

Eswatini Daily News

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Another interest rate hike looming

By Bahle Gama

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WHEN South Africa sneezes, Eswatini catches the cold. The adage holds true as South African Reserve Bank (SARB) Deputy Governor Fundi Tshazibana says the bank remains concerned by the risks to the inflation outlook which may result in the SARB resuming interest hikes in the event they materialise. Speaking to Bloomberg Television, the Deputy Governor stated that the Monetary Policy Committee's (MPC) decision to neither increase nor decrease interest in July was not a solid move because the risks remained insignificant.

■ SEE FULL STORY ON PAGE 2

TOO MUCH
COMM-OCEAN AT HOME?
Work from Ocean Basket!



Gables: 7602 8293, Mbabane Plaza: 7694 2697, Manzini Lifestyle Centre: 7850 6612

Ocean Basket OB

By Bahle Gama
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The adage holds true as South African Reserve Bank (SARB) Deputy Governor Fundi Tshazibana says the bank remains concerned by the risks to the inflation outlook which may result in the SARB resuming interest hikes in the event they materialise.

Speaking to Bloomberg Television, the Deputy Governor stated that the Monetary Policy Committee's (MPC) decision to neither increase nor decrease interest in July was not a solid move because the risks remained insignificant.

Last month, South Africa's Central Bank's Monetary Policy Committee paused its longest phase of monetary tightening since 2006, leaving its policy benchmark at 8.25 per cent after raising rates in its 10 past meetings to bring cumulative increases to 475 basis points since November 2021.

The Central Bank of Eswatini (CBE) on the other hand decided to decrease the interest rate by 25 basis points to 7.5 per cent from 7.75 per cent, a move that CBE Governor Dr Phil Mnisi said was effected in consideration of the relevant global, regional, and domestic economic factors as well as the price and financial stability mandate.

This move was not warmly welcomed by some economists who deemed it risky and costly to the economy. Meanwhile, the SARB Deputy Governor stated that there were several vulnerabilities and risks they were seeing which could resume the interest hikes.

"The Central Bank is also concerned by electricity which is seriously feeding into underlying prices," she said.

According to Tshazibana, the economy in the neighbouring country is experiencing its worst bout of power cuts, with this year's outages exceeding those for all of 2022, because state utility Eskom cannot meet demand from its ageing and poorly maintained plants.

Another interest rate hike looming

● SARB remains concerned by the risks to the inflation outlook which may result in the bank resuming interest hikes in the event they materialise

The South African inflation slowed to 5.4 per cent in June but remained above the 4.5 per cent midpoint of the central bank's target range, where it prefers to anchor price-growth expectations. Policymakers predicted inflation will only reach the midpoint in 2025 and are closely watching inflation expectations for evidence.

Tshazibana stated that while the central bank was concerned by the inflation risks, its policy actions were being felt in the economy as consumers were starting to take a strain, adding that the pain was very visible.

This she said was visible when looking at household spending numbers which are expected to rise by 1 per cent this year, something deemed as an economy that is not firing

up and charging forward.

"The impact is also evident in the banking sector. If one looks at non-performing loans by banks, one has seen a sharp increase in those starting from the second quarter of last year. So, the pain is coming through," said Tshazibana.

“The Central Bank is also concerned by electricity which is seriously feeding into underlying prices”

▲ SARB Deputy Governor Fundi Tshazibana.
▼ South African Reserve Bank.

Robbers stole 24 bullets in Lawyer 'Bhanyaza's' office

By Nokunceda Magagula

A staggering twenty-four bullets were among other things stolen in lawyer Bongani 'Bhanyaza' Mdluli's office during a break-in.

Phumlani Magongo (21) and Neliswa Malaza (29) appeared at the Mbabane Magistrate's court facing charges of robbery. The duo is said to have broken in through a window and aimed for Mdluli and Associates offices, stealing items estimated to be over E30 000.

Giving his testimony before Principal Magistrate Fikile Nhlabatsi, Mdluli narrated how he discovered his property was stolen. Mdluli said on June 19, 2023, he had gone to South Africa for work. The following day, he received a phone call from a practising lawyer in his office, who informed him that she and another lawyer had just entered the



▲ Lawyer Bongani 'Bhanyaza' Mdluli.

office to find it in disarray.

Mdluli also said they informed him that

a window was slightly open and there were footprints on the floor, indicating a break-

in. Mdluli noted that even the second floor, housing his office, was not spared from the intrusion.

Upon receiving this information, Mdluli instructed them to call the police. He also took it upon himself to contact a police officer he knew from the Mbabane Police Station.

Mdluli further testified that he then made arrangements to return to Eswatini. Upon his arrival, he immediately went to the office to assess the situation and identify the missing items.

In court, Mdluli was able to identify his stolen items as they were presented as evidence. He identified a wireless black speaker worth E5,000, two laptops branded Hp and Dell, amounting to E18,000, and a watch amounting to E1,500. Mdluli also identified Whisky worth E5,000, a wine bottle, a grinder, perfume, the 24 stolen bullets, a brown bag and a work briefcase.

After identifying the items, Mdluli applied to the court for their release into his possession.



▲ His Majesty King Mswati III has extended his congratulations to Evelyn Baring High School pupil Luyanda Simelane for taking second place in the SADC Secondary School Essay competition.

King Mswati III congratulates pupil on SADC essay competition

By EDN Reporter

HIS Majesty King Mswati III has congratulated Evelyn Baring High School pupil Luyanda Simelane for taking second place in the SADC Secondary School Essay competition.

His Majesty, along with his delegation, returned to the country on Saturday evening from Luanda, Angola, where he was attending

the 43rd Ordinary Summit of SADC Heads of State and Governments.

In a press briefing at Ludzidzini Royal Residence, His Majesty stated that Simelane had hoisted the country's flag, making the Kingdom proud. "We saw that she wrote a very beautiful essay which SADC saw it fit that of all the pupils in the region she is awarded second place with a prize money of about E19 000 (US\$1 000)," His Majesty said.

The King who was beaming with pride stated that Simelane was announced as second place in the competition along with others

during the official opening of the 43rd SADC Summit in Luanda, Angola.

"It was a delightful sight to see our flag hoisted by this pupil in the SADC region. Even though she was not in person to receive this award, I believe in the future such announcements will be made virtually to include the recipients," His Majesty said.

The SADC Secondary School Essay Competition is open only to secondary school students from the SADC Member States including Eswatini, Angola, Botswana, Union of the Comoros, Democratic Republic of the Congo,

Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Seychelles, South Africa, United Republic of Tanzania, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. The top three prize winners receive their prizes and certificates on the margins of the SADC Summit of Heads of State and Government held.

The SADC Secondary School Essay Competition was established in 1996 to recognize the best student's work in disseminating information on SADC to support the process of regional cooperation and integration in the region.

Broadcasting Bill to merge ETVA and EBIS

By Bahle Gama
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FOLLOWING Parliament's decision to pass the Broadcasting Bill of 2020, the country's two state broadcasting stations Eswatini TV (ETVA) and Eswatini Broadcasting and Information Service (EBIS) will be merged to operate under the same roof.

The Bill was first drafted in 2007, having been stalled for over 15 years until it was finally passed into law.

The Bill, that was tabled by the Minister of Commerce, Industry, and Trade Manqoba Khumalo on behalf of the Minister of ICT Princess Sikhanyiso who was on maternity leave at the time, seeks to end 58 years of a monopoly of state broadcasters.

According to the Ministry of ICT PS Pshesheya Dube, the merger between EBIS and ESTVA was progressing well following the passing of the Bill.

He stated that the Ministry of ICT had mandated Eswatini Communications Commission (ESCCOM) to draw up regulations that

would provide a guide on how the merger would be effected, which he said was a process in advanced stages. "The ministry will soon be engaging a consultant to assist with guidance regarding technicalities of the merger and pose time frames of when it can be operational because we want to ensure that everything runs smoothly by eliminating possible teething challenges," Dube said.

According to the PS, the Bill is being printed at Webster's and will soon be shared with the public. The Bill states that EBIS and ESTVA will be public broadcasters with the main objective of satisfying the aspirations and interests of listeners and viewers in the field of information by providing educational programmes that also entertain and inform.

It further states that ESCCOM will regulate broadcasting in the country and further promote pluralism in the media by prioritizing applicants able to satisfy their broadcasting services and will be subject to no editorial control other than an independent control exercised from within the broadcasting of the prospective licensee.

According to law, once passed,



▲ The Bill to merged the broadcasting entities was first drafted in 2007, having been stalled for over 15 years until it was finally passed into law in the August House.

a Bill is supposed to be effected by the relevant ministry through a notice in a government gazette.

The country reportedly adopted the African Charter on Broadcasting in 2001 calling for the transformation of state broadcasters to public broadcasters.

According to reports, concerns were heightened by a report by a parliamentary select committee,



tabled in parliament in September 2020, alleging nepotism and maladministration in the two-state broadcasters.

The new Broadcasting Bill seeks

to provide maximum availability of broadcasting services to the people through a three-tier system of public, commercial, and community services.

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Eswatini imbali to partake in KZN reed dance

IMBALI from Eswatini will be attending the Kwa-Zulu Natal Reed dance ceremony.

CAJ News reported that the Siyaya eMhlangeni and Moral Regeneration activities were ongoing to prepare maidens and their guides for the ceremonies to be held at eMchobeni Royal Palace in Umkhanyakude District on September 2-3 as well as Enyokeni Royal Palace in Nongoma on September 9-10. Maidens are expected to come from provinces such as Mpumalanga and Gauteng as well as neighbouring countries including the Kingdom of Eswatini. The ceremony is also expected to draw thousands of international visitors and serve as a massive boost to tourism.

According to CAJ, post hosting a successful Siyaya eMhlangeni programme in uMgungundlovu District, uMzinyathi District and Dr Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma municipalities, organisers will move to KwaMbotho Traditional Authority in uMuziwabantu Local Municipality under Ungu District the following weekend to mobilize young girls and the community at large to support the initiative.

The KZN Department of Sport, Arts, and Culture and the Zulu Royal House in conjunction with local municipalities as well as traditional leaders will organise the events.

The teachings given to maidens on values of ubuntu and self-respect also include protocols of how to behave in the palace and standards of morality expected from them.

KZN Sport, Arts and Culture MEC Dr Ntuthuko Mahlaba said the preparations for the 2023 reed dance could not have come at a better time than Women's Month in South Africa and this tradition is about guiding



▲EmaSwati maidens at Umhlanga ceremony.

young women to make informed decisions about their lives.

According to the MEC, the programme is a vehicle that can help the nation in moral regeneration and advancing agenda 2063 of the African Union of creating a continent "that is peaceful, prosperous and is free of

all social ill."

Worth noting is that preparations for the country's Umhlanga ceremony are also underway following His Majesty King Mswati III's decision to commission local and outside maidens to the national event.

The Reed Dance is set to start on August

29, with the main day set to take place on Monday, September 4. It will be on this day when the main ceremony occurs, with the dancing attended by Their Majesties, members of the royal family and dignitaries of different portfolios as well as the public, signalling a public holiday in Eswatini.

SADC launches mission to observe Zimbabwe's 2023 harmonized elections

Stories by Nokunceda Magagula

HIS Honour Dr. Nevers Mumba, former Vice President of the Republic of Zambia and Head of the SADC Electoral Observation Mission (SEOM) officially launched the mission's observation of the 2023 Harmonized Elections in the Republic of Zimbabwe.

Speaking at the launch event, Dr. Mumba expressed gratitude for the opportunity to observe Zimbabwe's elections, set to take place on August 23, 2023. He commended the calm and peaceful atmosphere that has been observed since the arrival of the SADC team on August 10, 2023, and lauded the Republic of Zimbabwe for its efforts in ensuring a conducive environment for the elections.

Consistent with the revised SADC Principles and Guidelines Governing Democratic Elections, Dr. Mumba emphasized, "the deployment of this SEOM was preceded by a Pre-Election Assessment Goodwill Mission to the Republic of Zimbabwe by the SADC Electoral Advisory Council (SEAC) from April 12 to 19 2023." He underscored the importance of electoral transparency and the role of SEOM in evaluating the elections against established democratic principles.

Dr. Mumba elaborated on the SEOM's assessment criteria, which include the full

participation of citizens, human rights, adherence to legal frameworks, prevention of corruption and violence, equal media access, electoral justice, and more. Notably, the mission comprises 68 personnel from 9 SADC member states and will focus on the pre-election, election, and post-election periods.

The SEOM's launch drew attention to the importance of upholding democratic values and principles envisioned in the SADC Treaty and related protocols. Dr. Mumba also urged registered voters to exercise their civic and political rights by participating in the elections and encouraged all stakeholders to ensure a peaceful, transparent, and credible electoral process.

Dr. Mumba extended an invitation to attend the release of the Preliminary Statement regarding the SEOM's observations, scheduled for August 25, 2023. The launch concluded with the formal announcement of the SADC Electoral Observation Mission to the 2023 Harmonized Elections in the Republic of Zimbabwe.

The launch event marks a significant step in promoting transparent and democratic elections in the SADC region, underscoring the commitment of member states to upholding the principles of fair governance and electoral integrity. As the SEOM takes on its vital role, all eyes will be on Zimbabwe as it moves towards the landmark election day on August 23.

African Environmental Ministers eager to transform desertification



▲Delegates at the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment held in Ethiopia.

AFRICAN environmental Ministers have shared ideas on strategies for sustainable land management and converting desertification into beneficial opportunities.

Speaking during the African Ministerial conference on the environment held in Ethiopia, the Minister of Tourism and the Environmental Affairs Moses Vilakati said during the meeting, they shared ideas on how desertification could benefit the people since it has shown that it is taking over in African countries.

