

Going, going Gordhan

 By [Terry Levin](#)

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During a cliffhanger week for South Africa in which beloved public protector, Thuli Madonsela took leave of office, the nation held its breath over the summoning of finance minister, Pravin Gordhan and universities burned in the #feesmustfall debacle, Justice Malala focused on reasons to be cheerful at the recent Deloitte State of the Nation forum in Cape Town.

Malala, whose forthcoming book is entitled *We have begun our Descent*, attributed current political volatility to an ANC divided – with players such as Trevor Manuel, Gordhan and Cyril Ramaphosa in an epic battle to prevent state capture by Jacob Zuma.



Bruce Whitfield, Justice Malala and Clem Sunter at Deloitte's State of the Nation breakfast. Photo: Terry Levin

In the event of Gordhan being asked to step down, Malala predicted a more extensive cabinet reshuffle, which could see Eskom CEO, Brian Molefe, become South Africa's fourth finance minister since December 2015. Despite the reshuffle, Malala reckoned that with about 60% support of the 86 ANC national executive members, Zuma himself looks set to be sitting pretty for the foreseeable future.

Five positive things in South Africa right now

1. The confidence-draining events of Nenegate ensured that business and civil society have found their voice. CEOs of listed companies have pledged billions for internships and collaborated to draw up a nine-point plan that will hopefully see business, labour and government collaborating more productively in the country's affairs.
2. South Africa still enjoys strong independent institutions such as the judiciary and the Constitutional Court.
3. An emerging multi-party democracy is creating more political diversity, which, for the first time in 22 years, is not dominated by one party.
4. The IEC and the recent local government elections were a model of free and fair, which saw a "sea-change" as the ANC plummeted from 11m votes in 2014 to 8m in 2016, indicating its constituency is leaving the party with no choice but to decide "whether to save itself or save one man".
5. The unrest at universities could offer the hope that someone like Julius Malema will exercise the necessary leadership to tell their student command to stop burning and start writing exams.

Malala concluded that there are still many good people within the National Treasury and in the National Prosecuting Authority with enough diversity of opinion for sense to reign over the nonsense.

Although he cautioned that we look set to replace one Zuma for another in 2019, with Jacob's ex-wife, Dr Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma as the most likely presidential successor.

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