

About Trailblazers

Trailblazers are freethinking individuals and focus groups with a shared vision of positively contributing towards advancing developmental discourse. The trailblazers' website stimulates and encourages discourse on Economic development, Political economy, knowledge economy and the green economy. The website serves as a forum for exchanging ideas, views and opinion. It attracts experts, academics, intellectuals and practitioners and anybody interested in contributing towards the debate. It is a site for generating new knowledge & cutting edge solutions for the global socio economic ills. The trailblazers seek to build social capital through the process of informal transmission of knowledge and social media. Also mentor and support practitioners in the specified field of work, through engagement, advice and referrals. The ultimate objective is to ensure professional development and support.

News of Top Stories

Shanduka prepares for Cyril Ramaphosa's exit



SHANDUKA Group is preparing itself for life after its executive chairman, Cyril Ramaphosa, steps down and is looking for opportunities to grow three core areas of the business. Shanduka, which is synonymous with Mr Ramaphosa, the deputy president of the ruling African National Congress (ANC), has brought new talent into the business, says CEO Phuti Mahanyele. Mr Ramaphosa, a political and labour union veteran, has been stepping off a range of boards to avoid conflicts of interest since he was elected to deputy president of the ANC in a bruising political battle in Mangaung last December. Ms Mahanyele declined to comment on when Mr Ramaphosa would quit the company in which a Ramaphosa family trust owns a 30% stake, the single largest holding in the unlisted group. However, she did say the group, which has a broad range of investments in resources, food and beverages, infrastructure and the financial sector, was preparing for his departure. "One of the things we've been doing is making sure we improve and add more skills and what we have now is a very robust team," Ms Mahanyele says. "Most of us have worked with the chairman for many years. If anything were to change there would be no changes in how the businesses are run; the ethos, the values, all of that will continue along the same trajectory," she says. It's not clear whether the trust will remain invested in Shanduka after Mr Ramaphosa's exit, but there are empowerment requirements for the group that must be considered, she says. The group is 51% black owned, with a range of broad-based trusts holding 18% of the business, making it a valuable empowerment partner for a range of companies in which it is invested. Shanduka has not exploited Mr Ramaphosa's political connections, Ms Mahanyele says. "In the nine years I've been here we've always operated very much as a corporate business. We've never worked closely with the government or on government projects. "Now that the chairman is the deputy president of the ANC, it's something we are very mindful of and I'm sure he will do whatever is necessary to ensure we don't find ourselves in a situation where we are facing conflicts," she says. <http://www.bdlive.co.za/companies/2013/06/03/shanduka-prepares-for-cyril-ramaphosas-exit>

German solar-mounting specialist weighing SA investment options



The South Africa unit of German solar photovoltaic (PV) mounting-systems specialist Schletter is considering investing in its own domestic manufacturing capacity in an effort to service growing local and regional demand, as well as to further raise the localisation levels of the solutions it supplies. The company established operations in Johannesburg in late 2011 and currently produces its systems locally in partnership with domestic manufacturers. Schletter South Africa (SA) MD **Bernhard Suchland** says it is already supplying mounting structures for five South African projects following the first two bidding rounds under South Africa's Renewable Energy Independent Power Producer Procurement Programme (REIPPPP). These projects collectively represent some 130 MW of solar PV capacity, adding to the group's global base of installed mounting tables that hold panels which together represent 11 000 MW of capacity across Europe, North America, Asia and Australasia. Additional workflow is expected to arise from further REIPPPP awards, as well as from private solar PV installations in South Africa and the rest of Southern Africa. Schletter's offering includes mounting structures for large-scale open-area facilities, as well as for rooftop installations and solar carports. <http://www.engineeringnews.co.za/article/german-solar-mounting-specialist-weighing-sa-investment-options-2013-06-03>

SA advances hydrogen strategy with launch of new research centre



South Africa is further advancing its strategy of developing commercial activities in hydrogen and fuel cell technologies with the launch of the Hydrogen South African (HySA) Infrastructure Centre of Competence (CoC) in the North West province. The HySA Infrastructure CoC is co-hosted by the North-West University and the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research at the university's Potchefstroom campus and is mandated to deliver technologies for renewable hydrogen production, storage and distribution. Two other HySA CoCs are already operational – HySA Systems Integration and Technology Validation, hosted by the University of the Western Cape, and HySA Catalysis, co-hosted by the University of Cape Town and Mintek. The HySA Infrastructure CoC focuses on technologies such as hydrogen storage materials, hydrogen reticulation and delivery, systems integration for hydrogen production and delivery, and platinum group metal (PGM) recycling. <http://www.engineeringnews.co.za/article/sa-advances-hydrogen-strategy-with-launch-of-new-research-centre-2013-06-03>

The only way to do great work is to love what you do.



