



JUDICIAL COMMISSION TOLD:

‘Master of High Court office assistants labelled me crazy’



By Nokunceda Magagula
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WIFE to late top lawyer, Collin Ntiwane, Sizakele, told the Judicial Commission of how office assistants at the Master’s office labelled her crazy and even attacked her outside their offices. Sizakele made her submissions during the inquiry of the Master’s office where she sought assistance regarding her late husband’s E7 million estate. She said her late husband died in 2007 and after his death, she was made co-executor of the estate together with Sabelo Mkhwanazi, a lawyer who had also worked with her late husband.

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DPM Dladla pledges new house for 90-year-old elderly resident in Somntongo

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WIFE to late top lawyer, Collin Ntiwane, Sizakele, told the Judicial Commission of how office assistants at the Master's office labelled her crazy and even attacked her outside their offices.

Sizakele made her submissions during the inquiry of the Master's office where she sought assistance regarding her late husband's E7 million estate.

She said her late husband died in 2007 and after his death, she was made co-executor of the estate together with Sabelo Mkhwanazi, a lawyer who had also worked with her late husband.

She mentioned that her later husband's E7 million estate included property in Mbabane, 8 cars, and cattle which they had placed in Motshane. Moreover, her husband also owned businesses which created monthly income for them.

Sizakele said the problem began when the Master's office didn't want to release her husband's estate to her, she says the people from the office were extremely hostile and would refuse to help her whenever she would come to their offices for assistance.

Sizakele said what hurt her the most is that from 2007, she would visit the Title Deeds office to check on the status of her husband's properties however, she found that the records of the ownership were deleted, which she knows for a fact that for that to be done it needed someone who is in the IT department.

She says that this made her suspect that there was some criminal activity that was taking place. The complainant alleged that she suspects that her co-estate executor might have had something to do with the Master's office's behaviour towards her.

As a result, she is currently living from hand to mouth, she says she now tries to sell

JUDICIAL COMMISSION TOLD:

'Master's office assistants labelled me crazy'

perfumes near a shop. She added that one of the assistants of the Master's office would come and ask the shops nearby to chase her away because she is a security risk.

She said when she would go to the Master's offices, they would make a mockery of her and would be labelled crazy because every time she came there, she would literally cry and beg for them to help her.

Sizakele said as a result of the stress, she became ill.

"When I was sick, I could not even go to the hospital because I did not have money since my husband's estate is still stuck at the Master's office," she said.

Sizakele said the Master's office couldn't even release funds for her son's school fees. She said she wrote letters to the office asking them to at least pay her son's fees, however, they could not help her.

Her son was forced to change schools, he moved from Saim High School to Bookville High School where his matric results have been withheld since 2016 because they have failed to pay.

Vuyisile Mdluli, acting assistant at the Master's office, explained that most things were communicated with Mkhwanazi who is also an executor.

On the allegations made by Sizakele on the assistant's behaviour, Mdluli said the Master's office is a public office that is open to everyone.

She added that she does not recall the office being hostile and anyone going to her shop to attack her, however, Sizakele is the one who would attack them and insult them at the office. Furthermore, they have reported her to the police.



▲ Sizakele Ntiwane and her son.

DPM Dladla pledges new house for 90-year-old elderly resident in Somntongo

By **Noaba Ntshakala**

DEPUTY Prime Minister Thulisile Dladla capped off a busy Monday with a heartwarming visit and a generous pledge to Gogo Beauty Masuku, a 90-year-old resident of Lavumisa kaShabangu eMsuzaneni under Somntongo Inkhundla.

Following her earlier inspection of ongoing school projects, the Deputy Prime Minister encountered Gogo Masuku living in a dilapidated dwelling. Touched by the elderly woman's circumstances, Dladla made a personal commitment to have a new house built for her. This pledge reflects the government's dedication to ensuring the well-being of its citizens, particularly the most vulnerable members like Gogo Masuku.

Earlier in the day, Dladla, together with Minister of Education and Training Owen Nxumalo, visited the under-construction Mahlaneni High School at eMahlabaneni. The school, a testament to collaborative efforts, is being funded by the Eswatini government alongside valuable partnerships with the USA Embassy, USA Distillers, and Crookes Plantation.

The inspection provided an opportunity for government to assess the project's progress and ensure its timely completion.



▲ Deputy Prime Minister Thulisile Dladla sharing a moment with Gogo Beauty Masuku.

By Ncaba Ntshakala

PM proposes regulated healthcare worker migration

ADDRESSING the 5th European Corporate Council on Africa and the Middle East (ECAM Council) Annual Summit in Rome, Eswatini's Prime Minister Russell Dlamini has acknowledged the ongoing issue of healthcare professionals' migration while proposing a novel approach to manage it.

