



E2m budget for Parly opening

By Ncaba Ntshakala

THE countdown is on for the State opening of the Eswatini Parliament, and behind the scenes, preparations are humming with activity. Clerk to Parliament, Benedict Xaba has assured the nation that it's all systems go for the momentous occasion. Xaba said that even though there is no tentative date towards the official date, preparations are underway.

■ SEE FULL STORY ON PAGE 2

Education’s relief as FPE Funds reach nearly all schools

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Xaba said that even though there is no tentative date towards the official date, preparations are underway.

Unconfirmed reports suggest the Parliament Opening is scheduled for Friday, February 9. Xaba stated that a sum of E2 million has been set aside for the event but the budget though not adequate it will help the organization.

Xaba said that he understands the lower budgets due to the global meltdown of the world economies. "It is very little but what can we do as there is not enough money. Things have really gone up," said Xaba.

This year's opening ceremony holds



▲ The Parliament floor.

particular significance as it marks the start of a new chapter for the Kingdom with a new government. With a dedicated budget allocated for the event, anticipation is running high for a spectacular display of Eswatini's heritage and aspirations. The official opening is done by the Head of State, His Majesty King Mswati III.

Education's relief as FPE Funds reach nearly all schools

PARENTS across the Kingdom can breathe a sigh of relief as Minister of Education and Training Owen Nxumalo announced at a press conference on Monday that nearly all primary schools have received their Free Primary Education (FPE) programme grants.

This timely infusion of funds came just before schools reopened for the new year on yesterday.

The Minister said that FPE funding has been disbursed to almost all primary schools across the country. This vital programme ensures access to quality education for all children, and government has been committed to its smooth implementation.

While celebrating the widespread distribution of funds, the Minister acknowledged that a few schools in the Hhohho region were experiencing a slight delay. The Minister said this is due to some late submission of required documents. However, the Minister assured parents and school administrators in these areas that their payments are being prioritized and will be processed before the end of the week.

The FPE program, established in 2010, covers school fees and provides essential learning materials for primary school students. It has played a crucial role in increasing access to education and reducing dropout rates in Eswatini. The timely release of funds ensures a smooth start to the academic year and guarantees uninterrupted learning for all children.

(gazette) in 2010 that would be a road Map for the implementation of FPE. The Gazette provides conditions on how and when non-Swazi children can be admitted and who determines the fees they should pay. The Ministry has put in place some strategies towards attaining Free Primary which include extending Primary school entry age from 6 to 9 years for grade one; and 7 to 11 for grade two. This was done to accommodate all out-of-school children who were above six but not above 11 years old. Also, Sebenta Non-Formal Upper Primary Education {NUPE} was expanded for children above ten years who seek admission into Grade one. Sebenta is using existing primary school facilities for the NUPE classes while rural Education Centres {RECs} will also be used as Satellites for the programme. In places where the influx will be very high like in urban\peri-urban schools the shift system will be used.

Minister Owen warns headteachers on expelling pupils over unpaid fees

In a swift move to safeguard pupils, the Minister of Education and Training, Owen Nxumalo, has issued a stern warning to headteachers against expelling pupils for unpaid school fees. Addressing the issue head-on, Nxumalo emphasized that education remains a fundamental right, and financial hurdles faced by families should not become a barrier to learning.

Nxumalo's directive clearly delineates the responsibility of school administrators, stating that engaging directly with parents and guardians about fee arrears is the preferred course of action.

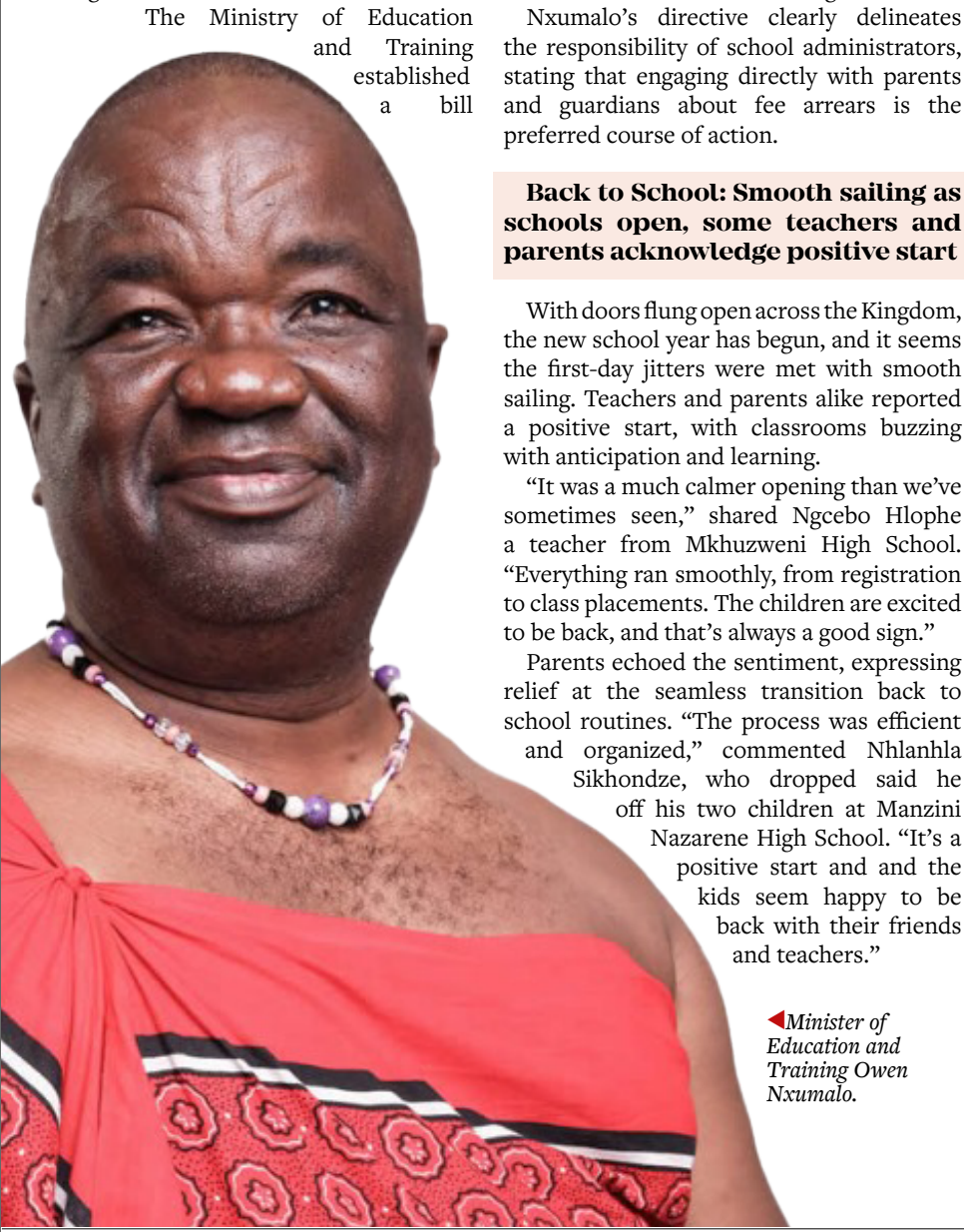
Back to School: Smooth sailing as schools open, some teachers and parents acknowledge positive start

With doors flung open across the Kingdom, the new school year has begun, and it seems the first-day jitters were met with smooth sailing. Teachers and parents alike reported a positive start, with classrooms buzzing with anticipation and learning.

"It was a much calmer opening than we've sometimes seen," shared Ngcebo Hlophe a teacher from Mkhuzweni High School. "Everything ran smoothly, from registration to class placements. The children are excited to be back, and that's always a good sign."

Parents echoed the sentiment, expressing relief at the seamless transition back to school routines. "The process was efficient and organized," commented Nhlanhla Sikhondze, who dropped said he off his two children at Manzini Nazarene High School. "It's a positive start and the kids seem happy to be back with their friends and teachers."

▲ Minister of Education and Training Owen Nxumalo.



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By Ncaba Ntshakala

Taiwan Medical Mission brings relief to Nkilongo

THE Taiwan Embassy and Medical Mission kicked off their 2024 outreach efforts with a visit to Nkilongo, a rural community in the southern part of Eswatini.

Led by Ambassador Jeremy Liang, the team provided free medical services to 270 residents, offering much-needed assistance to a community with limited access to healthcare.

A range of services provided by the medical mission included ultrasound examinations, dental checkups, dispensation of medication, and general medical consultations. In addition to these direct services, the team also provided public health education, raising awareness about daily healthcare practices and preventative measures.

Nkilongo Member of Parliament Petros Sibandze expressed the community's deep appreciation for Taiwan's friendship and support.

Recognising the challenges faced by remote rural areas in accessing adequate

healthcare, Ambassador Liang announced the mission's commitment to providing medical outreach services to Nkilongo twice a month.

This dedication builds upon Taiwan's ongoing efforts to support communities across Eswatini. Throughout 2023, the Taiwan mission assisted numerous constituencies, and they have pledged to continue their humanitarian work in 2024 and beyond.

Hope

The Taiwan Embassy and Medical Mission's outreach to Nkilongo serves as a beacon of hope for communities struggling with limited access to healthcare. Taiwan highlighted that by providing essential medical services and promoting preventative measures, the mission aims to make a real difference in the lives of residents.



▲ Nkilongo MP Petros Sibandze, Taiwan Ambassador Jeremy Liang and Taiwan Medical Mission posing for photo at Mahlabaneni.



▲ Taiwan Ambassador Jeremy Liang, Nkilongo MP Petros Sibandze delivering food parcels to a resident.



▲ A Taiwan Medical official administering medical aid to a minor.

Temporary fuel shortage at some stations, Ministry assures swift resolution

By Ncaba Ntshakala

THE Ministry of Natural Resources and Energy has issued a statement acknowledging a temporary shortage of ULP 95 petrol at some fuel service stations across the country.

The ministry has assured motorists and stakeholders in the petroleum industry that the situation is being addressed and fuel supplies will be restored as soon as possible.

The current shortage is attributed to logistical supply challenges faced by one of the fuel suppliers in Eswatini's neighbouring countries, from where some oil companies source their ULP 95 petrol.

The specific details of the logistical issues were not disclosed in the Ministry's statement.

"The Ministry of Natural Resources and Energy wishes to inform all motorists and other stakeholders in the petroleum



▲ A gas fuel station in the Kingdom of Eswatini. The Ministry of Natural Resources and Energy has issued a statement acknowledging a temporary shortage of ULP 95 petrol.

industry that the country is currently facing a temporary shortage of ULP 95 petrol

emanating from one supplier in our neighbouring countries where some of the oil companies source fuel," reads the statement in part.

"We understand the inconvenience this temporary shortage may cause motorists to urge the public to remain patient while we work diligently with oil companies to resolve the issue." The statement reads in conclusion.

Commitment

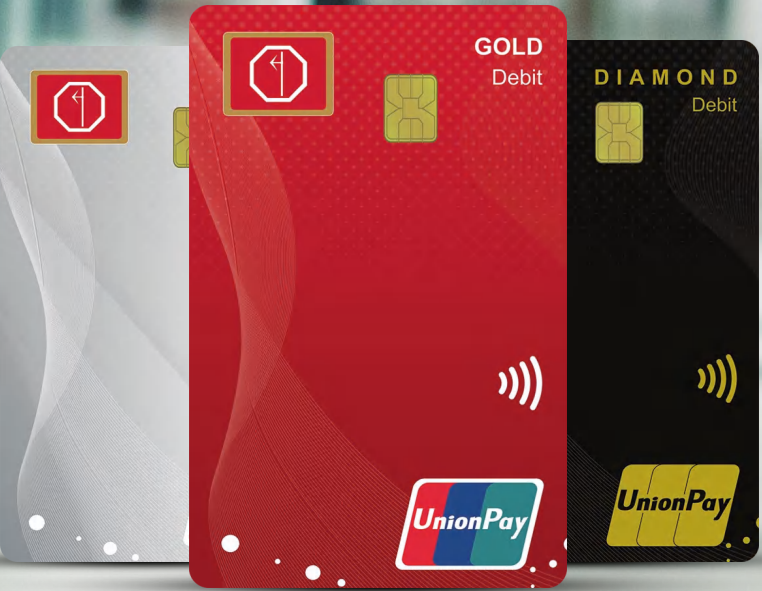
The ministry emphasised its commitment to ensuring a stable and reliable fuel supply for the nation. While the full extent of the affected stations remains unclear, reports suggest that the shortage is primarily impacting select areas within the country.

Motorists are advised to contact their preferred fuel stations for real-time updates on availability.

The ministry's prompt acknowledgement and reassurance aim to minimise panic and maintain public trust during this temporary disruption.



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By Silindzelwe Nxumalo
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ESWATINI Communications Commission (ESCCOM) has warned the public against using unlicensed Multiplex Investment (PTY) LTD t/a Broadband Technologies.

ESCCOM Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Mvilawemphi Dlamini said it had come to their attention of the Commission that an entity is advertising and portraying itself as a licensed Internet Service Provider providing internet services in Eswatini.

Dlamini said Broadband Technologies is not a licensed Internet Service Provider and as such is not allowed to offer electronic communication services in Eswatini.

Advertising

“The entity has been ordered by the Commission to desist from advertising or conducting its business as a licensed electronic communications service provider,” he said.

The CEO further reminded and warned individuals and companies that in terms of the

ESCCOM warns public against unlicensed Broadband Technologies

Electronic Communications Act, 2013, it is an offence to operate or provide an electronic communications network or service without a licence issued by the Commission.

Dlamini said the commission shall take stern legal action against any individual or company that is found to be operating or providing electronic communications network or services without a licence.

According to the commission’s website, Eswatini Communications Commission (ESCCOM) is the regulatory body responsible for regulating the commu-

nications sector in Eswatini, constituting of telecommunication services and networks, broadcasting services, postal services and the use and allocation of radio spectrum.

It derives its mandate from the Swaziland Communications Commission Act no. 10 of 2013.

The Commission became operational on the July 31, 2013, effectively taking over all the regulatory powers of the sector from the Eswatini Posts and Telecommunications Corporation (EPTC) and Eswatini Television Authority (Eswatini TV).

Advertising

The Commission is mainly responsible for licensing all systems and services in the communications industry, including telecommunications, postal, courier and broadcasting, managing the country’s frequency spectrum and numbering resources, facilitating the development of e-commerce, and type approving and accepting communications equipment meant for use in the country.

“The commission is also responsible for protecting consumer rights within the communications environment, managing competition within the sector to ensure a level playing ground for all players, regulating retail and wholesale tariffs for commu-

nications services, managing the universal access fund to facilitate access to communications services by all in Eswatini, and monitoring the activities of licensees to enforce compliance with the license terms and conditions as well as the law,” read the website.

