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NDLOVU?**

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RE-ENACT GANDHI
SALT MARCH**

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Raising the roof

Stadium on track for finish

KEN MCHUNU

THE next milestone in the construction of Durban's R3.1-billion Moses Mabhida Stadium is underway – the lifting of its hi-tech roof into place.

Roof Engineer Markus Balz said 52 hydraulic jacks, each strong enough to lift 80 adult elephants had been installed for the task.

"The roof structure for Moses Mabhida stadium hasn't been used anywhere else in the world. It is a new challenge for engineers."

Head of the City's Strategic Projects, Julie-May Ellingson, said: "We are very proud of the team of engineers".

She described the decision to include the iconic arch in the stadium's design as a "big, bold step" because of strong coastal winds.

"But we managed to get the best engineers in the world for the task and we are happy to see the progress," said Ellingson.

Balz said the roof was designed to withstand "even very catastrophic wind speeds"; and as Durban had one of the most corrosive environments in the world, the roof had undergone stringent anti-corrosion tests.

Once complete, the 45 000 square metre, white glass-fibre membrane of the roof would stay "very white" for a long time.

The roof is scheduled for completion in August.

To date, about 226 280 tons of concrete and 9 496 tons of reinforcement steel have been used in the construction of the stadium.

Ellingson said most of the major concrete work had been finished in the bowl, except for the precast seats, embankment seating, the remainder of precast mini steps, surface beds at the pump room area and areas used for temporary structures for building the arch.

She said metal frames for the seats were already being installed and the laying of seats would be completed by August.

"The seats will come in yellow, orange, green and white. Each of these has a tilt-up mechanism and offers a high level of comfort for spectators."

Ellingson said construction was 81% complete in the amphitheatre.

Grass for the pitch was being grown in Ballito and turf for around the field was being grown in Johannesburg. Both would be laid by the end of July, she said.

Work to install the catwalk and cable car is scheduled to start soon.

The stadium is expected to be completed by October and ready for handover to Fifa in January.

Ellingson said a website would soon be launched to keep the public abreast of the City's progress in preparing for the World Cup.

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WALK THE TALK



DEPUTY City Manager: Treasury, Krish Kumar, joins members of the Combined Risk and Managing the City Sub-Committee on a walkabout in central Durban to inspect the public realm. Broken pavement slabs, trading on walkways, illegal trading, and filthy and hanging power lines were some of the things the team came across. The Council's latest budget has increased funding to address these problems

Picture: JESSIE SINGH

Plenty of IPL action for Durban

ROMITA HANUMAN

CRICKET fans should not be disappointed if they missed the Indian Premier League (IPL) match in Durban earlier this week. There are plenty more matches to come, including one tomorrow.

The IPL, the most watched twenty-20 cricket tournament in the world, is usually

held in India, but the series was moved to South Africa amid security concerns.

Eight South African cities are feeling the benefits of the relocation, with Durban, which hosts 16 of the 59 matches, among the best off.

Tickets are selling fast, according to Computicket. The first match sold out in just two hours. IPL founder,

Chairman and Commissioner, Lalit Modi, said: "I am happy with the way ticket sales have progressed and I would like to thank the fans for all their support."

Not only has the IPL brought in cricket superstars, but Bollywood stars are set to spend the next few weeks in Durban. They include the likes of Shilpa Shetty, Shah

Rukh Khan and Preity Zinta.

Shetty owns shares in defending champions, Rajasthan Royals. Zinta co-owns Kings XI Punjab and Khan co-owns the Kolkatta Knight Riders. The Rajasthan Royals include Proteas Graeme Smith and Morne Morkel, so its little wonder they enjoy such a great fan-base here.

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MACK MAKHATHINI

THE international airport and Dube Tradeport at La Mercy will be complete in time for the 2010 World Cup, says the Airports Company of South Africa (Acsa).

Terence Delomoney, Acsa's General Manager for Durban International and National Airports, said the company was "very pleased" with the progress so far.

New airport set for 2010 take-off

track. While the construction team is busy building the airport, specialist teams are busy locally and internationally testing some of the bulk infrastructure such as the air bridges, baggage systems, cargo systems and public parking systems.

"At this stage all civil works such as the aprons and main

access road have been affected by the weather over the past four months. The bulk electrical works and fuel pipelines are being done."

He said Acsa was busy with an operational readiness and relocation programme to help it plan and make the transition from the current site to the new airport by the

first quarter of next year.

Some 53% of the R7.8-billion construction budget has already been spent and the project is more than half complete.

The new airport will have a 3 700m runway, compared with the existing airport's 2 440 metres, opening Durban up to the world's biggest

aircraft, the giant Airbus A380.

It will have an initial capacity of 7.5 million passengers a year, as opposed to the current airport's capacity of just less than 5 million.

With a passenger terminal almost three times the size of Durban International's, the new airport will eventually be able to cope with some 45

million passengers a year.

It will include a trade zone, commercial support zone and an agri zone that will cultivate and export vegetables, flowers and other perishables. These passenger and trade components will make up the Dube Tradeport.

Meanwhile, news that global carrier Emirates will operate daily flights to Dubai has sparked interest from the airline fraternity.

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