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He counts among his neighbours Mohammed Bobat, the Gupta-appointed adviser to weekend-special former finance minister Des van Rooyen.

He was also a classmate of Anoj Singh, the former chief financial officer (CFO) of both Transnet and Eskom, cited in numerous documents for having siphoned off a small fortune from those two companies for the Guptas.

Meet Mohammed Mahomed (pictured), the man who became the acting group chief executive (GCE) of Transnet less than two weeks ago, and who will be testifying before the state capture inquiry from tomorrow.

In his statement before the commission, Mahomed declares all his relationships with those accused of state capture, and is widely seen as Mr Clean in an organisation whose executive ranks have been decimated.

Mahomed may be the boss today, but he wanted to quit not so long ago. In his submission, he says that, in September 2016, he was told by then group supply chain officer Edward Thomas “to attend an interview at the PwC offices in Sunninghill which I was informed was a process commissioned by the board”.

“I was told that the key objective of this interview was to identify person/s responsible for leaks of Transnet information to the media,” he writes.

This was more than two years after the 1 064 locomotives tender, which cost Transnet R54 billion, was concluded.

“I was subjected to the following: a voice analysis test;

‘WHY I NEARLY QUIT’

effective lie-detector test; handwriting analysis; seven months of forensic interrogation at different times; [and] imaging of all computer and mobile electronic equipment,” Mahomed states.

“The process made working at Transnet unbearable, and in April 2017 I applied for a voluntary separation package (VSP), which was being offered by Transnet at the time.

“Subsequently, I was called to a meeting with Garry Pita, who advised me ... [that] the Werksmans/PwC teams reported to the board; that the forensic team found no conclusive evidence that I was involved in any wrongdoing; and that my VSP application was not going to be approved as Transnet needed my skill and experience,” he states.

“I am not sure why my VSP application was not approved and did not receive any further correspondence in this regard; neither did I receive any formal feedback on the Werksmans/PwC forensic process.”

Pita resigned as group CFO of Transnet soon after Pravin Gordhan was appointed minister of public



enterprises early last year.

Thomas was suspended in October last year for allegedly playing a role in Transnet deals with Gupta-linked Regiments Capital, Trillian Advisory Services, Trillian Capital Partners and accounting firm Nkonki Inc.

During his intensive questioning by investigators, Mahomed told them that Trillian did not do any billable work for his department, and that the invoices Pita and Thomas signed off could not have been right because no work had been done to justify them.

Mahomed is at pains to explain how he “made certain acquaintances during my career that may need further explanation”.

About Bobat, he says he met him after buying land in a gated complex in 2003.

“After I had built my house, I subsequently learnt that Mr Bobat also owned a freehold property in the same gated complex. He also resides at this property.

“I was appointed as chairman of the homeowners’ association. Bobat was also appointed to the association as a director, and we remain co-directors on the board of the

homeowners’ association. I have no contact with Bobat outside of these meetings and correspondences.

“I must also indicate that Bobat also worked for Regiments when Regiments rendered services to Transnet between 2013 and 2015. Bobat was one of the Regiments personnel who were assigned to this project.

“I had no direct role or influence in the appointment of Regiments for this assignment.”

Of his old classmate, Singh, Mahomed says that after he passed his accounting degree in 1995, he enrolled at the then University of Durban-Westville (now the University of KwaZulu-Natal) for the postgraduate accounting programme, and Singh was his classmate.

Then, when he joined the old Spoornet in 2004, he found Singh there as well. After a few years, Singh became his direct boss.

But their “cordial, professional” relationship did not stop him pointing out what was going wrong at Transnet.

During the post-tender negotiations for the locomotives tender, Mahomed says, it “came to my attention that the ... team was negotiating a higher than normal advance payment” to the locomotives manufacturers.

“I requested a meeting with Singh, at Webber Wentzel attorneys’ offices, to register my discomfort with any significant upfront payments, which would be out of kilter with the 10% practice in recent agreements, since it would negatively impact key financial ratios and cash requirements. He acknowledged my discomfort and advised that he would look into it.”

But still the massive advance payments went ahead.