Vilakati further stated that when looking closely at the rate of desertification taking place on the Southern Africa countries, it will result in hunger as people will not be able to plough plants that they can eat.

The Minister also mentioned that as Southern African countries, they have decided to take it upon themselves to look

into the issue, because when they look into desert countries, they noticed that there are no agricultural activities, and they don't want to find themselves in that situation since agriculture is a backbone for these countries.

Vilakati mentioned that they will strategize on how they can avoid drought.

Speaking on climate change, the minister said that as Southern African countries, they still believe that planting trees is the best way to deal with desertification. The African Ministerial Conference on the Environment (AMCEN), established in December 1985, following a conference of African ministers of the environment held in Cairo, Egypt, plays a crucial role in addressing environmental challenges such as desertification. At the heart of its mandate is the advocacy for environmental protection in Africa, with a strong emphasis on meeting human needs sustainably and fostering social and economic development at all levels.



▲ Inyatsi Group Chairman Michelo Shakantu joined by Eswatini Mobile and Eswatini Meat Industries employees, during the activation in Siphofaneni.



▲ Datum Corporate Services CEO Sydney Sichula handing over a prize to one of the winners.

Inyatsi Group Executives lend a hand to destitute family

By EDN Reporter

THERE is a saying that goes: “Help others without any reason and give without the expectation of receiving anything in return.”

The adage was put into practice over the weekend by the Inyatsi Group Executives when they changed a young man’s fortunes. The officials from Africa’s leading integrated business partner led by Executive Chairman, Michelo Shakantu, were in Siphofaneni for an Eswatini Mobile Siyabangena activation when they came across the young man who shared his story of life struggles.

He revealed that he resided with his grandfather and they were struggling to make ends meet. The executive team as well as employees from the different entities under the Inyatsi Group donated money and embarked on a clothing shopping spree with the young man.

Following the shopping spree, the young man was dropped off at his grandfather’s residence.

Gratitude

The sheer joy and gratitude radiating from him underscored the profound impact of the group’s compassion.

The day also saw other patrons and consumers leaving the event with huge smiles on their faces. The Siyabangena Roadshow also saw the group unveiling its latest acquisition, Eswatini Meat Industries (EMI) and officially welcoming it to the larger family.

The event proved to be an absolute showstopper, leaving warm hearts and memories.

Bringing together telecommunications and the food Industries, the roadshow captivated the people of Siphofaneni under the theme ‘Siyabangena with a Meaty Twist.’

A range of engaging games and generous prizes elevated the event to a unique level of excitement. Eswatini Meat Industries introduced a fresh ‘Spin the Wheel’ game, creating an avenue where patrons not only engaged but also had the chance to win delectable cuts of meat and hampers.

Amidst the excitement, the timeless Siyabangena games, including the renowned ‘Pick a Box or Money,’ took centre stage



▲ Msandi Ka Baba directing proceedings.



▲ Eswatini Mobile’s Nosipho Shongwe chats to the young man who was presented with cash and a meat hamper. The boy was also taken for a clothing shopping spree.



▲ Eswatini Meat Industries employees posing for a group picture.

once again. In an unforgettable moment, an elderly gentleman from Manyovu selected a box and to his astonishment, he walked away with a cutting-edge smartphone and E1000 in e-Mali cash.

Further intensifying the excitement,

Jabulile Simelane from KaMkhweli secured a brand-new smartphone.

Her impromptu decision to join the Siyabangena festivities while in town for shopping, coupled with an E50 airtime purchase, resulted in this surprising

triumph.

The day was filled with an abundance of savoury meat tastings, delighting attendees with bite-sized pieces. As the event concluded, the air was filled with a sense of fulfilment and shared jubilation.

I don't even own a firearm – robbery suspect

Stories by Bahle Gama
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A robbery suspect says he does not own a firearm and is being framed for the alleged offence.

Twenty four-year-old Bonginkhosi 'Scroef' Sibanyoni says he never partook in a robbery that occurred on November 4, 2022, at Mhlambanyatsi Engen Fillion station, where a salesperson, at gunpoint, was induced into giving the assailant items valued at E3 800.

These were a black and green Samsung A01 cell phone valued at E1 800, a blue Itel cell phone at E350, and cash amounting to E1 650.

Sibanyoni argued that he does not own a firearm, to begin with, and he is innocent of the charges levelled against him, stating that he did not partake in any armed robbery and does not know the complainant.

He stated that on the day in question, he received a phone call from a person he knew who had given him a lift in the past who informed him that there had been a robbery at a shop in Mhlambanyatsi.

He was informed that the robbery had



▲ Sibanyoni argued that he does not own a firearm, to begin with, and he is innocent of the charges levelled against him.

been done by men known to the caller.

"I told him I knew nothing about the robbery because he also thought I knew the men who did it," he stated.

A few moments later, another phone call came from the police who informed

him to go to the station which he did and upon arrival, he was arrested. He said he proclaimed his innocence.

Sibanyoni emphasized that he did not own a firearm and had never handled one in his life, and there were none found in his

possession, nor were the items mentioned in the charge sheet.

He stated that in the event he is admitted to bail, he would adhere to all the conditions and would not endanger the safety of the public or any other particular person.

Sickly

He further submitted that he was sickly with ulcers and the conditions as well as the diet at the remand centre were not conducive for someone in his state of health.

Sibanyoni stated that he is self-employed as a builder which is his only means of subsistence and the income he derives from the same which is used to cater for his family which includes his unemployed fiancée and two minor children.

"I have not been charged with contravention of the Arms and Ammunition Act and the mention of a firearm in the charge sheet is merely for frustrating my bail application as I stated that I did not commit the offence," he stated.

Bail was granted at E50 000, E3 000 to be paid in cash, and the rest as surety.



▲ Lucky Dlamini was also charged with contempt of court after he breached a court order instituted against him.

E50 000 bail pending 2-year custodial sentence appeal

A convict appealing a five-year custodial sentence has been granted bail at E50 000 pending his appeal application at the Supreme Court.

Lucky Dlamini, was arrested by members of the Royal Eswatini Police Service and charged with contravening Section 77 (1) (a) of the Sexual Offences Domestic Violence Act No 15 of 2018 after he allegedly assaulted the mother of his children by stabbing her with a knife once on the head.

He was also charged with contempt of court after he breached a court order instituted against him.

Subsequently, he was sentenced and convicted at the Piggs Peak Magistrates Court to two years without option or fine for assaulting his baby mama and E500 or one-year imprisonment for being in contempt.

In his urgent bail application, Dlamini stated that he was currently serving a sentence at Piggs Peak Correctional Centre and was desirous of being admitted to bail pending the hearing of his appeal as long as it can be demonstrated that he is not a flight risk.

He stated that there was nothing that suggested he would not be able to serve his sentence in the event his appeal was unsuccessful, adding that the administration of justice would not be endangered if he were to be admitted to bail.

Abided

"I have previously been admitted to bail and I abided by all conditions that the court had set for my release on bail," he stated.

In his appeal, Dlamini stated that the Piggs Peak Magistrate Court when handing down its sentence did not consider that he was a first-time offender and had to provide reasons why a fine was not apposite in the matter.

He further argued that the evidence brought before the court was that his baby mama was an aggressive person and had attacked him first resulting in him seeking a peace binding order against her.

She had also previously damaged his motor vehicle's windscreen and the court accepted her uncorroborated evidence that she had not slashed his car tyres on the day in question.

Evidence that was reportedly verified by the police, however, was not led in this account by a police officer in court.

According to Dlamini, the court further accepted evidence that his baby mama was stabbed with a man-made knife, a weapon that was never paraded in an exhibit in the court.

He stated that the complainant also went to the hospital four days after the stabbing incident and the doctor's report did not mention any stitching and it describes the injury she suffered as a 2cm laceration.

"My humble submission is that without the evidence of the doctor that examined her, the court could not have come to the conclusion that it was a serious injury," he stated.

Dlamini argued that the court should also have afforded him the opportunity to pay a fine and a partly suspended sentence would have been apposite in the circumstances.

Bail was granted at E50 000 by the High Court. E5 000 was to be paid in cash and the rest as surety. He is to report at the Piggs Peak Police station every last Friday of the month.

Rape suspect in need of traditional medical attention

A man arrested and charged with allegedly having sexual intercourse with a 14-year-old girl has told the court that he is sickly and requires medical attention, to steam with traditional medicine.

The accused person and Simunye Sugar Mill employee Musawenkhosi Tfwala put in an urgent application after he was arrested on August 7 for contravening Section 3 (3) of the Sexual Offences and Domestic Violence Act 15 of 2018 after he allegedly had sexual intercourse with the minor on July 14.

In his application, Tfwala submitted that he was sickly and needed constant medical attention because he suffers unending headaches hence

the need for traditional medicine.

He further submitted that his continued incarceration would be detrimental to him because he is employed at the mill which enables him to provide for his family.

"If not released on bail, I will definitely lose my job and consequently suffer irreparably," he stated.

Tfwala further stated that he would be making a plea of not guilty because he did not commit the offence and will detail his defence during the hearing of the matter.

In the event that he is able to pay E3 000 of his E50 000 bail, he is expected to visit the Simunye Police Station every last Friday of the month until the trial ends.



▲ Tfwala submitted that he was sickly and needed constant medical attention because he suffers unending headaches hence the need for traditional medicine.

Over 1 900 farmers pay for govt input subsidy programme

THREE weeks since the payments of the government input subsidy program were open, a total of over 1 900 farmers have paid for the programme. National Maize Corporation (NMC) Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Mavela Vilane said of the 1 900 farmers, 1849 payments were from maize farmers and 20 were from beans farmers with zero payments from sorghum farmers. Vilane emphasized that farmers should really utilize this opportunity as they would be saving themselves a lot of money.

“Even though this is a first come first serve situation I would encourage farmers to go and do their payments early. The earlier, the better,” he said. Vilane said their target was 5649 farmers in total for this programme.

“For maize, we are targeting 5399 farmers, 200 for beans farmers, and 50 farmers for sorghum. So far it looks like we will hit the target even before the deadline,” he said.

Just last week, the Minister of Agriculture Jabulani Mabuza announced the new Director of the E53 million Agriculture Development Fund, Howard Mbuyisa, who will also be of assistance to the farmers in the country.

The minister said this fund was there to assist farmers in accessing funding for the development of their business infrastructures.

Mabuza said this fund was one of the ways that government uses to show assistance to farmers in order to ensure that the country is able to sustain itself in terms of food production.

He further assured the nation and farmers that this very fund would be functioning and assisting farmers three weeks from the day the director was appointed.

2023 GOVERNMENT INPUT SUBSIDY PROGRAMME:

	Price for farmer	Price for Govt
Maize	E5 700	E5 700
Beans	E4 600	E4 600
Sorghum	E3 000	E3 000
Tractor per hour	E480	E180

Beware of scammers – EEC

Stories By Silindzelwe Nxumalo
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Beware of scammers!

Eswatini Electricity Company (EEC) has warned the nation about an ongoing scam where individual/s purporting to be EEC employees are soliciting money from customers so that they are removed from a list of people whose residences shall be disconnected from the power supply.

According to a statement issued by the entity, which is under the leadership of Managing

Director Earnest Mkhonta, these person/s were unknown to EEC. EEC reminded its customers that at no point where they expected or should they deposit money into MOBILE MONEY platforms or personal accounts.

“EEC services are paid for at Service Centres or EEC bank accounts,” read the statement.

EEC said if for any reason, a customer’s residence should be disconnected, the affected customer would be engaged, and processes would be explained to them.

“Customers are urged to stay vigilant and cautious, so they do not fall victim to these unscrupulous individuals,” read the statement.



▲ Ministry Of Commerce Industry and Trade and UNESWA officials pose with the students who received certificates of competence on screen printing.



▲ Mandla Shongwe receiving his certificate from UNESWA Vice Chancellor and the acting PS competence on screen printing.

24 handcraft students complete screen printing course

A total of 24 handcraft students have received certificates from the University of Eswatini (UNESWA) after completing a course on screen printing.

The training was a collaboration between UNESWA’s Apparel and Textile Department and the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Trade’s Handcraft Department.

Ministry of Commerce Industry and Trade Acting Principal Secretary Mluleki Dlamini said this was a great achievement for

the Ministry and the Handcraft Department since its mandate was to develop the handcraft sector business with the aim of promoting self-employment and reliance on reducing household poverty.

Dlamini mentioned that he had been rightfully informed that the University identified a gap in fading of cultural artifacts that describes their background and tradition as the Swazi Nation.

“The university then decided to preserve the fading artifacts through screen printing on fabric, for our great children to find them. These include tingula, titsebe ticamelo, tihlahla temsimeto, and many more traditional artifacts,” he said.

He stated that the ministry was delighted that among all Departments and institutions within the country, the Handcraft Department had been identified to be the driver of this activity.

He mentioned that the student had acquired a new skill in screen printing, which would give them an opportunity to have a variety of skills that would assist them to make different products for consumers to have a lot to choose from.

“This will reduce the duplication of products and the unnecessary competition among yourselves,” he advised.



▲ Letsiwe Mabuza from UNESWA presenting on screen printing.

Dlamini further urged the artisans to grab this opportunity with two hands and make sure they try out what they had learned so as to master the skill and end up earning a living out of it.

He also thanked the University the Apparel and Textile Department for choosing the Ministry of commerce, the Handcraft Department as it is responsible for the development of the handcraft sector in the country.


“I believe that training on new skills to the artisans will play a major role in assisting them to have a variety of products to make and sell for sustainability,” he said.

