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By Noaba Ntshakala

DEPUTY Prime Minister Thulisile Dladla, accompanied by Acting National Commissioner of the Royal Eswatini Police Service (REPS) Lydia Dlamini, visited the families of police officers who tragically lost their lives during the recent unrest in the Kingdom.

The Deputy Prime Minister expressed that this is one of the programmes that her office is currently embarking on which is checking children's welfare countrywide.

SEE FULL STORY ON PAGE 2



## PM jets off to represent King at key international Summit

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▲ DPM Thulisile Dladla having a light moment with the family members of one of the killed police officers whilst Acting National Commissioner looks on.

# DPM Thulisile Dladla extends support to families of slayed police officers

Stories By Noaba Ntshakala

DEPUTY Prime Minister Thulisile Dladla, accompanied by Acting National Commissioner of the Royal Eswatini Police Service (REPS) Lydia Dlamini, visited the families of police officers who tragically lost their lives during the recent unrest in the Kingdom.

The Deputy Prime Minister expressed that this is one of the programmes that her office is currently embarking on which is checking children's welfare countrywide. DPM added that she is assessing the situation of all orphans in the Kingdom, checking if they are well taken care of, and if they are ready for school opening.

DPM explained that she requested the assistance of the Members of Parliament to help identify the children within their constituencies. On her visit to the slayed cops' children, DPM stated that only one family was found to be struggling as the children were alone with no elders.

She expressed that they are catered for by the oldest who will be doing her Form 5 when schools

open. "I was devastated by in one of the police officers homesteads where I found that the children are living alone and with the oldest only doing her Form 5," DPM Dladla stated "The others are well taken care of with strong support systems from their mothers and their grandmothers"

Deputy Prime Minister said that she has committed herself to aiding children who need assistance as she has noted that there is an increase in the number of dropouts in the country yet there is the FPE programme in place.

### Breakthrough

Dladla said that such needed to be revisited. She highlighted the office's breakthrough at Maphiveni.

Recently in Maphiveni, DPM accompanied by Minister of Education and Training Minister Owen Nxumalo, visited the Maphiveni community to assess the progress of the construction project for new primary school classrooms.

Last year, as part of her programme to assess children's welfare countrywide, DPM visited the Mgidzangcunu compound, in Vuvulane to assess the conditions children lived under. She then toured the compound and visited Maphiveni where the community



▲ Deputy Prime Minister Thulisile Dladla and Acting Commissioner Lydia Dlamini and other officials during the visit to one of the killed police officers



▲ Chief Police Information Communications Officer Senior Superintendent Phindile Vilakati (2nd Right) with DPM's office officials seated during the visit.

revealed that the nearest school is 35 Kilometres away.

DPM visited the families of Sifiso Irvin Mthembu in Mafutseni who was shot in Manzini, brutally assassinated at Manzini golf course. All officers were killed during the recent unrest in different incidents.

## ... calls for child protection after tragic killing of three children

THE Deputy Prime Minister's Office issued a heart-wrenching statement, expressing profound sadness and anger over the reported poisoning incident of three young children by their mother. This tragedy has shocked the nation and sparked renewed calls for stronger child protection measures.

"The Deputy Prime Minister's Office is saddened by reports in today's newspapers (of the killing of three minor children through poisoning by their mother," read the statement. "Children are the future of our families and the perpetual existence

of this nation. families, communities, and individuals must implement measures that safeguard children from all acts of violence. As a nation, we all have a responsibility to raise awareness on the importance of protecting children and ensure that Eswatini is fit for every child."

The office went on to highlight the legal framework safeguarding children's rights, stating that both the Kingdom's Constitution and the Children's Act prioritize child protection and non-violation of their rights. Protecting children from violence, the statement stressed is not only a basic moral obligation but also a legal duty. "Their

protection and non-violation of their rights. Protecting children from violence is not only a basic value but also an obligation set out in these legislative frameworks," stated the statement.

The nation was devastated by the saddening news that their mother, Samkelisiwe compelled three of her children to ingest poisonous substances. It is reported that the children were found at around 2 pm and their mother who also ingested the substance but was quickly discovered and rushed to Dvokolwako clinic, never gave a reason for her act. DPM's office further expressed that the office remains committed

to assisting parents and families in caring for children. "Our regional social welfare offices are available to provide support," reads the statement. Furthermore, the office highlighted that it houses the gender and family issues department which is also ready to. assist families on various issues.

"The nation is encouraged to visit nearby social welfare offices for engagement on any social issue so that ideal solutions to challenges at hand may be explored to avoid such incidences. The office extends heartfelt condolences and sympathies to the families affected." the DPM said in the statement.



Stories by Ncaba Ntshakala

PRIME Minister Russell Mmiso Dlamini embarked on a diplomatic journey on Thursday, departing Eswatini for a series of high-profile international summits.

Carrying the mantle of His Majesty King Mswati III and the Kingdom of Eswatini, Dlamini will first attend the 19th Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) Summit of Heads of State and Governments in Uganda, followed by the Italy-Africa Summit in Italy.

The NAM Summit, scheduled for January 19-20 in the Ugandan capital Kampala, brings together representatives from over 120 developing nations aiming to promote global peace, solidarity, and development. The Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) is a forum that is not formally aligned with or against any major power bloc. After the United Nations, it is the largest grouping of states worldwide.

Drawing on the principles agreed upon at the Bandung Conference in 1955, the NAM was established in 1961 in Belgrade, Yugoslavia through the initiative of President of Yugoslavia Josip Broz Tito, President of Egypt Gamal Abdel Nasser, Prime Minister of India Jawaharlal Nehru, President of Indonesia Sukarno, and President of Ghana Kwame Nkrumah.

Following the NAM Summit, the Prime Minister will head to Italy for the Italy-Africa Summit, a crucial platform for strengthening ties between the European nation and African countries. Last year, Italy postponed the summit due to increasing global tensions. In November 2023, Italy announced its postponement of the summit and further added that it will host in late January the summit with African nations. The postponement came in the wake of the flare-up of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Such was shared by Italy Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni.

... UNFPA's new Country Director meets UN Resident Coordinator

THE new United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) Eswatini Country Director, Yu Yu, paid a courtesy visit to His Excellency George Wachira, the UN Resident Coordinator, yesterday.

The meeting marked a fresh start for both individuals, paving the way for strengthened partnership and renewed efforts towards improving the lives of vulnerable populations in the Kingdom.

The new Country Director has joined the UNFPA team and according to UNFPA, he brings a wealth of experience and expertise to the role. Having worked with UNFPA at various levels across the globe, his passion for reproductive health, gender equality, and youth empowerment is wide.

During the visit, the UNFPA delegation, led by Eswatini Head of Office, Margaret Thwala-Tembe held fruitful discussions with the UN Resident Coordinator, to explore avenues for strengthened collaboration and coordination of efforts in addressing pressing issues related to population and reproductive health in the country. UNFPA reported that the meeting focused on identifying shared priorities and aligning strategies to maximize the impact of interventions aimed at promoting sustainable development and improved quality of life for the people of Eswatini.

UNFPA Eswatini further reported that the new Country Director, Yu Yu met with the UNFPA Eswatini country office team. The organization said such marked a significant moment in their collective mission to deliver a world where every childbirth is safe and every young person's potential is fulfilled.

PM jets off to represent King at key international summits

"The Italy-Africa conference is scheduled for January 28-29," Meloni said after a cabinet meeting in Rome which approved initial steps towards an energy cooperation plan that Italy wants to offer to African countries. Scheduled for January 28-29, in Rome, the summit will focus on topics of mutual interest, including energy cooperation, economic cooperation, security, and migration. The summit scheme, known as the "Mattei plan" and named after Enrico Mattei, founder of state-controlled energy group Eni (ENI. MI), opens a new tab and is expected to lay the ground for cooperation beyond energy.

Italy is expected to take over the presidency of the Group of Seven (G7) nations this year and has pledged to make Africa a central theme while it is at the helm.



▲ Prime Minister Russell Dlamini (2nd from right) with Cabinet ministers before departure at the King Mswati III International Airport at Sikhuphe.

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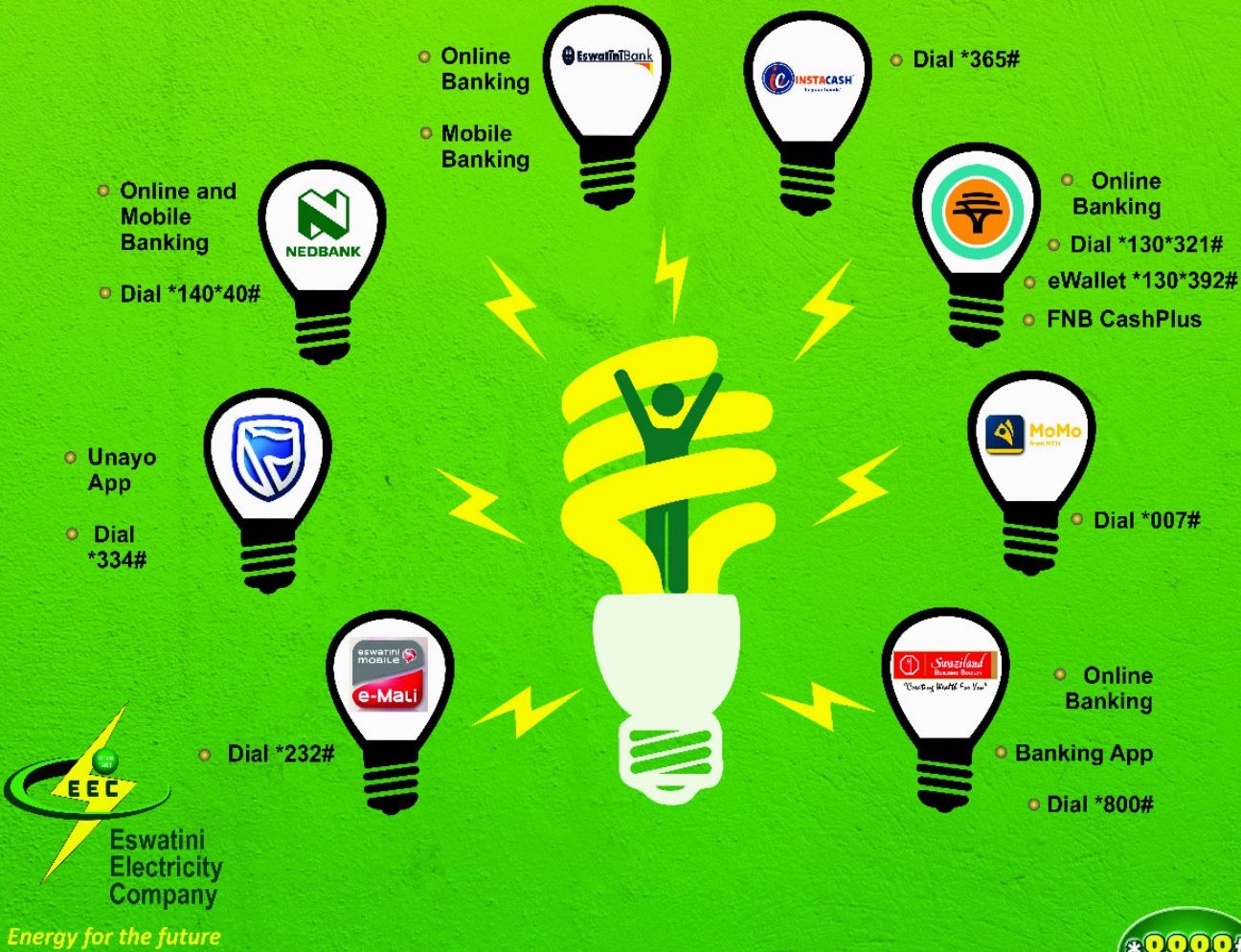
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# INMACOM in partnership with GEF, UNDP, and GWP holds productive stakeholder workshop

By Ncaba Ntshakala

THE Incomati and Maputo Watercourse Commission (INMACOM) held a significant workshop yesterday at Emafini Country Lodge, marking a major step forward in the Strengthening integrated transboundary management of the Incomati and Maputo River basins project (IncoMaputo).

This crucial initiative, facilitated by a Project Preparation Grant (PPG) from the Global Environment Facility (GEF) 8 project, aimed to develop a comprehensive Full-Size Project (FSP) proposal. The PPG phase will involve extensive data collection and stakeholder engagement, transforming the initial project concept into a detailed implementation plan.

Global Environment Facility (GEF) is a unique governing structure organized around an Assembly, the Council, the Secretariat, 18 agencies, a Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel, and the Evaluation Office. The GEF also serves as a financial mechanism for several environmental conventions.

The workshop served as an impactful platform for the PPG Team to achieve several key objectives which include providing transparency and clarity. Participants during the workshop received a clear overview of the project's goals, components, activities, and deliverables, ensuring everyone was on the same page. It was also aimed at securing stakeholder support.

The team actively sought contributions from stakeholders and insights as vital for the project's success. Also, during the workshop, national priorities were identified. The workshop facilitated the identification of priority national projects within Eswatini, which will be piloted as part of the larger IncoMaputo initiative.

**Graced**

The workshop was graced by the Principal Secretaries from the Ministry of Natural Resources and Energy Dorcas Dlamini and Khangeziwe Mabuza from the Ministry of Tourism and Environmental Affairs.

Mabuza is also the focal point of GEF in Eswatini and she applauded the stakeholder workshop and said that the Ministry of Tourism and Environmental Affairs is responsible for coordination and reporting of all issues that affect the environment.

Principal Secretary to the Ministry of Natural Resources and Energy Dorcas Dlamini in her remarks expressed that the project started with the preparation and submission of a project identification form (PIF) to the Global Environment Facility in 2023. She said this was done with the assistance of UNDP and Global Water Partnership Southern Africa and the full support of the Ministry of Tourism and Environmental Affairs.

"The first process was successful and it resulted in an award of a Project Preparation Grant by the Global Environment Facility to help the countries to develop a full-size project. This is the stage of the project currently," Said the PS.

Dlamini highlighted that is worth noting that the areas affected by the project, which are the Incomati and Maputo basins are very important to the Governments of the three countries as they support the livelihoods of communities and also contribute towards the socio-economic development of these countries, in supporting the agriculture sec-



▲ Principal Secretaries Khangeziwe Mabuza and Dorcas Dlamini following proceedings with INMACOM's Edward Mswane looking on



▲ INMACOM Interim Executive Secretary Edward Mswane delivering his remarks.



▲ Ministry of Tourism and Environmental Affairs and Focal point in GEF Khangeziwe Mabuza.



▲ National Expert and PPG Facilitator Enoch Dlamini during the discussions.

tor, industrial development, potable water supply and the tourism sector. "The basins are, however, facing pressure from various factors including severe droughts, floods, cyclones, changes in river flows, pollution, water scarcity and impacts of climate change," she noted.

INMACOM Interim Executive Secretary Edward Mswane applauded all stakeholders and said that Stakeholders are key in the Management of Water Resources. "Your active participation in this workshop will guide and give direction to the project that will be undertaken by the three Member States, being the Kingdom of Eswatini, the Republic of South Africa, and the Republic of Mozambique," said Mswane.

He also said that the Commission is grateful to GEF 8 for the grant they have availed. "As we are mandated by the 3 Member States to deliver on the project, we commit as INMACOM together with the Implementing agency (UNDP) and the Executing Agency (GWPSA) to adhere to the timelines that will

be developed and also involve the stakeholders as we move along. No one must be left behind." Mswane stated in his remarks.

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) as the implementing agency highlighted that The Goal of the Project is to promote integrated source-to-sea management of the Incomati and Maputo River Basins. UNDP Deputy Resident Representative Nessie-Gould Golaki further acknowledged the role of the UNDP Country Office (CO) in coordinating involvement and support from South Africa and Mozambique COs, highlighting successful instances of resource mobilization and stakeholder engagement. Golaki reiterated UNDP's dedication to ensuring the timely and collaborative completion of all deliverables in the PPG.

Also, she encouraged ongoing engagement and cooperation among stakeholders, highlighting the potential long-term benefits of the project for regional sustainability, economic growth, and improved quality of life.

