



## OVC grants to be paid timeously — DPM's Office

By Bahle Gama

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THE government through the Deputy Prime Minister's Office has made an audacious pledge of paying school grants for orphaned and vulnerable children (OVC) timeously this year. Public schools are scheduled to open on Tuesday, January 23. This was disclosed by the Principal Secretary (PS) in the Deputy Prime Minister's office Melusi Masuku who said the office intends to make the payments early to ensure that no pupils would be sent home due to unpaid fees this year.

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## Ministry of Housing identifies growth points poised to be developed into towns

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This was disclosed by the Principal Secretary (PS) in the Deputy Prime Minister’s office Melusi Masuku who said the office intends to make the payments early to ensure that no pupils would be sent home due to unpaid fees this year.

“As the DPM Office, in conjunction with the Ministry of Finance, we have ensured that one-third of the grants will be paid timeously to avoid inconveniencing the children. This is to ensure that the children are properly admitted and afforded education in the different schools,” Masuku said.

The PS said the DPM’s Office is not anticipating getting reports of OVCs who would be sent home for not paying their school fees, owing deposits or top-ups.

He said the DPMO and Ministry of Finance will also ensure that by the time the second term kicks off, two-thirds of the money expected to be paid by the government would have been paid in full to avoid children ending up attending classes due to owed money.

He said this is intended to assist schools



▲ Government says no pupil will be sent home due to owed fees.

in paying bills and support staff to ensure its smooth running and operations.

The Director of Social Welfare Mcusi Shongwe said the intake for 2024 was almost complete and applications were coming in, allowing the office to consolidate the list of beneficiaries.

According to the Director, the OVC grant is a bursary for secondary and high school education that targets poor OVC and is directly paid to schools.

He said the government pays E1 950 for OVC in Forms 1 - 3 and 5, then E2 500 for pupils in Form 4 because of the increase in the number of subjects.

Shongwe said the assessment which will be conducted by the DPM’s Office will allow the government to compile a list of the OVC in the country which includes single and double orphans, as well as those who are vulnerable.

According to the 2016/17 Eswatini



▲ Principal-Secretary in the Deputy Prime Minister’s Office Melusi Masuku.

Household Income and Expenditure Survey, the grant only covers 19 per cent of households, yet 60 per cent of all children in the country were classified as vulnerable and 71 per cent of these are orphans and vulnerable children.

The survey recommended that fiscal resources need to be reallocated from non-priority sectors to cover the full costs of reaching all children in need.

By Nokunceda Magagula  
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## Stokvel Treasurer pleads guilty ‘for robbing himself’ E48 000

A Stokvel treasurer has pleaded guilty to staging a robbery of E48 000 which was saved with his fellow members.

Bongani Tsela was charged with theft after he allegedly stole money which was entrusted to him as the treasurer of a stokvel that was formed by a group of security guards who stay at a certain rented compound at Mcitsini, Mbabane.

According to reports, after allegedly stealing the money, Tsela came up with a plan to stage a robbery so that his fellow members would eliminate him as a suspect.

The accused is said to have tied his hands and feet, blindfolded himself making sure that it seems like someone has come in and robbed him. However, as the police intensified their investigations, they detected that he was the suspect.

On the first day of his trial on Monday, the accused pleaded guilty to the charge of theft. The crown paraded its first witness, Amos Magagula who was also a member of the stokvel. Magagula told the court that they formed the stokvel in December 2022, after deserting another stokvel which they were members of. He told the court that it was Tsela who came up with the idea that they should form a stokvel, telling them (the other members) that he believed the treasurer of the previous stokvel had stolen

some of the money.

He narrated to the court that they held a meeting with other security guards who lived in the same compound together with him and Tsela to start the stokvel and they agreed to elect Tsela as their treasurer as he had promised to be faithful and accountable at all times. Magagula said the stokvel’s main objective was to spend the savings on buying groceries at the end of the year and share it among themselves. It had 26 members.

The witness explained that they contributed E150 as a monthly subscription per person, adding that he (Magagula) registered two names so he could contribute E300 every month. He also told the court that they had agreed that the money would be kept in Tsela’s mobile money account.

Narrating the events leading to the day of the staged robbery, Magagula said earlier that day, they had a meeting at Mbabane Market, where they discussed how they were going to buy the groceries as the year was coming to an end.

In the meeting, Magagula said Tsela told them that they had accumulated E48 000 over the year 2023 and it was short by E4000 which was money that was being owed by some members who had not yet paid back the money they had borrowed.



▲ Bongani Tsela, the Stokvel Treasurer who staged his robbery and stole E48 000 pictured at the Mbabane Magistrate’s Court after his trial on Monday.

Magagula said later that night while he was in his house, he heard a big bang which came from Tsela’s house. The witness said together with three other men they rushed to Tsela’s house where they found him in a terrific condition, Tsela had tied both hands

and feet with a cloth-like item, the accused also had socks in his mouth and his eyes were blindfolded.

The accused was also groaning indicating that he was in intense pain. Magagula said they called community police who came to inspect the situation. Upon their arrival, they tried to ask the accused a few questions however he could not speak. When asked where is the money the accused is said to have pointed to a drawer and when one of the community police opened it, he found a big empty purse. Realizing that the money was not there, Tsela was heard speaking for the first time saying “Oh Lord people’s money is gone”.

Magagula said the accused was then taken to hospital, upon his arrival from hospital the next day the accused told the witness that he was attacked by three men who were carrying bush knives and robbed him of the stokvel money. Magagula said he did not believe Tsela’s story as he did suspect that the accused might have planned the whole thing.

During cross examination Tsela refuted the claim that he is the one who came up idea of starting the stokvel, and had no further things to say. The matter will be heard again in court on January 18, 2024.





▲ One of the sugar plantations at St Phillips in the Lubombo region where over 100 emaSwati were educated on preventative measures against Malaria.

# St Phillips community equipped with Malaria preventative lessons

Stories by Ncaba Ntshakala

THE buzzing whine of mosquitos will pose less fear to the residents of St Phillips these days, thanks to a proactive initiative by the Ministry of Health.

In a recent outreach programme, the Ministry equipped the community with crucial knowledge and tools to combat malaria, a disease prevalent in some parts of Eswatini, mostly in the Lowveld.

The ministry's outreach provided residents with comprehensive information sessions where experts delivered informative talks on malaria symptoms, transmission, and prevention strategies. This awareness campaign aimed to dispel myths and misconceptions, empowering individuals to identify and address potential risks.

It also expressed the importance of using insecticide-treated nets (ITNs). Residents further received clear instructions on hanging, washing, and repairing ITNs, ensuring their effectiveness and longevity.

"The Ministry recognises that St Phillips, with its extensive sugar cane plantations and agricultural schemes, attracts a lot of people, increasing the risk of malaria transmission," shared Elias Ngcamphalala, a resident of St Phillips, highlighting the impetus behind the programmes.

### Fight

The Ministry asserted that the area has many activities due to the sugar cane plantations and such can create ideal breeding grounds for malaria.

His Majesty King Mswati III has been championing the fight against malaria in the country and Africa. His efforts led to the birth of the End Malaria Fund, which is an initiative established to curb the spread of malaria. The fund expresses that ending

malaria remains a strategic priority for all sectors and at all levels (from national down to the community). The End Malaria Fund actively sensitises religious and traditional leaders, parliamentarians, and business leaders to the objectives of the National Malaria Elimination Strategy.

The Fund has worked on many activities which include organised meetings with traditional leaders and the National Malaria Programme to discuss how they can champion malaria. Also, it has hosted events with national leaders commemorating the launch of the National Malaria Elimination Strategic Plan to raise the visibility of national objectives, created a platform for the Youth of Eswatini to contribute to the strategy of creating a Youth Army that will lead the malaria elimination agenda, stakeholder engagements, including Church Forums to discuss how the church can play its role in malaria elimination and resource mobilisation.

## Unroadworthy Sam & Sons bus crashes near Mahhala

Along-running saga of public concern culminated into a tragedy on Sunday when a visibly dilapidated Sam & Sons bus which was from Mbabane enroute to Manzini was involved in an accident near Mahhala, Matsapha, leaving the driver of the bus seriously injured.

Eyewitness Ndumiso Ngwenya gave a chilling account of the incident. "The bus was not speeding, and then suddenly it swerved violently, unable to make the turn properly," he described. "It seems the driver completely lost control of the steering wheel." The bus veered off the road and hit the concrete bridge of the Mahhala traffic circle.

Ngwenya's words echoed a mounting chorus of complaints about the bus's condition. "This wasn't a surprise," he stated with stark honesty. "Everyone knew this bus was in trouble. It looked worn out, the brakes often seemed to malfunction, and the doors barely shut properly. Mechanics were always tinkering with it, but it never seemed truly fixed."

These concerns had been voiced



▲ Sam & Sons bus which crashed at Mahhala on Sunday leaving the bus driver seriously injured.

publicly, with passengers taking to social media, Facebook to be precise to urge Sam and Sons to address the bus's evident unroadworthiness.

Tragically, these pleas fell on deaf ears,

leading to this avoidable accident. Many applauded the driver for trying to maintain balance and that the accident didn't happen in the notorious Malagwane hill which could be worse news.



Weekend tragedy:

## 4 die in car crashes, including 2-yr-old

OVER the past weekend four people, including a two-year-old child were tragically lost in separate road accidents across the Kingdom.

This sobering statistic was highlighted in a report by the Royal Eswatini Police Services (REPS). The police also highlighted that one woman drowned whilst crossing the Ngwavuma River.

The police reported that near kaHhelehhele in the Hhohho region, a Honda sedan driven by a 34-year-old man of kaHhelehhele reversed and knocked a 2-year-old child who sustained injuries on the head and died while undergoing treatment at Mbabane Government hospital.

Also, near Nkwene along Nkwene clinic on MR9 public road, a 23-year-old woman of Mehlwabovu fell off a Nissan hardbody van driven by a 43-year-old man of Mehlwabovu.

### Injuries

The woman is reported to have sustained serious injuries and was rushed to Hlathikhulu Government Hospital where she was certified dead upon arrival.

In Gege, near Sicunusa T-junction along MR4 public road a Toyota Quantum driven by a 29-year-old man of Malangeni collided with a Toyota sedan crystal light driven by a 33-year-old man of Nsuka which disregarded a stop sign. It is reported that the driver of the sedan and his passenger, a 33-year-old man from Nsuka, suffered serious injuries and were certified dead upon arrival at Mankayane Government Hospital. Seven passengers from the Toyota Quantum were treated and admitted at Mankayane Government Hospital while two passengers from the sedan were also admitted.

Police have also shared that a 40-year-old woman from Nsindatje was discovered to have drowned while crossing the Ngwavuma River at KaLiba.

The police reported that near kaHhelehhele in the Hhohho region, a Honda sedan driven by a 34-year-old man of kaHhelehhele reversed and knocked a 2-year-old child who sustained injuries on the head and died while undergoing treatment at Mbabane Government hospital.



# Ministry of Housing's identifies growth points poised to be developed into towns

By Ncaba Ntshakala  
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THE Ministry of Housing and Urban Development has unveiled exciting plans for Eswatini's urban landscape.

Minister of Housing and Urban Development, Apollo Maphalala, recently shared the identification of several growth nodes across the country, which are areas exhibiting the potential to develop into thriving towns and cities.

These promising locations include Siphofaneni, Hluthi, Luve, Mliba and Madlangempisi, representing a significant shift towards decentralised development.

The Ministry emphasized that the central government can initiate discussions and processes towards declaring growth nodes as controlled areas for better development management. The 'bi-modal' approach helps in balancing the interests of local communities and the programming of central government regarding settlement patterns and development control.

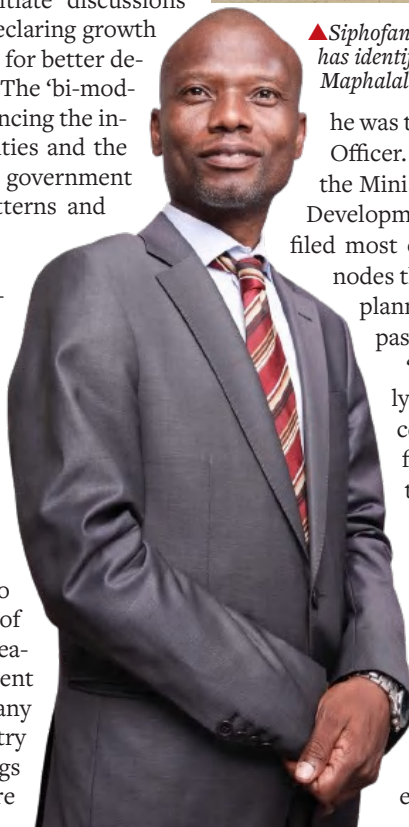
## Strategy

The Ministry's strategy on a "bi-modal" approach recognises the existing administrative structures within each growth node, and the central government offers two complementary pathways for development.

Maphalala who is also a Kukhanyeni Member of Parliament (MP) is seasoned in town development as he has served in many towns across the country including Nhlengano, Piggs Peak and Malkerns where



▲ Siphofaneni which is one of the areas that the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development has identifies as nodes for growth. (Left) Minister of Housing and Urban Development Apollo Maphalala.



he was the town's, Chief Executive Officer. Maphalala outlined that the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development has identified and profiled most of the prospective growth nodes through the regional spatial planning project undertaken in past years.

"The Ministry is currently engaged in internal processes to develop a national framework of support to the administrative structures currently governing undeclared growth nodes. The framework will include spatial planning, waste management, and building control, amongst other services," said the Minister "This will involve other Ministries that house

the competencies for the identified service support planned for the growth nodes. The success of all of these initiatives will largely depend on the affinity of the stakeholders involved in the processes."

When enquiring if the Ministry will guide the future development of such areas and similar settlements. The Minister of Housing and Urban Development expressed that there are comprehensive plans and strategies.

The Ministry has compiled national and regional spatial plans. However, the Minister added that these plans have no legislative anchor and therefore remain advisory in effect. The Ministry also has initiated stakeholder consultation to promulgate country-wide spatial planning and land-use management legislation. The proposed legislation will, amongst many benefits, help in the coordination of physical planning and land-use management activities housed under several government ministries and departments. This will ultimately help to control and inte-

## POSSIBLE BENEFITS OF THIS STRATEGY:

**Economic Diversification** - The development of new urban centres stimulates economic activity, creating jobs and attracting investment beyond the traditional hubs.

**Improved Service Delivery** - Decentralized urbanism will allow more efficient delivery of essential services like education, healthcare, and sanitation to previously underserved areas.

**Enhanced Quality of Life** - Planned urban development fosters vibrant communities with improved infrastructure, public spaces, and recreational facilities, leading to a higher standard of living for residents.

grate future development and human settlements. Two complementary pathways may be implemented for the development of such areas which are the development control instruments and regulatory frameworks. This asserts that growth nodes can proactively request assistance from the government in establishing efficient development control instruments and regulatory frameworks.

These tools, tailored to each location's specific needs, will guide responsible growth and ensure orderly urban expansion. Another pathway is the controlled area. In cases where rapid development demands more intensive management, the government may declare the growth node a "controlled area." This designation empowers the government to implement regulations and invest directly in infrastructure and service provision, accelerating the transformation into a fully-fledged town or city.