Decisions

The Commission is overseen by a Board of the Directors consisting of non-executive member and all decisions of the Board are executed by the Chief Executive Officer and is supported by an executive team.

“The entity has been ordered by the Commission to desist from advertising or conducting its business as a licensed electronic communications service provide”



▲ ESCCOM Chief Executive Officer CEO Mvilawemphi Dlamini.

Man arrested for hacking wife, son with axe granted E15 000 bail

By Nokunceda Magagula
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MCOLISI Sydney Hlatjwako of Mankayane who was charged with attempted murder after allegedly hacking his wife and son with an axe two times on the head, has been granted bail fixed at E15 000.

The accused charge sheet states that on December 28, 2023, at Mgazini Hlatjwako hacked her wife several times on the head and on the left thigh with an axe thus causing her to sustain severe injuries.

The second count states that the accused also slashed his son with an axe two times on the head thus causing him grievous harm.

The accused has moved his bail application at the High Court. In his affidavit the accused states that he is requesting the Honourable Court to admit him to bail, the accused said he is innocent of the charges leveled against him and he intends to plead not guilty at trial.” Once evidence is led in the matter, I believe that I will be acquitted as I have a very good defense to the charges I am facing” the affidavit reads.

Affidavit

In his affidavit, Hlatjwako said he must bring the Honorable Court into his confidence and make mention of the fact that the victims of the offences which he is charged with are his wife and his son and they are permanently residing at Sicunusa area where the accused established their matrimonial home.

Hlatjwako brought his side of the story on the incident, stating that on December 24, 2023, he had a misunderstanding with his wife. The misunderstanding was caused by the fact that his wife suspected that he was involved in an extramarital relationship with one of the girls in their community.

The accused said his wife then packed

her belongings and left their home, moving to her maternal home. Hlatjwako said on December 28, he went to his wife’s maternal home to seek an audience with her to discuss the issue of the extramarital relationship which he states that was not true, as he had never engaged with any other woman other than his wife.

On arrival at Mgazini, her maternal home, Hlatjwako says he found his wife with their minor child. When trying to have a conversation with her she didn’t respond, however, minutes later she eventually gave him an audience. “Whilst I was trying to explain to her that the issue of me being engaged in an extramarital relationship was not true, she slapped me on my face but due to the force of the slap she slipped and fell together with

the child on an axe, and both got severely hurt in the process” Hlatjwako asserted.

The accused emphasized that there was no point in time where he hacked his wife and son with an axe. He added that he firmly believes that once evidence is led in this matter his innocence will be proved as he strongly believes that everything that led to them getting hurt was an accident.

After the injury, Hlatjwako said he tried to organize transport for both of them to the hospital, and upon arrival at the hospital, they were informed that they should first obtain a police report so that they could be in a position to treat them.

Acting on the advice of the hospital personnel at Mankayane Hospital they proceeded to the police station, since his wife was still angry at him, she shouted that the

accused had just hacked her and the minor child.

However, the police did assist them, and they left for the hospital, shortly after their arrival at the hospital the police also arrived and informed the accused that they had come to fetch him for questioning at the police station.

Indeed, they proceeded to the police station, and on arrival, he was never questioned, instead, he was informed, without giving any explanation, that he was under arrest for having committed the offense of attempted murder.

The accused said he is if granted bail he would not pose a danger to anyone in society. He also mentioned that he is a Swati national and is willing to surrender his passport at the Mankayane police station. He was therefore granted bail fixed at E12 000.



▲ The man accused of hacking his wife and son has been granted E15 000 bail.

Housing ministry Under-Secretary trial to begin in March

Stories by Nokunceda Magagula
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A senior government official, Hlobisile Dlamini, who holds the rank of under-secretary (US) in the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development’s criminal trial is set to take place on March 4, 2024.

Dlamini was arrested in December 2023 by the police under the Commercial Crimes and Fraud Department. Dlamini’s arrest came after an investigation by the police on allegations of playing a role in arranging an unauthorised trip to the United States of America. During this arrangement, it was alleged that the under-secretary forged the signature of the Deputy Prime Minister’s Office (DPMO) Under-secretary, Lomkhosi Dlamini.

According to reports, the trip which was scheduled for February 18, 2023, was to be undertaken by a social worker employed under the DPM’s Office, which houses the country’s social welfare department.

It is worth mentioning that the arrest and subsequent appearance of Dlamini was



▲ Housing Ministry Under-Secretary Hlobisile Dlamini appeared before the Magistrate’s Court to set her court date which is on March 4, 2024.

kept under wraps as she appeared in the chambers of a magistrate at the Mbabane

Magistrate’s Court, where she was released on her own recognisance. The memo was

said to have accompanied an application by the social worker whose name is Poppy Mavis Sithole, to be granted an international passport. A woman, from the United States, who is in Eswatini on a visitor’s visa, was also found to be involved in the planned travel.

All three people, at the time, were planning to take an unidentified minor child to the United States, where they claimed the toddler was to undergo skin grafting surgery.

They reportedly claimed that a US-based non-profit organisation, known as The Stars Foundation, which advocates for underprivileged children and youth of the world, was going to fund the child’s surgery. Dlamini’s charge sheet states that the accused is charged with forgery and uttering. In detail, the charge sheet explains that in January 2023 at the Ministry of Home Affairs in the Hhohho region.

The said accused person unlawfully and intentionally defrauded or prejudiced Lomkhosi Dlamini of the Deputy Prime Minister’s Office, by forging and uttering or presenting a forged memorandum for the application for a new Swazi service passport for Poppy Mavis Sithole.

In Court, on Tuesday, Dlamini appeared before Principal Magistrate Fikile Nhlabatsi, for the setting of her trial date.

The Crown proposed that her trial should resume on March 4, 2024 and the application was granted by Nhlabatsi.



▲ Murder accused Mangaliso Dlamini outside the Magistrate’s Court after he made his appearance.

Ngwenya murder case: Man allegedly slapped him to death

IN connection with a murder case of Bongani Nkambule, the police have arrested Mangaliso Dlamini from Motshane.

The accused (Dlamini) appeared at the Mbabane Magistrate’s Court before Magistrate Xolile Nxumalo. According to sources close to the matter, while at Ngwenya, the accused engaged in an argument with an unidentified man, which led to a fight. It is said that the deceased (Nkambule) was trying to separate the two men who were fighting, when Dlamini allegedly assaulted Nkambule with open hands which led him to fall on concrete and made him suffer severe bruises. The Royal Eswatini Police Service Chief Police Information Communications Officer (CPICO) Senior Superintendent Phindile Vilakati confirmed the matter, stating

that on 21 January 2024, a 45-year-old man from Motshane was assaulted with an open hand twice on the left cheek and fell on a concrete structure at Ngwenya area. Vilakati said Nkambule sustained serious injuries and succumbed to his death while undergoing treatment at Mbabane Government Hospital. His charge sheet reads: “On January 21, 2023, at Ngwenya the said accused unlawfully and intentionally assaulted Nkambule with open hands who fell on the concrete ground and sustained fatal injuries which caused the victim to die,” part of the charge sheet reads.

In court, the accused represented himself but informed the court that he would be seeking the services of an attorney. The crown applied that may the accused be remanded into custody pending his committal to the High Court on February 2, 2024.

Mbabane Pizza Inn scooter knocks down woman

A Pizza Inn employee who drives a delivery scooter knocked down a woman at Mbabane near the Magistrate’s Court on a designated zebra-line crossing, causing severe injuries.

The accident occurred after lunch on Monday. According to eyewitnesses, the woman was crossing the zebra-line crossing when the scooter, which was driven by Bongiswa Dlamini, an employee at Pizza Inn, knocked her down.

One eye-witness, in Simphiwe Tsabedze said the scooter was speeding when it approached the woman. It knocked her and she fell on the ground. “The driver of the scooter did not adhere to the rule that cars stop for pedestrians in zebra-line crossing,” Tsabedze said.

Tsabedze added that the woman spent a few minutes on the ground and she was able to get back on her feet, distressed and confused, the woman went to sit on the pavement near the road.

As she sat down, her face was visibly swollen and blood oozed from her right cheek.

Another eye-witness, Themba Mkhonta, said

“The accident was caused by the negligence of the driver of the scooter. The driver failed to stop, just like other cars for people who are crossing the zebra-lines, his negligence resulted in this mess,” Mkhonta said.

Dlamini (the driver) also sustained bruises on his arm. The police arrived to assess the situation, followed by the emergency services 20 minutes later, where they were given medical assistance.

“
The driver of the scooter did not adhere to the rule that cars stop for pedestrians in zebra-line crossing
”



▲ The Pizza Inn scooter which knocked down a lady, sustaining serious injuries.

BUSINESS NEWS

BUSINESS BRIEFS

11th Annual Labour Law Seminar rescheduled

THE Business Eswatini (BE) has announced that due to the demand and request made by their members and public they have rescheduled the 11th Annual Labour Law Seminar to February 29th. BE Chief Executive Officer (CEO) E. Nathi Dlamini said the seminar which was set to be held on February 8th would now be on the 29th due to many requests they received from their members and the public to have the date rescheduled.

Oil eases slightly on mixed supply cues, geopolitical tensions

LONDON — Oil prices eased slightly on Tuesday as traders weighed simmering geopolitical tensions in several regions with supply outages in the U.S. and returning production in Libya. Brent crude futures lost 31 cents, or 0.39 per cent, to \$79.75 a barrel by 1019 GMT, while U.S. West Texas Intermediate crude futures (WTI) shed 33 cents, or 0.44 per cent, to \$74.43 a barrel. Brent slipped back below \$80 a barrel after settling above the threshold on Monday for the first time since December 26.

Rand recovers from three-month lows

JOHANNESBURG — South Africa's rand firmed against a weaker dollar early on Tuesday, recovering from the lows it touched in the previous session. At 0624 GMT, the rand traded at 19.1025 against the dollar, 0.5 per cent stronger than its previous close. On Monday, the currency sank to its lowest in more than three months. The dollar was last down about 0.2 per cent against a basket of global currencies.

Overpriced services hamper economic growth

By Silindzelwe Nxumalo

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THE value of public procurement amounts to 22.6 per cent of the country's gross domestic product (GDP), according to the Minister of Finance Neal Rijkenberg.

As a result, the Ministry of Finance, through the Eswatini Public Procurement Regulatory Authority (ESPPRA), has produced a market price reference catalogue as a mechanism that will, among other things, prevent corruption, ensure transparency, achieve economic efficiency and maximise competition as well as value for money in the use of public funds.

The Minister disclosed this during the launch of the market price reference catalogue for common use items following research commissioned by ESPPRA.

Rijkenberg said "overpricing does not only deplete government funds, but further hampers economic growth and sustainability. The funds that should be redirected towards crucial sectors such as healthcare, education, infrastructure development and maintenance are instead being absorbed by inflated prices. This, in turn, erodes public trust, undermines our commitment to good governance and perpetuates unethical business practices."

By establishing the market price reference catalogue for common use items, government is implementing a transparency tool and sending a clear message that Eswatini is committed to upholding the highest standards of accountability, transparency and integrity.

"It is an opportunity for us to reshape the way we do business, maximize limited resources and drive economic growth for the benefit of Eswatini," said the Minister.

ESPPRA's Chief Executive Officer Vusi Matsebula emphasized the importance of ensuring transparency and accountability in public procurement while maintaining appropriate confidentiality.

In an interview, Matsebula mentioned that the ESPPRA was launching the market price reference catalogue to provide guidance to all public enterprises when purchasing commonly used items. He mentioned that over 1 700 items were investigated and an average price was established, which will remain a guide. Matsebula said the procuring entities would be allowed a reasonable margin to deviate from should the need arise. All ESPPRA regulated enterprises will comply to the market price catalogue.

The catalogue was compiled after a market survey conducted by Eswatini Economic Policy Analysis and Research Centre (ESEPARC).

The survey ascertained that a majority of the country's economic activity took place in the Manzini and Hhohho regions. It also highlighted dissatisfaction among vendors with the public procurement regulatory environment. Their complaints pointed to overdue payments from government, which resulted on services being provided on high interest loans.

Responding to the issue of overdue payments by government, the Principal

66

The pricing guide should be used as a reference point for suppliers when quoting prices for government tenders. The use of the catalogue by both the procuring entities and suppliers will ensure that value for money is achieved in Eswatini public procurement.

99

Secretary in the Ministry of Finance Sizakele Dlamini said "sometimes the supplier is at fault because a transaction could not be completed without a purchase order. It is true, however, that overdue payments were unreasonable and affected small businesses, but government remain committed to pay in time."

ESEPARC's Research Fellow Tengetile Hlophe advised ESPPRA to use a pricing guide to monitor and audit public procurement. Hlophe further advised that the pricing guide should be updated and adjusted every two years to reflect changes.

"The pricing guide should be used as a reference point for suppliers when quoting prices for government tenders. The use of the catalogue by both the procuring entities and suppliers will ensure that value for money is achieved in Eswatini public procurement."

Another aspect to enhance the public procurement process in Eswatini was the electronic government procurement (e-GP) system. ESPPRA's CEO said "the system improved the quality of the tender documents and provided increased transparency on tender awards, tender opportunities, and procurement expenditure, as well as the adjudication of supplier grievances.

Such a system provided for improved efficiency and built the capacity of procurement practitioners. Furthermore, it provided for effective and efficient

online service, leading to speedy supply payments.

Matsebula said "deviations to the open tendering procedure may only occur after the regulator has granted authorisation. The procuring entity must apply in writing stating the reasons for the deviation in accordance with Section 6 of the Act and include supporting evidence."

The Act provides for deviation in the case of an emergency, humanitarian crisis, natural or man-made disasters, failure of critical infrastructure and political emergencies such as a civil unrest. This may lead to overpricing and many undesirable elements such as inefficiencies in the procurement process.

In such a situation, ESPPRA needs to evaluate the need for the emergency procurement, prioritize the immediate procurement activities and specify the time at which the procurement will be undertaken, among other requirements. The supplier will then report back to ESPPRA within thirty days after completion of the procurement.

Ongoing Consultations

ESPPRA CEO further highlighted that the process of consulting relevant stakeholders on the pricing guide, which should become live once completed, will go ahead headed by ESEPARC. Critical stakeholders remain the suppliers in this exercise and will be thoroughly consulted to ensure that all the gaps are covered.

"With this tool set to be launched at completion, we believe that a number of current challenges related to public procurement as well as timely payment of invoiced goods will be a thing of the past," he said.

Reforms within procurement

Matsebula further appreciated the Ministry of Finance for continued support in the implementation of the procurement reforms.

He said the reforms would address the economic development glitches caused by unscrupulous and exorbitant pricing.