“Your active participation in this workshop will guide and give direction to the project that will be undertaken by the three Member States, being the Kingdom of Eswatini, the Republic of South Africa, and the Republic of Mozambique”





NEW TENDERS		
PROCURING ENTITY	TENDER TITLE	SUBMISSION DEADLINE
ESWATINI AGRICULTURE DEVELOPMENT FUND	SUPPLY AND DELIVERY OF MOTOR VEHICLES	14/02/2024 12:00 PM
EZULWINI MUNICIPALITY	MAINTENANCE OF PUBLIC OPEN SPACES AND CLEARING OF VACANT POTS	30/01/2024 12:00 PM
EZULWINI MUNICIPALITY	SUPPLY, INSTALLATION & MAINTENANCE OF DOMESTIC AND STREETLIGHTING FITTINGS	30/01/2024 12:00 PM
EZULWINI MUNICIPALITY	REHABILITATION OF MDZENGA CLOSE & MANTENGA DRIVE IN EZULWINI	06/02/2024 12:00 PM
PROCURING ENTITY	TENDER TITLE	SUBMISSION DEADLINE
ESWATINI CIVIL AVIATION AUTHORITY (ESWACAA)	PROVISION OF CALIBRATION SERVICES OF ESWACAA'S TEST AND MEASURING INSTRUMENTS	08/02/2024 12:00 PM
ESWATINI CIVIL AVIATION AUTHORITY (ESWACAA)	PROVISION OF EXTERNAL AUDIT SERVICES	24/01/2024 12:00 PM
ESWATINI CIVIL AVIATION AUTHORITY (ESWACAA)	PROVISION OF AIRPORT APRON MARKINGS AT KING MSWATI III INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT	26/01/2024 10:00 AM
ESWATINI DEVELOPMENT AND SAVINGS BANK	HEATING VENTILATION & AIRCONDITIONING (HVAC) INSTALLATION IN THE CONSTRUCTION OF A NEW ESWATINI BANK BRANCH AT SIPHOFANENI PLAZA. PRINCIPAL	31/01/2024 12:00 PM
ESWATINI DEVELOPMENT AND SAVINGS BANK	FIRE SERVICES INSTALLATION IN THE CONSTRUCTION OF A NEW ESWATINI BANK BRANCH AT SIPHOFANENI PLAZA.	31/01/2024 12:00 PM
ESWATINI DEVELOPMENT AND SAVINGS BANK	ELECTRONIC INSTALLATION IN THE CONSTRUCTION OF A NEW ESWATINI BANK BRANCH AT SIPHOFANENI PLAZA.	31/01/2024 12:00 PM
ESWATINI DEVELOPMENT AND SAVINGS BANK	ELECTRICAL INSTALLATION IN THE CONSTRUCTION OF A NEW ESWATINI BANK BRANCH AT SIPHOFANENI PLAZA.	31/01/2024 12:00 PM
ESWATINI DEVELOPMENT AND SAVINGS BANK	CONSTRUCTION OF A NEW ESWATINI BRANCH AT SIPHOFANENI PLAZA.	31/01/2024 12:00 PM
ESWATINI DEVELOPMENT FINANCE CORPORATION (FINCORP)	THE DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF A LIFE INSURANCE ADMINISTRATION SYSTEM FOR FINSURE ASSURANCE LIMITED	17/01/2024 12:00 PM
ESWATINI ELECTRICITY COMPANY (EEC)	OPTIMUM FINANCING STRUCTURE STUDY	18/01/2024 11:00 AM
ESWATINI INVESTMENT PROMOTION AUTHORITY (EIPA)	ALTERATIONS TO MAVUSO TRADE EXHIBITION & SPORTS CENTRE VVIP BOX	02/02/2024 12:00 PM
ESWATINI NAZARENE HEALTH INSTITUTIONS	PROVISION OF CONSULTANCY SERVICES FOR STRATEGIC PLAN FORMULATION 2024 - 2029	19/01/2024 12:00 PM
ESWATINI RAILWAYS (ESR)	SUPPLY OF A LOCOMOTIVE	31/01/2024 10:30 AM
ESWATINI REVENUE SERVICE (ERS)	DEVELOPMENT OF A DATA STRATEGY AND DATA GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORK FOR THE ESWATINI REVENUE SERVICE (ERS)	02/02/2024 12:00 PM
ESWATINI WATER AND AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT ENTERPRISE (EWADE)	SUPPLY AND DELIVERY OF PRECAST VIP TOILET MATERIAL AT MYENI CHIEFDOM UNDER LUSIP 11	30/01/2024 11:00 AM
ESWATINI WATER AND AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT ENTERPRISE (EWADE)	SUPPLY AND DELIVERY OF CANAL SEALING MATERIAL	30/01/2024 10:00 AM
ESWATINI WATER AND AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT ENTERPRISE (EWADE)	SUPPLY AND DELIVERY OF A SKID STEER LOADER	16/01/2024 11:00 AM
ESWATINI WATER SERVICES CORPORATION (EWSC)	SUPPLY OF FLEET AND HEAVY PLANT EQUIPMENT	19/01/2024 12:00 PM
ESWATINI WATER SERVICES CORPORATION (EWSC)	MASTAPHA SERVICE CENTRE PARTITIONING CONSTRUCTION WORKS.	26/01/2024 12:00 PM
EZULWINI MUNICIPALITY	SUPPLY AND DELIVERY OF OFFICE STATIONERY	30/01/2024 12:00 PM
EZULWINI MUNICIPALITY	SUPPLY AND DELIVERY OF OFFICE CLEANING MATERIAL	30/01/2024 12:00 PM
EZULWINI MUNICIPALITY	PRINTING OF COUNCIL DOCUMENTS	30/01/2024 12:00 PM
EZULWINI MUNICIPALITY	SUPPLY AND DELIVERY OF ROAD SIGNAGE	30/01/2024 12:00 PM
EZULWINI MUNICIPALITY	SUPPLY OF PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT	30/01/2024 12:00 PM
EZULWINI MUNICIPALITY	SUPPLY OF GRAVEL, SAND & CRUSH STONE	30/01/2024 12:00 PM
EZULWINI MUNICIPALITY	SUPPLY AND MAINTENANCE OF COMPUTER HARDWARE & SOFTWARE	30/01/2024 12:00 PM
EZULWINI MUNICIPALITY	SUPPLY & DELIVERY OF BUILDING MATERIAL AND TOOLS	30/01/2024 12:00 PM
EZULWINI MUNICIPALITY	PLANT HIRING SERVICES	30/01/2024 12:00 PM
EZULWINI MUNICIPALITY	SUPPLY AND DELIVERY OF ROAD REPAIR MATERIAL	30/01/2024 12:00 PM
EZULWINI MUNICIPALITY	SUPPLY, DELIVERY AND MAINTENANCE OF FIRE FIGHTING EQUIPMENT	30/01/2024 12:00 PM
EZULWINI MUNICIPALITY	MAINTENANCE CONTRACTORS	30/01/2024 12:00 PM
EZULWINI MUNICIPALITY	BRUSHCUTTER CONSUMABLES & SERVICING	30/01/2024 12:00 PM
EZULWINI MUNICIPALITY	SUPPLY OF WASTE MANAGEMENT CONSUMABLES	30/01/2024 12:00 PM
EZULWINI MUNICIPALITY	SUPPLY AND DELIVERY OF PROMOTIONAL ITEMS	30/01/2024 12:00 PM
EZULWINI MUNICIPALITY	PREPARATION OF EZULWINI TOWN PLANNING SCHEME	24/01/2024 12:00 PM



# Brothers arrested for copper theft worth more than E75 000

Stories by Nokunceda Magagula  
nokuncedam@rubiconmedia.group

TWO brothers have been hauled into the accused dock on charges of theft after they were charged with stealing copper wires at Mbangweni, Mbabane valued at over E75 000.

The accused persons, Mangaliso Ngozo and Mcolisi Ngozo of Mahwalala, Mbabane appeared at the Mbabane Magistrate's Court before Magistrate Qondile Mtetwa on Thursday.

The duo allegedly committed this unlawful act on January 16, 2024, wherein they stole 300x200m per size of copper which was a property of the Eswatini Post and Telecommunications Corporation (EPTC) valued at E75 570, a property which was in lawful possession of Themba Makhubu, the charge sheet states.

Notably, these two accused represented themselves and the trial of their case did not resume following that the Crown applied that they should be remanded back into custody pending setting of their trial date on February 1, 2024. Their bail application was not opposed.

Separately, the accused moved their bail applications citing various reasons. Mangaliso told the court that he was not a flight risk, because he is a Swati national and does not have relatives outside the country, adding that he was willing to hand over his passport to the investigation officer. On the other hand, Mcolisi told the court that he is a family man and has three children who are dependent on him. He also told the court that he is a family man and has three children who are dependent on him.

The accused were granted bail fixed at E8 000 each and they have been ordered to appear in court on February 1, 2024.

In another copper theft case in late 2023, an accomplice-turned state witness Gcina Nyembe told the court how they stole copper with the accused, Gift Mabunda.

This was during the ongoing trial of Mabunda, who is currently in custody for copper theft which he allegedly stole at Ngwenya in July 2023.

Nyembe told the court that on that fateful day, he received a phone call from Mabunda at around 3 am, requesting that he fetch him



▲ Copper cables. Copper theft is still another crime that is rife in the country, costing Eswatini Telecommunications Corporation (EPTC) millions of Emalangeni.

from Ngwenya Village and promised that he would pay him. Acting upon the request, he drove to pick him up.

The duo met near a butchery when Mabunda took Nyembe to the location where he had placed the copper cable. Nyembe said he assisted Mabunda in loading the copper into the car. They then went to another location where the accused had hidden another bulk of copper cables. However, while driving to the third spot, they were stopped by a police van.

### Escape

Nyembe said Mabunda told him they should speed up the car and flee. However, Nyembe decided to stop, and that's when the accused made his escape, he jumped out of the car and ran away. A police officer came out of the police van and approached Nyembe's car. The police proceeded to search the car and found the stolen copper cables.

Thereafter, the police questioned him about who was running and why. Nyembe responded to the officer, saying that the person running away was Mabunda, the one responsible for the stolen copper. The police further instructed Nyembe to call the accused and give him false information that

he had managed to escape from the police and ask for his location.

The police went there and did not find Mabunda. He called him again, and Mabunda told him that he was not at the said location and added that he had given him the wrong location because he suspected that he might be with the police. The accused then gave him another location.

When they arrived at that particular location, the accused called Nyembe to tell him that he was now seeing police cars and realised that Nyembe was selling him to the police.

At that time, Nyembe said the police officer informed him that as Mabunda was running away, he would be the one to face charges of copper theft. He was taken to Ngwenya police station and formally charged. He added that he was later taken to Mbabane police station and was taken to court the following day, where he was granted E10 000 bail.

During cross-examination, Mabunda disputed any knowledge of the crime, stating that the crime was fabricated as he was never in Ngwenya and had no idea what Nyembe was talking about. He added that he wouldn't have stolen the copper alone.

## 70-year-old man arrested for rape of a Grade 1 pupil

IN a disturbing and shocking incident, a 70-year-old man from Ngudzeni in the eastern part of Shiselweni region has been arrested for raping a Grade 1 pupil.

According to sources close to the matter, the rape allegedly occurred on Monday and Tuesday at Ngudzeni. It is said that on both days the alleged perpetrator whose name cannot be revealed since he has not appeared in court, forcefully had unlawful sexual intercourse with a six-year minor.

One community member of Ngudzeni who asked to be identified as Lubukuva said the whole community is shattered. He said they were in disbelief since they never thought that someone respectful like the alleged suspect would commit such an act. Lubukuva stated that they now fear for young girls since the community has become unsafe. He said he hopes the police will deal with the man accordingly. "The sad part is that the young girl's life will never be the same again," Lubukuva said.

### Investigations

The Royal Eswatini Police Service Chief Information Officer Senior Superintendent Phindile Vilakati confirmed that a 70-year-old male has been apprehended by the police. Without providing much information, Vilakati highlighted that the man is currently in police custody and the police are still conducting further investigations.

Civic organisations have also voiced out their frustrations over such, Colani Hlatshwako who is the regional coordinator of One Billion Rising said it is extremely concerning that spaces in which children need to freely grow in like communities, now consist of dangerous perpetrators who prey on this young child.

"This calls for robust actions and efforts in ending gender-based violence, which can only happen if we work together," Hlatshwako said. Hlatshwako added that communities need to work together with community police to keep their respective communities safe. She emphasised that ways of keeping these places safe need to be done as soon as possible so that such cases can be avoided. "I hope that the law takes its course on such a matter," she emphasised. It is worth mentioning that a similar incident happened in Khayelitsha, South Africa where a 55-year-old male was arrested for raping his foster daughter. The rape occurred for seven years.

According to Ground Up, it took six years for the Khayelitsha Magistrates' Court to convict a man of repeatedly raping his foster daughter from the age of seven to 13. The 58-year-old rapist, Solomon Mazamela, was sentenced to life imprisonment.

**This calls for robust actions and efforts in ending gender-based violence, which can only happen if we work together**

## Man assaults ex-girlfriend with fist, breaks her nose

A man (30) has been charged with assault after he allegedly hit his ex-girlfriend with a fist on the nose thus causing her bruises.

According to the charge sheet of the accused Vovo Nhleko, the accident occurred at Lobamba on January 14, 2024. It is said that the pair had a verbal fight which led to the accused assaulting the victim. The accused was then arrested by Lobamba Police officers. He made his appearance at the Mbabane Magistrate's Court before Magistrate Qondile Mtetwa on Thursday.

The accused pleaded guilty to contravening Section 77(1) of the Sexual Offences and Domestic Violence (SODV) Act of 2018, the crown accepted the plea without providing any evidence and also stated that the accused had no previous convictions.

In his mitigation statement, the accused pleaded for leniency to the court when he

was handed down his sentence, because he had no intention to commit the crime. "May the court be lenient because what happened was a mistake," Nhleko said. Nhleko was sentenced to 13 months imprisonment or pay an E2 000 fine.

Just recently another man has been arrested and charged with assault after he used a belt to beat his girlfriend.

### Defence

The case involves Banele Soko of Mncitsini who made his brief appearance at the Magistrate's court before Magistrate Themba Simelane.

During his appearance the alleged abuser conducted his defence, his charge sheet read that on November 25, 2023, the accused contravened section 77(1) of the Sexual Offences and Domestic Violence (SODV) Act of 2018. It adds that the accused unlawfully used a belt to assault his girlfriend and

therefore committed the said offense.

This act stipulates that a person who unlawfully physically abuses another person shall be convicted or pay a fine.

During the court proceedings, the crown council moved an application which states that may the accused person be remanded in custody, pending the setting of his trial date. The crown added that if the accused wishes to move their bail application the crown will not oppose.

Soko therefore moved his bail application, he told the court that he is a first offender, and he has children who are dependent on him as their father.

Senior Magistrate Simelane granted Soko bail, fixed at E1 500. However, the accused was warned to not interfere with the crown witness, must not commit a similar offence while out on bail, and always be present in court when he is summoned to.





3,500  
3,000

## BUSINESS NEWS

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### BUSINESS SNIPPETS

#### Ship diversions boost bunker demand

SINGAPORE/CAPE TOWN/  
LONDON

— The re-routing of a growing number of ships around Africa to avoid potential attacks in the Red Sea is altering refueling patterns and boosting demand for bunker fuel at far-flung ports, from the Mauritius to South Africa to the Canary Islands. Ships are also expected to top up more at Singapore and Rotterdam, the two busiest bunkering ports and where fuel is competitively priced, as they try to hedge against uncertainty over route changes, traders and analysts said.

#### 'Bank CEOs, huddled in private in Davos'

DAVOS — Bank CEOs meeting in private at the World Economic Forum on Wednesday aired concerns about the competitive risks from fintech firms and private lenders, and complained about onerous regulations, a source familiar with the matter said. At the meeting in Davos, attended by dozens of CEOs including JPMorgan Chase & Co.'s, opens new tab Jamie Dimon, executives also discussed a challenging global economic picture, with shifting interest rate policies and rising debt, another person with knowledge of the meeting told Reuters.

