



**LANDFILL GAS PROJECT AN AFRICAN FIRST**  
News Page 3



**NEW DIRECTION FOR SOUTH BASIN**  
News Page 4



**CARSTENS IS COMING TO TOWN**  
Entertainment Page 6

**BRIGHT IDEAS**  
Feature Page 5

## Star start for Arena

FINOLA QUARSINGH

GLITZ and glam were the order of the evening as the city's who's who arrived for the gala opening of the new R460-million ICC Durban Arena.

The opening ceremony featured legendary Grammy-award winners, George Benson and Al Jarreau, who were welcomed by the convention centre's Chief Executive, Miller Matola.

"It is an honour to have such talented musicians at the Arena opening night," said Matola.

"We look forward to continuing this precedent, by offering international performers an indoor venue where audiences can enjoy the performance in comfortable, weather-proof surroundings," he said.

Designed with world-class facilities and flexibility, the venue can accommodate a range of sporting events.

"The expansion project, to the south of the existing ICC, has made the building more accessible to the local community and we look forward to hosting them during entertainment and sporting events" said Matola.

With the Arena, the ICC doubles in size to 500m in length. It can accommodate heights of up to 12m and has the capacity to hold up to 10 000 spectators.

The Arena is sophisticated when it comes to sound, with R27-million spent on acoustic operable or movable walls that are used to divide spaces into a variety of configurations to ensure maximum flexibility.

Matola said bookings had already been received, including *Holiday on Ice*, for July this year.

"The George Benson and Al Jarreau public concert was sold out weeks in advance as audiences no longer have to wait for weather forecasts before making their bookings," he said.



**STELLAR: Jazzman Al Jarreau brings some magic to the newly-opened ICC Arena** Picture: BONGA MSIMANG

The success of the ICC has "surpassed even our wildest dreams" said Mayor Obed Mlaba.

"On 8 August 1997 when we stood here at the opening of the Durban International Convention Centre, I realised this would probably be one of the best projects undertaken by any local government entity in South Africa.

### Grown

"The venue grew with the city. As local government found its feet in Durban, we established ourselves as a government for all the people of the city, with a management team they call the A-Team.

"Given the size of this complex, our council has

agreed that it be named after Inkosi Albert Luthuli, one of the major international figures to have been born in this province and received international recognition in the struggle for peace and democracy" he said.

City Manager Michael Sutcliffe said: "This is not merely the launch of a facility but the creation of an entire complex. The newly-named Inkosi Albert Luthuli International Convention Centre complex - includes the ICC, the Durban Exhibition Centre and the new Arena.

"This complex presents wonderful opportunities for the city and province.

"Fifa has chosen this space to launch the 2010 preliminaries in November this year," he said.

# Big beach clean up

City still counting cost of cyclone seas

FINOLA QUARSINGH

**A** MASSIVE clean-up operation is in full swing on the eThekweni coast after high tides and monster waves wreaked havoc this week.

The city's emergency services departments went on alert this week and the city's disaster management capabilities were tested when Cyclone Gamede rolled into town.

About 4am on Monday, a 7m tidal wave hit the Durban beachfront, causing massive damage.

With warnings of more monster waves on the way, the municipality formed a Disaster Management Joint Operations Committee, led by Deputy City Manager Derek Naidoo.

The committee included Metro Police, South African Police Services, Emergency Services, Electricity, Water, Communications, Roads, Engineering and Parks and Recreation. Its job was to monitor wave activity, minimise threat to life, shut down facilities open to the public that could be treacherous, and co-ordinate evacuations and emergency responses.

City officials met this week to develop a rehabilitation strategy. Getting the beaches ready for the Easter holidays is high on the must-do list.

Christo Swart, Deputy Head Parks and Recreation, said: "The city suffered a significant infrastructural loss and assessments are under way to determine the cost of the damage. This should last about 10 days and the public is urged to stay clear of the



**SWAMPED: Sand covers the Lower Marine Parade after an extra high tide** Picture: BONGA MSIMANG

beaches during this time.

"Although the worst is over, based on information from the weather office, Durban's beaches will remain closed as a precaution."

Chief Fire Officer Mark Te Water said: "The City has started a major mop-up operation of the beaches, removing debris, sand and damaged infrastructure, which could take months.

### Damage

"Once this has been done, we will be able to make a clear assessment of the damage.

"The worst of the storm is over but areas have had to be closed for safety reasons. We urge the public to be patient.

"The beaches will be closed but we are determined to have them open in time for the Easter holidays."

Deputy Mayor Logie Naidoo visited beaches to assess the damage. He expressed concern over the number of people who ignored warnings and said the work of the joint operations committee was being hampered by people who have flocked to the

beachfront to take pictures.

He urged people to heed the call to stay away as many areas are still unstable.

Durban has experienced unusually high tides. This was the result of the highest tide in many years - caused by the alignment of the sun, moon and earth - and a cyclone off Madagascar.

Municipal Coastal Engineer Andrew Mather said: "The highest astronomical tide occurs once in about 18 years. Spring tide is much higher and neap tide much lower.

"In this instance the waves arose as a result of the equinox as well as the effects of a cyclone, as strong winds generated higher waves in the already high seas. It is a rare combination."

Durban Africa Chief Executive Lindiwe Mahlangu, after a tour of the Golden Mile, said: "It's sad to see some of the businesses have been so badly affected on the Lower Marine Parade, but heartening to see the clean-up operation in full swing."

The public can report emergencies to 031 361 0000.

**THE telephone numbers of the municipal electricity office, at 11 Electron Road; and the Verulam Regional Centre, at 1 Wick Street, will change to 031 311 1111 as of Monday.**