

NC » WEATHER TODAY

KIMBERLEY:

HIGH 31° LOW 17°

UPINGTON:

HIGH 37° LOW 24°

KURUMAN:

HIGH 30° LOW 17°

R290m facility not complete

Eleven years and what is worse is that the costs for the place for the mentally challenged have escalated to R1.8bn

TNA REPORTER

WHAT was meant to be a state-of-the-art facility for mentally challenged people, put out to tender in 2005 for R290m, is still far from completion, 11 years after construction began.

To compound the problem, costs have escalated and are now standing at R1.8bn. The province has no specialised psychiatric hospital. Only Kimberley's West End Hospital has a 12-bed psychiatric wing, which means patients have to queue and sometimes wait for years to be admitted.

Vista Park Developers, who were awarded the tender for R290m, blamed the Northern Cape department of public works for reneging on the deal and not paying the full amount. The company said it was still owed R120m.

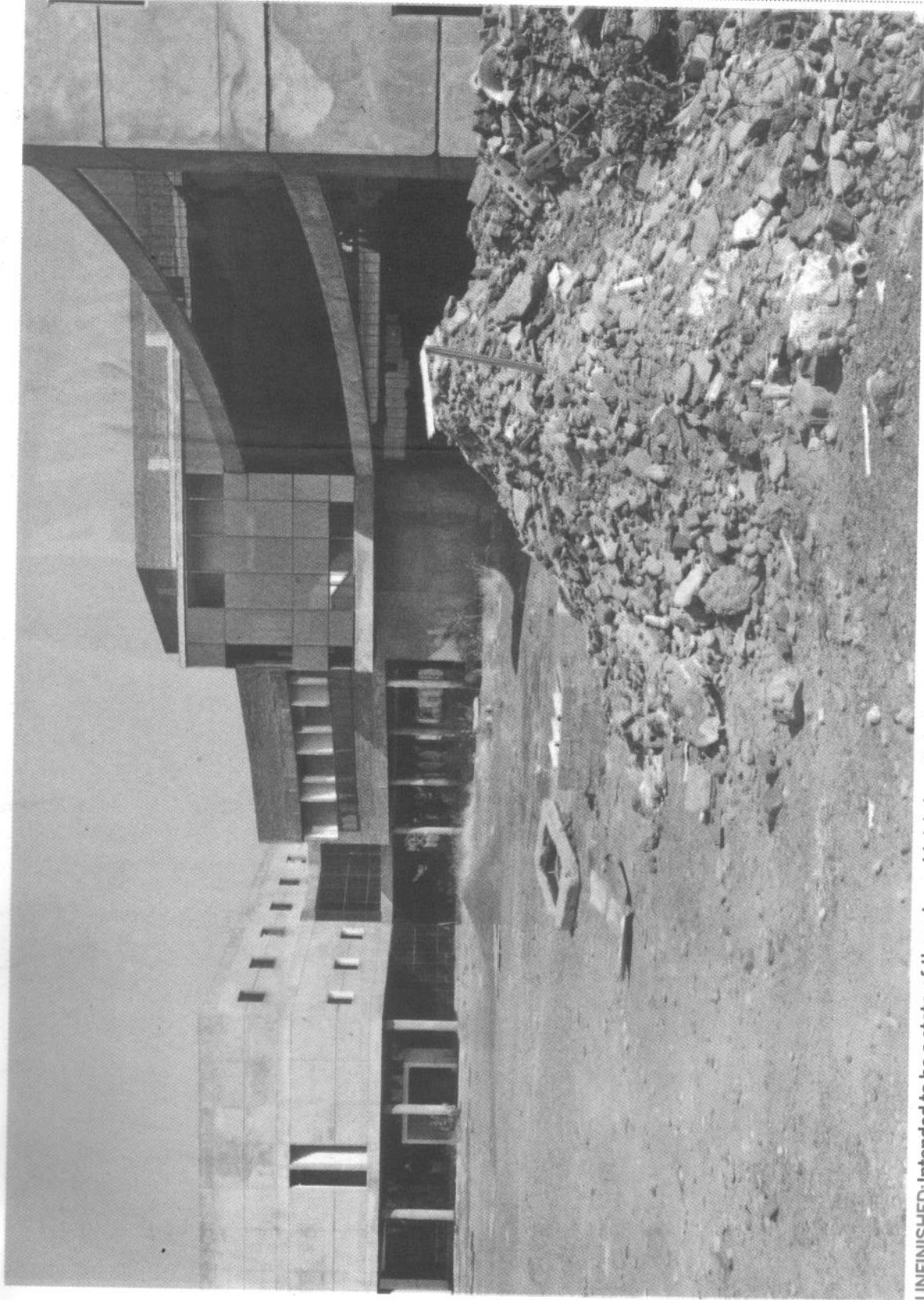
The company has taken the department to court before for non-payment. When asked for comment, the department's chief director Mzwandile Bosch said the matter was sub judice.

The department said it approached the Special Investigating Unit and the State Security Agency to probe the entire tender to determine who was to be blamed.

When the work stalled because of the dispute between Vista Park Developers and the department, in 2011 the department contracted another service provider, Inyatsi, to finish the work that had been started at a cost of R400m.

"At this time it became clear that the contractor (Vista Park) was struggling to keep up to the agreed completion period. It was also clear that the contractor's quotation was 15% below estimate," Bosch said.

"The contractor then revised the completion period to December 2009. At this stage we had indicated our dissatisfaction about the slow pace of devel-



UNFINISHED: Intended to be a state-of-the-art psychiatric hospital, this R290m building lies unfinished as Vista Park Developers, the original recipients of the tender, and the department of public works trade blame over costs, which have escalated to R1.8bn 11 years later. PICTURE: ETOUZA

opment in this project. As a department we were very concerned and indicated our intention to terminate the contract with Vista."

"As it stands now we do not have any contract with Vista Park Developers/JOH Arch Investments JV. We are in charge of the project."

The new contractor is on site, and the hospital is expected to open doors within a year.

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