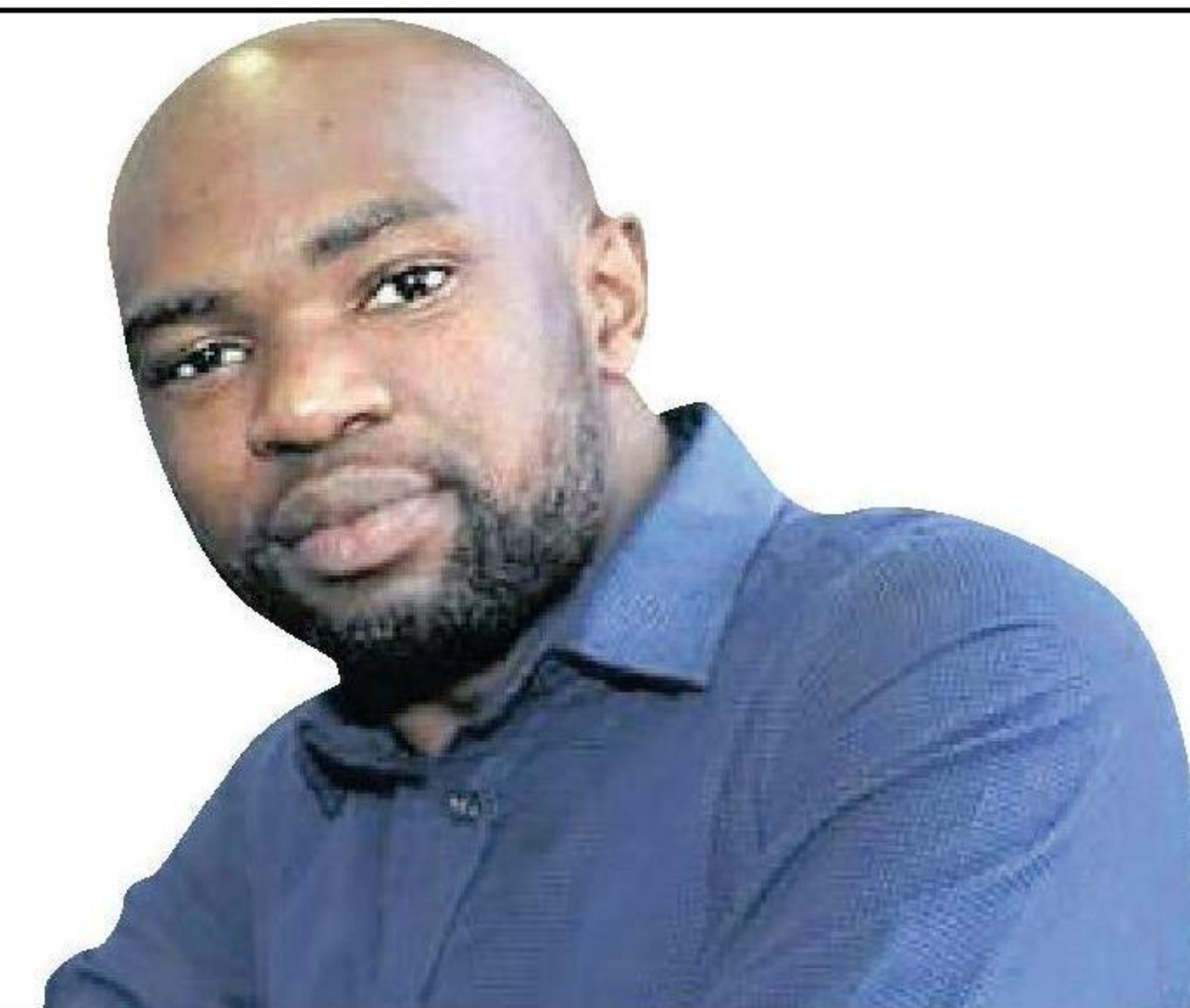




CITYWATCH

WITH SIBONISO MNGADI

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■ SECURITY

Burman Bush fence goes up

High quality system, at cost of R12m, will assuage fears of nature lovers, residents

THE installation of a R12million security fence around Burman Bush Nature Reserve in Durban suburb Morningside began this week.

The move was part of safety measures the city promised to put in place after musician Simon Milliken was killed in August.

