



The shocking state of education in South Africa

Staff Writer Businesstech

South Africa has one of the worst-performing education systems in the world, plagued by incompetence and corruption. As such, the Centre for Development and Enterprise (CDE) is calling for the dismissal or resignation of the minister of basic education, Ms Matsie Angelina Motshekga.

“The President speaks of a ‘silent revolution’, while the minister talks of a ‘system on the rise’. The truth is that we face a silent crisis in our schools: South Africa has one of the worst performing education systems in the world,” said CDE’S Executive Director Ann Bernstein. South Africa devotes a significant proportion of government revenue to basic education – roughly 13%, noted the report. To justify such outlays in the context of rising fiscal pressures in 2023, we should expect globally competitive learning levels, a reduction in learning inequality, new opportunities for children from poor households, and a large, trainable workforce. However, Bernstein said that, in reality, very little of this is evident. Levels of education are circling the drain.

South Africa does worse than Kenya or Tanzania, which have a GDP per capita of less than one-fifth of South Africa. The report states that our spending commitments are equivalent to some high-performing Scandinavian countries, but our learning outcomes are worse than those neighbouring Eswatini.

To put it into perspective, the distance between our performance and Singapore’s, one of the world’s richest and best learning-outcome performers, is equivalent to “a whole generation of schooling loss”.

This is evident in the several international benchmark assessments South Africa have participated in over the past two decades, with some of the most notable results being:

- After a year of school, more than 50% of Grade 1 learners don’t know all the letters in the alphabet.
- Out of 39 participating countries, South Africa’s Grade 9 learners – on a test designed for Grade 8s – placed 38th (second last) in mathematics proficiency and last place (39th) in science proficiency.
- Covid 19 lockdowns devastated learning in South Africa (as elsewhere). Experts believe the average 10-year-old knows less than the average 9-year-old before the pandemic.

“The time has come for civil society, business, all political parties, parents and the public to up the pressure on government: we all need to push for systemwide reforms that significantly improve the quality of teaching in the classroom,” said Bernstein.

This and That

Clicks have partnered with Discovery Health and Auto & General insurance to offer an innovative health insurance product, Flexicare, which provides affordable and private day-to-day healthcare coverage in SA. Flexicare combines key traits from the partners involved, and is designed to provide access to private healthcare services.

Sweden’s military bans staff members from using Chinese-owned TikTok on work devices due to security concerns. The European Commission as well as governments in the Netherlands, Britain, the United States, Canada and New Zealand have told officials they cannot use TikTok on work devices over fears of ties to the communist government in Beijing.

Alibaba is planning to split into six business units in a radical break-up following a crackdown by Beijing on China’s big tech groups. The shake-up would put a separate chief executive and board in place for each unit. The company said this could lead to some of the business units adopting separate public listings.

