



2024 a year of success, abundant harvest — King

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PM highlights key areas to stimulate economy

By Noaba Ntshakala

IN a recent interview with Eswatini TV hosted by Eswatini TV Editor-in-Chief John Molelekeng, Prime Minister (PM) Russell Dlamini outlined various initiatives which he strongly believes will stimulate Eswatini's economic growth and alleviate poverty. The PM who shared that he was raised by a civil servant placed education at the centre of national development, describing it as the "key to unlocking wisdom, opening minds to new possibilities, and equipping individuals with the tools to plan and solve problems effectively."

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Stories by Ncaba Ntshakala

IN a recent interview with Eswatini TV hosted by Eswatini TV Editor-in-Chief John Molelekeng, Prime Minister (PM) Russell Dlamini outlined various initiatives which he strongly believes will stimulate Eswatini’s economic growth and alleviate poverty.

The PM who shared that he was raised by a civil servant placed education at the centre of national development, describing it as the “key to unlocking wisdom, opening minds to new possibilities, and equipping individuals with the tools to plan and solve problems effectively.”

He added that education exposes one to greater knowledge as an educated person can plan and solve problems. Through education, the Prime Minister said that a person can also travel to other countries where they access more knowledge.

Slow Economic Performance

Regarding the economic performance of the Kingdom, the PM painted a vivid picture of the nation’s struggles, highlighting sluggish economic growth as the root cause. This anaemic performance, he asserted, spawns a multitude of additional woes, most notably a crippling high rate of youth unemployment. In other words, the engine of national prosperity sputters, leaving young hearts and minds stuck idle, a prospect deeply concerning for the nation and the Prime Minister, and a clear call to action for the Kingdom.

Poverty

In this regard, the PM placed economic growth at the heart of his poverty eradication strategy, emphasizing that a robust economy holds the key to unlocking a brighter future for the Kingdom’s citizens. He said: “The economy is principal, so we need to work on stimulating economic growth so that the government can be able to work towards improving the lives of all emaSwati.” He went on to say that the path out of poverty runs through a thriving economy. Dlamini placed strong emphasis on the crucial role of economic growth and investment in tackling challenges.

PM highlights key areas to stimulate economy



▲ Prime Minister Russell Dlamini delivering his remarks at the opening of the Cabinet Work Retreat, Deputy Prime Minister Thulisile Dladla looks on.

Investments

The Prime Minister expressed his vision for Eswatini’s economic future which includes investing in agriculture and prioritizing food security. He recognizes the immense potential within the Kingdom’s land and farming expertise, highlighting the stark reality of importing staple foods like maize and wheat.

His call for action emphasizes both utilizing existing resources like fertile soil and agricultural knowledge, and strategic investments to modernize and scale up the sector.

By prioritizing food security and sovereignty, the Prime Minister envisions a future where Eswatini not only feeds itself but also exports its agricultural bounty, boosting the economy and empowering emaSwati. This shift towards self-sufficiency could be a key pillar in the fight against poverty and youth unemployment.

Technology

Concerning technology, underscored that technology is a crucial tool for tackling two major challenges: climate change and economic growth. He urges Eswatini to

embrace technology such as drip irrigation technology at both commercial and household levels, mitigating the impact of dry spells and ensuring food security. Furthermore, he sees technology as a key to year-round farming, capitalizing on high-demand periods and boosting the economy.

Law and Order

Regarding this subject matter, the PM addressed the issue of crime and law enforcement in Eswatini, emphasizing the importance of instilling national identity and respect for the law from a young age. He believes that cultivating a strong sense of citizenship among emaSwati, coupled with an understanding of the law’s role in maintaining order and protecting rights, can contribute significantly to curbing crime. The Prime Minister’s emphasis on educating children about their national identity and the purpose of law suggests a long-term approach to crime prevention, targeting the root causes of criminal behaviour rather than solely relying on reactive measures.

Vocational Education and Training

The PM stressed the crucial role of vocational education and training (VET) in addressing unemployment and promoting entrepreneurship. He acknowledged the mismatch between industry needs and degree/diploma holders and emphasized vocational education as a key to empowering individuals with practical skills and supporting their entrepreneurial endeavours. He cited a successful program implemented in Rwanda, where trainees received both vocational skills and startup kits to launch their businesses.

Healthcare

He applauded Eswatini’s success in fighting HIV/AIDS and achieving the ambitious 95-95-95 targets (95 per cent diagnosed, 95 per cent on treatment, 95 per cent virally suppressed). This highlights progress in tackling a major public health concern. He emphasized the critical connection between economic growth and improved healthcare. This suggests a focus on strengthening the economy as a means to bolster healthcare resources and outcomes. The PM pointed to sexual engagement as a factor in HIV infections, indicating a potential focus on sexual health education and awareness programmes.

Social Media Concerns

In a cautionary note, the PM urged emaSwati to exercise vigilance regarding social media usage. Citing its potential role in “moral decay” and exposing young children to harmful content, he emphasized the need for national awareness and potentially, responsible media use initiatives.

Excellence

The Prime Minister made it clear that excellence is not just a personal pursuit, but a national imperative. He urged every citizen, regardless of their role or station, to embrace a culture of excellence, emphasizing that every task, however small, deserves to be executed with dedication and skill.

Cabinet retreat to concoct plans to invigorate economy begins in earnest

WITH a fresh year before them and the nation’s eagerness for progress, Cabinet Ministers, Principal Secretaries, and government officials embarked on their 2024 Cabinet Work Retreat yesterday which will last until Wednesday.

The atmosphere buzzed with both purpose and palpable tension of expectation, underscored by Prime Minister Russell Dlamini’s opening remarks on seeking root-cause solutions and drafting bold ideas to stimulate national progress. The retreat is held at the Royal Villas in Ezulwini.

The Prime Minister stressed the need to move beyond addressing mere symptoms and focus on dismantling the root causes of the challenges plaguing Eswatini. This, he acknowledged, “may be ambitious,” but it’s precisely that ambition that will spark the creation of “intellectually stimulating solutions.”

In a departure from past rhetoric, the Prime Minister, in his remarks made a clarion call for a fundamental shift in approach. “I urge that we do things



▲ Cabinet Ministers and Principal Secretaries following proceedings at the Royal Villas during the opening of the four-day retreat.

differently this time around because we cannot expect different results if we do things the same way. I asked that we work on attacking the challenges facing the country from the root cause and not just address the symptoms. I acknowledged that this may be ambitious, but that we must come up with intellectually stimulating solutions, which will also help us to attract the right partners that will help us resolve these challenges.”

reads his statement shared on his Facebook page.

The PM added that the team needs to come up with vast economic growth strategies. “I also urged the team to come up with an effective economic growth strategy. I ended my remarks by quoting the scripture from the book of Ecclesiastes 9 v 11, which says: “I have seen something else under the sun: The race is not to the swift or the battle

to the strong, nor does food come to the wise or wealth to the brilliant or favour to the learned, but time and chance happen to them all.” asserted the PM.

New year, new government, new hopes. That’s the feeling hanging in the air as the annual Cabinet Work Retreat began. This year, it’s extra special because a new team of leaders will be setting the course for the country.

Police report 4 deaths over the weekend

Stories by Bahle Gama
bahleg@rubiconmedia.group

THE Royal Eswatini Police Service (REPS) has reported that four people have died over the weekend from different incidents.

Two of these occurred on Friday, January 12. One was at Hluthi at about 8:30 p.m. when a 38-year-old man from the Sivule area was shot twice in the head by an unknown person at his home.

“An investigation is ongoing,” reads the report.

The other incident was at Malkerns where at 7 p.m. a 65-year-old woman from Makhungutja was struck by lightning while in her house. She was certified dead upon arrival at the hospital.

The two others were involved in a road accident on Saturday, January 13 at Logoba on the MR3 public road.

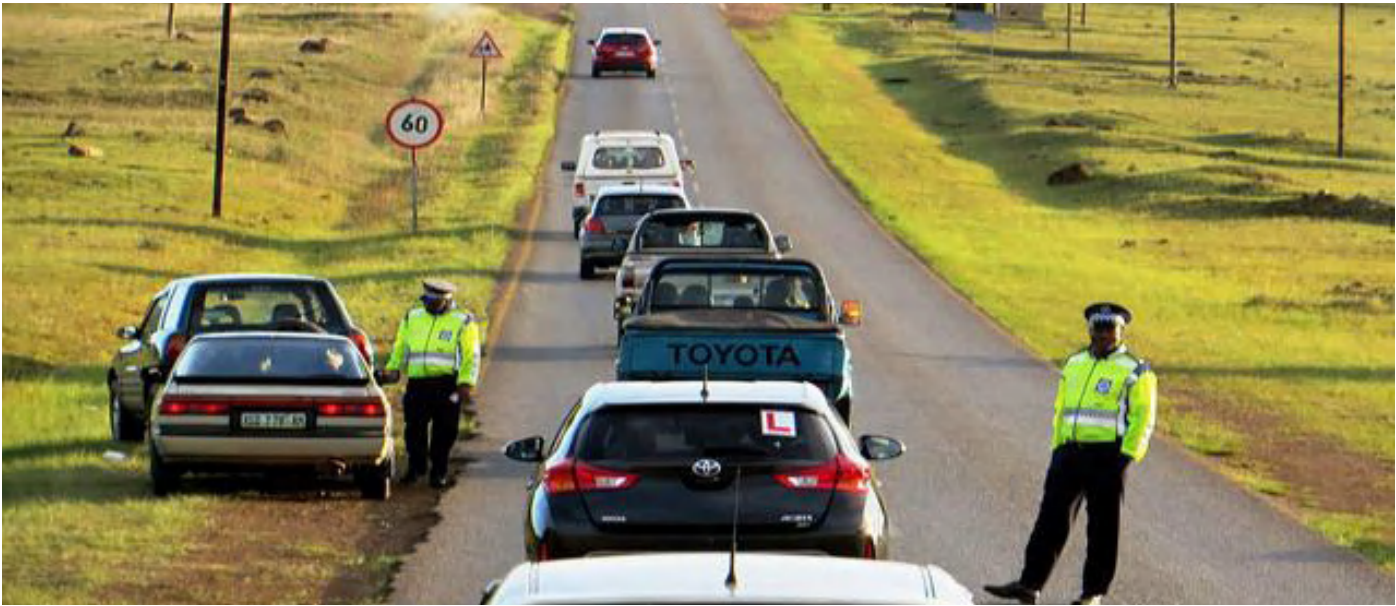
According to the police report, at 11 p.m. a VW sedan driven by a 23-year-old man from Ezulwini knocked down six pedestrians. Two pedestrians a 32-year-old woman from Mhlaleni and a man from kaBhekinkhosi sustained severe injuries.



▲ Deputy Police Information Communication Officer Superintendent Nosipho Mnguni.

They were certified dead upon arrival at RFM hospital. The other four male pedestrians aged 29, 35, 38, and 44 were

critically injured. They were also rushed to RFM hospital where they were admitted and are currently receiving treatment.



▲ Royal Eswatini Police Service (REPS) traffic officers during a roadblock in this undated photo.

SwaziBet Director's Alleged Shooting:

Ballistic report out

By Bahle Gama
bahleg@rubiconmedia.group

THE Royal Eswatini Police Service (REPS) has completed the ballistic report of the alleged shooting of SwaziBet (Pty) Ltd Director Nonjabuliso Maziya's shooting incident.

On January 5, Maziya who was returning to her homestead at Pine Valley at around noon reported that the vehicle she was in was hit by unknown objects on the windscreen targeting the passenger seat where she was seated. The vehicle was driven by her son on the day in question.

As soon as the incident she reportedly labelled as “an assassination attempt” occurred, she rushed to the Mbabane Police Station to report the matter.

REPS Deputy Police Information and Communications Officer (PICO) Inspector



▲ A vehicle with a shot windshield. however this is not to suggest that this is the directors vehicle.

Nosipho Mnguni confirmed that the report was out, however, its contents could not be made public for security reasons.

Mnguni said the matter was still under investigation, “the results form part of the investigation and therefore cannot be disclosed to the public.”

Maziya is reportedly embattled in a

fierce battle over the directorship of the company trading as EBet.

On June 28, 2023, she wrote a letter and sought to have the company's South African-based directors Ioannis Calivitis and William Delpont removed from the directorship and shareholdership.

It stated that the agreement with Calivitis and Delpont would be terminated

... 22 DD cases in court on Monday

A total of 22 motorists arrested for drinking and driving will be making appearances at the respective Magistrate Courts in the country on Monday.

According to the police reports, these were the cases recorded within 24 hours on January 14. According to the law, a drunk driver is charged with contravening Section 91 as read with Section 122 (2) of the Road Traffic Act of 2007 with a maximum fine of E5,000 or two years imprisonment depending on the alcohol content found in the air that a suspected drunk motorist breathes into a breathalyzer test. The measurements would be presented in court as evidence, in the process of tightening the crown's case against the accused person. However, due to the Covid-19 pandemic, breathalyzer tests were suspended to reduce infections and in the process increasing the number of motorists driving whilst intoxicated.

Evidence

Some matters in court were reportedly dismissed after motorists pleaded not guilty to the offence and no evidence was presented by the crown except for particulars like “suspect had a strong smell of alcohol coming from his/her mouth” and “suspect could not stand straight” in charge sheets submitted in court.

On January 8, Magistrate Innocent Motsa called for the devices to be brought back to curb the number of drunk drivers on the road and for the Road Traffic Act to be properly implemented and the law inflicted on perpetrators.

Motsa was residing over a case of a DD suspect Skhumbuzo Simelane who was arrested on January 6 at ka Zondle in Mbabane for driving under the influence of alcohol. Simelane pleaded guilty and was found guilty by the court according to his plea.

The Magistrate said government funds were going to waste as the courts could not give suspects the maximum fine of E5 000 because the crown lacks evidence in the form of measurements from a breathalyzer test.

Motsa said it was also not professional that the particulars of drink and driving were that the motorist had a strong smell of alcohol coming from the suspect's mouth because in the event the suspect made a plea of not guilty, there would not be any more evidence presented in court.

on July 12, 2023, and notified the directors that it would be illegal for them to continue trading with SwaziBet.

On July 3, 2023, the directors responded that the company was owned by the estate of the late Mduduzi Cyprian Maziya and by extension the Maziya extended family that was handling its affairs.

