

5 important things happening in South Africa today –

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Coronavirus: Global coronavirus cases are at around 4.7 million confirmed, with deaths now past 315,000. In South Africa, infections are accelerating with another 24-hour jump of 918 cases, taking the confirmed total to 16,433 cases. Deaths have risen to 286, while recoveries have also climbed to 7,298. This leaves the country with 8,849 active cases.

- **Back to school:** A proposal by the Department of Education to re-open schools using a staggered approach has been met with approval from governing bodies and unions. Under the proposals, school timetables will be rearranged so that certain grades will be taught on alternating days or weeks – while a third option is to have different grades taught in the mornings and the afternoon. Governing bodies want the freedom to decide what is best to do for their communities, while unions want basic precautions and processes to be in place before proceeding. [[TimesLive](#)]
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- **Futile measures:** Government's plan to move different districts around the country to different levels of lockdown is futile, says Justice Project South Africa head, Howard Dembovsky. He argues that no matter what laws government cooks up, it requires wide public buy-in for compliance, and effective policing for enforcement – both of which the country has demonstrated are not on the cards. He also said that the plan is logistically impossible, with people needing to move between districts constantly for work. [[MyBroadband](#)]
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- **NHI:** Government has taken the opportunity presented by the coronavirus outbreak to promote universal healthcare and the NHI as a response. While some medical experts are on board with universal healthcare as a concept – and say the Covid-19 response shows

how closely public and private healthcare can work together – there is a rather large catch: response has been completely centralised around government, which works during a crisis, but won't translate to day-to-day healthcare in the country. [702]

- **Covid -19 Vaccine:** A US medical firm has reported positive results to a new Covid-19 vaccine that is still in the early stages of testing. A phase 1 trial of 45 people saw the vaccine produce an immune response in 8 subjects – including locking the virus from replicating in the lungs. A phase 2 trial of 600 people has already been approved, with a phase 3 trial – to test on a larger scale – may begin in as early as July, depending on the results. [ENCA]
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- **Markets:** The rand continues to be driven by sentiment, which is essentially a balancing act as it switches between risk-on and risk-off as the pandemic unfolds. Growing optimism around a Covid-19 vaccine that is showing promising results helped to restore some positive market sentiment, while the US Federal Reserve's unwavering support for the US economy was also perceived as risk-on by the market. On Tuesday the rand was at R18.36 to the dollar, R22.40 to the pound and R20.04 to the euro. [XE]