The Acting PS said this could

be achieved through continuous pieces of training and harnessing one’s skills and talents so that they produce quality handcrafts that would sell around the globe, to sustain their livelihood.




“I say this because as a country we are faced with the scourge of high youth unemployment, which necessitates that we explore different ways of earning income to reduce poverty in our country,” he said.

He stated that it was his fervent belief that handcrafts if appropriately supported, can contribute meaningfully to the economic development of the country.



FX RATES

Notes/Cash	Buy	Sell
U.S. Dollar	18.5538	19.0230
G.B. Pound	23.5015	24.1855
Bank Rate (July 2023)	7.50%	
Prime Rate (July 2023)	11%	
Inflation (July 2023)	4.5%	
Petrol	E20.80/Litre	
Diesel	E22.00/Litre	
Replacement	E20.80/Litre	
Paraffin	E16.45/Litre	

China vows to coordinate support to resolve local government debt risks

BEIJING — China will coordinate financial support to resolve local government debt problems, the central bank said in a statement on Sunday, as policymakers look to shore up an increasingly shaky economic recovery and reassure worried investors.

The statement, following a joint meeting on Friday by the People's Bank of China (PBOC), the country's top financial regulator and the securities regulator, comes amid growing concerns that China's deepening property crisis is starting to spillover into its financial system.

China unexpectedly lowered several key interest rates earlier last week in a bid to shore up activity and it is expected to cut its prime loan rates on Monday, but analysts say moves so far have been too little, too late, with much more forceful measures needed to stem the economy's downward spiral.

Financial departments should coordinate support to resolve local debt risks, enrich tools to prevent and resolve debt risks, strengthen risk monitoring and firmly hold the line on avoiding systemic risk, according to the PBOC statement.

China's Politburo, a top decision-making body of the ruling Communist Party, in late July reiterated its focus on preventing local government debt risks and said it would



▲ Headquarters of the People's Bank of China (PBOC), the central bank, is pictured in Beijing, China.

carry out a basket of measures, but no plans have been announced yet.

Bloomberg reported on Aug. 11 that China will offer local governments a combined 1 trillion yuan (\$137 billion) in bond issuance quotas for refinancing.

Analysts believe that a coordinated rescue package would likely involve a combination

of additional funding or refinancing channels, debt swaps and payment extensions, and possible debt restructurings.

Debt-laden municipalities represent a major risk to China's economy and financial stability, economists say, after years of overinvestment in infrastructure, plummeting returns from land sales and soaring costs to

contain COVID-19.

The finances of many local governments have deteriorated alongside a severe slump in the once-mighty property sector, which has caused a growing number of developers to default on their debts.

But Fitch Ratings said earlier this month it expects the central government will try to avoid outright bailouts of more troubled municipalities, as that would undermine policymakers' years-long effort to bring debt levels down to more manageable levels.

The Friday meeting, attended by PBOC Governor Pan Gongsheng, deputy director of the National Financial Regulatory Administration Xiao Yuanqi, vice chairman of the China Securities Regulatory Commission Li Chao and other officials from financial departments, also urged banks to step up lending.

"Financial support to the real economy must be strong enough" while major banks should increase lending, the statement said.

The PBOC also reiterated that it will optimise credit policies for the property sector, and strongly support small firms, technology innovation and the manufacturing sector.

But analysts note many consumers and companies are in no mood to boost spending or borrowing given the extremely uncertain economic climate. New bank lending fell to a 14-year low in July. (Reuters)

How airlines cope with price surge during disasters



▲ The McDougall Creek wildfire burns next to houses in the Okanagan community of West Kelowna, British Columbia, Canada.

CANADIANS vented their frustration against airlines on social media last week after prices of commercial flights out of Yellowknife soared up to 10-fold above normal just as residents were ordered to evacuate due to raging wildfires.

Carriers including Air Canada (AC.TO) have pledged to cap prices on Yellowknife flights as most of its roughly 20,000 residents evacuated due to a large approaching blaze. But that can take time, analysts say, since airlines must manually override automated systems that raise fares in the case of higher demand.

Here is a look at how airlines deal with a sudden surge in demand on a particular route.

Disasters versus high demand

Airlines set a range of ticket prices based on factors like purchase timing and demand. They then allocate seats to each fare, explained Chris Amenechi, founder of startup SeatCash, which offers subscribers a product that predicts future flight prices.

A demand spike would lead lower-priced fares to sell out and shift to higher priced fares.

"The system doesn't know it's a disaster and when it happens, then companies have

to make a decision to override the system," said Amenechi, a former commercial airline executive.

"In a place like Yellowknife, there are (limited) flights and if all the flights are full you can just imagine how expensive it's going to be because nobody has an open seat."

He said in some cases only one first or business class seat may be available.

Can carriers cap aggregated fares?

Air Canada said in a statement that social media examples of flights for C\$4,500 (\$3,322) from Yellowknife to Calgary were aggregated fares from booking websites.

Some of the flights involved several stops operated by other carriers, with some trips lasting as much as 21 hours, compared with a two-hour normal non-stop flight to Calgary.

"We endeavour to get these aggregated fares corrected where possible," Air Canada said.

Air Canada said it canceled a business class fare of around C\$1,000 and made it into a regular fare on one flight out of Yellowknife. They also said they refund passengers who purchase a fare before it is corrected.

Travel site Expedia Group (EXPE.O) said air partners set flight prices and availability on its site. "Airlines are free to adjust the prices and availability they display."

Air Canada had a Tuesday flight from Yellowknife to Calgary for as low as C\$303 on Saturday. Rival WestJet Airlines had a direct flight of C\$122.98 for the route on Monday.

Airlines still have power to lower prices during disasters. Several U.S. carriers offered \$19 fares for a 40 minute evacuation flight from Maui to Honolulu to help those fleeing from wildfires this month, where at least 114 died.

"In the Maui case, it's very clear that U.S. carriers are going out of their way to be good neighbors and evacuate those residents and visitors," said U.S. aviation analyst Robert Mann. "Those \$19 fares were manually capped ... at carrier direction."

Mann suggested U.S. carriers may have learned from a 2015 derailment on an Amtrak train from Washington to New York that drove up airfares due to higher demand, generating accusations of price gouging. (Reuters)



▲ Caution tapes prevent the passage at El Medano beach, as Hurricane Hilary hits Mexico's Baja California peninsula, in Cabo San Lucas, Mexico.



▲ Hurricane Hilary hits Mexico's Baja California peninsula.

Hurricane Hilary barrels towards Baja California

MEXICO CITY - Hurricane Hilary hurtled towards Mexico's Baja California peninsula on Sunday, blanketing the region with heavy rain amid warnings of catastrophic and life-threatening flooding on the peninsula and in the U.S. Southwest.

One man died in the Baja California Sur state when a family of five was swept away into the sea while crossing a stream, according to a Mexican official, who also shared images of flooding and roads that were swept away in the area.

In the United States, the hurricane disrupted flights and sports games before it arrived. Early on Sunday, the hurricane was carrying top sustained winds of 85 mph (140 kph), the U.S. National Hurricane Centre (NHC) said. Its centre was forecast to move close to the west-central coast of the Baja California peninsula in the next few hours and then across southern California on Sunday afternoon.

Hilary was expected to weaken but would likely remain a hurri-

cane as it passed near Baja California, becoming a tropical storm before reaching southern California, the NHC said. Storm surges - when the ocean is pushed inland - could produce coastal flooding in parts of Baja California and the hurricane was carrying heavy rain that could cause catastrophic flooding in some areas, the NHC said.

Rainfall of 3 to 6 inches (7.6 to 15 cm), with isolated amounts of 10 inches, was expected across the northern Baja California peninsula as well as portions of southern California and southern Nevada, the Miami-based agency said in its latest advisory.

21 mph

As of 0900 GMT, Hilary was about 385 (625 km) miles south-southeast of San Diego, the NHC said. It was moving north-northwest at 21 mph (33 kph).

U.S. President Joe Biden received a briefing on Saturday from senior staff on preparations for the hurricane, the White



▲ A view of a leaning fence.

House said.

In the Baja California peninsula, some schools and other non-essential activities were cancelled through Monday, and authorities in Mexico's second-largest city, Tijuana, urged people in high-risk zones to move to temporary shelters.

Flash floods

Images shared on social media showed flash floods in the coastal town of Santa Rosalia, on the eastern side of the Baja California peninsula, with water gushing down what used to be a road, sweeping away a tree.

Some 30 miles (48 km) south, in the town of Mulege, where one person died when crossing a stream, Municipal President Edith Aguilar Villavicencio said on her Facebook account that Mexico's navy and local firefighters were rescuing peo-

ple.

U.S. authorities in affected areas warned residents and businesses to take precautions.

Nearly 200 flights scheduled for Sunday at the San Diego International Airport have been cancelled and another 184 on Monday, according to the FlightAware website.

In California, Major League Baseball's Los Angeles-based Dodgers and Angels brought their Sunday games forward to Saturday to turn them into split doubleheaders.

The city's soccer teams, Los Angeles FC and LA Galaxy, both postponed their Sunday matches due to the threat of heavy rains and flooding.

(Reuters)



▲ A woman looks on at El Medano beach, as Hurricane Hilary hits Mexico's Baja California peninsula, in Cabo San Lucas, Mexico.

Adobe co-founder Wancork dies

ADOBE's co-founder John Warnock died on Saturday, the company said in a statement on Sunday.

Dr. Warnock co-founded Adobe in 1982 with Dr. Charles Geschke after meeting as colleagues at Xerox. Their first product was Adobe PostScript, groundbreaking technology that sparked the desktop publishing revolution. Dr. Warnock retired as CEO in 2000 and he was chairman of the board, a position he shared with Dr. Geschke, until 2017.

He was a member of the Board of Directors since then. In recognition of their technical achievements, Dr. Warnock was awarded the prestigious National Medal of Technology and Innovation by President Barack Obama; the Computer Entrepreneur Award from the IEEE Computer Society; the American Electronics Association Medal of Achievement; and the Marconi Prize for contributions

to information science and communications.

Adobe Chair and CEO Shantanu Narayen sent the following email to all Adobe employees:

It is with profound sadness that I share that our beloved co-founder Dr. John Warnock passed away at the age of 82.

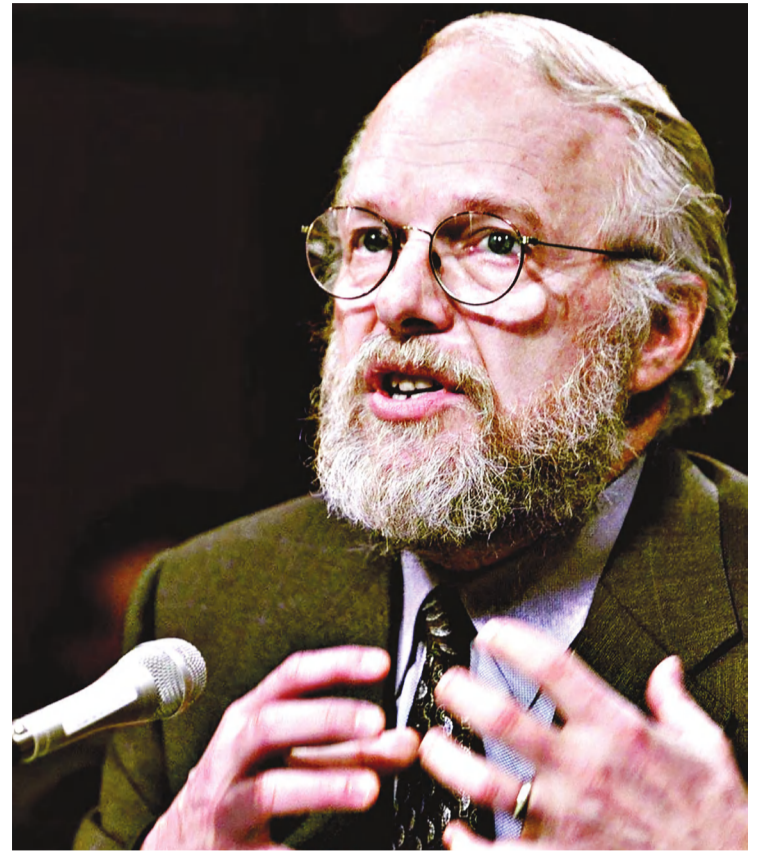
John's brilliance and technology innovations changed the world. It is a sad day for the Adobe community and the industry for which he has been an inspiration for decades.

John and Dr. Chuck Geschke founded Adobe in 1982 with PostScript, sparking the desktop publishing revolution. His vision and passion enabled Adobe to deliver groundbreaking innovations such as Illustrator, the ubiquitous PDF file format and Acrobat, Photoshop and Premiere Pro, defining the desktop era and unleashing creativity and opportunity for millions of people.

John has been widely

acknowledged as one of the greatest inventors in our generation with significant impact on how we communicate in words, images and videos. Among many other awards, President Barack Obama awarded him the National Medal of Technology and Innovation, one of the nation's highest honors bestowed on scientists, engineers and inventors, in 2008; he received the Computer Entrepreneur Award from the IEEE Computer Society; the American Electronics Association Medal of Achievement; and the high honor of the Marconi Prize for contributions to information science and communications. John retired as CEO in 2000 and he was chairman of the board, a position he shared with Chuck, until 2017. Since then, he continued to serve on the Board of Directors. (Reuters)

▶ Adobe co-founder John Wancork.



▶ A Nestlé advert.

From Mad Men to machines? Big advertisers shift to AI

GENERATIVE artificial intelligence (AI) has gained popularity among marketing teams as a tool to produce content based on past data. Advertisers hope that AI will lead to cheaper, faster, and more innovative ways to promote their products.