They said Maziya was not the director of the company and objected to her addressing herself as Mduduzi's first wife, further questioning her relationship with her lawyer as well as Gaming Control Board Chairperson Simo Simelane.

Her appointment by the Master of the High Court as the Executrix of her late husband Mduduzi's estate was also deemed unlawful and illegal.

In court papers, she pointed out that two letters issued by the Master of the High Court dated May 22, 2023, settled the long-standing issues about her appointment as Executrix.

She told those opposing her directorship to approach the office of the Registrar of Companies and go through the file of SwaziBet (Pty) Ltd.

2024 a year of success, abundant harvest – King



▲ His Majesty King Mswati III making his remarks before dispersing libutfo at Engabezweni Royal Residence on Saturday.

By Bahle Gama
bahleg@rubiconmedia.group

HIS Majesty King Mswati III has declared 2024 as a year of success and abundant harvest for emaSwati.

The King was speaking when dispersing libutfo on Saturday at Engabezweni Royal Residence marking the end of the Incwala Ceremony that began on December 15, 2023.

His Majesty referenced the burning of the log which happened on January 1 signifying the end of an old and the beginning of a new year.

The King observed the rains which he said indicated that Eswatini would have plenty of food this year.

“The rains also demonstrate the food security that a country will have and dependence on other nations should be a thing of the past. Therefore, there is no justification for hunger when God has given abundant rain” the King said. His Majesty said emaSwati would have to harvest water to reduce costs and water bills.

The King further urged the nation to exercise

the spirit of sharing amongst each other because if emaSwati take care of each other’s needs the country will develop.

“Do not eat alone, but share with others,” the King said.

According to the King, 2024 is not a year of problems, but solutions, adding that the country needs social, economic, health, and political solutions to develop the nation.

His Majesty further stated that conquering the Covid-19 pandemic was a sign that the country is agile and capable of solving any problem.

Success

“I call upon each and every one of you to support each other with integrity and truth,” the King said. The King thanked God and the ancestors for ensuring that the Incwala was a success. His Majesty further applauded the female regiment for participating in the ceremony, as well as the young Ingatja, and assured them that they would reap the blessings for participating in these events.

The King further emphasised that emaSwati should know the significance of Incwala and when to sing the song.



▲ Regiment in song before being dispersed by His Majesty King Mswati III on Saturday.



▲ A section of females joined the regiment in song before it was dispersed by the King.

Nation warned about fake DPMO food grant

By Bahle Gama
bahleg@rubiconmedia.group

THE nation is being warned about a syndicate of scammers promising emaSwati money under the guise that it is a food grant from the Deputy Prime Minister’s Office (DPMO).

In a statement, Government Spokesperson Alpheous Nxumalo said they have no knowledge of such a grant and therefore warned emaSwati to be on the lookout for this syndicate and many have been scammed, particularly through the mobile money (MoMo) platform.

“At the moment, the Deputy Prime Minister’s Office only disburses elderly grants and grants for persons with disabilities through the MoMo platform. Should there be any other grants, the Nation will be notified of these through official Government and mainstream media platforms,” Nxumalo said.

In a phone interview, the spokesperson said the office had received reports from some people who were robbed by this syndicate.

He said one person called the DPM and notified her that someone from the office had called and requested that they share their Momo number and pin so they would receive the supposed grant.

Robbed

Indeed, after doing so they received E700, and after a short while they saw a withdrawal exceeding the deposited amount made on the number. It was only later that they realised they had been robbed.

“It is quite unfortunate, and the victim was advised by the DPM to report the matter to the police,” said Nxumalo.

Nxumalo said what was gathered is that if the victim does not have any funds in their MoMo account, the perpetrators do not send the money, only when they find a huge sum of money do they make the move.

He further advised any more victims to expose these perpetrators so they can be brought to justice.

Deputy Police Information and Communications Officer (PICO) Superintendent Nosipho Mnguni said they had not received an official complaint from anyone yet.

However, Mnguni reiterated that such syndicates exist, referencing one that existed during the Covid-19 pandemic whereby emaSwati were scammed under the pretence of an almost similar grant using the same method.

“As the REPS we are on the lookout for such syndicates and it is clear that they are back. We advise emaSwati not to fall victim to any of these calls or messages. Do not give out your pin to anyone and when a person hears about any grant that has not been formally announced by the state, they should immediately contact that office or entity before any further action,” Mnguni said.

She also advised emaSwati to contact



▲ Government Spokesperson Alpheous Nxumalo.

the police immediately to prevent dealing with the aftereffects of the crime and have the perpetrators face the wrath of the law in time.

Stories by Ncaba Ntshakala

PM lauds TSC, calls for transparency, patriotism

PRIME Minister Russell Dlamini shared with the Teaching Service Commission (TSC) during a recent meeting, commending their efforts while urging them to tackle internal challenges head-on.

This was shared by the Premier on his Facebook page where he acknowledged the meeting with the commission.

Dlamini acknowledged the Commission's crucial role in education and expressed appreciation for their dedication. He emphasized the importance of "patriotism and excellence" in carrying out their mandate, highlighting the impact their work has on shaping the future of the nation.

However, the Prime Minister also addressed public concerns surrounding the TSC's practices. He urged the Commission to "investigate the source of public assertions that they lack fairness and transparency," suggesting such perceptions could undermine public trust. He further called for "the necessary steps to be taken to address these, as well as any legitimate concerns raised."

The Prime Minister advised TSC to address "allegations of corruption" levelled against the. "I had the pleasure of receiving the Teaching Service Commission (TSC) at the Private and Cabinet Office this after-



▲ Prime Minister Russell Dlamini with members of the Teachers Service Commission.

noon, where we had discussions on several matters. I commended them for the job they are doing and encouraged them to exercise patriotism and excellence as they carried out

their mandate. I also advised them to investigate the source of public assertions that they lack fairness and transparency and take the necessary steps to address these. I also

urged them to urgently deal with allegations of corruption levelled against them." Reads his statement on his Facebook page.

The Ministry of Labour has begun processing students' allowances for Dec

A wave of relief has washed over students at local tertiary institutions, as the Ministry of Labour and Social Security announced the commencement of processing student allowances for December in the academic year of 2023/24.

This timely news applies to all scholars under the Government Scholarship Programme (PTET), bringing much-needed financial support amidst the academic year. This melodious news was shared in a statement released by the Principal

Secretary Makhosini Mndawe.

"The Ministry of Labour and Social Security is pleased to inform all students studying in local tertiary institutions that are supported through the Government Scholarship Programme (PTET) that payments of student allowances for the academic year 2023/24, month of December, are now being processed," reads the statement "Students are advised that payments commenced, on Thursday, 11 January 2024. The Ministry thanks students and local tertiary institutions for their pa-

tience and cooperation during this critical time. The Ministry further reiterates and assures its continued commitment to ensuring that students' welfare is prioritised."

Nomcebo Dlamini who is doing a Bachelor of Social Work at the University of Eswatini expressed that this comes as welcome news for them, as it provides crucial financial stability. They are in another academic year and ensuring they can focus on their studies without the burden of immediate financial concerns.



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▲ World Vision Eswatini has asserted that hunger levels are at their worst in rural households in the Kingdom.

World Vision calls for Eswatini to end the cycle of hunger

World Vision Eswatini has asserted that hunger levels are at their worst in rural households in the Kingdom.

"In Eswatini, rural households have a higher proportion of households faced with high stress to meet their food.

This is just not good," reads their call to action poster. World Vision has also argued that every child deserves the food they need to develop a healthy body

and mind. "Every family has the right to be able to put enough of the right food on the table." Reads World Vision Statement.

Their message is a clarion call, urging the nation to rise to the challenge and break the shackles of poverty that keep hunger a constant companion. Through child sponsorship, World Vision offers a tangible solution, a life-line thrown to children and their communities drowning in the sea of hunger.

A 35-old man has been sentenced to five years imprisonment for assaulting Constable Wandile Maseko stationed at Mbabane police while on duty.

By Nokunceda Magagula
nokuncedam@rubiconmedia.group

Sithembiso Fakudze made his appearance at the Mbabane Magistrate's court before acting Magistrate Innocent Motsa, his charge sheet reads that on January 11, 2024, near Dlanubeka Building the accused unlawfully assaulted Maseko with fists on the face and the body while on duty.

In court, Fakudze conducted his defence and pleaded guilty to the offence. The crown paraded the complainant Constable Maseko who narrated how he was assaulted. He stated that he was assigned to work at the Dlanubeka building, while going there he was carrying a raffle R4 and came across Fakudze who started insulting him.

The police officer said Fakudze shouted at him without provocation stating that police officers are full of themselves. Whilst still shocked as to why this man was shouting at him, the accused then began assaulting him with fists. "He assaulted me with fists in the left eye and went on to hit me on the body,"

Man sentenced 5 years for assaulting police officer



Constable Maseko asserted.

Constable Maseko mentioned that he thought the accused wanted to take the

gun away from him so he tried by all means to protect the gun from being taken away. He mentioned that he was extremely humiliated by the situation and finally got rescued by his colleague who manhandled the accused.

Fakudze did not cross-examine the police officer, and the accused was found guilty as per his plea. In his mitigation statement, Fakudze said his act of assaulting the police officer was revenge as he was once assaulted

by police. "Your worship when I saw the complainant at Dlanubeka I got angry because I once went to report a case at Mbabane police station, upon my arrival at the station police officers took me into a dedicated room and brutally assaulted me for absolutely nothing," Fakudze said.

He further pleaded with the court to be lenient when handing down the sentence because he is a first-time offender and remorseful for his actions. Magistrate Motsa stated that the accused saying that he was once assaulted by the police is an afterthought since he did not mention when the police officer was in the witness box.

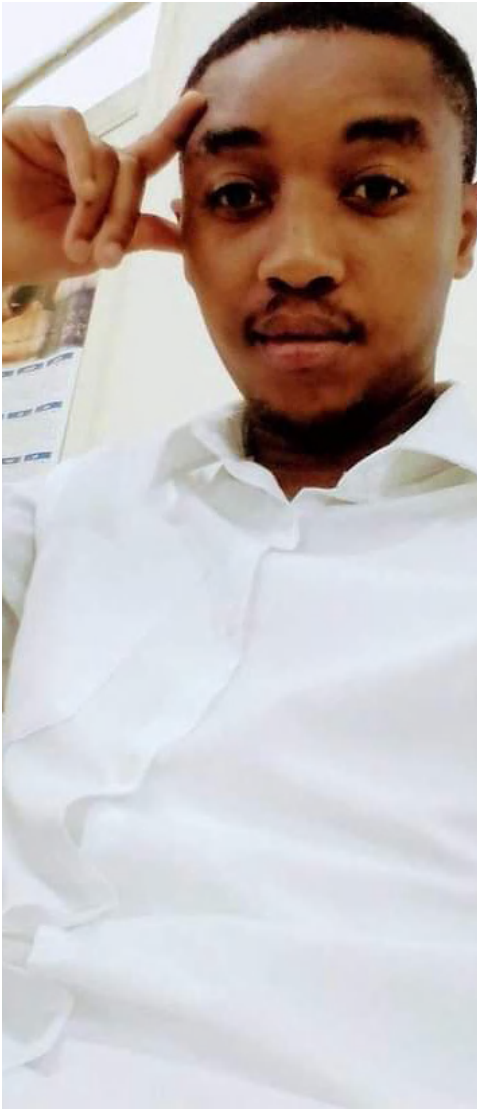
When handing down the sentence Magistrate Motsa stated that Fakudze will get a sentence which will teach him a lesson, because assaulting a police officer while on duty of keeping eSwatini safe is a serious offence. The accused was therefore sentenced to five years imprisonment without an option of a fine.

Alleged ATM bomber suspect slapped with contempt of court

AFTER he failed to appear in court for the continuation of the ATM bombing case, Lindani Zitha who is one of the four suspects has been charged with contempt of court.

Zitha made his appearance at the Mbabane Magistrate's court on Friday, where he was formally charged with contempt of court. His charge sheet reads that on January 11, 2024, at Mbabane Magistrate's court in the Hhohho region, Zitha unlawfully and intentionally failed to appear before the Magistrate's court while warned to do so.

Zitha pleaded guilty to the charge, he was therefore found guilty as per his plea. In his mitigation statement, he asked the court to be lenient when handing down the sentence because he did not intentionally abscond the court. Stated that there was a miscommunication between him and his lawyer. "My lawyer and I had communicated that the trial will be resuming on January, 15 so i did not know I have to be in court," Zitha said.



He was therefore sentenced to five months imprisonment or pay E500.

The Mbabane Magistrate's Court has issued a warrant of arrest for Zitha, who is the sole individual currently out on bail in the ATM bombing case.

The warrant of arrest was issued by Senior Magistrate Sfiso Vilakati after the crown council applied that the court grant a warrant of arrest directed to Zitha since he was absent in court. Zitha was granted bail fixed at E5,000 back in December 2022.

Zitha was arrested with his South African national co-accused Sicelo Msibi, Muziwandile Lukhele, and Given Mavuso. These men are charged with ATM bombing, and they are facing 17 charges, including robbery, malicious damage of property, and kidnapping, among others.

The crown explained that if an accused out on bail is absent for his or her court appearance without furnishing the court with a valid reason he or she shall be arrested and charged with contempt of court.

▲ATM bombing suspect Lindani Zitha.

These alleged acts by these men are said to have resulted in over E2 million stolen and malicious damage of property. It's worth noting that the 17 charges also include the use of explosives to bomb the FNB ATM situated in the Mbabane Industrial Site, resulting in property damage amounting to E785,000. The accused were apprehended by the police on August 21, 2022.

EEC looking for companies to develop optimum financing structure study

By Silindzelwe Nxumalo
silindzelwen@rubiconmedia.group

THE Eswatini Electricity Company (EEC) has invited suitably qualified companies for the development of an Optimum Financing Structure Study.

In their Request for Proposal (RFP), EEC stated that in Directive No. 1 of the February 2023 Tariff Order, the Eswatini Energy Regulatory Authority (ESERA) directed the Eswatini Electricity Company to conduct a study for an Optimum Financing Structure to inform the treatment of the weighted average cost of capital (WACC) for future tariff applications and determinations.

The company said the optimum financing structure is the best mix of debt and equity financing that maximizes the company's value while minimizing its cost of capital.