This flexible approach balances local autonomy with strategic central government support. Growth nodes will continue to retain their unique identities and administrative structures while receiving the necessary resources and expertise to unlock their full potential.

## All systems go for government's Geoscience Mapping Survey Phase II

By Bahle Gama  
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THE government through the Minister of Natural Resources and Energy will begin the second phase of the Eswatini Multi-disciplinary Geoscience Mapping Survey in earnest.

The survey is expected to start next week after the Eswatini Civil Aviation Authority (ESWACA) granted a safety licence to the Council of Geologists in South Africa.

Phase I of the survey was completed in 2021, which identified minerals such as gold, iron ore, diamond, and copper-nickel-platinum group elements in the Hhohho and Manzini Regions.

The newly-initiated Phase II will extend the exploration to the Shiselweni and Lubombo Regions and is expected to cover about 10,000 kilometers.

The survey will be conducted in conjunction with the Ministry of Natural Resources and Energy under the Geologist Survey Depart-



▲ Minister of Natural Resources and Energy Prince Lonkhokhela (In traditional attire) with the Council of Geologists during the launch of Phase II of the Survey in November.

ment.

According to the Head of Geologists in Eswatini Dr Noah Nhleko the Phase II project encompasses an airborne geophysical survey, integrating high-resolution geophysical data with existing geological and geochemical information.

He said the application of arti-

ficial intelligence (AI) aims to identify and prioritize potential mineral targets, streamlining the mineral exploration process.

Dr Nhleko said the council was granted the licence allowing them entry into the country and to also land/park their helicopters at Sikhuphe International Airport.

Dr Nhleko said what remains is the transport licence which they hope will be issued by Thursday, January 18.

"The survey is expected to begin on January 22 and the data collection will begin at Sikhuphe before moving to other parts of the region including Lomahasha, Simunye, and Mpaka amongst others," he said.

He further stated that the Council brought three helicopters to ensure the data collection process is quick.

According to Dr Nhleko, normally, one helicopter would be used, taking about six months to collect data. However, the council decided on three helicopters to create a shift schedule allowing for the team to rest and a quick process.

"We might have challenges due to the ongoing rains, therefore the projected completion period of the project is six months minimum depending on how they will work," he said.

In November 2023, Minister of Natural Resources and Energy Prince Lonkhokhela when

launching the second phase of the survey emphasized the integral role of geoscientific mapping and landscape characterization in stimulating economic growth and attracting investment.

He said the country's roadmap for 2018 to 2023 identified the mining industry as one of the pillars for the economic recovery of Eswatini.

The Minister said for investment to take place in this sector of the economy, quality, and reliable geoscientific data and information is one of the requirements for potential mining investors to make quick decisions on investing in the country.

"Geoscientific mapping and characterization of the landscape of the Kingdom of Eswatini forms an integral part in stimulating economic growth and investment. A full geoscientific understanding underpins any efforts towards sustainable development of the Kingdom's potentially vast and untapped onshore mineral resources," said Prince Lonkhokhela.



# Police to host drugs, gangs awareness in schools workshop

By Ncaba Ntshakala

THE Royal Eswatini Police Service (REPS) is taking a proactive stance against the dangers of drugs and gangs in schools with a special Drugs and Gang Awareness at School workshop before schools open.

Taking place on Wednesday, January 17 at 9 am at the Mbabane Police Station’s Conference Room, the police force is inviting all pupils across the country to learn how to make safe and smart choices.

Deputy Police Information Communication Officer Superintendent Nosipho Mnguni said that the workshop is organized by the Hhohho Regional Office hence it will be facilitated by their officers. Mnguni added that they are looking into doing the same program countrywide. She expressed that they are still waiting on the other regional Psychotherapist to submit their working plans for the year.

The workshop promises an engaging and impactful experience. It will have knowledgeable speakers that include Clinical psychologist Phephile Sukati and REPS’

in-house psychological counsellor, Praisyy Thwala. The speakers will share their expertise on the dangers of drugs and gangs, offering valuable insights and guidance to students. This initiative will offer interactive activities sponsored by Young Heroes and Build It Plus Mbabane. The workshop will move beyond traditional lectures, incorporating interactive activities to keep students engaged and retain information effectively.

Clinical Psychologist Ndo Mdlalose has hailed the initiative made by the police. Mdlalose said that this is very important as it addresses the causes of crime. “I am saying thumbs up to the police force for the initiative as I believe it will provide a platform to educate people on issues leading to drugs and crime,” Mdlalose said “I am happy that they will attend to this with a Clinical psychologist as crime and psych behaviours go hand in hand and we call such psycho-criminology,”

REPS has said that the workshop will be a safe space for open discussion as students will have the opportunity to ask questions, voice concerns, and learn from their peers in a safe and supportive environment.

This workshop represents a crucial step in REPS’ ongoing commitment to safeguarding the nation and that of school-going children.



▲ Deputy Police Information Communications Officer Superintendent Nosipho Mnguni

### How parents can help ensure that children stay out of drugs, gangs

UNITED Nations has advised that parents and communities have a task to play to ensure that children are not exposed to danger or bad behaviour.

UN advises such on ensuring that children drift away from drugs and gangs:

**Building Open Communication**

- The first brick in this wall of love is open communication. Talk to your children, not to them. Create a safe space where they can confide in you without fear of judgment. Listen actively, without interrupting or dismissing their concerns. This open dialogue lays the foundation for trust, allowing you to understand their vulnerabilities and anxieties, the very chinks in the armour that drugs and gangs can exploit.

**Strengthening Bonds of Family**

- Weave a tapestry of strong family ties. Spend quality time together, engaging in activities that foster laughter and connection. Dinnertime conversations shared hobbies, and family outings go a long way in building a sense of belonging and support. In this web of togetherness, children find their anchor, a sense of purpose and stability that makes the allure of gangs and drugs pale in comparison.

**Setting Clear Boundaries** - Boundaries are not walls, but guideposts. Establish clear expectations around behaviour, academics, and peer relationships. Be consistent in enforcing these boundaries, showing your children that you care enough to guide them.

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**LIDWALA  
HEALTH**



# Man arrested for raping mentally-ill woman

By Nokunceda Magagula  
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ALMOST six months later, Samkeliso Magagula has been arrested for allegedly raping a mentally-ill woman in June 2023.

Magagula made his first court appearance at the Mbabane Magistrate's Court before Magistrate Innocent Motsa, where his case was committed to the High Court.

The accused's is charged with contravening Section 3(1) of the Sexual Offences and Domestic Violence Act, 2018. The charge sheet adds that on June 11, 2023, Magagula unlawfully had sexual intercourse with Lindiwe\* without using a condom.

The alleged rape is accompanied by aggravating factors, which state that the accused did not use a condom during the commission of the offence thus exposing the victim to sexually transmitted diseases. It is worth noting that the victim is said to be mentally-ill and thus, by law, could not consent.

It is worth noting that last week, two men were charged with a similar offence and made their appearances in the same court.

One of the rape suspects is a man who shall not be identified to protect the identity of the minor. The accused allegedly raped his 13-year-old daughter. The accused's charge sheet states that he is alleged to have sexually assaulted his daughter at his homestead in Mcaphozini from May 6, 2023, to May 8, 2023.

"The accused did unlawfully have sexual intercourse with one Londiwe\* being his daughter who is 13 years of age without a condom and therefore, contravening Section 3(1),3(2),3(3)(c) read together with Section



▲ A prison cell doorway.

3(9)(A) of the Sexual Offences and Domestic Violence Act 2018," read part of the charge sheet.

## Remanded

Moreover, the accused's charges are accompanied by aggravating factors as envisaged by Section 185 of the Criminal Procedure and Evidence Act 67/1938 as amended in that, the accused did not use a condom thus exposing the victim to the risk of contracting sexually transmitted infections including HIV and AIDS. Another factor is that the person had sexual intercourse with a minor person under the age of 18 years.

The crown applied that the accused must be remanded into custody pending committal to the High Court. Acting Magistrate Motsa's ruling assured that the suspect will be remanded into custody until January 26, 2023, pending his committal to the High Court. Furthermore, the accused

shall move his bail application to the High Court.

The second case from last week was of Nkosinathi Nxumalo (36), who was also charged with the same offence of rape. It is alleged that Nxumalo raped an 18-year-old without a condom in a toilet.

"On August 31, 2023 at Zulwini area in the Hhohho district, the accused person unlawfully had sexual intercourse with one Sibongile\* who is 18-years-old without a condom while in the toilet," the charge read.

Nxumalo's charge is also accompanied by aggravating factors, which are that the accused is alleged to not have used a condom during the commission of the offence thus exposing the victim to the risk of contravening HIV/AIDS.

Nxumalo will remain in custody until January 29, 2024 pending committal to the High Court.

**\*Not real names**



▲ Mntambe Americo at the Mbabane Magistrate's Court on Monday. Americo was found guilty of stalking a woman and was eventually fined E1 600.

## Man handed E1 600 fine for stalking woman

By Nokunceda Magagula  
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THE claws of the Sexual Offences and Domestic Violence Act of 2018 (SODVA) strike again as 38-year-old Mntambe Americo was sentenced to a year imprisonment and pay a fine of E1 600.

The sentence of Americo was handed down at the Mbabane Magistrate's Court by Magistrate Qondile Mtetwa on Monday. Americo was accused of stalking Cynthia\* by loitering near her residence and calling her cellphone countless times. The accused was then charged with contravening Section 10 (1) as read with (2)(a),(b),(c) and (iii) of the SODVA. "In the Hhohho region at Dalriach East, the accused person unlawfully stalked Cynthia by entering her place of residence, loitering and calling her cellphone countless times thus causing her reasonable apprehension of fear," reads the charge sheet.

Americo pleaded guilty to the charge, and also told the crown he was a first time offender. He was found guilty as per his plea. In his mitigation statement, the accused said he and the victim would call each other because he worked at the victim's home as a gardener so they would always talk about work.

"She never complained about me calling her before, I never knew I was overstepping or harrasing her," Americo said.

He further asked the Court to be lenient when handing down his sentence, because he lives and survives on a part-time job and he has five children who are dependent on him. Magistrate Mtetwa sentenced the accused to two years imprisonment or to pay E1 600. The SODV Act was drafted to better protect the rights of everyone, be it women, men, or children. While in previous legislature rape was recognized, the difference now is that the Act takes into cognisance other acts which were not previously defined as rape and qualified as lesser crimes. **\*Not real names**

## Employee fired for disposal of used sanitary pad in dustbin

By Bahle Gama  
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AN employee of one of the butcheries in Malkerns was fired after her employer retrieved a used sanitary towel she had disposed of in a dustbin which was inside the business instead of dumping it in a pit latrine.

Speaking to Eswatini TV, the employee, Vuyisile Dlamini, said the used sanitary towel was discovered by a janitor who was looking for something to use for collecting dirt, and when she asked who had put it in the bin, Dlamini admitted it was her.

"I think it would have been bad if I denied disposing it in the bin, only for the truth to come out later, making things worse for myself," she said.

Dlamini said her dismissal was unfair and illegal, thus requiring that her employer write a formal letter stating the reasons for firing her the way he did.

She said she wants to continue with her life, she has debts and for her to close some accounts she needs a letter of dismissal from her employer.

Dlamini said she believed the dismissal was unlawful and intends to approach the Conciliation Mediation and Arbitration Commission (CMAC) offices to register a dispute with her employer because she neither received a written nor verbal warning. She said there was no bin or latrine



specifically allocated for female employees to dispose of used sanitary towels and at the time, the dustbin was the closest place where she could dispose of it.

## Wrong

"I admit that it was wrong for me to use a dustbin, but the problem is that there was no provision for us to dispose of such things at the workplace because women are not accommodated," she said.

The owner of the butchery who was identified as Fakudze confirmed firing his employee and said he was disgusted by the conduct forcing him to send her home on the spot.

In response to whether there is an area for

women to dispose of their used sanitary towels, Fakudze said there was one and when requested for a picture of it, he said there was no need for such evidence.

"I don't care what she decides to do, I made my decision and that is final. She can go to CMAC if she feels the dismissal was unfair," Fakudze said.

## Advised

Meanwhile, Labour Commissioner in the Ministry of Labour and Social Security, Mthunzi Shabangu said there was not much he could say on the matter and advised that Dlamini should go to the labour's office or CMAC which are entities available to assist employees countrywide. According to Section 37 of the Employment Act of 1980, "When the conduct of an employer towards an employee is proved by an employee to have been such that the employee can no longer reasonably be expected to continue in his employment and accordingly leaves his employment, whether with or without notice, then the services of the employee shall be deemed to have been unfairly terminated by his employer."

In terms of the certificate of employment, Section 38 states that: "Any employee whose services are terminated shall be entitled to receive a request, at the time of such termination, a certificate from his employer specifying the dates of his engagement and termination as well as the nature of the work on which he has been employed."



# BUSINESS NEWS

## BUSINESS BRIEFS

### Ezulwini avails business opportunities

THE Ezulwini Town Council has availed a business opportunity to town planners to prepare its 5-Year Town Planning Scheme.

A Town Planning Scheme is a legal document that applies within the jurisdiction of Ezulwini Municipality, and the tender applications will be open till January 24, 2024. According to tender documents, it has been highlighted that this current year is the fifth of the 10 years, and therefore, the Scheme lapses in the year 2028.

### Oil drops more than 1% despite Middle East conflict

LONDON — Oil prices lost more than 1 per cent on Monday as the Middle East conflict's limited impact on crude output prompted profit taking after oil benchmarks gained 2 per cent last week. Brent crude futures were down \$1.14, or about 1.5 per cent, at \$77.15 a barrel by 1250 GMT and U.S. West Texas Intermediate crude lost \$1.15, or 1.6 per cent, to \$71.53.

### 'IMF board set to approve \$600 mln loan for Ghana'

LONDON/ACCRA — The International Monetary Fund (IMF) executive board is due to meet on Friday to approve a \$600 million rescue loan payout to Ghana, three sources told Reuters, after the country reached a deal to restructure \$5.4 billion of official creditor debt. The board date is expected to be published in the IMF's public calendar on Tuesday, one of the sources said. All the sources requested anonymity to speak on sensitive matters.

## EswatiniBank

### FX RATES

Notes/Cash	Buy	Sell
U.S. Dollar	18.2637	18.7683
G.B. Pound	23.1907	23.8747
EURO	19.9737	20.5816
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	

# 35 Phumelela Exipro members to share over E140k after liquidation

Stories by Silindzelwe Nxumalo  
silindzelwen@rubiconmedia.group

**A total of 35 emaSwati will share over E140 000 worth of savings after the liquidation of their co-operative, Phumelela Exipro Savings and Credit Cooperative Society Limited.**

Phumelela Exipro was placed under liquidation by the Financial Services Regulatory Authority (FSRA) in consultation with the Commissioner of Co-operative Development (Commissioner of Cooperatives).

Through a statement, the FSRA notified stakeholders and members of the general public that Phumelela Exipro Savings and Credit Cooperative Society Limited ("Phumelela Exipro") has been placed under liquidation in terms of Part XIV of the Cooperative Societies Act, 2003.