AI-powered technologies have the potential to revolutionize the advertising industry by automating tasks that were previously done manually.

These technologies can analyze large amounts of data and generate personalized marketing content tailored to individual consumer preferences. This allows marketers to create more targeted and effective advertising campaigns.

Companies like WPP, Nestlé, Walmart, and Unilever have already embraced AI in their marketing efforts. For example, WPP has partnered with AI platform Zyper to lev-

erage social media data and identify brand advocates who can promote their clients' products. Nestlé has used AI to develop personalized email marketing campaigns, while Walmart has employed AI to optimize its on-line advertising strategies.

However, AI is not meant to replace human creativity and intuition but rather enhance it. Human marketers are still needed to provide input, define objectives, and interpret the generated content. Additionally, AI systems are only as effective as the data they are trained on, so ensuring high-quality data is crucial. While AI offers promising opportunities, there are also challenges. Privacy concerns, data bias, and the risk of overreliance on technology are just a few of the issues that need to be addressed. Nonetheless, the shift towards AI in advertising is likely to continue as marketers seek ways to stay ahead in the fast-paced digital landscape. (Reuters)

Elon Musk says X will strip ability to block accounts

SOCIAL media company X, formerly known as Twitter, will remove a protective feature that lets users block other accounts, owner Elon Musk said Friday in another controversial move for the company he bought last year.

The block function on X allows a user to restrict specific accounts from contacting them, seeing their posts or following them. "Block is going to be deleted as a 'feature,' except for DMs," Musk said in a post on the platform, referring to direct messages.

He said X would retain the mute function, which screens a user from seeing specified accounts but, unlike blocking, does not alert the other account to the action.

The billionaire owner has described himself as a free speech absolutist, but some critics have said his approach is irresponsible. Researchers have found an increase in hate speech and antisemitic content on the platform since he took over, and some governments have accused the company of not doing enough to moderate its content.

Removing or limiting the block feature might bring X into conflict with guidelines incorporated by Apple's App Store and Alphabet's Google Play.

Apple says apps with user-generated content must have the ability to block abusive users. Google Play Store says apps must provide an in-app system for blocking user-generated content and users.

X, Google and Apple did not immediately reply to requests for comment.

Responding to a post from anti-bullying activist Monica



▶ The X logo illuminated on a building.

Lewinsky urging X to keep the "critical tool to keep people safe online," Chief Executive Linda Yaccarino defended Musk's move.

"Our users' safety on X is our number one priority. And we're building something better than the current state of block and mute. Please keep the feedback coming," Yaccarino posted. The company has

said Musk would lead the product and engineering teams, while Yaccarino would lead all other teams, including legal and sales. (Reuters)



▶ X owner Elon Musk.

S.African municipalities' unpaid dues to Eskom rise to R63.2 billion — minister



JOHANNESBURG — The amount of unpaid dues that South African municipalities owe debt-laden power company Eskom has risen to more than R63.2 billion (\$3.33 billion) and is increasing exponentially, risking even longer power cuts around the country, the electricity minister said on Sunday.

Kgosisentsho Ramokgopa said the figure had risen by R4.7 billion since the start of this year. Municipalities in South Africa don't have the funds, forcing them to cut back on maintenance and replacement of assets such as transformers and substations, leading to communities going without power for weeks.

Eskom supplies power to 238 municipalities with the top 20 of them accounting for 77% or R48.9 billion of the total overdue debt, Ramokgopa said.

◀ SA Minister of Electricity
Dr Kgosisentsho Ramokgopa.

"The rate at which we are experiencing this, even the annual growth of municipal debt is going to increase and increase exponentially," he said.

This was adding to Eskom's debt and undermining its ability to invest the money in generation, transmission and also distribution which was adding to long hours of power cuts, he said.

Eskom is saddled with a massive debt burden forcing it to tread a thin line between allocating capital for regular maintenance and capital expenditure of its fleet of ageing, coal-fired power plants, often at the cost of daily power cuts.

Its transmission capacity is also limited, allowing a slow ramp of alternative sources of power such as solar and wind energy with the government estimating up to R210 billion to upgrade it.

Ramokgopa said his ministry had not made an estimate on the capital required to fix the ailing distribution system but his estimates show there was an underspending of up to R30 billion.

The government is exploring ways to resolve the municipal debt crisis and is looking at funding from various means to upgrade the distribution infrastructure, Ramokgopa said, without giving any timeline. (Reuters)

At least 21 civilians killed in central Mali attack — sources

BAMAKO — Gunmen killed at least 21 civilians in an attack on a village in central Mali's insurgency-hit Mopti region on Friday, two local sources said on Saturday.

The unidentified assailants struck in the afternoon, targeting the village of Yarou near the town of Bandiagara, the sources said, speaking on condition of anonymity.

"It was real carnage, armed men burst into the village and fired on people. The toll is heavy between 20 and 30 killed and wounded," one of the sources said by phone. The second source said the reported death toll stood at 21 and included women, while 11 others were wounded.

Reuters was not able to independently verify their accounts. No group immediately claimed responsibility for the attack.

The West African nation is battling a violent insurgency with links to al Qaeda and Islamic State that took root in its arid north following a Tuareg separatist rebellion in 2012.

Militants have since spread to other countries in the Sahel region south of the Sahara, seizing territory, killing thousands and uprooting millions of people in the process. Frustration over the growing insecurity has spurred two military coups in Mali since August 2020.

The junta has burnt bridges with traditional Western allies and turned to Russian mercenaries for help. (Reuters)

'Morocco has not applied to join BRICS'

RABAT — Morocco has not made a formal request to join the BRICS grouping and will not attend its summit in South Africa, state news agency MAP said on Saturday.

Citing an unnamed diplomatic source, MAP denied a statement by South Africa's foreign minister Anil Sooklal who said earlier this month Morocco was among the nations seeking to join the bloc.

"South Africa allowed itself to speak about Morocco's ties with the BRICS without prior consultation," it said.

The group of major emerging economies is now made of Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa, but its potential expansion will be discussed at the summit and South Africa has said more than 40 countries have expressed interest in joining.

South Africa's diplomatic support for the Algeria-backed Polisario Front, which seeks to establish an independent state in Western Sahara, a territory Morocco considers as its own, has strained relations between the two countries. Morocco would not attend the BRICS meeting in South Africa, MAP said, adding: "South Africa has in fact always shown a primary hostility towards Morocco and has systematically taken negative and dogmatic positions on the Moroccan Sahara issue."

Morocco is attached to a non-divisive multilateralism and has good ties with the rest of the BRICS member states, it said. (Reuters)

West African bloc meets Niger's ousted president, junta leader in Niamey

By Felix Onuah and Boureima Balima

ABUJA/NIAMEY — A delegation from West Africa's main regional bloc ECOWAS on Saturday met Niger's ousted President Mohamed Bazoum and held talks with junta leader General Abdourahmane Tiani in the capital Niamey, a Nigerian presidential spokesperson said.

The West African group is pursuing diplomatic ways to reverse the July 26 coup. The coup leaders' acceptance of the mission could signal a new willingness to negotiate after the bloc on Friday doubled-down on its threat to use force as a last resort to restore democracy. It said an undisclosed "D-Day" had been agreed for possible military intervention.

While previous ECOWAS missions have been rebuffed, Saturday's delegation was met at Niamey airport by the junta-appointed prime minister, an ECOWAS source said, speaking on condition of anonymity.

The group that flew in was led by Nigeria's former military leader Abdulsalami Abubakar and included ECOWAS commission President Omar Touray, the source said.

Nigerian presidential spokesperson Abdulaziz Abdulaziz posted a photo of the delegation meeting Bazoum.

"After meeting ... (junta leader) General Abdourahmane Tchiani, the ECOWAS delegation in Niger have also visited President Mohamed Bazoum this evening," he wrote on messaging platform X, formerly



▲ The ECOWAS Committee of Chiefs of Defense staff brief the press on plans to deploy its standby force to the Republic of Niger, in Accra, Ghana.

known as Twitter.

He did not share details on the outcome of talks.

There was no immediate comment on the negotiations from the junta, which has held Bazoum since seizing power despite international calls for his release.

But in a televised address to the nation on Saturday evening, Tiani said neither coup leaders nor "the Nigerien people want war and remain open to dialogue."

He cautioned that Niger was ready to defend itself if needed. "If an aggression were to be undertaken against us, it would not be the walk in the park that some believe," he said.

In the meantime, Tiani said the junta was pursuing its own agenda and would launch a national dialogue to consult on a transition back to democracy, which "should last no longer than three years."

Thousands volunteer to support junta

ECOWAS has taken a harder stance on

the Niger coup, the wider region's seventh in three years, than it did on previous ones. The credibility of the bloc is at stake because it had said it would tolerate no further such overthrows.

Niger also has strategic importance for regional and global powers because of its uranium and oil reserves and role as a hub for foreign troops involved in the fight against the insurgents linked to al Qaeda and Islamic State. Underscoring the interests at stake, the U.S. State Department said on Saturday it had sent a new ambassador to Niger whose "diplomatic focus will be to advocate for a diplomatic solution that preserves the constitutional order."

The junta's vow to resist external pressure to stand down has been applauded by many in Niger.

Thousands of its supporters gathered at a stadium in Niamey on Saturday where the crowding prompted the postponement of an unofficial census of civilian volunteers for non-military roles if ECOWAS does resort to force. (Reuters)

Russia's first lunar mission in 47 years smashes into the moon in failure

By Guy Faulconbridge

MOSCOW — Russia's first moon mission in 47 years failed when its Luna-25 space craft spun out of control and crashed into the moon after a problem preparing for pre-landing orbit, underscoring the post-Soviet decline of a once mighty space programme.

Russia's state space corporation, Roskosmos, said it had lost contact with the craft at 11:57 GMT on Saturday after a problem as the craft was shunted into pre-landing orbit. A soft landing had been planned for Monday.

"The apparatus moved into an unpredictable orbit and ceased to exist as a result of a collision with the surface of the Moon," Roskosmos said in a statement.

It said a special inter-departmental commission had been formed to investigate the reasons behind the loss of the Luna-25 craft, whose mission had raised hopes in Moscow that Russia was returning to the big power moon race.

The failure underscored the decline of Russia's space power since the glory days of Cold War competition when Moscow was the first to launch a satellite to orbit the Earth - Sputnik 1, in 1957 - and Soviet cosmonaut Yuri Gagarin became the first man to travel into space in 1961.

It also comes as Russia's \$2 trillion economy faces its biggest external challenge for decades: the pressure of both Western

sanctions and fighting the biggest land war in Europe since World War Two.

Russia had not attempted a moon mission since Luna-24 in 1976, when Communist leader Leonid Brezhnev ruled the Kremlin.

Russian state television put news of the loss of Luna-25 at number 8 in its line up at noon and gave it just 26 seconds of coverage, after a news about fires on Tenerife and a 4 minute item about a professional holiday for Russian pilots and crews.

FAILED MOONSHOT

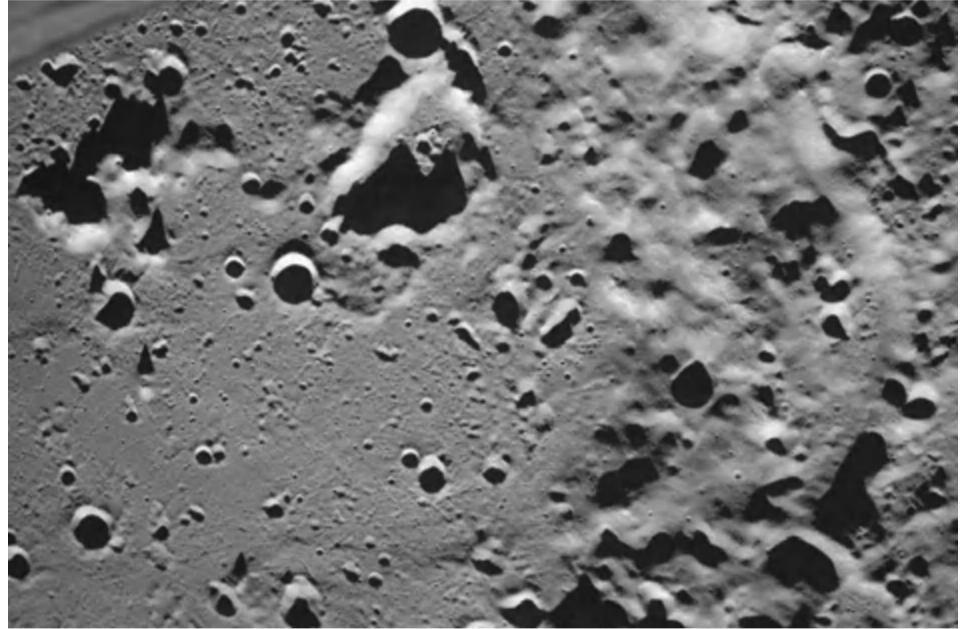
Russia has been racing against India, whose Chandrayaan-3 spacecraft is scheduled to land on the moon's south pole this week, and more broadly against China and the United States which both have advanced lunar ambitions.

"India's Chandrayaan-3 is set to land on the moon on August 23," the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) posted on X, formerly Twitter, around the time news of the Luna crash broke.

Russian officials had hoped that the Luna-25 mission would show Russia can compete with the superpowers in space despite its post-Soviet decline and the vast cost of the Ukraine war.

"The flight control system was a vulnerable area, which had to go through many fixes," said Anatoly Zak, the creator and publisher of www.RussianSpaceWeb.com which tracks Russian space programmes.

Zak said Russia had also gone for the much more ambitious moon landing before undertaking a simpler orbital mission - the usual practice for the Soviet Union, the



▲ A picture taken from the camera of the lunar landing spacecraft Luna-25 shows the Zeeman crater located on the far side of the moon.