"The focus of the study would therefore be to ascertain the appropriate gearing, cost of debt, as well as cost of equity that will maximize the company's value, given local conditions," read part of RFP.



Indicators

According to the RFP, it is expected that the study for the optimal capital structure will cover gearing, stating that the study should consider local financial markets, economic indicators, and local tariff objectives to determine an optimal debt and equity range suited to the EEC's operation.

"Since the optimal level of gearing is a moving target that changes over time, the study should present a gearing model whose inputs can be updated to inform the optimal gearing ratio at: - a point in time, and - over a projected period (5 years)," read the RFP.

The RFP stated that in the determination of optimal gearing, the study is expected to cover or demonstrate, benchmarking with comparable electrical utilities in the SADC region, benchmarking with local comparable

and capital-intensive parastatals, consideration of the risk perception of the EEC by relevant local financiers, the actual cost of debt of a typical duration used to finance assets of a utility company at the time of the study, and the cost of equity required by investors for investments of similar risk at the time of the study.

EEC added that the initial primary outputs, therefore, will prioritize the demonstration of a five-year projection of the company's optimal gearing, and a methodology and tool that can be used to determine optimal gearing in response to real-time changes to input variables.

They further stated that when it comes to the cost of equity, the study should establish a methodology by which the EEC can calculate the appropriate cost of equity.

"This shall take into consideration the ownership structure of the utility. The study shall also consider the methodology required by the Electricity Multiyear Price Determination Tariff Methodology for determining the cost of equity, currently the Capital Asset Pricing Model (CAPM)," read the RFP. Moreover, the RFP said the study shall consider the most appropriate proxy for a risk-free rate, benchmarking with other capital-intensive regional parastatals to determine the appropriate range for a Beta, as suggested by the ESERA Tariff Methodology, benchmarking against other regional entities to determine an appropriate risk premium, as suggested by the ESERA Tariff Methodology.

The Eswatini Electricity Company is a power utility whose mandate is to generate, transmit distribute, and supply electricity in the Kingdom of Eswatini.

The company generates about thirty per cent of the local power requirements and imports the rest from South Africa, the Republic of Mozambique as well as sources from the Southern African Power Pool (SAPP) markets.

BUSINESS NEWS

BUSINESS BRIEFS

Nigeria's Dangote refinery starts production after years of delays

ABUJA — Nigeria's Dangote oil refinery has begun producing diesel and aviation fuel, the company said on Saturday, after years of construction delays at the 650,000 barrel per day (bpd) plant. The refinery, Africa's largest, was built on a peninsula on the outskirts of the commercial capital Lagos at a cost of \$20 billion by the continent's richest man Aliko Dangote.

US banking giants shed over 17,000 employees

WELLS FARGO, Bank of America and Citigroup reduced their workforces by a combined 17,700 last year, the banking giants reported in their fourth-quarter earnings on Friday. As dealmaking dried up and demand from borrowers softened last year, banks laid off employees or stopped replacing those who left. JPMorgan Chase, the nation's largest lender, bucked the trend by bolstering its ranks for a third straight year.

FedEx has not seen much impact from Red Sea disruptions, CEO says

NEW YORK — U.S. parcel delivery giant FedEx Corp said that it hasn't seen much of a shift to air freight due to disruptions in the Red Sea that have tacked on nearly two weeks to shipping transit times. "Shipping over the ocean makes up 90 per cent of global commerce so even a small change would have an impact, but we haven't seen much yet," CEO Raj Subramaniam said at the National Retail Conference on Sunday. Subramaniam, who took over the reins as CEO in June 2022, said air freight rates have remained stable.

Shortage of dairy cows striking down efforts of enhancing sector

Stories by Silindzelwe Nxumalo
silindzelwen@rubiconmedia.group

THE Minister of Agriculture, Mandla Tshawuka says the country's dairy industry's biggest challenges are the lack of dairy plants and there aren't enough cows in the country for the sector.

Tshawuka said the local dairy cows only have two dairy plants, in Masundwini and Matsapha, which cannot service the country enough due to the high milk demand in the country.

The minister said that as a country we only have 5 000 dairy cows out of the 18 000 cows needed by the country.

"This shows that as a country we have a long way to go in the dairy industry as we are lacking with 13 000 cows and even if we use artificial insemination on them, they will not give us the 13 000 dairy cows we need," he said.

He also added that if the country wants to feed itself, it calls for the Ministry of Agriculture to quickly find a solution to the problem and boost the current number of cows.

He said they have been doing research together with the dairy board to see how they can find a solution to this issue.

The minister stated that they would work on this issue while still protecting the country from all the diseases which could be transmitted from the neighbouring countries.

"It is a taboo that as a country we have built all these dairy plants but not utilizing them to their full capacity because the money which has been put in there put there is very important," he said.

He also added that another challenge is that



▲ Minister of Agriculture, Mandla Tshawuka.

the country is still failing to supply its quota of meat to international markets.

"These are lucrative markets but we are failing as a country to satisfy them because we do not have enough stock of slaughtered cattle in the country," he said.

He stated that this calls for the ministry to look at ways to how they can import cattle from neighbouring countries and increase the numbers without bringing diseases.

Tshawuka assured the nation that the Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD), and the Evian flu which led to the ban on the importation of beef and chicken meat and related products from South Africa remain managed.

He said to the ministry this is a huge challenge which is faced by the ministry, adding that they have been trying to prevent and protect the country.

Tshawuka said they have done so by

importing only eggs from selected zones in South Africa.

He explained that they have done so many things as a ministry which includes, competitive marginalization, which allows them to only pick selected places not affected by these animal diseases and import from them.

"We don't just bring in the animals anyhow, we have to be sure that we will not be bringing in the disease into the country and affecting the animals the country has," he said.

The minister said through this they can avoid diseases from getting into the country, and that there were still working on these issues to increase the number of chickens and cows in the country which has decreased.

He further stated that even the pork meat industry was being threatened, and they were still trying to import the same way as they do with chickens and beef.

Ministry of Agriculture to receive facelift

AFTER many years of operation, the Ministry of Agriculture headquarters will receive a facelift that will cost about E20 million.

This was confirmed through a memo that was directed to the ministry's staff from the Ministry's Principal Secretary (PS) Sydney Simelane. The PS was notifying the staff that they should be expecting building inspectors on January 19, 2024, at 10 am.

In the memo, Simelane said the ministry will be undergoing the rehabilitation of the headquarters building with the help of Micro Project as an Implementation agent of the project.

Simelane also advised all the staff members that on the mentioned day they requested to unlock all offices for the tenderers to easily access the entire building as per the tendering procedure.

"You're understanding and cooperation in this regard shall be highly appreciated," read part of the memo.

When contacted Simelane said a lot of the offices were leaking, including the minister's office.

He explained that when it rains it's very hard to work because most of these offices

leak which triggered the renovations which are spearheaded by the Micro project.

He added that once the renovations start they will move to the Ndlanubeka building in Mbabane.

"I have already requested office reservations and we have signed with the building management," he said.

Speaking anonymously to this newspaper, one of the staff members said the offices of this building were very damaged and old and they needed this rehabilitation.

She stated that most of the ceilings on the roofing were falling and the furniture was now broken.

She stated that they had also been advised that there would come a point where they would have to relocate their offices to temporal offices.



▲ Ministry of Agriculture offices.



FX RATES

Notes/Cash	Buy	Sell
U.S. Dollar	18.2297	18.6945
G.B. Pound	23.1832	23.8672
EURO	19.9651	20.5738
Bank Rate	(July 2023)	7.50%
Prime Rate	(July 2023)	11%
Inflation	(July 2023)	4.5%
Petrol	E20.50/Litre	
Diesel	E21.80 /Litre	
Paraffin	E16.75/Litre	



Nigeria's Dangote refinery starts production after years of delays



▲A view of the newly-commissioned Dangote Petroleum refinery in Ibeju-Lekki, Lagos, Nigeria.

ABUJA — Nigeria's Dangote oil refinery has begun producing diesel and aviation fuel, the company said on Saturday, after years of construction delays at the 650,000 barrel per day (bpd) plant.

The refinery, Africa's largest, was built on a peninsula on the outskirts of the commercial capital Lagos at a cost of \$20 billion by the continent's richest man Aliko Dangote.

Although Nigeria is Africa's top energy producer, it has relied on imports for most of the fuel it consumes. The Dangote

refinery is expected to not only make it self-sufficient but also allow it to export fuel to neighbouring West African countries, potentially transforming oil trading in the Atlantic Basin.

Company officials told Reuters test runs could begin this week after the refinery received a sixth crude oil cargo on Jan. 8.

"This is a big day for Nigeria. We are delighted to have reached this significant milestone," the company said in a statement posted on social media platform X.

The plant received 1 million barrels of

Nigeria's Agbami crude on Monday, taking the total volume received since December to 6 million barrels.

Nigeria's state-owned NNPC Ltd. is expected to supply four crude cargoes to the refinery from its February programme.

It could take months after the start up of the refinery's crude distillation unit to move from test runs to the production of high-quality fuels at full capacity, according to experts.

Dangote has said it will start by refining 350,000 bpd, hoping to ramp up to full production later this year. **Reuters**)

Alaska Airlines begins preliminary inspections on up to 20 Boeing 737-9 MAX

ALASKA Airlines has begun preliminary inspections on some of its Boeing 737-9 MAX aircrafts this weekend, adding that up to 20 planes could undergo inspection, the company said on Saturday.

The carrier also said it would initiate and enhance its own layers of quality control to the production of the airplane and has initiated a review of Boeing's (BA.N) production quality and control systems, including Boeing's production vendor oversight. Alaska Airlines said that it engaged in a candid conversation with Boeing's CEO and leadership team earlier in the week to discuss their quality improvement plans to ensure the delivery of the highest quality aircraft off the production line for Alaska.

The airline said that the U.S. Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) will require more data from Boeing before it approves the airline manufacturer's proposed inspections and the maintenance instructions used to conduct the final inspections to safely return the 737-9 MAX to service.

The FAA on Friday extended the grounding of Boeing 737 MAX 9 airplanes indefinitely for new safety checks and announced it will tighten oversight of Boeing itself after a cabin panel broke off a new jet in mid-flight.

Under more stringent supervision, the regulator will audit the Boeing 737 MAX 9 production line and suppliers and consider having an independent entity take over from Boeing certain aspects of certifying the safety of new aircraft that the FAA previously assigned to the planemaker.

US banking giants shed over 17,000 employees in turbulent year

By Niket Nishant and Manya Saini

WELLS FARGO, Bank of America and Citigroup reduced their workforces by a combined 17,700 last year, the banking giants reported in their fourth-quarter earnings on Friday.

As dealmaking dried up and demand from borrowers softened last year, banks laid off employees or stopped replacing those who left.

JPMorgan Chase, the nation's largest lender, bucked the trend by bolstering its ranks for a third straight year.

Challenging times for the industry could persist this year as weakness in commercial real estate and tougher proposed capital rules could prompt banks to pull back on lending.

Wall Street businesses suffered last year as economic uncertainty weighed on dealmaking.

While the S&P 500 banks index rose 7 per cent in 2023, it underperformed indexes tracking industrial or consumer discretionary companies.

Citi overhauls, Goldman steadies ship

Citigroup's headcount fell by 1,000 to 239,000 employees in 2023, and the lender outlined plans to cut 20,000 jobs over the next two years including layoffs from a



▲A customer exits the lobby of JPMorgan Chase & Co. headquarters in New York.

sweeping reorganization and other business changes.

At Bank of America and Wells Fargo the workforce contracted by about 2 per cent and 5 per cent, respectively, last year.

JPMorgan added more than 16,200 employees. The bank bought failed lender First Republic Bank in a rescue deal in May. It has added jobs every year since 2021.

Goldman Sachs and Morgan Stanley are set to disclose their latest headcount next week. As of September end, they had cut over 4,300 jobs versus last year.

Earlier in 2023, Goldman Sachs undertook its biggest round of layoffs since the global financial crisis of 2008. In October, the bank's CFO Denis Coleman said they were in a position to do "selective investments" in headcount. **(Reuters)**



▲FedEx air freight cargo planes parked at a FedEx regional hub at Los Angeles International Airport (LAX) in Los Angeles, California, U.S.

FedEx has not seen much impact from Red Sea disruptions, CEO says

NEW YORK — U.S. parcel delivery giant FedEx Corp said that it hasn't seen much of a shift to air freight due to disruptions in the Red Sea that have tacked on nearly two weeks to shipping transit times.

"Shipping over the ocean makes up 90 per cent of global commerce so even a small change would have an impact, but we haven't seen much yet," CEO Raj Subramaniam said at the National Retail Conference on Sunday.

Subramaniam, who took over the reins as CEO in June 2022, said air freight rates have remained stable.

Iran-backed Houthi militia attacks on container ships in the Red Sea have forced some retailers to stock up on goods before China's Lunar New Year holiday by seeking air or rail alternatives to transportation via the Red Sea in a scramble to avoid empty shelves this spring, executives and experts told Reuters. **(Reuters)**

Microsoft edges out Apple as world's most valuable company

By Noel Randewich

MICROSOFT's stock market value ended a trading session higher than Apple's for the first time since 2021 on Friday, making it the world's most valuable company as worries about demand hit the iPhone maker's shares.

Apple crept up 0.2 per cent on Friday, while Microsoft added 1 per cent. With that, Microsoft's market capitalization stood at \$2.887 trillion, its highest ever, according to LSEG data. Apple's market capitalization was \$2.875 trillion, calculated with data in a filing on Thursday.

Worries about smartphone demand have pushed Apple's shares down 3 per cent so far in 2024 after rallying 48 per cent last year. Microsoft is up about 3 per cent year to date after surging 57 per cent in 2023 in a rally driven in part by its lead in generative artificial intelligence through an investment in ChatGPT-maker OpenAI.

Apple's market capitalization peaked at \$3.081 trillion on Dec. 14, according to LSEG.

Microsoft has incorporated OpenAI's technology across its suite of productivity software, a move that helped spark a rebound in its cloud-computing business in the July-September quarter. Its AI lead has also created an opportunity to challenge Google's dominance of web search.

Apple, meanwhile, has been grappling with tepid demand, including for the iPhone, its cash cow. Demand in China, a major market, has slumped as the country's economy makes a slow recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic and a resurgent Huawei erodes its market share. Sales of Apple's Vision Pro mixed-reality headset start on



▲ Microsoft logo is seen on the smartphone in front of displayed Apple logo in this illustration.