#### Oil prices rise

LONDON — Oil prices rose on Thursday as the IEA joined producer group OPEC in forecasting relatively strong growth in global oil demand this year, with price impetus also coming from disruption to U.S. output and geopolitical risks in the Middle East. Brent crude futures gained 37 cents, or 0.5 per cent, to \$78.25 a barrel by 1005 GMT while U.S. West Texas Intermediate crude futures rose 55 cents, or 0.8 per cent, to \$73.11. (Reuters)

# 'Addressing overpricing is key to prevent depletion of govt funds'

Stories By Silindzelwe Nxumalo  
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**THE Ministry of Finance is of the view that addressing the existing issue of overpricing is important because it does not only deplete government funds but further hampers economic growth and sustainability.**

This was said by Minister Neal Rijkernburg during the launch of the Market Price Reference Catalogue for Common Use Items on Thursday at Sibane Sami Hotel.

Rijkernburg said with the current procurement reforms at the forefront it is imperative, that we address the existing issue of overpricing, be it for common-use items or any sector of the Government services, which does not only deplete Government funds but further hampers economic growth and sustainability.

He stated that the funds that could be redirected towards crucial sectors such as healthcare, education, infrastructure development and maintenance are instead being absorbed by inflated prices.

The minister explained that this in turn erodes public trust, undermines their commitment to good governance and perpetuates unethical business practices.

"By tackling this issue head-on and implementing a transparency

tool, we are as the Government sending a clear message that Eswatini is committed to upholding the highest standards of accountability, transparency, and integrity," he said.

He said it is upon them to create an environment that fosters fair competition, incentivizes Suppliers to offer competitive prices, and ensures value for money.

He stated that by publishing this catalogue, they hope to bring about a shift that results in fair market prices being offered to the government.

"This, in turn, will not only reduce our procurement spend but also stimulate economic growth and create opportunities for investment and development," said the minister.

Rijkernburg said the success of this initiative depends on the collaboration and commitment of everyone as esteemed leaders of the different Procuring Entities.

"I implore you to embrace this price catalogue, ensure that your organizations adhere to fair pricing and value for money and to actively participate in our collective effort to create a more efficient and effective procurement system," he said.

He added that it was evident that the Public Procurement System drives the country's economy, and it is through procurement that the government fulfils its promise to citizens in providing supplies for



▲ Minister of Finance Neal Rijkernburg making his remarks.

education, construction, maintenance of infrastructure, health supplies, pharmaceuticals and health equipment, agriculture supplies and farm inputs and security equipment among others.

"In the same vein, Suppliers of these goods and services get income to run their businesses with multiplier effects including job creation for the citizens which leads to economic growth," he said.

He said as a government they must maximize every cent of their budget thus, better management of the public procurement sector with increased transparency, efficiency, and value for money, is critical for achieving economic growth and boosting shared prosperity for all.

"We are all very aware of the challenges we face in managing our procurement spend, which currently stands at a staggering 22.6 per cent of our country's expenditure," he said. The minister said the launch of the Market Price Reference Catalogue signifies a new era of transparency and accountability in procurement and it is an opportunity for people to reshape the way they do business, maximize limited resources, and drive economic growth for the benefit of their beloved Eswatini.

"Let us join hands and strive towards a future where fair pricing is the norm and where procurement spending is a catalyst for progress," he urged.

**THE Market Price Reference Catalogue for Common Use Items in 2020 estimated the value of Public Procurement in Eswatini to be 22.6 per cent of the country's GDP.**

ESPPRA Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Vusi Matsebula said in the 22.6 per cent of the GDP the total was E14.02 billion (2020) and E17.7 billion (Est.2022).

He stated that the total included E7.845 billion from the central government, which was 56 per cent of PPS, E110 19 million from local government which was 0.8 per cent of PPS, and E6.065 billion from 43.2 per cent.

#### Challenges

Matsebula said key challenges included the compliance requirements being too complex, cumbersome, and discouraging to start-up MSMEs, suppliers inflating prices especially when dealing with central government and some Cat A parastatals, and expensive advertising to invite MSMEs to submit tender documents.

He added that other challenges were that the system can be restrictive in terms of taking care of procurement emergencies, the system creates monopolies and rewards the already established and big companies, some organisa-

## Public Procurement Valued at 22.6% of GDP



▲ ESPPRA CEO Vusi Matsebula presenting the study.

tions have experienced a decline in several prospective suppliers, and that open tender is not always ideal, looking for a specific skill, small goods, unique services, etc.

The CEO explained that during the study they collected 79 456 prices in 17 categories and all the four regions of the country.

He said the prices were collected from suppliers or tender entrepreneurs and retailers or wholesalers.

Matsebula said through the

study they noticed that a majority of economic activity takes place in the Manzini and Hhohho regions with 79 per cent in these two regions.

"The study also observed that Lubombo and Shiselweni region recorded zero prices for some items. This was because no items are not supplied by the vendors, and vendors in the region that supplied the specified itemising Blinds and Curtaining. Cleaning Materials and Chemicals. ICT. etc)," he said.

He added that the study also observed that for item description, suppliers found it difficult to comprehend or relate to the terminology (nomenclature) used to characterize each item or class of items, and some vendors provided prices for multiple categories.

He stated that the study also observed that E.G Investments Group C may provide cleaning supplies, protective clothing, and office furniture to procuring entities, and that dissatisfaction among public procurement vendors with procuring entities and the public procurement regulatory environment (late payments, suppliers must supply on high-interest loans).

Furthermore, he also recom-

mended that the Pricing Guide should be updated and adjusted every two years to reflect changes in the number of items, preferences, prices per category, and inflationary adjustments that may be used in between.

The CEO further recommended that a pricing guide should be used as a reference point for suppliers when quoting prices for government tenders.

"The use of the e-Catalogue by both the procuring entities and suppliers will ensure that value for money is achieved in Eswatini public procurement," he said.

He also recommended that the pricing guide be used by the ESP-PRA to monitor and audit public procurement in the country.

Matsebula also recommended that the country should consider adopting the United Nations Standard Products and Services Code (UNSPSC) to improve the classification of common-use items, develop an e-catalogue and e-procurement system to migrate a bulk of the activities online for transparency, efficiency, and fairness, and create an online registration platform for all suppliers and procuring entities.



#### FX RATES

##### Notes/Cash

	Buy	Sell
U.S. Dollar	18.0041	18.4702
G.B. Pound	22.7581	23.4421
EURO	19.6466	20.2527
Bank Rate (July 2023)		7.50%
Prime Rate (July 2023)		11%
Inflation (July 2023)		4.5%
Petrol	E20.80/Litre	
Diesel	E23.40/Litre	
Paraffin	E18.05/Litre	







▲ The youth posing with their certificates after graduation.



▲ First prize went to Fresh Bubbles Laundry service in Msunduzi.

# 20 graduates in Junior Achievement entrepreneurship programme

By Silindzelwe Nxumalo  
silindzelwen@rubiconmedia.co.group

THE youth of Mbabane have been urged to make good decisions as these decisions contribute to who they become in future.

This was said by the Junior Achievement (JA) Executive Director (ED) Phetsile Masilela during the graduation ceremony of 20 youths who have undergone the JA Entrepreneurship Program which runs for 9 months.

Masilela said the group of young people trained showed a lot of resilience and she encouraged them to continue being resilient as this was a good trait for every entrepreneur, seeing that over and above resilience the youth showed how customer-oriented they were, a recommended trait in an entrepreneur.

"I would like to appreciate Mbabane Municipality for the continued



▲ Second prize went to Gcina Mdumiseni Dlamini of Rabbit Run Farms.

partnership which does not only involve the out-of-school youth but also embraces schools within the Mbabane precinct who are part of all JA programs offered at the school level," she said.

She further urged the council to reflect on the numbers already trained and see if these businesses were adding value to the city and help them solve any challenge, they

face in running their businesses effectively.

The ED also urged the council to ensure that the businesses being started by the trained youth have good and sustainable markets for their products stating that this would ensure sustenance and continuation of the program as more youth will be drawn by the success of those who have already started.



▲ Tiphwe Sweet Treats got third prize.

The council awards the top three of the trained youth, where the 1st prize went to Fresh Bubbles, a laundry service in Msunduzi, 2nd prize going to Gcina Mdumiseni Dlamini, in Agriculture and breeds rabbits and 3rd prize went to Tiphwe Sweet Treats which produces sweets locally.

Meanwhile, Mbabane Municipal Council Acting CEO Bongani

Dlamini expressed his appreciation of the different business ideas displayed by the youth saying these gave hope that the future was indeed in good hands.

He urged the youth to be selfless and share opportunities as this would help them grow and achieve more. The Mayor of Mbabane Vusi Tembe who confessed that it was his first time to experience what the trainings were about, assured the youth that he would be visiting them on sight to ascertain if indeed the businesses were run efficiently.

The mayor also offered business advice at any time, encouraging the youth to utilize the tendering processes done by both the government and the private sector to get more business.

He assured them that the council would consider their tenders where applicable and encouraged the young people to explore other financiers to enhance their business growth.

## ENHI avails business opportunities to consultancy firms

ESWATINI Nazarene Health Institutions (ENHI) has invited consultancy firms to submit sealed proposals for the provision of consultancy services for strategic plan formulation for 2024 – 2029.

According to the request for proposals (RFP), interested Consultants are expected to have acquired at least ten (10) years of practical experience in conducting similar work for public enterprises particularly in the health sector.

The RFP said the consultant must have adequate resources in terms of qualified and experienced staff to carry out the consultancy assignment.

### Website

"Detailed information regarding the terms of reference can be obtained at the Raleigh Fitkin Memorial (RFM) Hospital, Finance Department, Accounts Office above ICU, or downloaded from the ESPPRA's website at [www.esppra.co.sz](http://www.esppra.co.sz) for a non-refundable fee of E500," read the RFP.

The RFP stated that tenders received in time by the latest date and time for submission will be opened at the RFM Hospital Boardroom immediately at 12:15 hours on Friday 19th January 2024.

"Late tenders, as well as tenders received by telegram, facsimile, email or similar medium will not be considered. Consultants



may attend the opening procedure," read part of the RFP.

The Institution is comprised of the Raleigh Fitkin Memorial Hospital and 20 Nazarene Community clinics spread across the country. On average a total of 500 (Five Hundred) Patients are serviced daily at the Outpatient department and about 200 Patients are admitted at RFM Hospital.

"It is envisaged that once a selection decision is made, the successful Consultant should be able to begin work soon thereafter, following contract signing. The successful consultant is expected to have completed

the whole process within a period of 2 months," read the RFP.

The RFP added that the scope of work is flexible to enable the consultant to establish the best approach for a functional and efficient strategic plan.

It stated that the consultants may identify missing components, which are most relevant for inclusion in the proposal.

"The scope of work included reviewing and analysing the strategic plan for 2021-2024 and all key documents with a focus to understanding Eswatini Nazarene Health Institutions (ENHI), reviewing and analysing previous SWOT Analysis and in collaboration with the Institution's stakeholders, update or develop a SWOT analysis to inform the 2024-2029 strategic planning process," read the RFP.

### Stakeholders

According to the RFP, the scope of work also included engaging with ENHI management, staff and other key stakeholders (Ministry of Health, Public Enterprise Unit, worker formations, business community etc.) in consultation with the CEO to formulate reviewed Vision, Mission, Values, Strategic objectives and expected outputs with clear timelines.

It was added that the scope of work also included formulating a costed strategy that

will guide the implementation of the strategic objectives with broad activities, and required resources for achieving the desired outputs, aligning the strategy with the national health sector strategic plan (NHSSP 2023- 2027) and other relevant national strategies, and ensuring the strategy is cost-effective and innovative with improved efficiencies.

"Presenting on the mitigating factors to address the challenges currently faced by the health sector in the country and ENHI is also part of the scope of work for the tender," read the RFP.

The RFP stated that after the exercise, the consultant will be expected to have delivered a costed Strategic plan document, articulating reviewed Vision, Mission, Values, Strategic objectives and focus areas and expected outputs with clear timelines covering five years from 2024 to 2029.

It was added that the consultant is expected to produce a balanced scorecard to be used as an implementation and monitoring tool for measuring and evaluating performance and progress, strategic Planning report (Inception report, strategic plan budget, Final report), enterprise-wide risk assessment, and training and skills transfer to assist the Board and Management in implementing the new strategic plan.



# Red Sea ship diversions boost bunker demand, prices in Africa, Mediterranean

By Jeslyn Lerh, Wendell Roelf and Robert Harvey

**SINGAPORE/CAPE TOWN/LONDON** — The re-routing of a growing number of ships around Africa to avoid potential attacks in the Red Sea is altering refueling patterns and boosting demand for bunker fuel at far-flung ports, from the Mauritius to South Africa to the Canary Islands.

Ships are also expected to top up more at Singapore and Rotterdam, the two busiest bunkering ports and where fuel is competitively priced, as they try to hedge against uncertainty over route changes, traders and analysts said.

Attacks by Yemen's Houthi militia on merchant ships in the Red Sea and retaliatory U.S. strikes have ratcheted-up tensions in the Middle East as the Gaza war rages on.

The attacks by the Iran-allied Houthis, which they say are in support of Palestinians, target a route that accounts for about 15 per cent of the world's shipping traffic and acts as a vital conduit between Europe and Asia.

Hundreds of large vessels have rerouted around the southern tip of Africa, adding 10-14 days of travel, to avoid drone and missile attacks by the Houthis.

"Ships are diverting away from the Red



▲A container ship is seen near Suez Canal Bridge which is known as the "Peace Bridge" following a Suez Canal tugboat sinking yesterday after colliding with a Hong Kong-flagged LPG tanker in the waterway of the Suez Canal, Egypt.

Sea and re-routing around the coast of South and West Africa – this increased traffic has created huge congestion in bunkering ports around Africa and placed significant pressure on port infrastructure," John A. Bassadone, founder and CEO of independent bunker supplier Peninsula, told Reuters.

Bunker fuel demand has risen at ports including Mauritius' Port Louis, Gibraltar and ports in the Canary Islands and South Africa, said traders and industry sources,

with sales jumping in Cape Town and Durban. Prices of low-sulphur bunker fuel delivered at Cape Town have jumped 15 per cent to almost \$800 per metric ton since mid-November when the attacks started, data from bunker supplier Integr8 Fuels showed.

"We have seen an increase in bunker demand and fixtures in South Africa, particularly for bunker-only vessels lately," said Philip Wang Balke, a senior bunker

trader for Africa at Integr8, adding that supply is tightening as more shipowners and operators buy fuel in advance to ensure sufficient supplies.

## Tankers and Bulkiers

Container ships were first to divert away from the Red Sea, and now oil tankers and dry bulk carriers are following suit, diverting bunker demand to West Mediterranean ports at the expense of East Mediterranean, industry sources said.

"We are anticipating increased demand in Las Palmas and Western Mediterranean ports as it's likely the African ports will exceed capacity," Peninsula's Bassadone added.

Singapore and Rotterdam have yet to see a demand surge, though buying is poised to pick up in the next few weeks as ships lift more fuel at competitive prices, traders said.

"If the vessels are prone to higher ton-mileage or uncertainties, they are likely to fill up their tanks in case they ended up at expensive ports, and they can save a bit by buying less due to the extras they bought in Singapore," said an Asia-based bunkering manager.

Spot premiums for prompt low-sulphur bunker fuel delivered at Singapore rose to \$25 to \$30 a metric ton above cargo quotes in mid-January, climbing from about \$20 in early January, said industry sources. (Reuters)

## 'Bank CEOs, huddled in private in Davos, worry about competition, economy'

By Stefania Spezzati and Megan Davies

**DAVOS** — Bank CEOs meeting in private at the World Economic Forum on Wednesday aired concerns about the competitive risks from fintech firms and private lenders, and complained about onerous regulations, a source familiar with the matter said.

At the meeting in Davos, attended by dozens of CEOs including JPMorgan Chase & Co.'s, opens new tab Jamie Dimon, executives also discussed a challenging global economic picture, with shifting interest rate policies and rising debt, another person with knowledge of the meeting told Reuters.

Bank leaders were observed going into the meeting by Reuters. Before the meeting, at least one banking CEO told Reuters they see geopolitical risks potentially derailing interest rate cuts.