United States, China and India.

Russian scientists have repeatedly complained that the space programme has been weakened by poor managers who are keen for unrealistic vanity space projects, corruption and a decline in the rigour of Russia's post-Soviet scientific education system.

More than a decade ago, the failure of the 2011 Fobos-Grunt mission to one of the moons of Mars underscored the challenges facing Russia's space programme: it could not even exit the earth's orbit and fell back to earth, smashing into the Pacific Ocean in

2012.

Eventually, in the early 2010s, Russia settled upon the idea of the Luna-25 mission to the south pole of the moon. Luna-25 did manage to exit the earth's orbit.

But its failure means that Russia may not be the first to sample the frozen water which scientists believe the south pole of the moon holds.

It was not immediately clear what long-term impact the failed mission would have on the country's moon programme, which envisages several more missions over coming years. (Reuters)

North Korean hackers target U.S.-South Korea military drills, police say

By Ju-min Park

SEOUL — Suspected North Korean hackers have targeted a joint U.S.-South Korea military exercise being held this week though classified information has not been compromised, South Korean police said on Sunday.

South Korean and U.S. forces will on Monday begin 11-day Ulchi Freedom Guardian summer exercises to improve their ability to respond to North Korea's evolving nuclear and missile threats.

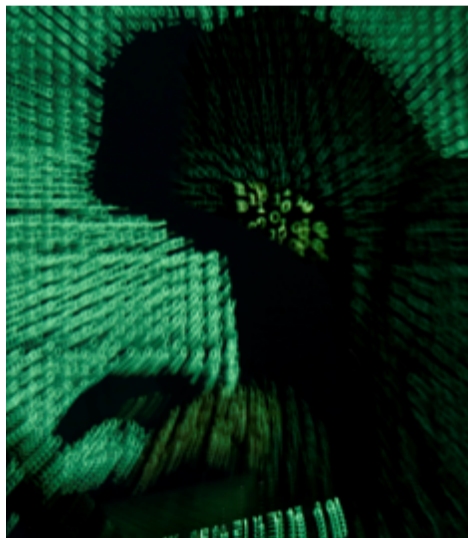
North Korea objects to such exercises saying they are preparations by the U.S. and its South Korean ally for an invasion of it.

The hackers were believed to be linked to a North Korean group that researchers call Kimsuky, and they carried out their hack via emails to South Korean contractors working at the South Korea-U.S. combined exercise war simulation centre, the Gyeonggi Nambu Provincial Police Agency said in a statement.

"It was confirmed that military-related information was not stolen," police said in a statement on Sunday.

North Korea has previously denied any role in cyberattacks.

The Kimsuky hackers has long used "spear-phishing" emails that trick targets into



▲ A man holds a laptop computer as cyber code is projected on him in this illustration picture.

giving up passwords or clicking attachments or links that load malware, according to researchers. South Korean police and the U.S. military conducted a joint investigation and found the IP address used in the hacking attempt matched one identified in a 2014 hack against South Korea's nuclear reactor operator, police said.

At that time, South Korea accused North Korea of being behind that cyberattack. (Reuters)

Militant attack kills 11 labourers in Pakistan — caretaker PM

By Jibrán Ahmad

PESHAWAR — Eleven labourers were killed in a militant attack in Northwestern Pakistan, caretaker prime minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar said on Sunday in a post on social media platform X, formerly known as Twitter.

Security and police officials in northern Khyber Pakhtunkwa province said a suspected improvised

explosive device detonated, tearing through a truck carrying the workers to a construction project in Waziristan, near the Afghan border.

"They were working at an army post that is under construction ... an IED exploded under a vehicle carrying the labourers," deputy commissioner of North Waziristan, Rehan Khattak said.

No group immediately claimed responsibility for the blast.

Pakistan has seen a resurgence of attacks by Islamist militants since last year when a ceasefire between the Pakistani Taliban, the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) and the government broke down.

Other groups including the Islamic State have also claimed responsibility for some attacks, including a large blast at a political rally in Khyber Pakhtunkwa held by a religious group last month that killed 45. (Reuters)



◀ Pakistan caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar.

Siyabangena with tasty sizzling meat

By EDN Reporter

RESIDENTS of Siphofaneni were treated to a spectacle and a day of fun when Eswatini Mobile took its Siyabangena Roadshow to the area accompanied by Eswatini Meat Industries (EMI).

The day was characterised by dancing and prizes for the different competitions that have become synonymous with the Red team. The day also saw Inyatsi Group's new acquisition, EMI, being introduced to the public and welcomed to the conglomerate family with meat galore on offer.

Customers walked away with airtimes, cellphones and meat hampers. Those in attendance also got to enjoy braaied meat during the event.



▲ The Eswatini Mobile team together with Eswatini Meat Industries team watching the proceedings as Msandi ka Baba leads them to a song, (r) Sihamba ngolayani: Eswatini Mobile's Msandi Kababa leads the crew to a 'sihamba ngolayini' dance.



▲ Eswatini Meat Industries lady serving the crowd some meat.



▲ More meat for everybody: plenty of meat was grilled and served at the event.



▲ Eswatini Mobile's Msandi Ka Baba presenting a young boy with a cash prize and a pack of meat.



▲ Inyatsi Group Chairman Michelo Shakantu (c) flanked by Datum Corporate Services CEO Sydeny Sechula (l) and Inyatsi Construction MD Sandile Mhlanga (r) at the event in Sphofaneni.



▲ The ladies having some meat.



▲ Lidwala Health Insurance MD Dr Thokozani Nkambule presenting a phone to the lucky winner.



▲ EMI's Sibusiso Nyawo handing over a box full of meat to a man at the event.



▲ EMI ladies presenting some meat pack to a woman at the event.



▲ Eswatini Mobile's Msandi Ka Baba showing the phone to be won to the crowd.



▲ Habashwe boy: A young boy at the event gesturing.



▲ Can I have some too: A young boy craving the meat but afraid to take some.



▲ Natsa Cedza!!! A woman drinking a 1 litre of Coca Cola at the Siyabangena Roadshow in Sphofaneni.

Pabi Cooper, the last addition to Rockabilli

Stories by Sipheshle Dlamini

SOUTH African musician Pabi Cooper has been added to the Rockabilli line-up to entertain Amapiano lovers at the event.

Rockabilli is set to be held at the Rock Lifestyle located inside the stunning Sibebe Resort in Eswatini on August 26, 2023. Sibebe Resort is known for its lush natural surroundings, breathtaking views and world-class facilities. The Rock Lifestyle is a state-of-the-art entertainment complex that features a variety inside the venue, including a ballroom, a theatre, a conference center, butchery, restaurants and bars.

The event has already confirmed headliners DJ Melzi and Kelvin Momo.

The event also features a well-curated line-up of local acts including Thubillion, Wordsmith Felix, Tella, AyaCity and Sgitha among others. Presale general tickets to the show cost E150, general tickets cost E200, VIP tickets cost E500 and VVIP tickets cost E1 500.

Paballo Basetsana Mthapo, popularly known as Pabi Cooper, is one of Amapiano's fastest-rising talents.

The Soshanguve-born musician became the talk of the town after dropping the hit song 'Banyana Ke Bafana'. She is famously known for songs like 'Ispthiphithi' and 'Waga Bietjie' among others. The 22-year-



▲ Pabi Cooper.

old is multi-talented as she can dance and MC. She has performed in South Africa and beyond, in countries like Botswana, Namibia and Kenya.

Security

The Rockabilli event organisers assured safety for patrons, especially teenagers.

They said in addition to the venue's top-notch security, they will have extra measures

in place to ensure the safety of all guests. "With responsible adult supervision, your teens can enjoy a night of music and fun without you having to worry about their safety," stated the organisers.

They further added that they are looking forward to a night of incredible music, delicious food, and a memorable night under the stars.

Vukubone Sound Lab cohort 2 application still open

THE registration for the second cohort of Vukubone Sound Lab programme is still open.

This was confirmed by Antidote Culture Foundation co-founder and Communications Officer Sipheshle Magagula. She said registration for cohort two will close on August 25, 2023.

Cohort two will commence on September 7, 2023 and end on October 10, 2023. The programme is split into two cohorts with ten participants each. Participants from each cohort will be enrolled in a six-week programme divided into two phases. The first one will be training and master classes and the second phase will be mentorship and development.

The programme is currently in cohort one. The cohort is currently in phase one of the six-week programme and will be completed on September 8, 2023.

Antidote Music has partnered with Eswatini National Council of Arts and Culture and Antidote Culture Foundation in bringing the programme to the youth. For cohort one, over 190 young people applied for the programme.

A total 85 per cent of the applicants were men while 15 per cent were women. Fifty five per cent of the applicants were from the Hhohho region, 37 per cent were from Manzini region while Shiselweni and Lubombo regions were represented by 4 per cent each.

Magagula urged the youth to apply for the programme.

She also encouraged more women, especially producers to apply for Cohort two. She further urged more people from

the Shiselweni and Lubombo regions to apply. "Our greatest hope is that after enrolling in this programme our Cohorts will start to approach their craft like a business and be more intentional, strategic and well-rounded in their approach to how they navigate their chosen field," said Magagula.

Application

Artists eligible for application are sound engineers, singers, songwriters, DJs, producers and podcasters. Artists must be from 18 to 28, be of Eswatini citizenship or be a resident of Eswatini. Applicants must be able to attend in-person workshops and studio sessions between the starting dates to the finish.

The accelerator programme will cover topics ranging from intellectual property rights including copyright-related rights and trademarks branding, brand development, creative entrepreneurship, digital marketing, financial marketing, to the art of storytelling.

The Sound Lab programme is designed to nurture talent and empower artists to reach their fullest potential.

It is a capacity-building accelerator programme designed to build the

knowledge competencies of and provide state-of-the-art recording facilities to emerging Eswatini sound engineers, producers, singers, songwriters, DJs and podcasters. The programme offers a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for sound artists to gain knowledge from industry experts and has full access to studio facilities free of charge.



◀ Antidote Culture Foundation Communications Officer Sipheshle Magagula.



▲ Mr Kangaroo.

Mr Kangaroo set to hop on the 23:28 Lounge stage

ESWATINI Rapper Mr Kangaroo is set to deliver an energetic and electric performance at the weekly Open Mic sessions at 23:28 Lounge in Mbabane.

The rapper told Eswatini Daily News that he is prepared to perform in the Open Mic sessions. Taking place on August 23, 2023, he promised attendees a beautiful atmosphere of good music. The sessions will start at 6 pm and entry is free. 'Commander Bullets', as he is famously known by his fans, added that he is planning to perform several new songs from his album including Swati Star, a song about the struggles he faced before making it as an established artist.

The multi-award-winning artist is a producer at his record label Swazi Swag Records. He has performed in big stages locally including the Bushfire Festival and has released a couple of chart-topping singles. The 'Wadla Jesu' hitmaker is currently working on a studio album titled Swati Star.

Gesture

He is fondly known for his generous gesture of collaborating and producing for local upcoming artists, helping some discover their talents. He produced music for previous SWAMA Newcomer of the Year winners; A2Z, Popzin and Street Cooper. He has worked with companies such as Swaziland Beverages, SWAGGA, PSI and MTN among others.

He further added that it was an honor to receive a call from New Life Entertainment for this booking. He said that he is excited and this will be one of his highlights for the year. He urged his supporters to come in numbers. He further added that it would be a huge disappointment if people do not attend a free entry event.

Tupac murder suspect facing 'imminent charges'

TUPAC Shakur's suspected murderer is said to be facing "imminent charges" after the gangster boasted in a book he killed the rapper.

Las Vegas homicide detectives are now reportedly "optimistic" they have built enough evidence against Compton Crip gang leader Keefe D, 60, to finally close the Tupac case almost 27 years after the rap icon was fatally wounded and died six days after being shot four times on the Las Vegas strip aged 25 on 7 September 1996.

Insiders told The US Sun on Friday that "leading officers, with the backing of the district attorney", have "allegedly built a strong case against Keefe D", who has previously confessed to helping hunt down and assassinate Tupac. The district attorney's office is due to present their case to a Las Vegas grand jury, two sources confirmed to the publication.

One insider said a criminal case will be brought "imminently" and the district attorney "is looking at first degree murder potentially for Keefe D" based on Nevada law. Keefe has given multiple interviews and written a memoir called 'Compton Street Legend' confessing to his role in the

shooting of Tupac, and claims he rode in the car and handed nephew Orlando Anderson the murder weapon before he fired the fatal shots that killed the rapper. If a grand jury decides that the evidence supplied is strong enough for them to suspect Keefe of being criminally guilty in any capacity for

Tupac's death, the case will be able to proceed.

One source said: "The homicide team did not enter into this investigation lightly. "They knew that the world would be watching if they took any action against Keefe. They do not want to make any missteps.

"One key aspect was building a strong case and file of evidence detailing how Keefe was one of the four suspects in the car, was pivotal in the actual murder, then the destruction of critical evidence.

"Keefe's own words and comments in his interviews and memoir obviously have him as potential

murder suspect. But there is a lot more to the case than simply showing a jury those statements.

"The detectives have been piecing together as much information, evidence and witness statements about Keefe's role that night and actions afterwards.

Keefe has gloated so much about this that he has effectively talked himself into huge legal trouble.

"They have spent months pulling it together and continue to hunt down corroborating evidence and other possible witnesses for the grand jury."

Keefe claimed in his memoir Tupac appeared to be reaching for a weapon before the execution, but his side fired first, essentially killing the rapper.

