



Editorial Sample

Editorial: Let's inspire the world ... again

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(Mail & Guardian)

This week, we began a series interrogating the legacy of the 2010 World Cup a decade on from the event. This tugging of nostalgia is an easy trick for media outlets to use to fill news pages and chase clicks. Yet, after staring back at that period, we can see this is not a frivolous exercise.

The World Cup was an unequivocal success. It is indelibly inked in the history books as a marker of South African excellence. It should serve as a reminder that we can achieve anything given the appropriate dedication and co-operation.

Few believed it was possible in the build-up to that first kick-off. Local naysayers pointed to our ongoing energy crisis and deficient transport system as insurmountable hurdles to hosting a global showpiece. Internationally, our flaws were blown up in the most insulting and hyperbolic ways imaginable: some governments blatantly attempted to frighten its citizens out of travelling to South Africa while others thought it was okay to advise that people pack their own condoms when visiting our country. FIFA was repeatedly encouraged to give up this African idea and fall back to the safety net of Europe's polished stadiums.

But we did it. And did it damn well. South Africa was the first to welcome the World Cup to our beautiful continent — that is something no one can take away from us. In these troubled Covid-19 times it's worth reminding ourselves of that achievement.

President Cyril Ramaphosa addressed the nation once more this week and said that most of the country will transition to lockdown level three at the end of month. It's an announcement that has done little to ease the criticism of the government's position on measures to contain the spread, and deadly effect, of the virus.

It's natural to feel frustrated that life as we know it has been taken from us, but we must clearly visualise the goal we're fighting for.

Ramaphosa's preamble should give us the motivation we need to keep up the battle. Without the lockdown, he said, at least 80000 of us would have been infected by now and thousands would probably have died. If international precedents are anything to go by, this is no exaggeration.

Our government's response has not been perfect. Aside from the worrying abuses of power by the police and army, some argue that some of the restrictions are draconian and perhaps even nonsensical. But there's no escaping that we've saved lives — far more than the callous approaches in parts of the developed world.

If we want this country to emerge stronger from this experience, we won't achieve it by disregarding anyone that calls it home. It may seem difficult right now, but it won't be the first time we've beaten the odds. We've amazed the world before. Let's do it again.

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