The private session was led by Barclays, opens new tab CEO C.S. Venkatakrishnan and Manulife, opens new tab CEO Roy Gori, according to a copy of the agenda seen by Reuters. The topics included navigating risk against a backdrop of geopolitical tension, macroeconomic uncertainty and technological disruption.

The pushback on regulation comes after Wall Street banks this week urged the U.S. Federal Reserve to completely overhaul a draft rule hiking bank capital, seeking to water down the "Basel Endgame" proposal that bankers say will hurt the economy.

UBS, opens new tab Chairman Colm Kelleher, speaking earlier, opens new tab in Davos, said regulators should focus on so-called shadow lenders that aren't subject to the same rules and are more likely to cause the next crisis.

Bank failures in the United States and Europe in March reignited a debate about the risks lenders can pose to the financial system, even if capital buffers among tightly regulated lenders helped stem contagion fears.

Meanwhile, under a long-awaited move in the U.S., new regulations expected to be finalized this year should allow consumers to more easily transfer their data between financial services providers, which could prompt competition with financial technology firms.

There were about 60 CEOs of global financial firms including banks and insurance companies present, the first source said.

Among regulation concerns, UK supervisors were discussed by some as being particularly harsh, followed by European regulators, that source said.

Officials for JPMorgan didn't have an immediate comment. Spokespeople for Barclays and Manulife couldn't immediately be reached. Officials at the European Central Bank (ECB) and Britain's Prudential Regulation Authority declined to comment.

The former chair of the ECB's supervisory board said, opens new tab in September that the average capital requirements for banks deemed significant to the EU would be somewhat higher under U.S. rules. (Reuters)

## Oil prices rise on strong IEA and OPEC demand estimates

By Ahmad Ghaddar

**LONDON** — Oil prices rose on Thursday as the IEA joined producer group OPEC in forecasting relatively strong growth in global oil demand this year, with price impetus also coming from disruption to U.S. output and geopolitical risks in the Middle East.

Brent crude futures gained 37 cents, or 0.5 per cent, to \$78.25 a barrel by 1005 GMT while U.S. West Texas Intermediate crude futures rose 55 cents, or 0.8 per cent, to \$73.11.

The International Energy Agency (IEA) now expects oil demand to grow by 1.24 million barrels per day (bpd) in 2024, up 180,000 bpd from its previous projection, its monthly report said. The agency cited improved economic growth and lower crude prices in the fourth quarter.

The Organization of the Petroleum Producing Countries (OPEC) had said on Wednesday that it expected demand growth of 2.25 million bpd this year, unchanged from its forecast in December. The producer group also said oil demand is expected to rise by a robust 1.85 million bpd in 2025 to 106.21 million bpd.

The IEA's executive director, Fatih Birol, told the Reuters Global Markets Forum on Wednesday that he expects oil markets to be in a "comfortable and balanced position" this year despite Middle East tensions, rising supply and a slowing demand growth outlook.



▲The logo of the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) is pictured on the outside of the new OPEC headquarters in Vienna.

Oil's range-bound trading in recent days reinforces the narrative that investors are shrugging off concern that tankers may be at risk from attacks in the Red Sea, said Ehsan Khoman, analyst at bank MUFG. The IEA's executive director, Fatih Birol, told the Reuters Global Markets Forum on Wednesday that he expects oil markets to be in a "comfortable and balanced position" this year despite Middle East tensions, rising supply and a slowing demand growth outlook.

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# ChatGPT effect: Coursera sees signups for AI courses every minute in 2023

DAVOS, Switzerland - U.S. edutech platform Coursera added a new user every minute on average for its artificial intelligence courses in 2023, CEO Jeff Maggioncalda said on Thursday, in a clear sign of people upskilling to tap a potential boom in generative AI.

The technology behind OpenAI's ChatGPT has taken the world by a storm and sparked a race among companies to roll out their own versions of the viral chatbot.

"I'd say the real hotspot is generative AI because it affects so many people," he told Reuters in an interview at the World Economic Forum in Davos.

Coursera is looking to offer AI courses along with companies that are the frontrunners in the AI race, including OpenAI and Google's DeepMind, Maggioncalda said.

Investors had earlier feared that apps based on generative AI

might replace ed-tech firms, but on the contrary the technology has encouraged more people to upskill, benefiting companies such as Coursera.

The company has more than 800 AI courses and saw more than 7.4 million enrollments last year. Every student on the platform gets access to a ChatGPT-like AI assistant called "Coach" that provides personalized tutoring.

The bot is built using large language models from OpenAI and Google's Gemini, Maggioncalda said, adding that the company does not plan to build or train its own models.

"We'll probably be fine tuning with proprietary data just on top of these large language models."

Coursera has also used the technology to translate about 4,000 courses in different languages and plans to ramp up hiring for AI roles this year.

(Reuters)



▲ The technology behind OpenAI's ChatGPT has taken the world by a storm and sparked a race among companies to roll out their own versions of the viral chatbot.

# EU sends information request to 17 tech firms including Amazon, Apple, Meta

BRUSSELS - The European Commission said on Thursday it had send requests for information under the EU's Digital Services Act to 17 tech companies that it regards as very large online platforms and search engines.

It said it contacted AliExpress, Amazon's Amazon Store, Apple's AppStore, Booking.com, Meta's Facebook and Instagram, Alphabet's Google Search, Google Play, Google Maps and Google Shopping, Microsoft's LinkedIn and Bing, Pinterest, Snapchat, TikTok, YouTube and Zalando.

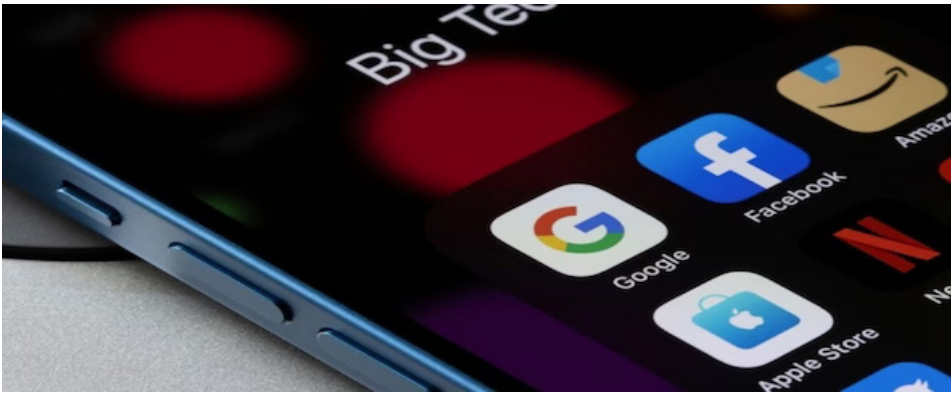
The EU asked the companies to provide

more information by February 9 on measures they have taken to give researchers access to data that could be relevant to the upcoming EU and national elections as well as countering illegal content and goods sold online.

The DSA came into force in November last year and requires very large online platforms and search engines to do more to tackle illegal content and risks to public security.

The Commission opened its first probe under the DSA in December 2023 into social media company X over suspected breaches of its obligations.

(Reuters)



▲ The EU asked the companies to provide more information by February 9.

# Court rules Facebook moderator suffered work-related mental trauma

BARCELONA/MADRID - A Spanish court has ruled a former Facebook moderator's mental health was damaged by his work reviewing graphic content such as beheadings, in a case that could have implications for how social media firms work with moderators.

The Barcelona court, upholding a decision by Spain's social security agency, said the psychiatric treatment the subcontracted moderator required was due to work-related issues, meaning he is entitled to extra compensation for sick leave.

The moderator was employed between

2018 and 2020 by CCC Barcelona Digital Services, part of Telus International, which is one of Facebook owner Meta's outsourced providers. Meta did not immediately reply to a request for comment.

Telus said it was disappointed by the ruling and would appeal.

It is the first time in Spain that a court has recognised a content moderator's sick leave was caused by their job, said Francesc Feliu, the worker's lawyer who is also representing around 20 other former and current content moderators at CCC on similar legal grounds.

(Reuters)

# BMW taps humanoid startup Figure to take on Tesla's robot

ROBOTICS startup Figure said it has signed a partnership with BMW Manufacturing to deploy its humanoid robots in the U.S., as more companies turn to human-like robots to take on certain physical tasks.

This marks the first commercial deal Figure has signed since it was founded in 2022.

While the company didn't disclose how many robots BMW will be using, the partnership will start with small quantities and expand if performance targets have been met, according to Brett Adcock, chief executive at Figure.

Figure's humanoids will be deployed in BMW's manufacturing facility in Spartanburg, South Carolina, the largest automotive exporter in the U.S., which currently employs 11,000 people. They will be integrated into the manufacturing processes including the body shop, sheet metal and warehouse in the next 12-24 months, after being trained to perform specific

tasks. "We have designed the robot to be safe next to humans. Working with BMW on automation in a manufacturing facility is a huge validator for us in the space," Adcock said.

Car makers from Honda to Hyundai have been experimenting with humanoid robots to perform repetitive and dangerous work in assembly lines for years. Tesla recently released its latest humanoid in development, Optimus Gen 2, and Chief Executive Elon Musk predicted a billion humanoid robots on earth in the 2040s.

General-purpose humanoid robots with artificial intelligence-powered software have received renewed interest from investors as they have the potential to move in a wide range of motion and learn to perform new tasks like humans do. Robots currently in use are generally created for specific tasks, and it is not clear if a more flexible robot able to perform a broader array of services will prove viable in a real-life environment.

(Reuters)



▲ Figure's humanoids will be deployed in BMW's manufacturing facility in Spartanburg, South Carolina.



# Meyiwa murder accused gets 10 year sentence in separate charge

THE first of five men accused in the Senzo Meyiwa murder trial, Muzikawukhulelwa Sibiyi, has been sentenced to 10 years in prison in a separate matter.

Sibiyi appeared before the Tembisa magistrate's court for sentencing on Thursday. Drugs and ammunition charges. He was arrested in May 2020 and charged with dealing in drugs and possession of ammunition.

In his previous appearance in December, he was found guilty of the possession of drugs but was acquitted in a charge for dealing in drugs. He was also found guilty of possession of illegal ammunition.

## Lack of remorse worrisome

On Thursday, defence lawyer Morgan Masegela requested the court to take into account certain factors during its judgment. This include the fact that the accused's children reside with his parents in KwaZulu-Natal.

The court heard that Sibiyi supports all the children, as their mothers were all unemployed. The defense urged the court for leniency.

However, the magistrate appeared unimpressed with the defence's approach. He questioned whether they will solely emphasise the gravity of the charges without addressing any expression of remorse from the accused in their submission.

Prosecutor Xolani Khumalo contended that the accused has displayed no remorse throughout the trial. He emphasised a public outcry for protection and underscores that the accused is not a first-time offender.

## Court urged to send a strong message

He has asked the court to send a strong message against wrongdoing, considering the interests of society. In response to the submissions, the magistrate emphasised that the court's deliberations were limited, with the defence mainly focusing on Sibiyi being a repeat offender with five children.

He noted that the other factor the court has been asked to consider includes that Sibiyi is a 38-year-old man with a formal education level of Grade 11.

Additionally, he previously operated two car wash businesses, yielding a monthly income of R6,000.

"This is all the court has to consider. There was nothing about you showing remorse or accept the sentence. Nothing has been placed in court that you asked for forgiveness," said the magistrate. "You're danger to society, but [you] can change."

## Non-law abiding citizen

According to the magistrate, in a brief period, Sibiyi has swiftly portrayed himself as a non-law-abiding citizen. He says he is a danger to society.

"But with all due respect sir, I have the belief that you can change." Sibiyi was concomitantly sentenced to five years direct



▲ Muzikawukhulelwa Sibiyi was jailed for 10 years by the Tembisa magistrate's court for dealing in drugs and possession of ammunition.

imprisonment for the possession of drugs charge. Another a five-year term has been imposed for animation, and he is declared unfit to possess a firearm.

Both these sentences will run concurrently with the current 12 year sentence. He was shown a desire to appeal. Meanwhile, he is due back at the Pretoria High Court on Monday for the Meyiwa trial.

(Sunday World)

## Curfew imposed in Comoros after protests on president's re-election

MORONI - An overnight curfew has been imposed in the Indian Ocean nation of Comoros, the interior ministry said, after violent protests against President Azali Assoumani's re-election.

Assoumani won a fourth five-year term after the country's electoral body on Tuesday declared him the winner of Sunday's election against five opponents.

The army fired tear gas to disperse protesters in Moroni on Wednesday, and protesters were still on the streets in the north of the capital in the early hours of Thursday.

The interior ministry announced the curfew on Wednesday.

A government spokesperson blamed the protests on supporters of losing candidates.

"These are things that happen here and elsewhere, especially when we are beaten and we contest the results," Comorian government spokesperson Houmed Msaïdie told Reuters.

He said several demonstrators had been arrested.

At least four people told Reuters on Thursday that they had trouble connecting to the internet to use social media platforms because of service disruptions.

(Reuters)

# The Rwanda bill UK's, migrant plan explained

LONDON - Britain's parliament is set to vote on Prime Minister Rishi Sunak's bill to allow the government to send asylum seekers who arrive without permission in Britain to Rwanda amid deep divisions in his Conservative Party on the issue.

Last November, the UK Supreme Court declared the policy unlawful and Sunak hopes the new legislation, when passed, will override legal concerns and fulfil his pledge to stop people arriving across the Channel in small boats.

Here are details about the plan and the migration issue:

## why is immigration such an issue in Britain?

Taking back control of Britain's borders and ending the free movement of people was a major factor that led to the 2016 vote for Britain to leave the European Union. Polls show it remains one of the most important issues for voters.

Sunak's government has announced a series of measures to cut legal migration by 300,000, and he has also promised to stop people making the dangerous journey of about 20 miles (32 km) across the Channel in small boats.

Meanwhile, more than 29,000 people arrived this way last year, after a record 45,775 migrants arrived in 2022. So far this year, more than 260 people have been detected and on Sunday French authorities said five migrants had died trying to cross.

## What is Britain's Rwanda plan?

The Rwanda scheme, agreed in April 2022

by then Prime Minister Boris Johnson, was designed to deter migrants from coming to Britain illegally and break the business model of people smugglers.

Under the plan, anyone who arrived in Britain illegally after Jan. 1, 2022, faced being sent to Rwanda, some 4,000 miles (6,400 km) away.

However, the first deportation flight in June 2022 was blocked by European judges.

The Supreme Court then unanimously upheld a ruling that the scheme was unlawful because migrants were at risk of being sent back to their homelands or to other countries where they would be at risk of mistreatment.

Despite no deportations taking place, Britain has already paid Rwanda 240 million pounds (\$304 million). While Britain hopes to send

thousands of migrants, at the moment Rwanda only has the capacity to take a few hundred.

## Why is the Rwanda policy so important to Sunak?

After becoming prime minister in 2022, Sunak made a pledge to "stop the boats" one of his top five priorities.

Britain is currently spending more than 3 billion pounds a year on processing asylum applications, with the cost of housing migrants awaiting a decision in hotels and other accommodation running at about 8 million pounds a day.

At the start of the year Sunak said he had met a pledge to clear a so-called "legacy backlog" of 92,000 asylum claims which were made before a June 2022 change in immigration law, although figures show about 100,000 applications remain to be decided.

## What is Sunak's Rwanda bill?

To address the issues raised by the Supreme Court, Sunak agreed a new treaty with Rwanda that seeks to prevent anyone from being sent anywhere else other than back to Britain.



▲ U.K. Prime Minister Rishi Sunak overcame a Conservative Party rebellion and got his plan to send some asylum-seekers on a one-way trip to Rwanda

proposed bill, which the government stated might not be compatible with the European Convention on Human Rights, affirms that Rwanda is a safe country.

It disapples some sections of Britain's Human Rights Act and says ministers alone would decide on whether to comply with any injunction from the European Court of Human Rights. If passed, Sunak says flights to Rwanda would begin in spring.

## UK house passes bill to send some migrants to Rwanda

U.K. Prime Minister Rishi Sunak overcame a Conservative Party rebellion and got his plan to send some asylum-seekers on a one-way trip to Rwanda through the House of Commons on Wednesday (Jan. 17).