66 *One key aspect was building a strong case and file of evidence detailing how Keefe was one of the four suspects in the car, was pivotal in the actual murder, then the destruction of critical evidence.* **99**



▲ Slain rapper Tupac Shakur and suspect in his killing Compton Crip gang leader Keefe D.

DJ Tira reflects on over 20yrs in the game

WITH a career spanning over two decades, DJ and Afrotainment owner Mthokozisi Khathi - DJ Tira - shows no signs of slowing down.

IOL Entertainment got to witness DJ Tira in action on the set of his music video for his upcoming single 'Korobela' featuring Murumba Pitch and Q Twins, where he opened up about his longevity in the entertainment industry.

"It's the Makoya Bearings level," he confidently said when I asked him how did he scout the upper echelon venue in Inanda, which works perfectly for the love song video.

He is gearing up to release a new album, 'Malume Way' and on this album, his fans can expect to get a bit of all the facets of DJ Tira that they have grown to love.

"I'm trying to do different scenarios because the album has different vibes, from gqom, gospel sounds turned into love songs.

"The song (Korobela) we are shooting today, it's more of an urban, classy song. I'm also trying to position the DJ Tira brand in that way, that my music also caters for those who enjoy beautiful music, not going down to the piano tempo.

"I can still do house music, not the typical gqom music, that they know Tira for. I'm coming more soulful, trying to touch the ladies, the upper market. I'm basically trying to cater to most people that love DJ

Tira, from those who know me for my earlier music."

The album has a mix of songs, even a collaboration one wouldn't necessarily expect, D'Banj, Master KG and Nkosazana Daughter.

"You will have to listen to the song for you to decide what genre it is. For me it's nice and soulful that it accommodates them and since they managed to sing on the song and make such a beautiful song, I guess I got them exactly where I wanted them."

DJ Tira has seen all the different phases of music our country has been through, but also maintained relevance throughout, coming a long way since he won the Smirnoff SA DJ Knockout competition in 2000 and 2001.

"I like to position myself as a people's person. I am loved by all kinds of people and I try to make sure that I cater for those who are growing with me.

Twenty-three years later I'm still here, I'm still giving people good music and I'm showing no signs of stopping."



▲ DJ Tira.

Stefflon Don, Red Café write support letters to Tory Lanez's sentencing judge

On Friday, Meghann Cuniff revealed support letters penned by rappers Stefflon Don, Red Café, Melii, Poe Boy Records founder Elric "E-Class" Prince, R&B singer Mario and many others.

In Stefflon's unsealed letter, the British rapper used her real name, Stephanie Allen, and expressed that she was "deeply saddened by the incident that led to Tory's conviction."

She added that the highlight of her "musical journey" was with Lanez during the recording of their remix to "Senseless," which they co-wrote and performed.

"[The song] resonated deeply with our audience and received significant acclaim, climbing the charts and touching the hearts of many listeners," she wrote. "This achievement stands as a testament to Tory's artistry and ability to connect with people through music."

Fellow rapper Melii, born Audrey Ducasse, penned in

her letter that she was an artist signed to Daystar Peterson and was a positive mentor.

His image he had was more of a character for the industry his in but even through that, his real self always shined through and that's why we all love him the way we do," she wrote.

"Although this took a turn I ask that you please give Daystar a chance and give him the opportunity to be home soon and not be seen in such a horrible light."

Meanwhile, Red Café, whose real name is Jermaine Denny, wrote a letter describing Tory as being dedicated "to his craft, community and his fans has undoubtedly left a lasting impression and serves as an inspiration to aspiring musicians and individuals from all walks of life."

Despite the letters, Tory Lanez was sentenced to 10 years in prison for shooting Megan Thee Stallion during a July 2020 altercation.

As previously reported, Iggy Azalea wrote a letter in defense of Tory Lanez to the sentencing judge. In her missive, dated Feb. 22, 2023, the "Fancy" rapper used Tory's real name, Daystar Peterson, and described him as a kind and gentle man.

"Daystar Peterson is not the pest you have heard about, he's a gardener. He helps others bloom," she typed.



▲ Rapper Stefflon Don.

By Deena Beasley and Nancy Lapid

THE World Health Organization and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention are tracking a new, highly mutated lineage of the virus that causes Covid-19.

Six cases in four countries have been detected since late July. Scientists are keeping an eye on the new lineage, named BA.2.86, because it has 36 mutations that distinguish it from the currently-dominant XBB.1.5 variant.

So far there is no evidence that BA.2.86 spreads faster or causes more serious illness than previous versions. The CDC said its advice on protecting yourself from Covid remains the same.

WHAT IS NEW ABOUT COVID?

Covid infections and hospitalizations have been rising in the U.S., Europe and Asia, with more cases in recent months attributed to the EG.5 “Eris” subvariant, a descendant of the Omicron lineage that originally emerged in November 2021.

Over the past few days, public health authorities have documented one case each of BA.2.86 in the United States, the UK, and Israel, and three cases in Denmark.

WHAT DO SCIENTISTS SAY ABOUT BA.2.86?

BA.2.86 stems from an “earlier branch” of the coronavirus, so it differs from the variant targeted by current vaccines, explained Dr. S. Wesley Long, medical director of diagnostic microbiology at Houston Methodist Hospital.

He said it remains to be seen whether BA.2.86 will be able to out-compete other strains of the virus or have any advantage in escaping immune responses from prior infection or vaccination.

But many countries have drastically reduced testing of patients and their efforts to analyze the genomes of the viruses causing new Covid cases. In that situation, the trajectory of BA.2.86 “doesn’t look good right now,” given the speed at which new cases are being identified, said Dr. Eric Topol, a genomics expert and director of the Scripps Research Translational Institute in La Jolla, California.

Its many mutations make BA.2.86 “radically different in its structure” compared to earlier variants, Topol said.

“Based on the available evidence, we do not yet know what risks, if any, (BA.2.86) may pose to the public’s health beyond what has been seen with other currently circulating lineages”

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Eris, BA.2.86: Do I need to worry about Covid again?

The main question, he added, is whether BA.2.86 will turn out to be highly transmissible.

lineages,” a CDC spokesperson said.

DO THE NEW VARIANTS MAKE PEOPLE SICKER?

U.S. emergency department visits and hospitalizations for Covid remain low, but have been rising since early July, according to data on the CDC website. So far, however, doctors have been reporting that patients seen in recent weeks, as the Eris variant has been spreading, are not as sick as those they treated during earlier waves of the pandemic.

Wider spread of BA.2.86 would likely cause more illness and death in vulnerable populations, Topol said.

It is too soon to know whether BA.2.86 will cause more-severe illness.

“Based on the available evidence, we do not yet know what risks, if any, (BA.2.86) may pose to the public’s health beyond what has been seen with other currently circulating

WILL VACCINES PROTECT AGAINST NEW VARIANTS?

Due to the waning of the pandemic, it may have been a year or more since many people were either previously infected or vaccinated against Covid.

“The vaccine is still going to provide you great defense against illness and death,” Long said.

Updated Covid booster shots now being developed have been designed to target the Omicron subvariant XBB.1.5.

Moderna said preliminary trial data suggest its latest version of the vaccine shows promise against Eris and a related variant called Fornax, which has begun to circulate in the U.S.

Pfizer Inc has said its updated Covid-19 shot showed neutralizing activity against the Eris subvariant in a study conducted on mice.

(Reuters)



◀ A sign pointing to a clinic where residents who are over 50 years old and immunocompromised can receive their second booster shots of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) vaccines.

Few patients may qualify to get new Alzheimer's drugs

By Berkeley Lovelace Jr.

THE first Alzheimer's drugs meant to slow the progression of the fatal disease may only be available to a tiny fraction of patients, a study published Wednesday in the journal *Neurology* suggests.

The drugs, Eisai's *Leqembi* and Biogen's *Aduhelm*, are approved for older adults with mild cognitive impairment or early-stage Alzheimer's disease but, according to the study, less than 1 in 10 patients at this point in the disease may be prescribed them. The estimate is based on how the drugmakers studied the drugs in clinical trials.

Clinical trials often "select the best, most robust patients, with the fewest comorbidities," said Dr. Alberto Espay, a neurologist at the University of Cincinnati College of Medicine who was not involved with the research. This approach helps reduce the risk of adverse reactions or complications from the medications, which may be exacerbated in people with pre-existing conditions.

The decision to exclude patients with underlying conditions in the trials, however, can sometimes carry over to clinical practice, said Espay, inadvertently cutting off access to the treatments to a significant number of people, much like the trials did.

Dr. Vijay Ramanan, a co-author of the study and a clinical neurologist at the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota, said some clinicians may use the trial criteria as a "reasonable guidepost" when deciding which patients make the best candidates for the drugs.

Ramanan said the study results show only a "modest fraction" of the population in the U.S. may qualify, even though settings for clinical trials and the real world are "often very different."

Progression

Using data from the Mayo Clinic Study of Aging cohort study, the authors of the new study looked at 237 older adults who met the Food and Drug Administration's approval criteria for the drugs: They had mild cognitive impairment or mild dementia, and had brain scans showing a buildup of amyloid plaque. (Both drugs attempt to slow the progression of the disease by targeting amyloid in the brain, considered a hallmark of Alzheimer's disease.) However, many of these people also had a history of cancer, heart problems, diabetes or obesity — conditions that excluded patients from participating in the *Leqembi* and *Aduhelm* clinical trials. When the researchers excluded people with these conditions from their cohort, they found that only 19 people, or 8%, would be eligible for *Leqembi*. Only 12 people, or 5%, would have been given *Aduhelm*.

Espay said the results "give us an idea" of the proportion of patients in the real world likely to get treatment. But, he added, given that Alzheimer's is such a devastating disease, it's unlikely that all physicians will only rely on trial data when deciding whether to prescribe these drugs to their patients. (NBC)

How much coffee is too much?

● A couple of cups of coffee a day is likely to be fine for most people, experts said — but people with pre-existing health conditions should be warier.

By Maia Pandey

AS summer iced coffees turn into seasonal fall lattes, it can be easy to reach for an extra cup of coffee throughout the day for a jolt of energy, a mood boost or a sugary afternoon treat.

Along with a temporary pick-me-up, research has continued to show the longer-term health effects of coffee include a decreased risk of cancer, heart failure, Type 2 diabetes and even death. But there are a few caveats: Studies have also shown that high coffee consumption is linked to increased risk of dementia and stroke, as well as a higher risk of death from cardiovascular disease among coffee drinkers with hypertension.

So where's the line between reaping the benefits of a morning cup of coffee and taking it too far?

NBC News reviewed the research and spoke with four doctors and nutritionists, who generally agreed that although coffee is safe and healthy, people with pre-existing health conditions may feel more of its negative side effects.

And though there is "strong and consistent" evidence that moderate coffee consumption isn't harmful, that doesn't mean coffee should be consumed for health benefits, said a member of the American Society for Nutrition, Tricia Psota, a dietitian with Nutrition on Demand.

"I would never recommend that individuals who don't consume caffeinated beverages start incorporating them into their day for any reason," Psota said.

HOW MUCH COFFEE IS BAD FOR YOU?

The Food and Drug Administration recommends people cap their daily caffeine intake at 400 milligrams, or about four or five 8-ounce cups of coffee. Most people are unlikely to experience serious side effects of caffeine — like erratic heartbeat, vomiting, seizures, diarrhea and even death — unless they consume 1,200 milligrams, or about 12 cups, in a day, according to the FDA.

But even consuming 400 milligrams of caffeine daily can sometimes come with undesirable side effects, including jitteriness, anxiety and trouble sleeping, Psota said.

While some people can easily down four to five cups a day, she said, others may just have lower caffeine tolerances and be more susceptible to the side effects. Psota said she has found her own body can't tolerate more than one or two cups of coffee a day.

"I've noticed that on days when I might not have slept as well the night before and go beyond that point, I just feel jittery and uncomfortable," she said. "So for me, I definitely stay below that FDA



▲ A lady taking her morning coffee.

recommendation."

For pregnant or breastfeeding people, Psota recommends no more than 200 milligrams, or about two cups of coffee a day, because the caffeine can pass on to the infant through breast milk.

Research has shown that caffeine consumption during pregnancy can lead to lower birth weights among newborns, though a 2021 study found that pregnant people who consumed moderate amounts of caffeine were at lower risk for gestational diabetes than people who didn't consume caffeine. A daily cup of coffee might also be riskier for people with cardiovascular disease or diabetes if they add sugar or cream, said Nikki Cota, a dietitian at the Mayo Clinic in Arizona. Cota said she has seen elaborate caffeinated beverages from coffee shops that contain up to 50 grams of sugar — which is how much added sugar the FDA recommends for the entire day for people eating 2,000 calories a day.

(NBC)

“I would never recommend that individuals who don't consume caffeinated beverages start incorporating them into their day for any reason”

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AROUND THE WORLD IN PICTURES



▲ FIFA Women's World Cup Australia and New Zealand 2023 - Fans in London watch Spain v England - London, Britain.



▲ World Athletics Championship - Men's 110m Hurdles - National Athletics Centre, Budapest, Hungary.



▲ Clergy members and the faithful attend the Angelus prayer led by Pope Francis at the Vatican.



▲ Rescuers work after a bus crashed and caught fire in Pindi Bhattian, eastern Punjab province, Pakistan.



▲ A soldier stands guard inside a polling station on the day of a presidential election in Quito, Ecuador.



▲ A Ukrainian serviceman of the 108th Separate Brigade of Territorial Defence prepares shells for a small multiple launch rocket system, amid Russia's attack on Ukraine, near a front line in Zaporizhzhia region, Ukraine.



▲ Spain players and staff celebrate with the trophy after winning the World Cup.



