

The Star first with results

The Star will be the first to bring you the matric results. Results for Gauteng matriculants will be available at a minute after midnight tonight from The Star's offices in Sauer Street in the Johannesburg CBD.

Those with access to the Internet can visit our website, <http://matric.iol.co.za>.

Copies of the paper will also be available at the following points: Fourways Crossing shopping centre's parking area; Cresta entrance 4; Balfour Park entrance 2; Southgate entrance 5; Alberton City entrance 2; The Glen's roof parking; Eastgate entrance 5; East Rand Mall entrance 3; Westgate shopping centre entrance 5; Diepkloof shopping centre; Lenasia shopping centre; Dube shopping centre and Protea shopping centre.

The full results will appear in a supplement in The Star tomorrow.

Road death toll moves up to 635

At least 635 people have been killed on SA's roads this month, according to Arrive Alive. The toll in KwaZulu Natal reached 99 late yesterday, with 89 fatalities in the Eastern Cape, Free State 85, Gauteng 72, North West 70, Western Cape and Northern Province 64 each, Mpumalanga 62 and the Northern Cape 30.

— PAGE 2

'Cape bombing a political act'

Safety and Security Minister Steve Tshwete says he is convinced a Christmas Eve bombing in Cape Town which wounded seven police officers was politically motivated — PAGE 3



Sea creatures in Key West

— PAGE 14

Shares at a glance

The Star

TUESDAY
DECEMBER 28 1999
Established October 17 1887

www.iol.co.za

R2,30 inc VAT
(R2,80 outside Gauteng)
Annual subscribers: R2,03



Matrics warned of poor results

Nationwide picture likely to mirror

KwaZulu Natal and Free State marks

By TPO MOTHIBELI
Education Reporter

Education experts warned yesterday that matric results, due to be released in Gauteng at midnight tonight, were likely to be disappointing, after KwaZulu Natal and the Free State issued their results yesterday.

In KwaZulu Natal, 51% of the 15 067 candidates who wrote the exam passed, a slight improvement of 0,7 percentage points on last year's tally.

This is a barely perceptible improvement on last year's 50,3% pass, which was an all-time low.

In the Free State, 42,1% passed, a 1,3 percentage point drop on last year's figure.

The long wait for Gauteng candidates ends at midnight tonight, and educationists have warned against optimism.

They said a protracted teachers' strike; lack of discipline in schools, especially those in the townships; and a lack of commitment from teachers were the major contributors to the poor results.

KwaZulu Natal MEC Eileen kaNkosi Shandu said there were some in the teaching fraternity who "do not display the desired commitment to our learners and the communities. I will be making every effort to determine the causes for weaknesses, and remedial measures will be implemented."

However, Shandu said she was satisfied with the pass rate. "I believe this is a fair reflection, given the status quo, and we can only improve from this point onwards."

Of the 96 534 candidates who wrote the exams, only 16 250 bagged a university-entry pass. Leading education expert Lebamang Sebidi said the results were indicative of what should be expected throughout the country.

"This is the pattern we are going to see in other provinces. The poor results cannot be

blamed on the protracted strike by teachers, but to lack of discipline in the schools, particularly those in the townships," said Sebidi, executive director of the Trust for the Advancement of Education in South Africa.

The government would have to push its campaign to get effective learning and teaching moving in the schools if it hoped to improve the situation.

Free State Education Department chief director Thabo Khunyeli said the department would take disciplinary action against principals and teachers who were not delivering.

"We will not hesitate to fire teachers and principals who are not performing. We cannot drop on like this."

"People will be brought before disciplinary hearings and

Lack of discipline in schools blamed

if it is found that it is appropriate to dismiss them, we will do so," he said.