Lawmakers voted 320 to 276 to back a bill intended to overcome a U.K. Supreme Court block on the Rwanda plan.

The vote came a day after some 60 members of Sunak's governing Conservatives rebelled in an effort to make the legislation tougher.

The bill now goes to the unelected House of Lords, Parliament's upper chamber, where Sunak's Conservatives do not have a majority.

The Lords can delay and amend legislation but ultimately can't overrule the elected House of Commons.

More than 29,000 people made the perilous journey in 2023, down from 42,000 the year before.

Five people died in the night of January 13 to January 14 while trying to launch a boat from northern France in the dark and winter cold. (Reuters)



# Ukraine starts to rebuild towns, cities even as the war rages on

**TROSTIANETS, Ukraine** - An excavator belches out fumes as it clears earth and rubble from between the train and bus stations in the Ukrainian town of Trostianets to make way for a reimaged transport hub.

Badly damaged in fighting with Russian forces almost two years ago, Trostianets is one of six settlements being rebuilt with state funds in a pilot programme to develop the skills and experience needed for a far broader reconstruction drive later.

Mayor Yuriy Bova said time was running out to breathe life back into towns, or risk losing millions of Ukrainians who could help redevelop the country to permanent exile in Europe.

"We're fighting for every person who should return; for every child who needs to return and build their future here," he told Reuters in the town, barely 30 km (20 miles) from Russia.

"To walk around and see this every day, that will morally traumatise a person," Bova said of the ruined northeastern town. "We need to restore everything, starting with cafes, libraries, factories, schools, hospitals."

Officials in Kyiv have also signaled the urgency of rebuilding Ukraine, an effort that will require hundreds of billions of dollars and involve more than quick fixes to critical sites such as hospitals, power stations and railways.

The war, however, shows no signs of abating. Short on cash, Ukraine is defending against new Russian attacks after its own counteroffensive failed to yield significant gains. Moscow has also resumed a campaign

of mass air strikes on population centres far beyond the front line.

For Pavlo Kuzmenko, the mayor of Okhtyrka, a town only 20 km down the road from Trostianets that also bears the scars of heavy Russian bombing at the start of the war, resurrecting town squares is a luxury Ukraine cannot afford right now.

Officials in Okhtyrka were slow to finish clearing away the rubble on the main boulevard that was once the city hall and have not yet fixed the gutted department store across the street. Most schools, however, have been repaired with new windows, roofing or bomb shelters, thanks in large part to international donors.

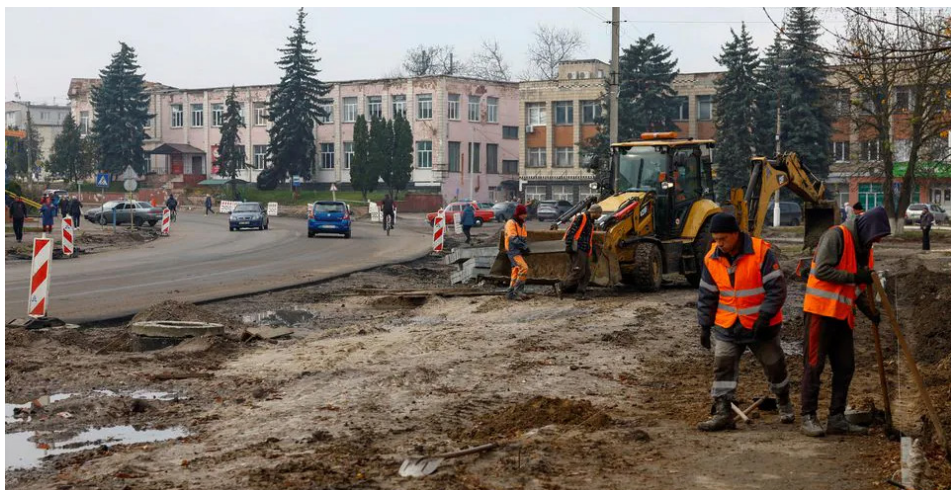
## Publicly criticised

Kuzmenko, who publicly criticised the plans for Trostianets last year and bemoaned a lack of resources, said the focus should be on patching up homes and critical infrastructure only. Any other available funds should go to the military.

"There is plenty to rebuild," Kuzmenko told Reuters. "Squares, and all their decorations, can be done after the war."

Standing near the remains of the city hall, Okhtyrka resident Antonina Dmytrychenko, 65, said she agreed with her mayor: "First we need victory, then reconstruction."

The different views in the neighbouring towns reflect a broader debate about wartime spending playing out across Ukraine. Most visibly, a growing grassroots protest movement is demanding that discretionary projects, such as sprucing up streets and public spaces, be shelved in favour of the military.



▲ Workers reconstruct a street, which was damaged on the first months of Russia's attack on Ukraine in the town of Trostianets, Sumy region, Ukraine.

In a sign of the tension, officials in the Odesa region cancelled more than \$9 million of tenders during the last three months of 2023, saying spending on things such as road repairs, the renovation of a stadium and software was "unacceptable" during wartime.

The disputes highlight the need for a clearly communicated government strategy for what recovery and, more broadly, a war-adapted economy should look like, said Orysia Lutsevych at the Chatham House think-tank in London.

She said officials must urgently unlock Ukraine's economic potential by restoring income-generating growth opportunities that can help defeat Russia - and that meant luring people back as well as stopping more leaving the country for good.

"Military win battles, but economies win wars. It's part of the same equation," she said.

It might make sense, for example, to build more schools in the comparably safer western city of Lviv for the many Ukrainians displaced there by fighting elsewhere, so they will stay and contribute to the wartime economy, Lutsevych said.

"This is what rebuilding is: maybe it's not fancy playgrounds, maybe it's not new zoos," she said. "But it must be a category of projects that fits within the wider strategy of how Ukraine will sustain this war." One of the officials in charge of rebuilding Ukraine, Mustafa Nayyem, acknowledged that reviving heavily damaged towns such as Trostianets would require major administrative muscle. (Reuters)

## Tensions with Iran add to Pakistan's economic challenges

**KARACHI, LONDON** - An escalation of geopolitical tensions between Pakistan and neighbouring Iran on Thursday has sent shockwaves through Pakistan's struggling economy, roiling its dollar bonds and hitting its stock market.

Pakistan conducted strikes inside Iran, targeting separatist Baloch militants two days after Tehran said it had attacked the bases of another group within Pakistani territory.

The standoff with Iran comes as Pakistan is in the midst of a crippling economic crisis with its \$350 billion economy beset by high inflation and yawning fiscal and current account deficits. It is undergoing a tough \$3 billion International Monetary Fund (IMF) bailout programme that pulled it from the brink of default last summer.

Pakistan's international bonds fell after its foreign ministry said it conducted strikes inside Iran on Thursday, two days after Tehran attacked the bases of another group within Pakistani territory.

The 2026 bond suffered some of the biggest declines at 0750 GMT, dropping 1.2 cents to trade at 71.125 cents in the dollar, data from Tradeweb showed.

Earlier in the day, Pakistan's benchmark share index (.KSE), opens new tab fell 1.6% after Pakistan said it conducted strikes inside Iran, before recovering some

ground.

Pakistan's economic ties with Iran, while not huge, are important for Islamabad as it struggles to supply its western-most regions in Balochistan with critical commodities, including fuel and electricity.

Iran provides electricity to many areas in Pakistan, and unofficially there is a lot of trade in commodities, including Liquefied Petroleum Gas and Iranian diesel.

Last year in June, Pakistan passed a special order to allow barter trade with Iran, along with Afghanistan and Russia, for certain goods, including petroleum and natural gas.

"The bilateral trade, valued at over \$2 billion, is crucial for both economies, especially regions like Balochistan in Pakistan, where the local economies are significantly dependent on trade with Iran, particularly for agricultural products and petrochemicals," said Aneel Salman, chair economic security at Islamabad Policy Research Institute.

Salman said that interruption of trade routes would have immediate economic impacts, including shortages in Pakistan and a notable decrease in the critical \$2 billion

trade volume.

He said the conflict could significantly impact long-term collaborative projects like the Pakistan-Iran gas pipeline, known as the Peace Pipeline.

The pipeline would transport natural gas from Iran to Pakistan and potentially India. Already delayed, it may now face further delays and funding challenges.

In August, Pakistan's then-minister of state for petroleum said Pakistan was "actively engaged" with Iran to dissuade it from pursuing international arbitration over delays in the pipeline.

Pakistan has until March 2024 to negotiate a settlement with Iran to avoid legal battles.

The two countries signed a five-year trade plan in August 2023 and set the bilateral trade target at \$5 billion.

(Reuters)



▲ Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi.

## Qatari court convicts ex-finance minister of laundering \$5.6bn

**DOHA** - A criminal court in Qatar has sentenced the Gulf Arab state's former finance minister to 20 years in prison for laundering more than \$5.6 billion, according to a document outlining the judgment seen by Reuters.

The court of first instance also ordered Ali Sherif al-Emadi to pay a fine in excess of 61 billion Qatari riyals (\$16.7 billion), consisting of 40.9 billion riyals -- or twice the amount of money he laundered -- plus additional fines amounting to more than 21 billion riyals, the document shows.

Judges also found Sheikh Nawaf bin Jassim bin Jabor Al Thani, a high-ranking member of Qatar's ruling family and a brother of Qatar's former prime minister, guilty of misuse of public funds, sentencing him to six

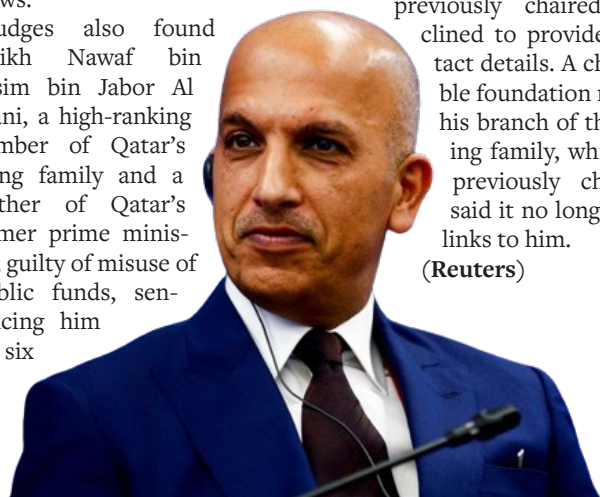
years in prison and fined him 825 million riyals, the same document shows.

Emadi and Sheikh Nawaf, who faced trial along with 14 others, can appeal against the conviction, which the court issued on Jan. 10. It was not immediately clear whether the two had entered pleas in answer to the charges during the trial.

Emadi's lawyers did not respond to Reuters' requests for comment on the conviction and Emadi has not commented publicly since he was arrested.

Sheikh Nawaf could not be reached for comment. Katara Hospitality, the company he previously chaired, declined to provide contact details. A charitable foundation run by his branch of the ruling family, which he previously chaired, said it no longer has links to him.

(Reuters)



▲ Gulf Arab state's former finance minister to 20 years





# Let's dance the weekend away

Stories by Siphesihle Dlamini  
[siphesihled@rubiconmedia.group](mailto:siphesihled@rubiconmedia.group)

AS February, the month of love, approaches, the entertainment scene in Eswatini is gearing up for a spectacular lineup of events.

With the Janu-worry blues slowly fading away, it's time to embrace the joyous spirit building up to the next Valentine's and dance the weekend away. Eswatini Daily News has got you covered with all the exciting events happening in town.

## ► BACK TO SCHOOL SHANDIS

**When:** Saturday  
**Where:** Mdzimba View Shisanyama  
**Fee:** Free

First up on the list is the Back to School Shandis, taking place on Saturday at Mdzimba View Shisanyama. And the best part- it's free. This event promises to be a jump, with a lineup of talented entertainers ready to rock the stage. Guest DJs Forbes and Ghost Lady will be spinning the hottest tracks, while resident DJs MaWillies, Slimdeep, MaTenTen, Sbuda, and DJ Castle will keep the party going all night long. Don't forget to dress to impress in smart casual attire. And to make the night even sweeter, the venue will be offering special deals on select drinks.

## ► FRIDAY GROOVE

**When:** Friday  
**Where:** IF's Lounge  
**Fee:** Free

If you're looking to kickstart your weekend with some after-work fun, look no further than Friday Groove at IF's Lounge. This event, happening on Saturday, will feature one of the best local Hip Hop DJs, 1D. Joining him on stage will be the deep and innovative Mistosoul, Yamkela, and Wacko. Get ready to groove to the beats and enjoy some fantastic specials on drinks and beverages.

## ► FUSION FRENZY & JAMBOREE ACTIVATION PARTY

**When:** Friday  
**Where:** Club 83  
**Fee:** Free

Local entertainment hangout spot, Club 83 is gearing up to host a truly unforgettable event - the Fusion Frenzy & Jamboree activation party. Hosted by Underground on Demand (UOD), the event is one of a series of underground music sessions for alternative music and great intimate vibe lovers. This 'activation' special edition promises to be a fusion frenzy and jamboree, showcasing the best of the underground music scene. Club 83 will transform into a haven for music enthusiasts, as a lineup of talented artists takes the stage. Among

the featured acts are Orthodox, Tharo The DJ, The Other Guy, Mac Deep, Lord Boogy, Flava, Curious Lounger, and the club's resident DJs. With such an eclectic mix of performers, attendees can expect an evening filled with diverse sounds and infectious beats.

## ► DANCE DERBY

**When:** Saturday  
**Where:** Olympia Africa Centre  
**Fee:** E50

Eswatini's dynamic DJ and dance duo, the Trend Twins, are set to take the nation by storm once again as they gear up to host the highly anticipated second edition of the Dance Derby.

This electrifying event will be held on January 20, 2024, at the Olympia Africa Centre, next to the Somhlolo National Stadium. The Dance Derby's second edition promises to be an exhilarating showdown between the cities of Manzini and Mbabane. Showcasing the incredible talent of five of Eswatini's finest choreographers, this competition is open to individuals aged between 10 and 30 years old, with a nominal joining fee of E50.

## ► CITY GIRLS RUP

**When:** Saturday  
**Where:** Solani's  
**Fee:** E120

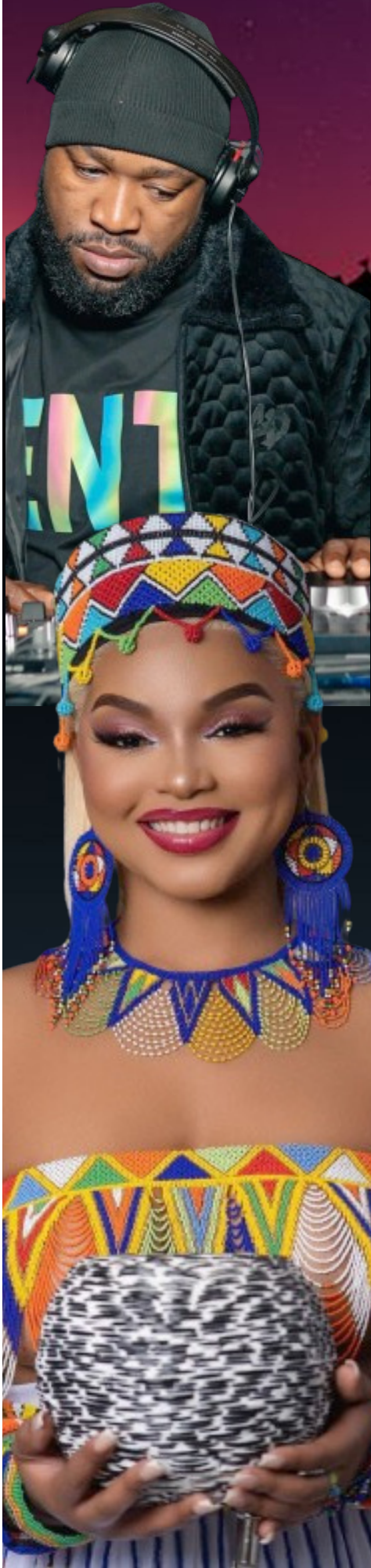
It is set to be an exhilarating night, as South African Amapiano vocalist and performer, Mawhoo is poised to send music fanatics to a frenzy with a performance at Solanis. Known for her soul-stirring vocals and energetic performances, Mawhoo is set to leave music fanatics in awe at the 'City Girls RUp,' Saturday edition event. The 'City Girls RUp' event will feature an all-female lineup, showcasing the incredible talent of DJ Expo, Black Pearl, Lady Zee, Wassabee, The Prefect, Ash, Belinda Chester, Zo'leka, and Chantel. Together, these talented artists will create an atmosphere of pure musical bliss, ensuring that the night is one to remember.