Spain down England to win Women's World Cup for first time

SYDNEY - Captain Olga Carmona scored the winner in the first half as Spain won the Women's World Cup for the first time by beating England 1-0 in front of 75,784 fans at Stadium Australia on Sunday.

La Roja, robbed of some of their best talents by a mutiny against coach Jorge Vilda only a few months ago and thrashed 4-0 by Japan in the group stage, outplayed England to deservedly claim their first major title in only their third World Cup.

Aitana Bonmati and Teresa Abelleira ran the game from the Spanish midfield and the margin of victory would have been greater had England goalkeeper Mary Earps not saved a second-half penalty from Jennifer Hermoso.

"It's the best feeling of my life," a tearful Hermoso said.

"We played the football we wanted to but I still think we are not aware of what we have achieved."

Vilda became only the second male coach to win a major women's tournament - the World Cup, the Olympics and the Euros - since 2000.

"What we did, it's difficult to achieve," he said. "Very proud of this team, we have shown we know how to play, that we know how to suffer, we have believed and we are world champions."

England's second defeat in 39 matches since Dutchwoman Sarina Wiegman took



▲ Spain celebrate winning the World Cup final.

over as coach denied them the chance to add a maiden world title to the European Championship crown they won last year.

"It's really hard to take," said captain Millie Bright. "We gave everything, in the first half we weren't at our best but in the second half, we were back.

"There was a lot of belief, we have been 1-0 down, we never give in. We are absolutely heartbroken but unfortunately, we weren't there today. The girls are unbelievable."

The first Women's World Cup final not to feature either the United States or Germany started at quite a pace with England just about enjoying the upper hand in the battle of two first-time finalists.

Forward Lauren Hemp continued where she left off in the semi-final against Australia

and screwed the ball towards goal in the fifth minute before clipping a shot off the bar 12 minutes later.

Spain responded immediately, with Carmona overlapping down the left flank and driving the ball across the goal but teenager Salma Paralluelo was unable to make contact and Alba Redondo's shot from the far post was well saved by Earps.

La Roja took the lead just before the half-hour mark after England were dispossessed in midfield and Abelleira curled a sublime cross-field pass to Mariona Caldentey, who slid the ball forward to Carmona.

The left-back drove into the area and let fly with an angled shot which flew past the fingertips of Earps and into the far corner of the net.

The goal appeared to knock the stuffing out of England and Spain had the better of the rest of the half with Paralluelo ping a shot off the post just before the break.

England have shown their adaptability throughout the tournament and Wiegman switched from three to four at the back after the break, while bringing Lauren James on for Alessia Russo up front.

Spain's game, by contrast, has been unchanging and they continued to drive forward with Caldentey bringing a fine save out of Earps with a shot from the edge of the box in the 50th minute.

Bonmati hit the bar with a long-range effort just after the hour mark and the Spanish appealed vociferously for a handball against Keira Walsh during their next visit to the England box.

The award of a penalty looked like a formality from the moment referee Tori Penso was instructed by VAR to review the footage but Earps dived low to her left to stop Hermoso's spot kick.

James had a shot tipped over the bar by Spanish goalkeeper Cata Coll in the 75th minute but Spain were not content to sit on their lead and Earps had to be at her best to deny Ona Batlle as the clock hit the 90th-minute mark.

England threw all 11 players forward for a corner deep into stoppage time but Coll, playing only her fourth international, came out confidently to gather the ball.

(Reuters)

Pochettino's wait goes on as Chelsea lose at West Ham

NEW Chelsea boss Mauricio Pochettino's wait for a first victory will go on for five more days at least as his side flattered to deceive in a 3-1 away loss at West Ham United on Sunday.

A header by Nayef Aguerd, Michail Antonio's goal on the break and a late penalty by Lucas Paqueta secured victory for West Ham who finished with 10 men after Aguerd was dismissed for a second yellow card midway through the second half. West Ham's first two goals were assisted by debutant James Ward-Prowse who signed from Southampton this month.

Chelsea cancelled out Aguerd's goal with a well-taken equaliser by Carney Chukwuemeka in the 28th minute and only had them-

selves to blame for defeat as they dominated possession, missed chances and saw a penalty by Enzo Fernandez saved.

Pochettino sent on the club's latest big-money signing Moises Caicedo in a bid to salvage something but he gave away the penalty which sealed his side's fate. West Ham have four points from their opening two games with Chelsea, who host Luton Town next Friday, on one.

Chelsea have spent around 325 million pounds (\$414 million) on eight players so far in the transfer window, taking their total spending since Todd Boehly and Clearlake Capital took over in May 2022 to close to 800 million pounds.

Blending them together will be a challenge, however, for the former Tottenham

Hotspur and Paris St Germain manager. His side pinned West Ham back at times on Sunday, especially in the opening half, but whereas the hosts trusted their system, Chelsea are clearly a work in progress.

All the spending in the world cannot legislate for poor defending and West Ham's first goal came from the most simple of formulas. Ward-Prowse swung over a corner and Aguerd rose unmarked to nod the ball past Robert Sanchez.

Chukwuemeka cut in to equalise with his right foot and when Chelsea were awarded a penalty in the 42nd minute after Raheem Sterling was brought down, it seemed they would take control.

(Reuters)



▲ Chelsea boss Mauricio Pochettino.

Alcaraz to face Djokovic for Cincinnati title

CARLOS Alcaraz fended off a match point en route to a 2-6 7-6(4) 6-3 win over Hubert Hurkacz on Saturday to reach the Cincinnati Open final, where he will meet Novak Djokovic in a rematch of last month's riveting Wimbledon final.

The Spanish world number one has lived dangerously since capturing his second Grand Slam title at the All-England Club, needing three sets in all his matches in Ohio, including his quarter-final win over qualifier Max Purcell.

Hurkacz, who narrowly lost to Alcaraz in the quarters of the Canadian Open, raced out to a 3-0 lead as Alcaraz mixed dazzling shotmaking with some head-scratching errors in the entertaining first set.

Hurkacz captured the opener when he broke Alcaraz for a second time and had match point in the second set while returning serve and leading 5-4 but misfired on a forehand.

Alcaraz drew Hurkacz to the net with a drop shot and then fired a sensational cross court winner to set up the tiebreak.

In the breaker Hurkacz once again started strong, grabbing a 4-1 lead before his 20-year-old opponent took his game to another level, pounding a forehand winner for a 5-4 lead and crushing a serve Hurkacz could not put

in play to force a deciding set.

Alcaraz took control for good when Hurkacz's forehand into the net handed Alcaraz his first break of the match at 3-1, with the Pole bouncing his racket off the court in frustration while a pumped up Alcaraz roared along with the crowd.

A perfectly executed volley on his first match point delivered Alcaraz into his eighth final of the year and despite spending more than 10 hours on the court this week, he said he feels fresh.

"People think that I going to be tired in the final, but I feel good," he told reporters.

"It doesn't matter if I play a third set, long matches, I'm recovering really, really well with my physio, with my team. I feel like I'm going to play the first match of the tournament. I feel great."

Djokovic topples Zverev

In the night match, Alexander Zverev put pressure on Djokovic's serve in the first game of the match but failed to convert any of his three break point chances as the 23-time Grand Slam champion served his way out of trouble. Those missed opportunities would haunt Zverev, who would not see another break opportunity in a first set, which Djokovic captured with an unreturnable serve in the tiebreak.

(Reuters)



▲ World number 1. Carlos Alcaraz (l) and world number 2 Novak Djokovic (r).

Neymar injury delays Al-Hilal debut by a month

BRAZILIAN r might have to wait until September to make his debut for Saudi Arabia's Al-Hilal because of injury, coach Jorge Jesus said.

Neymar joined Al-Hilal from Paris St Germain last Tuesday on a two-year contract that French newspaper L'Equipe said could earn the 31-year-old 160 million euros (\$174 million).

"Neymar is an innovative and creative player, he will help us to improve, but he has a slight injury now and I don't know when he will return. Maybe he will be ready in mid-September," Jesus said after a welcom-

ing ceremony in front of 60,000 spectators at the King Fahd International Stadium on Saturday.

Drones flew above Al-Hilal's home ground and spelled out "Neymar is Blue" before the former Barcelona star watched his new team held to a 1-1 draw by Al-Fayha.

Al-Hilal coach Jesus also expressed his surprise at Neymar's inclusion in the Brazil squad for two World Cup qualifiers next month.

"I don't know how the Brazilian national team (could have) called him, he is not ready," Jesus said.

Neymar has not played for Brazil since last



▲ Oblique Seville crosses the line first to win his men's 100 metres heat.

Jamaica shines in world championships

BUDAPEST - Jamaican Oblique Seville put the United States on warning that they will have their work cut out for another world 100 metres sweep when he posted the fastest time of the first round on Saturday with an impressive 9.86 second run.

Jamaica have not triumphed in the blue ribband event since the last of Usain Bolt's golds in 2015, with the U.S. winning the three since then, including a podium sweep last year.

Seville's time matched his personal best, was the third-fastest in the world this year and brought him home ahead of defending champion and event favourite Fred Kerley.

The duo had to deal with a long delay before their heat, which then featured two false starts, and Kerley barely got out of second gear to come home in 9.99, watching the action on the big screen as he eased down.

"I am very surprised by that, I never expected it in the first round," said Seville, who finished fourth in last year's final.

"I've been through some dark places but this shows I'm on the way now and can run with the best and I've got much more to come. Being able to stay with Fred Kerley in the lane beside me was great. That was something I will carry to the semi-finals.

"We can give those Americans a scare. The Jamaicans are coming, definitely."

American Noah Lyles won his heat in 9.95 seconds while easing up and running in lane nine. Former champion Christian Coleman also advanced safely but surprise U.S. champion Cravont Charleston went out as he clocked 10.18 to finish fifth in his heat.

Lyles's time was initially flagged as 9.82 seconds but was soon adjusted to a more realistic number.

"I'm going to run sub-10 every round and get faster and faster and the final will be won in whatever time I run," said Lyles, the double world champion over 200 metres.

"I've said I can run 9.65 and I don't think anyone else can do it. But if they think they can then I'll be there on the line to beat them to it." Muscular Kenyan Ferdinand Omanyala, second in the world rankings, who served a doping ban in 2017, also looked strong coming in just behind him in 9.97.

World leader Zharnel Hughes of Britain, who was disqualified for a false start in the Tokyo Olympic final, perhaps had that in mind as he was awfully slow out of the blocks in the opening heat. However, once he got into his running he picked off everyone in front of him to win the heat in 10 seconds dead.

(Reuters)



▲ Brazilian winger Neymar.

Defending champion Kerley fails to make 100m final

BUDAPEST - American Fred Kerley will not be defending his world 100 metres title later on Sunday after he failed to progress from the semi-finals, as his compatriots Noah Lyles and Christian Coleman qualified fastest for the final.

Kerley, who has been in good form this season, was never in the mix in the last of three heats, finishing third in 10.02 to miss out on a fastest-loser slot by a hundredth of a second. Lyles was the quickest qualifier as he posted 9.87, within a hundredth of his personal best, punching the air as he crossed the line.

Former champion Coleman got his traditional fast start and maintained his form to win the second heat in 9.88, but Britain's Zharnel Hughes, the fastest in the world this year, was slow out of the blocks and had to work hard to clinch second spot in 9.93.

South African Akani Simbine's streak of finishing fourth or fifth in the last five global championships is over after he was disqualified for a false start. (Reuters)

(Reuters)

Weslians to act tough on rowdy fans



▲ Newly elected Manzini Wanderers National Supporters committee after they were elected into office on Saturday at Prince Mfanyana Hall.

Stories by **Sibusiso Masilela**
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MANZINI Wanderers will act tough on hooliganism during their matches in the 2023/24 season.

The club has since appointed a Disciplinary Committee (DC) that will reprimand misbehaving fans or supporters. The committee is made up of three members in Magistrate Mthokozisi Dlamini (Chairman), Magistrate Vusi Thomo (Secretary) and Phumlani Mkhwanazi (Prosecutor). The team's Governor

Bongani 'Bhanyaza' Mdluli said the committee would enforce discipline within the team structures. This was during the team Annual General Meeting held at Prince Mfanyana Hall on Saturday.

"We will all be held accountable for any form of misconduct from management, National Supporters Committee and supporter's level," he said.

He further stated that Council of Elders will be the appeal body for the new disciplinary structure.

"The Committee will ensure that the brand will not be dragged into the mud next season," he added.

'We have to revive Wanderers brand' — NSC Chairman

NEWLY elected Manzini Wanderers National Supporters Committee Chairman Mandla Khumalo says his main task is to revive the image of the club.

Khumalo said this would include promoting the brand across the country. He said this soon after assuming the hot seat during the team's Annual General Meeting (AGM) held on Saturday at Mfanyana Hall (Manzini Central High School).

Khumalo replaced Xolo Dlamini who is now the vice Chairman while Sizwe Motaung retained the Secretary position.

Mbongiseni Dlamini and Sicelo Mkhabela

were elected as committee members.

"We have a huge task ahead of us which is to bring back our Supporters who lost interest in supporting the club due to lack of silverware. This would require unity from the entire 'Weslians' family," he said.

Meanwhile, Board of Governor Bongani 'Bhanyaza' Mdluli welcomed the new committee.

"We hope to work smoothly with the NSC as the Chairman will automatically earn a seat in the Management Committee," he said.

He further appealed for unity from the entire 'Weslians' family.

EBA happy with Development Tourney



▲ Boxers posing with officials during the Eswatini Boxing Association (EBA). Development Tournament held on Saturday at Cuddle Puddle.

THE Eswatini Boxing Association (EBA) has applauded the performance of junior boxers during their recent development tournament.