According to the statement, the liquidation process is overseen jointly by the FSRA and the Commissioner of Cooperatives, under the Ministry of Commerce Industry and Trade

"The Commissioner of Cooperatives, in consultation with the FRA, has appointed Ms Khanyisile Ginindza as the Liquidator responsible for the finalization of the liquidation process," read part of the statement.

Phumelela Exipro Savings and Credit Cooperative Society Limited Chairperson Thulani Shongwe stated that they started the society as co-workers who were working at Exipro Swaziland Pty (Ltd), a company located in Matsapha which manufactures water tapes.

Shongwe explained that when this company

was restructuring in October 2022, 95 per cent of the society's members lost their jobs in the company including himself as the chairman.

He stated that they had to meet and discuss a way forward and they decided that they had no choice but to liquidate savings and credit institutions because they did not have enough sources of income.

He said while still working, it was easy for them to subscribe and save in society as they had given the company authority to deduct their contributions from their salaries and send them to the society's account.

He explained that the decision was taken by all members of the society after they signed a petition which was submitted to the commissioner of cooperatives.

He went on to say that after they were laid off from their jobs it was obvious to them that they had to liquidate and share what they had as savings.

The Commissioner of Co-operatives Bongani Maziya confirmed that this liquidation was applied for by the members of the society and they made clear submissions as to why.

Maziya stated

that they explained that since they were laid off, and most of their members were currently unemployed they didn't have any source of income to contribute to society.

Efforts to get a comment from the Liquidator, Khanyisile Ginindza were not successful as her phone rang unanswered when called several times on Monday.

The Commissioner of Cooperative Development is mandated by the law to support and facilitate the development of cooperative societies through promotion, business training, and supervision.

According to their website, they are also mandated to assist cooperatives to overcome many of the business constraints they face, through the creation of an enabling and conducive environment for their growth and the primary objective is to help cooperative members improve the quality of their lives.

FSRA CEO  
Ncamiso  
Ntshalintshali.



## EEC gearing up to develop an Optimum Financing Structure

THE Eswatini Electricity Company (EEC) is looking for suitably qualified companies for the development of an Optimum Financing Structure Study to submit their proposals.

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 EEC 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.

The RFP further details 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.

EEC stated that 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 of five years

In the determination of optimal gearing, the RFP document states that 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)," reads the RFP.

Furthermore, 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.



# Ezulwini Municipality avails business opportunities to town planners

Stories by Silindzelwe Nxumalo  
silindzelwen@rubiconmedia.group

THE Ezulwini Town Council has availed a business opportunity to town planners to prepare its 5-Year Town Planning Scheme.

A Town Planning Scheme is a legal document that applies within the jurisdiction of Ezulwini Municipality, and the tender applications will be open till January 24, 2024.

According to tender documents, it has been highlighted that this current year is the fifth of the 10 years, and therefore, the Scheme lapses in the year 2028. Section 21 (4) of the Town Planning Act, 1961 permits for a review at five-year intervals.

The council seeks to develop a new scheme that will encompass the changes that have happened in the town, as well as develop a developmental direction for the town.

It is stated that Ezulwini Municipality area is renowned as the tourism and recreation hub of Eswatini and over the last five years however, the town has evolved to be the preferred location for headquarters of organisation as well as township developments therefore the legislative background needs to be reviewed to accommodate these developments.

“The Municipality seeks to provide



▲A part aerial view of Ezulwini Town.

a regulative, whilst accommodative environment for current and future development trends,” read part of the RFP.

They stated that the main objective of preparing the Ezulwini Town Planning Scheme is to ensure it is aligned with the strategic objectives and overall vision of the Town which is “To be a high quality residential, corporate, tourism-friendly and green destination”, and to develop a baseline Survey of the town.

They further explained that the need for

the scheme came with that it aims to regulate development to ensure the harmonious development of the built environment.

“The current scheme is unable to adequately do this because of the lack of Full Baseline Survey and GIS Data Updates.

“The Municipality requires that a full baseline Survey be undertaken to determine the current status quo. This survey is particularly important for the development of the four volumes of the Scheme, as well as other decision-making areas within the

organization,” read part of the RFP.

They state that all of this must be accompanied by spatial analysis of the status quo through the adoption of Geographic Information Systems (GIS).

“The Municipality seeks to have, as little as possible, the number of rezoning and special consent applications. An increase in such applications is an indication that the current Scheme is not flexible enough to permit a variety of harmonious land uses,” read part of the RFP.



## MAKE SURE THEY START THEIR BEST SCHOOL DAY, IN THE BEST WAY POSSIBLE

### THE INSTRUMENTAL HAMPER



- 500g Econo Russians,
- 1kg Embiveni French Polony,
- 1kg Embiveni Ham,
- 1kg SMI Chicken Vienna,
- 200g Cheddar Cheese Yellow 12 slices,
- 1kg Back Bacon.

**E320<sup>00</sup>**

### THE RULING HAMPER



- 500g Quality Russian,
- 1kg Embiveni French Polony,
- 2kg Embiveni Ham,
- 2kg SMI Chicken Vienna,
- 400g Cheddar Cheese white 24 slices,
- 1kg Back Bacon,
- 1kg SMI Farmstyle Wors.

**E569<sup>99</sup>**

### THE PENNING HAMPER



- 500g Econo Russians,
- 5 x 100g Embiveni French Polony,
- 500g SMI Chicken Vienna,
- 100g Cheddar Cheese Yellow 6 slices,
- 500g Chakalaka Wors,
- 1kg Choice Burger.

**E128<sup>99</sup>**

Making Meal Times Special





By Natalie Grover

# Oil drops more than 1% despite Middle East conflict



▲Storage tanks are seen at the Petroineos Ineos petrol refinery in Lavera, France.

LONDON — Oil prices lost more than 1 per cent on Monday as the Middle East conflict’s limited impact on crude output prompted profit taking after oil benchmarks gained 2 per cent last week.

Brent crude futures were down \$1.14, or about 1.5 per cent, at \$77.15 a barrel by 1250 GMT and U.S. West Texas Intermediate crude lost \$1.15, or 1.6 per cent, to \$71.53.

Several tanker owners steered clear of the Red Sea and multiple tankers changed course on Friday after U.S. and Britain launched strikes against Houthi targets in Yemen after the Iran-backed group’s attacks on shipping in response to Israel’s war against Hamas in Gaza. The conflict has also held up at least four liquefied natural gas tankers travelling in the area.

“The realisation that oil supply has not been adversely impacted is leading last week’s bulls to take profit, with the move down somewhat exacerbated by a slightly stronger dollar,” said Tamas Varga of oil broker PVM.

On Sunday the Houthi militia threatened a “strong and effective response” after the United States carried out another strike overnight.

The U.S. later said it shot down a missile fired at one of its ships from Yemen.

The chief negotiator for Yemen’s Houthis on Monday warned that attacks on ships headed towards Israel will continue.

“As the Middle East conflict is currently not affecting oil production, the geopolitical

risk premium priced in oil prices now appears modest based on the implied volatility of options,” Goldman Sachs analysts said in a note.

There have been no oil supply losses so far, but the shipping disruption is indirectly tightening the market by keeping 35 million barrels at sea owing to longer journeys

shippers have to take to avoid the Red Sea, Citi analysts wrote.

In Libya, people protesting against perceived corruption threatened to shut down two more oil and gas facilities after shutting the 300,000 barrel per day Sharara field on Jan. 7.

The economic situation also remains

gloomy somewhat and the European Central Bank (ECB) last weekend warned against cutting interest rates too fast.

With inflation seemingly close to dropping to targeted levels, markets have been quick to bet that the ECB will rein in interest rates that were ratcheted up last year to quell sticky inflation. (Reuters)

## IMF board set to approve \$600 mln loan for Ghana on Friday — sources

By Jorgelina Do Rosario and Maxwell Akalaare Adombila



▲The International Monetary Fund (IMF) logo is seen outside the headquarters building in Washington, U.S.

LONDON/ACCRA — The International Monetary Fund (IMF) executive board is due to meet on Friday to approve a \$600 million rescue loan payout to Ghana, three sources told Reuters, after the country reached a deal to restructure \$5.4 billion of official creditor debt.

The board date is expected to be published in the IMF’s public calendar on Tuesday, one of the sources said. All the sources requested anonymity to speak on sensitive matters.

Ghana struck a deal with its bilateral lenders, including China and France, late last week, a key step to unlocking the second tranche of IMF funding under a \$3 billion bailout.

Ghana’s finance ministry and the IMF did not immediately reply to a request for comment.

IMF Managing Director Kristalina Georgieva welcomed the debt deal agreement on Friday, saying it clears the path for the executive board’s first review of Ghana’s programme.

A sign off by the board is usually seen as a formality once a date has been agreed.

The West African country defaulted on most external debt in December 2022 after servicing costs soared.

It also needs to reach a relief deal with private holders of about \$13 billion in international bonds.

The bonds rose almost 1 cent on the dollar

on Monday, with the 2042 maturity up the most, climbing 0.82 cents to 43.09 cents, its highest level since early November.

“Recently, China encouraged all parties to overcome technical difficulties and narrow differences, and finally led all parties to reach a basic consensus on Ghana’s debt settlement plan... on January 8,” Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Mao Ning said on Monday.

Some members of the Official Creditor Committee, which is co-chaired by China and France, are still “going through their internal procedures,” she told reporters at a regular news briefing.

Ghana is aiming to restructure \$20 billion of external debt, which totalled about \$30 billion at the end of 2022, under the Common Framework, a debt restructuring process set up by the G20 countries during the Covid-19 pandemic. It has targeted cutting \$10.5 billion from payments due between 2023-2026.

The IMF second tranche payout, once signed off, should also trigger \$550 million in additional World Bank funding, Ghana’s finance ministry said on Friday. (Reuters)



▲People shop at Cherries Hypermarket in Abuja, Nigeria.

## Nigeria’s inflation rises to more than 27-year high in December

By Chijioke Ohuocha

ABUJA — Nigeria’s inflation rate rose to its highest in more than 27 years in December as food prices surged, exacerbating a cost-of-living crisis and piling more pressure on the central bank to raise interest rates.

Consumer inflation rose for the 12th straight month in December to 28.92 per cent year on year from November’s 28.20 per cent, the National Bureau of Statistics said on Monday.

Inflation in Africa’s biggest economy and most populous nation has not climbed this high since mid-1996.

The food inflation rate, which accounts for the bulk of Nigeria’s inflation basket, rose to 33.93 per cent in December from 32.84 per cent a month earlier.

The statistics office said prices rose for a broad range of food items including bread

and cereals, oil, fish, meat, fruit and eggs.

Analysts say higher fuel prices and a weaker naira currency have also stoked price pressures.

David Omojomolo, Africa economist at Capital Economics, said “inflationary pressures are only likely to build from here,” citing second-round effects from the removal of a fuel subsidy last year and naira weakness.

He predicted that inflation would breach 30 per cent by the end of the first quarter and said it was unlikely to peak until the middle of 2024.

President Bola Tinubu last May embarked on Nigeria’s boldest reforms in decades by scrapping a costly but popular fuel subsidy and devaluing the currency to try to revive economic growth. But growth is yet to pick up while inflation has worsened.

Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) Governor Olayemi Cardoso is yet to hold a rate-setting meeting since taking office in September. (Reuters)



ERIN McGoff has 3 million followers on social media, but with the money she gets from Instagram and TikTok, she wouldn't be able to pay for the plate of mozzarella sticks we're sharing in a Baltimore bar.

"On Instagram, I'll have a video hit 900,000 views and make six dollars," McGoff said. "It's insulting."

Like most content creators, McGoff makes her living from brand deals, sponsorships and subscription products, rather than from the platforms themselves. But that reality is emblematic of the conundrum creators find themselves in: they're propelling social platforms to new heights, but those same platforms can betray them at any second with one small algorithm change or unfounded suspension.

Creators deal with the same stresses of any self-employed business owner, but at the same time, they're wholly dependent on the whims of massive social platforms, which don't pay them enough, or at all, for creating enormous value. And when it comes to brand deals and partnerships, there's no standard to make sure creators are being compensated fairly.

"TikTok and Instagram are making so much money off of ads, and they're not sharing that with creators," McGoff told TechCrunch.

The creator economy has a sustainability problem. According to Matt Koval, an early creator who then worked for a decade as YouTube's first creator liaison, a creator's career span usually lasts between five and seven years.

# The creator economy is ready for a workers' movement



▲ Creators deal with the same stresses of any self-employed business owner, but at the same time, they're wholly dependent on the whims of massive social platforms, which don't pay them enough, or at all, for creating enormous value.

"If creators don't capitalize on their flash of fame and turn it into some kind of sustainable business, they can find themselves in a really hard place of, 'Well, what do I do now?'" he said in a YouTube video.

Since starting her social media accounts in 2021, McGoff has made more and more money each year, but she's still worried that her job could disappear at any moment. What if her TikTok account gets taken down? What if her followers

get bored of her? With the exception of a small elite group, there's really no blueprint for what a career as a content creator looks like ten, twenty or thirty years down the road.

"You have to act like your influencer money could go away tomorrow," she said. "A lot of creators just think, 'I'm gonna make videos online and make a bunch of money,' and that's unfortunately not sustainable. You have to have a

business mindset and understand how to make money work for you."

These anxieties aren't unique, nor are they're not unfounded. While creators try to build their multifaceted businesses, they're also beginning to wonder if they can work together to advocate for more transparency with platforms and brands, which might help make their careers more tenable.

Last year, creators watched as Hollywood's writers and actors

unions picketed incessantly under the unforgiving Los Angeles sun, eventually winning contractual changes with studios that will help them secure better treatment and pay. Some creators even pledged not to cross picket lines during the strikes. Gen Z has come of age in an era when workers at Amazon, Starbucks, REI, Trader Joe's, Home Depot, UPS and so many more are waging high-profile strikes and union drives to fight for better working conditions. And this generation – which spends a whole lot of time on social media – is the most pro-union generation alive.

Is now the time for content creators to get their due?

## A lack of transparency

As a creator making videos and resources around career advice, it makes sense that McGoff is thinking so intently about her career trajectory. The same goes for Hannah Williams, the founder of Salary Transparent Street (STS), which has amassed over 2 million followers across platforms.

In her videos, Williams asks people on the street to share their salary as a means of promoting pay transparency – since she started her TikTok account in 2022, STS has grown into a broader resource hub to help people get paid fairly.

(TechCrunch)

## As more than \$1 trillion flows into tech ... incentive-tracking apps find firm footing

**SPEND** some time with people in the climate tech world and you'll soon learn that a lot of them share something in common: They're not used to having a lot of money.

That's because for years, climate represented a cost for many businesses, not an opportunity. Fortunately, that's started to change recently as investors have rushed into the space, seeking opportunities in "double-digit trillion-dollar markets" that are "largely decoupled from general tech investing," Joshua Posamentier, managing partner at Congruent, told TechCrunch+.

Investment in climate tech has been gathering pace over the past five years or so. While the sector wasn't entirely immune to the slowdown that gripped the rest of the startup world over the past couple of years, we did see signs of a rally in the third quarter.

This continued strength is due in part to both U.S. and European commitments to climate-forward industrial policies. Between the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) and the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law in the U.S. and the Green Deal in the EU, nearly \$1 trillion



▲ Investment in climate tech has been gathering pace over the past five years or so

in tax credits, grants, and other incentives are available for climate- and energy-related investments and purchases.