## ► SATURDAY CHILL OUT

**When:** Saturday  
**Where:** IF's Lounge  
**Fee:** Free

And the entertainment extravaganza doesn't stop there. On the same night, IF's Lounge will host the Saturday Chill Out event, headlined by the sensational Milotion.

This event is guaranteed to entice fun lovers, providing the perfect opportunity to dance away the stresses of the week. Joining Milotion on stage will be Yamkela, Lamentic Soula, and Mistosoul, ensuring a night of non-stop entertainment. And as always, attendees can enjoy discounts on selected drinks throughout the night.





# Soul Therapy to host ‘Ematsandvweni’

Stories by Siphesihle Dlamini  
siphesihled@rubiconmedia.group

Walking for Love!

Couples and singles will be walking for love as Soul Therapy is set to host a love-themed event dubbed Ematsandvweni.

This love-themed gathering promises to be a memorable experience for couples and singles alike, filled with games, music, poetry, and refreshments.

Scheduled to take place on March 2, 2024, at Sheba’s Breast Hiking Trail, Ematsandvweni aims to bring vibrance and joy to the hearts of all participants. The event’s director, Siphiso ‘Dede’ Dlamini, emphasised that the focus is on promoting love and fostering a sense of togetherness.

“We want to see people happily in love and enjoying every moment of this hiking experience,” Dlamini shared in a recent interview. “We aim to engage participants through various forms of entertainment and content, creating an atmosphere of team building and connection.”

While the event is still finalising its lineup of performers, Dlamini assured attendees that they can expect a diverse range of talent to grace the stage. From talented musicians and poets to eloquent speakers, Ematsandvweni promises to offer an unforgettable experience for all who attend.

In a bid to streamline the ticketing process, Soul Therapy has opted for an electronic payment system. Attendees



▲ Soul Therapy’s Director Siphiso ‘Dede’ Dlamini.

are advised that physical tickets will not be available, and all payments will be processed electronically through Smart Ticket.

Couples eager to embark on this love-filled adventure can secure their spot for E200, while singles can join in on the fun for E150. With limited spots available, it is advisable to book early to avoid disappointment.

## Jumbo Khumalo for Bakers Conference



IT is set to be a sweet treat for cake professionals as Manzini is set to become the hub of all things cake-related with the eagerly anticipated inaugural Bakers Conference.

The venue for this exciting event is the EEC Manzini Regional Office, which will provide a conducive and professional environment for attendees to network, learn, and grow. This event, scheduled for February 3, 2024, promises to be a game-changer for aspiring and established cake professionals, students, and retail bakers alike.

One of the highlights of the conference will be the presence of renowned local motivational speaker and entrepreneur, Jumbo Khumalo. With his wealth of knowledge and experience, Khumalo is expected to inspire and empower

attendees with his insightful keynote address. In addition to Jumbo Khumalo, the stage will be graced by other notable names in the industry. Attendees can look forward to engaging with industry experts such as Mtera Thwala, Sir Cakes from South Africa, Cakes by Charmaine, and Theoscakes.

**Business**

The Bakers Conference aims to provide a platform for cake enthusiasts to establish, manage, and grow their businesses. With a focus on topics such as marketing and branding, as well as financial management, attendees will gain valuable insights into the business side of the cake industry.

From learning how to make sprinkles and fondant to exploring rice paper sales and mastering fondant edges, the conference promises to be a treasure trove of cake-making knowledge.

To make this event accessible to all cake enthusiasts, the registration fee has been set at E500.

However, Cake Baking Eswatini students will enjoy a discounted rate of E400, further encouraging young talent to participate and learn from the best in the business.

◀ Motivational speaker and entrepreneur Jumbo Khumalo.



## Sundeck, Molly’s join hands

IT is exciting news for food and entertainment enthusiasts as local restaurants Sundeck and Molly’s House of Grills join forces to offer an unparalleled dining experience.

Sundeck, renowned for its lively atmosphere and refreshing beverages, will now be collaborating with Molly’s, a well-established upscale restaurant known for its delectable cuisine and impeccable service.

Under this new partnership, both restaurants will be located under one roof, with Molly’s taking charge of the culinary side while Sundeck continues to provide exceptional drinks and entertainment. This collaboration aims to provide customers with the best of both worlds, combining the vibrant ambience of Sundeck with the culinary excellence of Molly’s House of Grills.

“We are thrilled about this collaboration between our two establishments, as it will elevate the customer experience to new heights,” read a joint statement released by Sundeck and Molly’s. With this partnership, patrons can expect a seamless fusion of great food, refreshing beverages, and top-notch entertainment.

Exciting changes are also underway at the Manzini branch of Sundeck, with a fresh new look set to be unveiled on Friday. Customers can anticipate a delightful surprise as they step into the revamped space. The Mbabane branch will also undergo renovations at the end of this month, further enhancing the dining experience for patrons in the capital city.

In addition to the physical transformations, Sundeck and Molly’s will now be open seven days a week, allowing customers to indulge in their culinary delights and enjoy the vibrant atmosphere any day of the week. With a new and improved menu on the horizon, food enthusiasts can look forward to exploring a range of scrumptious dishes that cater to various palates.





# King Charles diagnosed with enlarged prostate

**KING** Charles is said to have been at his private residence in Balmoral when he was diagnosed with an enlarged prostate.

The 75-year-old monarch is set to attend hospital next week to be treated for the condition, Buckingham Palace announced on Wednesday afternoon.

A source has now told the DailyMail.com he is currently staying at his private home of Birkhall on the Balmoral estate in Scotland, where it said he received the diagnosis.

It added aides said the king's condition was benign and he would be having a corrective procedure.

His engagements will be postponed for his short period of recovery.

The Mail added even though the level of detail on Charles' health update is unusual for the royal family, he had been "keen" to share it to encourage other men who may be experiencing symptoms to get checked for the condition. Kensington Palace separately announced at 2pm on Wednesday Catherine, Princess of Wales, 42, was being treated in hospital after undergoing successful abdominal surgery.

Charles had a series of meetings and events planned at Dumfries House in Ayrshire for the rest of this week, which have now been postponed.

A Buckingham Palace spokesman said at 3.30pm on Wednesday: "In common with thousands of men each year, The King has sought treatment for an enlarged prostate."

"His Majesty's condition is benign and he will attend hospital next week for a corrective procedure."



▲ King Charles is said to have been at his private residence in Balmoral when he was diagnosed with an enlarged prostate.

"The King's public engagements will be postponed for a short period of recuperation." Royal expert Phil Dampier said on X about the announcement: "Today's medical news about the King and Princess of Wales

reminds us that they are human beings with the same problems as the rest of us. "Cue the usual suspects complaining they get better treatment. But the point remains."  
(Bang Showbiz)



▲ Arnold Schwarzenegger.

## Schwarzenegger detained at German airport

**ARNOLD** Schwarzenegger was detained at an airport in Germany after failing to declare a luxury watch.

The 'Terminator' actor, 76, was held by customs officers in Munich on Wednesday "under tax laws" for several hours after flying in from Los Angeles after he was taken pulled aside to have his luggage inspected and officials found a custom-made watch from Swiss brand Audemars Piguet in his bag worth more than \$21,000 (about R400,000).

Munich's customs spokesperson Thomas Meister told German newspaper Bild the timepiece should have been registered because it is an import and they have now "initiated criminal tax proceedings" over the incident.

According to Bild, Schwarzenegger called in his lawyers after being questioned for nearly four hours and was allegedly slapped with a €35,000 fine for failing to declare the watch.

He was reportedly flying with his physiotherapist partner Heather Miligan, 49, was released and allowed to continue on his journey to Austria shortly before 5pm local time.

In a photo obtained by Bild, the actor did not appear fussed by the situation as he was seen smiling to the camera as he held up a box with the watch presumably inside.

A source told Page Six the actor was "never asked to fill out a declaration form and he answered every question from customs officers honestly".

They added: "He cooperated at every step even though it was an incompetent shakedown, a total comedy of errors that would make a very funny cop movie."

Page Six said a source told them Schwarzenegger agreed to pre-pay potential taxes on the watch but officers allegedly had issues using a credit card machine for up to an hour.

The insider added Schwarzenegger was then brought to a bank to withdraw from a cash machine, but the amount needed exceeded the funds and the bank was already closed.

They said: "When he returned, a new officer brought a new credit card machine that worked."

(Bang Showbiz)

## 'Doja Cat's brother knocked out her teeth'

**DOJA** Cat had her teeth knocked out by her brother, their mom has claimed.

The 'Say So' hitmaker's mother, Deborah Elizabeth Sawyer, has filed for a temporary restraining order against her 30-year-old son, Raman Dalithando Dlamini, and in her filing, she also claimed her daughter - whose real name is Amala Ratna Zandile Dlamini - also needs to be protected from her sibling.

According to documents obtained by TMZ, Sawyer alleged Dalithando Dlamini gave his sister cuts and bruises, as well as knocking out her teeth and destroying or stealing some of her property.

She went on to allege her son had been verbally abusive to his famous sister in a "very degrading and demeaning" way and accused him of making the 28-year-old star feel "unsafe and traumatised".

When it comes to her own safety, Sawyer alleged she had been physically abused and threatened multiple times over the last year by her son and claimed the most recent incident took place earlier this month.

The judge granted the request for Sawyer pending a hearing for a permanent restraining order but didn't grant the same protection for Doja, ruling she would need to file her own restraining order petition.

Sawyer also noted in her documents she had a restraining order against Dalithando Dlamini in the past but it had since expired.

Doja recently hit back at critics who branded her work satanic.

She told Apple Music of her dancing on a green goblin in the promo for 'Paint The Town Red': "That was a painting I painted.



▲ The judge granted the request for Sawyer pending a hearing for a permanent restraining order but didn't grant the same protection for Doja.

My painting isn't a weapon. It isn't offensive. It's just a green goblin-y monster guy. ...

"That was a really big piece for me. It was one of my proudest moments ever, and people wrote that off as Satanism, and it's liter-

ally just a little green guy with horns and I'm standing on his head! Where's the harm?"

She added: "I'm not gonna make everyone happy, and that's just that."

(Bang Showbiz)





“FOOD freedom” — it’s a complex term, with definitions ranging from ditching diet culture and restrictive diets to attaining good health and food security through growing your own foods.

It’s marketed as an approach to address eating disorders for some and as a way to promote intentional weight loss for others.

However, in the health and wellness space, it’s an emerging, revolutionary concept that challenges societal norms of dieting and the thin ideal.

It is championed by passionate health professionals and game-changers, such as Shana Spence (@thenutritiontea). Spence is a registered dietitian who takes a non-diet, weight-inclusive approach to health.

She uses her platform to redefine what “health” means — distinct from the diet industry’s often-unattainable standards.

Another powerful and passionate food freedom champion is Dr. Kera Nyemb-Diop (@black.nutritionist), who has created a space that emphasizes body respect, eating without guilt, and reclaiming your cultural food heritage as an integral part of your healthy lifestyle.

In this article, we explore food freedom, explain what intuitive eating and mindful eating are, and discuss what roles — if any — they may have in the pursuit of intentional weight loss.

#### What is food freedom?

The food freedom framework has various definitions and applications, including but not limited to:

- ▶ freedom from industrial food production
- ▶ an approach to strengthen food sovereignty
- ▶ gastronomy — the science of understanding historical cultural foods and their impact on human health
- ▶ a spiritual journey to overcome “food addiction”
- ▶ a liberating part of weight loss programs such as Whole30

In other contexts, food freedom refers to ditching dieting culture and restrictive diets by giving yourself permission to enjoy all foods in moderation (unless allergies or medical needs prevent you from eating certain foods).

In that application of food freedom, practitioners see food as more than just fuel. They seek to build a positive and judgment-free relationship with all foods, where guilt is not considered an ingredient in the eating experience.

This view of food freedom encompasses intuitive eating and mindful eating, two philosophies that cultivate self-trust around food choices and reject unnecessary restrictions.

Intuitive eating and mindful eating are often used to support recovery from eating disorders such as anorexia nervosa and bulimia nervosa, chronic mental illnesses that negatively affect nutritional status and your relationship with food.

Overall, food freedom can help people overcome diet culture or introduce flexibility for intentional weight loss.

Because the varied and overlapping marketing of the term “food freedom” may lead to some confusion, context matters. This article will focus on food freedom as a non-diet approach to health and nutrition.

#### The origins of food freedom as a concept

Food freedom as a therapeutic approach for eating disorder recovery grew out of the need for non-pharmaceutical treatments that emphasize behavioral changes, such as a positive body image and healthy eating attitudes.

# Ditch diet culture, learn to trust your body’s cues

... Food freedom refers to ditching dieting culture and restrictive diets by giving yourself permission to enjoy all foods in moderation (unless allergies or medical needs prevent you from eating certain foods).



A 2017 study demonstrated that dieting — accompanied by body dissatisfaction and the pursuit of thinness — increases the risk of developing bulimia nervosa, binge eating disorder, and purging disorder.

Even dieting among inherently lean individuals increases their risk of developing anorexia nervosa.

The multibillion-dollar diet industry promotes the “thin ideal” with unhealthy weight management behaviors, potentially encouraging disordered eating patterns that can contribute to the development of eating disorders. There’s evidence that dieting doesn’t help those who are seeking long-term weight loss, either. Weight regain within 1–5 years is common among chronic dieters, and approximately 33% of dieters regain more weight than they initially lost. Dieting restrictions contribute to disordered eating. Food freedom, on the other hand, seeks to combat this.

Food freedom as a mindfulness-based practice may address disordered eating, including emotional eating and binge eating disorder. It can also help you avoid eating in response to external cues, such as the sight or smell of foods, when you’re not physically hungry. In particular, intuitive eating is associated with improved

psychological well-being and physical health and fewer dietary restrictions.

#### Food freedom, intuitive eating, and mindful eating: What’s the difference?

Although these three terms are often used interchangeably, you may wonder whether they are essentially the same. There are minor distinctions among their presiding principles. For instance, mindful eating is rooted in the Buddhist practice of mindfulness and living with awareness and intention. It’s a meditative practice that is built on the mind-body connection and fosters a state of nonjudgmental awareness that engages your senses — sight, smell, taste, and feel — during a meal.

Mindful eating is the art of being present while you eat. Similarly, intuitive eating nurtures a mind-body connection, but it’s distinctively rooted in a weight-inclusive approach to health and serves as the core of the Health at Every Size paradigm.

Intuitive eating is guided by 10 principles, including respecting your body, rejecting diet culture, making peace with food, and honoring health through gentle nutrition.

Food freedom, however, isn’t so well

defined. It may represent true forms of intuitive eating or mindful eating, or it may attempt to bridge gaps between intentional weight loss, caloric restriction, and increased flexibility with food.

Despite these differences, there is a common thread among the three terms: They all seek to reduce unnecessary dietary restrictions and improve your relationship with food. They aim to remove prospects of guilt, shame, and negative emotions associated with consuming “forbidden” or “bad” foods.

#### Tips to pursue food freedom

Food freedom, when used as a non-diet approach to health, seeks to liberate you from the thin ideal and diet culture, unsafe weight loss or weight management behaviors, and yo-yo dieting.

Whether you choose to adopt a meditative approach with mindful eating or work through the 10 principles of intuitive eating, freedom from restriction and judgment is possible.

#### Here are some tips:

- ▶ Work with a registered dietitian who is certified in intuitive eating or who





implements mindful eating techniques to guide you.

► Work on unlearning the idea that foods are either “good” or “bad.” Instead, focus on the purpose that food serves at a given moment (such as pleasure, energy, or nourishment).

► Similarly, remove the idea of morality from foods. Understand that you’re not a bad person for eating a pleasurable food and that food choices should not make you feel inferior or superior to others.