"Some are colluding with the procuring entities as evidenced by the audits conducted in the recent past. He emphasised that such reforms were a necessity, as currently, the ACT only addressed procurement from planning up to the contract management stage. In other countries, the ACT regulates even product storage, distribution, disposal and evaluation, which are part of the procurement process.

"Our ACT needs to provide oversight on issues of wastage at warehouses," he recommended.

ESPPRA CEO
Vusi Matsebula.



FX RATES

Notes/Cash	Buy	Sell
U.S. Dollar	18.7031	19.2072
G.B. Pound	23.7348	24.4188
EURO	20.3317	20.9394
Bank Rate	(July 2023)	7.50%
Prime Rate	(July 2023)	11%
Inflation	(July 2023)	4.5%
Petrol	E20.50/Litre	
Diesel	E21.80/Litre	
Paraffin	E16.75/Litre	



By Silindzelwe Nxumalo
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BE Chief Executive Officer (CEO) E. Nathi Dlamini said the seminar which was set to be held on February 8th would now be on the 29th due to many requests they received from their members and the public to have the date rescheduled.

He said this anticipated event promises to provide a comprehensive discussion of crucial labour-related issues in the kingdom, with a key focus on Collective Bargaining.

He stated that the Seminar will interrogate organizational rights in the workplace and other bargaining forums; and further evaluate the interplay of minimum wage and collective bargaining.

Dlamini said the seminar, an annual event for BE, is expected to draw professionals such as business leaders and trade unions, human capital practitioners, labour market experts, legal minds, industry experts and policymakers from across the country.

He stated that as the landscape of labour laws evolves, keeping abreast with the latest developments in the international labour market becomes imperative for both employers and employees.

“The 11th edition of the seminar aims to facilitate this knowledge exchange, fostering



▲BE CEO E. Nathi Dlamini.

a conducive environment for healthy employer-employee relationships and promoting fair labour practices,” he said.

The CEO explained that the seminar will have a particular focus on topics such as an evaluation of the Eswatini Collective Bargaining Framework, Constructive,

Meaningful and Informed Negotiation, Strikes and Lockout as well as the effectiveness of NEDLAC as a social dialogue forum lesson for Eswatini.

He stated that they will also look at the National Minimum Wage Debate where there will be an update of what employers

have been working on so far, which will entail discussions on progress and the next steps.

“Another focus will be the Labour Law Updates 2024 Legislation and Case Law,” he said.

Dlamini stated that BE remains dedicated to promoting a conducive business environment and fostering sustainable economic growth.

“The annual Labour Law Seminar stands as a testament to this commitment, providing a platform for stakeholders to engage, learn, and collaborate towards building a robust and equitable labour market,” he said.

He added that registration for the 11th Annual Labour Law Seminar is now open.

“Interested participants are encouraged to visit the Business Eswatini website for more details on how to secure their spot at this insightful event,” he said.

He stated that the seminar would be held on a date to be announced, at the Happy Valley hotel and BE Members were expected to pay E3 300, non-members to pay E4 500, and Table for 10 to pay E29 000.

Dlamini said the objective of the seminar is that it aims to bring employment and labour law practitioners up to date by providing an overview of the latest policy developments, legislative initiatives, and case law in this field.

ESWACAA issues out Airport apron markings tender



▲King Mswati III International Airport.

ESWATINI Civil Aviation Authority (ESWACAA) has invited local tenderers for the provision of airport apron markings at King Mswati III International Airport.

According to the Request For Proposals (RFPs) in order to comply to safety regulations and ICAO standards and recommended practices, ESWACAA seeks to employ services of a contractor who will conduct airport apron markings at the King Mswati III International Airport.

The RFPs stated that the successful bidder

will be expected to meet the requirements including having 4 years’ experience on projects of this nature and magnitude, demonstrate availability of qualified and experienced staff, proof of ownership or rental agreement of specialized road-marking machines for airports, demonstrate ability to deliver the project in a period of 4 weeks, and demonstrate compliance to management systems (OHSMS, EMS, QMS, Other). The RFPs also stated that the successful bidder will be expected to remove old markings and clean surface in preparation of new markings, surface treatment to improve

water proofing properties, pre-Marking for new markings, painting new markings, and site handover.

The deadline for the tender is set for January 26, 2024, at 12 noon.

“Bids shall be delivered to the employer at the address specified in the tender advertisement and no later than the time and date specified,” read the RFP.

The RFP stated that the employer may extend the deadline for submission of bids by issuing an amendment, in which case all rights and obligations of the employer and the bidders previously subject to the original

deadline will then be subject to the new deadline.

“Any bid received by the employer after the prescribed deadline will be returned unopened to the bidder,” read the RFP.

The Eswatini Civil Aviation Authority is a statutory body established by the Government of the Kingdom of Eswatini through an act of parliament, the civil aviation authority act No. 10 of 2009. It is mandated by the act with the responsibility of regulating the civil aviation industry in Eswatini as well as operating the country’s airports and management of the airspace.

Oil eases slightly on mixed supply cues, geopolitical tensions



▲An aerial view shows a crude oil tanker at an oil terminal off Waidiao island in Zhoushan, Zhejiang province, China.

By Robert Harvey

LONDON — Oil prices eased slightly on Tuesday as traders weighed simmering geopolitical tensions in several regions with supply outages in the U.S. and returning production in Libya.

Brent crude futures lost 31 cents, or 0.39 per cent, to \$79.75 a barrel by 1019 GMT, while U.S. West Texas Intermediate crude futures (WTI) shed 33 cents, or 0.44 per cent, to \$74.43 a barrel.

Brent slipped back below \$80 a barrel after settling above the threshold on Monday for the first time since December 26.

Prices had risen by around 2 per cent on Monday after a Ukrainian drone strike on Novatek's Ust-Luga Baltic fuel export terminal near Russia's second city St Petersburg raised supply concerns.

"The attack ... is a timely reminder that

a bigger, more influential war is still raging on," said PVM analyst John Evans.

Tensions also rose in the Middle East, where U.S. and British forces carried out a second joint round of strikes on Houthi positions in Yemen on Monday night.

In Libya, production at the 300,000 barrels per day Sharara oilfield restarted on Jan. 21 after the end of protests that had halted output since early this month.

But the returning supply could be offset by ongoing outages in the U.S. because of extreme cold weather. As much as 20 per cent of North Dakota's oil output was still shut in on Monday, the state's pipeline authority said.

The weather-induced shutdowns over the last week could see a drop in crude inventories in Tuesday's American Petroleum Institute (API) weekly report, PVM's Evans added.

A Reuters poll suggested that U.S. crude oil inventories would fall by about 3 million barrels in the week to January 19. (Reuters)



▲South African Rand coins are seen in this illustration picture.

South African rand recovers from three-month lows

JOHANNESBURG — South Africa's rand firmed against a weaker dollar early on Tuesday, recovering from the lows it touched in the previous session.

At 0624 GMT, the rand traded at 19.1025 against the dollar, 0.5 per cent stronger than its previous close.

On Monday, the currency sank to its lowest in more than three months.

The dollar was last down about 0.2 per cent against a basket of global currencies.

"The rand remains a passenger along for

the ride and will likely take its direction from developments in the dollar," ETM Analytics said in a note.

This week, investors will focus on consumer and producer price inflation figures for December, which will be released ahead of the South African Reserve Bank's (SARB) rate decision.

South Africa's benchmark 2030 government bond was stronger in early deals, with the yield down 2 basis points to 9.695 per cent. (Reuters)



▲A man walks past a branch of South African drug retailer Clicks in Cape Town, South Africa.

South Africa's Clicks 20-week sales boosted by strong festive season

JOHANNESBURG — South African pharmacy chain Clicks Group said on Tuesday retail sales for its 20-week period rose by 11.8 per cent driven by strong festive season trading and growth in personal care, beauty and essentials such as cleaning products.

Sales in comparable stores increased by 8.4 per cent in the first 20 weeks of its 2024 financial year to Jan. 14, with selling price inflation averaging 7.5 per cent. Overall group turnover rose by 8 per cent to 16.8 billion rand (\$878.71 million).

Chief executive Bertina Engelbrecht said Clicks achieved its highest ever daily sales on Friday, Dec. 22, while the week preceding Christmas was a record trading week for the chain.

Strong growth in personal care, beauty

and everyday essentials was supported by strong sales of private label and exclusive brands, Clicks said.

Sorbet, the beauty salon chain acquired by the group in June 2023, increased franchise and corporate sales by 12.3 per cent over the comparable period.

However, total managed turnover at United Pharmaceutical Distributors (UPD) - its bulk and wholesale division - declined by 6.3 per cent due to its strategy of rationalising its bulk distribution portfolio to focus on profitable clients.

This strategy is expected to benefit margin, Engelbrecht said.

UPD's wholesale turnover was 0.8 per cent lower, owing mainly to the impact of the systems transition at UPD's main distribution centre, the group added.

(Reuters)

Woolworths flags lower half-year profit as shoppers spend less

JOHANNESBURG — South African retailer Woolworths expects its half-year profit to fall by as much as 10 per cent due to consumers pulling back on spending on clothes and as the country's energy and logistics crisis persisted.

The food, fashion and beauty retailer, which targets the mid- to upper-income segment of the country, said its headline earnings per share (HEPS) from continuing operations likely fell 5 per cent to 10 per cent in the 26 weeks ended Dec. 24.

Group turnover and concession sales from continuing operations, excluding retailer David Jones which it sold last year, rose 5.4 per cent and by 4.4 per cent in constant currency terms. That was lower than the 12.5 per cent reported in prior period.

Woolworths said performance for the current period has been effected by an increasingly challenging macroeconomic backdrop, given the sustained impact of interest rate increases and higher living costs.

"This has negatively impacted footfall, resulting in a greater-than-expected pullback

in discretionary spend," the retailer said.

Operations were further disrupted by a higher number of power cuts, port congestion and the impact of Avian flu on the availability of staple food product lines such as eggs. During the last six weeks of the period, which included trade during the festive season, sales growth accelerated to 7.2 per cent, supported by Black Friday promotions and holiday season trade, Woolworths said.

Its food business grew turnover by 8.4 per cent, while sales at its fashion beauty and home business grew by 2.2 per cent and by 1.5 per cent in comparable stores impacted by poor availability, due in part to the late arrival of certain summer ranges arising from port congestion.

Trading conditions in Australia and New Zealand have deteriorated further, with consumer sentiment in Australia at near-record lows and household savings the weakest since the global financial crisis, Woolworths said.

As a result, clothing business Country Road Group saw sales decline by 5 per cent, and by 9 per cent in comparable stores. (Reuters)



▲ Ukrainian servicemen of the Rarog UAV squadron of the 24th Separate Mechanized Brigade operate a first person view (FPV) drone at a position near the town of Horlivka, amid Russia’s attack on Ukraine, in Donetsk region, Ukraine.



▲ A Ukrainian serviceman of the Rarog UAV squadron of the 24th Separate Mechanized Brigade places a first person view (FPV) drone with an attached shell for an RPG-7 grenade launcher to a launch point, at a position near the town of Horlivka.

DONETSK REGION, Ukraine - A Ukrainian soldier near the front line looks into video goggles and clutches a control set in both hands as he guides a drone during the war against Russia. The soldier, who goes by the call sign “Sam”, looks up and complains: “There’s no video.” Unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), or drones, have become vital for Ukraine’s military since Russia’s full-scale invasion in February 2022.

Hundreds can buzz over Russian positions in eastern and southern Ukraine at any one time.

But many of them are hastily and cheaply assembled by volunteers, and the lack of quality is affecting Ukraine’s ability to survey and attack Russian positions.

At an undisclosed location along the eastern front line in the Donetsk region, soldiers in the “Raroh” squadron said they would rather have 10 well-made devices than 50 less reliable ones.

“Most common problems are problems with the video link and with the control link,” Sam said during a recent visit by Reuters.

“And most of them are because of low-quality parts that are used very often to

Drones are hit and miss for Ukrainian soldiers

make the drones even cheaper.”

Some of the drone operators called for UAVs to be tested before they are used in battle.

“We must test drones supplied by new producers or made by a civilian,” said one who goes by the call sign “Fest”. “In addition to losing the drone itself, we can lose ammunition which is not cheap.”

Another, who uses the call sign “Pit”, said drones should conform to standards so that operators know in advance how the device they are asked to operate will work.

“You work a lot and have to do flight after flight while drones differ a lot.

One has different controllers, another different settings, and so on,” he said. “When under pressure, it happens that you miss a detail and it leads to missing a target.”

AN INTEGRAL PART OF UKRAINE’S WAR EFFORT

Ukraine’s defence ministry did not immediately respond to a Reuters request for comment on the soldiers’ remarks.

The use of what are known as First Person View (FPV) drones in battle has been one of the more successful low-cost strategies Ukraine has used on the battlefield.

Russia has expanded its own drone fleet since the start of the war, and has improved its ability to block Ukrainian UAVs through electronic warfare, but drones are an integral part of Ukraine’s war effort.

Drones range from small UAVs controlled remotely to larger devices that can fly hundreds of kilometres deep into Russian territory. President Volodymyr Zelenskiy has said Kyiv plans to produce 1 million drones

in 2024.

Video footage provided by Ukraine’s military, and demonstrating the use of UAVs in action, shows a small drone carrying an explosive device flying into a Russian armoured vehicle parked in a garage before the screen goes blank. Reuters could not independently verify the footage.

Despite their impact, Sam said drones could not win the war on their own. Artillery remains an important weapon against Russian forces using fortified trenches and dugouts, and Ukraine has told its allies it is running short of ammunition.

“This war has like a high-tech side of it and still the old-school trench warfare side of it,” Sam said. “Modern warfare today combines modern tactics with old-school tactics working together.”

(Reuters)

Doomsday Clock at 90 seconds to midnight

... in chilling warning that world is on brink of apocalypse amid WW3

THE Doomsday clock has stayed dangerously close to midnight as the world sits on the brink of nuclear Armageddon. Scientists revealed today just how close we are to the end of the world as the clock stayed at 90 seconds to the feared midnight hour.

The update came at 3pm UK time or 10am local time in Washington DC by the Bulletin of Atomic Scientists, which organises the clock.

The Doomsday Clock has been left untouched, reflecting a “continuing and unprecedented level of risk”, according to the Bulletin.

It is the same number as last year, when it marked the closest to midnight it has ever been.

The scientists who created the clock stressed that choosing not to modify it should not lead to complacency.

They said said the threats posed by Vladimir Putin and his war with Ukraine continue, with Bulletin president and CEO Rachel Bronson saying how the horror October 7

attacks in Israel added an extra source of concern.

The Middle East has become a powder keg unsettled by Israel’s ongoing war against Hamas, Iran-backed Houthi rebel attacks in the Red Sea, and recent clashes and strikes between Iran and Pakistan.