But that trillion-dollar forecast actually might be a conservative one. The IRA alone might yield more than that since many of the tax credits are uncapped; Goldman Sachs estimates the law's climate provisions might pay out \$1.2 trillion in incentives, spurring some \$3 trillion in private investment.

That's not enough to get the U.S. or the EU's economy to net-zero carbon emissions (or to make up for historical emissions), but it's a down payment

so large it can be hard to keep track of it all.

In fact, climate tech today finds itself in the unusual position of being so awash in cash (relatively speaking) that there are a number of websites, apps and startups rushing to track it all and help companies and customers make the most of the incentives.

Making sense of it all

"Unfortunately, there's no comprehensive database out there for all of these rebates and incentives," said Thomas Stephens, co-founder of Upfront, a startup that's cataloging incentives for merchants.

(TechCrunch)

## Microsoft topples Apple to become market cap leader

MICROSOFT has eclipsed Apple to become the world's largest company by market capitalization, driven by its deep focus on generative artificial intelligence (AI), a sector that has garnered increasing investor favour.

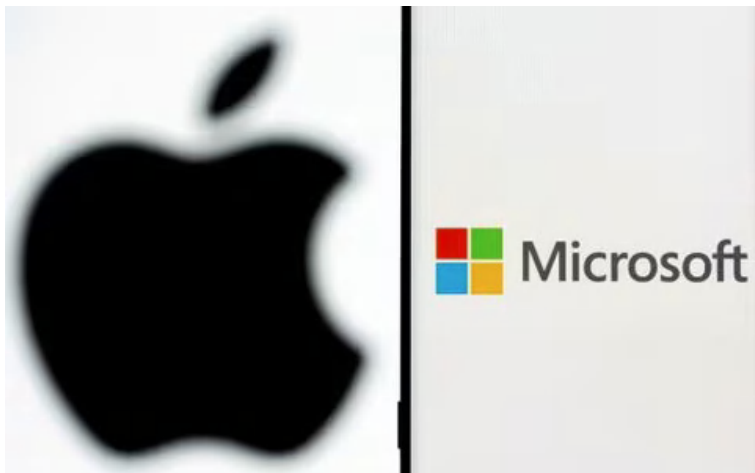
The tech giant, which along with Nvidia and Amazon placed a significant emphasis on AI, has experienced substantial market surges over the past year. Notably, Microsoft's market value has risen by over \$1 trillion.

Analysts are drawing parallels between this shift and the early 2000s, when technology and internet companies began to

replace consumer and financial firms at the forefront of the market's highest echelons.

According to LSEG data, Microsoft's market cap stood at \$2.887 trillion, its highest ever, while Apple's market cap was \$2.875 trillion as of Friday's close after peaking at \$3.081 trillion on Dec. 14. 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.

(Reuters)



▲ The Apple and Microsoft logos.



# Zuma asks for prayers as he sets his sights on Union Buildings

**FORMER** South African president Jacob Zuma is gunning for a third time as the head of state if his hint at a Nazareth Baptist Church service at the weekend is anything to go by.

Addressing scores of worshippers at the church commonly known as Shembe, Zuma asked for their blessings and prayers, as he plots to stage a spectacular return to politics.

The worshipers, under Mduduzi “uNyazi LweZulu” Shembe of Ebuhleni faction, are on their annual pilgrimage to the holy Khenana Mountain in Ndwedwe in the north of Durban.

Since December, Zuma has been on a campaign trail across the country for the newly formed uMkhonto weSizwe Party (MKP).

This after he declared on December 16 that he would not vote for the ANC in the general elections

which are expected to be conducted in the first six months of 2024.

His unexpected announcement left the governing party divided, anxious and uncertain ahead of what is likely to be the fiercest elections since 1994.

There are mooted plans to expel Zuma from the ANC following his decision to ditch the party he once led as its president.

Political comeback

Addressing the worshippers while kneeling down and surrounded by church elders, reverends, and evangelists, Zuma said: “As you all know, I was prematurely removed from office because I was trying to help the poor.

“But the conduct of some people has forced me to make a political comeback to resolve the issues of the poor. I would like ubaba [church leader Shembe] to pray for me as I am eyeing a comeback.

“I listened attentively to his prayer and sermon today, and I

would appreciate it if his hands could touch me because I want to bounce back.”

Shembe church spokesperson Thokozani Mncwabe said the church knew Zuma would attend the service.

“Msholozzi’s visit is not special. He has been to our headquarters in Ebuhleni in Inanda in the past and would have private meetings with our leader,” said Mncwabe.

“Remember we are in crunch election time, so we anticipate many political leaders to come in numbers seeking blessings from our leader.

“Most recently, we had the PAC leader [Mzwanele Nyhotso] on our shores.”

Founded in 1910 by prophet Isai-ah Mdlwamafa Shembe, the Nazareth Baptist Church is the second-largest indigenous church in the country with an estimated 12.8 million followers.

(Sunday World)



▲ Former president Jacob Zuma is gunning for a third time as president.

## Namibia criticises German support for Israel over ICJ genocide case

**NAMIBIA** has disapproved of Germany’s decision to step in on behalf of Israel in a case before the International Court of Justice (ICJ), where South Africa has accused Israel of committing genocide in Gaza.

President Hage Geingob urged Germany to reconsider its involvement, citing the historical context of Germany’s acknowledgement of genocide in Namibia in 2021. During the period from 1904 to 1908, German colonizers perpetrated what historians consider the 20th century’s first genocide, resulting in the massacre of over 70,000 Herero and Nama people.

President Geingob argued that Germany’s moral commitment to the United Nations Convention against genocide, including atonement for the Namibian genocide, conflicted with its support for Israel. He stated that the German government had yet to fully address its historical wrongdoing in Namibia.

Germany, however, dismissed the genocide accusation against Israel, characterizing it as a “political instrumentalization” of the UN genocide convention. The German government emphasized its commitment to the convention, given its historical responsibility stemming from the Holocaust.

In response to the accusations, Germany highlighted the recent conflict triggered by Hamas’s attack on Israel in October. The government argued that Israel, acting in self-defence, faced an existential threat from Hamas, an organization aiming to destroy the country.

The ongoing conflict has claimed



▲ Namibian President Hage Geingob has appealed to Germany to retract its support of Israel.

numerous lives on both sides. According to the Hamas-run health ministry, nearly 24,000 people, primarily children and women, have lost their lives in Israel’s retaliatory attacks on Gaza since October.

Concerns about a potential famine and the spread of disease among displaced people in Gaza have been raised by the UN and humanitarian organizations, urging the allowance of more aid into the territory.

South Africa initiated the case at the ICJ, presenting a comprehensive list of alleged Israeli offences,

including the indiscriminate killing of Palestinian civilians and the widespread destruction of Gaza’s infrastructure. Israel vehemently denies these allegations, labeling them as “baseless” and countering that, if anyone is guilty of genocide, it is Hamas.

The ICJ will now play a crucial role in determining the validity of South Africa’s claims and shedding light on the complexities surrounding the Israel-Gaza conflict.

(Africa News)

## Health authorities rallying to contain worst cholera outbreak in Zambia

**ZAMBIA** is dealing with one of its worst cholera outbreaks in recent years as 351 people have died and nearly 9,000 active cases have been registered.

Health workers say they are scrambling to contain the crisis that has the potential to be the worst the country has seen since the first in 1977.

On Friday, relatives of people being treated gathered outside a stadium in the capital Lusaka to wait for information about their loved ones.

“They are announcing names here, but (inaudible) my nephew. So I don’t know what is going on. Whether my nephew is dead, I don’t know. Whether he is alive, I don’t know” uncle of a cholera patient said.

President Hakainde Hichilema has urged people to relocate from towns to villages as poor sanitation in some densely populated urban areas was a good breeding ground for cholera.

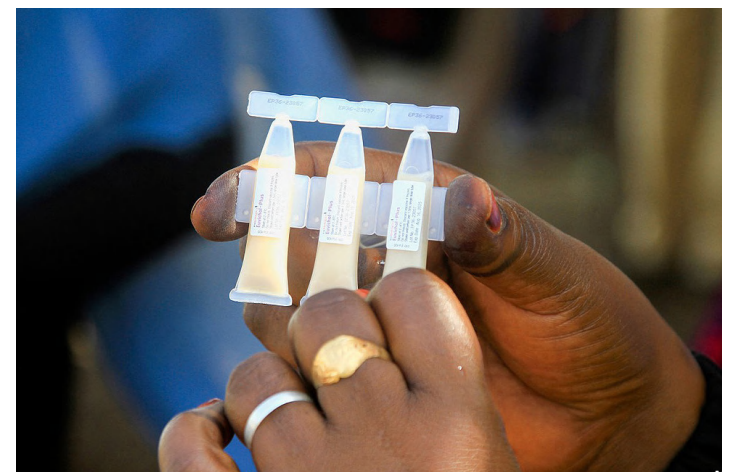
The prohibition of funerals and family burials has remained in place. More emergency rules are being brought according to the country’s health ministry.

“I’ve told them that they cannot participate in burials, and I also told them that they cannot have funerals at their homes. I also told the general public not to attend funerals anymore” says Sylvia Masebo, Zambian Health Minister.

“To avoid those funerals, especially if someone has died from cholera because they are risking their lives. I think in the beginning it was a bit difficult, but I can tell you that, generally I think, the message is sinking.”

Cholera is transmitted through the ingestion of contaminated food and/or water. Experts have suggested climate change to be responsible for heavy rainfalls which contaminated drinking water for those living in crowded, poorer areas.

(Reuters)



▲ Zambia is dealing with one of its worst cholera outbreaks in recent years as 351 people have died and nearly 9,000 active cases have been registered.



# ‘China should intervene to end Russia, Ukraine war’

DAVOS, Switzerland - China needs to be involved in talks to end the war with Russia, Ukraine’s top representative said after a high-level diplomatic meeting ahead of the World Economic Forum in Switzerland.

Ukraine’s presidential chief of staff Andriy Yermak said on Sunday it was important that Russian ally China was at the table when Kyiv convenes further meetings on its peace formula.

Chinese Premier Li Qiang will lead a delegation in Davos this week. Asked if President Volodymyr Zelenskiy would meet Li, Yermak told a news briefing “let’s see”, adding he had not seen the Ukrainian president’s final agenda.

Zelenskiy is due to arrive in Bern, Switzerland on Monday to meet the President of the Swiss Confederation Viola Amherd.

Swiss Federal Councillor Ignazio Cassis, who attended Sunday’s discussions, told an earlier news conference: “We must do everything to end this war.”

“China plays a significant role. We must find ways to work with China on this,” Cassis said, adding that both Russia and Ukraine were not willing to make concessions.

Zelenskiy is also likely to meet JPMorgan Chase (JPM.N) CEO Jamie Dimon at Davos this week as he tries to seek support to shore up funds for Ukraine, a source familiar with the matter said. Bloomberg News first reported about Zelenskiy’s plans to meet Dimon.

President Vladimir Putin sent thousands of troops into Ukraine in February 2022, triggering the biggest confrontation between Russia and the West since the 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis.

Cassis said that countries that had a dialogue with Russia, such as Brazil, India and South Africa, were involved in the Davos discussions and could play an important role.

A European Union official said Ukraine’s Western partners had expressed unequivocal support for Kyiv and its peace plans, with



▲ Russian President Vladimir Putin and Chinese President Xi Jinping meet in Beijing on February 4, 2022.

a call on the Global South nations to make clear to Russia the importance of respecting the United Nations charter and its core principles in the interest of global security.

## GLOBAL SOUTH

The role of the Global South in Ukraine’s peace formula talks has come into focus in the lead up to Davos. Many of the non-aligned countries from Africa, Latin America, the Middle East and Asia that have largely stayed on the sidelines over Ukraine will be represented in the Swiss mountain resort.

The EU official said the Global South partners had generally expressed empathy with the fate of Ukrainians. Some highlighted the need for engaging with Russia’s concerns.

Yermak said nobody had asked him about any compromise over territory during Sunday’s meeting.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskiy was not at Sunday’s meeting. But Cassis said he would appear at the summit and there would be opportunities for diplomats to speak to him.

Zelenskiy was represented by his chief of

staff Andriy Yermak, who said there were participants from 18 Asian countries, 12 African countries and 6 South American countries.

“Countries from the Global South are increasingly involved in our work,” Yermak said earlier on his Telegram account.

Ukraine, with strong backing from its allies, has consistently said it will not give up until it has reclaimed every piece of territory that Russia has taken.

It is unclear, however, if countries in the Global South agree with that as a peace formula.

Nigeria’s national security adviser Nuhu Ribadu told Reuters that the African oil producer stood by Zelenskiy’s side, saying it will deal with the consequences of rising food prices.

The talks were also attended by the U.S. special representative for Ukraine’s Economic Recovery Penny Pritzker, as well as James O’Brien, the U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for European and Eurasian Affairs.

(Reuters)



▲ Pope Francis at the Vatican.

## Pope Francis defends same-sex blessings declaration

ROME - Pope Francis on Sunday defended a landmark decision approving blessings for same-sex couples, suggesting that those in the Catholic Church who have resisted it have jumped to “ugly conclusions” because they do not understand it.

In a television interview, Francis made his first public comments since the Dec. 18 declaration sparked widespread debate in the Church, with bishops in some countries, particularly in Africa, refusing to let their priests implement it.

“Sometimes decisions are not accepted, but in most cases when decisions are not accepted, it is because they are not understood,” Francis said in response to a specific question about the December declaration.

“The danger is that if I don’t like something and I put it (the opposition) in my heart, I become a resistance and jump to ugly conclusions,” he said during a link from his Vatican residence with the “Che Tempo Che Fa” program on Italy’s Channel 9.

“This is what happened with these latest decisions on blessings for all,” he said, referring to the declaration known by its Latin title *Fiducia Supplicans* (Supplicating Trust). It was issued by the Vatican’s doctrinal department and approved by him.

Since the original declaration, the Vatican has been at pains to stress that the blessings did not amount to an approval of gay sex and should not be seen as anything remotely equivalent to the sacrament of marriage for heterosexual couples.

Some bishops in France told their priests they could bless gay individuals but not couples.

The Church teaches that gay sex is sinful and disordered and people with same-sex attractions should try to be chaste and the pope appeared to be alluding to this is his response.

“The Lord blesses everyone,” Francis said. “But then people have to enter into a dialogue with the blessing of the Lord and see the path that the Lord proposes. We (the Church) have to take them by the hand and lead them along that path and not condemn them from the start”.

(Reuters)

## Taiwan loses ally, accuses China of post-election ploy

SYDNEY/TAIPEI - Taiwan lost one of its few remaining diplomatic allies Nauru to China on Monday, just days after it elected a new president, and accused China of attempting to pressure it while it affirmed the will of Taiwanese to go out into the world.

China claims Taiwan as its own territory with no right to state-to-state ties, a position Taiwan strongly disputes, and the two have for years traded accusations of using “dollar diplomacy” as they compete for diplomatic recognition.

Taiwan security officials told Reuters before Saturday’s election that China was likely to continue to whittle away at the handful of countries - now down to a dozen - that maintain formal diplomatic ties with Taipei.