► Give yourself permission to enjoy pleasurable foods regularly. This way, you won’t feel out of control around certain foods.

► Focus on health-promoting habits such as staying hydrated and engaging in fun physical activity. Health is more than just the number on the scale.

► Tune in to your internal cues, such as emotions and feelings of fullness and hunger, rather than simply the external cues of eating (such as eating because it’s a specific time of day or because you feel you must finish all the food on your plate).

► Eat slowly, without distractions, and savor your food.

► Focus on how a food makes you feel, and choose more foods that make you feel good.

Using intuitive eating for intentional weight loss

Intentional weight loss is the active attempt to change your body weight, with the goal of lowering the number on the scale.

Although studies show that intuitive eating is associated with weight loss and a lower body mass index (BMI), at its core, intuitive eating is not a weight loss method (10).

A true intuitive eating program would not advertise weight loss as an outcome, since some people may lose weight while others may gain or maintain weight.

Intuitive eating allows your body to find its “happy weight,” or biologically determined set point weight.

Likewise, the fundamental principles of mindful eating are not focused on weight loss — though some weight loss programs have co-opted its messages of mindfulness (11).

Other programs work to bridge the gap by focusing on health-promoting habits while instituting small calorie deficits that promote slow-paced weight loss without completely avoiding pleasurable foods that might not be nutrient-dense or low in calories.

The bottom line

“Food freedom” is a highly marketed term with various definitions, ranging from overcoming diet culture and restrictive diets to engaging in food sovereignty. Therefore, context matters.

As a non-diet approach to nutrition, food freedom includes tuning in to your internal cues of fullness and hunger, decoupling foods and morality, and focusing on health-promoting behaviors — not just the scale.

At their core, intuitive eating and mindful eating principles don’t focus on or promote intentional weight loss. Rather, they help you discover and engage in health-promoting habits that may lead to weight loss, gain, or maintenance.

These frameworks help people foster positive relationships with foods and their bodies that are built on self-trust and self-compassion rather than on the thin ideal.

Healthline

The Best Core Exercises for Fitness

WHETHER you’re pushing a grocery cart or putting on shoes, you use your core to accomplish a lot of everyday activities. It also affects your balance, posture, and stability.

Contrary to popular belief, your core doesn’t just include your abdominal muscles. It also consists of muscles in your back and around your pelvis.

Your core, or trunk, includes your:

► **Erector spinae.** The erector spinae is a back muscle that extends up your trunk. It helps you stand up straight after bending over, as well as bend sideways and rotate your head.

► **Rectus abdominis.** When you bend forward, you use an abdominal muscle called the rectus abdominis. It’s sometimes called the “six pack” muscle.

► **Obliques.** Your internal oblique and external oblique help you rotate or bend your trunk.

► **Transverse abdominis.** The transverse abdominis, which wraps around the front and side of your trunk, stabilizes your pelvis.

► **Multifidus.** The multifidus in your back supports your spine.

Other muscles that make up your core include your:

► pelvic floor

► diaphragm

► glutes

► muscles that attach to the pelvis (hamstrings, hip flexors, and hip adductors)

► Keeping these muscles strong helps stabilize your body, support your spine, and enhance your overall fitness.

BEGINNER MOVES

If you’re new to exercise or if you haven’t exercised in a long time, start with these beginner moves.

It may also be a good idea to consult with a personal trainer, if you can, to talk about the right amount of reps and sets for your personal fitness level and goals.

Throughout these exercises, you’ll see the phrase “tighten your core” — but how do you know if you’re actually doing that?

One good way to start is to inhale, and as you’re doing that, imagine you’re bringing your belly button toward your spine. Hold your muscles tight in that position for a few seconds.

This feeling of braced stomach muscles is what it feels like to engage — or tighten — your core.

BRIDGE

This pose activates your glutes to lift your hips, which helps train your core while toning your butt and thighs.

► Start on your back. Bend your knees and plant your feet on the floor at hip width. Place your hands at your sides, palms down.

► Tighten your core and glutes.

► Raise your hips until your knees are in line with your shoulders.

► Hold for 10–30 seconds.

► Repeat 3–5 times.

CRUNCH

Crunches are a classic core-strengthening move. The act of lifting your upper body works your abdominal muscles.

If you have occasional low back pain, do crunches with care — move slowly and

The best core exercises

... Contrary to popular belief, your core doesn’t just include your abdominal muscles. It also consists of muscles in your back and around your pelvis



start with just a few reps.

If your low back pain is chronic, talk with a certified trainer or healthcare professional before attempting this classic crunch. It may not be the best option for you.

► Start on your back. Bend your knees and plant your feet on the floor at hip width. Line up your head and spine. Cross your arms across your chest.

► Tighten your core and relax your neck and shoulders. Tuck in your chin and lift your upper back, keeping your lower back, pelvis, and feet on the floor. Pause.

► Slowly lower your upper back to return to the starting position.

► Start with 1 set of 8–12 reps.

SUPINE TOE TAP

This is a basic Pilates exercise. It engages your core muscles while working your glutes, hips, and legs.

Toe taps also place minimal pressure on your spine. If you have back pain, toe taps may be an ideal alternative to crunches.

► Start on your back. Lift your legs, with your knees bent to 90 degrees. Place your hands at your sides, palms down.

► Tighten your core. Lower your right foot and gently tap the floor, keeping your left leg still and your back flat.

► Raise your right leg to return to the starting position.

► Repeat with your left leg.

► Start with 1 set of 8–12 reps.

BIRD DOG

The bird dog engages both your abdominal and back muscles, so it’s an ideal core-strengthening move. It also challenges your coordination, balance, and stability.

► Start on all fours, hands below your shoulders and knees below your hips.

► Tighten your core. Lift and straighten your right leg to hip level. Simultaneously lift and extend your left arm to shoulder level, palm down. Hold a neutral spine without allowing your back to arch as you extend your

arm and leg.

► Pause.

► Repeat with your left leg and right arm.

► Start with 1 set of 8–12 reps.

BICYCLE CRUNCH

This variation on a regular crunch works your obliques, rectus abdominous, and hips.

► Start with your back on the floor, with your left knee bent and drawn toward your chest. Keep your right leg straight and slightly lifted off the floor. Place your hands behind your neck or the lower part of your head — be careful not to pull on your neck while you do this move.

► With your left knee bent and your right leg straight, lift your right shoulder off the floor and move your right elbow toward your left knee.

► As you bring your right shoulder back to the floor, extend your left leg while bending your right knee and bringing it toward your chest.

► As your right knee moves farther in, lift your left shoulder off the floor and move your left elbow toward your right knee.

► Start with 3 sets of 12 alternate repetitions.

► Intermediate moves

► As you get stronger, take it up a notch with these intermediate exercises.

PLANK

The plank is a full-body exercise that targets your core. It also strengthens your arms, shoulders, back, glutes, and legs.

► Start on all fours, with your hands below your shoulders and your knees below your hips.

► Straighten your legs behind you, keeping your feet hip-width apart. Tighten your core.

► Hold for 10–30 seconds.

► Repeat 3–5 times.

► To make this exercise easier, keep your knees on the floor, with your weight over your hands. Keep a straight line from your knees to shoulders.

Healthline



# PICTURES OF THE DAY



▲ A woman holds her dog to be blessed by a priest at the Cathedral San Bernardino de Siena during the ceremony commemorating the Feast of San Antonio Abad, the patron saint of domestic animals, in Xochimilco on the outskirts of Mexico City.



▲ A child holds a cat as displaced Palestinians, who fled their houses due to Israeli strikes, shelter at a tent camp, amid the ongoing conflict between Israel and the Palestinian Islamist group Hamas, in Rafah in the southern Gaza Strip.



▲ Homeless people who live at the Suhrawardy Udyan light a fire to warm themselves, as temperature drops significantly during winter in Dhaka, Bangladesh.



▲ Honor guards wait to take part in a military funeral procession for Houthi fighters killed in recent U.S.-led strikes on Houthi targets, in Sanaa, Yemen.



▲ Speaker Mike Johnson (R-LA) speaks during a vigil held on the steps of the U.S. House of Representatives with family members of hostages and victims of Hamas, in Washington.



▲ A group consisting mostly of women, who call themselves “The Endorphins”, gather for a sunrise swim in the chilly waters of Lake Ontario during freezing temperatures in Toronto, Canada.



# ‘Bafana panicked against Mali’

FORMER Bafana Bafana coach Gordon Igesund says that Bafana were punished for the errors that they committed against Mali in their opening of the 2024 Africa Cup of Nations against Mali on Tuesday night.

### Zero points after 2-0 defeat

Bafana were handed a 2-0 defeat by west Africans Mali. This resulted in coach Hugo Broos’ side being the cellar-dwellers in Group E, with zero points after one round of matches.

Namibia caused the biggest upset in the tournament after they nailed Tunisia 1-0. They are occupying second position in the group, with Mali topping the log table. Bafana will now face Namibia in their next match in what will be a do-or-die affair on Sunday.

Besides the gloomy situation for Bafana, Igesund is still optimistic that South Africa can sneak through to the next round of the tournament.

### There’s still hope

“The result was very disappointing,” Igesund told Sunday World. “There are some things that need to be fixed before the next match. They could have gotten something out of that game (Mali), but we can improve against Namibia. And we can win that match. The boys were quick, brave and technically better compared to Mali. They are also younger than the Mali players.”



▲ Bafana were handed a 2-0 defeat by west Africans Mali. This resulted in coach Hugo Broos’ side being the cellar-dwellers in Group E, with zero points after one round of matches.

The four-time PSL league winner added that Broos’ charges can be more competitive if they focus. “Bafana gave the ball away cheaply and they panicked. They were over-elaborating on the ball in bad areas of the pitch.

### Punished for silly mistakes

“The team did not look like they had it together as a team. But in fairness, they did not play badly at all. It’s just that they committed silly mistakes, and they were duly punished,” he said.

“Teams like Mali are very dangerous when you give them a chance. They knew they could capitalise on the mistakes of Bafana. They know that they are not too quick and that they did not have pace. Their strength is that they are organised, and they work as a team.”

### Now a do-or-die situation

Igesund added that it is now going to be more difficult to qualify after losing the first match.

“If you win the first match you have 50%



▲ Former Bafana Bafana coach Gordon Igesund says that Bafana were punished for the errors that they committed against Mali in their opening of the 2024 Africa Cup of Nations against Mali on Tuesday night.

chances of going through. Because if you get a draw in the second game, you are as good as qualified. If Bafana got at least one point, then they could beat Namibia. And their chances were great. Now it is a do-or-die against Namibia and to also get at least a point against Tunisia in the last group match. That is going to be very difficult,” he added. (Sunday world)



▲ Brazilian foward Neymar Jr.

## French police search finance ministry tax offices over Neymar transfer

FRENCH police have searched the Finance Ministry’s tax administration offices over allegations of favourable treatment granted to football club Paris-Saint-Germain over the transfer of Brazilian star Neymar, a source close to the investigation said.

The source, who confirmed earlier reports of the raid by news outlet Mediapart, added that the raid was part of a bigger investigation. Mediapart had reported earlier that the suspected favourable tax treatment was given to the club as part of Neymar’s 2017 transfer from Barcelona to PSG.

The Economics and Finance Ministry declined to comment.

Paris-Saint-Germain did not immediately respond to a Reuters request for comment.

(Reuters)

## Warriors assistant coach dies after heart attack

GOLDEN State Warriors assistant coach Dejan Milojevic has died, the National Basketball Association (NBA) club said on Wednesday after the Belgrade native suffered a heart attack during a team dinner.

The 46-year-old Milojevic was in his third season as an assistant coach with Golden State after helping the team win the 2022 NBA championship.

“We are absolutely devastated by Dejan’s sudden passing,” said Warriors head coach Steve Kerr. “This is a shocking and tragic blow for everyone associated with the Warriors and an incredibly difficult time for his family, friends, and all of us who had the incredible pleasure to work with him.

“In addition to being a terrific basketball coach, Dejan was one of the most positive and beautiful human beings I have ever known, someone who brought joy and light to every single day with his passion and energy.”

The Warriors said Milojevic was taken to a Salt Lake City hospital on Tuesday after suffering a heart attack at a private team dinner but, despite life-saving efforts, died late Wednesday morning.

Earlier, the NBA announced that the Warriors’ game at the Utah Jazz scheduled for later on Wednesday had been postponed because of a “medical emergency in the Warriors family” and that a makeup date would be announced at a later time.

The Utah Jazz were among the NBA teams who expressed their condolences following the news of Milojevic’s death, calling him “a well-respected and beloved member of the NBA family.”

Before joining the Warriors, Milojevic spent the 2021 season as head coach of Buducnost in the Adriatic League in Montenegro. Prior to that role, Milojevic was head coach for Mega Basket in Belgrade, Serbia, for eight seasons.

In December 2019, Milojevic was named



▲ Golden State Warriors assistant coach Dejan Milojevic has died.

an assistant coach for the Serbian national team under Igor Kokoskov.

Milojevic also enjoyed a 14-year international playing career and was named the Adriatic League Most Valuable Player three times (2004-06).

NBA Commissioner Adam Silver also released a statement on Milojevic’s death.

“The NBA mourns the sudden passing of Golden State assistant coach Dejan Miloje-

vic, a beloved colleague and dear friend to so many in the global basketball community,” said Silver.

“In addition to winning the 2022 NBA championship in his first season with the Warriors and mentoring some of the best players in the world, Dejan had a decorated international playing career and was a distinguished head coach in his native Serbia.”

(Reuters)



# Real Madrid plan to use Jude Bellingham to land Haaland

REAL MADRID hope to use Jude Bellingham to help lure Erling Haaland to the Bernabeu in the future – according to reports in Spain. The Spanish giants would love to sign Manchester City’s Norwegian goal sensation and know he has a dream of one day playing in Spain. Bellingham and Haaland remain good friends having played together at Borussia Dortmund for a couple of years until the forward left for the Etihad in summer 2022. And Madrid want to take advantage of that as they look to turn the head of City’s 23-year-old superstar. Mundo Deportivo and SER also say they will use similar tactics to the ones that proved so successful in signing Bellingham in the summer. That plan is to work in the background with Haaland’s agents to put some groundwork in place – avoiding direct

negotiations with the player himself and City. So when it becomes clear a deal can be done they will be in pole position to win his signature. Haaland is believed to have release clauses his contract at the Etihad although the exact nature of them has never been confirmed. City agreed to insert them after landing him for a knockdown price of £51.4million from Dortmund 18 months ago. Despite all the noise from Spain, the Treble winners are convinced Haaland is happy where he is after a sensational start to his career in England. They would also like to sit down and thrash out a new contract with him in the coming months. Madrid are certain to be watching closely. Their top priority is finding a way to land Kylian Mbappe from Paris Saint Germain but Haaland is very much on their radar. (The Sun)



▲Jude Bellingham and Erling Haaland during their time at Borussia Dortmund.



▲Manchester City have been charged with 115 alleged breaches by the Premier League.

## Former adviser’s Man City warning

A former Manchester City financial adviser has revealed that the charges levelled against the club are on a ‘completely different scale’ to the rest of the league and relegation could be the least of their worries. The current reigning champions were charged by the Premier League with 115 alleged breaches of financial regulations in February after opening an investigation in 2018. Throughout a long-running saga the competition and the club have remained tight-lipped – and both declined to comment when contacted. Speaking on talkSPORT, Stefan Borson, who was previously an advisor at the Etihad, was asked how different City’s charges are to Everton and Nottingham Forest. He replied: ‘The scale is on a completely different level. There’s no question, if those charges are proven, this will end in at least relegation!’ ‘There is a suggestion of conspiracy over a 10-year period.

