

## THE HORSE HAS GALLOPED ALREADY, NDEBELE

It is only in the South African government where such a silly thing can happen, a minister in government asking for full details on an event that has almost polarised relations in the country.

The e-toll saga has been in the media for too long let alone on the government agenda. The United Christian Democratic Party even raised it during the debate on the state of the nation address and characteristic of the government no attempt was made to respond thereto.

Civil Society and unions stood up and spoke against the e-tolling in Gauteng but all these fell on deaf ears because the ANC-led government felt they were going to bulldoze their way blindfolded through the course.

Cabinet through all their procedures gave the e-tolling process a thumbs-up and through their spokesperson Jimmy Manyi made it clear that it was not a dream and it was going to happen.

That the ANC, with Minister Sbu Ndebele present, and COSATU met behind closed doors to cut the deal on the matter is on record.

It is strange that after all the protestations and requests to delay or even do away with the tolling by the public, Ndebele is still trying to lay his hands on the full details of the contract. One wonders on what basis the minister proceeded to cabinet and even succeeded on having the e-tolling process being accommodated in the budget process tabled in February.

Can it be that he was too happy to watch the presentation on slides and perhaps did the same when he presented to the president and subsequently to cabinet. A project of this magnitude and implications could not and should not have been allowed to proceed without a close scrutiny of the small print.

Government as consumer should know that the legislation such as National Consumer Act is not meant for us citizens only. The *waar moet ek teken* mentality should have no place in our time given that they have so many bureaucrats to support them among whom are special and even political advisors all paid for by government, indirectly the taxpayer.

It is unpardonable that it is being argued that Nazir Alli dived and ducked whenever he was asked to present the documents for scrutiny. It is quite simple and clear that Ndebele did not have the heart and appetite to go through them.

Promises of good governance and fighting against poverty by the ANC government are simply words that are bandied around without actually meaning what is being said.

Arguments such as it was started before the incumbent took office are inconsequential as the government is in the hands of the same party and the current minister had his eyes wide open as he took office with glee.

The UCDP supports that a full probe by the Public Protector be mounted in this matter, through the eye of the needle, and all those involved, be it through dereliction of duty, withholding information or as beneficiaries from the e-toll contracts be exposed.

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