Lai Ching-te, repeatedly criticised by China before the poll as a dangerous separatist, won the election for the ruling Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) and will take office on May 20.

The govern-

ment of the tiny Pacific Island nation of Nauru said that “in the best interests” of the country and its people it was seeking full resumption of diplomatic relations with China and would cut ties with Taiwan.

Nauru has recognised China before, between 2002 and 2005.

China and the United States have in recent years stepped up their competition for influence in the Pacific. In 2019, Kiribati and the Solomon Islands both ditched Taiwan for China in the space of a week.

The U.S. affirmed that its commitment to Taiwan is “rock solid” after Saturday’s election, in comments delivered by former U.S. National Security Advisor Stephen Hadley on Monday during a trip to the island.

Taiwan’s Deputy Foreign Minister Tien Chung-kwang told a hastily arranged media briefing after Nauru’s announcement that the news had



▲ Taiwan President-elect Lai Ching-te, of Democratic Progressive Party’s (DPP), holds a press conference, following the victory in the presidential elections, in Taipei, Taiwan

news had



# King Mora & Ronnie's hilarious video gets record-high views

Stories by Siphesihle Dlamini  
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RISING comedy stars King Mora & Ronnie have taken the internet by storm, with their latest video amassing over 107 000 views in just five days.

The video, which humorously pokes fun at Southern African Nazarene University students and their penchant for parading around town in their uniforms, has garnered widespread attention and praise.

In an exclusive interview, the dynamic comedy duo expressed overwhelming excitement and gratitude for this milestone. They said reaching over 100 000 views on a single comedy video is a significant accomplishment for them as a brand.

The comedians believe that this achievement signifies not only their growth in popularity but also the increasing recognition of their unique comedic style. "The fact that more and more people are sharing our videos indicates that our content is of the highest standard," said Ronnie. "We wouldn't have achieved such a remarkable milestone if our jokes weren't top-notch."

King Mora emphasized their pride in the progress they have made as a brand. Reflecting on their three-year journey with Ronnie, he acknowledged the tremendous growth they have experienced. "We never imagined that we would achieve such impressive numbers for our content so quickly," he admitted. Notably, the duo achieved this success without relying on the assistance of other celebrities for marketing purposes, relying solely on their efforts.

When asked about their plans, King Mora & Ronnie remained tight-lipped but hinted at exciting developments on the horizon.



▲ Comedians King Mora and Ronnie.

They assured their fans of more live performances throughout the year, promising to bring their unique brand of humour to even more audiences.

The comedy duo expressed heartfelt gratitude to their loyal fans, acknowledging that their immense support has been the driving force behind their success. "It is because of our fans' messages and unwavering support that we are inspired to push ourselves further," they confessed. "Without their dedicated following, King Mora & Ronnie would not have achieved such remarkable figures on their content and amassed such a massive following on their Facebook and TikTok platforms."

“

It is because of our fans' messages and unwavering support that we are inspired to push ourselves further

”



▲ War Words Director Anthonimass.

## War Word 4: A battle of words

THIS highly anticipated War Words 4 promises to deliver a battle of punchlines that will leave the audience snapping their fingers just like Thanos in The Avengers and nodding their heads in awe.

Wordsmiths at War Words 4 will wield their poetic prowess, captivating the crowd with heartfelt poems that will have them clapping their hands in appreciation. According to the event's director, Anthonimass, this year's War Words will surpass all expectations. With each passing year, the event has grown in popularity, attracting poetry lovers from far and wide. It has become a staple in the local events calendar, solidifying its position as one of the best poetry shows in the country.

Anthonimass emphasized that War Words 4 provides a platform for both novice and seasoned poets to showcase their talent. This inclusivity adds to the event's charm, as it celebrates the diversity and creativity within the poetry community. The line-up for this year's event will be a unique blend of upcoming poets and seasoned veterans, ensuring a dynamic and captivating show.

While the venue is yet to be confirmed, the event will be hosted on March 23, 2024. Anthonimass hinted at the headliner, one of the best poets in the country, whose identity will be revealed in due time. This exciting addition to the line-up is sure to elevate the event to new heights.

Furthermore, Anthonimass revealed that the organizers are working on an engaging theme for the event, aiming to create an unforgettable experience for attendees. He added that they hope to host the show twice this year, providing even more opportunities for poetry enthusiasts to witness the magic of War Words.

## Itende Worship Experience calls for vocal auditions

ITENDE Worship Experience (IWE) is calling all talented vocalists to showcase their skills at the upcoming Itende Massive Show.

To secure a spot on the prestigious stage, vocalists are required to submit a one-minute video audition via WhatsApp to the number 7903 5729. The deadline for auditions is January 27, 2024, so aspiring artists are encouraged to act swiftly and not miss out on this incredible opportunity.

Mnqobi Tsabedze, the Public Relations Officer (PRO) of Itende Worship Experience, emphasized that the auditions are open to individuals of all ages who have a passion for music and a desire to realize their dreams. The online platform will serve as the stage for the initial auditions, with the top 10 vocalists being selected to compete for a spot in the final line-up.

Tsabedze expressed his team's enthusiasm for this year's Itende Massive Show, assuring fans that it will surpass all expectations. Drawing from the success and feedback of previous editions, the organizers have been

working tirelessly to improve every aspect of the event.

"We are going bigger and better this year," Tsabedze declared. "We have listened to our audience and are committed to delivering a line-up that showcases the incredible talent of our Itende Worship Experience artists, as well as featuring renowned South African Itende artists. Together, they will bring the soul-stirring sounds of tent music to our audience."

### Line-up

While the venue and full line-up are yet to be confirmed, one thing is certain – the Itende Massive Show will be a night to remember. The event, set to take place on November 29, 2024, promises to be an unforgettable experience for both performers and attendees alike.

If you have a passion for music and dream of performing on a grand stage, seize this opportunity and submit your audition video before January 27, 2024.



▲ IWE Public Relations Officer (PRO) Mnqobi Tsabedze.



## Young Zesh nails ‘Mathananazana’ challenge



▲ Young Zesh.

HOW many times does he have to nail challenges for him to be dubbed ‘King of Challenges’?

Young Zesh, known for his incredible talent and unwavering determination, has once again proven his mettle by accepting and conquering the ‘Mathananazana’ verse challenge.

With his unique style and creative flair, Young Zesh has breathed new life into the popular song, infusing it with a vibrant Swati vibe. The release of his video, in which he flawlessly sings his verse of the challenge, has caused a sensation, garnering over 20 000 streams within the first day of release.

The verse rendered by Young Zesh has not only captivated the hearts of his fans but has also received an outpouring of love

and support from the music community. His rendition of ‘Mathananazana’ has struck a chord with listeners, who have praised his talent and innovative approach. Adding to the excitement, the original owner of the song, Airic, recognized Young Zesh’s exceptional rendition and shared it on his TikTok platform.

### Passion

Hailing from South Africa, the ‘Mathananazana’ hitmaker, Airic, is not only an artist but also a producer, beatmaker, and music engineer. His passion for music ignited during his early teenage years, leading him to make the bold decision to quit his studies in varsity and fully commit himself to his craft. This dedication has paid off, as he continues to make waves in the music scene with his unique sound and undeniable talent.



▲ Upscale Live Director Sibusiso 3T Simelane.

# Sphiwo Ndoni to ignite the Worship Experience

Stories by Siphesihle Dlamini  
siphesihled@rubiconmedia.group

### THE Holy Spirit shall descend!

Luyengo Campus is about to witness an electrifying night of divine melodies as Sphiwo Ndoni, a local Gospel music sensation is set to deliver a soul-stirring performance at the Worship Experience.

With the Holy Spirit as his guide, Sphiwo Ndoni is set to captivate audiences with his soul-soothing performance at the highly anticipated Gospel event. The Worship Experience is not just a concert but a spiritual journey that promises to touch the depths of the soul.

The CP Auditorium, in Luyengo Uneswa Campus, will be transformed into a sanctuary of worship, where attendees can expect an unforgettable evening of spiritual enlightenment and musical brilliance. Presale tickets for this extraordinary event are priced at E30, while those who decide to join the celebration at the gate will be charged E40.

Set to take place on February 2, 2024, starting at 5 pm and extending well into the night, the Worship Experience promises to be a feast for the senses. Alongside Sphiwo Indoni, a constellation of talented artists will grace the stage, including Mzayoni, Mboneleli, Lucia-Kate, Setsa-M, Nqoba, Lemonade, Philani, and Swakhile. Each artist will bring their unique style and anointing to create a harmonious atmosphere of praise and worship.

Sphiwo Ndoni has been making waves in the Gospel music scene, leaving an indelible mark on the hearts of listeners. His recent feature on the One Gospel channel has catapulted him into the spotlight, solidifying his status as one of the genre’s trendsetters. Notably, he has also done notable interviews, with the most recent one with Ligwalagwala



► Gospel artist Sphiwo Ndoni.

FM.

Having shared stages with renowned Gospel artists such as Spirit of Praise, Take Ndou, Ayanda Nazi, and Jumbo, Sphiwo Ndoni has proven his ability to hold his own among the industry’s giants. His passion for spreading the message of hope and faith through his music is evident in every note he sings, leaving audiences inspired and uplifted.

## 3T shares valuable advice for aspiring artists

IN an inspiring message to upcoming artists, Sibusiso ‘3T’ Simelane, the director of Upscale Live, has offered artists invaluable insights on how to navigate the challenging yet rewarding path to success in the entertainment industry.

Taking to social media, he urged aspiring artists to stay true to themselves and believe in their unique talents. He emphasized that along the journey, they will encounter individuals who genuinely appreciate and support their craft, providing invaluable assistance to help them grow and improve.

However, Simelane also acknowledged that people change over time, and some may eventually withdraw their support or even attempt to hinder an artist’s progress. Yet, he encouraged aspiring artists not to be discouraged by such setbacks, as they are an inevitable part of the journey toward personal and artistic growth.

### Talent

“Find a way to keep pushing forward,” Simelane advised, urging artists to remain authentic to their passions. He emphasized that by staying dedicated to what they love, aspiring artists will inevitably cross paths with new individuals who believe in their talent and are willing to help them achieve their goals.

Rather than viewing changing circumstances as the end of the road, Simelane encouraged artists to perceive them as the beginning of a new chapter in their artistic journey. He advised upcoming artists to look up to the artists who initially inspired them and study their paths to success.

“The most successful artists are not where they are today with the same people they started with. As we grow, change is inevitable; it’s simply a part of our nature,” he explained. His message resonated deeply with aspiring artists, who found solace in his words of wisdom.



# Black Coffee lets fans know he's home and on the road to recovery

IT'S been a tough start to 2024 for Grammy award-winning DJ and producer Black Coffee.

Last week his team released a statement explaining that he was involved in a "severe travel accident" while en-route to a gig in Mar Del Plata, Argentina.

The Daily Mail further reported that he was recovering from surgery after sustaining injuries on his private plane which was forced to make an emergency landing at Montevideo Airport due to severe turbulence.

Although his camp didn't elaborate on the extent of the 47-year-old's injuries, they did add, "We can confirm that he is receiving the best possible medical attention and is surrounded by a supportive family and team".

Fans can breathe a sigh of relief. Grootman has taken to X to let his 5.3 million followers know that he is on the mend.

Posting a series of emojis, what we've concluded is that he's recovering back home in South Africa, and thanked God for his blessings. X users were quick to wish him a speedy recovery, while some asked what the cryptic post was about.

"Celebrities and cryptic messages... 'I'm at home, getting better, thank God' is too basic," commented an online user.

Another curiously asked: "Right? What do those emojis even mean?"

Coffee's post comes just days after his estranged wife Enhle Mbali went onto IG Live to clear up a few mis-



▲ His Majesty King Mswati III addressing fellow leaders at the Transform Africa Summit on April 26

conceptions, including people dragging her for a meaningless meme she posted hours after news broke of his plane accident.

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 screenshot it.

She said that many little petty things could be used against her in her divorce case, which she added

was in November.

Speaking about those 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."

(IOL)

## 'Diddy' reportedly to miss 2024 Grammys

SEAN 'Diddy' Combs will reportedly miss the 2024 Grammys after facing sex assault allegations.

The billionaire rapper and business mogul, 54, is nominated in the Best Progressive R and B Album category for his latest project 'The Love Album: Off the Grid', but sources say he won't be turning up at the awards after claims he sexually assaulted several women.

Page Six said it is standard policy for the Recording Academy to issue an invitation to all nominees, and stressed Diddy hadn't been "disinvited" from the event, but reported he won't be going.

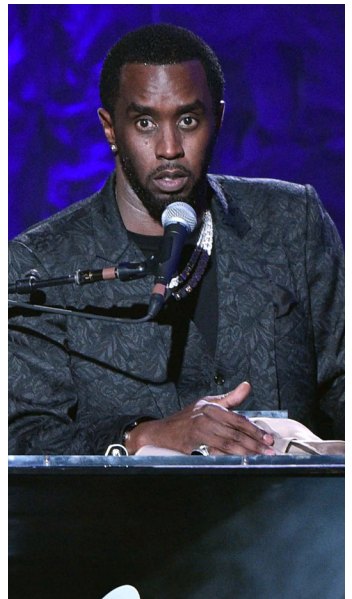
The Academy told Rolling Stone in December about the accusations against Diddy: "We are taking this matter very seriously and we are in the process of evaluating it with the time and care that it deserves."

This year's Grammys is scheduled to take place at the Crypto.com Arena in Los Angeles on 4 February.

Diddy's 'Off the Grid' record featured a star-studded line-up of appearances from artists including Busta Rhymes, Mary J. Blige, Summer Walker, Fabolous, Jazmine Sullivan and Babyface.

Diddy faced accusations in 2023 from multiple women that he subjected them to rape and abuse.

In November, the Bad Boy Records founder's ex and former artist Cassie filed a lawsuit against the rapper, alleging that he raped and abused her during their 10-year relationship.



▲ Sean 'Diddy' Combs will reportedly miss the 2024 Grammys after facing sex assault allegations.

In the suit, the 'Me and U' singer, 37, born Casandra Ventura, claimed her ex "was prone to uncontrollable rage, and frequently beat Ms Ventura savagely."

It added: "Over the years that Mr Combs abused Ms Ventura physically and sexually, she again and again tried to escape his tight hold over her life."

"Every time she hid, Mr Combs's vast network of corporations and affiliated entities found her, and those who worked for Mr Combs's companies implored her to return to him."

"Many went as far as to explicitly state that her failure to return to Mr Combs would hinder her success in the entertainment industry."

(Bang Showbiz)

## 'Oppenheimer' dominates 2024 Critics Choice Awards

'OPPENHEIMER' dominated the 2024 Critics Choice Awards, winning eight prizes.

Christopher Nolan continued to lead the awards season 'Barbie' battle after his epic biological thriller scooped the most prizes at Sunday's ceremony at Santa Monica's Barker Hangar, where the blockbuster was named Best Picture and he won Best Director for Christopher Nolan.

Robert Downey Jr. also won Best Supporting Actor for his role as Rear Admiral Lewis Strauss.

During his speech, the 58-year-old actor went on to share some of the harsh criticism he's received during his career.

He began: "The Critics Choice Association, they've given me such beautiful feedback, really just so many great moments."

"And some of it's so poetic, I just want to share some of their thoughts with you over the years."

