

Tight race seen in ANC leadership vote

by UPI

POLOKWANE, South Africa -- Voting began Tuesday in South Africa to elect the top six positions of the African National Congress party with a tight race for the presidency. Some 3,900 party delegates were more subdued in the conference hall in Polokwane as two days of raucous debate and cheering wound down for the vote, the Cape Town Cape Argus reported. All message-bearing T-shirts, placards and banners were banned as delegates lined up in a heavy rain to cast ballots for the six party positions. Incumbent party President Thabo Mbeki faces a massive tide of support for his former anti-apartheid ally and now rival, Jacob Zuma, the report said. Mbeki, 65, was hand-picked by Nelson Mandela to lead the party. Zuma is also 65, and is seen as more of a populist, as he grew up in poverty and was illiterate until his teens. A correspondent for Canada's Globe and Mail at the conference reported Zuma was acquitted last year of raping a young family friend, has at least three wives and faces corruption charges in an arms dealing case.

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