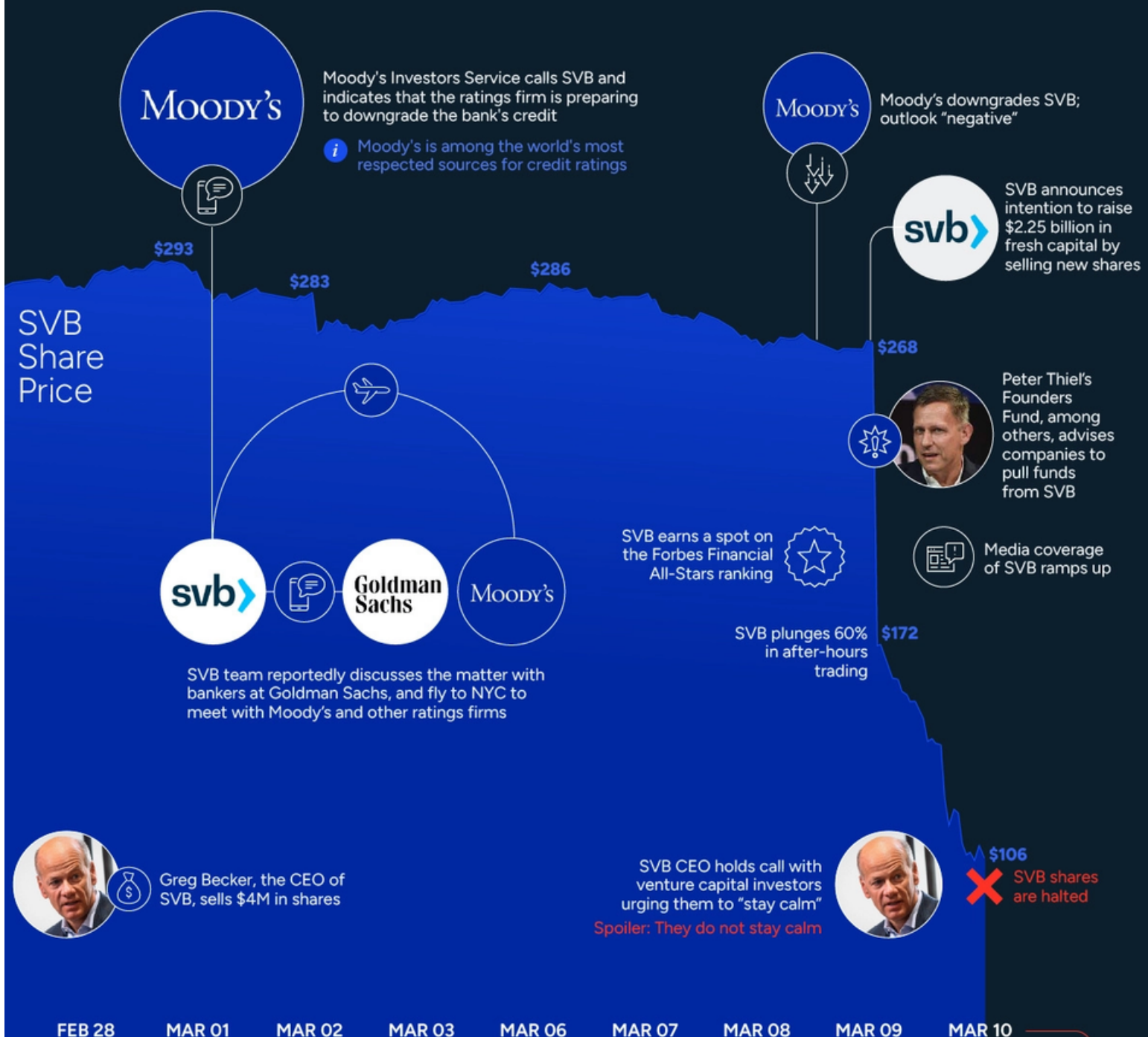
SA bank placed under curatorship: Habib Overseas Bank has been placed under curatorship by Finance Minister Enoch Godongwana to deal with governance failures and protect the bank’s depositors. The minister made the decision after a recommendation from the SARB’s Prudential Authority (PA). The SARB said the bank was defying financial sector regulations, such as stringent exchange control rules.

Climate change presents a serious concern for the coffee industry, with scientists predicting lower yields. Robusta, a coffee bean, however, can cope with higher temperatures and has higher yields.

Robusta coffee has a dire reputation, but a small group of farmers in Vietnam is trying to turn the bean’s fortunes around as a warming world threatens the industry.

Silicon Valley Bank Collapse

SVB collapsed after widespread client withdrawals in what could become the second biggest bank failure in U.S. history. Below is a timeline of key events:



MOODY'S

Moody's Investors Service calls SVB and indicates that the ratings firm is preparing to downgrade the bank's credit

i Moody's is among the world's most respected sources for credit ratings

MOODY'S

Moody's downgrades SVB; outlook "negative"

svb

SVB announces intention to raise \$2.25 billion in fresh capital by selling new shares

Peter Thiel's Founders Fund, among others, advises companies to pull funds from SVB

svb **Goldman Sachs** **MOODY'S**

SVB team reportedly discusses the matter with bankers at Goldman Sachs, and fly to NYC to meet with Moody's and other ratings firms

SVB earns a spot on the Forbes Financial All-Stars ranking

Media coverage of SVB ramps up

Greg Becker, the CEO of SVB, sells \$4M in shares

SVB CEO holds call with venture capital investors urging them to "stay calm"

Spoiler: They do not stay calm

SVB shares are halted

FEB 28 MAR 01 MAR 02 MAR 03 MAR 06 MAR 07 MAR 08 MAR 09 MAR 10

i **Who is SVB?** Silicon Valley Bank is a 40-year-old commercial bank that was an important lender for the tech and venture capital sector. It's estimated that **half of U.S. venture-backed startups** were customers of the bank.

California state regulators take possession of the bank, and appoint FDIC as receivers