However, despite the heightened and new hazards, there was some good news.

The Bulletin acknowledged that there has been some progress in responding to climate change, but the challenge continues to imperil humanity’s future.

It also highlighted the weakening of nuclear weapons reduction agreements, the climate change crisis, with 2023 being the warmest year on record, new genetic engineering technologies and AI, and the dangers of disinformation.

The world has been moving towards the brink of WW3 as tyrants Kim Jong-un and Putin have sent a chilling warning to the West as they vowed to form a “New World

Order”.

Warnings of a potential new world order had already been given by Putin’s warmonger foreign minister Sergei Lavrov, who told the West that their time of “global domination” is over.

And veteran Russian MP Alexander Osoltsov said World War Three has already begun for the West’s enemies and “we’re all participating in it”.

Meanwhile, Baltic states are racing to bolster defences on their borders with Russia and Belarus as Europe braces for an all-out war.

The Doomsday Clock operates as a wake-up call for the world about global threats such as nuclear war, dangerous technologies and mass health concerns.

Used as a metaphor to signal how close the human race is to self-destruction by its distance from midnight, it is reset around the same time in January each year by varying lengths.

(The Sun)



▲ The Doomsday clock.



▲ The 3rd South Summit ended in Kampala on Monday (Jan. 22). It gathered high-level representatives from nearly 100 countries and heads of United Nations agencies.

Third South Summit ends in Uganda with calls for deeper cooperation

THE 3rd South Summit ended in Kampala on Monday (Jan. 22). It gathered high-level representatives from nearly 100 countries and heads of United Nations agencies.

Uganda's president called to keep promoting the interests of the global south.

"That the Group of 77 and China remains united in its pursuit of collective interests at the United Nations. In the inter-governmental processes of the United Nations, We must ensure that priorities of the Group are promoted and defended," Yoweri Museveni said.

The two-day meeting was held under the theme "Leaving No One Behind" and is expected to bring a new dynamic to the cooperation among its 134 member states amid the increasingly competitive global environment.

The summit aims to promote South-South cooperation in the fields of trade, invest-

ment, sustainable development, climate change, poverty elimination and digital economy.

The South Summit is the supreme decision-making body of the Group of 77 (G77), which was established in June 1964.

Since the 1990s, China has been coordinating and cooperating with the G77 through the "G77 and China" mechanism which is an important platform for developing countries to unite to strengthen themselves and coordinate to respond to challenges.

Over the years, China has joined hands with other member countries to promote South-South cooperation to achieve new and greater progress.

"That the Group of 77 and China remains united in its pursuit of collective interests at the United Nations. In the inter-governmental processes of the United Nations, We must ensure that priorities of the Group are promoted and defended," said Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni, who is also the

incoming chair of G77.

"Let us face it, those that benefit most from the present global governance system are unlikely to lead its reform. So momentum for change must come from you," said Antonio Guterres, Secretary-General of the United Nations.

Guterres also affirmed China's great contribution to South-South cooperation.

"I think it's a very important contribution of China. This summit is the voice of the Global South and one of my main objectives is to make sure that we reform international institutions, for the Global South, to have the importance that corresponds to today's reality," he said.

This was the first time that the South Summit was held in Africa. The previous two summits were held in Havana, Cuba, in 2000, and in Doha, Qatar, in 2005, respectively.

(Africanews)

ActionSA holds municipality accountable for deadly CBD fires

ACTIONSA has called on the City of Johannesburg to account for the ongoing crisis of deadly fires in hijacked buildings.

The party's call comes in response to a fire that broke out on Sunday at the intersection of Commissioner and Nugget streets.

A woman, allegedly involved in a domestic dispute, has since been arrested for igniting the deadly blaze.

This tragic incident is not the first of its kind.

In August, a fire swept through an illegally occupied and abandoned building in Johannesburg and claimed the lives of 77 people. More than 80 people were injured, while scores were left homeless.

It was recognised as one of the deadliest fires in the city's history.

The ActionSA caucus in Johannesburg believes that the fatalities resulting from fires across the CBD (central business district) are a direct consequence of the government's negligence.

Tactics to Obstruct ActionSA

Caucus leader Nobuhle Mthembu has accused Johannesburg mayor Kabelo Gwamanda of employing various tactics to obstruct ActionSA motions aimed at tackling the problems associated with hijacked buildings.

Mthembu emphasised that the council's programming committee rejected two ActionSA-sponsored motions in September, citing an inquiry initiated by Gauteng pre-



▲ A fire gutted a residential building at the intersection of Commissioner and Nugget streets on Sunday.

mier Panyaza Lesufi, which, to date, has yielded no tangible results.

"ActionSA Joburg caucus is of the view that the fatalities owing to fire within the Johannesburg CBD should be squarely blamed on the delinquent ANC-led government," Mthembu said.

"The mayor, Kabelo Gwamanda, has used every trick in the book to deter ActionSA motions, which were aimed at addressing the issues emanating from hijacked buildings.

"We will, however, use every legislative piece to compel the City of Johannesburg to reclaim hijacked buildings before another soul is lost and call upon Gwamanda to usher the City of Johannesburg into an era

where hijacked buildings will be a thing of the past."

She argued that the rejected motions sought to recommend the expropriation of hijacked buildings and their conversion into affordable rental units or social housing.

Said Mthembu: "The recent fire on the corner of Commissioner and Nugget streets, which claimed two lives, is another grim reminder of an administration that has lost touch with reality and believes in quick fixes as opposed to permanent solutions.

"This could have been avoided had the city heeded our calls and reclaimed hundreds of these hijacked buildings, which are not suitable for human occupation.

(Sunday World)

Canada caps foreign student visas

CANADA on Monday announced a two-year cap on international student visas to ease the pressure on housing, health care and other services at a time of record immigration.

Immigration Minister Marc Miller said that there will be a 35% reduction in new study visas in 2024. He said that institutions offering "sham" degrees have exploited the international students program, putting pressure on housing and health care.

"It's a bit of a mess, and it's time to rein it in," Miller said.

The number of new visas handed out will be capped at 364,000. Nearly 560,000 such visas were issued last year.

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's Cabinet retreat in Montreal this week will prioritize affordability and housing, according to a government statement.

The government said that there are about 1 million foreign students in the country now, and without any intervention, this number would keep increasing. The total number of foreign students is more than three times what it was a decade ago.

Stabilizing

Miller said that officials have been working on stabilizing the number of people entering the country yearly as housing pressures mount.

Canada grew by about 1 million people last year, reaching a record of 40 million, as many Canadians struggle with an increased cost of living, including rents and mortgages.

"You cannot bring in 1.25 million people a year but only create 300,000 homes on average and think you're not going to have a structural problem on housing," TD Bank Group chief economist Beata Caranci said at the Economic Club of Canada's 2024 Annual Economic Outlook earlier this month.

The immigration minister said that there are unscrupulous schools that accept high tuition fees from foreign students without offering a solid education in return. In some cases, the schools are a way into Canada for students who can parlay their visas into permanent residencies.

Sham

"It is not the intention of this program to have sham commerce degrees or business degrees that are sitting on top of a massage parlour that someone doesn't even go to and then they come into the province and drive an Uber," Miller said. "If you need a dedicated channel for Uber drivers in Canada, I can design that, but that isn't the intention of the international student program," he said. The leader of the opposition Conservative Party of Canada, Pierre Poilievre, called it a mess and blamed Trudeau for granting study permits to tens of thousands of students who attend fake schools. "People are still somewhat shell-shocked and responding to the steep inflationary increases of the past," said Nelson Wiseman, a political science professor at the University of Toronto "There is some debate over the impact of immigration and the massive increase in foreign students on the housing market and rents. The student influx has largely impacted rents and not house prices as few students buy houses." (AFP)

GAZA/JERUSALEM - Twenty-four Israeli soldiers were killed in Israel's worst day of losses in Gaza, the military said on Tuesday while also claiming to have encircled southern Gaza's main city and killed dozens of Palestinian fighters in a major ground assault of the new year.

Spokesman Rear Admiral Daniel Hagari said 21 soldiers were killed when two buildings they had mined for demolition exploded after militants fired at a nearby tank. Earlier, three soldiers were reported killed in a separate attack in southern Gaza.

"Yesterday we experienced one of our most difficult days since the war erupted," Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said. "In the name of our heroes, for the sake of our lives, we will not stop fighting until absolute victory."

The deaths came as the Israeli Defence Forces (IDF) attacked the western part of Khan Younis, the main city in the south of the enclave which is sheltering hundreds of thousands of Palestinians who have fled areas to the north. Israel says the city is now the principal base of Hamas, the Islamist group that rules Gaza.

"Over the past day, IDF troops carried out an extensive operation during which they encircled Khan Younis and deepened the operation in the area. The area is a significant stronghold of Hamas' Khan Younis Brigade," the military said.

"Ground troops engaged in close-quarters combat, directed (air) strikes, and used intelligence to coordinate fire, resulting in the elimination of dozens of terrorists."

Gazans say the advancing Israeli forces have since Monday blockaded and stormed hospitals in the crowded city, leaving the wounded and dead beyond the reach of rescuers.

Bodies were being buried in the grounds of Khan Younis's main Nasser hospital because it was unsafe to leave to reach the cemetery. Another Khan Younis hospital, Al-Khair, was stormed by Israeli troops who arrested staff there, and a third, Al-Amal, run by the Pal-

Israel loses 24 soldiers in worst single-day loss

estinian Red Crescent, was unreachable, according to Palestinian officials.

The Red Crescent said a tank shell had hit its headquarters on the hospital's fourth floor, and Israeli forces were firing from drones on anyone who moved nearby, making it impossible to dispatch ambulances for the entire Khan Younis area.

Israel says Hamas fighters operate in and around hospitals, making them legitimate targets. Hospital staff and Hamas deny this.

'Graveyard for the occupation'

As news of the Israeli losses spread through Gaza, Palestinians celebrated what they viewed as a victory.

"The resistance said it is going to make Gaza a graveyard for the occupation, and this is what is happening," said Abu Khaled, sheltering in a school in Deir al-Balah, one of the few areas yet to be stormed by Israeli forces, between Khan Younis and the central zone where the Israeli troops were killed.

"The more they stay, the more we will suffer for sure, but the more they will suffer too."

Israel has vowed to wipe out Hamas, which is sworn to Israel's destruction and sent fighters through Israel's border fence on Oct. 7, killing 1,200 people and abducting around 250 hostages, of whom about half remain in Gaza.

At least 25,295 Gazans have since been confirmed killed, according to Palestinian authorities, with thousands more dead feared lost in the rubble of a coastal strip largely laid to waste.

Nearly all of Gaza's 2.3 million people have lost their homes, the vast majority



▲ Twenty-four Israeli soldiers were killed in Israel's worst day of losses in Gaza.

now penned into small towns just north and south of Khan Younis, many sleeping rough in makeshift tents, with food and medicine running out and no clean water.

Israel itself is beginning to see the first stirrings of discontent with Netanyahu's war strategy - committed to the total annihilation of Hamas but with only vague discussion of what should come next for Gaza.

Since last week, Netanyahu has publicly vowed never to let Palestinians have an independent state, a break with Israel's main ally Washington, which has made a peace process ultimately leading to a Palestinian state the bedrock of its Middle East policy for decades.

Relatives of hostages still held in Gaza have called for more effort to bring them home, even if that means reining in the military campaign. A group of them burst into a parliamentary committee hearing on Monday.

Last week, a member of Netanyahu's war cabinet, former military chief-of-staff Gadi Eisenkot, whose own soldier son was killed in Gaza last month, said the campaign had yet to achieve its aim of dismantling Hamas and that there was no hope of freeing the hostages in a military operation. He called for elections to replace a government that he said had lost public confidence.

(Reuters)

Turkey set to approve Sweden's NATO membership bid

ANKARA - Turkey's parliament is widely expected to approve Sweden's NATO membership bid on Tuesday, clearing the biggest remaining hurdle to expanding the Western military alliance.

Turkey's general assembly, where President Tayyip Erdogan's ruling alliance holds a majority, is set to vote on Sweden's application about 20 months after Stockholm asked to join NATO following Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine.

Once parliament has ratified the move, Erdogan would be expected to sign it into law within days, leaving Hungary as the only member state not to have approved Sweden's accession.

Hungary has said it believes NATO membership is "not a priority" for Sweden based on its actions. It had pledged not to be the last ally to ratify Sweden's membership, but its parliament is in recess until around mid-February.

Turkey and Hungary maintain better relations with Russia than other members of the U.S.-led North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

While opposing Russia's invasion of Ukraine, Turkey has criticised Western sanctions on Moscow,



▲ Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan, Swedish Prime Minister Ulf Kristersson and NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg gather prior to their meeting, on the eve of a NATO summit, in Vilnius, Lithuania.

which has cautioned that it would respond if NATO bolstered military infrastructure in the two Nordic states.

The delay in securing Turkey's approval has frustrated some of Ankara's Western allies and enabled Turkey to extract some concessions.

Delay over ratification

When Sweden and Finland asked to join NATO in 2022, Turkey surprised some alliance members in raising objections over what it said was the two countries' protection of groups that Ankara deems terrorists.

Turkey endorsed Finland's mem-

bership in April last year but, along with Hungary, has kept Sweden waiting. Ankara had urged Stockholm to toughen its stance on local members of the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), which the European Union and United States also deem a terrorist group.

In response, Stockholm introduced a new anti-terrorism bill that makes being a member of a terrorist organisation illegal. Sweden, Finland, Canada and the Netherlands also took steps to relax Turkey arms-export policies.

(Reuters)

China undergoes rare scrutiny of rights record at UN meeting

GENEVA - China underwent scrutiny of its human rights record at a key U.N. meeting on Tuesday, with Western countries calling for more protections for Xinjiang Uyghurs and greater freedom in Hong Kong while Beijing said it had made historic progress.

The review at the U.N. in Geneva is the first since the global body's top rights official released a report in 2022 saying the detention of Uyghurs and other Muslims in China's Xinjiang region may constitute crimes against humanity.

China has been lobbying non-Western countries to praise its human rights record ahead of the meeting by sending memos to envoys in recent weeks, diplomats told Reuters.

China's diplomatic mission did not comment on the reported lobbying. Its delegation in Geneva said on Tuesday it had made progress since

its last U.N. review in 2018, saying it had lifted nearly 100 million people out of poverty.

"We embarked on a path of human rights development that is in keeping with the trend of the times and appropriate to China's national conditions and scored historic achievements in this process," said Ambassador Chen Xu at the meeting.

Some 163 countries are set to speak at the Tuesday session and countries had only 45 seconds each to speak.

Many countries lauded China's efforts on human rights, including Ethiopia and Cameroon. Western countries raised concerns including Germany, which cited human rights violations in Xinjiang and Tibet, and Canada which called for China to repeal a controversial Hong Kong national security law.