Feb. 2 in the United States, marking Apple's biggest product launch since the iPhone in 2007. However, UBS in a report this week estimated that Vision Pro sales would be "relatively immaterial" to Apple's earnings per share in 2024.

A handful of times since 2018, Microsoft has briefly taken the lead over Apple as the most valuable company, most recently in 2021, when concerns about supply chain shortages related to the Covid-19 pandemic hit the iPhone maker's stock price.

Both tech stocks look relatively expensive in terms of price to their expected earnings, a common method of valuing publicly listed companies. Apple is trading at a forward PE of 28, well above its average of 19 over the past 10 years, according to LSEG data. Microsoft is trading around 32 times forward earnings, above its 10-year average of 24.

In its most recent quarterly report in November, Apple gave a sales forecast for the holiday quarter that missed Wall Street expectations, hurt by weak

demand for iPads and wearables. Analysts on average see Apple posting revenue up 0.7 per cent to \$117.9 billion for the December quarter, according to LSEG. That would mark its first year-on-year revenue increase in four quarters. Apple reports its results on Feb. 1.

Analysts see Microsoft reporting a 16 per cent increase in revenue to \$61.1 billion, lifted by ongoing growth in its cloud business when it reports in the coming weeks. (Reuters)

India's TCS to diversify to other markets amid US weakness

By Haripriya Suresh and Sai Ishwarbharath B

BENGALURU — India's No.1 software-services exporter Tata Consultancy Services (TCS.NS) is planning to focus more on markets such as Japan, Latin America and Southern Europe amid weakness in North America, its chief executive said.

The plan to diversify more comes after the industry leader reported its slowest quarterly profit growth since 2020, and revenue contributions from its mainstay market, North America, have declined for four straight quarters.

"I wouldn't say we are consciously reducing our North America exposure, but we are consciously increasing our play in other geographies because we want to work more in markets like Latin America, Southern Europe or Japan," K. Krithivasan said.

North America has been vital for the \$245 billion Indian information technology sector, with several companies deriving over half their revenue from the region. IT clients there have been reluctant to spend

on discretionary projects in recent quarters amid inflationary pressures and economic uncertainty.

That is making TCS look at other markets with a lot of headroom for growth despite language and other barriers.

For instance, Japan's revenue contribution to the Indian IT sector is "very miniscule" despite the country being the one of the largest tech spenders, Krithivasan said.

Mumbai-based TCS, which has traditionally made more money catering to clients abroad, is also zooming in on its home turf.

India contributed to 6.1% of the revenue in the latest third quarter, the highest level since the second quarter of fiscal 2018. Latin America accounted for 2.1% of TCS's revenue.

The top TCS executive is "generally optimistic" about the upcoming financial year, after many analysts called the current one a "washout" for the Indian IT industry.

Last week, Infosys tightened its annual revenue forecast, HCLTech trimmed the top end of the same metric and Wipro warned it might end the year with a revenue decline for the first time in three years.

"We believe it (fiscal 2025) could be a better year than fiscal 2024," Krithivasan said. (Reuters)



▲ The seal of the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) is seen at their headquarters in Washington, D.C., U.S.

US SEC says breach of X account did not lead to breach of its broader systems

WASHINGTON — The U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission on Friday said there was no evidence to suggest the breach of its X account earlier this week also involved a breach of the agency's systems, devices, data or other social media accounts.

The fake post on Tuesday said the SEC had approved trading of spot bitcoin exchange-traded funds (ETFs), sending industry executives scrambling. Bitcoin prices had whipsawed ahead of an expected announcement on Wednesday by the agency to allow trading of the products.

"While SEC staff is still assessing the

scope of the incident, there is currently no evidence that the unauthorized party gained access to SEC systems, data, devices, or other social media accounts," the SEC said in a statement.

The SEC quickly disavowed and deleted the post. X, formerly Twitter, later said the account was compromised because of an "unidentified individual" obtaining control of a phone number.

The SEC did approve the bitcoin ETFs on Wednesday.

The SEC said the Department of Homeland Security's Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency has joined the FBI and the SEC's inspector general in investigating the breach. (Reuters)

Total amount of life that has ever existed on earth is mind-boggling

LIFE on Earth remains a subject of immense curiosity and scientific investigation across all sections of humanity. But have you ever stopped to think about the total amount of life that has existed on Earth since the first cells appeared 3.8 billion years ago? What about the total amount of life that will ever inhabit our planet, from now until Earth is consumed by the Sun?

A recent study led by Peter Crockford, Assistant Professor at Carleton University, in collaboration with researchers from the Weizmann Institute of Science and Smith College, dives head first into this mind-blowing topic.

Their work, published in Current Biology, delves into the historical and future aspects of life on our planet.

At the heart of the study is the concept of primary production, a process where organisms convert inorganic carbon, like atmospheric carbon dioxide and oceanic bicarbonate, into the organic molecules essential for life.

This process, currently dominated by oxygenic photosynthesis involving sunlight and water, is responsible for an estimated annual uptake of 200 billion tons of carbon.

Understanding the historical rates of primary production is crucial, and scientists have turned to the isotopic composition of oxygen in ancient sulfate deposits for answers.

The study compiled various estimates of ancient primary production, leading to the staggering conclusion that about 100 quintillion tons of carbon have been processed since life began.

This figure is a hundredfold greater than the total carbon content contained inside the Earth, highlighting the profound impact of primary producers like plants, algae, and cyanobacteria. In Earth's early days, primary production was predominantly managed by organisms that didn't rely on oxygenic



▲ At the heart of the study is the concept of primary production, a process where organisms convert inorganic carbon, like atmospheric carbon dioxide and oceanic bicarbonate, into the organic molecules essential for life.

photosynthesis. Techniques like identifying the oldest forests and analyzing molecular fossils have helped pinpoint when different primary producers were most active.

Crockford's team found that land plants, despite their late emergence, have likely been the biggest contributors to Earth's primary production.

Cyanobacteria also stand out as significant contributors. This research is vital in understanding not just the amount of primary production but also the organisms responsible for it.

One fascinating aspect of the study

is the estimation of life on Earth, both historically and presently. By correlating primary production with cell existence, the researchers approximate that around 1030 (10 noninillion) cells exist today.

Throughout Earth's history, between 1039 (a duodecillion) and 1040 cells have likely existed. The study also touches on the finite lifespan of Earth's biosphere, a sobering reality dictated by the life cycle of the sun.

Over time, the sun's increasing brightness will push Earth's biogeochemical systems beyond their limits, leading to the demise of land plants and eventually turning Earth back into a largely lifeless planet.

Looking forward, Crockford and his team project that about 1040 cells will inhabit Earth over its entire habitable lifetime. This projection is based on current levels of primary productivity.

In an era where over 5000 exoplanets have been discovered, the study also positions Earth as a benchmark for comparing life on other planets.

Crockford emphasizes the significance of historical events, like the advent of oxygenic photosynthesis and endosymbiosis, in shaping the trajectory and abundance of life on Earth.

(MSN)

Adidas' CEO says he gave his cell number to 60 000 employees ... and was slammed with 200 messages a week, report says

ADIDAS CEO Bjørn Gulden shared his cellphone number with 60,000 employees at a town hall meeting in an effort to boost transparency at the firm, The Wall Street Journal reported. Adidas had been in the midst of a tricky period when Gulden, a former professional soccer player, took the helm in January 2023. The company had recently severed ties with rapper Kanye West, now known as Ye, and was reeling in the wake of a 724 million euro operating loss in the final quarter of 2022.

Gulden's first step to righting the ship was to try and address some of the transparency concerns that had also been raised by employees.

After giving out his number, Gulden said that for a while he was contacted about 200 times every week by staff asking him to make changes to the company, per The Journal. "Some people think I'm crazy," the Norweigan national told the outlet, before adding that he thought it was important for leaders to be open.

Gulden had previously spent nine years at Puma, where he was credited with leading an impressive sales turnaround that he's now

trying to replicate at Adidas.

After a year that saw the company caught up in controversy following Ye's antisemitic remarks, struggling sales, and worker discontent, Gulden said he was aware that turning the company around would be a challenge.

"There was a culture of finding reasons not to do things," he said, adding that it was holding the company back.

Much like he did at Puma, Gulden made a quick impact at Adidas, starting by dumping consultants who he said made decisions industry-experts would never make, per the report.

Some of Gulden's other changes included reintroducing sports like cricket that have loyal customers in big, albeit specific, markets such as India, streamlining communications at the top of the business so that he had more direct reports from department heads, and binning a laborsome evaluation practice.

He said that the company was now on track to return to profitability this year.

For decades its main competitor Nike has



► Adidas CEO Bjørn Gulden.

been the number one player in the industry, but weaker sales caused the company's stock price to drop over the last year.

The company announced in December that it planned to cut hundreds of jobs to try and save \$2 billion.

Nike also recently ended its iconic

partnership with Tiger Woods, which had started back in 1996.

Adidas did not immediately respond to Business Insider's request for comment, which was made outside of normal working hours.

(MSN)

Collapse of goldmine in Tanzania kills 22

DAR ES SALAAM, - The collapse of an illegal small-scale gold mine has killed at least 22 people in northern Tanzania following heavy rains, a senior government official said on Sunday.

The accident happened early on Saturday in the Simiyu region after a group of people aged between 24 and 38 years old started mining in an area where activity had been restricted due to ongoing heavy rains, Simon Simalenga, the region's Bariadi district commissioner, told

Reuters.

"Initially we were told that there were 19 to 20 people who were trapped in the mines but unfortunately we ended up retrieving 22 bodies," he said, adding that the search and rescue operation was continuing although almost all the rubble that had buried them had now been removed.

Simalenga said the group had discovered an area rich in minerals around two to three weeks previously and moved to start mining before the government had approved physical and environmental safety

and procedures. "The regional mining officer visited them and stopped them from mining as it was working on the required procedures," he said.

The group defied the order, he added, starting to mine late on Friday before part of the area caved in and buried them inside.

The government has worked for years to improve safety for small scale miners but unsafe and unregulated illegal mining still occurs in Tanzania, which is Africa's fourth-largest gold producer after South Africa, Ghana and Mali.

(Reuters)



▲ The collapse of an illegal small-scale gold mine has killed at least 22 people in northern Tanzania following heavy rains, a senior government official said on Sunday.

President Tshisekedi's ruling party leads in Congo legislative election

KINSHASA - Democratic Republic of Congo President Felix Tshisekedi's UDPS party won 66 seats in the December parliamentary election, placing it ahead of 44 other parties that won one or more seats in the 500-member house, provisional results showed on Sunday.

The increased number of UDPS seats, up from 35 in the 2018 election, along with gains by allied parties, could enable Tshisekedi to maintain his ruling big tent Sacred Union coalition, giving him the majority needed to name a new government. The coalition controlled over 390 seats in the outgoing legislature.

Provisional results announced by Congo's national election commission early on Sunday showed that parties led by some of Tshisekedi's allies including Senate President Modeste Bahati Lukwebo, Defence Minister Jean Pierre Bemba and Economy Minister Vital Kamerhe won 35, 17, and 32 seats respectively.

The results of the legislative vote follow the Constitutional Court's confirmation of Tshisekedi's landslide re-election in the disputed Dec. 20-24 general election that was marred by allegations of fraud, legis-



▲ President Felix Tshisekedi's UDPS party won 66 seats in the December parliamentary election.

tical shortcomings and disruptions. Opposition parties and independent observers have raised concerns about the election's transparency, citing chaotic voting conditions and a murky tabulation process.

Several western governments made similar observations in congratulatory statements to Tshisekedi, who is set for another five years as leader of Africa's second-largest

country after a first term hampered by economic woes and a security crisis in the eastern regions. The fallout of the vote threatens to further destabilise Congo, the world's third-largest copper producer, and the top producer of cobalt, a battery component needed for the green energy transition.

(Reuters)



▲ About 2,000 U.N. troops will leave restive eastern areas of the Democratic Republic of Congo by the end of April.

UN to withdraw 2,000 peacekeepers in Congo

KINSHASA, Jan 13 (Reuters) - About 2,000 U.N. troops will leave restive eastern areas of the Democratic Republic of Congo by the end of April in the first phase of the peacekeeping mission's planned withdrawal from the country, the head of mission said on Saturday.

The U.N. Security Council approved the end of the mission in December following a request by Congolese President Felix Tshisekedi in September to fast-track the withdrawal of the peacekeepers.

The currently 13,500-strong force, known as MONUSCO, took over from an earlier U.N. operation in 2010 to help quell insecurity in the east of the Central African country, where armed groups fight over territory and resources.

But in recent years, its presence has become increasingly unpopular for what critics say is a failure to protect civilians against militia groups, sparking deadly protests.

"We have a ceiling of 13,500 troops authorised by the Security Council, as of April 30th,

with the start of the withdrawal underway, we will reach 11,500," Bintou Keita, head of the mission, told a joint press conference with government officials. The first of three withdrawal phases will begin in South Kivu province, she said, adding that 14 U.N. bases in the province will be taken over by Congolese security forces.

U.N. peacekeeping forces will later withdraw from the North Kivu and Ituri provinces in the next phases.

Congolese Foreign Minister Christophe Lutundula told the press conference in the capital Kinshasa that the remaining U.N. forces are expected to be out of the country by Dec. 31. "The withdrawal of MONUSCO does not necessarily mean the end of the fight we are undertaking to protect the territorial interests of our country, we must continue to struggle," Lutundula said.

More than 7 million people have been displaced due to conflicts in Congo, mostly in the three eastern provinces where a myriad of armed groups continue to operate.

(Reuters)

Comoros holds presidential election

Voting was under way in Comoros on Sunday in an election widely expected to hand a fourth five-year term to President Azali Assoumani, who faces five opponents in a vote some opposition leaders have boycotted.

The polls opened across the Indian Ocean archipelago at 8 a.m. (0500 GMT) for the 338,940 registered voters out of its 800,000 population. Voting ends at 6 p.m.

Comoros has experienced around 20 coups or attempted coups since winning independence from France in 1975 and is a major source of irregular migration to the nearby French island of Mayotte. Some opposition leaders have called for a boycott, accusing

the election commission of favouring the ruling party. The commission denies this, saying the process will be transparent.