~ Steve Jobs

Economic week ahead: Volatility in the market place



South Africa's Bureau of Economic Research (BER) at the University of Stellenbosch will release this month's PMI on Monday. This closely followed indicator for the continent's largest economy, closely followed forward-looking crossed the key 50-mark separating contraction from expansion in April. Markets will be watching to see if the index held its ground in May. On Tuesday, the BER will release its business confidence index for the second quarter and the National Association of Automobile Manufacturers of South Africa will report May's vehicle sales data. The releases will come on the back of announcements made by President Jacob Zuma last week about the falling rand.

Read: [The fall of the rand: Zuma's big idea](#)

Africa Elsewhere on the continent, the Bank of Uganda will auction 160-billion shillings of three- and five-year treasury bonds and announce its latest interest rates decision on Wednesday. Citing upside risks to inflation, policymakers left the bank's benchmark rate on hold at 12.0% for the fifth straight month in May. Figures released on Friday showed that Uganda's year-on-year consumer price inflation rate showed a slight increase last month, rising to 3.6% in May from 3.4% in April. Core inflation rose to 5.6%, remaining above the central bank's 5% medium-term target. Stronger domestic demand, coupled with potential food supply constraints, may increase inflation risks in the near-term. As a result, economists expect policymakers to remain vigilant this month and again leave rates unchanged. The Bank of Uganda is also expected to release April's M3 money supply data – the broadest measure of money – sometime this week. Money supply rose 11.63% in March from a year earlier, down from a 16.56% expansion in February. **United States** The big event on the US data calendar is Friday's employment situation report. Markets expect the monthly jobs report to show that companies in the world's largest economy added 165 000 positions in May, the same amount that they added in April. The country's unemployment rate is expected to remain flat at 7.5%. America's job figures are always closely followed by economists and investors, but are under increased scrutiny since Federal Reserve chairperson Ben Bernanke said last month that an improving economic picture could prompt the central bank to begin tapering its \$85-billion a month asset purchase programme. Many analysts believe that this aggressive stimulus policy is behind the record performance of equity markets this year. <http://mg.co.za/article/2013-06-03-economic-week-ahead-volatility-in-the-market-place>

Africa offers best growth opportunities for airlines -



Cape Town – In a world where production in developed economies was close to saturation levels, Africa offered the most viable potential for growth for the aviation industry, according to Deputy President Kgalema Motlanthe. The presence of seven of the world's top 10 fastest growing economies in Africa also bolstered the continent's position for growth, Motlanthe said while opening the 69th annual general meeting of the International Air Transport Association (IATA) and Air Transport Summit in Cape Town on Monday. This is the first time that the AGM is taking place in South Africa. Motlanthe, however, said cooperation between government and the aviation industry had to be improved. "This growth potential cannot be realised if African governments do not improve collaboration with the aviation industry," Motlanthe said. In Africa, which has the world's worst safety record, states should play their part in improving aviation safety by providing the necessary public infrastructure, as well as support programmes associated with cushioning the high initial capital investment required for assisting industry growth. "Africa offers the most viable growth potential for the aviation industry in a world where developed economies are producing at close to saturation growth levels, with marginal growth coming from services and consumption sectors," Motlanthe said. **Planning for future growth** The South African government, in adopting its **National Infrastructure Plan** a year ago, had signed up to this by resolving to build new rail systems, ports, fuel pipelines and the generation of energy. Through interventions such as its young pilot cadet programme, South Africa was also hoping to draw more young people into the aviation industry. "We hope that these efforts will help to contribute to growth and investment in the aviation industry," Motlanthe said. State-owned enterprises such as Denel were also recipients of investments geared for research, development, maintenance, repairs and the overhauling of aircraft. As a long-haul destination, South Africa was well aware of the important role the aviation industry played in achieving national development objectives. Aviation brought tourists, trade flows, foreign direct investment, and foreign exchange earnings. Last year, a total of 9.2 million international tourists visited South Africa, with a large number of them travelling by air. South Africa believed that inter-regional mobility had increased over the past few years, with more and more flights connecting directly to Africa. "Indeed, interconnectivity is a key concern for us and we are looking at the options available for unlocking the growth potential from new markets development. This will also drive down general prices on the back of increased competition and create new employment opportunities," Motlanthe said. <http://www.sanews.gov.za/south-africa/africa-offers-best-growth-opportunities-airlines-motlanthe>