This was shared on his Facebook page where the PM highlighted the key issues he touched upon on his address.

The Summit, themed "Creating a Better Present and Building a Greater Future Together for Africa: The Role of Healthcare and Investments," resonated deeply with Eswatini's own aspirations in the sector.

"I joined world leaders, on behalf of His Majesty King Mswati III and the Nation, at the 5th European Corporate Council on Africa and the Middle East (ECAM Council) Annual Summit in Rome, Italy." Said the PM as he was reporting on his address. "The Summit has been held under the theme; Creating a better present and building a greater future together for Africa: the role of healthcare and investments which resonates with many of our own aspirations as Eswatini."

The Premier expressed the Kingdom its achievements in the health sector. "At the Summit, we highlighted the significant strides made by Eswatini in terms of healthcare while equally highlighting the challenges." Prime Minister shared. "We emphasised the importance of partnerships to eliminate health issues, as seen with other partnerships we have had with World Health Organ-

ization (WHO), UNICEF, and The Global Fund, amongst others."

The Prime Minister said that they also noted the relocation of the Kingdom's healthcare professionals such as nurses and doctors to other countries. He said the Kingdom of Eswatini has invested heavily in training a high number of healthcare professionals. Eswatini further proposed a proactive solution towards controlled migration of health workers which can be a system of formal agreements with countries facing acute healthcare worker shortages. This approach, the Prime Minister argued, could ensure that the migration of these vital professionals benefits both Eswatini and the receiving countries.

"Therefore, we proposed that the migration of workers happens in a mutually beneficial manner and invited countries that have an acute need for health workers to enter into formal agreements with the Kingdom for provision of the same." The Premier added.

Looking beyond immediate challenges, the Prime Minister championed the development of preventive healthcare systems across Africa, including within Eswatini itself. "Investing in preventative measures," he explained, "not only reduces the burden on our health systems but also improves overall health outcomes and quality of life for our people."

The 5th edition of the European Corporate Council on Africa and the Middle East



▲ ECAM Founder Kamel Ghribi who is also the President of GKSD Investment Holding (I) and The Prime Minister Russell Dlamini posing after the at the 5th European Corporate Council on Africa and the Middle East (ECAM Council) Annual Summit in Rome, Italy.



(ECAM Council) took place on January 30, 2024, in Rome. The event represented a significant platform for discussion and collaboration, bringing together entrepreneurs, government leaders, and representatives from multilateral agencies to explore this year's fundamental theme.

ECAM says that the healthcare sector is a fundamental pillar for sustainable growth in the African continent. The 5th edition of the ECAM Council delved into innovative ap-

proaches to healthcare and the tangible impacts arising from the availability of robust healthcare infrastructure. This was coupled with a focus on investment strategies that will fuel economic growth, with special attention to the new generations. ECAM highlighted that the synergy between Africa and Italy represents a decisive step towards building a winning partnership capable of addressing today's challenges and seizing emerging opportunities.



National Data Protection Awareness Day

Take Control of Your Data

28 January 2024



Join us in celebrating the National Data Protection Week 2024 by taking control of your data.

The Eswatini Data Protection Act came into force in March 2022 and espouses the Right to Privacy as enshrined in the Eswatini Constitution, 2005. The object of the Act is "to provide for the collection, processing, disclosure and protection of personal data; balancing competing values of personal information privacy and sector-specific laws and other related matters". The Act designates the Eswatini Communications Commission as the Eswatini Data Protection Authority (EDPA) charged with the responsibility to enforce compliance thereto.

On Friday, 26 January 2024, Eswatini joined the world in commemorating the International Data Protection Day by hosting an event under the theme "Take Control of Your Data". The Data Protection Day is internationally celebrated each year on 28 January, which marks the anniversary of the Council of Europe's 'Convention 108' on the protection of personal information - the first legally binding international law on data protection which was open for signature in 1981.

However, other countries soon embraced the initiative, and now Data Protection Day is globally recognized. It is an international effort to create awareness about the importance of respecting privacy, safeguarding data, and enabling trust.

The National Data Protection Day is also a chance to catch up with new developments in the Data Protection area.

As the EDPA we recognise the week of 22-28 January as the National Data Protection Week, during which we urge entities (data controllers and data processors) and other actors to organise activities to raise awareness about the importance of data protection and to promote best practices with regards to processing personal information. Data protection concerns mainly individuals (the data subjects) whose personal information is processed by entities in their line of business. Still, many people lack knowledge about how their personal data is being collected, used, and shared.