"I am delighted with this anchoring of democracy in our country," Assoumani told reporters after voting in his home town of Mitsoudjé, adding that he hoped for victory in the first round.

The former army officer first came to power in a coup in 1999. He has since won three elections and has served as the chair of the African Union for the past year. He won the 2019 election with 60% of the vote, breaching the 50% mark required to avoid a runoff. Critics say since then his government has cracked down on dissent, an accusation it denies. (Reuters)

WASHINGTON, - U.S. President Joe Biden said on Saturday the United States does not support the independence of Taiwan, after Taiwanese voters rebuffed China and gave the ruling party a third presidential term.

Earlier in the day, the Taiwanese ruling Democratic Progressive Party's (DPP) presidential candidate Lai Ching-te came to power, strongly rejecting Chinese pressure to spurn him, and pledged both to stand up to Beijing and seek talks. "We do not support independence..." Biden said, when asked for reaction to Saturday's elections.

The United States switched diplomatic recognition from Taipei to Beijing in 1979 and has long said it does not support a formal declaration of independence by Taiwan. It does, however, maintain unofficial relations with the self-governed island and remains its most important backer and arms supplier.

Beijing, which has never renounced the use of force to bring Taiwan under its control, fears that Lai could declare the establishment of a Republic of Taiwan, which Lai has said he will not do. Biden has previously upset the Chinese government with comments that appeared to suggest the United States would defend the island if it were attacked, a deviation from a long-held U.S. position of "strategic ambiguity".

His comments on Saturday appear to be an effort to reassure Beijing.

Even so, Washington warned just hours ahead of the polls opening that "it would be unacceptable" for "any" country to interfere in the election. Taiwan, which neighboring China claims as its own, has been a democratic success story since holding its first direct presidential election in 1996, the culmination of decades of struggle against authoritarian rule and martial law.

U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken congratulated Lai Ching-te on his victory and said the United States "is committed to maintaining cross-strait peace and stability, and the peaceful resolution of differences,

'U.S. does not support Taiwan independence'

free from coercion and pressure." He said the U.S. looks forward to working with Lai and leaders of all parties in Taiwan to advance their "longstanding unofficial relationship, consistent with the U.S. one China policy."

The Biden administration has feared that the election, transition and new administration would escalate conflict with Beijing.

Biden has worked to smooth relations with China, including agreeing to talk through differences on security matters at a California summit with President Xi Jinping in November.

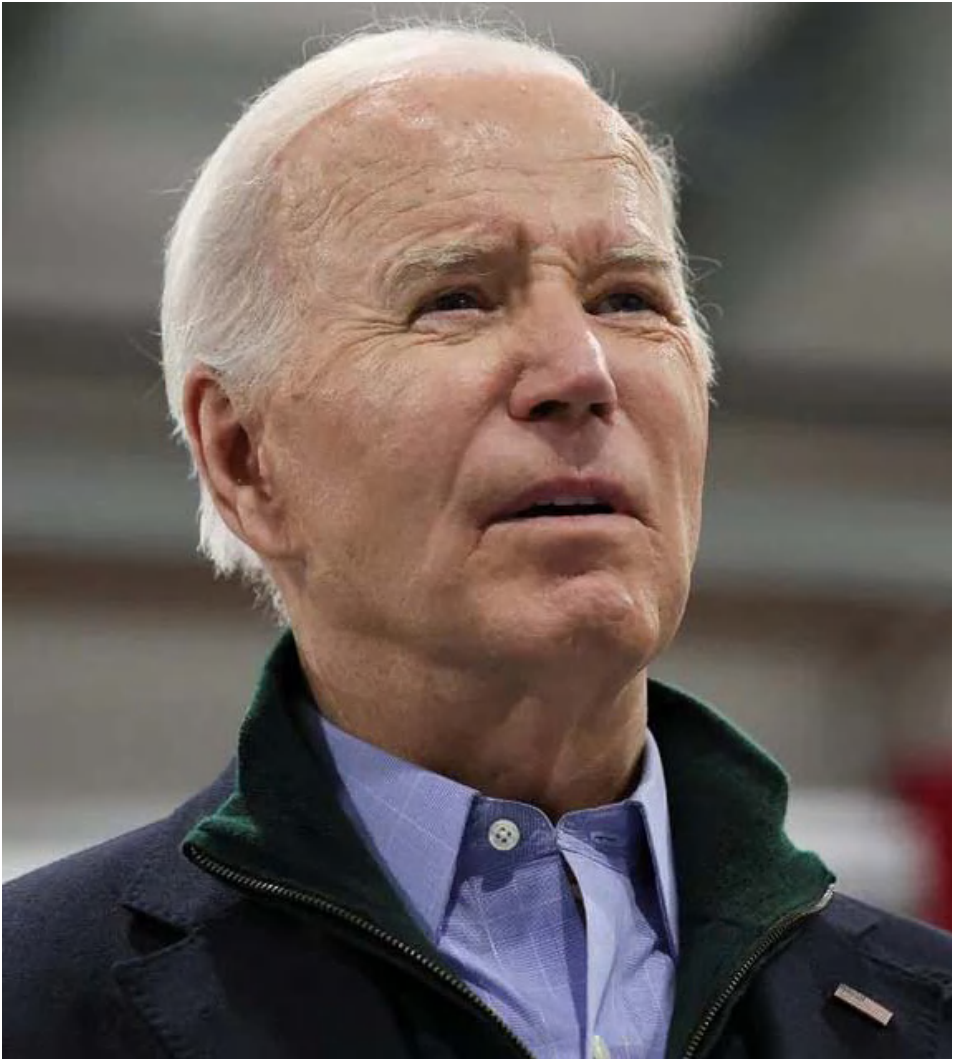
Taiwan's government expects China to attempt to put pressure on its incoming president after the vote, including staging military maneuvers near the island this spring, two senior government officials said. China has never renounced the use of force to bring Taiwan under its control.

In a show of support for the government, Biden plans to dispatch an unofficial delegation to the self-governed island, according to a senior Biden administration official.

The delegation is likely to include some former high-ranking American officials, according to the official, who said the names have not been finalized. Similar delegations have been sent to Taiwan in the past.

China was angered in 2016 when then-President-elect Donald Trump spoke by phone with President Tsai Ing-wen of Taiwan, the first such conversation between U.S. and Taiwan leaders since President Jimmy Carter switched diplomatic recognition from Taiwan to China in 1979.

(Reuters)



▲ U.S. President Joe Biden said on Saturday the United States does not support the independence of Taiwan, after Taiwanese voters rebuffed China and gave the ruling party a third presidential term.

Denmark awaits new king, as Queen Margrethe to bow out

COPENHAGEN,- Queen Margrethe II, Denmark's longest reigning monarch, was set to pass the throne to her first-born son Frederik on Sunday and huge crowds began gathering in front of parliament to witness the events.

Margrethe stunned the nation of nearly 6 million on New Year's Eve when she announced her decision to abdicate after 52 years as queen, becoming the first Danish monarch in nearly 900 years to voluntarily relinquish the throne.

There will be no coronation, but the succession will take place in parliament at around 1300 GMT, the moment Margrethe, 83, signs the declaration of her abdication.

People from all over Denmark converged on the capital in a sign of the huge popularity the monarchy is enjoying.

"I was in shock and started crying when the queen said on New Year's Eve she would abdicate," said Karen Holk Jeppesen, 31, a communications consultant, standing in front of parliament where the new king will be proclaimed later on Sunday.

Jeppesen, who arrived in Copenhagen with her sister on Saturday, said she booked a hotel in the capital the day after the queen's announcement.

"It's very rare to witness a real historical moment that you know will be written about in the history books," she said.

Queen Margrethe, affectionately known as



▲ The Danish Royal Horse Guard trains with a proxy carriage for the upcoming coronation of Denmark's Crown Prince Frederik and his Australian-born Crown Princess Mary in the yard of Christiansborg Palace in Copenhagen, Denmark

Daisy after the marguerite flower, was congratulated by her cousin Sweden's King Carl XVI Gustaf, who himself celebrated 50 years on the throne in September last year.

"Your Majesty, dear Cousin Daisy! When you step down today from your high office as Queen of Denmark, I want to say a warm thank you for the good cooperation over the years," the Swedish king said on Instagram. The crown prince, 55, and his Australian-born

wife Mary, 51, who will become queen, were scheduled to leave the royal palace at 1235 GMT in a 1958 Rolls-Royce. Margrethe will follow by horse carriage a few minutes later to take her final ride as monarch through the streets of the capital.

The signing of the abdication will take place during a meeting of the Council of State at parliament where the government, Frederik and his oldest son Christian, 18

years old and the new heir to the throne, will participate.

Soon after, Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen will proclaim the new king on the balcony of the parliament and Frederik will give a short speech, before the new king and his wife ride by carriage back to the palace.

The Amalienborg complex, built in the 1750s, is located in central Copenhagen and consists of four palaces built around an octagonal courtyard. It is home to both the outgoing queen and the new reigning couple.

ROYAL POWER COUPLE

Margrethe, who in the past had said she would remain on the throne for life, did not give an exact reason for her decision to step down but said that a major back surgery she underwent in February last year had made her consider her future.

"It could be that she thinks Prince Frederik is prepared to take over now," said Lars Hovbakke Sorensen, a historian and associate professor at University College Absalon in Denmark.

"He's 55, and maybe the queen wanted to avoid a situation where you would have a very, very old king, as you saw with Prince Charles." The British king was 73 when he ascended the throne after his mother Queen Elizabeth died in September 2022 aged 96.

The new king and queen will take the throne at a time of huge public support and enthusiasm for the monarchy.

(Reuters)

Upscale Live to up the scales

Stories by Siphesihle Dlamini
siphesihled@rubiconmedia.group

RENOWNED Eswatini management stable, Upscale Live, is set to make waves in the music industry this year with the release of exciting projects.

The director of the label, Sibusiso '3T' Simelane, has expressed their unwavering commitment to making Eswatini music fashionable and has revealed the label's jam-packed schedule for the year.

Currently, Upscale Live is hard at work, meticulously mixing and mastering four music projects that are slated to be released in the coming months. He revealed that Upscale Live has also set its sights on creating visually captivating experiences for music lovers. They have plans to shoot music videos for two of their most promising artists, Young Zesh and Lyrikal Busta.

One of the most anticipated releases from Upscale Live this year is the music video for Sean Cast HQ's hit single, 'Fasa Ngwane.' This track, featuring the talented Young Zesh, has already garnered significant attention, and the upcoming music video is expected to take it to the next level.

Upscale Live will also introduce their newly signed artists from the Eastern Cape in South Africa, IndianaRSA & Skoen Pampiri. These rising stars are set to make their mark in the music industry with their debut single, 'Kuningi,' featuring none other than the sensational Young Zesh.

In addition to these exciting music projects, Upscale Live has some highly anticipated album releases in store. Fans of talented rapper Young Zesh can rejoice as his long-awaited album, 'Lwandiso,' is finally set to drop. This highly anticipated release is expected to showcase Young Zesh's lyrical prowess and unique style, cementing his status as one of Eswatini's most sought-after



▲ Young Zesh and Lyrikal Busta.

artists.

Sean Cast HQ, another exceptional artist under the Upscale Live umbrella, will also be releasing his album titled 'Siphatsimandla.' With his distinct sound and thought-provoking lyrics, Sean Cast HQ is poised to make a lasting impression on the music scene.

Lyrikal Busta, known for his 'Swati music to the world' mantra will also be dropping his project titled 'Mbabane to Jozi.' Lastly, Upscale Live's newly signed artists, IndianaRSA & Skoen Pampiri,



will be releasing their debut album titled 'Route 56.' This album promises to be a refreshing blend of genres, showcasing the unique musical talents of these rising stars.



► Comedian
Sbu Ngwenya.

Comedian Sbu Ngwenya lands new role

LOCAL comedian, Sbu Ngwenya, has recently taken on a new role as the social media marketing manager for Cypress Basket, a popular food business.

In an interview, Ngwenya expressed enthusiasm for this opportunity, describing it as the beginning of greatness. He highlighted the financial stability that this role would bring, providing him with a monthly source of income.

This partnership not only offers financial benefits but also presents a fresh challenge for Ngwenya, as he steps into the role of a marketing manager for a food business. He said he sees this as an eye-opening experience that will enhance his knowledge and skills in marketing, ultimately benefiting his career as a comedian.

Ngwenya stated that he believes that the marketing strategies he will acquire in this position will not only benefit Cypress Basket

but also contribute to improving his brand as a comedian. The opportunity to work in a different field is both interesting and valuable, as it allows him to sharpen his work ethic and expand his skill set.

Although Ngwenya cannot disclose all the plans he has for Cypress Basket due to confidentiality, he assured the public that he would do everything in his power to attract more customers to the business.

As a creative individual, he intends to leverage his comedic talent to support local artists in Eswatini.

Ngwenya commended Cypress Basket for their initiative in supporting local artists and urged other companies and emaSwati to follow suit, emphasizing the importance of supporting one's community.



▲ SwaziBoy Entertainment PRO Miss N.

Stalls application open for House Musiq Fest

ENTREPRENEURS, this is your time!

Stalls applications are now open for the upcoming House Musiq Fest.

This was confirmed by the event organisers' SwaziBoy Entertainment management team. The festival offers a range of stalls, catering to different interests and needs. From corporate stalls to food stalls and accessories stalls, there is an opportunity for everyone to showcase their products and services. Interested individuals are encouraged to apply early, as the deadline for applications is February 7, 2024. Food stalls, limited to only 10, will charge E2 500, while accessories stalls are priced at E700.

Stalls will be provided by the festival, but participants are required to bring their multi-plug, extension cord, and table. For more information and to apply, individuals can email sales@housemusiqfest.com.

With the early bird tickets sold out, the House Musiq Fest has now entered Phase 1 of ticket sales. General tickets are priced at E300, while VIP tickets are available for E800. However, fans should act fast, as after this phase, ticket prices will increase to E350 for general admission and E1000 for VIP access.

Enthusiastic

The House Musiq Fest, now in its 5th edition, has become a staple in the country's music scene, attracting a massive following of music enthusiasts. With each passing year, the festival has grown in popularity, and this year's event aims to surpass all expectations.

Scheduled to take place on March 30, 2023, at Manzini Club, the House Musiq Fest offers a diverse range of experiences for all attendees. From food and beverages to artisanal crafts, therapy and body wellness, health and wellbeing, merchandise, retail, and corporate stalls, there is something for everyone at this festival.