Eric Chan, Hong Kong's chief secretary, praised the law.

(Reuters)

C-Blak to spin the deck at DHC

Stories by Siphesihle Dlamini
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DANCE will be the language of the day and groove will be the order of the day as South African DJ, C-Blak delivers an electrifying performance at the Deep House Conversations (DHC).

The event, set to be held at Sundeck in Manzini, promises to be a playground for the crème de la crème of Eswatini DJs, with C-Blak headlining the show. attendees will be treated to the deck-prowess of renowned DJs such as Crooks, Mthizo, Orthodox, Fantasy, Rekorder, The Other Guys, and Maphi. To secure a spot on this unforgettable night, music enthusiasts are required to pay E60 before 2 pm and E100 thereafter.

The event is set to be held on January 28, 2024, and has gained a reputation for showcasing the finest talent in the industry. Deep House Conversations, lovingly referred to as DHC, is a concept dedicated to celebrating and elevating House music. Spearheaded by the visionary SwaziBoy Entertainment, this event has become a monthly ritual for music lovers seeking the soulful melodies and infectious rhythms of House music.

While DHC embraces a variety of music genres, House music remains its beating heart. The event's success lies in its dedication to promoting and nurturing this genre, bridging the gap in the market for House music enthusiasts. With its second anniversary on the horizon, the organisers are thrilled to continue hosting shows that showcase the very best of House music.

C-Blak, a musical prodigy hailing from Balfour, Mpumalanga, is set to steal the show at DHC. With his unique sound, this talented



▲ South African DJ C-Blak will rock Deep House Conversations (DHC).

DJ has captivated audiences since his explosive debut in 2007. Known for his mesmerising productions, soulful vocals, and infectious beats, C-Blak has collaborated with numerous renowned artists, solidifying his position as a House music sensation. C-Blak recently launched his very own record label, 'Blak Records.' This venture serves as a platform for him to nurture emerging talent and further push the boundaries of House music.

SwaziBoy Entertainment Public Relations Officer (PRO) Miss N said they are excited to be hosting C-Blak once again and this time around, it is the 'Road to House Musiq Fest' (HMF) edition. She added that there is exciting news and surprises for their fans before the festival. "At the show we will also be selling tickets to HMF and merchandise. We have more surprises and urge everyone to stay glued to our social media pages," she said.



▲ Saxophonist Fakazi Samuel.

Cheese & Wine VIP tickets are now sold out

THE Cheese and Wine extravaganza is just around the corner, and excitement is reaching fever pitch as VIP tickets for the event have officially sold out.

Priced at E500, these exclusive tickets offered attendees a premium experience that promises to be nothing short of extraordinary. General admission tickets are still available for E250 and can be purchased exclusively at Galitos. With the VIP tickets selling out in record time, organisers are urging eager attendees to secure their general admission tickets early to avoid disappointment.

The inaugural Cheese & Wine with Kings and Queens event is set to take place at the exquisite Sibayeni Lodge on February 10, 2024. Hosted by Eclipse, this elegant affair will transport guests into a world of enchantment and indulgence, with a masquerade theme adding an air of mystery and allure to the evening.

Treat

Music enthusiasts are in for a treat as one of Eswatini's finest saxophonists, Fakazi Samuel, will grace the stage with his mesmerising melodies. Known for his soulful tunes and electrifying performances, Fakazi Samuel is sure to captivate the audience and create an atmosphere of pure bliss.

Adding to the allure of the event, renowned poet Majaha Nkonyane will take the stage, weaving words of wisdom and emotion through his powerful spoken word performance. With his ability to touch hearts and minds, Nkonyane is set to leave a lasting impact on all those in attendance.

To keep the energy high throughout the night, the event has enlisted the charismatic MC, Mdura, to guide guests through the evening's festivities. Known for his wit and charm, Mdura is sure to keep the crowd entertained and engaged, ensuring a seamless flow of entertainment.

Attendees will also be treated to an array of dance styles, including Salsa, Ballroom and Latin American, Bachata, and Kizomba.

Bongiswa & Darren set to light up Polar Rest & Bar

IT is set to be giggles galore and attendees are in it for a laughter treat as the dynamic duo, Bongiswa and Darren, prepare to take the stage at Polar Rest and Bar for the show, 'Angisat Ngitsin'.

This comedic extravaganza is scheduled to take place on February 3, 2024, starting at 4 pm, promising an evening of non-stop entertainment. Joining Bongiswa and Darren on stage will be the sensational Snap King. To keep the beats pumping throughout the night, Polar Rest and Bar's resident DJs will be spinning the latest tunes, ensuring a lively atmosphere that will have everyone on their feet.

To secure a spot at this unmissable event, comedy enthusiasts will need to purchase tickets priced at E30. The event promises side-splitting laughter, unforgettable moments, and an evening of pure entertainment.

Bongiswa and Darren, also known as 'Angisati Ng'itsin', have captured the hearts of emaSwati with their hilarious social media skits. Their signature catchphrase, 'uMbhoboko,' pays tribute to the legendary radio duo, Mbhokane and



▲ Comedians Bongiswa and Darren.

S'gcos'yaninca, who revolutionised Eswatini's radio scene in the '90s with their iconic program, 'Tinkinga'.

Success

Beyond their online success, Bongiswa and Darren have taken their comedic talents to the stage, showcasing the bright future of Eswatini comedy. Their unique blend of wit, relatability, and infectious humor has earned them accolades such as the 2022 Social Media Awards for Best

Comedians of the Year. Additionally, they were nominated for the 2020 MTN SWAMA Awards for Best Comedy Series, solidifying their status as rising stars in the industry.

Sharing the stage with comedy heavyweights like Sifiso Nene, Nonto R, Vusi Mongwe, Simphiwe Shembe, and Abuti Lolo, Bongiswa and Darren have proven their ability to captivate audiences with their comedic prowess.

Stories by Siphesihle Dlamini
siphesihled@rubiconmedia.group

ESWATINI'S musical sensation, M Nation is set to embark on an exhilarating journey to India.

The talented artist has been invited to perform at the prestigious Surajkund International Craft Mela 2024, which will take place next month in Faridabad, India.

The Surajkund International Craft Mela is a celebration of art, culture, and music from around the world. It is a platform where artists come together to showcase their talents and exchange cultural experiences. For M Nation, this performance marks a significant milestone in his career, as he prepares to represent Eswatini on an international stage. In an exclusive interview, M Nation expressed excitement about the upcoming performance, stating that he believes this year is his time to shine. The 'Limuva Lami' hitmaker promised emaSwati that he would represent them with utmost pride and dedication, just as he always has. He revealed that he will be collaborating with a Swati cultural dance group for a special performance, which will be a fusion of music and

M Nation to hoist Eswatini flag in India



▲ M Nation.

dance, showcasing the rich cultural heritage of Eswatini. This unique collaboration has M Nation buzzing with anticipation, as it will be

his first time exploring such a creative blend of artistic expression. The opportunity to perform in India was made possible with the support

of the Office of Arts and Culture, facilitated through the embassy. M Nation expressed gratitude for their assistance in making his dream a reality. This performance not only allows him to showcase his talent but also serves as a cultural exchange, strengthening the bond between Eswatini and India. Born as Wandile Ndlovu in the town of Piggs Peak, M Nation burst onto the music scene in 2015. His debut was met with great enthusiasm, and his popularity has only grown since then. Last year, he was among the top ten winners of the prestigious MTN Bushfire Firefly competition, further solidifying his position as a rising star. This recognition opened doors for him to perform at various high-profile events, establishing him as one of Eswatini's most promising musical talents.

Discounted tickets for the Young Stunna show on Unayo

IT is nectar-sweet news for partygoers as discounted tickets for the highly anticipated First Assembly with Young Stunna are now available on Standard Bank Unayo.

Attendees can enjoy an E50 discount when purchasing their tickets through the Unayo Marketplace, making this event even more accessible and affordable. The regular ticket price at the gate is E150, while VIP tickets are priced at E250. However, those who take advantage of the discounted tickets on Unayo will only need to pay E100 for regular admission and E200 for VIP access. This special offer is a treat for music lovers who want to experience an unforgettable night without breaking the bank.

On January 27, 2024, Mega Lounge will be transformed into a vibrant schoolyard as 'students' from all walks of life gather for the third edition of 'The First

Assembly.' This back-to-school-themed event promises to be a night of music, fun, and nostalgia, as attendees are encouraged to dress in school uniforms, adding a unique and immersive twist to the festivities.

Headlining the event is South African Amapiano sensation, Young Stunna, whose infectious beats and energetic performances have captivated audiences across the continent. With his chart-topping hits and undeniable stage presence, Young Stunna is set to stun the crowd and keep them dancing all night long. The lineup also includes a talented roster of local acts, including Linda Dlamini, Zulu D, Sbu Drum DJ, The Prefect, Supa CDQ, Tilungu, Matamza, The Bishops, and the Mega Lounge All Stars.

Beyond the music and entertainment, The First Assembly aims to make a positive impact on the community. Attendees are encouraged to bring donations such as old school uniforms, clothes, shoes, sanitary towels, and food parcels for the less privileged. By doing so, they can contribute to creating a brighter future for those in need, spreading the spirit of giving and unity.

◀ Young Stunna.

Ayanda Maphosa, Mzayoni to minister at Springs Of Life International Church

TALENTED local Gospel musicians Ayanda Maphosa and Mzayoni Tsabedze are set to take the stage at the Springs of Life International Church.

The duo will be ministering at the Territorial Dominance and Breaking Record Prayer, a two-day event that promises to be a powerful and uplifting experience for all attendees.

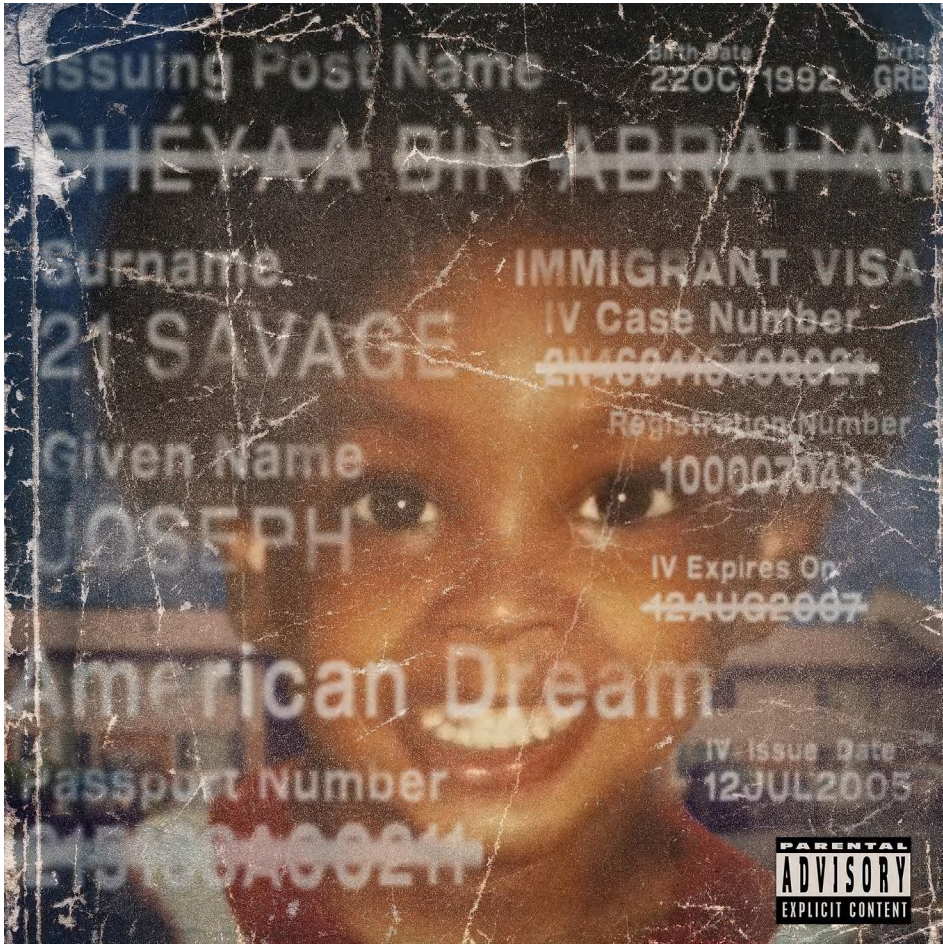
The event, scheduled for this Friday and Saturday, aims to bring together believers from all walks of life to seek spiritual guidance and blessings. Friday's program will kick off with a half prayer session starting at 6 pm, setting the tone for an evening of worship and reflection. The artists will be joined by the esteemed prophet Ntsika Mhlanga, adding an extra dimension of spiritual insight to the event.

Ayanda Maphosa and Mzayoni Tsabedze will be sharing their musical talents, delivering soul-stirring performances that will touch the hearts of those in attendance. Joining them on stage will be other artists, including Sweet Melody, Sexophone, and Phiwo Mnisi. Together, these talented musicians will create a harmonious blend of melodies that will resonate with the audience, fostering a sense of unity and spiritual connection.

One of the most remarkable aspects of this event is that it is open to everyone, with no admission fee required. The organisers of the event have gone the extra mile to ensure that attendees from Mbabane and Manzini surroundings have access to free transportation, making it convenient for individuals to join in the spiritual gathering.

▲ Ayanda Maphosa who is one of the performers for the Territorial Dominance and Breaking Record Prayer.





21 Savage album debuts at Number 1

21 Savage has secured back-to-back No. 1 solo albums, as his latest LP *American Dream* has debuted atop the **Billboard 200** chart.

On Sunday, **Billboard** announced the latest top 10 of the **Billboard 200** chart, which revealed 21 Savage's new *American Dream* album sits at the top spot.

The Atlanta rapper's third solo LP moved 133,00 equivalent album units in its first week. This is 21 Savage's fourth top three solo debut.

His freshman offering, *Issa Album*, debuted at No. 2 in 2017 with 77,000 units.

2018's *I Am > I Was* moved 131,000 units on its way to the top spot on the chart. *Savage Mode 2* with Metro Boom debuted at No. 1 in 2020. 21 also has another No. 1 album with his *Her Loss* joint project with Drake. 21 Savage's latest LP features guest appearances from Doja Cat, Young Thug, Travis Scott, Metro Boomin and more.

Other rappers in the top 10 of this week's **Billboard 200** chart include Drake (*For All the Dogs*, No. 4) and Nicki Minaj (*Pink Friday 2*, No. 7), both of which were released in 2023.

(**XXL Magazine**)

Nadia Nakai to drop AKA tribute single

RAPPER Nadia Nakai has announced the first single from her highly anticipated album, which is a tribute to her late boyfriend rapper AKA.

