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TEXT 1

Soldiers, police intervene as taxi strike leaves commuters stranded in Gauteng

22 June 2020 - 07:44 by IAVAN PIJOOS AND KGAUGELO MASWENENG

1. Commuters were left stranded across Gauteng, roads were barricaded and a bus hijacked as the SA National Taxi Council (Santaco) embarked on a strike on Monday to protest against a R1bn government relief package for the industry.
2. The council said in a letter “we were expecting at least R20,000 per vehicle” but would receive significantly less out of the package announced by transport minister Fikile Mbalula.
3. Police and soldiers were deployed to clear some blocked roads, leading to an early morning gridlock, while frustrated commuters faced being crammed together in whatever transport they could find and plead for lifts. Others were ordered off buses.
4. Tshwane Metro Police Department spokesperson Isaac Mahamba said several roads had been blocked or closed by taxis.
5. Tshwane metro spokesperson Selby Bokaba said protesters attempted to hijack a city bus at Olievenhoutbosch, but the driver managed to escape and return to the depot.
6. “In a second incident, taxi drivers successfully hijacked a bus with passengers in Danville. They took the bus with the driver and went to block the other side of the road. They refused to let the bus driver use his phone and threatened him and the passengers, but he remained calm.”
7. Metro police were called in to rescue the driver and passengers.
8. Santaco said the shutdown was planned for Monday and Tuesday.
9. During a virtual press conference on Sunday, Mbalula said increasing the amount provided in the relief package was “simply not an option on the table”.
10. “The door is still open for creative ideas to maximise value for this limited benefit for all operators in the industry.

11. "We have emphasised many times before that whatever support we avail to the taxi industry, it must be for the benefit of all operators."
12. Mbalula said R1.135bn would be given to taxi operators.
13. Last week, Santaco said a nationwide taxi fare increase has been announced with effect from July 1.
14. Spokesperson Thabisho Molelekwa said at the time that the industry faced a situation in which many taxis would be repossessed without some form of financial relief. The industry has felt the financial impact of the pandemic lockdown and not being permitted to transport a full load of passengers per vehicle.
15. Molelekwa said if nothing was done, in the next six to eight months at least 45% of taxis would be repossessed.
16. Santaco provincial spokesperson Middyali Mali told TimesLIVE the strike was going ahead as planned.
17. Mali said taxi drivers would keep their vehicles stationed at taxi ranks and not ferry any commuters. He said the strike would be peaceful and without any disruptions to alternative transport for commuters.
18. "Government must urgently speak to the banks to stop harassing our members to repossess their vehicles during this difficult time of Covid-19."

Adapted from: <https://www.timeslive.co.za/news/south-africa/2020-06-22-taxi-strike-leaves-commuters-stranded-across-gauteng/>

TEXT 2

The taxi industry deserves a full load of respect

Mcebo Dlamini

24 Jun 2020

1. The taxi industry in South Africa is one of the most important industries in the country, yet it is underfunded and often ignored by the government. It attracts all sorts of negative stereotypes but what is rarely mentioned is how it is the backbone of most poor, black families. Not only because it transports them to their workplaces at an affordable price, but because it also allows for the existence of other businesses.
2. It is not difficult to understand why this industry is treated in this way; it is administered by black people. In a country such as ours, with a colonial legacy that still sees everything black as subordinate and everything white as superior, there is a misconception that race determines the quality of the service. Black is often associated with “violent, inefficient and dirty”. White, on the other hand, is “clean, classy and reliable”. It is not surprising then that the minister of finance refers to taxi owners protesting for a reasonable relief fund as “bullies”. When blacks in this country protest, it is senseless and not within the logic of justice.
3. The taxi industry is one of the few businesses that is black, from its employees to its owners, although of course it is not immune to the overreaching white hand, because the taxis are still manufactured and financed by white-owned institutions.
4. Nevertheless, the taxi industry disproves the myth that blacks are incapable of governing themselves and running a sector efficiently. For years it has managed to operate without collapsing. It has managed to transport Sis’ Zandi to work everyday so that she can feed her family, it sustains the queue marshals, mechanics and all the sisters and brothers who sell their wares at the rank. To say the industry does not contribute anything in tax is another fallacy – what about fuel levies and other associated taxes? Do they not count?
5. To realise how important this industry is, we only have to remember how the rhythm of our daily lives is affected when they decide to stop operating.
6. Here I want to also suggest that there is something quite suspicious about calling the taxi associations “greedy” for demanding an increase from the relief fund. Because of the Covid-19 regulations, taxis are only allowed to transport a certain number of people; this means that per load they are not making the same amount they used to make before the pandemic. Yet, the petrol they use and the maintenance of the taxis, as well as the payment of drivers does not change. Also,

important to note is that many of these taxis are financed and the financial institutions still require the payment of instalments.