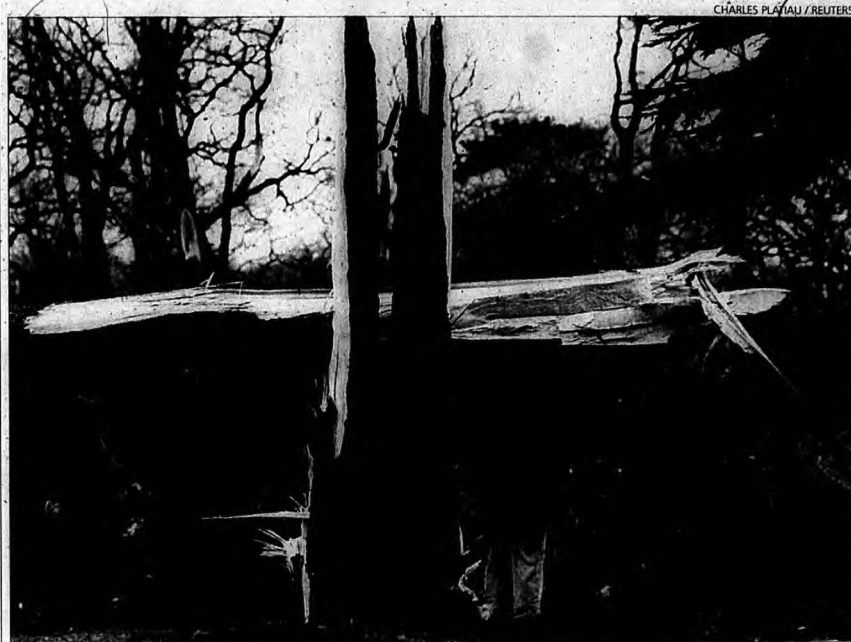
Free State Education MEC Papi Kganare said the pupils, teachers, principals and parents were all to blame for the slide in the pass rate.

In KwaZulu Natal, seven candidates obtained eight distinctions each, 33 candidates received seven distinctions each and 110 pupils scored six distinctions each.

There was an improvement in 34 subjects and a decline in 13 subjects.

A number of deep rural and township schools improved their pass rates from 10% to 40% and from 60% to 90%.

Sixty-one KwaZulu Natal schools obtained a 100% pass rate. These included a number of schools that obtained the same pass rate last year and a few new schools.



CHARLES PLATIAU / REUTERS

Nature's wrath... Parisians stand near a large, broken tree in Paris's Bois de Boulogne yesterday after a freak storm blasted its way across western Europe.

Paris — Another powerful storm hit France yesterday as western Europe struggled to recover from freak weekend gales that ripped up trees, toppled walls and killed at least 76 people.

France suffered the most, with 44 victims, many hit by trees and debris since Sunday.

Although weather conditions in Paris and much of the country were calm yesterday, another storm hit south-west France late in the evening. Flights to Bordeaux, Toulouse and Biarritz were cancelled and rail traffic was suspended

More wintry fury flays battered Europeans

throughout the region.

About 60 000 trees were uprooted or damaged in two forests on the outskirts of Paris, and another 2 000 along Napoleon's route.

Seventeen people died in Germany, most of them in Baden-Wuerttemberg state. In neighbouring Switzerland, at least 13 people were killed and several injured, mostly by falling trees.

Two of the victims were killed at a southern ski resort

where the roof was damaged, windows were broken and 10 000 trees were torn down, including 200-year-old cedars planted during Napoleon's rule.

Slabs of roofing of the Notre Dame cathedral were blown off and a stained-glass window at the Sainte-Chapelle was shattered by flying stonework that came loose.

Worst hit among France's cultural monuments was the royal palace and park at Versailles, where the roof was damaged, windows were broken and 10 000 trees were torn down, including 200-year-old cedars planted during Napoleon's rule.

When a tree crashed into a ski lift cable.

In northern Spain, a gust of wind knocked down a wall under construction at a truck stop, killing two workers.

In Austria, winds gusting as high as 220km/h were reported in the Salzkammergut region. About 2 000 people were evacuated from a complex of cinemas in St Poelten, west of Vienna, as high winds threatened to damage the roof.

