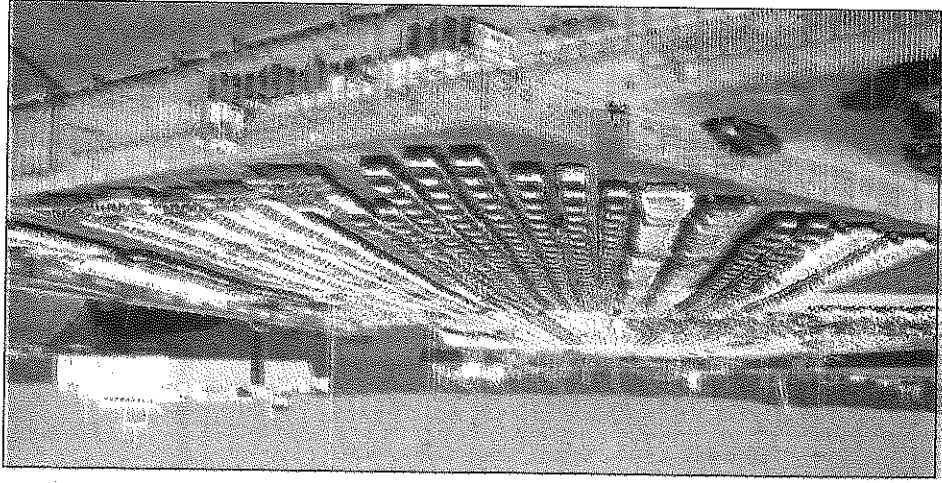


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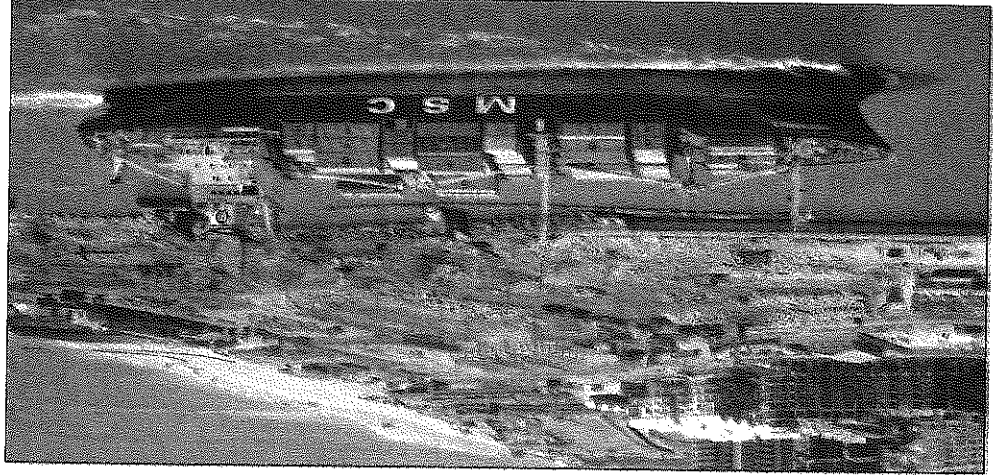
CARS GALORE: The vehicle terminal at the Port of Durban

LOCATION



FREE TO FLY: The site of the new La Mercy airport, planned for north of Durban

LOCATION



MAKING AN ENTRY: A container ship pulls into Durban Port

Picture: MARIANNE SCHWANKHART

Surrounding areas crucial for success

Ground-breaking plans for a new port terminal and airport in Durban have translated into action, writes **Brendan Peacock**

CONSTRUCTION of the R6.8-billion King Shaka International Airport and Dube TradePort has begun, adding to the international focus

the eThekweni municipality hopes to train on the city from 2010 onwards. However, the success of these new facilities relies greatly on the geographical areas that surround them.

"There have been many stakeholders to consult in the process, but we have had to take a long-term view of growing business and industry around the new airport in order to ensure sustainability and the best solution for all parties," said Durban city manager Mike Sutcliffe.

Deon Cloete, the Airports Company's (Acsa) general manager for Durban's international and national airports, said instructions had been given to the construction contractor in August last year.

"Site mobilisation is at an advanced stage at the La Mercy site, and bulk earthworks are finished for the passenger and cargo terminals. Building has started and we have made good progress. We are confident of completing the facilities and commissioning the airport at the end of 2009. Facilities will be phased in and fully tested before the handover, which is expected in April 2010."

Cloete said operational readiness for 2010 and beyond was a focus. "The contract with the construction consortium is of an engineering, procurement and construction nature, which means we are provided with a turnkey solution and the contractors as-



Picture: JACKIE CLAUSEN
BIG JOB: Rohan Persad, Dube TradePort's CEO says the port and airport projects will boost the provincial economy tremendously

strategic and has a strong commercial con- text, but there are macro considerations such as the growth plans of the city."

Construction of the airport has also been undertaken with a strong emphasis on local involvement. About 70% of procurement contracts for the new airport and adjacent Dube TradePort must be filled by BBE suppliers. "There are quotas for women, locally employed people and corporate investment initiatives. I have not heard of any other project that has such progressive stipulations," said Rohan Persad, Dube TradePort's CEO.

