He also said Tsenoli and Gauteng MEC for Co-operative

Governance and Traditional Affairs Ntombi Mekiwe had set up a task team to look into the alleged malfunctioning of the Westonaria local municipality.

Makhura said the same team would investigate the problems of housing on the West Rand.

ANC national chairwoman

Baleka Mbete also appealed to residents to be patient, saying their concerns would be attended to after the elections.

Mbete said the ANC would "focus on local governments and deal with the rot in it" after the elections.

"The ANC will come closer to the villages, where local governments operate."

As for Sithole, Zuma need not doubt her support.

"I am going to vote for the ANC. I am getting a child-support grant for my children aged 16 and 10 because of the ANC," Sithole said.

Gilbert Mashaba, 18, a member of the "born free" generation, saw things

differently. He said the scales would always be tipped against them when it came to services.

Supporters pour in to hear Zuma speak, 'despite all his faults'

ALLY MUTNICK, SUSIE NEILSON
AND JOYCE LEE

CEDRICK Netshitongwe and Rotondwa Mugwesi lay sprawled on the grass outside FNB Stadium where the ANC held its "final push" rally.

The two were exhausted. They had woken up at 3am to make it to the rally on time from Mpumalanga, showing their commitment to the party whose history had earned their votes the day they were born.

"We love the ANC," said Netshitongwe, a member of the first-time voters bloc: the born-free generation. "It's the only party that brings us together."

He likes the DA and EFF, but, like others at the rally, his loyalty comes from the party's anti-apartheid legacy, and he could never imagine backing an opposition party.

Netshitongwe was part of a



PACKED: Thousands of ANC supporters attended the Siyanoqoba rally at FNB Stadium to hear President Jacob Zuma. PICTURE: ANTOINE DE RAS

yellow sea of 100 000 ANC supporters who gathered to hear President Jacob Zuma speak, three days before what is expected to be the country's most contested elections since 1994.

Dancers and entertainers enthralled the crowd from 9am

until Zuma took the stage nearly five hours later. By early afternoon, the stands were spilling over with fervent supporters, many of whom echoed Netshitongwe and Mugwesi's sentiments.

Twenty years on, the sup-



STAUNCH SUPPORTER: Princess Matshebelele said she supported President Jacob Zuma despite his shortcomings. PICTURE: JOYCE LEE

porters said they felt grateful to the ANC for the gains made since 1994.

Dressed in army attire, a cluster of Umkhonto weSizwe (MK) veterans came to celebrate 20 years of ANC government.

Antony Khano, who joined

MK in 1991, witnessed the end of apartheid and the integration of the ANC's military wing with the SANDF before retiring in 2003.

He thanked the ANC for "the freedom they gave us" and said his party membership

spanned his whole life.

"This is the only movement I will support," he said. "Till death do I part."

Supporters were not deaf to widespread claims of ANC corruption, but many said it did not affect their support for Zuma nor their dedication to the ANC. Some said they chose to accept that their leaders had human failings.

Asked about Nkandla, Steve Ramoshoba, 40, a construction entrepreneur, defended Zuma, claiming any corruption was the fault of the committee in charge of the upgrade to his estate.

Draped in a Nelson Mandela flag, Princess Matshebelele said South Africans should stick with what they know.

"We have our own houses, Jacob Zuma is a decent man, he's just confused like anyone else," she said.



HOPING: Few people attended the ACDP rally. PICTURE: THOBILE MATHONSI

God is needed to save the country, says ACDP

GOITSEMANG TLHABYE

THE AFRICAN Christian Democratic Party on Saturday held a rally in Atteridgeville, near Pretoria, to ask God to guide and heal South Africa.

The rally coincided with those of the ANC and EFF, which were also held in the area. Close to 2 000 people attended the rally, which was addressed by party leader Kenneth Meshoe and pastors.

Meshoe said people must have hope that things will change. He said the government had made a mistake by putting God aside in its leadership as divine intervention was needed to save South Africa. "The ANC has good brains in their leadership but they are mistaken if they think they can make it without God," he said.

Meshoe added the ACDP was not just for Christians. "What

people need to understand is that we love and care for everyone despite their religious beliefs, all we're emphasising is a return to our core values as humans," he said.

During the rally, a prayer session was held for the sick.

Youngster Lerato Moloi said she was voting for the ACDP as it represented the values she was taught at home. "I believe in their message and I think other young people would benefit from them too if they listened carefully."

Sophie Mzimba said: "I want a leader who is honest and determined to change South Africa for the better, and I know Kenneth Meshoe is that kind of leader."

"We want our children to learn respect, prayer and guidance in schools and to know that nothing will come without God on our side helping us forward," she said.

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DA campaign closes with slick Obama touch

SHANTI ABOOBAKER

IF THE DA's family concert on the historic Walter Sisulu Square in Kliptown yesterday appeared low key, rest your soul, because the party brought out the bling on Saturday with the slickest political show South Africa has ever seen.

With echoes of US campaigns – especially that of then presidential hopeful Barack Obama – the DA "brought it" to the people with teleprompters, chants of "We can win" and "Change", and a whole lot more.

They unleashed hip-hop muso Ifani, who reinterpreted his hit song *Mili* with "give me more jobs and then I can make a *mili*" and Mi Casa's J-something's sensual

jika-majika'd.

The significance could not be lost on even the most cynical observer. The DA has grown – exponentially – and it is sometimes a black party.

The Coca-Cola Dome, where the closing DA Gauteng rally was held, has a 19 000-seat capacity, and there were thousands of black Gauteng supporters who donned their Mmusi Maimane campaign T-shirts.

Maimane is handsome, like Obama, and the T-shirts are epic. Last weekend, the party held its Western Cape closing rally in the Bellville Velodrome.

Bellville was a different beast from Northgate – it was an all-coloured people affair with few

white DA supporters.

In Mitchells Plain, born-and-bred Emo Adams performed *goema*, with roots in its history of slavery and minstrel music, while the Cape Flats' favourites ranged from Bob Marley to Justin Bieber.

Party leader Helen Zille took to the stage with karaoke, performing the Cape DA supporters' favourite DA-Zille, song *Keekie Loekie*.

But yesterday in Kliptown, the DA wound down its campaign before Wednesday's big push.

They brought out folk singer Bongeziwe Mabandla and their own superstars: Maimane, the DA's Gauteng premier candidate; parliamentary leader Lindiwe Mazibuko; and party youth leader Mbali Ntuli.

'I'm voting DA'

MBALI Luthuli is a young unemployed mother. She attended the DA's "We Can Win Concert" at Walter Sisulu Square in Kliptown, Soweto, yesterday with her three-month-old baby.

Luthuli did not let the scorching sun deter her from going to show her support for the DA. "My presence is needed here, I want change for the future. Right now, with the ANC, we don't see any change in employment and education, so I'm voting for opportunity," she said.

When she had to abort her studies after the National Student Financial Aid Scheme halted its funding, it was the last straw, she said. – Staff Reporters