

# Tongaat Mall plans not approved

Rectangle Properties has conceded in the Department of Labour-appointed commission of inquiry into the collapse of the Tongaat Mall that the plans for the development were never approved.



Phumudzo Maphaha, the Presiding Officer at the Commission of Inquiry into the collapse of the Tongaat Mall. Image: [SA Construction News](#)

Ravi Jagadasan, the Sole Director of Rectangle Properties CC, and a Director of Gralio Precast the company that was responsible for the construction of the Tongaat Mall, admitted this to the Commission of Inquiry that the companies did not have approval to build the Mall.

Jagadasan told the Commission that acting on the advice of his legal representative, he had instructed Gralio Precast, a company owned by Jay Singh to stop the project after receiving a Court order last November from eThekweni Municipality.

He told the Commission that he was told by his team of architects that the project could still proceed on "pre-approved" plans. Jagadasan said he was shocked when he saw in the news that the Mall had collapsed.

Asked by Phumudzo Maphaha, the Commission's Presiding Officer if he was aware that the Construction Regulations requires that a competent person with (knowledge, training, experience, and qualification) needed to undertake a project of such magnitude. Jagadasan said he said he was not aware of them.

## Trusted Jay Singh's "wisdom"

He said he trusted Jay Singh's wisdom, the Chief Executive Officer of Gralio, the construction company, which boasts 30 years of experience in the construction industry, who has also undertaken similar projects of building malls and housing in KwaZulu-Natal.

Despite having earlier told the Commission, he had asked for the project to be halted, he said he was aware of changes in the design to enable trucks to move around on site.

The eThekweni Municipality had served the owners of the R220m project with court papers to halt the project on 13 November last year. The project was supposed to have been completed in April this year.

Meanwhile, Ronnie Pillay, a foreman during the construction of the Tongaat Mall today told the Commission that he was not aware that it was part of his duty to ensure that he had to regularly obtain concrete tests results and verify the strength and quality of the material.

"I was not really aware it was part of my responsibility," said Pillay.

He said he was performing his duties taking a lead from the drawings prepared by engineers led by Andre Ballack. Pillay further told the Commission that he was not aware of any revisions done to the drawings, as it was not one of his responsibilities.

The collapse of the mall led to the death of two people and injured 29 injured. The Department of Labour appointed the Section 32 Inquiry in terms of the Occupational Health and Safety Act to investigate instances of negligence that may have



The collapsed Tongaat Mall. Rectangle Properties Director Ravi Jagadasan has admitted that plans for the development were never approved. Image: [Jay Singh](#)

led to the death and injury of workers.

Maphaha said an announcement on the future of the Mall will be made in about a month from now.

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