This year's festival promises to be the biggest one yet, with a dynamic lineup of talented artists and electrifying DJ sets that will leave attendees craving more.

Previous editions have seen the likes of DJ Zinhle and Oskido grace the stage, delivering unforgettable performances that left the crowd in awe. This year's lineup, yet to be unveiled, is expected to be just as impressive, with a mix of local talents and international acts set to take the stage. Attendees can expect a diverse and exciting musical experience that will keep them dancing all night long.



▲ A photograph captured by renowned local photographer Simenkosi Msoni.

Open call for photographers to partake in the Kuyini exhibition

CALLING all photographers!
The Kuyini photography exhibition is now accepting applications for photographers to showcase their talent and creativity.

This unique exhibition, themed ‘perspective and reflection,’ promises to be a captivating display of visual storytelling. Set to take place at Yini Loku in Mbabane, Eswatini, the Kuyini exhibition is a collaboration between Yebo Art Gallery and the Antidote Culture Foundation. This partnership aims to provide a platform for photographers to express their artistic vision and explore the question, ‘Kuyini? What is this?’ through the lens of their cameras. Photographers interested in participating are invited to apply online by submitting a short biography along with their best work. Up to five images can be submitted, showcasing the photographer’s unique perspective and interpretation of the theme. The deadline for applications is January 21, 2024, so aspiring photographers are encouraged to act swiftly.

Selection

The selection process will be conducted by the ‘Yini Loku’ team, who will carefully review all applications. Approximately 20 photographers will be chosen to exhibit their work at the Kuyini exhibition. Each selected artist will have the opportunity to showcase one to two photographs, with the final printing generously sponsored by Apollo Printers.

All submitted images must be original creations of the applying photographer. Furthermore, photographers must obtain the necessary permissions from any individuals depicted in their photographs. Respecting the subjects and their consent is of utmost importance to ensure ethical and responsible artistic representation.

The Kuyini photography exhibition presents a remarkable opportunity for photographers to share their unique perspectives and engage with a diverse audience. It is a chance to showcase their talent, creativity, and storytelling abilities in a visually captivating and thought-provoking manner.



▲ Local DJ sensations, Trend Twins.

Oukitel Eswatini partners with Trend Twins

Stories by Siphesihle Dlamini
siphesihled@rubiconmedia.group

CELLPHONE brand, Oukitel Eswatini, has recently announced an exciting partnership with the talented local DJs, Trend Twins.

This collaboration marks a significant milestone for both parties as they embark on a journey towards success and innovation.

Taking to their social media platforms, Oukitel expressed delight in becoming the official cellphone sponsor of Trend Twins. The brand’s post exuded enthusiasm, stating, “A very happy day for us at Oukitel, partnering with Trend Twins, as their sponsor.”

Oukitel also revealed that they look forward to many great events together, road trips to various events and regional countries, and most importantly, taking both brands to a new level of success.

The news was met with equal excitement from the dynamic duo themselves. Trend Twins, whose real names are Nkosenhle Dlamini and Nosimilo Dlamini, took to social media to share joy about the collaboration. They announced that Oukitel Eswatini would be their official cellphone sponsor for the year 2024. The duo expressed gratitude for being recognized by such a prominent company, emphasizing that hard work truly pays off.

Trend Twins have been making

waves in the Afro House scene, captivating audiences with their unique style and infectious beats. What began as a dance group quickly transformed into a powerful DJ duo, drawing inspiration from industry heavyweights like Shimza, Cairo, and Da Capo. With their talent and passion for Afro House, Gqom Music, and Dance, Trend Twins have consistently climbed the ladder of success since joining forces in 2016.

Their rise to prominence has been fueled by their electrifying performances and unwavering dedication to their craft. Sharing the stage with some of the biggest names in the music industry, Trend Twins have established themselves as forces to be reckoned with.

“A very happy day for us at Oukitel, partnering with Trend Twins, as their sponsor”



Eswatini Creators Awards voting now open

ONLY five candidates running for glory in each category of the Eswatini Creators Awards are remaining, and now, voting is open.

The public now has the power to determine the winners in each category. To cast a vote for their favourite creators, individuals simply need to send an SMS with the code of their chosen creator to 7355.

There is no limit to how many times an individual can vote, so voters can vote as much as possible. An SMS costs E1.71 on both Eswatini Mobile and MTN while voting via Instacash is E1.50.

The journey to the Top 5 was not an easy one.

After an initial round of public mentions, where the most mentioned creators were shortlisted for the Top 10, the Eswatini Creators Awards team took to social media to showcase the Top 10 contestants. The public then had the power to determine the final five in each category by simply liking their favourite creator’s picture. This unique selection process made the whole experience exciting and interactive, bringing the community together.

Empower

The Eswatini Creators Awards are a celebration of the kingdom’s creative industry, and they are open to every citizen and resident.

This inclusivity ensures that talents from all walks of life are acknowledged and given a chance to shine. From models to influencers, the awards aim to empower and support individuals, while also elevating the value of existing brands.

This prestigious event not only recognises the talents of the nation’s creators but also provides them with a platform to showcase their skills and gain recognition. It is a chance for these talented individuals to step into the spotlight and have their work appreciated by a wider audience.

Moreover, the Eswatini Creators Awards bring a sense of unity and fun to the Kingdom of Eswatini. With social media platforms playing a significant role in the daily lives of its citizens, the awards leverage this connectivity to create a vibrant community of creators.

Through sharing and engaging with each other’s work, they foster a sense of camaraderie that transcends borders and unites the nation in its creative endeavours.

Enhle Mbali breaks her silence on Black Coffee

JUST days after Black Coffee fans dragged his ex Enhle Mbali for posting an innocent meme saying, “Best thing I’ve heard this year,” the mother of two decided to break her silence. The actress and fashion designer is a fan of sharing inspirational quotes and quirky memes with her followers, and many took it the wrong way, thinking she was referring to his recent plane accident.

Always one to protect her peace, Mbali had enough of the online bullying and took her message to Instagram Live. Looking relaxed and sun-kissed after her holiday in Botswana, the ‘Blood Psalms’ star explained the reasoning behind her posting funny quotes on X, unaware that people would read into something that wasn’t there. She then mentioned a back-and-forth email between her and Coffee, real name Nkosinathi Innocent Maphumulo, wishing him a speedy recovery.

“I’m in trouble with a lot of people right now but I am so tired of being the bigger person,” she said. “In case you guys haven’t noticed, I am living my life. When I said I wanted a divorce, I wanted a divorce because there were two children by two different mothers,” Mbali added.

“Even pre and post the situation, there was a lot of sh*t happening, and I haven’t said a word. I have only reacted to the things that have been done to me.” The 35-year-old also spoke to her detractors and said she wasn’t going to delete the IG Live video, in case they wanted to screen-shot it.



▲ Black Coffee fans dragged his ex Enhle Mbali for posting an innocent meme saying, “Best thing I’ve heard this year,” the mother of two decided to break her silence.

She said that many little petty things could be used against her in her divorce case, which she added is in November. Speaking about online users who stalk her social media accounts for any reference to Coffee, she said, “I don’t care for him; I only care about his wellbeing and for my children.”

Spilling some piping hot tea, Mbali let it slip that Coffee might also be a dad to a newborn, and repeated, “I don’t care, it’s his life.” She ended the IG Live by telling fans to stop going onto her profile and “searching for things that don’t exist.” (IOL)



▲ World’s richest man Elon Musk.

‘Cisgender’ a ‘heterophobic word’ – Musk

ELON Musk has branded “cisgender” a “heterophobic word”. The Tesla billionaire, who bought Twitter in a \$44-billion deal in 2022 before rebranding it under its current banner of X, sparked huge controversy by also declaring anyone who uses the phrase should be ashamed of themselves.

He messaged on X: “Cis is a heterophobic word. Shame on anyone who uses it.” His comment sparked an immediate wave of outrage, with users explaining its meaning to the entrepreneur and others telling him it is “neither ‘heterophobic’ nor homophobic”. Another fuming X user said Musk’s declaration was a sign he had “gotten so lost” – though others agreed with the SpaceX founder, saying ‘cis’ and ‘cisgender’ belonged to a tranche of “made-up words” from the so-called ‘woke’ movement. Cisgender is defined as those whose internal sense of gender corresponds with the sex the person was identified as having at birth.

Dictionaries also states it is not meant to be used as an insult as it is intended to be used “neutrally”. Musk has vowed to make X a platform for “free speech”, which he says should resemble a “town square” where everyone has a voice. In June 2023, he appeared to have trolled actress Megan Fox, 37, after she was accused of forcing her sons to wear “girl’s clothes”. He posted on X at the time, “Looking to hire a VP of Witchcraft and Propaganda.” And in November last year, Musk was also accused of allowing anti-semitism to run rampant on X and even endorsing a hateful comment about Jews himself – which he denied. The move caused many advertisers, including Walt Disney, to pull their content from the site, causing the social media company to lose millions of dollars. (Bang Showbiz)

Looks like Trevor Noah has a new girlfriend

DOES Trevor Noah have a new bae?

The last time we saw the comedian with a lady by his side was a few years ago when he was in South Africa visiting friends. This past festive season Noah was spotting out and about with a new woman, and rumour has it that the two are dating.

According to The South African, gossip bloggers Maphepha Ndaba and Musa Khawula seem to think that the ex ‘The Daily Show’ presenter has been romantically linked to South African Zoë Mabie.

Noah was in the country holidaying with friends. One of his friends, Xolisa Dyeshana, posted a few snaps of their holiday together. In one picture, you can see Noah resting his hand on Mabie’s shoulder.

The local beauty posted an Instagram reel captioned: “We love summer!” showing snippets of the holidays. In the reel, you briefly see Noah in the shot where they are out at an outdoor restaurant. On a previous holiday to South Africa, Noah brought US actress Minka Kelly along. The



▲ One of his friends, Xolisa Dyeshana, posted a few snaps of their holiday together. In one picture, you can see Noah resting his hand on Mabie’s shoulder.

pair were dating at the time. However, just a few months after the vacation, the couple split. At the time, a source said the pair were rocked by Noah being

“too focused on work and didn’t have enough time for a relationship.” Noah generally tries to keep his romances low-key, but since his split with actress Kelly, he has been linked to Gram-

my award-winning pop star Dua Lipa. The pair were photographed kissing in the streets of New York City after a cosy dinner date in September 2022. (Reuters)



MIGRAINE episodes may last anywhere from a few hours to multiple days. Seek medical attention if your symptoms last longer.

HOW LONG WILL A MIGRAINE EPISODE LAST?

A migraine attack typically lasts from 4 to 72 hours but can also last longer. It can be difficult to predict how long an individual episode will last, but charting its progress may help.

Migraine episodes can usually be divided into four or five distinct stages. Not all people with migraine experience each of these phases during each episode. Phases can include:

- ▶ warning or premonitory phase
- ▶ aura (not all people with migraine experience this phase, and those who do may not experience it during every episode)
- ▶ headache, or main attack
- ▶ resolution period
- ▶ recovery or postdrome stage (not all people with migraine experience this phase, and those who do may not experience it during every episode)

Some of these phases may only last briefly, whereas others may last much longer. You may not experience each phase with every episode you have. Keeping a migraine journal can help you track any patterns and prepare for what's to come.

Keep reading to learn more about each stage, what you can do to find relief, and when to see a doctor.

WHAT TO EXPECT DURING THE PRODROME (WARNING) PHASE

Sometimes, migraine can begin with symptoms that have absolutely nothing to do with a headache.

These symptoms can include:

- ▶ craving certain foods
- ▶ increased thirst
- ▶ stiff neck
- ▶ irritability or other mood changes
- ▶ fatigue
- ▶ anxiety

Premonitory symptoms can last anywhere from 1 to 24 hours before the aura or headache phases begin.

WHAT TO EXPECT DURING THE AURA PHASE

About 25 per cent of people with migraine experience aura. Aura symptoms typically happen before the headache, or main attack, occurs. It often occurs 10 to 30 minutes before the headache pain begins.

Aura symptoms can last anywhere from 5 minutes to 1 hour.

Aura can include a wide range of neurological symptoms. You may see:

- ▶ colored spots
- ▶ dark spots
- ▶ sparkles or "stars"
- ▶ flashing lights
- ▶ zigzag lines
- ▶ "heat waves"

You may feel:

- ▶ numbness or tingling
- ▶ weakness
- ▶ dizziness
- ▶ anxiety or confusion

You may also experience disturbances in speech and hearing. In rare cases, fainting and partial paralysis are possible.

Although these symptoms usually precede a migraine headache in adults, it's possible for them to occur at the same time. Children may be more likely to experience an aura at the

same time as their headache.

In some cases, aura symptoms may come and go without ever leading to a headache.

What to expect during the headache phase

Most cases of migraine aren't accompanied by aura symptoms. Migraine without aura moves directly from the warning stage into the headache stage.

Headache symptoms are typically the same for migraine with and without aura. They may include:

- ▶ pulsing pain on one or both sides of your head
- ▶ sensitivity to light, noise, odors, or even touch
- ▶ blurred vision
- ▶ nausea
- ▶ vomiting
- ▶ loss of appetite
- ▶ lightheadedness
- ▶ worsening pain with physical activity or other movement

During a migraine attack, many people may be unable to work or continue with their usual daily activities.

This phase is the most unpredictable, with episodes lasting anywhere from a few hours to a few days.

WHAT TO EXPECT DURING THE POSTDROME PHASE

Many migraine headaches gradually fade in intensity. Some people find that taking a nap can help relieve their symptoms. Children may only need to rest a few

minutes to see results. This is known as the resolution phase.

As the headache begins to lift, you may experience the recovery phase. This can include a feeling of exhaustion or even of elation. You may also feel:

- ▶ moody
- ▶ dizzy
- ▶ confused
- ▶ weak

Your symptoms during the recovery phase may pair with symptoms you experienced during the warning phase. For example, if you lost your appetite during the warning phase you may now find that you're ravenous. These symptoms may last for up to a day after your headache.

HOW TO FIND RELIEF

There isn't one right way to treat a migraine. If your migraine episodes are infrequent, you may be able to use over-the-counter (OTC) medications to treat symptoms as they occur.

If your symptoms are chronic or severe, OTC treatments may not be helpful. A doctor may be able to prescribe stronger medication to treat existing symptoms and help prevent future attacks.