In Italy, several highways

were closed and, about 7 000 passengers were stranded at Milan's airport.

In Belgium, several rivers overflowed their banks, but flooding was less serious than feared.

Emergency teams moved into action in the southern Netherlands after the Maas river rose dangerously and was on the verge of overflowing.

Public transport across Europe was slowly reverting to normal service yesterday and power was being restored after serious disruptions. — Sapa-AP

Class of '99 draws subdued applause

There was a mixed reaction from political parties to the KwaZulu Natal and Free State results, with the New National Party describing the Free State figures as "scandalous".

The NNP said poor management within the provincial education department was to blame for the drop.

Since 1994, the NNP had cautioned against gambling

with the improvement in the matric results in the province, even though it is too minimal."

Mthimkhulu said that although six of the eight regions in the province had bettered last year's results, results in Empangeni and Ulundi had shown a decline.

"We think the two regions did not put an extra effort and were too relaxed to execute

Taliban threatens to storm hijacked Indian airliner

London — Taliban authorities threatened yesterday to storm a hijacked Indian Airlines aircraft carrying some 160 passengers and crew, as officials arrived in Afghanistan from Delhi to negotiate with the hijackers. As the hostage crisis in the Afghan city of Kandahar en-

dangered the lives of the

foreign minister. One passenger has already been killed and another injured. According to Eric de Mul, a United Nations official at the scene, the hostages were in bad mental and physical condition.

Taliban officials who delivered food to the aircraft said

Pick 'n Pay
Discount & FAMILY Supermarkets



Defiant Mengistu defends his revolution to the death

Tens of thousands died during this man's rule, but although he feels pain and sorrow, he is unrepentant. He spoke to Mathatha Tsedu

Mengistu Haile Mariam is an angry and bitter man. Sitting in a boardroom at the offices of the Central Intelligence Organisation in Harare, Zimbabwe, he cuts a figure of a simple man.

He is short and lean, and does not fit the caricature of the megalomaniac who wielded power ruthlessly during his 17-year reign as leader of Ethiopia. He speaks softly, measuring his words to make sure his English expresses what he feels.

And in those words a conviction comes through of a man rooted in ideology who still sees the planet needing salvation from world capitalism through the collective efforts of socialist forces.

The voice picks up emotion as he speaks of the nine assassination attempts and the two bullets he still carries, and how his gains have been reversed. He is close to tears.

The interview took place in the presence of two representatives from the offices of President Robert Mugabe and two CIO agents. Throughout the 90-minute, no attempt was made to censor either questions or answers, or interrupt in any way.

He hates former Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev and blames him for the demise of socialism in the world over. He has no regrets about his rule and is angry that all the good work of the revolution has now been undone by "narrow nationalists and counter-revolutionaries" now at the helm of Ethiopia.

Mengistu says the international situation today amounts to neo-colonialist rule where "it is very difficult for one country to decide its own destiny" but is convinced that given a chance, he would be able to ride this wave too.

He refuses to be judged by the present government in Addis Ababa which he says came to power "by other people's force in a Trojan horse setting, supported by the United States and the then Soviet government. They have no legal or moral ground to judge the Ethiopian revolution."

He wants to be judged on the achievements of his revolution, and those doing so have to understand the circumstances prevailing then.

"I was a 32-year-old major, I knew nothing about politics and was not interested in public office and was not prepared for power."

"There was nothing working then in the feudal system that we took down. We found no vanguard party to replace the feudal system of Haile Selassie. The only viable social group in the whole country was the army, and we did not come by force but were invited by popular revolution."

"We did not fire a single shot, and our slogan was 'revolution without blood'. The day the feudal system fell, it was like holiday," Mengistu said.

He professed that he was surprised to be elected chairman of the National Democratic Revolution that was charged with overseeing the "fundamental change in Ethiopia, which was a very backward, archaic and feudal system."

"Changing all these was not easy in the best of times, but when you were faced with war on so many fronts, it is an impossible feat," he said.