As this year's theme indicates, taking control of one's data begins with the data subjects themselves. It is important to make informed and calculated decisions when sharing your personal data, especially with entities. Your personal data such as age, gender, data related to children, health records, National Identity number, financial records, purchase history, location have great value and may be used for unintended purposes. It is important to keep that in mind when deciding what you share and with whom.

Entities who in terms of the Act are data controllers and

data processors on the other hand need to make sure that they keep their customers' data always protected and in accordance with the data protection principles and

other applicable legal frameworks on data protection. Risk should always be managed, and to create trust, the entities should be transparent on how they are collecting, using, and sharing personal data. A data breach where an individual's personal data is leaked or accessed by unauthorised persons can lead to a loss in both reputation and customer trust, in addition to potential financial sanctions which may be imposed by the EDPA.

In this regard we invite the public to join us as we create awareness and discuss important privacy-related topics to remind organizations and individuals why they should care about data privacy.

ESCCOM Chief Executive

Mvilawemphi Dlamini



Monetary Policy Statement

26 January 2024

Interest Rate
7.50%

The CBE maintained the interest rate at **7.50 per cent**.

Inflation
4.3%

Headline inflation decreased to **4.3 per cent** in December 2023 from **4.7 per cent** in the previous month.

What does this mean?

Banks are expected to maintain the prime lending rate on loans extended to individuals and businesses at **11.0 per cent** until the next monetary policy meeting.

What to expect?

The CBE expects the cost of goods and services to increase moderately in 2024. The CBE marginally revised down its inflation forecasts for 2024 to **4.9 per cent** (from 5.2 per cent forecasted in November 2023).

Economic Activity

Economic activity, as measured by the Quarterly Gross Domestic Product grew by a slower 7.7 per cent year-on-year (seasonally adjusted) in the third quarter of 2023, down from a revised growth of 8.2 per cent in the second quarter of 2023.

On the 26th January 2024, the Central Bank of Eswatini (Bank), together with the Monetary Policy Consultative Committee (MPCC) held a meeting to consider the appropriate monetary policy stance. Taking into consideration relevant global, regional, and domestic economic factors; as well as the price and financial stability mandate, the Bank decided to maintain the discount rate unchanged at 7.5 per cent.

On the global front, the ongoing effects of tighter monetary policy, the restrictive credit conditions and the intensifying geopolitical tensions are weighing down on growth prospects. Economic growth in advanced economies is subdued whilst growth in Emerging Markets and Developing Economies (EMDEs) with strong fundamentals is improving. The US economy grew by an annualized 3.3 per cent in the fourth quarter of 2023 from 4.9 per cent in the previous quarter whilst the UK and the Eurozone contracted by 0.1 per cent each in the third quarter of 2023. China grew by 5.2 per cent in the fourth quarter of 2023, compared to the 4.9 per cent recorded in the previous quarter. Inflation in advanced economies and EMDEs remain persistent and above target, and monetary conditions remained at restrictive levels.

Regionally, the South African economy shrank by 0.2 per cent in the third quarter of 2023, after a revision downward to 0.5 per cent in the second quarter. The South African Reserve Bank (SARB) marginally revised down its growth forecast for 2023 to 0.6 per cent (from 0.8 per cent forecasted in November 2023) whilst the forecasts for 2024 and 2025 remain unchanged at 1.2 per cent and 1.3 per cent, respectively. The South African inflation decreased to 5.1 per cent in December 2023 from 5.5 per cent the previous month, recording an average of 6.0 per cent in 2023. The SARB left its inflation forecast for 2024 unchanged at 5.0 per cent whilst the forecast for 2025 was marginally revised up to 4.6 per cent (from 4.5 per cent). The SARB maintained the repo rate unchanged at 8.25 per cent in its 25 January 2023 meeting.

On the domestic front, economic activity as measured by the quarterly GDP, grew by a slower 7.7 per cent year-on-year (seasonally adjusted) in the third quarter of 2023, down from a revised growth of 8.2 per cent in the second quarter. The primary and secondary sectors recorded slower increases (on a year-on-year basis) in the quarter under review, whilst the tertiary sector remained resilient on double digit growth. On a quarter-on-quarter basis, economic activity grew by 3.0 per cent (seasonally adjusted) in the quarter under review, from a revised growth of 1.3 per cent in the previous quarter.