HOME REMEDIES

Sometimes, changing your environment may be enough to relieve the bulk of your symptoms.

If you can, seek solace in a quiet room

with minimal lighting. Use lamps instead of overhead lighting, and draw the blinds or curtains to block sunlight.

The light from your phone, computer, TV, and other electronic screens may exacerbate your symptoms, so limiting your screen time may help.

Applying a cold compress and massaging your temples may also provide relief. If you aren't feeling nauseous, upping your water intake may also be helpful.

It can also help to track, identify, and avoid what's triggering your symptoms. This may help reduce symptoms and prevent them from recurring.

Common triggers can include:

- ▶ stress
- ▶ certain foods
- ▶ skipped meals
- ▶ drinks with alcohol or caffeine
- ▶ certain medications
- ▶ not getting enough sleep
- ▶ hormonal changes
- ▶ weather changes
- ▶ concussions and other head injuries
- ▶ OTC medication

OTC pain relievers may help with symptoms that are mild or infrequent. Common options include:

- ▶ aspirin (Bayer)
- ▶ ibuprofen (Advil)
- ▶ naproxen (Aleve)

If your symptoms are more severe, you may want to try a medication that combines a pain reliever and caffeine, such as Excedrin. Caffeine has the potential to both trigger and treat migraine episodes, so you





may want to avoid this product unless you're sure that caffeine isn't a trigger for you.

These medications shouldn't be used more than 10 to 15 days per month. Doing so can lead to medication overuse headaches.

PRESCRIPTION MEDICATION

If OTC options aren't working, you may decide to talk with a doctor.

They may be able to prescribe stronger, more targeted medications to help ease the pain.

This may include triptans, such as:

- ▶ sumatriptan (Imitrex, Treximet)
- ▶ zolmitriptan (Zomig)
- ▶ eletriptan (Relpax)
- ▶ rizatriptan (Maxalt)
- ▶ almotriptan

If your migraine episodes are chronic, a doctor may also prescribe medication to help prevent future episodes. These medications may include:

▶ Calcitonin-gene-related peptide (CGRP) antagonists: rimegepant (Nurtec ODT) or ubrogepant (Ubrovelvy)

▶ Selective serotonin 1F receptor agonist: lasmiditan (Reyvow)

▶ They may also prescribe medication to help relieve nausea.

WHEN TO TALK WITH A DOCTOR

If you're experiencing a migraine episode for the first time, you may be able to relieve your symptoms with home remedies and OTC medications.

But if you've had multiple migraine episodes, you may want to make an appointment with a doctor. They can assess your symptoms and develop a treatment plan tailored to your individual needs.

You should see your doctor right away if:

- ▶ Your symptoms began after a head injury.
- ▶ Your symptoms last longer than 72 hours.
- ▶ You're 40 years old or older and are experiencing a migraine for the first time.
- ▶ You develop a sudden severe headache.
- ▶ You're over the age of 50.
- ▶ Your headaches have changed in quality.
- ▶ You have a headache that occurs with neurological symptoms, such as weakness on one side of the body, numbness, loss of vision, loss of consciousness.

TAKEAWAY

A migraine episode typically lasts anywhere from 4 to 72 hours.

It consists of four or five phases during which you may experience other symptoms. During the headache phase, you may experience throbbing pain and sensitivity to light, sound, smell, or touch.

A doctor can prescribe prescription medication that may help relieve pain and prevent future episodes.

“During a migraine attack, many people may be unable to work or continue with their usual daily activities. This phase is the most unpredictable, with episodes lasting anywhere from a few hours to a few days.”

Time-restricted eating may help you improve organ health

A new study published in the journal *Cell Metabolism* reports that time-restricted feeding (TRF) — also known as time-restricted eating (TRE) when it applies to humans — was found to have effects on gene activity in mice.

Altogether the effects were exhibited in 22 different tissue types throughout the body, including the heart, lungs, liver, brain, and gut.

“Nearly 80% of all genes show differential expression or rhythmicity under TRF in at least one tissue,” according to the study authors.

They suggest that future work could guide the use of TRE to treat various disease conditions in humans.

WHAT IS TIME-RESTRICTED FEEDING/EATING?

Shereen Jegtvig, a nutritionist and author who teaches at the University of Bridgeport in Connecticut, explained that time-restricted eating is a common form of intermittent fasting (IF), which involves eating only during specific hours of the day and fasting for the rest of the time.

“Other forms of IF are more difficult and include fasting for a full day now and then or restricting calorie intake to about 500 or so every other day,” said Jegtvig. Lead author of the study, Satchidananda Panda, PhD, who holds the Rita and Richard Atkinson Chair at the Salk Institute for Biological Studies in La Jolla,

CA, described TRE as limiting calorie intake to a specific, regular period of time each day, leaving a 12- to 18-hour window when no nutrients are consumed.

Panda further noted, “There is no explicit limit on energy intake during eating hours. TRE allows water consumption outside of the designated eating window, but in some cases, non-caloric beverages such as unsweetened tea or black coffee are permitted.”

He additionally suggested that the fasting window should be customized to the individual based on their sleep time and schedule.

Panda added that since the fasting community often uses the terms “intermittent fasting” or “IF” to refer to regimens other than time-restricted eating, TRE (or TRF for animal studies) is the most accurate term to use.

Most scientific studies use this term, and curious minds can search this term to find peer-reviewed scientific publications.”

The effects of time-restricted feeding on mice Panda said that while previous research had focused on linking TRF/TRE to a fairly small number of genes in the liver, their study greatly expanded on this work by looking at 22 different organs and brain regions, as well as all genes in the genome.

To do this, Panda and his team allowed a control group of mice to eat as much as they desired while another



group was only allowed to consume food during a 9-hour feeding window.

All mice were fed a diet corresponding to a Western diet in humans, and all were supplied with the same number of calories.

At the 7-week mark, the researchers took samples from the designated organs and brain regions of the mice every 2 hours extended over a 24-hour period.

What they found was that, compared with the controls, the TRF mice experienced genomic responses in nearly all tissues and brain regions.

“These changes indicate TRF improves autophagy, mitochondria function, DNA damage repair, proteostasis, RNA folding, fatty acid oxidation, glycolysis, gluconeogenesis, and many more,” said Panda. “These pathways also predict TRF may benefit by reducing the risk for atherosclerosis, kidney disease, dysbiosis, and various gut diseases.”

TIME-RESTRICTED EATING CAN HELP PREVENT OR MANAGE HEALTH CONDITIONS

Panda noted that TRE/TRF has previously been shown to have multiple potential benefits for human health. “It has been shown to prevent, better manage, or in some cases reverse several health conditions,” Panda said. That list includes but is not limited to conditions such as:

- ▶ glucose intolerance
- ▶ insulin resistance
- ▶ hypertension
- ▶ dyslipidemia
- ▶ fatty liver disease
- ▶ chronic inflammation
- ▶ sleep disorders
- ▶ age-dependent declines in cardiac

function.

Time-restricted eating can aid with weight loss as well Jegtvig added that time-restricted eating can also help with weight loss because it reduces the amount of time that you can eat. “It may also affect insulin and appetite hormone levels, but most of the effect is probably from reducing calories even though counting calories isn't necessary,” she said. Jegtvig further noted that small studies suggest it may improve the risk factors for metabolic syndrome and heart disease, although this may be a side effect of the weight loss itself rather than something specific about TRE.

Jegtvig concluded by advising that if you are going to practice TRE or any other form of IF, the feeding window shouldn't be seen as an opportunity to indulge in unhealthy food.

“While there should be a place for occasional snacks and treats in your diet, it's important to nourish yourself with healthy foods,” she said.

Healthline

NEWS IN PICTURES



▲ Netherlands' Daria Danilova and Michel Tsiba perform during the pairs free skating at the European Figure Skating Championships in Kaunas, Lithuania.



▲ he Gravity-1 rocket, developed by Chinese company Orienspace, takes off from a ship off the coast of Haiyang, Shandong province, China.



▲ Supporters attend a campaign rally of the ruling Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) ahead of the presidential and parliamentary elections in Taipei, Taiwan.



▲ A male kingfisher eats a fish from the River Ver, Verulamium Park, St Albans, Britain.



▲ An armed soldier stands guard in a commercial area, in the aftermath of a wave a violence that saw the storming of a TV station on-air and explosions around the nation, in Quito, Ecuador.



▲ Team Audi Sport's Carlos Sainz and co-driver Lucas Cruz in action during stage 6 of the Dakar Rally in Saudi Arabia.

‘SA refereeing has regressed’

RETIRED Fifa referee Victor Hlungwani has raised concerns about the thin representation of South African officials at the 2023 Africa Cup of Nations (Afcon) in Ivory Coast, saying the deterioration of SA’s refereeing is alarming.

Apart from Bafana Bafana, referee Abongile Tom will be the only on-field match official that will be flying the South African flag in Ivory Coast.

Akhona Makalima will also be representing SA at the Afcon, but she will only officiate in the Video Assistant Referee (VAR) booth.

Hlungwani, a seasoned referee during his 20-year-long career with the whistle and now well-respected football analyst on refereeing matters, said having Tom as the only South African referee at the Afcon could be a consequence of recent poor officiating in the PSL.

Speaking to the Sunday World, Hlungwani went as far as suggesting he doubts that SA will have any representation at the upcoming 2026 Fifa World Cup.

“The fact that we have only Tom as the only on-field official at the Afcon, the biggest competition in Africa, should be a major concern for us as a country.

“It’s true that the performance of our officials in the PSL has not been good enough in recent years and the referees need to do better. So, it is imperative that Safa and the PSL move with time, not only to improve



▲ Retired Fifa referee Victor Hlungwani has raised concerns about the thin representation of South African officials at the 2023 Africa Cup of Nations (Afcon) in Ivory Coast, saying the deterioration of SA’s refereeing is alarming.

our referees, but to improve our entire football because football is constantly evolving.”

Zakhele Siwela, who is arguably the best assistant referee on the continent, was overlooked by CAF in its final list of match officials. The decision has irked Hlungwani: “Zakhele is a top CAF official who has officiated at more than three Afcons and was officiating with Victor Gomes in the final of the last Afcon.

“Maybe this is a question Victor

[Gomes] must answer as he is the head of our referees and is likely to know how CAF reached their decision.”

Abdul Ebrahim, Safa head of department for referees, said: “As an association we are obviously disappointed to not have Zakhele at the Afcon, but we are not upset. What is more important for us is the appointment of Makalima as a VAR official. Having her representing us is massive.” (Sunday World)

Japan beat Vietnam in six-goal thriller at Asian Cup

DOHA - Japan came from behind to beat Vietnam 4-2 in their Asian Cup Group D opener in a thrilling encounter on Sunday at the Al Thumama Stadium where five goals were scored in the first half and Takumi Minamino grabbed a brace.

Japan, four-times champions who last won the Asian Cup in 2011, were shocked into action when Vietnam took a 2-1 lead before the Samurai Blue cut their south-east Asian opponents down to size with two goals just before halftime.

“I know people in Japan wanted to see a game where we overcome our opponents with great power, but opening games in tournaments are always difficult and that’s what we saw today,” Japan coach Hajime Moriyasu told reporters.

“When we lost the lead in the first half the players were very calm, they knew they had the whole 90 minutes to play for the win. They managed to do that in the end of the first half.”

Vietnam’s initial resistance when the game kicked off lasted all of 10 minutes before Japan scored, with



▲ Japan came from behind to beat Vietnam 4-2 in their Asian Cup Group D opener in a thrilling encounter on Sunday.

Minamino being in the right place at the right time to pounce on a rebound and guide it through a crowd of players into the net.

But Vietnam shocked Japan with an equaliser five minutes later from a corner when Nguyen Dinh Bac -- running away from goal -- directed a glancing header that looped over the keeper and into the net at the far post.

As the game opened up and with both sides creating chances, it was

Vietnam who took the lead from another set piece when Bui Hoang Anh headed the cross to the far post where Japan keeper Zion Suzuki failed to deal with it and Pham Tuan Hai fired home.

The goal sparked wild celebrations and Vietnam coach Philippe Troussier, who is no stranger to Japan having guided them to the title in 2000, allowed himself a wry smile when they went 2-1 up.

(Reuters)



▲ Novak Djokovic tried his hand at wheelchair tennis during a charity event on Rod Laver Arena.

Djokovic tries wheelchair tennis

NOVAK Djokovic proved he is human after all after trying out wheelchair tennis at a charity event in Melbourne and leaving the crowd in stitches due to his struggles.

A sensational line-up of sports superstars joined Djokovic for an evening to remember on Rod Laver Arena ahead of the first round of the Australian Open.

Spectators secured their seats to watch Djokovic take on a variety of challenges, including cricket with Steve Smith and basketball with former NBA player Alan Williams. Track star Peter Bol also put him through his paces in running drills. However, arguably the highlight of the night was Djokovic strapping himself into a wheelchair and attempting to take part in a rally while unsteadily moving around.

Rounding off the event, Aryna Sabalenka, the defending Australian Open champion, Stefanos Tsitsipas, Maria Sakkari and Aussie wheelchair tennis player Heath Davidson took to the court and threw themselves into a chaotic match of sorts. On one side of the court, Djokovic, clad in blue, struggled to guide his chair closer to the net to return several shots, with his opponents keen to ease him into the action. Davidson and his doubles partner Sakkari began to apply the pressure after serving, however, with Djokovic’s own partner, a tennis prodigy nicknamed Mini Novak, forced to race across almost the full width of the court for returns. Eventually, Davidson hit a forehand down the line that arrowed to Djokovic’s right and the world No 1 unsurprisingly couldn’t make contact after dangling his racket. (Mail Sport)

Moroka Swallows target players for no-shows

W from being found guilty of misconduct and bringing the Premier Soccer League (PSL) into disrepute after failing to honour two matches, Swallows are set to turn the heat on their players.

Swallows escaped expulsion from the DStv Premiership following the saga towards end of December.

Under pressure from players who were demanding December salaries early and refusing to play until payment was made, the Dube Birds requested the clash against Mamelodi Sundowns be cancelled just hours before kick-off.

The match between Swallows and Lamontville Golden Arrows a few days later was also abandoned as precaution.

Sunday World has reliably learnt that the Swallows management hauled the players before the disciplinary com-

mittee on Friday. Swallows are accusing the players of engaging in an unlawful strike, failing to honour the fixtures and breaching the National Soccer League rules, said the source.