The acclaimed rapper Kiernan 'AKA' Forbes was gunned down in a suspected hit outside Wish restaurant on Durban's popular Florida Road in February.

His friend, chef and entrepreneur Tebello 'Tibz' Motsoane, who was his former manager, was also gunned down as the two hugged and embraced on that fateful evening.

Till today, their killers have not been brought to justice.

As AKA's 36th birthday approaches, emotions are especially high among his family and friends who continue to remember him.

Nakai has been teasing her tribute project since late last year and recently teased fans with a preview during one of her Instagram

Lives while on holiday in Mauritius.

Titled 'Never Leave', featuring KashCPT, the song pays tribute to AKA.

Their relationship was blossoming when he was killed with them both looking deeply in-love, even when they tried to hide it.

"And the day I got that news, I wish you kept on this damn pendant," she wrote.

On the single's artwork the pendant in question could be seen in Nakai's hands, where her matching tattoo with Mega is as well. @ZazuB said: "Makes sense now when you once said 'you always wore your necklace, but on the day you decided to take it off'... not sure we're you said this but I remember. Love and light mama Bragga

Fans are very eager to hear Nakai's newest work and all the emotions she has bottled inside. @Bumblebee1901 tweeted: "May you heal(whatever that entails personally for u) whilst carry him with you forever.

(IOL)



▲Nadia Nakai and late rapper AKA.

Conspiracy theories as jury selection starts for Jam Master Jay's murder trial

JURY selection began on Monday in the trial over the murder of Jam Master Jay, the innovative Run-DMC DJ who was killed in his Queens studio two decades ago.

The trial is centred on the events of October 30, 2002, when the pioneering rap music star Jason "Jay" Mizell was fatally shot in the head.

The artist was 37 years old and a father of three.

The infamous New York murder was in limbo as a cold case for nearly two decades, until federal prosecutors in August 2022 announced a 10-count indictment against suspects Ronald Washington, now 59, and Karl Jordan Jr, the alleged shooter who is now 40.

All three men hailed from Hollis, Queens.

Both defendants are imprisoned in Brooklyn, and face charges of murder while engaged in narcotics trafficking, and firearms-related murder.

Jordan, who was 18 at the time of the alleged crime, also faces several additional narcotics distribution counts.

According to court documents, the motive was linked to Mizell's acquisition of cocaine that was intended for distribution in Maryland by a group including Washington and Jordan.

An internal dispute resulted in Mizell cutting Washington out of the deal, which according to prosecutors led to the murder



▲Jam Master Jay was 37 years old and a father of three. The infamous New York murder was in limbo as a cold case for nearly two decades, until federal prosecutors in August 2022 announced a 10-count indictment against suspects Ronald Washington, now 59, and Karl Jordan Jr, the alleged shooter who is now 40.

plot.

The killing was particularly shocking given the reputation of Run-DMC, a 1980s-era hip hop group known for hits including 'It's Tricky' and 'Christmas In Hollis.'

The trio regularly railed against violent gang culture, which in the early 1990s became associated with rap music.

Over the years, investigators had explored a number of possible motives - including that the fatal shooting involved a grudge against fellow Queens-born rapper 50 Cent, who was Jam Master Jay's protege. That theory was later dropped.

Jam Master Jay's slaying followed a spate of murders within the rap community in the 1990s, including the shootings of superstars Tupac Shakur and The Notorious B.I.G.

Along with LL Cool J and Public Enemy, Run-DMC were trailblazers of new school hip hop - a sound characterized by rock elements, aggressive boasting and sociopolitical commentary - and its outgrowth golden era hip hop, which included eclectic sampling.

All heralding from the Hollis neighbourhood of Queens, Run-DMC included its DJ - Jam Master Jay - and the

MCs who dropped rhymes, Joseph "Run" Simmons and Darryl McDaniels, or "DMC."

They also established a new, enduring rap aesthetic incorporating street culture, a departure from the flashy, disco-inflected attire of the group's predecessors.

Their single 'My Adidas' off their hit album 'Raising Hell' led to a massive endorsement deal with athletic brand adidas, kicking off today's inextricable link between hip hop culture and sneakers.

And the 'Walk This Way' remake off the same album was even more successful than the original 1970s hit, with Run-DMC and Aerosmith performing a groundbreaking rap-rock version that became a touchstone of the genre and an international hit.

Prior to his death, Mizell became particularly influential in New York as a local cultivator of talent, working with young aspiring rappers and founding a DJ Academy.

Jurors will be anonymous, and opening statements are currently scheduled for January 29. There had been a chance that, if found guilty, the men would face the death penalty. But in 2021, the government notified the court that US Attorney General Merrick Garland had directed against that punishment in the event of conviction.

In May 2023 prosecutors filed a superseding indictment that charged a third defendant, Jay Bryant, now 50. He will be tried separately, according to a court spokesperson.

(BANG Showbiz)



SO, what is the prostate and why does it cause so many problems for men?

It's a topic most people don't want to discuss. But it can have a big impact on your life.

The prostate is a small organ that sits just beneath the bladder. Its main function is to provide a nourishing fluid that helps transport sperm.

As men age, the prostate tends to increase in size. And as the gland enlarges, it can block the flow of urine from the bladder. In plain English, that can make it harder to pee, and lead to a lot of middle-of-the-night trips to the bathroom.

That's what King Charles has: an enlarged prostate, also called BPH, or "benign prostatic hyperplasia." The key word here is "benign," with symptoms that are rarely life-threatening.

A bigger problem is when the prostate becomes cancerous. Prostate cancer is the second-leading cause of cancer death in men, and is what Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin was diagnosed with.

What makes this tricky is that, while about 1 in 8 men will be diagnosed with prostate cancer, it often grows so slowly that about 80% of those men, if untreated, would end up dying of another cause, including old age.

But sometimes prostate cancer is fast-growing, and a real threat.

So, what to do?

You may be familiar with a screening blood test called PSA, or prostate specific antigen. There are limitations to using PSA testing to screen for prostate cancer, since this protein is made by both BPH (an enlarged prostate) and cancerous prostate tissue.

Since both BPH and prostate cancer lead to increasing levels of PSA, there are concerns PSA screening leads to overdiagnosis and overtreatment. That, in turn, has prompted disagreement among medical professionals about its overall benefits.

Tests can sometimes yield a false positive: you suspect you have cancer when you actually don't, leading to an unnecessary biopsy; or, you diagnose and over-treat a slow-growing cancer.

Bottom line: Talk to your health-care provider and have a careful discussion about the risks and benefits of screening, taking into account individual factors like family history, age, race, and more.

If your PSA is elevated, other tests may help decide if a biopsy is needed. If cancer is suspected, a biopsy can confirm it, and a wide range of approaches can be considered: from active surveillance (just monitoring the tests and seeing if the cancer grows), to zapping only the part of the prostate where cancer has been found, to removing or destroying the entire gland.

In Secretary Austin's case, his cancer led doctors to remove his prostate entirely. [Prostate cancer is more common in Black men.] For King Charles, the enlarged

What is the prostate, why does it cause so many problems for men?

● Black men with prostate cancer that hasn't spread to other parts of the body (called nonmetastatic) tend to live just as long as white men when both groups get the same kind of treatment



prostate will be treated in the hospital this coming week and he should be fine.

Two men, two common diagnoses, and two very different treatments, which offer lessons for all of us.

Prostate Cancer in Black Men

Black men are half as likely to die of prostate cancer today as they were a few decades ago. That's good news. Still, there are racial disparities when it comes to early detection, treatment, and deaths.

Talk to your doctor about your risk. Experts recommend Black men discuss that and plans for future screenings by age 45. Here's more about how prostate cancer impacts Black men.

How Does Prostate Cancer Affect Black Men?

Prostate cancer makes up about 37% of all cancers in Black men. Around 1 in 6 will be diagnosed with the disease at some point in life. It's more common in Black men than other racial/ethnic groups.

The disease is also deadlier for Black men. They're twice as likely to die from

prostate cancer compared to men of other races. That's the biggest racial disparity in deaths from any cancer in the United States.

When it comes to prostate cancer, Black men are also more likely than other races to:

- Be diagnosed at an earlier age
- Have fast-growing, or high-grade, tumor cells
- Have prostate cancer that has spread to other parts of the body (called advanced or metastatic cancer)

We have a better understanding about prostate cancer in Black men than we used to, but more research is needed. Racial minorities are often left out of clinical research for various reasons. But there's a growing push to include more Black men in clinical trials.

Why Does Prostate Cancer Affect Black Men Differently?

Health disparities are largely blamed on decades of racial bias and discrimination. You may hear this called systemic or structural racism. It can impact every part of life, including access to healthy food, jobs, housing, and medical care.

But experts are still trying to find answers for exactly why prostate cancer is more common and fatal in Black men. Some theories include:

Barriers to care. Black men often have less access to health insurance and high-quality medical care. Access to medical services, education, employment, and income all impact how healthy you are. If you're a Black man with prostate cancer, racial and socioeconomic barriers can contribute to:

- Delays in treatment
- Lower rates of prostate cancer screenings
- Less health education about treatment choices

- Lower quality care
- Less high-benefit treatments, such as surgery

Bad advice: From 2012 to 2018, the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF) said they didn't think the PSA test should be used for routine prostate cancer screening. That's a blood test commonly used to detect early signs of prostate cancer. They've changed their guidance since then, saying that men should make that decision with their doctors based on their personal risk of prostate cancer. But some researchers think the recommendation against PSA screening likely took a heavier toll on Black men compared to other races.

Medical mistrust: Black people are often less trusting of the health care system. There are cultural and historical reasons for this.

Fewer Black doctors: People may feel more comfortable with a doctor who shares their race. While 13% of the population is Black, only five per cent of the workforce includes Black doctors. And only two per cent of urologists are Black. Urologists are specialists who often diagnose and treat prostate cancer.

Other health problems: Your lifestyle, such as what you eat and whether you exercise or smoke, along with your genes, impact your health. And the ongoing stress of systemic racism can also make you sick.

Certain medical conditions occur more often in Black men. Some that can negatively affect prostate cancer outcomes include:

- Heart disease
- Diabetes
- Overweight or obesity

Genetic variants: Genes are passed down through families. And there's some evidence that Black men may inherit the risk for more aggressive types of cancer or certain genetic mutations, or changes. There's ongoing debate about how much biology impacts prostate cancer in Black men. We may know more in the future as genetic testing becomes widely available.

Prevention, Screenings, and Active Surveillance

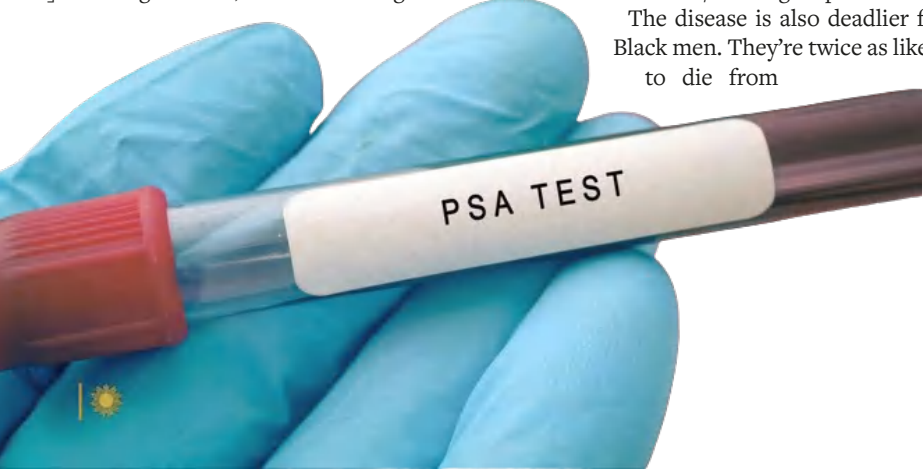
Early detection is key in prostate cancer. Nearly 100 per cent of men from any race will live 5 years past their diagnosis when prostate cancer is found early. But the disease is a lot harder to treat when it spreads to other parts of the body.

The 5-year-survival rate for men of all races drops to 30 per cent when they're diagnosed with advanced, or metastatic, prostate cancer.

Experts think prostate cancer screenings could save more Black lives than those at lower risk. That's because there's a strong link between midlife PSA levels in Black men and aggressive prostate cancer later on.

The American Cancer Society guidelines recommend the following for higher-risk groups:

- Discuss prostate cancer screening at age 45 if you're a Black man or you have a father or brother diagnosed with prostate cancer before





age 65. Discuss prostate cancer screening at age 40 if you have more than one first-degree family member (a parent, sibling, or child) who had prostate cancer before age 65 or you test positive for a BRCA1 or BRCA2 gene mutation.

► Go over the pros and cons of active surveillance. This is when your doctor monitors your prostate cancer but doesn't give you treatment right away. This is also called watchful waiting. It's a common approach for low-risk tumors, but it might not work as well for Black men. Prostate cancer may be more likely to grow and spread in a Black man during active surveillance.

But if you choose this option, your doctor will likely:

- Check your PSA levels every six months
- Give you a digital rectal exam at least once a year
- Go over treatment options when your tests change

How Do Black Men Respond to Treatment?

Scientists don't know if certain prostate cancer treatments work better for men of different races. But there's evidence that Black men do just as well or better than men of other races when the same kind of care is available.

Black men with prostate cancer that hasn't spread to other parts of the body (called nonmetastatic) tend to live just as long as white men when both groups get the same kind of treatment. Radiation therapy may work better for Black men with early prostate cancer. And hormone-based therapy may be more effective for Black men with metastatic castration-resistant prostate cancer (mCRPC). That's a type of aggressive prostate cancer that no longer responds well to testosterone-lowering therapy. Make sure your doctor goes over all your treatment choices. Black men with aggressive prostate cancer can benefit from surgery or radiation therapy. But they're less likely than other races to get it. If your doctor doesn't suggest these treatments, ask them why. You can also get a second opinion from another doctor.

What You Can Do

To lower your chances of prostate cancer, you should:

- Exercise at least 150 minutes a week to get your heart rate up
- Eat plenty of fruits, vegetables, and whole grains
- Maintain a healthy body mass index (BMI)
- Limit red meat, alcohol, and highly processed foods

If you smoke, quit. Current smokers are more likely than nonsmokers to have aggressive tumors or cancer that comes back after treatment. Smoking also raises your odds of dying from prostate cancer.

You can also:

- Learn all you can about your treatment options.
- Find out which tests and treatments your insurance covers.
- Ask your doctor about genetic testing.
- Enroll in a prostate cancer clinical trial.

If you're a Black man who's been diagnosed with prostate cancer, you can share your experience with researchers leading the RESPOND study. These experts hope to uncover what's behind disparities in prostate cancer for Black men. The study is supported by the National Cancer Institute and the National Institute on Minority Health and Health Disparities along with the Prostate Cancer Foundation. Find more information at [Respondstudy.org](https://respondstudy.org). **CBS health**



DRINKING one glass or more of 100 per cent fruit juice each day is associated with weight gain in children and adults, according to a new analysis of 42 previous studies.