One he shared was that he's "sloppy, messy and lazy" and another compared him to "Pee Wee Herman emerging from a coma."

He's also been dubbed "a puzzling waste of talent".

The flick also won Best Cine-

matography, Best Acting Ensemble, Best Visual Effects, Best Editing, and Best Score.

Greta Gerwig's 'Barbie' followed shortly behind with six prizes, including Best Comedy and Best Original Screenplay, despite going into the awards with a whopping 18 nominations.

The live-action musical movie also landed Best Production Design, Best Costume Design, Best Hair and Makeup, and Ryan Gosling won the music award for Best Original Song for the hit 'I'm Just Ken'.

Elsewhere, in the movie categories, Paul Giamatti was named Best Actor for Alexander Payne's comedy-drama 'The Holdovers'.

Da'Vine Joy Randolph won Best Supporting Actress and Dominic Sessa claimed Best Young Actor.

Emma Stone scooped Best Actress for 'Poor Things' and thanked her critics.

She said: "This is the Critics Choice Awards — and it is about outside opinion — but I'm very grateful to the critics for this. But I'm just learning not to care what you think."

In TV, meanwhile, it was a big

night for 'Beef', 'Succession', and 'The Bear'.

The Netflix comedy-drama was named Best Limited Series and Best Actor in a Limited Series or Movie Made for Television went to the show's Steven Yeun and his co-star Ali Wong won Best Actress. Maria Bello also took home Best Supporting Actress.

Kieran Culkin and Sarah Snook took Best Actor and Actress in a Drama for 'Succession', and Jeremy Allen White and Ayo Edebiri landed Best Actor and Actress in a Comedy Series for 'The Bear'. Ebon Moss-Bachrach also claimed Best Supporting Actor in a Comedy Series for the latter show.

Elsewhere, Billy Crudup and Elizabeth Debicki won Best Supporting Actor and Actress in a Drama Series for 'The Morning Show' and 'The Crown', respectively.

Meryl Streep wasn't in attendance but was named Best Support Actress for 'Only Murders in the Building'.

Special honours were handed out with Margot Robbie presenting the SeeHer Award to her 'Barbie' co-star America Ferrera, and James Mangold gave his 'Indiana Jones



▲ 'Oppenheimer' dominated the 2024 Critics Choice Awards, winning eight prizes.

and the Dial of Destiny' castmate Harrison Ford the Career Achievement Award.

Comic Chelsea Handler was on hosting duties and made sure to poke fun at her boyfriend Jo Koy's

Golden Globes disaster that saw his jokes fall flat.

In her opening monologue, she quipped: "Thank you for laughing at that — my writers wrote it."

(Bang Showbiz)



AN anxiety attack tends to occur in response to certain stressors and may build gradually while panic attacks can occur unexpectedly and abruptly.

Both may indicate an underlying health condition. You might hear people talking about panic attacks and anxiety attacks like they're the same thing. But they're different conditions.

Read on to find out more about the differences between panic attacks and anxiety.

### WHAT IS AN ANXIETY ATTACK?

The "Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, 5th edition" (DSM-5) does not mention anxiety attacks, but it does define anxiety as a feature of a number of common psychiatric disorders.

This includes the following conditions:

- ▶ generalized anxiety disorder
- ▶ panic disorder
- ▶ separation anxiety disorder
- ▶ agoraphobia without history of panic disorder
- ▶ post-traumatic stress disorder
- ▶ social anxiety disorder
- ▶ obsessive-compulsive disorder
- ▶ specific phobia

Anxiety is usually related to the anticipation of a stressful situation, experience, or event. It may come on gradually.

Symptoms of anxiety include:

- ▶ worry
- ▶ distress
- ▶ fear

The lack of diagnostic recognition of anxiety attacks means that the signs and symptoms are open to interpretation.

That is, a person may describe having an "anxiety attack" and have symptoms that another person has never experienced despite indicating that they, too, have had an "anxiety attack."

### WHAT IS A PANIC ATTACK?

Panic attacks come on suddenly and involve intense and often overwhelming fear. They're accompanied by very challenging physical symptoms, like a racing heartbeat, shortness of breath, or nausea.

DSM-5 recognizes panic attacks and categorizes them as unexpected or expected.

Unexpected panic attacks occur without an obvious cause. Expected panic attacks are cued by external stressors, like phobias.

Panic attacks can happen to anyone, but having more than one may be a sign of panic disorder, a mental health condition characterized by sudden and repeated panic attacks.

### SYMPTOMS OF PANIC ATTACK VS. ANXIETY ATTACK

Panic and anxiety attacks may feel similar, and they share a lot of emotional and physical symptoms. You can experience both an anxiety and a panic attack at the same time.

For instance, you might experience anxiety while worrying about a potentially stressful situation, like an important presentation at work. When the situation arrives, anxiety may culminate in a panic attack.

A panic attack or anxiety attack can both cause physical and emotional symptoms, including:

- ▶ apprehension and worry
- ▶ distress
- ▶ fear of dying or losing control
- ▶ a sense of detachment from the world (derealization) or oneself (depersonalization)
- ▶ heart palpitations or an accelerated heart rate
- ▶ chest pain
- ▶ shortness of breath
- ▶ tightness in the throat or feeling like you're choking
- ▶ dry mouth

# The difference between a panic attack and an anxiety attack?



▶ sweating

▶ chills or hot flashes

▶ trembling or shaking

▶ numbness or tingling (paresthesia)

▶ nausea, abdominal pain, or upset stomach

▶ headache

▶ feeling faint or dizzy

It may be difficult to know whether what you're experiencing is anxiety or a panic attack. Keep in mind the following:

▶ **The cause:** Anxiety is typically related to something that's perceived as stressful or threatening. Panic attacks aren't always cued by stressors. They most often occur out of the blue.

▶ **The level of distress:** Anxiety can be mild, moderate, or severe. For example, anxiety may be happening in the back of your mind as you go about your day-to-day activities. Panic attacks, on the other hand, mostly involve severe, disruptive symptoms.

▶ **Fight-or-flight:** During a panic attack, the body's autonomous fight-or-flight response takes over. Physical symptoms are often more intense than symptoms of anxiety.

▶ **Speed of onset:** While anxiety can build gradually, panic attacks usually come on abruptly.

▶ **Effect:** Panic attacks typically trigger worries or fears related to having another attack. This may have an effect on your behavior, leading you to avoid places or situations where you think you might be at risk of a panic attack.

### CAUSES OF PANIC ATTACK VS. ANXIETY ATTACK

Unexpected panic attacks have no clear external triggers. Expected panic attacks and

anxiety can be triggered by similar things. Some common triggers include:

- ▶ a stressful job
- ▶ driving
- ▶ social situations
- ▶ phobias, like agoraphobia (fear of crowded or open spaces), claustrophobia (fear of small spaces), and acrophobia (fear of heights)
- ▶ reminders or memories of traumatic experiences
- ▶ chronic illnesses, like heart disease, diabetes, irritable bowel syndrome, or asthma
- ▶ chronic pain
- ▶ withdrawal from drugs or alcohol
- ▶ caffeine
- ▶ medication and supplements
- ▶ thyroid problems

### RISK FACTORS FOR PANIC ATTACK VS. ANXIETY ATTACK

Anxiety and panic attacks have similar risk factors. These include:

- ▶ experiencing trauma or witnessing traumatic events, either as a child or as an adult
- ▶ experiencing a stressful life event, like the death of a loved one or a divorce
- ▶ experiencing ongoing stress and worries, like work responsibilities, conflict in your family, or financial woes
- ▶ living with a chronic health condition or life threatening illness
- ▶ having an anxious personality
- ▶ having another mental health condition like depression
- ▶ having close family members who also have anxiety or panic disorders
- ▶ using drugs or consuming alcohol
- ▶ People who experience anxiety are at an increased risk of experiencing panic attacks. But having anxiety does not mean you will experience a panic attack.

### DIAGNOSING PANIC ATTACK VS. ANXIETY ATTACK

Doctors can't diagnose anxiety attacks, but they can diagnose:

- ▶ anxiety symptoms
- ▶ anxiety disorders
- ▶ panic attacks
- ▶ panic disorders

A doctor will ask you about your symptoms and conduct tests to rule out other health conditions with similar symptoms, like heart disease or thyroid problems.

To get a diagnosis, a doctor may conduct:

- ▶ a physical exam
- ▶ blood tests
- ▶ a heart test, like an electrocardiogram (ECG or EKG)
- ▶ a psychological evaluation or questionnaire

### TREATMENT AND MEDICATION FOR PANIC ATTACK VS. ANXIETY ATTACK

Speak with a doctor about other treatments for anxiety and panic attacks. Here are some treatments they may discuss with you.

▶ **Counseling and psychotherapy:** Talking therapies for anxiety and panic disorders can involve the following, often in combination.

▶ **Cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT):** This type of therapy can help you see things that worry you in a new way. A counselor can help you develop strategies for managing triggers when they arise.

▶ **Cognitive therapy:** This can help you pinpoint, reframe, and neutralize the unhelpful thoughts that often underlie an





anxiety disorder.

► **Exposure therapy:** This form of therapy involves controlled exposure to situations that trigger fear and anxiety, which can help you learn to confront those fears in a new way.

► **Relaxation techniques:** These include breathing exercises, guided imagery, progressive relaxation, biofeedback, and autogenic training. A doctor can talk you through some of these.

A doctor may suggest attending individual sessions, group sessions, or a combination of the two.

MEDICATION

Examples of medications your doctor may prescribe are:

**Antidepressants:** These medications include selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRIs) and serotonin-norepinephrine reuptake inhibitors (SNRIs).

► **Beta-blockers:** These medications can help manage certain physical symptoms, like a rapid heart rate.

► **Anti-anxiety drugs:** This includes benzodiazepines, a sedative medication that can suppress symptoms quickly.

All these drugs can have adverse effects. SSRIs and SNRIs are for long-term use, and it can take time to feel the effects. Benzodiazepines are for short-term use only, as there is a high risk of dependence.

Oftentimes, a doctor will recommend a combination of treatments. They may also need to alter your treatment plan over time.

HOME REMEDIES FOR PANIC  
ATTACK VS. ANXIETY ATTACK

You should speak with a doctor or mental health professional to find out what you can do to both prevent and treat anxiety- and panic-related symptoms. Having a treatment plan and sticking to it when an attack happens can help you feel like you're in control.

If you feel an anxiety or panic attack coming on, try the following:

► **Take slow deep breaths:** When you feel your breath quickening, focus your attention on each inhale and exhale. Feel your stomach fill with air as you inhale. Count down from four as you exhale. Repeat until your breathing slows.

► **Recognize and accept what you're experiencing:** If you've already experienced an anxiety or panic attack, you know that it can be incredibly challenging. Remind yourself that the symptoms will pass and you'll be alright.

► **Practice mindfulness:** Mindfulness-based interventions are increasingly used to treat anxiety and panic disorders.

► **Use relaxation techniques:** Relaxation techniques include guided imagery, aromatherapy, and muscle relaxation.

Healthline

“Both may indicate an underlying health condition. You might hear people talking about panic attacks and anxiety attacks like they're the same thing. But they're different conditions.”

# Jump Rope vs. Running:

## ... Is One Better Than the Other?

JUMPING rope is a low cost exercise that requires little equipment and minimal space.

Running is also a low cost exercise, but it typically requires increased space to perform unless you're running on a treadmill. However, that compromises the affordability.

Still, both are economical and efficient ways to work on your fitness, whether you're working on endurance or intensity. As such, you may wonder which is better for you, or whether you should focus on one over the other.

DO THEY BURN THE SAME  
AMOUNT OF CALORIES?

Both jumping rope and running burn a significant amount of calories. When comparing the number of calories burned during a 10-minute session of each, jumping rope offers a slight advantage.

Listed below are the estimated number of calories burned for each activity at comparable intensities for a 150-pound (68-kg) person performing each exercise for 10 minutes:

Intensity  
► Jumping rope  
► Running

Low  
► 105 calories  
► 117 calories

Medium  
► 140 calories  
► 125 calories

High  
► 146 calories  
► 140 calories

While other factors affect calorie burning, including your age and sex, these are the general guidelines.

DO THEY WORK THE BODY  
THE SAME WAY?

► Muscles used

Both running and jumping rope involve the use of your lower extremity muscles for propulsion, while your core muscles provide trunk stabilization.

Also, single-foot rope jumping and the stance phase of running require somewhat similar trunk and hip stabilization.

However, running requires increased use of your buttocks (hip extensors) through a greater range of motion for propulsion. Yet, alternating single-foot rope jumping requires increased use of your hip abductors to keep your pelvis stable, just like during the stance phase of running. Jumping rope also involves resistance to control the rope, involving your shoulder, biceps, triceps, and forearm flexor grip.

Meanwhile, running involves minimal resistance but the repetitive contraction of your shoulders (deltoids) and sustained flexion of the biceps to counterbalance your leg movement.

► Impact force

The amount of impact force on your lower extremities is relatively similar between jumping rope and running.

The impact force differs between



single-skip rope jumping (single unders) and double-skip rope jumping (double unders). Double unders typically have a higher impact force than single unders.

► Aerobic or anaerobic?

Both forms of exercise can be performed as aerobic exercise to enhance endurance by maintaining a steady pace over a longer duration.

In addition, sprints or high intensity intervals, which are considered anaerobic activities, can also be performed with both jumping rope and running.

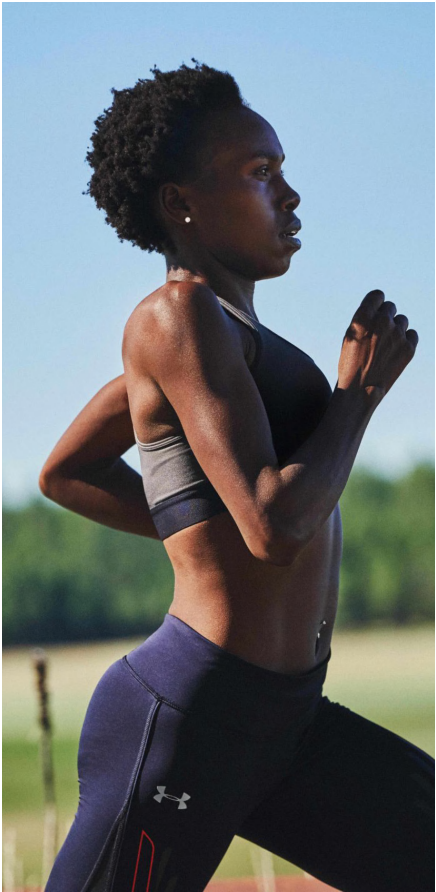
Either is a good choice for high intensity interval training (HIIT), which involves short bouts of exercise at 80–95% of your max heart rate interspersed with periods of lower intensity exercise at 40–50% of your max heart rate.

DO THEY BOTH BURN FAT?

One recent 12-week study observed that a jump rope program reduced body fat and improved risk factors associated with heart disease. Other studies have found similar results regarding body fat reduction. The challenge is that both the quantity and size of studies on rope jumping tend to be smaller than those on running. Running has been shown to be an excellent method of burning body fat. In fact, similar calorie expenditures were observed for various forms of running, including continuous endurance running and high intensity interval training (8).