They’re suggesting that City’s main sponsorship agreements are not for £50-60million but are for actually £8m and the whole thing was a sham and a whole load of people lied. ‘A whole load of executives from multiple companies were in on it. The club also lied to multiple parties, professionals, people doing due diligence on the company, the league, UEFA, the FA. ‘If proven this is super serious. Nobody would argue that. City themselves in their submissions they will say this is an allegation of the most serious nature.’ Asked whether they will clear the name, he added: ‘I think they will clear their name because a case of this nature has to have a level of cogent proof which seems to me impossible to present to independent commission. ‘Furthermore it seems to me highly unlikely that the conduct that is alleged has taken place over a ten year period with the sorts of individuals that are involved in the club. That also will be the starting of the independent commission. ‘For any court or tribunal, to

suggest that this number of people have been this dishonest is a massive call.’ In November, Mail Sport revealed that a date for City’s showdown with the league has been initially scheduled for the late autumn of 2024. Those with knowledge of the situation believe that a conclusion may not follow until the end of next season – which is when City boss Pep Guardiola’s current contract is due to expire. It is understood that what has been a highly confidential process is currently at the stage where statements are being taken from witnesses – which is likely to remain the case until next spring. Should the trial go ahead on time, a verdict would be likely around the summer of 2025. Delays, however, may well push the proceedings back further. And should either party find the eventual outcome unpalatable it would be difficult to imagine a world in which they would not appeal. Such a scenario would add significant time. (The Sun)

# Emma Raducanu was ‘being sick in her mouth’ during brave Australian Open loss

EMMA Raducanu admits she was “throwing up in my mouth” as a stomach bug derailed her Australian Open campaign. The weary Brit struggled to breathe at times as she battled hard for close to three hours before losing 6-4 4-6 6-4 to China’s Wang Yafan in the second round in Melbourne. The 21-year-old felt under the weather pre-match and this illness proved her downfall despite gallantly winning the second set after being a break behind. Feeling “weak and nauseous”, the former US Open champion had her blood pressure checked by a medic during the third set and took some pills before resuming. Raducanu, who puked up post-match, said: “I think I just had a bit of a stomach bug beforehand. “Now I feel a little bit better. I had some time. “During the match, the third set I was 30-0 up serving. Then all of a sudden I just felt so sick, just really weak and nauseous. “Throughout the third set I think everyone could see it was a

bit of a battle. “Like physically, body-wise, I felt fine. It was more I was throwing up in my mouth. “Then after the match, it came out. Now I’m OK. I’ll get over it. It just sucks with the timing. “I was actually feeling good about my tennis. Mentally, I don’t know why, I just felt really composed the entire time. “Even in the first set when I was making a ton of errors with the wind, I kind of always had this feeling that I was coming back, just tidy up the errors. I felt pretty composed throughout.” Raducanu, playing just her fourth match in eight months, was determined to keep going and fight it out, particularly during a gruelling 65-minute second set. She said: “I’ve been in that situation before in matches, whether it was with illness or injury, and retired a few times. “With what I went through last year, you feel awful right now. “At some points I couldn’t really see the ball very well, but I think it’s made me so much tougher. (Daily Mail)



▲Emma Raducanu was battling illness during her second-round match.





# Nigeria stun hosts Morocco

ABIDJAN :Nigeria handed Africa Cup of Nations hosts Ivory Coast a 1-0 defeat in their Group A clash at the Alassane Ouattara Stadium on Thursday with a second-half penalty settling the encounter.

Captain William Troost-Ekong struck home the 55th minute spot kick after a VAR review showed that young Ivorian defender Ousmane Diomande had impeded Victor Osimhen.

The result means Nigeria move above the Ivorians in the standings on four points along with Equatorial Guinea, who beat Guinea Bissau 4-2 earlier. The hosts have three.

The clash of the west African heavy-weights was a largely languid affair, dominated by physical battles and with few clear-cut chances created.

But Diomande, 20, was found to have caught Osimhen on the knee as the two tussled for the ball in the penalty area and Troost-Ekong blasted the ball straight down the middle to settle the clash.

Nigeria offered their hosts few chances in

a strong defensive performance, playing five across the back and keeping the tricky home attack at bay. They also looked more dangerous up front with Osimhen squandering a good opportunity for an early lead.

Christian Kouame came closest for the hosts in the first half but had his effort blocked by Nigeria goalkeeper Stanley Nwabali. The Ivorians ran out of energy early and despite nine minutes of stoppage time, never looked likely to break down the Super Eagles, who won in the Ivory Coast for the first time in 10 attempts.

Ivory Coast are still well placed to advance as they already have three points from a 2-0 win in their opener last Saturday against Guinea Bissau.

They meet Equatorial Guinea in their final group game on Monday while Nigeria will play Guinea Bissau at the same time.

Both matches are in Abidjan although at stadiums at the opposite ends of the city.

Later on Thursday, Egypt and Ghana were playing the last of three matches in one day at the tournament in a Group B clash.

(Reuters)



▲Ivory Coast's Serge Aurier in action with Nigeria's Seko Fofana.



▲Match ball. Equitorial Guinea hat-trick hero Emilio Nsue.

## Nsue hat-trick earns Equatorial Guinea handsome win over Guinea Bissau

Veteran striker Emilio Nsue grabbed a hat-trick as Equatorial Guinea beat Guinea Bissau 4-2 on Thursday to put themselves in a strong position to qualify for the Africa Cup of Nations last-16 in the Ivory Coast.

Nsue opened the scoring in the 21st minute and added two more in the second half with Josete Miranda also on target in the Group A encounter.

Guinea Bissau's goals — their first in eight matches at the finals since 2017 — came from an own goal from Esteban Orozco to level the score at 1-1 and a stoppage-time consolation effort from Ze Turbo.

The win moved Equatorial Guinea to four points after they

held Nigeria to a draw in their opening game on Sunday while Guinea Bissau have now lost twice.

Equatorial Guinea went ahead in the 21st minute as Guinea Bissau captain Sori Mane failed to intercept a pass from Pablo Ganet and Nsue needed no second invitation to score.

Guinea Bissau equalised 16 minutes later as Mauro Rodrigues' cross was turned into his own net by defender Orozco.

They were then awarded a penalty two minutes later after a challenge by Saul Coco on Franculino. Yet after a lengthy VAR check it was reversed as Franculino was deemed the offender rather than the Equatorial Guinea centre back.

A long ball down the middle at the resumption of the second half was missed by the Guinea Bissau centre backs and allowed Miranda an easy finish to restore the lead.

They extended their advantage in the 51st minute as Basilo Ndong's cross was missed by Guinea Bissau goalkeeper Ouparine Djoco and Nsue slid the ball in at the back post.

His hat-trick was completed 10 minutes later although it took a long VAR check for offside before the goal was awarded.

It was a first hat-trick at the finals since 2008.

Ze Turbo pulled one back for Guinea Bissau with a touch off the outside of his left foot late in stoppage time but the game had long been settled. (Reuters)

## Cande rues missed chances

Guinea-Bissau coach Baciro Cande was left to rue his side's failure to take their chances after a 4-2 TotalEnergies CAF Africa Cup of Nations loss to Equatorial Guinea.

Despite scoring twice, the Djurtus were undone by Emilio Nsue's ruthless hat-trick in the Group A clash in Abidjan on Thursday.

"I feel sad. We wanted to win this match but we did not succeed," a dejected Cande told reporters after the game. The Guinea-Bissau boss felt his team squandered opportunities to take control before falling behind. "Before their first goal, we had four chances to score plus the penalty that was refused," Cande explained.

The Djurtus also had a strong penalty appeal waved away by VAR just before half-time at 0-0.

Cande believed missing out against one of the group's weaker sides was a big opportunity lost.

"We worked hard to be ready for this game. Football is sometimes like that," he said philosophically.

Winless Guinea-Bissau now face the daunting task of needing victory over Nigeria in their final match to have any hope.

"We have one game left to close the group stage and we hope to win," Cande added.

But hopes of progression are slim after this demoralizing defeat condemned them to zero points so far.

(Reuters)



▲Guinea-Bissau coach Baciro Cande.



# 2024 ESA's New Year Gala on January 27

By Bahle Gama  
bahlegama@rubicon.co.sz

SWIMMERS will be back in action when they compete in the Eswatini Swimming Association (ESA) 2024 New Year's Gala.

The first competition in the New Year will be held on January 27 at Enjabulweni School, Manzini. The event will be hosted by Griffin Swimming Club the first competition will start at 9 am.

"Griffin Swimming Club is eagerly looking forward to welcoming all swimmers and parents to the event. We are excited to organize a day full of fun, friendly competition, and camaraderie. We can't wait to see you there. Be punctual, the gala will begin at 9:00 am sharp," reads a statement.

ESA announced that the entry fee is E20 per event and a swimmer may not swim if their entry fee has not been paid. All clubs are to make a single deposit for entry fees no later than Friday, January 25, 2024. ESA emphasised that no cash payment will be accepted.

"Swimmers may only swim in correct age groups. Swimmers may only accrue points in their own age groups. Only recognised registered coaches, teachers may enter and withdraw a swimmer. All queries must go through the coach and teacher," he said.

The gala will swim in five lanes under ESA and World Aquatics technical rules as well as World Aquatics age group swimming rules.

The Gala format is as follows: 200m Breaststroke, 100m Backstroke 100m, Butterfly 25m Backstroke, 200 I.M, 50m Backstroke, 25m Butterfly, 100m Breaststroke and 400m Freestyle

50m Butterfly, 200m Freestyle, 50m Breaststroke, 100m Freestyle, 25m Freestyle, 100m Individual Medley and 50m Freestyle.

Age Groups recognized for this gala:

- 1. 6 and under
- 2. 7/8 Years
- 3. 9/10 Years
- 4. 11/12 Years
- 5. 13/14 Years
- 6. 15/17 Years
- 7. 18/24 Years (Open)
- 8. 25&Over (Masters)

Competition: 9 am

About the event:

Date: 27 January 2024  
Venue: Enjabulweni School  
Start time of gala: Saturday 9 am  
Sponsor and hosts: Griffin Swimming Club  
Warm-up Start time: Saturday 8:15 am



▲ Swimmers at podium finish to receive their medals after a competition.



▲ Bob Masters players in action during a recent ENVA tournament.

## Volleyball B Division teams kick off on Saturday

By Bahle Gama  
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The 2024 Volleyball B Division league will finally kick off on Saturday at two venues.

The tournament is aimed at determining the top four teams that will qualify for the 2023 VA Cup which carries a ticket to the Zone VI club championships.

The games will be played concurrently at Olymp Africa and Zakhele Courts in a bid to book a place in the annual knockout tournament.

Some of the teams that will be in action at Zakhele Courts include Kwaluseni, Eagles, Bob Masters and Luve.

There will be some action at Olymp Africa Courts where the likes of Sidwashini, Fire, Tigers and Phoenix will battle out.

Eswatini National Volleyball Association Vice-Secretary Nobuhle Dlamini confirmed the fixtures.

"We are happy that the B Division league will finally kickoff and urge teams to keep time. We are also inviting fans to attend the games in numbers," she said.

Other upcoming tournaments include the Trade Fair sponsored by MulaSport.

Correctional Sunrises and Scorpions represented the country in the 2022 edition of the annual regional interclub competition where Correctional Males reached the semi-finals of the annual interclub competition.

The 'Green machines' as Correctional are fondly known also booked their place in the 2024 African championships to be held at a venue still be confirmed by the Confederation of African Volleyball (CAVB).

## Thabiso geared up for the African Games qualifying tournament

By Bahle Gama  
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Top local boxer Thabiso Dlamini says he is ready for the Eswatini Boxing Association (EBA) African Games qualify tournament slated for Saturday at Olymp Africa Centre.

Dlamini will be fighting for a slot in the Boxing national team that will be part of team of Eswatini during the continental games in March in Ghana.

The athlete recently returned home from a one-year training program in Russia.

"I am looking forward to the qualifying tournament where I will put a good fight to secure a place in the national team," he said.

Meanwhile, EBA Secretary Nkosinathi Dlamini said preparations for the tournament were proceeding smoothly.

"We are looking forward to the tournament where we will be having some of our top boxers. The outstanding boxers will qualify for the African games, and I am not yet able to pre-empt the numbers of boxers for now until we receive the budget from Eswatini Olympic and Commonwealth Games Association (EOCGA). We urge teams and fans to attend the tournament in numbers," he said.

The boxing national team attended the 2023 African championships and World championships which were held in Uzbekistan and Senegal respectively.

The country was represented by Zweli Dlamini, Thabiso Dlamini and Veliswa Magaya in the two assignments.

Boxing is among the lists of disciplines that will be included in the Ghana-bound African games including Taekwondo, volleyball, Chess, karate and athletics by the local Olympic movement (EOCGA).



▲ Top local boxer Thabiso Dlamini says he is ready for the Eswatini Boxing Association (EBA) African Games qualify tournament slated for Saturday at Olymp Africa Centre.



# Three months suspension for blundering referees!

By Sibusiso Masilela  
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BLUNDERING referees will soon face a month's suspension from local football. This follows a meeting by the Eswatini National Referees Association (ENRA) following numerous complaints from premier league referees over match officials. Some of the teams that have complained before the Premier League of Eswatini (PLE) about referees include Moneni Pirates and Mbabane Highlanders. A source close to the matter revealed that the two bodies have resolved to suspend the culprits. "The RC and the ERA is currently working on new disciplinary procedures that will improve the standard of refereeing in the country. Some of the possible sanctions that

... After endless complaints by teams to the Premier League of Eswatini (PLE) on poor officiating, the Eswatini National Referees Association (ENRA) resolved to effect new disciplinary procedures that could lead to a three-month suspension for a blundering match official

were discussed during the meeting include a three months suspension. The final decision will be taken in the next fortnight," the source said. Eswatini Referees Association Chairman Jabulani Motsa asked not to comment and referred queries to the Referees Committee Chairman Sipho Kunene. Meanwhile, Kunene could not be reached for comment on the matter as he was locked in a meeting at the time of compiling this report on Thursday. However, Kunene recently stated the Committee do have internal disciplinary processes, but they were not going to disclose their processes to the public.



This was during the recent Premier League of Eswatini (PLE) Indaba recently held at Sigwaca House where several boards of governors complained about referees.



▲ Premier League of Eswatini referees.

## Wanderers mourn Reverend Bhekindlela Magongo's demise

By Ntokozo Magongo  
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MANZINI Wanderers celebrations after the 1-0 win over log leaders Green Mamba were cut short on Tuesday evening after the passing away of one of the club's elders Reverend Bhekindlela Magongo. The former Anglican Church Archdeacon passed away after a tragic car accident on Tuesday night near Mahhala, Matsapha, just after the MTN Premier League match played at Mavuso Sports Centre. Wanderers won 1-0 against the defending champions through a goal scored by Captain Mlamuli 'Mlaba' Nkambule in stoppage time. Manzini Wanderers sent their condolences to all those affected by the sudden demise of Magongo. "Manzini Wanderers would like to express our deepest condolences to the Magongo family on the tragic passing of Reverend Bhekindlela Magongo, one of our esteemed elders. The news of his sudden death in a



▲ The late Reverend Bhekindlela Magongo.

car accident shortly after our game against Green Mamba on Tuesday night has left us devastated. We stand together as the Manzini Wanderers family, offering our support and comfort to all those affected by this loss.

May the Lord provide solace and strength to Reverend Magongo's loved ones during this difficult time. *Lala ngekuthula Weseli lakitsi,*" reads the statement in part. Details of his funeral arrangement are yet to be released.



▲ Aristote.

## Ex-'Birds' Aristo in SA's Black Leopard radar

By Ntokozo Magongo  
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FORMER Mbabane Swallows defender Aristo Tamuzi is set to join South Africa's Black Leopard. The player has already started training with the Motsepe Foundation League side where he is expected to be signed alongside Mbabane Highlanders Philani Mkhontfo. Negotiations to sign the two players are still ongoing. The DR Congo player is also a former player for defunct Vovovo FC and Mbabane Highlanders, who departed at Mbabane Swallows on mutual consent in December. He played under Solly Luvhengo at the black and white outfit before leaving to join rivals, Mbabane Swallows.

A source close to the matter confirmed that the player was among the players set to join the Limpopo-based side. The players are set to work under former Mbabane Highlanders Coach Solly Luvhengo who left the 'Bull' late last year. "Luvhengo is among those scouting players for the club in Eswatini as he had been working in the country. He is the one who negotiated for the players to be taken for trials in the club," said the source.

“Luvhengo is among those scouting players for the club in Eswatini as he had been working in the country”







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**Sport**



**3-months  
suspension  
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