

Sowetan - 3 May 2013, Page 14

Gupta visit continues litany of errors

A COUNTRY'S dignity, reputation and prosperity lies in the conduct of its leaders.

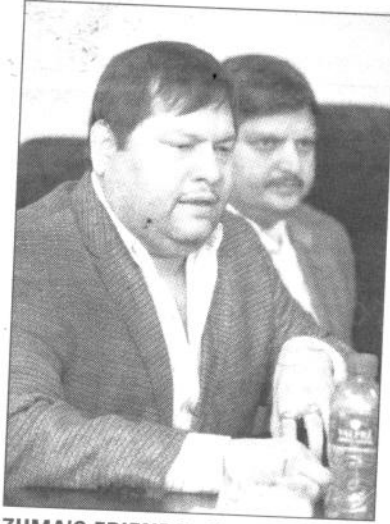
The president, as the first citizen, must display a high level of skills to understand the complex and myriad demands associated with governing a country.

However, this is not one of the qualities inherent in President Jacob Zuma, whose leadership continues to compromise the country at all levels.

Locally, service delivery continues to be stifled by poor leadership, incompetence, corruption and fraud.

Internationally, South Africa's image continues to decline on a downward spiral. The president refuses to acknowledge his mistakes and is unable to redeem his own behaviour.

He made controversial appointments by appointing people such as Menzi Simelane (National Prosecuting Authority), Richard Mdluli (intelligence) and Bheki Cele (police commissioner) to strategic positions. He attempted to extend Chief Justice Sandile Ngcobo's tenure at the Constitutional Court and refuses to fire the Minister of Education Angie



ZUMA'S FRIENDS: Ajay and Atul Gupta

Motshekga, regardless of her incompetence.

Zuma takes his nephew Khulubuse Zuma on government business trips despite his failure to appreciate the torture and human indignity he was causing his employees at the Aurora mine where he failed to pay them for

more than a year.

The failure to grant the Dalai Lama a visa to visit the country for a birthday celebration was the first test of South Africa's sovereignty because such action would have angered China.

Then this was followed by a vote at the United Nations over a "no-fly zone" that resulted in the killing of Libyan leader Muammar Gaddafi, one of the ANC's key alliance partners during the struggle for liberation.

Then came the Nkandla compound conundrum.

The public works department spent more than R250-million refurbishing the president's household and immediately turned it into a national key point, to justify the unjustifiable penchant for excessive abuse of state resources.

The country was just coming to terms with the disastrous Central African Republic mission in which 14 South African soldiers were killed, when another national key point, the Waterkloof Air Force Base, is abused. The military airport received private individuals – the Gupta family and their wedding guests –

who are close to Zuma.

The country's safety and security was compromised when the base was abused for personal gain.

The question is not who gave the Guptas permission to land – even though they were not supposed to land there in the first place, so no permission can be contemplated. The key question now is: were all protocols required to receive visitors in the country followed?

Did the South African Revenue Services customs department ascertain the proper clearance of the visitors and charge taxes where they were required?

Did the department of home affairs clear the passengers' documents – passports and visitation rights?

Did the police check whether illegal items and criminals were entering the country in disguise?

Too many questions remain unanswered.

And if the defence force did not give permission, why did the military not shoot down the plane when it entered South Africa's airspace?

Phillimon Mnisi, Johannesburg