The reserve has been a hot spot for criminals, with at least four people killed there in recent years, according to the city, and others robbed while visiting the area.

Milliken, 60, worked for the KZN Philharmonic Orchestra. After his death, it was found that the reserve was unstaffed, access was uncontrolled and the fence was easy to get through.

eThekweni Municipality announced it would replace the old fence, use more game rangers and implement tighter security controls.

Thembinkosi Ngcobo, head of the city's Parks and Recreation Unit, said the cost of the new fence might seem high, but it was worth it. He said it was

safe given its "high quality".

"The city has spent R12m putting the fence around the 50 hectare reserve. We had some delays because, initially, when we did an assessment, we were given a quote of R5m, but we later realised it would not cover the entire reserve," he said.

Visiting times have also been reduced to 12 hours as the reserve now operates from 6am to 6pm. It was previously open 24-hours.

"Our safety measures have brought some relief because no crime has been reported to us since they were implemented," Ngcobo said.

Regarding the use of more rangers, Ngcobo said the city was conducting a study of all its nature reserves to establish how many people were needed.

The city would add more rangers to all the reserves to ensure the safety of the patrons, he said.

Martin Meyer, former Morningside ward councillor, said he was excited that action had been taken to address



the issue of safety at the Burman Bush Nature Reserve.

Meyer said six contractors would share the R12m contract and more than 20 people who were employed were youths who lived in the area.

"It will help not just the reserve but also the people nearby who were living in fear. We are pleased that this safety initiative has created employ-

ment for the youth, some of whom are employed as security guards and some among the six contractors erecting the fence. The safety of the area is very important as it attracts a lot of visitors and contributes to the economy of the city," said Meyer.

Meanwhile, it was reported this week that a R70000 reward for information that could lead to the

arrest and conviction of the person responsible for Milliken's murder had been posted. Milliken's brother Jonathan told sister newspaper the Daily News he was sad the killer had not been arrested.

People with information can contact Crime Stop on 0860010111 or investigating officer Sergeant Mthethwa on 0710590669.

BURMAN Bush nature reserve in Morningside, which runs 8km north of the CBD. Comprising 50 hectares, it constitutes a small, circular enclave of coastal forest which forms part of the Durban municipal open space system. It is the northern remnant of a forest that once covered much of the Berea ridge. | LEON LESTRADE African News Agency (ANA)

■ HEALTH



PRITHIE Veerappen says flooding worsened the sewage seepage from the school property into her yard near her kitchen.

Three years of sewage stench and contamination

A CHATSWORTH resident has been caught in the centre of a maintenance problem between the departments of education and public works.

For three years, Prithie Veerappen of Tourmalin Avenue in Arena Park has been pleading with authorities of Rose Heights Primary School to fix a hazardous sewage leak.

Her house is separated from the school by a boundary wall where the contaminated water is seeping through. She said although she had endured the problem for a couple of years, the situation had worsened after the floods last month.

The smell was unbearable as the

sewage steadily flowed into her yard and near her kitchen, she said.

The sewage has attracted insects such as mosquitoes which poses a risk of diseases.

"We have been exposed to this kind of risk for a very long time. We can not keep on cleaning this mess. It is dangerous, doctors have advised me.

"I'm living with my old mom and my two dogs. We are all at risk of contracting hepatitis," said Veerappen.

"As a ratepayer, I am extremely frustrated by the unfair treatment I have received from those responsible for the school.

"I have been sent from pillar to

post and no one seems to be concerned or to take the initiative to fix this problem. I have contacted the authorities, including the principal," she said.

The principal, Dr RS Bundhal, said the school's ageing infrastructure was the cause of the sewer leak which he maintained he had raised with the public works department.

"This school is more than 50 years old. It is damage the school cannot afford to fix. I have written to the department and they promised that the leak will be repaired soon," he said.

But Public Works spokesperson Mbulelo Baloyi said the officials could not trace the complaints

lodged by the school on their records.

"Although Public Works is the custodian of all public buildings, it has to receive the request and budget from the concerned department.

"The department's officials may have done the inspection, but the education department will have to send the funds for the repair," said Baloyi.

Kwazi Mthethwa, Department of Education spokesperson, said the principal should raise the matter through the internal ranks.

"The principal is aware of all avenues within the district where such issues should be reported so it can be attended to," he said.