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k-sur-Mer, northern France. | AFP

something like this.

They say living far away makes your heart grow fonder. You yearn for family and friends you haven't seen for many years. On behalf of the family and friends, I want to thank Kusturi and Maheshini from the bottom of our hearts. We will never forget this get-together.

THYAGARAJ MARKANDAN | Klook

DA - Education MEC to blame for crisis

The DA in KwaZulu-Natal is deeply alarmed by the ongoing financial crisis engulfing KwaZulu-Natal's (KZN) Department of Education (DoE).

Two issues in particular expose the devastating mismanagement that continues to define this department – the halting of critical infrastructure projects by the province's Department of Public Works and Infrastructure (DPWI) due to non-payment, and the looming threat of a salary payment crisis that could leave thousands of educators unpaid. While the DA acknowledges that KZN's seventh administration inherited these financial failures from the previous MEC, current Education MEC Sipho Hlomuka's arrogance and inaction in the face of collapse are inde-

fensible.

Despite the gravity of the situation, MEC Hlomuka has demonstrated a lack of urgency and an unwillingness to take KZN's Education portfolio committee into his confidence and disclose the entire picture. Nor has he shown the political will to pursue meaningful reform. Instead, his department continues to recklessly spend more than 90% of its R66billion budget on salaries, leaving little to no room for school infrastructure, curriculum development or learner support.

This is not just poor governance – it is a betrayal of every child who depends on our public education system to escape poverty. The DoE is not just cash-strapped, it is functionally bankrupt in terms of vision and leadership. As part of KZN's Government of Provincial Unity (GPU), the DA proposes the following urgent reforms:

- Immediate restructuring of the DoE wage bill, including an audit of "ghost posts" and a freeze on non-critical appointments to ensure that funds are directed where they are most needed and;

- A dedicated infrastructure ring-fenced fund, managed with transparency and accountability, to ensure that service provider payments are made timeously and that vital school construction and maintenance projects are no longer halted.

The future of millions of children in KZN is being held hostage by political incompetence. The DA will no longer tolerate excuses. It is time for bold, honest leadership that puts learners first.

SAKHILE MNGADI | DA KZN spokesperson on Education



THE DA has questioned KwaZulu-Natal Education MEC, Sipho Hlomuka's leadership amid the department's financial crisis.

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