But his men and women got down to the task and organised land redistribution that saw every peasant given between 5ha and 10 ha, depending on the size of family.

"Our land reform was a very very radical one, and even today every Ethiopian has some land to himself or herself."

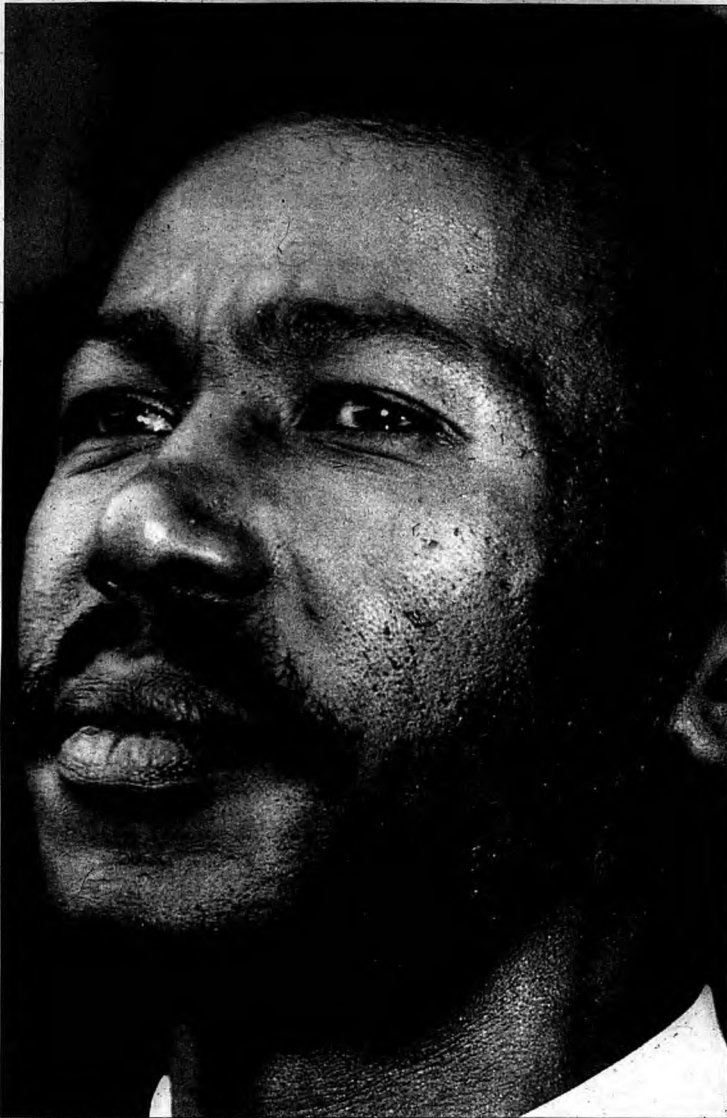
"We organised the peasants to defend and consolidate their gains. We were prepared for

'The Soviet Union under Mikhail Gorbachev was the worst enemy of our revolution'

peace with our neighbours, but we were not willing to give one inch of Ethiopian soil. Our neighbours mistook our reasonableness for weakness and attacked."

"We organised workers and peasants into a strong armed force and repelled Sudan and Somalia. The fight was very hard also on. This war of secession may be one of the reasons for our fall as at that time the Soviet Union under Gorbachev became the worst enemy of our revolution," he said.

His major surprise was to witness the



A grateful but 'unhappy' man in exile ... Mengistu Haile Mariam says he refuses to be judged by the present rulers in Addis Ababa.

Mengistu said he had not killed anyone personally but gave orders in battle which resulted in the deaths of people. He insisted the "red terror" campaign for which he was blamed, during which thousands of people died, was "a fight between two different social groups".

"There was anarchy in the country for three months ... The Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Party was formed as a guerrilla movement to overthrow the Workers' Party government. There were assassination attempts all over and nine on myself alone."