DO THEY BOTH IMPROVE  
ENDURANCE AND SPRINT  
PERFORMANCE?

Both exercises have been shown to improve cardiovascular endurance — even if a rope wasn't used to perform the jumping task. There are alternatives to corded jump ropes that put the body through the same movement but require less coordination.



There's a correlation between jump rope speed (or the ability to perform double unders) and sprint speed. Thus, the ability to perform double unders may correlate to improved sprinting abilities given the anaerobic nature of the exercise.

In fact, double-under rope jumping has been a stable component of high intensity interval training and CrossFit programs since their inception.

WHO SHOULDN'T RUN? WHO  
SHOULDN'T JUMP ROPE?

Both activities involve increased ground reaction forces compared with activities like swimming, cycling, and walking. Thus, both activities may be difficult for people with lower leg injuries at the hips, knees, or ankles.

However, there are alternatives to running on land. There are gravity-reducing, or unweighting, treadmills, which assist a portion of your weight to decrease the mechanical stresses on your body. Also, aqua jogging allows you to perform the mechanics of running in shallow or deep water.

Finally, the DigiJump machine offers a lower impact surface for simulating jumping rope. In addition, you can use a mini trampoline to simulate jumping rope.

HOW SHOULD I CHOOSE?

Both forms of exercise have been shown to improve cardiovascular endurance. However, if you're pressed for time, jumping rope may benefit you more than running.

Nevertheless, if your goal is to be a better runner or compete in running races, running is a better option. Furthermore, if you're more inclined to enjoy a change of scenery during exercise, running is definitely a better option.

That said, jumping rope can be an alternative exercise to perform on days in between running to change the pattern of muscle activation while still working your cardiovascular system. **Healthline**



# NEWS IN PICTURES



▲ Denmark's newly proclaimed King Frederik and Queen Mary kiss on the balcony of Christiansborg Palace, following the abdication of former Queen Margrethe who reigned for 52 years, in Copenhagen, Denmark.



▲ Republican presidential candidate and former U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Nikki Haley walks off the Fox News Sunday set past a monitor showing Republican presidential candidate Florida Governor Ron DeSantis ahead of the Iowa caucus vote in Des Moines, Iowa.



▲ A volcano spews lava and smoke as it erupts in Reykjanes Peninsula, Iceland.



▲ A woman sits with her dog on a chair as people take shelter inside a metro station during an air raid alert, amid Russia's missile attacks on Ukraine, in Kyiv, Ukraine.



▲ A man holds a banner as climate protesters interrupt the campaign event of Former U.S. President and Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump, in Indianola, Iowa, U.S.



▲ General view during the first round match between Serbia's Novak Djokovic and Croatia's Dino Prizmic as the Melbourne skyline is seen in the background at the Australian Open, Melbourne Park, Melbourne, Australia



▲ A protester reacts, as climate activists and anti-WEF (World Economic Forum) demonstrators take part in a protest ahead of the opening of the WEF annual meeting in Davos, Switzerland



# Osaka falls at first hurdle on Grand Slam return

MELBOURNE - Naomi Osaka was disappointed to bow out of the Australian Open in the first round on her Grand Slam return on Monday but thought she was making rapid progress in her comeback after 15 months out of the game.

The Japanese former world number one, who took time out to have daughter Shai, went down 6-4 7-6(2) to French 16th seed Caroline Garcia on the Rod Laver Arena court where she won two of her four Grand Slam titles.

“I thought it was a really good match. For me, I felt like I did the best that I could possibly do,” she told reporters.

“I think I still feel like a bit disappointed ... I did feel nervous, but I felt like I kept telling myself to be positive. I thought I kept doing better as the match went on.

“So, yeah, I’m not too happy right now, but I think I can learn from the progress.”

Taking on the experienced Garcia was always going to be a big challenge for Osaka, who had played only two matches in Brisbane two weeks ago since her return to tournament tennis.

A double fault gave Garcia the first break point of the match in the fifth game and the former world number four converted it to edge ahead.

Osaka had a sniff of a break back at deuce in the eighth game but dumped a routine backhand into the net and Garcia held with back-to-back aces before going on to take the set.

### BACK FOOT

Twice U.S. Open champion Osaka won her first three service games of the second set to love, but Garcia was serving so well that Osaka was unable to build any pressure with her returns.

“I felt like I was constantly on my back foot and really hesitant,” Osaka added.

“I was a little bit overthinking in my head



▲ Naomi Osaka ‘s Grand Slam return ended prematurely in a first-round loss to Caroline Garcia.

where to go. I think that’s something that will come in time, but right now it kind of sucks a little.”

Garcia, who raced through the second-set tiebreak to clinch her place in round two, said she was sure it would not be too long before Osaka was back at the top of the game.

“She has had an amazing career, she has been away for 15 months and been through a lot,” the 30-year-old said.

“Six months after giving birth and she’s playing amazing, so we have to watch out.”

It was Osaka’s earliest exit in eight visits

to the Australian Open and her third successive loss in the opening round of a Grand Slam after she fell at the first hurdle at the French and U.S. Opens in 2022.

The 26-year-old was clearly struggling to reconcile her disappointment at the loss with the fact that she was so competitive after such a long period on the sidelines.

“Of course, there’s a voice in my head that is, ‘Who are you to think you can come back and immediately start winning matches?’,” Osaka said. “I don’t know. I kind of always expect myself to stand a chance anyways.”

(Mail Sport)



▲ Harry Kane is capable of breaking Robert Lewandowski’s 41-goal single-season Bundesliga record with the England captain off to a sensational start at the German champions.

## Harry Kane can beat Lewandowski’s Bundesliga goals record

BAYERN Munich coach Thomas Tuchel says Harry Kane is capable of breaking Robert Lewandowski’s 41-goal single-season Bundesliga record with the England captain off to a sensational start at the German champions.

Kane scored his 22nd league goal of the season in Friday’s 3-0 win over Hoffenheim, and has now struck in all but three of 16 Bundesliga appearances since his move from Tottenham.

He is on pace to shatter the mark set by Lewandowski in May 2021, when the Poland striker broke Bayern great Gerd Mueller’s record that had stood for 39 years.

“It is in danger, and no one could ever believe that it would be in danger, but it is,” Tuchel told the Bundesliga website.

“We need a bit of luck, we need the team to keep going, Harry needs to be fit, then we’ll see what happens.”

Kane left Spurs in August in a deal worth 100 million euros (\$109 million) and has hit the ground running in Germany, netting 26 times in 23 matches in all competitions.

“It’s just a gift, I feel very privileged to be his coach,” said Tuchel, whose side are four points behind leaders Bayer Leverkusen but have a game in hand. (AFP)

## Ten Hag hopes Hojlund-Rashford partnership will flourish

RASMUS Hojlund and Marcus Rashford are beginning to display signs of a potent partnership, Manchester United manager Erik ten Hag said after the attackers both scored in Sunday’s 2-2 Premier League draw with Tottenham Hotspur. Hojlund’s early opener was cancelled out by Richarlison before Rodrigo Bentancur levelled again for Spurs after Rashford had put United back in front.

Hojlund has scored only two league goals this season while Rashford has four but the pair appear to be developing an understanding and were involved in the build-up to each other’s goals.

“I hope they keep going with this progress,” Ten Hag told reporters. “You see they are coming up with routines – that is what you need.

“You need it everywhere but especially in the front line, where there are tight areas and quick decisions have to be made. In a split second you need the right decisions, so you need that intuition.

“When your front players are not scoring, it goes through the whole



▲ Manchester United’s Marcus Rashford celebrates scoring their second goal with Rasmus Hojlund.

team. It makes everyone insecure, starting with the front players, because they are of course eager when they’re not scoring and play with less confidence.”

United are next in action on Jan. 28 in an FA Cup fourth-round tie against either Newport County or Eastleigh.

(Reuters)

## Ratcliffe calls decision to invest in Man United the most “exciting”

MANCHESTER, England, Jan 14 (Reuters) - British billionaire Jim Ratcliffe, who attended his first Manchester United game on Sunday since striking a deal to take a minority stake of the club, called his investment the most “exciting” endeavour of his life.

“I have done a few exciting things but this caps it all, there’s no question about that,” Ratcliffe said during a brief meet and greet with reporters before Sunday’s 2-2 draw with Tottenham Hotspur in the Premier League. “I am very excited to be here.”

Ratcliffe, who grew up a United fan, said because of the regulatory process, he could not reveal any plans for the club. His proposed 25% purchase, approved by United’s board on Christmas Eve, still

has to be ratified, which he expects to take “three or four weeks”.

“I think it’s early February, I hope they don’t find anything dodgy on my CV,” the INEOS chairman said with a laugh. “I have met (manager) Erik (ten Hag) obviously but it would be inappropriate to (to say anything) until it’s all formalised,” he added.

Ratcliffe, who plans to attend “quite a lot of games,” said he has dreamed of United ownership for a few years.

“It’s taken a few turns along the road, but it all turned out well in the end,” he said.

The 71-year-old explained he was “about 10” when he took in his first game at Old Trafford, and his most recent visit to the stadium before Sunday was two or three years ago.

(Reuters)





▲ Senegal recorded an emphatic 3-0 victory in their opening fixture.

# Senegal begin title defence in style

REIGNING champions of the TotalEnergies CAF Africa Cup of Nations, Senegal opened their title defense campaign with an emphatic 3-0 win over The Gambia at Yamoussoukro's Stade Charles Konan Banny, thanks to a Pape Gueye early strike that was accompanied by a Lamine Camara second half brace.

The Scorpions, who were quarter-finalists in the last edition were outclassed by the reigning champions who dismantled them with the early goal by Gueye following a Sadio Mane assist.

The Gambia tried re-grouping and fighting their way back into the match but were met by a resolute and disciplined Senegalese defense.

Things got worse for the scorpions when

Ebrima Adams was sent off for an early shower after a vicious tackle on the young Lamine Camara just before the break.

Returning from recess, the reigning champions continued their dominance, giving the Scorpions zero chances of a comeback, who were a man down.

**Opponents**

A brace by the young sensation, Camara which included a peach of a strike from the edge of the box that found its way into the top corner saw the Lions of Teranga roar into a 3-0 victory to go top of Group C and send a clear message of intent to their opponents.

Up next for the defending champions is a mouth-watering tie against the Indomitable Lions of Cameroon on Friday, 19 January.

(Reuters)

# Cameroon, Guinea share the spoils

YAMOUSSOUKRO - Cameroon came from behind to share the points with 10-man Guinea in a 1-1 stalemate in the first game for both teams at the Africa Cup of Nations finals in Ivory Coast on Monday. Franck Magri equalised early in the second half after Guinea had taken a 10th minute lead through Mohamed Bayo but then had captain Francois Kamano sent off.

The draw at the Charles Konan Banny Stadium in the Ivorian capital followed the opening Group C game where holders Senegal easily disposed of Gambia 3-0.

Cameroon were without Andre Onana in goal but he did arrive ahead of the game after featuring for Manchester United in Sunday's 2-2 draw with Tottenham Hotspur

at Old Trafford.

Guinea were handed a fortunate lead following some horror defending from the Indomitable Lions.

After Bayo's initial shot at goal was parried away by goalkeeper Fabrice Ondoa, there were two chances to clear the ball but under pressure the Cameroon defence botched their efforts and centre back Olivier Kemen ended up kicking the ball back towards his goal and into the path of Bayo, who need no second invitation to finish from close range.

**Equaliser**

Cameroon might have had a quick equaliser but Andre-Frank Zambo Anguissa missed a good opportunity at the back post from Georges-Kevin Nkoudou's 13th minute freekick.

But their chances were enhanced on the stroke of halftime when Kamano was sent off for a challenge from behind on Magri, standing first on his heel and then ankle.

Initially he was cautioned but after the referee was advised to review his decision via VAR, it was changed to red.

With the one man advantage, Cameroon dominated the second half attacks with the equaliser coming in the 51st minute after Nkoudou put in a cross to the back post and Magri climbed high to head home despite the attention of Guinea defender Antoine Conte.

Cameroon could have won the game late but a superb save from Ibrahim Kone denied Karl Toko Ekambi.

(Reuters)



▲ Guinea goalscorer Mohamed Bayo plays his club football for Le Havre in France.

# ... I'm proud of my team – Aliou Cissé

SENEGAL national team coach, Aliou Cissé expressed his full satisfaction with how the defending champions opened their TotalEnergies CAF Africa Cup of Nations Cote d'Ivoire 2023 title defense on Monday after thrashing The Gambia 3-0 in Yamoussoukro.

Speaking after the emphatic victory, the coach said the team did well under the trying conditions of the heat and played well despite the challenges.

"I am very satisfied with the performance of the players, especially since things were difficult given the climatic conditions and heat that we faced. We will continue to work hard on a few things that need to be rectified but overall, I am very happy with this victory", said the coach.

On the young sensation, Lamine Camara who put up a TotalEnergies Man of the Match performance on his TotalEnergies CAF AFCON debut, Cisse boldly stated that it

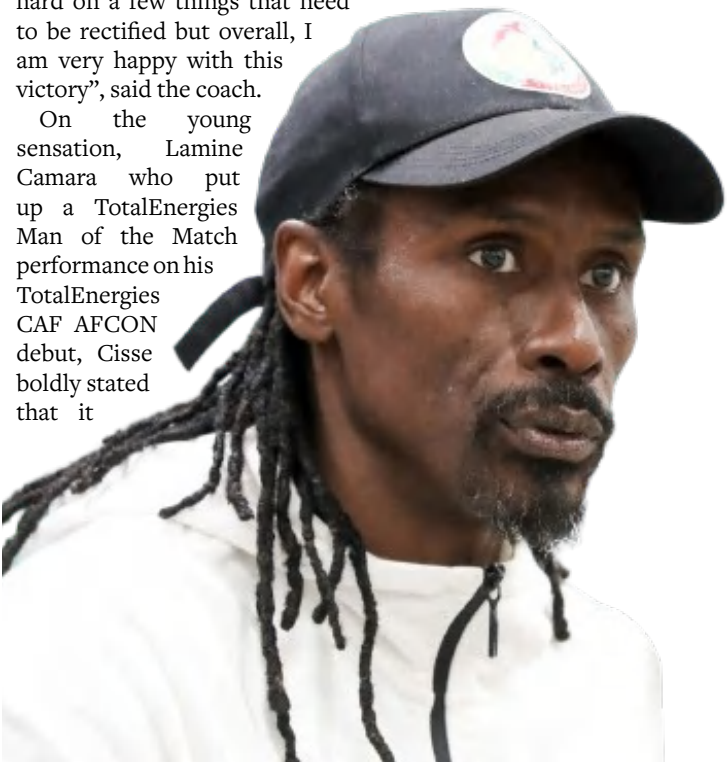
was his time to shine.

"Lamine Camara is a young player, and his time has come. He scored two goals against Gambia and gave a distinguished performance on the field. The young player must be trusted and developed."

To his opponents, Cisse encouraged them that there were still matches to be played and that they should not be disheartened.

"It is not over for Gambia after losing in the first match. They can correct it, just like what happened to us in the World Cup where we lost our first match in the group stage. They can still turn things around" urged the coach.

(cafonline)



▲ Senegal national team coach, Aliou Cissé.