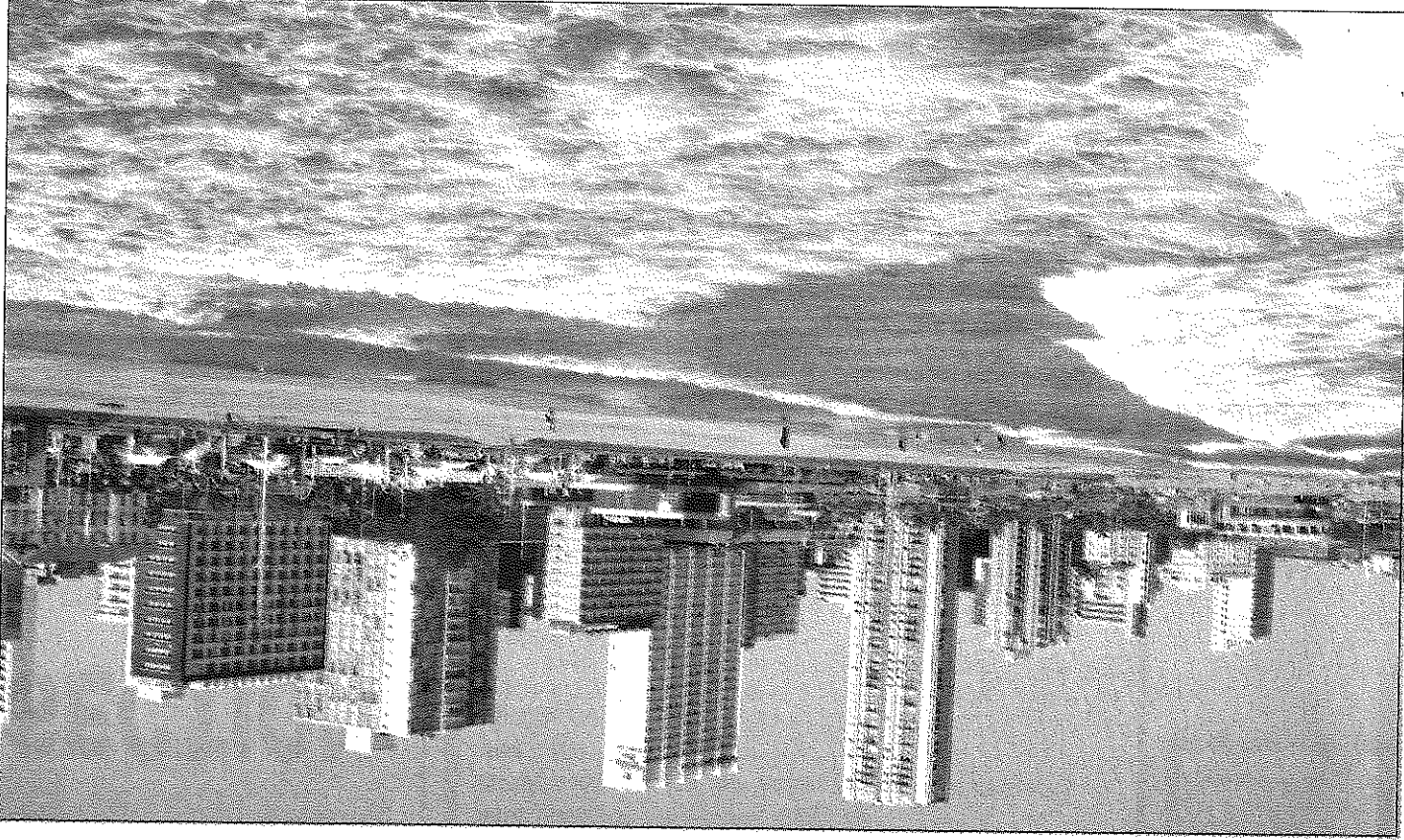
Persad claims rain days and time taken to reach environmental impact consensus have delayed progress, but have not affected the overall outcome. "The environmental impact assessment was a public process, and now that appeals are completed the committee will see ongoing engagement with the surrounding communities."

Concerns over barn swallows have been overcome. "The times when the swallows swarm are not really an issue, because the morning period is before airport activity commences. In the afternoon, most of the activity is out of the planned flight paths anyway, but the airport will install sophisticated bird radar and avoidance procedures similar to those for bad weather will be in place. It is a large airfield, so avoidance should be easy. The other issue, related to noise, has been properly researched by all authorities and we believe the impact will be minimal," said Cloete.

Not everybody's gone surfin'

DURBAN is striving to attract more international tourists while also broadening its range of attractions in order to move away from its image as strictly a holiday-season capital. "We are uplifting our status away from a mere beach destination to become an international locale with more sophisticated appeal," said Peter Benheim, CEO of the city's tourism authority, Durban Africa. Benheim said the key to Durban's sustainability as an international destination was the development of new tourism routes. "Durban is a large city, so we have defined five corridors of

excellence which will be developed or improved. These routes will be packaged for private investment to be used by tour guides or for self-drive purposes. "The new routes include the 100 Hills route, which is being upgraded; the historical CBD route; the northern sugar route; and, finally, the Inanda trail. "This route takes in the Inanda dam, the Gandhi settlement, John Dube's original house and the place where Nelson Mandela cast his first vote, as well as the Inanda Seminary for leaders and the Shembe site." — *Brendan Peacock*



POSTCARD: Durban's beachfront has helped peg the city as a summer destination in the minds of tourists — but it has more to offer
Picture: SYDNEY SESHIBED

Where Business in Durban