"A country cannot go on like that. Millions of people came to Addis and said, 'defend us or arm us'. We had to organise people into urban defence units and rural defence committees and peasants' associations to defend the country. The so-called genocide was this war in defence of the revolution."

Mengistu denied killing Haile Selassie and said: "He was 80 years' old and a very weak man. We tried our best to save him but we could not keep him alive."

This version is different from the one that circulated after Mengistu took over. According to that version, he went to Selassie and told him to sign authorisation to repatriate money about \$10-billion (\$7.5-billion), in personal overseas bank accounts.

Selassie is said to have spat in Mengistu's face and told him he did not speak to slaves. In a fit of rage, Mengistu is said to have throttled Selassie, who then died.

money in overseas banks. He said 'I have the right, like every Ethiopian, to give something to my children and grandchildren ... you have no right to ask me whether I have any money or not'."

"I said to him, you know all about the drought and the war, and that it is your duty as king. He said 'I have no such money and I have, I have given it to my children'."

"We asked the children, and they said they have not been given any money but should it be found in their names; they would pledge it to Ethiopia."

"We tried other ways but we failed. In the end we got nothing and till today we do not know if there was any money there or not."

Mengistu said he was happy in his "second home" Zimbabwe but missed his own land. It pained him to see it being destroyed.

"I am a very unhappy man. I am a very wounded person. I am with friends here, close comrades with whom I fought side by side in the struggles for the liberation of Zimbabwe, Namibia, Angola, South Africa and Mozambique."

"But as I sit here, my comrades are dying behind bars for lack of medical attention. What can one do? I am so sorry for them, and the pain is so immense, but again what can one do? I feel bad because compared to them and those in graves, I am better."

In response to a question about what he would do differently if he found himself back in power, Mengistu said at 32 he had been

judged by history and Ethiopians.

"All I can say is that living for 17 years without rest from fighting, dealing with problem after problem, war after war, and crisis after crisis everyday and every hour was very difficult."

"I was not a father to my children, I was not a husband to my wife. I completely forgot myself for that whole period to see the revolution through, and now later the results are

"I was not a father to my children, I was not a husband to my wife. I completely forgot myself for that whole period to see the revolution through, and now later the results are

"I was not a father to my children, I was not a husband to my wife. I completely forgot myself for that whole period to see the revolution through, and now later the results are

"I was not a father to my children, I was not a husband to my wife. I completely forgot myself for that whole period to see the revolution through, and now later the results are

"I was not a father to my children, I was not a husband to my wife. I completely forgot myself for that whole period to see the revolution through, and now later the results are

"I was not a father to my children, I was not a husband to my wife. I completely forgot myself for that whole period to see the revolution through, and now later the results are

"I was not a father to my children, I was not a husband to my wife. I completely forgot myself for that whole period to see the revolution through, and now later the results are



Breathtaking ... Michelangelo's famous painting on the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel in the Vatican of Adam reaching towards God

Medical detective says 16th Century genius had gout

By JEREMY LAURANCE

The knee gives it away. It is enlarged, deformed and covered in hard lumps. The Renaissance genius who painted the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel almost certainly had gout.

In a piece of forensic medical detective work, an American doctor has diagnosed Michelangelo's condition from a fresco by Raphael that adorns the Pope's library, the Stanza della Signatura, in the Vatican.

Dr Carlos Hugo Espinel, a specialist in blood-pressure disorders at Georgetown University, Washington, also suggests in an article in *The Lancet* that Michelangelo's obsession with his work and neglect of his diet may have caused the problem.

Espinel cites Vasari, the writer and painter, who observed that the master would go for days on bread and wine, which, notes Espinel, was processed in lead containers. And Michelangelo may also have been exposed to lead-based paints. Plumbism, or lead poisoning, could explain the gout. The key to the diagnosis is the central figure in Raphael's School of Athens.

The fresco portrays luminaries of pre-Renaissance thought, including Plato holding his Timaeus, Aristotle with his Ethics and Diogenes reclining on the steps. One man, in the centre foreground, remains unidentified. Espinel believes it is Michelangelo.