The club could fine or dismiss the players if found guilty. The exodus of players like striker Kagiso Malinga in the Birds nest is imminent as some players are reportedly courted by top PSL teams. Most players are six months away from their contracts ending and are eligible to sign pre contracts elsewhere.

This publication also picked up that two senior players, midfielder Andile Jali and striker Hellings “Gabadhino” Mhango, have been fingered by management as the main instigators who initiated the strike.

They have since informed the Players Union about being summoned before the DC,” a source said. (Sunday World)



▲Nigerian hitman, Victor Osimhen levelled matters with a difficult header that found its way into an empty net to salvage a point for the Nigerians.

‘We were unlucky’

HELD in check on Sunday in their first Group A game of the TotalEnergies CAF Africa Cup of Nations Côte d'Ivoire 2023, Nigeria did not succeed in starting off in the fashion they would have loved. But beyond the slightly disappointing result, Super Eagles coach Jose Peseiro is satisfied with the performance of his players. “We hoped to win this match and we did everything to win. Our team was better than that of Equatorial Guinea but we lacked luck,” he said.

“I am not happy. I deserved to win, this draw doesn’t suit us. Our team created a lot of chances but we didn’t score. We hope that next time, even with fewer opportunities, we will score. We simply have to improve our finishing,” he said. Nigeria will face hosts Côte d'Ivoire, for their second game. The match scheduled for Thursday at the Stade Olympique Alassane Ouattara in Ebimpe at 17h00 GMT will be decisive for the Super Eagles, who have almost no room for error. (Cafonline)



▲Nigeria Coach Jose Peseiro.

Osimhen rescues a point for Super Eagles

EQUATORIAL Guinea frustrated Nigeria with a 1-1 stalemate on Sunday afternoon after both sides kicked off their TotalEnergies CAF Africa Cup of Nations Group A matches at Ebimpe’s Alassane Ouattara Olympic Stadium. A composed finish by Ivan Salvador in the 36th minute saw Equatorial Guinea shock the Super Eagles with the lead. The celebrations were short-lived as Nigerian hitman, Victor Osimhen levelled matters with a difficult header that found its way into an empty net to salvage a point for the Nigerians. With the crowd behind them, Nigeria went in search of the second and were almost rewarded in the 45th minute when Moses Simon’s well struck effort came off the upright to the relief of Equatorial Guinea.

Coming in the second half, both sides hardly troubled each other’s goals, with both set of defenders doing well to remain disciplined. Up next for Nigeria is a clash that all of Africa will be waiting for with bated breath as they take on tournament hosts, Cote d’Ivoire who opened their campaign with a clinical 2-0 win over Guinea-Bissau on Saturday evening.

Wounded
Equatorial Guinea on the other hand will be encouraged by the point when they face a wounded Guinea-Bissau. The results sees Group A being led by Cote d’Ivoire while Equatorial Guinea and Nigeria are a point above Guinea-Bissau. (Cafonline)



▲Equatorial Guinea head coach, Juan Micha.

Our mission is not complete – Juan Micha

AFTER the draw against Nigeria, it was clearly evident that Equatorial Guinea head coach, Juan Micha was not enthused. He intends to continue the work to achieve his objectives in this edition of the TotalEnergies CAF Africa Cup of Nations Cote d'Ivoire 2023. Equatorial Guinea earned a valuable point on the second day of Group A. The Nzalang Nacional were able to resist the offensive might of the Super Eagles, largely thanks to the great form of goalkeeper Jesus Lazaro Owono Ngua, who was subsequently named Man of the Match. In a post-match press conference, Micha refused to see this result as an achievement. “I think this selection that I lead is prepared day by day to compete in this tournament... I am lucky to know the details of football

having been a high level player,” he said. He added his teammates intend to keep their heads on their shoulders and not plunge into euphoria after this encouraging result. “Our mission is not complete, we still have a lot to do. We are in a group stage, this is the first match. We will try to reach the next stage before seeing what happens next.” Equatorial Guinea will face Guinea-Bissau on Thursday for the second game. A victory against the Djurtus will allow Micha and his men to have a step in the round of 16. During its three previous participations, the Central African country has always managed to get out of the group stages. (Cafonline)

Mbabane Highlanders, Moneni Pirates in 1-all draw



▲Mbabane Highlanders players and Moneni Pirates battle for the ball during the MTN Premier League 1-all draw at Mavuso Sports Centre.



▲Mbabane Highlanders supporters celebrate their goal against Moneni Pirates.



▲Mbabane Highlanders Philani Mkhontfo avoids a tackle from Moneni Pirates.



▲Moneni Pirates players celebrate after taking the lead against Mbabane Highlanders.



▲Mbabane Highlanders players in a hurry with the ball after scoring in their 1-all draw against Moneni Pirates.



▲Moneni Pirates goalkeeper makes a save from Mbabane Highlanders Musa Dlamini strike.



▲Moneni Pirates Mfanfikile 'Fash' Ndzimandze dribbles past Mbabane Highlanders Frimpong Kojo.



▲Mbabane Highlanders and Moneni Pirates players reaction after the 1-all draw on Sunday in the MTN Premier League.

EFA needs E20mil for World Cup qualifiers



▲Eswatini Football Association (EFA) CEO Frederick Mngometulu.

Stories by Sibusiso Masilela and Lwazi Dlamini

THE Eswatini Football Association needs E20 million for the 2026 FIFA World Cup qualifiers.

This was revealed by the organization’s Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Frederick Mngometulu during the football Indaba held on Saturday.

“We will need about E20 million to sustain the senior national team during the World Cup qualifiers. The money will cover the entire match expenses as we usually spend about E700 000 for home matches, which we normally host at Mbombela Stadium.

Away matches usually costs around E1.2 million per match and this include air tickets and other expenses,” he said.

The senior national team has already played two matches in the World Cup qualifiers against Libya and Cape Verde respectively where they were defeated 1-0 and 2-0 at Mbombela Stadium.

Sihlangu will also take part in the 2025 AFCON qualifiers from March this year.

The nation’s pride is still going to face Cameroon, Angola, and Mauritius in the other Group D matches of the global showpiece qualifiers.

The next World Cup finals will be jointly hosted by the United States of America, Canada and Mexico.



▲Premier League of Eswatini (PLE) Executive Member Charles Matsebula.

National team coaches should not be conflicted — Charles

PREMIER League of Eswatini (PLE) Executive member Charles Matsebula has called for national team coaches to recuse themselves from executive positions at the Eswatini Football Coaches Association.

Matsebula said such a situation compromises the integrity of the coaches.

This was during the Football Indaba held on Sunday at Sibane Sami Hotel.

“National team coaches should not hold positions within the Coaches Association. This causes coaches to be conflicted and it should be avoided at all costs.”

Matsebula also called for the appointment of an independent national team panel that will oversee operations in the senior national squads.

“We need to have an independent committee that will look after the national team and report to the Executive Committee. The formation of the Committee can also help to grind results for the national team,”

he said.

Meanwhile, Technical Committee member Nhlanhla ‘Madida’ Mabuza called for the engagement of national team coaches permanently.

“The national team should be full time so that he can do other national team duties such as development competitions when the squad is inactive,” he said.

Eswatini Football Association (EFA) President Peter ‘Samora’ Simelane said they were still going to compile reports for the submissions made by delegates.

Incumbent Sihlangu coach Dominic Kunene is treasurer for the Coaches Association, while his assistant, Anthony Mdluli is chairperson of the coaches’ mother body.

The Eswatini Football Association will decide on the fate of the current coaches during their retreat scheduled for Friday possibly at the Hilton Hotel.

Kunene’s contract expired on December 31, 2023.

Let's revive football in the country — ‘Chacklas’

ESWATINI legend Abel ‘Chacklas’ Shongwe has called for the revival of football in the country.

Shongwe said this could be achieved through unity within the entire football fraternity.

“Let’s all work together to revive the sport. We need to work together as a country by going back to grassroots level to scout for talent that can be developed until the youngsters become professional players. Such talents can propel the country to greater heights within the footballing fraternity,” he said.

The former Mbabane Highlanders

winger was echoed by another legend ex-goalkeeper William ‘Cool Cat’ Shongwe, who was the programme director at the Football Indaba.

“Regional talent identification can help the country to scout for the best talent. This includes school youth programs, and I am a product of schools development. I was scouted by the late former Sihlangu head coach Ted Dumitru at St Mark’s High School,” he said.

The Indaba was attended by EFA delegates and representatives from the business community Nedbank and Eswatini Posts and Telecommunications Corporation (EPTC).



▲Abel ‘Chacklas’ Shongwe.

Nyasha Chintuli torments Leopard

... New Zimbabwean striker Nyasha Chintuli grabs a hat-trick on his debut as Nsingizini Hotspurs trash Royal Leopard 3-1 at King Sobhuza II Memorial Stadium on Sunday

By Lwazi Dlamini
lwazid@rubiconmedia.group

THE ink had barely dried up after signing a two-year contract with Nsingizini Hotspurs when Zimbabwe-born eccentric striker Nyasha Chintuli proved he could be the find of the 2023/2024 season for the Shiselweni-based outfit.

Chintuli, signed from Tenax Football club in Zimbabwe last week, was officially unveiled by club President Derrick Shiba on Sunday morning.

Four hours later he had opened his scoring account for his new team with a typical poacher's goal.

It took him just 46 minutes on his debut to net the first of his three goals. Leopard responded swiftly with an equaliser through ever-green Sifiso 'Junior' Magagula two minutes later.

New Nsingizini coach, Alexio Sigion, who was also unveiled as well on Sunday morning after penning a two-year contract, watched his fellow countryman warmed himself into the hearts of those clad in green and white on the terraces with another deft finish for the second goal four minutes after the hour-mark. The lavishly talented former Zimbabwe Dynamos marksman completed his hat-trick in the 84th minute with another cool-as-a-cucumber finish to announce his arrival in the Eswatini football landscape and win the hearts of the Embiveni Meats sponsored outfit.

Nsingizini Hotspurs remains in eighth spot in the log standings and will face a hard fighting Denver Sundowns, who drew 1-1 with Mbabane Swallows at Mavuso Sports Centre, in the Ingwenyama Cup Last 16 this weekend.

► Zimbabwean striker Nyasha Chintuli (Right) with club Chairman Derrick Shiba during his unveiling.



► Mbabane Highlanders played a 1-all draw against Moneni Pirates on Sunday during the MTN Premier League at Mavuso Sports Centre.



'Birds', 'Bull' held to draws in MTN Premier League

Stories By Ntokoze Magongo
ntokozom@rubiconmedia.group

BITTER traditional rivals, Mbabane Swallows and Mbabane Highlanders dropped crucial points in the Premier League after settling for 1-all draws on Sunday.

Mbabane Swallows, who are third on the log forced a 1-all draw with Denver Sundowns while it was the same story for Mbabane Highlanders against Moneni Pirates as they also came back from a goal down to settle for a 1-all draw.

This was during the MTN Premier League doubleheader played at Mavuso Sports Centre on Sunday.

It was Mbabane Swallows' Felix Badenhurst who came to their rescue with the equalising goal in added time as Denver Sundowns had taken the lead with six minutes remaining before full time.

Swallows failed to repeat their heroics in the 3-0 win over Lozitha Spurs in the Ingwenyama Cup at Somhlolo National Stadium.

They now have 25 points after the draw on Sunday, two points away from log leaders Green Mamba who play Manzini Wanderers on Tuesday.

Meanwhile, Moneni Pirates gave Mbabane

MTN PREMIER LEAGUE WEEK 14 RESULTS:			
D. Sundowns	1-1	M. Swallows	
M. Pirates	1-1	M. Highlanders	
Illovo	1-0	Madlenya	
Y. Buffaloes	3-1	M. Sea Birds	
N. Hotspurs	3-1	R. Leopard	
Ezulwini	0-3	Rangers	
Playing Tuesday:			
Mavuso Sports Centre:			
M. Wanderers	vs	G. Mamba	6 pm

Highlanders a scare as they went to the break leading 1-0 after a 40th minute goal. Highlanders were rescued by Mpendulo Tfomo with 20 minutes remaining before full time when he scored against his former team.

The biggest winners of week 14 were the trio of Rangers who beat Ezulwini United 3-0 on Friday afternoon at the Prince of Wales Sports Ground while Young Buffaloes won 3-1 against Manzini Sea Birds and Nsingizini Hotspurs inflicted the same score against struggling Royal Leopard who was also booted out of the Ingwenyama Cup last in the last 3-2 by First Division League side, Tambankulu Celtics.

Despite Green Mamba, being out of action, they remain top of the log with 27 points having played a game less.

A two-year contract for new Nsingizini Zimbabwean coach

NSINGIZINI Hotspurs has handed their new Zimbabwean Coach Alexio Sigion a two-year contract.

He took over the post from departed Malawi Coach Meck Mwase who had been in charge of the club last season.

Sigion was unveiled by the team President Derrick Shiba on Sunday morning ahead of the 3-1 win against Royal Leopard.

"Yes, he is our new coach and has signed a two-year contract with us. We will support him in every way possible so that he can deliver on his mandate," Shiba told Eswatini Daily News on Sunday.

Sigion will be assisted by Charles Manda who has been in charge of the Shiselweni base since in the absence of Meck

Mwase who left the club three months ago to attend to some personal errands back in his home country, Malawi.

Nsingizini Hotspurs Public Relations Officer (PRO) Mnotfo Dlamini said they were happy that their coach led them to victory on his debut and it shows that they were heading for good times.

Debut

Sigion holds a CAF Licence A certificate and was on the bench when the team beat Royal Leopard on his debut.

Nsingizini Hotspurs also unveiled their new signees including Alvin Shabashie from Denver Sundowns, Yeki Khumalo from Moneni Pirates and Sambulo Simelene who is on loan from Rangers.



► Zimbabwean Coach Alexio Sigion (Right) being unveiled by Shiba.



**‘South African
refereeing has
regressed’**

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**‘Birds’, ‘Bull’
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Sport



Outstanding Chintuli torments Leopard

... New Zimbabwean striker Nyasha Chintuli grabs a hat-trick on his debut as Nsingizini Hotspurs trash Royal Leopard 3-1 at King Sobhuza II Memorial Stadium on Sunday. *Page 23*