The research, published Tuesday in JAMA Pediatrics, found a positive association between drinking 100 per cent fruit juice and BMI — a calculation that takes into account weight and height — among kids. It also found an association between daily consumption of 100 per cent fruit juice with weight gain among adults.

100 per cent fruit juice was defined as fruit juices with no added sugar.

The increases were small — among children, for example, each additional serving per day was associated with a 0.03 higher BMI — but it did vary depending on age, with BMI increases appearing greater for younger children.

“Our analyses suggested that younger children,” those under 11 years old, “showed a greater BMI gain per every 8-oz additional serving per day of 100 per cent fruit juice than the older children,” the study noted.

Does this mean you should skip juice entirely?

Not necessarily — but the study does suggest being more mindful about how

● Juice contains “little to no fiber compared with the whole fruit form, resulting in low satiety

much you consume.

“Our findings are in support of public health guidance to limit consumption of 100 per cent fruit juice to prevent overweight and obesity,” the authors write.

It also raises the question: If fruit is good for you and recommended as part of a healthy diet, why can 100 per cent fruit juice lead to weight gain? The authors point to “liquid calories” as a possible factor.

“A potential mechanism linking 100 per cent fruit juice to weight gain is the consumption of liquid calories, which has been shown to result in greater weight gain compared with the ingestion of solid calories,” they note.

Juice contains “little to no fiber compared with the whole fruit form, resulting in low satiety,” they add, meaning that juice will not make you feel as full as eating fruit itself.

The authors also note their findings are in line with American Academy of Pediatrics guidelines

that children younger than six should consume “less than a glass of fruit juice per day,” with a typical glass being an eight ounce serving.

The AAP and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention also advise that children younger than 1 should avoid juice entirely.

The AAP's guidance for other ages are as follows:

- Children 1 to 3 — limit juice to 4 ounces daily.
- Children 4 to 6 — limit to 6 ounces daily.
- Children 7 to 18 — limit to 8 ounces daily.

If you want to enjoy that fruit flavor with fewer calories, the CDC recommends adding a splash of 100 per cent juice to plain or sparkling water for a “refreshing, low-calorie drink.” **CBS Health**



AROUND THE WORLD IN PICTURES



▲ Inter Milan’s Lautaro Martinez lifts the trophy with teammates after winning the Supercoppa Italiana final against Napoli in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.



▲ Israeli soldiers and archaeologists inspect a road for evidence and remains relating to the deadly October 7 attack by gunmen from Palestinian Islamist group Hamas, near Israel’s border with Gaza in southern Israel.



▲ Damage is shown after a heavy rain storm causes a small river to overflow into a neighborhood in San Diego, California.



▲ Coco Gauff of the U.S. in action during her quarterfinal match against Ukraine’s Marta Kostyuk at the Australian Open.



▲ A model presents a creation by designer Virginie Viard as part of her Haute Couture Spring-Summer 2024 collection show for fashion house Chanel in Paris, France.



▲ A Hindu devotee prays near the Lord Ram temple after its inauguration, in Ayodhya, India.

Gavin Hunt gives Khama Billiat a thumbs-down

KHAMA Billiat's search for a club continues after he was told to stop training with SuperSport United.

Hopes were high that the Pretoria-based team would sign the former Kaizer Chiefs attacking midfielder since it emerged that he had been training with the club.

United's captain and Billiat's Zimbabwean homeboy, Onismor Bhasera, even expressed his wish for the club to sign him.

However, it has since been revealed that just after three days of training, coach Gavin Hunt has decided against adding the 33-year-old player to his roster.

Billiat was nowhere to be seen during a training session on Monday.

United CEO Stan Mathews confirmed the latest developments.

"We are not going to sign him, so it's pointless to continue training," said Mathews in response to a Sunday World question.

It is not clear why Hunt excused the former international from both-ering to report for a mini-camp anymore, but sources suspect rustiness as one of the main reasons.

Going AWOL

The former Ajax Cape Town and Mamelodi Sundowns star has been kicking his heels in frustration since leaving Amakhosi under mysterious circumstances in June 2023.

With his future at the Chiefs uncertain since his contract expired on June 30, the Glamour Boys issued a statement that left fans dumbfounded, saying Billiat had gone AWOL



▲ Khama Billiat's search for a club continues after he was told to stop training with SuperSport United.

(absent without leave).

"Following the expiry of attacking midfielder Khama Billiat's Kaizer Chiefs contract on June 30, 2023, the club tabled a new offer for the Zimbabwean marksman to remain with Amakhosi, said Chiefs in a statement.

"However, to date, the player has not responded to the offer.

"Billiat was last seen at the Kaizer Chiefs Village on June 29 and has not answered any of the calls or

messages sent to him by the club.

"The team is currently in camp with all the players, yet Billiat, who is also expected to be there with his teammates, failed to show up and is currently nowhere to be found."

Since leaving Chiefs, the former 2016 PSL Footballer of the Season and CAF Champions League winner has been linked with Cape Town City and some clubs in North Africa, but nothing has materialised.

(Sunday World)

Doha comeback in sight for Nadal

RAFAEL Nadal was named on the entry list for next month's Doha Open on Wednesday, prompting speculation that the injured Spaniard will make his return to action in Qatar. After missing most of the 2023 season because of a hip injury, Nadal, 37, only got back on court this month in Brisbane, where he reached the quarterfinals.

But a micro tear in a muscle during that quarterfinal defeat by Jordan Thompson forced him to withdraw from the Australian Open.

"Doha, get ready for the return of El Matador," th

Doha tournament said on Instagram.

"Thrilled to see Rafael Nadal back in action at the Qatar Exxon-Mobil Open 2024. Vamos!"

Nadal, who has said previously there was a "high percentage" that 2024 would be his farewell to the tour, won the Doha title in 2014 but has not played there since 2016.

▲ Rafael Nadal was named on the entry list for next month's Doha Open

(Reuters)

Eder Militao extends Real Madrid deal

BRAZIL defender Eder Militao has signed a contract extension to 2028 with Real Madrid, the Spanish giants announced on Tuesday.

Militao, 26, arrived at the Santiago Bernabeu from Porto in 2019 but has played just one game this season due to a knee injury.

Militao has won the Champions League once and La Liga twice during his spell in the Spanish capital.

According to Spanish media, Militao's new contract includes a release clause worth hundreds of millions of euros, similar to those of teammates Vinicius, Rodrygo, Eduardo Camavinga and Federico Valverde.

Last month Madrid boss Carlo Ancelotti signed a new deal to stay with the club until 2026, ending speculation that he would take over the Brazil job.

(AFP)

Royal AM confident on dodging FIFA ban bullet

ROYAL AM are optimistic about dodging the FIFA ban bullet because they believe they have strong cases in two matters that got them in trouble with the football governing body.

Shauwn "MaMkhize" Mkhize, a charismatic and outspoken businesswoman from KwaZulu-Natal, owns the team, and FIFA's ban on player registration has had a significant negative impact on the team's performance in the DStv Premiership.

Royal AM have had a difficult start to the season due to their inability to beef up the squad with new players. They are at number 14 on the log, one position away from relegation.

The team was handed a player registration ban for owing money to former players Samir Nurkovic and Ricardo Nascimento.

Nurkovic is now with TS Galaxy, while Nascimento is still without a club after he was released with two months left on his contract.

The club cleared the air on Tuesday and unpacked how it finds itself in this precarious situation.

Contractual dispute

Reads a statement from Royal AM: "At the end of April 2023, two months before the expiry of Mr Nascimento's contract, Royal AM FC terminated the contract and paid out Mr Nascimento the remainder of the unexpired term of his employment contract — May and June 2023.

"Mr Nascimento referred a contractual dispute to FIFA's dispute resolution chamber [DRC] for payment of the salary for May and June 2023, payment of the salary for the option period, which Royal AM did not exercise, and an R120 000 bonus.

"On September 28 2023, the FIFA DRC granted Mr Nascimento an award for a payment of R600 000. Royal AM appealed with the Court of

Arbitration for Sports [CAS] and requested a motivated decision from FIFA.

"On the 7th of November 2023, FIFA notified [of] its motivated decision, and upon perusal, Royal AM FC established that the award made by the FIFA DRC was [for a] salary for May and June 2023, which Royal AM had already paid to Mr Nascimento.

"All other claims by Mr Nascimento were rejected by the FIFA DRC. In light of this revelation, the CAS appeal was withdrawn."

FIFA transfer ban

FIFA notified Royal AM of the transfer ban on January 15 2024, for non-compliance with the award that Royal AM had already paid.

"Royal AM legal representatives are in the process of clarifying this issue with both FIFA and Mr Nascimento's legal representatives and have already provided proof of payment to FIFA," said the club in a statement.

"The registration ban shall be lifted in due course."

In regards to the matter involving Nurkovic, the club explained: "Royal AM confirms that the appeal against the FIFA decision in the Nurkovic matter is still pending at CAS.

"The delay in the finalisation of the matter has been occasioned by the refusal by Mr Nurkovic and FIFA to have an expedited procedure and the refusal by Mr Nurkovic to pay his share of the advanced costs.

"Royal AM has paid the full advanced costs, which include Mr Nurkovic's share of the advanced costs.

"It is worth noting that Mr Nurkovic has now expressed his desire to have the matter expeditiously resolved, and Royal AM agrees with this proposal.

"Currently, we await a directive from the CAS office regarding the appointed arbitrator in this matter, the procedure to be adopted, and the allocation of the date of this hearing." (Sunday World)



▲ Royal AM are optimistic about dodging the FIFA ban bullet because they believe they have strong cases in two matters that got them in trouble with the football governing body.



Indomitable Lions dramatically edge Scorpions

CAMEROON dramatically secured their spot in the Round of 16 in the 2023 Africa Cup of Nations (Afcon) as they defeated Gambia 3-2 at the Stade de la Paix in Bouaké.

The stakes were high in the fixture as Cameroon needed a win to stay in the competition and star goalkeeper Andre Onana made headlines as he was dropped to the bench by Rigobert Song.

Gambia started off incredibly resilient and went into the match with a winning mindset as they dominated the attack and had more shots on goal in the first half.

Cameroon started to catch on and create their own fair share of chances too as the game progressed.

Although the first half was entertaining, the scoreline was goalless at the break, with Gambia going in with more of an advantage due to their promising attempts on goal.

As for the Indomitable Lions, the nation was lucky to survive a number of dangerous counter attacks from the Scorpions.

Early in the second half, Cameroon came into the match with a renewed spirit which saw

Kevin-Georges N'Koudou take a shot on goal but was unlucky and hit the crossbar.

The breakthrough for the Indomitable Lions finally came in the 56th minute through Karl Teko Ekambi who gave the team the lead with a precise flicked header.

There were doubts about the goal but it was reviewed by the VAR shortly afterwards and it stood, much to the delight of the Indomitable Lions.

Gambia levelled up the score as Ablie Jallow finished with a volley in the 72nd minute.

The Scorpions were desperate to get back in the game after conceding and successfully pulled it off by equalising in dramatic fashion.

As 15 minutes were left to play in the crunching encounter, Ekambi was close to restoring Cameroon's lead but hit the crossbar with his attempt on goal.

It looked to be all over for the Scorpions but a goal from Ebrima Colley, who had just been subbed on due to Jallow's hamstring injury, put them ahead in the 85th minute.

James Gomez would unfortu-



▲ Cameroon dramatically qualified for the Last-16 after beating Gambia 3 - 2.

nately score a heartbreaking own goal two minutes later as he tried to clear the ball as a Cameroon cross made its way into the box.

This levelled matters between the two teams once again and the score was 2-2.

All Cameroon needed was a

goal to keep their dream alive and Christopher Wooh's header in the beginning of stoppage time saw the scoreline become 3-2.

The Scorpions thought they had levelled things up once again through Colley but the VAR showed that he used his hand

when he scored, thus the goal was ultimately disallowed.

The win saw Cameroon qualify automatically for the Round of 16 with a second placed finish in Group C.

(Supersport)



▲ Senegal progress to the Last-16 with a 100 per cent record.

Lions of Teranga brush aside Syli National

THE Lions of Teranga progress to the Round of 16 as Group C winners having won all three their group stage games.

Senegal will now take on a team that will finish third in either Group A or B or F in the Round of 16 on 29 January.

Guinea, on the other hand, finished their Group C campaign in third place with four points from three matches and they progressed to the Round of 16 as one of the four best third-placed teams.

The Lions of Teranga pushed for an early goal and they threatened first through Ismaila Sarr in the seventh minute.

Sarr, who had netted against Cameroon on 19 January, unleashed a shot that was blocked in the Syli National's box.

Guinea and Senegal both struggled to create clear-cut chances as the match

progressed and most of the shots at goal were either blocked or missed the target.

The first half, which had few goalscoring opportunities, ended with the two teams locked at 0-0. Senegal continued to apply pressure on Guinea's defence after the restart and they were awarded a free-kick after Sarr was fouled on the hour mark.

The resultant free-kick from Krepin Diatta was turned home by Abdoulaye Seck to hand Senegal a 1-0 lead.

The Lions of Teranga did not take their foot off the pedal after taking the lead as they continued to attack in search of another goal.

They got in the 90th minute through Iliman Ndiaye who netted with a low shot to seal Senegal's 2-0 win courtesy of Sadio Mane's assist.

(Supersport)

Salah has 'proper tear' in hamstring, sidelined 3-4 weeks

MOHAMED Salah has returned to England for treatment on a hamstring tear to give him the best possible chance to be available for the Africa Cup of Nations final, should Egypt make it, Liverpool assistant manager Pep Lijnders said on Tuesday.

Salah was forced to watch from the stands as Egypt secured their passage to the last 16 of the competition in dramatic fashion on Monday after a 2-2 draw with Cape Verde.

The two-time African player of the year hobbled off during his country's second game of the tournament against Ghana, but the Egyp-

tian federation have maintained hope he could return should the Pharaohs progress far in the tournament.

However, Lijnders suggested that only the final on 11 February is realistic, even if Salah's recovery goes as planned.

"They made a detailed scan and it came out that it was a proper tear in his hamstring. So it means his expected return to play is between three to four weeks if everything goes smooth and everything goes right," Lijnders said at a press conference ahead of the Reds' League Cup semifinal, second leg against Fulham on Wednesday.

(Supersport)



▲ Egypt's Mohamed Salah is receiving treatment in England.



▲ From left to right, the trio of professional golfers James Pennington, Mandla Dlamini Jnr, Brandon-Jude Rennie will all start their campaign under the Sunshine Tour in the Mediclinic Invitational.