7. The expenses remain the same yet the income decreases drastically. Where will this money come from?

8. If the government takes seriously the contribution that the taxi industry makes to the economy, why then does it refuse to negotiate and rather resort to calling taxi bosses names? If the government does not have the money that the taxi associations require, how is it that throughout the years it has always been able to bail out other industries, such as aviation and broadcasting?

9. Of course, questions about violence, particularly gender-based violence, and the regulating and equipping of the sector must also be addressed.

10. But, the government should find a way to address the concerns of an industry that has been on the sidelines for a very long time without antagonising them.

11. To deny this industry relief when it needs it the most is to deny its importance and legitimacy as one of the anchors of the South African economy.

Taken from <https://mg.co.za/opinion/2020-06-24-coronavirus-taxi-industry-bailout/>

TEXT 3

Travelling by minibus taxi in SA

Nosimilo Ndlovu

Catching a minibus taxi is one of the cheapest ways of getting around in South Africa – and a great way to get to know the country and its people.

For a truly African experience, and for those on a tight budget, minibus taxis – or just taxis, as they are known in South Africa – would be the first choice. Not only will they get you around town quickly (too quickly for some), they'll bring you up close to the country's vibrant mix of cultures and people.

A Johannesburg taxi driver's clientele will range from a hot-shot businesswoman working in Sandton, the commercial hub of the city, to an old sangoma (traditional healer) from Soweto, South Africa's largest township, in the south.

You hop in, and the adventure begins. On the one side there may be young women sharing the latest celebrity gossip, and on the other an old man complaining about moral degeneration. While all this is going on, the music system will be pumping out the latest kwaito or hip hop beats, keeping all the heads bobbing. Those who travel the same route quickly get to know each other well, and one commuter will be able to tell you exactly what's going on in another's life.

Having grown up in a township, I've been taking taxis all my life to get anywhere and everywhere. But for me, taxi-travelling has never been particularly easy, let alone comfortable. The drivers are highly skilled and experienced, but notoriously reckless in the traffic. The vehicles can also be overloaded and unsafe.

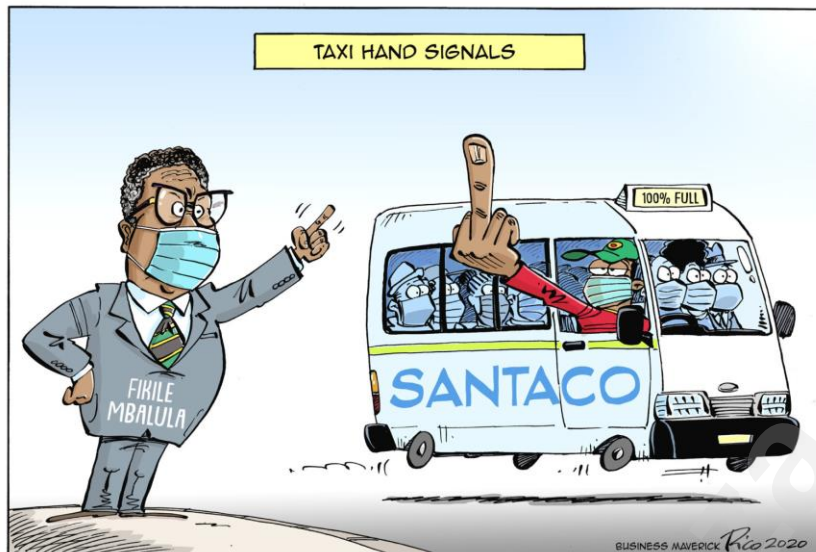
Knowing the right hand signals and lingo when stopping and boarding a minibus taxi is key to a successful journey.