There are several clues. The figure is not included in cartoons Raphael drew in preparation for the fresco, suggesting he was a late addition.

He is in contemporary clothes, a simple purple cassock and boots, while the rest are in classical robes.

Of the Sistine Chapel's 300-plus figures, that of Jeremiah, one of Michelangelo's alleged self-portraits, has a hint of boots. Vasari described him wearing "buskins of dogskin". The man is of the right age and size

and, although his head is turned, his nose appears to be twisted, in keeping with Vasari's description that it was "somewhat flattened, broken in his youth by Torregiano's fist".

But why was Michelangelo included? Espinel suggests that Raphael may have had an early glimpse of the Sistine chapel when Michelangelo allowed the first viewing on 14 August 1511. One glance would have persuaded him that Michelangelo belonged with the greatest geniuses who had lived.

"Scanning the divine images above, realising that now he would have to change, and the world would have to change, Raphael may have decided to add a portrait of Michelangelo. The style of this portrait, the figure's space, mass and perspective are ... more akin to the images in the Sistine chapel."

The seated figure has his right knee framed and highlighted by his own shadow, with his boots rolled down. Espinel writes: "It is not a hot knee: its skin, pale and tense, show no sign of inflammation; nor is there ulceration. But underneath the skin there are lumps, knobs of a light yellow that appear dense and hard."

In his writings Michelangelo described episodes of bladder and kidney problems that persisted throughout his life.

In one poem he laments "I have learnt to know the urine" and later he recorded in a letter how he had passed "gravel" and kidney stone fragments.

Putting this together with his knobby knee, Espinel says there is only one possible diagnosis.

Although written descriptions of the condition are common throughout history, illustrations are rare.

Michelangelo's knee, as portrayed by Raphael, can take its place in medical textbooks, suggests Espinel, as an early pictorial description of gout. *The Independent, London*

Hurry to Victor Lidchi's Gigantic Festive Season Persian Carpet SALE!

"I'm making you an irresistible offer. And I promise you a memorable experience. Act now and join tens of thousands of delighted Lidchi customers since 1936."

Save now and invest in an affordable Victor Lidchi guaranteed Persian for generations of beauty, joy and growing value.

Victor Lidchi

Save 20-50% Now!

Our Services Include:

- My full-credit Exchange Guarantee: If at any time you wish to exchange a piece purchased from us, we will credit you the full purchase price, provided only that it is still in good condition.
- Apprais: If you want to fit a few pieces in your home or office, we understand and make it easy for you to do so.
- Trade-ins will always be accepted, no matter what the condition.
- Terms: We make it easier for you financially. We're happy to discuss credit.
- Cleaning and Repair Service: Should your carpets need expert cleaning or restoration, call us, and we'll be right there.
- We are also open on Weekends: Saturdays 9 to 4, Sundays 10 to 1 (Weekdays 10 to 6).
- Is there any other way we can be of service? Call us!

Just a few examples from our enormous and breathtaking range:

'It was a very important moment for me to be treated in a free South Africa'

very bad and sorrowful."

He was full of praise for the medical attention he received while in South Africa recently, and said he had missed the major part of the media frenzy around his presence as he was moving from one medical specialist to another. He had come to know, however, that "many journalists had been trying hard to interview me."

He said, contrary to wide speculation, doctors had found that he had "a huge ulcer and not a brain tumour or blood pressure or heart

Don't get our Certificate

Victor Lidchi
A FINE TRADITION FOR GENERATIONS

'The Soviet Union under Mikhail Gorbachev was the worst enemy of our revolution'

peace with our neighbours, but we were not willing to give one inch of Ethiopian soil. Our neighbours mistook our reasonableness for weakness and attacked.

"We organised workers and peasants into a strong armed force and repelled Sudan and Somalia. The fight with Eritrea was also on. This war of secession may be one of the reasons for our fall as at that time the Soviet Union under Gorbachev became the worst enemy of our revolution," he said.