Professional golf trio in E2 m Mediclinic Invitational

By Ntokozo Magongo
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THE trio of professional golfers James Pennington, Mandla Dlamini Jnr and Brandon-Jude Rennie will all start their campaign under the Sunshine Tour in the Mediclinic Invitational.

The four-round tournament will start on January 25 with the final day on January 28 at the Maccaulei Golf Club, South Africa. The tournament is the first in 2024 under the Sunshine Tour.

It is sponsored to the tune of E2 million and the winner is expected to take home over E300 000. The defending champion of the tournament is Stefan Wears-Taylor who will also be playing.

The tournament will be played in one of the best golf courses in South Africa. According to sunshinetour.com, Maccaulei became known as the only 'Inland Links' golf course in the world, and was referred to as the 'queen of inland links'. It was a real seaside course though no sea was visible. If you wanted a bunker all you had to do was dig a hole.

Maccaulei hosted four South African

Open Championships in the 1920's to 1940's. As history shows us, no golf course is ever complete, and the Maccaulei golf course undertook a major reconstruction under the watchful eye of the renowned golf course architect, Peter Matkovich.

The result is a course essentially parkland in style with link-like characteristics. Although the front nine has several memorable holes, it is the closing holes on the back nine which are its piece de resistance. It has been said that the six-hole stretch from 13 onwards is as good and as lovely as anything that this golf-rich land of ours can offer.

One of the most famous holes on the

course is the par-4 17th, with its giant bunker sloping up from the fairway towards the green, and in its day reputed to be the largest in the world. Today Maccaulei still holds its own in the top 50 courses in the country.

About the tournament:
Dates: January 25th - 28th, 2024
Tournament: Mediclinic Invitational
Venue: Maccaulei Golf Club
Defending Champion: Stefan Wears-Taylor
Rounds: 4 (Four)
Prize fund: E2 million

Forces derby in Eswatini pool festival semis

Stories by Sibusiso Masilela
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POOL fans will have a derby dose during the Eswatini Pool Festival team's tournament semi-finals between rivals Correctional and Royal Eswatini Police Services pool club.

The two giants will face off in the semi-final on Saturday at Manzini Pool Club while Ludzeludze will take on Malkerns to determine the two finalists in the new annual tournament.

The proceedings will be wrapped up by the finals later with a prize purse of E10 000 currently at stake for the four teams.

The team's section could not be concluded during the main tournament that was staged at Prince Mfanyana Hall featuring local and international in the singles categories two weeks ago.

The tournament's coordinator Sithembiso 'Dodge' Matsebula confirmed the draw when contacted.

"We will be wrapping up the team's tournament on Saturday and we are looking forward to an exciting action. We are still working on the prize breakdown, and we are inviting fans to attend the tournament



▲ REPS pool club in action during a recent match.

in numbers," he said.

The recently ended tournament saw South African male star Jeremiah Naidoo win the males category after beating local star Nkosinathi 'Bhubesi' Sihlongonyane 11-6 taking home a whopping E38 000 first prize money carrot.

Meanwhile, male national star Sihlongoyane received E18 000 for finishing second. The ladies category saw Botswana's Boinelo Kalantsho emerge victorious after beating local female star Ncobile Dlamini 7-4 taking home E9 000 while Dlamini got E4 500.

'We will fight in African Games qualifiers'

VOLLEYBALL national team star Nduku Masangane has promised to put up a good fight during the African Games beach volleyball qualifiers slated for Botswana between Thursday and Sunday.

The seasoned Correctional player is part of the four-member squad that will represent the country in the continental games including Mlamuli Simelane (Royal Eswatini Pool club) and the Correctional female pair of Nokulunga Kunene and Nonhlanhla Khoza.

"I am confident that we will do well in the games, and we are currently working hard at training pushing for positive results. I am adamant we will bring home some medals after the games," he said.

The seasoned player was named the best attacker award during the 2023 Zone VI club championships with his club (Correctional) in Lesotho.

The four-member national team will be led by Royal Eswatini Sugar coach Vusi Dlamini who is the leader of the delegation for the assignment.

The local team is expected to leave the country on Wednesday



▲ Top volleyball player Nduku Masangane.

for the qualifiers where eventual winners will book a place in the upcoming continental games slated for March in Ghana.

Volleyball is among the list of sporting codes for team Eswatini during the African Games including Boxing, Volleyball, Athletics, Taekwondo, Swimming, Karate and Chess were recently announced by the Eswatini Olympic and Commonwealth Games Association (EOCGA).

Pigg's Peak Rangers richest in Ingwenyama Cup



▲Pigg's Peak Rangers players.

By Ntokozo Magongo
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PIGG's Peak Rangers have struck it rich in the Ingwenyama Cup after reaching the quarterfinals of the tournament.

They are guaranteed of E105 000 after reaching the last eight of the tournament. They beat Milling Hotspurs 2-0 in the last 16 stage on Saturday at Prince of Wales Sports Ground. They are the last man standing from the National First Division and Regional teams.

They will be receiving E75 000 for reaching the quarterfinals and E30 000 for being the only team from First Division and Regional team. The team had also received E5 000 participation fee at the start of the tournament.

The eight teams that reached the quarterfinals are all guaranteed of the E75 000 while those to go through to the semi-finals will each be receiving E210 000.

The Ingwenyama Cup Management Committee (MC) is yet to announce the date of the quarter-final draw.

The eight teams that made it through to the quarterfinals are Pigg's Peak Rangers, Mbabane Highlanders, Young Buffaloes, Madlenya, Mbabane Swallows, Ezulwini United, Nsingizini Hotspurs and the defending champions Green Mamba.

The winner of the tournament will represent the country in the Confederation of African Football (CAF) Confederation Cup. The champions are also set to receive E1.4 million with the runners up getting E530 000.

This is the sixth edition of the tournament.



▲Mxolisi Mkhonto.

Ernest delighted with Mxolisi move to Botswana

Stories by Sibusiso Masilela
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GREEN Mamba head coach Ernest Mavuso says he delighted by his player, Mxolisi Mkhonto's move to Botswana giants Jwaneng Galaxy.

This is after the 'Correctional Services' captain joined Galaxy on a two-year deal. He leaves 'Inyoka Eluhlazana' after diligently serving the team for eight years.

"I'm personally happy for the player's move. He deserves this breakthrough after showing such loyalty to the team. I'm confident he will perform well for his new team," he said.

The former Mbabane Highlanders mentor also stated that he would love to see his top striker Sabelo 'Sikhali' Ndzinisa and defender Sibongakonkhe Silenge making international moves.

"My other wish is to see Sikhali and Silenge moving abroad as both players have the necessary international experience," he said.

The ex-Malanti Chiefs joined the CAF champions League participants on a E200

000 transfer fee after spending eight years with the reigning MTN Premier League champions.

He is currently back home sorting his paperwork including the processing of his two years unpaid leave with his employer, the His Majesty Correctional Services.

Mkhonto is the second local player to ply his trade in Botswana Premier League after ex-Highlanders' star Banele 'Stiga' Ndzabandzaba, who is in the books of Botswana's Police XI.

Mkhonto boasts of various Sihlangu caps under Serbian mentor Kostadin Papic and the incumbent coach Dominic Kunene.

He featured in the 2023 CAF Champions League preliminary round tie with Green Mamba, where they were knocked out by Mozambique champions UD Songo.

This was after he led the Ernest Mavuso led side to the 2022/23 MTN Premier League title which was 'Inyoka eluhlazana's third in history.

The towering attacking player also won the 2019 Ingwenyama Cup with his current side and the 2023 revived Trade Fair Cup.

Other local international players are Justice Figareido (Richards Bay, South Africa) and Lindo Mkhonta (Zesco United, Zambia).

SIHLANGU head coach Dominic Kunene welcomed the roping in of Ernest Mavuso and Sifiso 'Nuro' Ntibane as his new assistants.

Kunene believes his two assistant coaches will both add value to the national team.

This is after two were roped in the senior national side in an announcement made by Eswatini Football Association President Peter 'Samora' Simelane on Monday at Sigwaca House.

"I think the arrival of the new assistants will help the national team to improve as they are both good coaches and they both bring a wealth experience. I cannot complain about the changes made in the technical bench since the new assistants will quickly adapt into the national set up," he said.

The ex-Young Buffaloes coach also stated he cannot pre-empt on his future at the end of his current one-year contract on March 31, 2024.

'Ernest, 'Nuro' will add value to Sihlangu' — Dominic



▲Dominic Kunene.

Meanwhile, Simelane stated that they were going review Kunene's future at the end of his current contract.



▲Ernest Mavuso.

Kunene joined the nation's pride in 2019 after taking over from former Orlando Pirates coach Kostadin Papic from Serbia.

The changes further saw the redeployment of assistant coach Anthony Mdluli to the goalkeeper coach position replacing the legendary Sipho 'Shilton' Dube who has been relieved of his duties.

Another change saw the roping in of Royal Leopard and Ladies National under-17 trainer Dennis Fakudze in the position of Mbuso Gina.

The senior national team is expected to take part in the 2025 AFCON qualifiers in March and further continue with the 2026 FIFA World Cup qualifiers in June.

Mavuso once worked with as National under-20 head coach while Ntibane is currently in charge of the National under-23.

Mavuso recently won the 2022/23 MTN Premier League title and the 2023 Trade Fair Cup meanwhile Ntibane won the 2014/15 MTN Premier League title his former team Royal Leopards.

We need E500m for a new stadium – EFA CEO

By **Sibusiso Masilela**
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IT would cost Eswatini E500 million to build an internationally recognised stadium. This figure would assist the country to construct a modern stadium that can ease the current ban effected on the Somhlolo National Stadium and Mavuso Sports Centre. The two stadiums were barred from hosting international matches in 2018. The current ban has resulted in the country using the Mbombela Stadium, South Africa as an alternative venue to host international matches.

Figures

Eswatini Football Association (EFA) Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Frederick Mngomezulu confirmed the figures when asked to shed the association’s plans of constructing a proper stadium. “We will need about E500 million to construct a 15 000-20 000-seater stadium in the country, and FIFA hasn’t allocated funds to construct stadiums to Member associations. Such assistance can be universal if they can have a programme to construct stadiums for all 211 Member associations,” he said.

He further said they currently had limited resources to construct such a stadium. “We do not have enough funds to construct a proper stadium with our limited budget of E40 million,” he said. He further explained that they were in the process of upgrading the KaLanga Technical Centre. “We are currently working on constructing a grandstand at KaLanga that will accommodate fans during big matches. We are also working on constructing a technical centre in Manzini under Mafutseni Inkhundla,” he added. Government has already released E60 million for the refurbishment of the country’s only football mecca.



▲Aerial views of Somhlolo National Stadium and (Inset) EFA CEO Frederick Mngomezulu.



▲Mbabane Highlanders players celebrating victory during the team's match last Sunday.

‘Weslians’, ‘Bull’ at Mavuso for MTN League

FOOTBALL fans will be treated to exciting MTN Premier League games on Saturday at Mavuso Sports Centre. Moneni Pirates will host Manzini Wanderers in the Manzini derby and battle for relegation at 2:30pm while title challengers, Green Mamba and Mbabane Swallows will face off later at 5pm under week 15. Games All the seven games will be played on Saturday with Mbabane Highlanders playing Rangers at Mayaluka Stadium at 3pm and Young Buffaloes will host Illovo at KaLanga Technical Centre. This will be a repeat after Young

Buffaloes trounced the Lubombo based side 7-1 in the Ingwenyama Cup last 16 on Saturday at the same venue. The match will start at 3pm. According to the fixtures released by the Premier League of Eswatini (PLE) another double headers is scheduled for King Sobhuza II Memorial Stadium where Manzini Sea Birds will play Denver Sundowns at 1:30pm and the last game will be between Nsingizini Hotspurs against Ezulwini United, kick-off 3:30pm. The MTN Premier League returns after a one-week break giving way to the Ingwenyama Cup last 16 matches.

MTN PREMIER LEAGUE WEEK 15 FIXTURES:			
All games to be played Saturday:			
King Sobhuza II Memorial Stadium:			
M. Sea Birds	vs Sundowns	1:30pm	
N. Hotspurs	vs Ezulwini	3:30pm	
Mayaluka Stadium:			
Highlanders	vs Rangers	3:30pm	
KaLanga Technical Centre:			
Y. Buffaloes	vs Illovo	3pm	
Mavuso Sports Centre:			
M. Pirates	vs Wanderers	2:30pm	
G Mamba	vs Swallows	5pm	
Prince of Wales Sports Ground:			
R. Leopard	vs Madlenya	3:30pm	
MTN National First Division League, week 14:			
Saturday:			
Mayaluka Stadium:			
U. Flyers	vs L. Spurs	1pm	
Prince of Wales Sports Ground:			
Malanti Chiefs	vs T. Oallies	1:30pm	
Killarney Sports Ground:			
PPB. Swallows	vs S. Dreams	2:30pm	
Sunday:			
Mayaluka Stadium:			
Sisonkhe	vs T. Oeltios	3pm	
King Sobhuza II Memorial Stadium:			
Nyanyali	vs Survivors	3pm	
Manzini Club:			
M. Hotspurs	vs Rangers	1pm	
Louis XIV	vs L. Killers	3pm	

Blow for ‘Birds’ as Felix out for up to 3 weeks

MBABANE Swallows will be without their trusted forward Felix Badenhorst as he is expected to be out of action for over three weeks. This comes after he suffered a dislocated shoulder injury during the Ingwenyama Cup last 16 match against Tambankulu Celtics on Saturday at Mayaluka Stadium. The former National team, Sihlangu Captain is currently on sling after the injury. A source close to the matter confirmed that doctors estimated that the player will be out of action for about a month. “He went for a review on Tuesday and the medical staff said he needs up to three weeks to out of action. The club will continue to monitor the situation an as they believe he can bounce back earlier,” said the source. Meanwhile, Tambankulu Celtics defender Jabulani Mbimbili who was involved in the tussle that led to the injury of Mbabane Swallows player paid a visit to the player alongside the club’s Public Relations Officer Senzo Shabangu on Sunday. Shabangu said they wanted to check on him and also apologised for the injury as it was not intentional.



▲Injured Mbabane Swallows player Felix Badenhorst with Tambankulu Cetlics’ Jabulani Mbimbili.



**Hunt gives
Billiat a
thumbs
down**

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**Blow for 'Birds'
as Felix out for
up to 3 weeks**

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Eswatini Daily News Wednesday 21 January, 2024

Sport

We need **E500** million for a new stadium – EFA CEO

.. Eswatini Football Association CEO Frederick Mngometulu says to build a 15 000–20 000 seater stadium would cost an arm and leg for the country and FIFA has not allocated any funds to build a stadium for all 211-member countries. **Page 23**

