

Former Mineral Resources DDG, Gupta associates in court

Two Gupta associates and a former Deputy Director General (DDG) of the Minerals and Energy Department (DMRE) have appeared in the Randburg Magistrate's Court in a case related to the Gupta-owned Optimum Coal Mine.



Former Tegeta Exploration and Resources Director, Ronica Ragavan; former trustee of Optimum Coal Mine, Pushpaveni Govender and former DMRE DDG, Joel Raphela, stand accused of a raft of charges including fraud, forgery, uttering, perjury and money laundering related to R107.5m rehabilitation funds meant for the Optimum Coal Mine and Koornfontein Mine trust accounts in 2016.

According to National Prosecuting Authority Investigating Directorate (NPA ID) spokesperson, Sindisiwe Seboka, funds meant for the rehabilitation of the mine were allegedly illegally transferred to other companies.



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18 Jan 2021



“R7.5m was transferred from the Optimum Mine Rehabilitation Trust account... to Optimum Coal Mine, and the amount was used as part of the payment of R26.4m to Klipbank Mining, which is not in accordance with the requirements of the trust, regardless of what the funds were used for.

“Ragavan and Govender obtained R100m from the Koorfontein Trust Account in June 2016 to act as surety for a loan in favour of Tegeta for the purchase of Optimum Coal Mine,” she said.

Seboka explained that in terms of Mineral and Petroleum Resources Development Act, the Minister of that department keeps rehabilitation funds in order to deal with the environmental impact mining activity leaves behind when that mine is closed or sold.



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Valencia Talane 13 May 2022



“In this case, the trustees, so cited in the case and company directors, are accused of orchestrating a scheme where they requested the funds held in the two rehab funds to be transferred into other current company accounts and used for purposes in breach of the department’s rules.

“Raphela, as former DDG, stands accused of authorising the funds to be released from the Koorfontein Mine Rehabilitation Trust,” she said.

Seboka said the matter is part of a cohort of seminal matters the NPA is determined to enrol, which relate to State capture.

“[NPA ID head] Advocate, Andrea Johnson, assures the nation that the Investigating Directorate (ID), working with the support of the Hawks, is committed to ensuring that those responsible for corruption and facilitating State capture are held criminally accountable and that it will work steadfastly to claw back stolen funds back to the fiscus.

“The country can expect more of these priority State capture cases to be enrolled soon,” Seboka said.

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