

■ CRIME

Hawks probe Richards Bay man over R95m tender

BONGANI HANS

THE HAWKS are investigating whether anyone conspired with Richards Bay businessman Ishwar Ramlutchman in allegedly defrauding a R95million draft relief tender aimed at providing water to rural communities in northern KwaZulu-Natal.

The man, who is known as King Goodwill Zwelithini's Indian son, and goes by the name of Prince Mabheka Zulu, reportedly won a drought relief tender from the Umzinyathi Municipality in northern KZN.

This tender was to install boreholes so as to provide water to the drought-stricken rural communities of Endumeni, Nquthu, Msinga and Umvoti municipalities.

However, it is alleged that the money disappeared without being used for the intended project.



Ishwar Ramlutchman

Hawks provincial spokesperson Captain Simphiwe Mhlongo said the police were following leads to solve

the case, which was reported last year and later transferred to the Hawks in Newcastle.

"Right now the allegations are linked to this guy, so part of the investigation is to establish who else is involved," said Mhlongo.

Ramlutchman denies having been involved in fraud and corruption, although he confirmed getting a tender to drill boreholes "through a consultant. The work was done, and completed. At this stage it is all accusations," he said.

He added that he was surprised to hear that the Hawks were investigating him since they had not contacted him.

When asked further questions, Ramlutchman said his lawyers would provide answers and promised to provide the Daily News with the contact details of his lawyers, but he did not. Instead he ignored SMSes and

WhatsApp messages sent to him.

District mayor Mthandeni Ngu-bane said he could not elaborate on Ramlutchman's tender, since it was the subject of an investigation.

"There are boreholes. A company was hired to verify if there were boreholes on the ground. Some of them are operating, while others need to be repaired because they have not been producing water since 2013," he said.

It has been reported that Ramlutchman was convicted in 2013 of "defrauding the provincial Public Works Department by using forged documents during a tender bidding process".

The reports said he had paid a R500000 fine after pleading guilty.

The king's spokesperson, Prince Mbuyiseni Zulu, said yesterday that the investigation had nothing to do with the King or the royal family.