Focus on MTN Premier League Round 13



▲ Nsingizini Hotspurs President Derrick Shiba welcomes Zimbabwean striker Nyasha Chintulu before the player scored a hattrick in the 3-1 win over Royal Leopard on Sunday.



▲ Moneni Pirates players celebrate the goal they scored in the 1-all draw against Mbabane Highlanders.

THE MTN Premier League continues to captivate and bring surprises to fans with only one match into the second round.

By Sibusiso Masilela  
sibusisom@rubiconmedia.group

We review ‘Game 13’ of the batch of matches played over the weekend.

**1. ‘Birds’ miss out on top spot**  
The capital city giants missed out on an opportunity to reclaim the top spot after being held to a 1-all draw by Denver Sundowns at Mavuso Sports Centre on Sunday. A victory could have taken the red and white glamour side to 27 points for at least 24 hours ahead of Green Mamba’s tricky date against Manzini Wanderers on Tuesday. The Caleb Ngwenya-led side had to come from behind to secure a hard-fought draw with the ‘Kappa Boys’ through a Felix ‘Fela’ Badenhorst late equaliser.

**2. Illovo earn Lubombo bragging rights**  
The newcomers earned the Lubombo region bragging rights with a 1-0 win over Madlenya at Mayaluka Stadium on Sunday, which moved them to position seven on the log table. The Zwelibanzi ‘Botsotso’ Khoza-led side condemned the Siphofaneni-based side to their second defeat of the season.

**3. Nsingizini’s new signing makes a memorable arrival**  
Nsingizini Hotspurs’ Zimbabwean striker Nyasha Chintulu made an immediate impression in the MTN Premier League after netting a hat-trick during their 3-1 win over Royal Leopard on Sunday at King Sobhuza II Stadium. The Zimbabwean’s heroics ensured that ‘Insingizi yeZulu’ completed a double over the police side in the current campaign. The Shiselweni-based side also paraded two other new signings Alvin Shabashie and Yekisizwe Khumalo, signed from Denver Sundowns and Moneni Pirates, respectively.

**4. Pirates still winless**  
The going is getting tougher for Moneni Pirates in the current campaign. The black



▲ Mbabane Swallows played to a 1-all draw against Denver Sundowns and failed to take the top spot.

and white ensemble is still winless this season after they recorded their eighth draw of the campaign against Mbabane Highlanders. They have secured eight draws and are still languishing along the drop zone with eight points after 14 matches, mounting more pressure on head coach Gcina Dlamini.

**5. Pressure mounts on ‘Weslians’**  
Hub giants Manzini Wanderers will be under pressure heading to their next match against defending champions Green Mamba on

Tuesday at Mavuso Sports Centre. The ‘Weslians’ need to grind positive results to move out of the drop zone, as they are currently rooted at the bottom of the table with eight points.

**6. Referees under the spotlight at Mavuso Sports Centre**  
Match officials were under the spotlight at Mavuso Sports Centre during the double-header that featured Mbabane Swallows, Mbabane

MTN PREMIER LEAGUE WEEK 14 RESULTS:		
Swallows	1-1	Sundowns
Pirates	1-1	Highlanders
Nsingizini	3-1	Leopard
Illovo	1-0	Madlenya
Buffaloes	3-1	Sea Birds
Ezulwini	0-3	Rangers
Pending fixtures		
Tuesday		
Mavuso Sports Centre		
Manzini Wanderers	vs	Green Mamba 6pm
Pending fixture:		
Denver Sundowns	vs	Ezulwini United
Next attraction		
Green Mamba	vs	Mbabane Swallows
Young Buffaloes	vs	Illovo
M. Highlanders	vs	Rangers
Royal Leopard	vs	Madlenya
N. Hotspurs	vs	Ezulwini United
Moneni Pirates	vs	Manzini Wanderers
Sea Birds	vs	Denver Sundowns

Highlanders, Denver Sundowns and Moneni Pirates over the weekend. Sundowns officials and Highlanders fans were not satisfied with the decision taken by match officials, and we hope the referees’ committee will come to the party and improve the standard of refereeing in the elite league to avoid such occurrences.



▲ Referees took centre stage during the MTN Premier League games at Mavuso Sports Centre on Sunday.



By Ntokozo Magongo  
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Fixture: M. Wanderers vs G. Mamba  
Venue: Mavuso Sports Centre  
Kick-off: 6 pm  
Entry fee: E30

IT’s been one-sided results between the two sides as Manzini Wanderers have failed to win against Green Mamba in the past five meetings.

Green Mamba has won three matches and the two ended in draws.

The last time the two sides clashed, Green Mamba won 3-0 and it was April 11, 2023, in an MTN Premier League second-round encounter. The two sides go to tonight’s game on opposite ends of the log standings.

Green Mamba is at the top of the table while Wanderers is lying second from the bottom of the 14-team log.

Green Mamba is eyeing a win from this game to open a five-point lead at the top. They are already motivated having won the E100 000 first-round incentive.

The defending champions lost 0-2 to rivals, Royal Leopard in their last game in the MTN Premier League and they will be all out to bounce back.

The Ernest Mavuso-led side has the quality of players that can easily pass the struggling Manzini Wanderers, who are yet to win a match in the Premier League. Wanderers’

# MTN Premier League preview: Wanderers enter the Mamba’s hole blindfolded

only victory came in the Ingwenyama Cup when they trounced National First Division League side Sisonkhe 3-0 to qualify for the last 16 stage of the tournament.

Green Mamba will rely on the performance of last year’s top goal Sabelo ‘Sikhali’ Ndzinisa who has already visited the net 13 times this season. There are also the likes of Njabulo ‘D4D’ Ndlovu, Njabulo Thwala, Captain Mxolisi Mkhontfo and Mthunzi ‘Xavi’ Mkhontfo.

Meanwhile, Manzini Wanderers would like to have former Green Mamba Banele ‘Bunny’ Mdluli who signed for the Nyanga Hlophe-led side last week and scored a hat trick against Sisonkhe on his debut but indications are that he is unlikely to feature against his employers.

### Players to watch:

Green Mamba: Sabelo ‘Sikhali’ Ndzinisa and Njabulo Thwala.  
M. Wanderers: Mlamuli ‘Mlaba’ Nkambule and Sandile ‘Nkomishi’ Ginindza.



▲Nsingizini Hotspurs player Mlamuli Nkambule.



▲Green Mamba’s Sabelo Sikhali Ndzinisa.

# ‘Give tax rebates to sponsors’ — Shiba



▲Nsingizini Hotspurs President Derrick Shiba.

Stories by Sibusiso Masilela  
sibusisom@rubiconmedia.group

NSINGIZINI Hotspurs President Derrick Shiba has called for the introduction of tax rebates to benefit companies that sponsor football activities and other sporting codes in the country.

Shiba made this submission during the Premier League of Eswatini (PLE) Indaba held on Saturday at Sigwaca House.

“We appeal to government to consider

introducing rebates for companies that support sports in the country, and this would encourage more companies to invest in sports entities. Sports needs funding to create jobs in the country,” he said.

Shiba further called for consistency in the selection of national team players.

“National team coaches should be consistent in the squad selection, as they normally select fringe players ahead of active ones. We also want to see the smooth transition of players from junior squads to propel the country to greater heights in international scenes,” he said.

Meanwhile, Eswatini Sports and Recreation Council (ESRC) CEO

Darius Dlomo said the government was willing to listen to companies that supported sports.

“Our doors are open for companies that sponsor sports, and we are ready to assist them get tax rebates from government,” he said.

Nsingizini Hotspurs recently received E1.5 million from Embiveni Meats, plus a technical sponsorship from Primo.

The Shiselweni-based side has produced several junior international players such as Mayibongwe ‘Suarez’ Mabuza, Thubelihle Mavuso, Sibusiso ‘Bharaba’ Dlamini and Sambulo ‘Masoso’ Simelane, among others.

# Saneliso Masuku is out of the Olympic qualifiers

MOZAMBIQUE-BASED taekwondo star Saneliso Masuku has been left out of the 2024 Olympic Games-bound national team.

This follows his loss to Wandile Maziya during the local qualifying tournament held on Saturday at Zakhele Hall.

Maziya will now represent the country during the continental qualifiers slated for Senegal between February 10 and 11 together with Mfanewekhaya Dube, Carlotta Munave and Nonhle Maduna.

Eswatini Taekwondo Federation (ETF) Vice Secretary Mbongeni ‘Ndo’ Sibandze confirmed the updates.

“We are happy to announce our four-member national team that will attend the Olympics qualifiers and we are confident that the four athletes will make the country proud during the qualifiers. We will announce other details of the squad in due course. We are happy with the attendance of local athletes during the recent local tournament,” he said.

The outstanding athletes in the continental qualifiers will qualify for the 2024 Olympic Games

Dube and Munave recently attended the 2023 World Championships in Uzbekistan in May.

Dube further reached the quarterfinals of the 2023 African championships together with Masuku in Ivory Coast.

**The full Olympic Games qualifier squad**  
**Head Coach: Mancoba Motsa**  
**Females**  
**Nonhle Maduna - 49kg**  
**Carlota Munave +67kg**

**Males**  
Mfan’wekhaya Dube -58kg  
Wandile Maziya -68kg  
The full qualifying tournament results

**Female: -49kg**  
1. Nonhle Maduna 18 pts  
2. Hlelo Vilakati 12 pts

3 Luyanda Mvila -3pts  
4. Luphelele Shongwe 00 pts

**Female: -57Kg**  
1. Sivuno Dlamini- 9 pts  
2. Aphiwe Dlamini- 6 pts  
3. Temvelo Dlamini - 3 pts  
4. Fakazile Nxumalo: 00 pts  
5. Ntsiki Ntshalintshali - 00 pts

**Females: -67kg**  
1 Sivuno Dlamini- 6 pts  
2. Sandzi Mavimbela 3 pts  
3. Vuyiswa Mhlanga 00 pts

**Males: -58Kg**  
1. Sihlelelwe Matsebula: 30 pts  
2. Mfanewekhaya Dube: 24 pts  
3. Goinumuzi Nxumalo- 24 pts  
4. Sifiso Dlamini - 12 pts  
5. Lindo Fakudze: 6 pts  
6. Bongumusa Mkhathswa - 6 pts  
7. Mthokozisi Sihlongonyane -3 pts  
8. Velile Gwebu - 0 pts



▲Saneliso Masuku.

**Male: -68kg**  
1. Wandile Maziya: 21pts  
2. Saneluso Masuku: 15 pts  
3. Lindelwa Mkhathswa -12 pts  
4. Khumbulani Mahlalela - 9 pts  
5. Sambulo Ndzabandzaba - 9 pts  
6. Siyabonga Ndzabandzaba- 3 pts  
7. Melusi Lukhele - 3 pts  
8. Nsika Simelane - 0 pts



Stories By Sibusiso Masilela  
sibusisom@rubiconmedia.group

# ‘Bull’ players on ice ahead of Ingwenyama Cup

THREE Mbabane Highlanders players are currently on ice after being suspended by the club for misconduct. The affected players are defender Mandla Palma, Enzo Motsa and goalkeeper Mxolisi Dlamini.

One of the longest-serving players, Ndumiso ‘Ndu’ Mabuza was also part of the culprits before he apologized to the Management Committee (MC) headed by Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Musa Masuku.

The three players will soon appear before the Disciplinary Committee (DC) headed by Masuku after team Boss Chief Ally Kgomongwe tasked the MC to handle the matter.

News

Kgomongwe confirmed the news when reached for comment.

“Three players are currently suspended pending the outcome of the DC before taking further actions,” Kgomongwe told Eswatini Daily News on Monday.

The trio missed the ‘Black Bull’ 1-all draw against Moneni Pirates at Mavuso Sports Centre.

The three players are also doubtful for the SMVAF Ingwenyama Cup against MTN National First Division Louis XIV at a venue still to be confirmed by the Premier League of Eswatini (PLE).

‘Inkunzenyama’ paraded Ghanaian striker Kwado Frimpong, formerly with Nsingizini Hotspurs, during their recent league match



▲Mbabane Highlanders in action against Moneni Pirates on Sunday. The capital city giants have suspended the trio of Mandla Palma, Mxoli Dlamini (Inset) and Enzo Motsa.

against the ‘Sea Robbers’

The crowd pullers are on the verge of losing their captain Philani Mkhonto to Motsepe Foundation League outfit Black Leopards.

The Sihlangu players recently attended

a three-day assessment at the Limpompo-based side where former coach Solly Luvhengo is a coach together with Morgan Shivambu.

Mkhonto is set to become the second Highlanders to play for Leopards after

legendary defender Bongani ‘Ndezi’ Masangane.

Leopards are also monitoring goalkeeper Khanyakwezwe Shabalala and anchorman Mpendulo Tfomo.



By Ntokozo Magongo  
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THE trio of professional golfers, James Pennington, Mandla Jnr Dlamini and Brandon-Jude Rennie are placed in reserves in the E2 million-sponsored Mediclinic Invitational.

The tournament is the first under the Sunshine Tour in the current year.

The tournament will be played from January 25th to 28th at the Maccaulei Golf Club, South Africa. The trio were last in

ABOUT THE TOURNAMENT:  
Name: Mediclinic Invitational  
Dates: January 25th - 28th, 2024  
Venue: Maccaulei Golf Club  
Round: 4 (Four)  
Prize money: E2 million

action in December.

There are already over 140 professional golfers from all over the world expected to tee off in the tournament. The trio will only get a chance to play if there are withdrawals from the entered golfers.

# ‘Banny’ blow for ‘Weslians’ as they face Green Mamba

HUB giants Manzini Wanderers have suffered a major blow ahead of the crunch MTN Premier League clash against Green Mamba on Tuesday at Mavuso Sports Centre.

The ‘Weslians’ will be minus the services of their top striker Banele ‘Banny’ Mdluli who is barred from playing against his parent club as per the loan agreement between the two clubs.

Mdluli joined the crowd pullers in a season loan deal from the correctional services side.

He recently transported the hub giants into the SMVAF Ingwenyama Cup after scoring a hat trick during their 3-0 win over National First Division side Sisonkhe.

Wanderers Management Committee Chairman Berger Nxumalo confirmed the news.

“Banny won’t be part of our match against Green Mamba due the loan deal terms which we signed with Green Mamba. We are confident that the available players will do job inside the field of play,” he said.

Nxumalo further stated that they were on the verge of signing four players ahead of their date against the reigning league champions.

The possible signings include former Mbabane Swallows striker Simanga Shongwe, ex-Highlanders’ playmaker Sibusiso Mkhonta, Nigerian international Hassan Balogun

(formerly with Nsingizini Hotspurs) and their development product Mfanzile Mdluli from Moneni Pirates.

The maroon and white ensemble recently beefed up its technical bench with Zimbabwean mentor Ikabort Masocha and physical trainer Percy Shongwe.



▲ Manzini Wanderers striker Banele ‘Banny’Dlamini.





**Osaka falls  
at first  
hurdle on  
return**

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**Banny blow  
for Manzini  
Wanderers**

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**Bull players  
on ice ahead of  
Ingwenyama Cup**

... Mandla Palma, Enzo Motsa and Mxolisi Dlamini have been suspended for misconduct and are highly likely to miss the Ingwenyama Cup clash against National First Division side, Louis XIV. **Page 23**