Once you're on the taxi, it's very important to know what to say to get off, how to say it and when to say it. You can get off just about anywhere along the route; there are no official stops. Before getting the taxi to stop, look out for nearby road or landmarks you name, loudly, for the sake of the driver. For example, shout "stop sign" 10 seconds before the sign, and the driver will make a plan. But don't shout too early or too late, because chances are you'll miss the drop-off point.

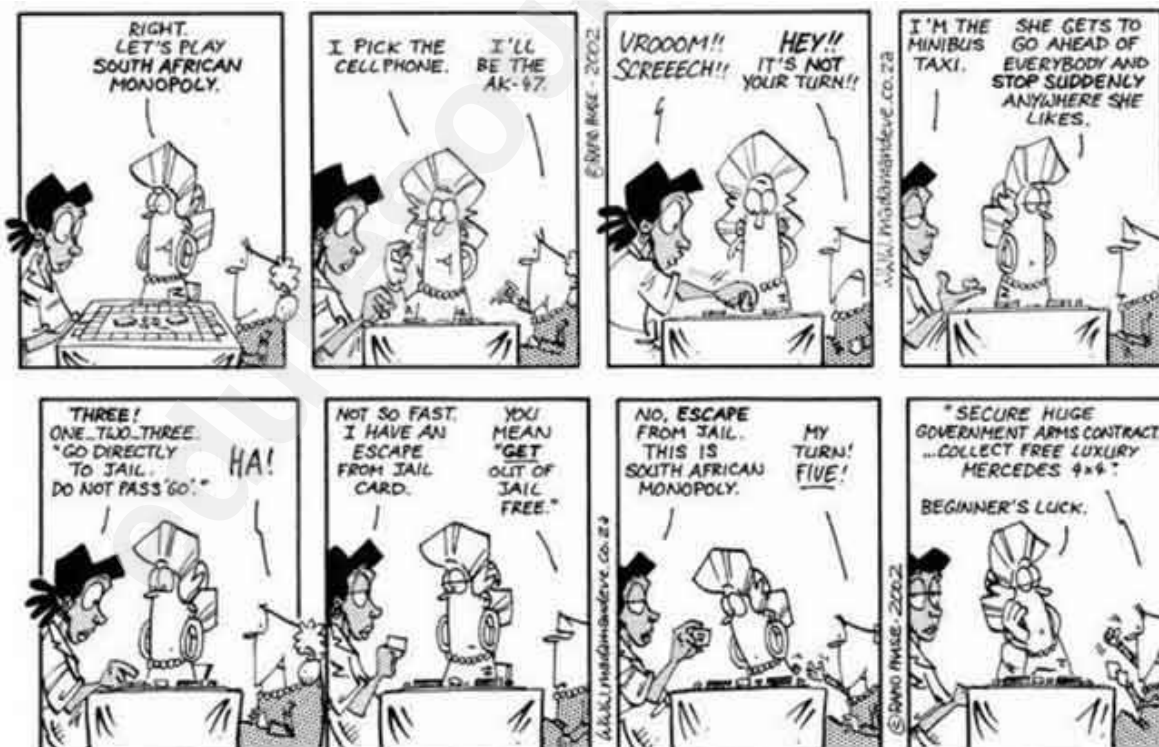
Get all this right, and you're in for a ride of your life. Catching a taxi will take you on an audacious African journey not to be experienced anywhere else in the world.

Adapted from: <https://www.brandsouthafrica.com/tourism-south-africa/sa-taxi-catching-guide>

TEXT 4



TEXT 5



TEXT 6A

SANTACO

@SA_Taxis

We condemn blocking of roads and intimidation of people. We urge SANTACO Gauteng and the general taxi industry to demonstrate a peaceful shutdown.

TEXT 6B

@iamShandu

EMPLOYEE: Boss, I can't make it to work today - there's a taxi strike.

EMPLOYER: On your curriculum vitae you wrote running as a hobby, I will see you at work.

TEXT 6C

@Mangethe95

I just wish one day as commuters we could partner with government or companies and organize a strike for a day or week, where no commuter will use a public taxi...

There's alot we have to teach these taxi associations.

TEXT 6D

@SneKhumaloSA

Stop spreading the misinformation that taxis don't pay tax.

It's not true.

It's inconvenient that they are striking but I'm glad they are holding the govt accountable.

Govt has paid out billions to white industries, why not to this solely Black one?