

Weather

 Joburg 12/19	 Pretoria 13/22	 Mbombela 14/17
 Polokwane 13/20	 Cape Town 16/25	 Durban 17/20

Sunrise & Sunset

Johannesburg	05:07/18:43
Cape Town	05:28/19:38
Durban	04:18/18:39
Bloemfontein	05:09/18:57

Jihadists, soldiers die in skirmish

Ouagadougou – Three soldiers and 11 suspected jihadists were killed when an army unit came under fire in northern Burkina Faso, the military said yesterday.

The detachment in Thiou, in the northern province of Yatenga, was attacked early on Wednesday, military headquarters said.

The troops “neutralised 11 terrorists” for the cost of three dead and about 10 wounded, it said, using a term routinely applied to jihadists.

Ground-based reinforcements were brought in, with air support, to evacuate the wounded and secure the area, it added.

Groups linked to al-Qaeda and the Islamic State group have plagued the landlocked Sahel nation since 2015, killing about 2 000 people. – AFP

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THE THINKER A woman in front of an art installation at Expo 2020 in the Gulf Emirate of Dubai on Wednesday. Picture: AFP

Gun owners up in arms over Bill

PARLY: HOLD BACK FIREARMS CONTROL ACT LEGISLATION

➔ **Removal of self-defence provision when applying for a gun licence ‘absurd’.**

Sipho Mabena

The decision by the parliamentary portfolio committee on police to hold back the contentious Firearms Control Amendment Bill has received a nod – with lobbyists, however, dismissing the removal of self-defence provision when applying for a firearm licence as absurd.

The committee chair, Tina Joemat-Pettersson, has proposed that the Bill be held back for further consideration.

Instead, the committee agreed to prioritise the Criminal Law (Forensic Procedures) Bill, also known as the DNA Bill, the Independent Police Investigative Directorate (Ipid) Amendment Bill, as well as the South African Police Service (Saps) Amendment Bill.

According to Paul Oxley of Gun Owners South Africa, the Bill was a horrible attempt by Police Minister Bheki Cele to cover for the fact that the crime situation has escaped his police force and blame law-abiding citizens.

“The Bill flies directly in the face of Saps’ own, paid-for, research by the Wits School of Governance in 2015... [Cele] then hid the Wits report from public view

for six years, until multiple [Promotion of Access to Information Act] requests unearthed it in June this year and concocted a ‘desktop study’ to justify the Bill,” he claimed.

The Wits report concluded that firearms were used in only about a third of murder cases, with sharp objects used more often. The survey also found that in periods of strategic, strong policing, under the Firearms Control Act (FCA) conditions, crime drops and the involvement of firearms in firearm-related crimes, such as murder, attempted murder and robberies at residential premises, dropped too.

The research also concluded that when strong policing was withdrawn, even under the stringent conditions of the FCA, firearm-related crime increases once again and the use of firearms in these crimes tends to increase.

“This finding of the necessity of strong policing for reducing firearm-related crime and firearm usage in these crimes, even under the FCA, has been a consistent pattern in our findings,” the study stated.

“Credit must go to strong policing, rather than to the FCA, for controlling crime and for reducing the use of firearms in crimes of murder, attempted murder and house robberies.”

The research notes that there are certain violent crimes that are impervious to the FCA, with crimes such as carjackings, truck hijackings, robberies at business

info

▶ “The vast majority of crimes aren’t firearm-related and the FCA isn’t applicable to them,” says Wits report.

premises, cash-in-transit robberies and bank robberies dependent on firearms.

It found that even under the stringent FCA regulations, these crimes decrease only under strong policing conditions and increase when policing is withdrawn.

Attorney and gun law expert Heinrich Gonzales said SA has a dysfunctional police system. He said although it was the third-most dangerous country, the government still wanted to take away citizens’ right to self-defence.

“We elect government, so they must look to the people when taking decisions affecting us.

“They serve us, not other way around.”

Gonzales said there was an urgent need to take SA back from the thugs but that this could only be done by arming citizens and getting involved in neighbourhood watches. “In this way, we will take back our streets for our children,” he said.

“Removing Section 13 from the FCA violates my constitutional right to life (Section 11 of constitution), specifically seen against the backdrop of the crumbling police system.” – siphom@citizen.co.za

Hong Kong’s elderly put back on their feet

Hong Kong – Gently unwrapping clingwrap covering the old man’s damaged feet – skin darkened and cracked, nails lumpen and deformed – the Hong Kong beautician doesn’t flinch. Instead she picks up her tools and starts working.

Once or twice a month, Cass Ng and her team of beauticians swap out their nail polish collection for tough scissors, nail files and an electric drill.

Her initiative Change, or Caring Health Anywhere Nails Goal Elderly, offers free pedicures for low-income elderly people who cannot afford healthcare and do not have family to fall back on.

“We want to serve these people the most because they lack others’ love the most,” the 37 year old said.

After three years of giving volunteer manicures, Ng was inspired to start her own social enterprise to help those – often over 65 and on social benefits – unable to afford the city’s expensive private healthcare.

While Hong Kong has public healthcare, many complain they have to wait for long periods to be seen, with ailments getting worse.

One of those visiting Ng’s free clinic for the first time was Martin Sun, 71, who said he had been troubled by ingrowing toenails and fungal infections for years. He describes the treatment, a full pedicure, as a blessed relief.

“If not, I would do it myself, bend down, then take a deep breath and endure the pain,” he said.

Kwan Lung, 86, gave a thumbs up and beamed during her visit to the clinic at the Kwai Chung community centre.

“The more [the manicurists] come, the happier we old people are,” the grandmother explained.

She described “sweating like it’s raining” when she tried to do her own pedicures before.

Although the day seems light-hearted, Ng explains when the elderly don’t treat fungal nail infections – a common problem – they can face difficulties walking.

“Slowly, they might tend not to go out and they will become lonelier,” she said.

“If the nails are fixed, they feel more comfortable with their feet and can ... take a walk and chat with friends.

“When you manicure, the smell and level of dirtiness are very difficult to accept,” she said, describing helping one man who was particularly filthy. “But after half a year to a year, his situation has changed.” – AFP