This was revealed by the Association Secretary Nkosinathi Dlamini after the event held at Cuddle Puddle on Saturday.

The tournament was attended by eight clubs being Zebra Force, Stepping Razor, Kid Mamba, New Boys and Titans, among others.

"We are happy with the proceedings of the development tournament where we had an overwhelming attendance," he said.

He further stated that such tournament's contribute towards the development of the

sport in the country.

"We would like to thank boxers for giving out best performances on the day during the bouts. We hope such performances will translate into the national team doing better," he added.

He further mentioned that they were also preparing to take part in two international tournaments in Mozambique.

Some of the upcoming international tournaments include the Zone IV championships and the Nelson Mandela Cup to both take place at Maputo, Mozambique in October.

EBA recently sent the national team to the 2023 World Championships which were staged in Uzbekistan.



Lactalis E30k boost for Eswatini Teqball

▲ Eswatini Teqball Federation executive members, players and Lactalis staff members led by head of Marketing Lucky Phiri during the launch of the E30 000 sponsorship at Olymp Africa Centre on Friday.

ESWATINI Teqball Federation (ETF) received a boost after Lactalis donated E30 000.

The sponsorship will see the association receive products from the dairy company for the next 12 months during their competitions. Lactalis Head of Marketing Lucky Phiri said the sponsorship is aimed at promoting the sport in the country during the presentation held at the Olymp Africa Centre on Friday.

"We are pleased to announce a partnership of E30 000 towards contribution of our products during Teqball competitions. This is a way contributing towards sports development in the country and we are looking forward to a fruitful relationship with the Federation," he said.

Meanwhile Eswatini Teqball Federation President Mfanafuthi 'Taribo' Bhembe thanked the sponsor for the kind gesture.

"We are grateful for the sponsorship as a growing association which is only three years

old. The sponsorship will help to spearhead our development programs in the country. Teqball is a sport that helps in players skills development hence we donated 36 tables to both Premier League and First Division clubs in the country in 2021," he said.

Meanwhile, Eswatini Olympic and Commonwealth Games Association (EOCGA) President Adam 'Bomber' Mthethwa applauded the partnership between the two entities.

"We are pleased with this partnership and the progress that has been made by the Teqball Federation and we are commitment in assisting sports development in the country," he said.

The event was also graced by Eswatini Sport and Recreation Council (ESRC) Business Development Manager Zama Tsabedze who also commended the sponsor for supporting the sports Federation.

The Teqball Federation recently reached the semi-final of the 2023 Africa Beach Games in Tunisia.



▲ Members of Soccer Legends Foundation during their press briefing held at EOCGA offices on Sunday.

National Legends Foundation on the cards

By Sibusiso Masilela
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A new National Legends Association (NLA) is on the cards.

The new organisation will be given birth by the newly established Soccer Legends Foundation.

This was revealed by the Soccer Foundation Secretary Bheki Maziya during a press briefing held at Eswatini Olympic and Commonwealth Games Association (EOCGA) on Sunday.

The Soccer Foundation has since been joined by Honorary EOCGA President Zombodze Magagula and former Athletics Association President Gideon Mthembu who were both part of the briefing.

Other notable personalities included for-

mer Kaizer Chiefs player Absalom 'Scara' Thindwa (who is the Soccer Legends Association Secretary) and Liqoqo Chairman Paul Dlamini.

Popular radioman Donatus Zwane is the current Interim Chairman of the Soccer Legends Foundation.

"We are in the process of establishing the National Sports Legends Foundation that will look on the welfare of Legends," he said.

He further stated that the body will also ensure that Legends contributes towards grooming new youngsters within the country.

Meanwhile, Thindwa said their main goal is to have a body that will accommodate Legends from various sporting codes.

The former Sihlangu striker further stated that they were also in the process of drafting their new constitution.

40th finish for Pennington in SunBet Challenge

By Ntokozi Magongo
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Professional golfer James Pennington played one over par to finish 40th in the SunBet Challenge Time Square at Wingate Park Country Club on Friday. The three rounds tournament was under the Sunshine Tour. It was a good performance by the Eswatini Royal Insurance Corporation (ESRIC) Brand Ambassador after making it through the cut on day two of the tournament.

The E2 million sponsored tournament had a field of 132 golfers tee-off but only 52 made it through to the last day, Friday including Pennington.

Meanwhile, a strong back nine saw Malcolm Mitchell cruise to a remarkable four-stroke victory and claim his maiden win on the Sunshine Tour.

After turning in one under for his round, Mitchell made five birdies on the back nine for a final round of 66 to win on 14 under par. He finished well clear of second-placed Lou-

is Albertse, who had a great last day with a 65 to end on 10 under par.

According to the sunshinetour.com, Mitchell's victory was his first on the Sunshine Tour in his 73rd event, and comes after he was the runner-up to Estiaan Conradie in the same event at Wingate two years ago.

Pennington results:

Score	Player	Total
=40	James Pennington	12.78
+1	217 74 70	
73		
=40	Michael Kok	12.78
+1	217 73 71	
73		
=40	Ruan Korb	12.78
+1	217 70 74	
73		
=40	Allister de Kock	12.78
+1	217 71 72 74	



▲ Professional golfer James Pennington.

Mark to officiate in World Aquatics Championships

By Ntokozi Magongo
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SWIMMING Coach and official Mark Hoare is among the Technical Officials to officiate in the World Aquatics Junior Championships to be held in Netanya, Israel.

He is the only candidate from the country to be appointed by the World Swimming Association. There are three swimmers who will be competing in the event, Siwakhile Dlamini, Chadd Ning and Tiano Fraser.

The City of Netanya, Israel, will host the Championships from September 4-9 2023. Over 600 promising young swimmers from more than 100 National Federations are expected to compete in the five-day event.

"Congratulations to Mark Hoare on his nomination to serve as a Technical Official at the Junior World Aquatics Championships in Netanya, Israel. This is a historic moment for Eswatini Swimming, and an honour for the country as a whole. We're proud to see the recognition of Mark's expertise and the growing prominence of Eswatini Swimming on the international stage. We wish Mark all the best in his upcoming role and look forward to watching him in action," said another technical official Meluleki 'Sluga' Simelane.

The World Aquatics selected the duo of Mark Hoare and Meluleki Simelane to be Technical Officials from 2022 to 2026.



▲ Swimming Technical Official Mark Hoare will travel to Israel for the World Aquatics Juniors Championships.



▲ Taekwondo Coach Sizwe Mabuza during a performance.

Taekwondo referee seminar in Mozambique

By Ntokozi Magongo
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THE Eswatini Taekwondo Federation (ETF) is hopeful that aspiring referees will grab the opportunity and attend the World Taekwondo Referee Seminar and Refresher Course to be held in Maputo, Mozambique in November.

EFT Secretary Sizwe 'Mshengu' Mabuza said the courses were different with Poosame starting November 1st to 5th and the Kyorugui set for November 6 to 9.

"Please note we have this World Taekwondo courses coming up in our region in November. Please note to qualify you must have done the prerequisite online courses and you must have Kukkiwon Dan certificate. May we all get ourselves ready to meet

in Mozambique. Let us try our best to make this the best attended course ever," reads a statement.

The courses will not come cheap for those interesting in attending as they would have to pay. It will cost about E5 700 for the Kyorugi IR Seminar while it will be about E1 900 to attend the IR Refresher Course.

Each country is allowed to send 10 participants and only the host (Mozambique) can be allowed to register at least 16 participants. Registration is already open and it closes on October 15.

Taekwondo is one of the fastest-developing sports in the country and has done well in international tournaments. Taekwondo artist Sihlelelwe Matsebula recently made the country proud as he took home the best sport junior during the Regional Annual Sports Awards (RASA) held in the country last month.

By Ntokoza Magongo
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Tough outing for Green Mamba

THE country's CAF Champions League representatives, Green Mamba are now on the brink of exiting the premier Inter-club competition on the first hurdle after succumbing to a 0-1 defeat to Mozambique's UD do Songo in Maputo on Sunday.

The first leg match hosted by Green Mamba away from home was played at the Estadio Nacional Do Zimpeto in Maputo and watched by a motley group of travelling local fans.

The 'Correctional Services' side will face the Mozambican side in the second leg tie at the same Stadium as the country's soccer stadiums have been banned by CAF for not meeting the required standards.

The Ernest Mavuso-led side conceded the goal as early as the 5th minute and they went on to dominate the first half, created a plethora of chances in the second half too but failed to locate the back of the net, leading to the demoralising defeat.

The league reigning champions will have to win the second leg match by at least 2-0 if they are to stand a chance of going through to the second round of the preliminaries.

The winner between the two sides will face Angola's Petro de Luanda in the second-round preliminaries. Green Mamba, who are participating in the CAF Champions League for the first time in four years, started strong.



▲ Dejected Green Mamba players.

They were boosted by the return of striker Sabelo 'Sikhali' Ndzinisa who recovered before the match and came on as a late substitute. He, however, could not rescue them from the jaws of defeat. They now have to dig deeper into their reserves of courage in the second leg.

TEAMS LINE UP:

UD DO SONGO: Inicial, Ernan, Sidique, Tinotenda, Agenor, Danito, Muzaza, J. Banda, Dominguez, Dayo, Reginaldo and Emmanuel.

GREEN MAMBA: Xolani Gama, Colani Dlamini, Sibongakonkhe Silenge, Banele Dlamini, Mcolisi Manana, Khethokuhle Mkhontfo, Njabulo Ndlovu, Mxolisi Mkhonto, Njabulo Thwala, Njabulo Magagula and Mthunzi Mkhontfo.

'Proper planning can help Sihlangu qualify for World Cup'

By Sibusiso Masilela
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ESWATINI Legend Absalom 'Scara' Thindwa believes with proper planning, the national team, Sihlangu could qualify for the 2026 FIFA World Cup.

The former Kaizer Chiefs striker said this when quizzed about the nation's pride chances in the qualifiers for the next global spectacle that will be jointly hosted by the United States of America, Canada and Mexico.

Sihlangu will take on Cameroon, Angola, Libya, Cape Verde and Mauritius in the qualifiers with only the winner of the group qualifying for the tournament.

"Anything is possible in football and we need to do proper planning for the

qualifiers," he said.

Thindwa said the squad should be mentally prepared when asked about the current lack of home-ground advantage for the nation's pride. The country is currently hosting home matches in South Africa due to the ongoing ban on the Somhlolo National Stadium and Mavuso Sports Centre.

Plan

"The coaches need to prepare the players mentally and come up with a proper plan for the opposition. Playing home matches won't be a challenge if the players are mentally prepared for the opposition," he said.

The senior national side will be looking to improve its performance on the international scene following its nightmarish run in the 2023 AFCON qualifiers and the COSAFA Cup.



▲ Absalom 'Scara' Thindwa.



MoMo Cup votes closer to 50 Million

By Ntokoza Magongo
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THE MoMo Cup votes are closing in on the 50 million mark.

By the end of business on Friday, there were 47 460 312 with defending champions Nsingizini Hotspurs taking the lead with 8 412 412 votes while National First Division League side Pigg's Peak Black Swallows was second with 7 894 757 votes.

TEAMS VOTES

1. Nsingizini Hotspurs	8 412 412
2. PP. B. Swallows	7 894 757
3. Moneni Pirates	7 347 362
4. Lozitha Spurs	6 925 370
5. Mbabane Swallows	4 905 791
6. Mbabane Highlanders	3 542 877
7. Manzini Wanderers	3 367 144
8. Rangers	757 305
9. Illovo	723 997
10. Ludzeludze Killers	618 624
11. Madlenya	541 619
12. Pigg's Peak Rangers	390 095
13. Denver Sundowns	345 173
14. Young Buffaloes	343 095
15. Green Mamba	294 216
16. Ubombo Flyers	247 278
17. Royal Leopard	208 854
18. Nyanyali	202 498
19. Malanti Chiefs	156 855
20. Louis XIV	129 509
21. Manzini Sea Birds	98 931
22. Sisonkhe	68 996
23. Tambankulu Celtics	34 607
24. Ezulwini United	28 217
25. Tambankulu Callies	24 476
26. Tambuti	21 344
27. Milling Hotspurs	15 294
28. Seven Dreams	3 078

Total: 47 460 312

Clement bounces back as BASE President

By Sibusiso Masilela
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SEASONED Basketball administrator Clement Dlamini has bounced back into the sport.

Dlamini was elected as the new Basketball Association of Eswatini (BASE) President during the Association's Annual General Meeting (AGM) held at the Olymp Africa Centre on Sunday.

He managed to beat his competitor Bonginkhosi 'Dee' Shabangu by 15 votes with the latter getting a meagre four votes. Dlamini replaces Nhlanhla 'Kid' Maphanga in the hot seat. He previously served two terms between 2008 and 2016.

He will be assisted by Vice President Phumelele Motsa while Philile Mavimbela is



▲ The new Basketball Association of Eswatini (BASE) executive.

the Secretary. The new president appealed for unity within the Basketball fraternity.

"Let us all work to transform the sport and end factions," he said. He further urged



THE FULL BASKETBALL ASSOCIATION OF ESWATINI EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE:

President:	Clement Dlamini
Vice President:	Phumelele Motsa
Secretary:	Philile Mavimbela
Treasurer:	Bayanda Malindzisa
Head of Coaches:	Martin Simwamba
Head of Competitions:	Thando Mkhathshwa
Head of Technical:	Sifiso Ndlovu.
Gender Equity:	Nolwazi Ngwenyama
Disability panel:	Mandisa Zwane.

the executive committee to double their efforts within their respective portfolios.

The new ExCo term of office will come to an end in 2027.



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Sport

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