His major surprise was to witness the "counter-revolutionaries" finally take over Ethiopia, and occupy Addis Ababa.

"I did not believe they could do that, or that the Ethiopian people would accept that."

But it happened and he flew to Kenya to mobilise supply routes and ended up in Zimbabwe. By then his fall was "a fait accompli".

ruia movement to overthrow the Workers' Party government. There were assassination attempts all over and nine on myself alone.

"A country cannot go on like that. Millions of people came to Addis and said, 'defend us or arm us'. We had to organise people into urban defence units and rural defence committees and peasants' associations to defend the country. The so-called genocide was this war in defence of the revolution."

Mengistu denied killing Haile Selassie and said: "He was 80 years' old and a very weak man. We tried our best to save him but we could not keep him alive."

This version is different from the one that circulated after Mengistu took over. According to that version, he went to Selassie and told him to sign authorisation to repatriate money, about \$12-billion (R72-billion), in personal overseas bank accounts.

Selassie is said to have spat in Mengistu's face and told him he did not speak to slaves. In a fit of rage, Mengistu is said to have throttled Selassie, who then died.

Mengistu said this was untrue. "We asked and begged him about the money. We told him 'you are history and a father to the country. If you offer this money during this trying time, you will be one of the people to be remembered for saving the country'."

"He did not deny directly that he had

have not been given any money but should it be found in their names, they would pledge it to Ethiopia.

"We tried other ways but we failed. In the end we got nothing and till today we do not know if there was any money there or not."

Mengistu said he was happy in his "second home" Zimbabwe but missed his own land. It pained him to see it being destroyed.

"I am a very unhappy man. I am a very wounded person. I am with friends here, close comrades with whom I fought side by side in the struggles for the liberation of Zimbabwe, Namibia, Angola, South Africa and Mozambique.

"But as I sit here, my comrades are dying behind bars for lack of medical attention. What can one do? I am so sorry for them, and the pain is so immense, but again what can one do? I feel bad because compared to them and those in graves, I am better."

In response to a question about what he would do differently if he found himself back in power, Mengistu said at 32 he had been "very ambitious and patriotic", determined to change the situation together with fellow Ethiopians to make the country progressive.

"But wishes and doing actual things are very different. We were able to replace the feudal system, but rebuilding a country is very difficult, and I think what we did can be

'It was a very important moment for me to be treated in a free South Africa'

very bad and sorrowful."

He was full of praise for the medical attention he received while in South Africa recently, and said he had missed the major part of the media frenzy around his presence as he was moving from one medical specialist to another. He had come to know, however, that "many journalists had been trying hard to interview me".

He said, contrary to wide speculation, doctors had found that he had "a huge ulcer and not a brain tumour or blood pressure or heart problems as many said in the South African papers". It had been a "very important moment for me to be treated in a free South Africa. They were organised and efficient and did their best for me".

Mengistu is writing a book which should be available in about 18 months' time.

Colourful Kilims from under R500

Fine City rugs from under R2,750

Rich, plush Gobbehs from under R1,950

Rare Village rugs from under R3,500

Lovely Tribal rugs from under R1,450

Rare Collectables from R4,500



purchase price, provided only that it is still in good condition.

Approx: If you want to try a few pieces in your home or office, we understand and make it easy for you to do so.

Trade-ins will always be accepted, no matter what the condition!

Terms: We make it easier for you financially. We're happy to discuss credit.

Cleaning and Repair Services: Should your carpets need expert cleaning or restoration, call us, and we will do the rest.

We are also open on Weekends: Saturdays 9 to 4, Sundays 10 to 1 (Weekdays 10 to 6).

Is there any other way we can be of service? Call us!

Victor Lidchi

A FINE TRADITION FOR GENERATIONS

Dunkeld West Centre, cnr Jan Smuts & Bompas Road, Dunkeld. Tel: 327 2860