The country's annual headline inflation declined further to 4.3 per cent in December 2023 from 4.7 per cent in November 2023. The slowdown is attributed to a decrease in prices for; 'food & non-alcoholic beverages' which grew by a slower 7.1 per cent in December 2023 from 8.4 per cent the previous month; 'furnishing & household equipment' which grew by 3.9 per cent in December 2023 compared to 4.1 per cent in the previous month, and 'transport' which fell by 0.5 per cent in December 2023 following a zero growth in November 2023. These decreases were counteracted by increases in the price indices for; 'clothing & footwear' which rose by 6.5 per cent in December 2023 from 6.0 per cent the previous month and 'miscellaneous goods & services' which grew by 0.2 of a percentage point to 9.6 per cent in December 2023. The country's headline inflation averaged 5.0 per cent in 2023. The Bank revised down its inflation forecasts to 4.9 per cent (from 5.2 per cent forecasted in November 2023) for 2024 and the forecast for 2025 is at 5.1 per cent. Risks to the inflation outlook include elevated crude oil prices, a weaker exchange rate and higher food prices, amongst others.

Credit extended to the private sector declined by 0.9 per cent month-on-month to E18.8 billion at the end of November 2023. Accounting for the slowdown in credit to the private sector were decreases in the credit extended to "other sectors of the domestic economy" and "households and NPISH". These sectors decreased by 16.6 per cent month-on-month to settle at E1.0 billion and 0.1 per cent month-on-month to E8.3 billion at the end of November 2023 respectively. Credit extended to businesses on the other hand grew by 0.5 per cent to E9.4 billion at the end of November 2023. The banking sector's total non-performing loans (NPLs) fell by 4.1 per cent in November 2023 compared to the previous month to settle at E1.1 billion. Consequently, the NPL ratio declined by 0.3 of a percentage point month-on-month to 6.9 per cent at the end of November 2023.

As at 19 January 2024, gross official reserves stood at E11.1 billion an equivalent to import cover of 3.5 months. Total public debt increased by 1.0 per cent to E34.7 billion in December 2023 from E34.3 billion the previous month. At this level, public debt is equivalent to 40.9 per cent of GDP.

The Bank will continue to monitor international and domestic developments that influence the movements of inflation and will act appropriately in line with its mission to foster price and financial stability that is conducive to the economic development in Eswatini.

Dr. Phil Mnisi
GOVERNOR

Stories By Nokunceda Magagula
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Mega Lounge alleged car thief apprehended

THE Royal Eswatini Police Services officers have arrested a 24-year-old man in connection with the theft of a motor vehicle that was stolen outside Mega Lounge during a show. Lungelo Phesheya Dlamini from ka Siko appeared at the Mbabane Magistrate's court before Magistrate Thembela Simelane on Tuesday.

According to sources close to the matter, last Saturday the popular entertainment spot Mega Lounge which is located at Sidvashini hosted a show that attracted a lot of fun lovers.

Fled

It is alleged that the accused who was also present during the show, stole Nomalungelo Sukati's car key. Allegedly the accused proceeded to the car which is a white Volkswagen and fled with the car.

A few moments later Sukati realised that her car was missing she began posting it on social media seeking assistance from people to report it to the police when they came across it. She also reported to the police from Mbabane police station.

Dlamini's charge sheet reads that he is charged with theft of a motor vehicle. "On January 27 2024 at Sidvashini in the Hhohho region, the said accused person, unlawfully and intentionally stole a motor vehicle valued at E120 000 which was the lawful prop-

erty of Nomalungelo Sukati, and thus committed the said offence" part of the charge sheet reads.

In court, the crown applied that the accused be remanded into custody pending the setting of his trial date on February 6, 2024, and the accused bail is not opposed. The crown also applied that the car is released to the owner and Simelane agreed for the car to be released.

Dlamini went on to move his bail application, he said he is currently enrolled in one of the universities in Eswatini, furthermore, he has two children which he takes care of.

Complainant

He assured the court that if he is granted bail he will stay away from the complainant and he is not a flight risk because he is a Liswati born and bred in Eswatini. Dlamini mentioned that he is also willing to hand over his passport to Mbabane police station.

Magistrate Simelane granted the accused bail fixed at E5 000 and cited that the accused should not interfere with the crown's witnesses and should be present in court when he is summoned.



▲ Lungelo Dlamini who allegedly stole a car at Mega Lounge.

Woman charged with theft ...after using money mistakenly sent to her MoMo account

A 23-year-old woman from Mahlanya was arrested by the police after she used money that was mistakenly sent to her mobile money account.

The woman can be identified as Khetsiwe Madlazi, it is said that on December 13, 2024, Vuyokazi Lukhele mistakenly sent E4 680 to Madlazi's mobile money account. Lukhele realized that she had made a mistake and asked the accused to kindly return the money, however, the accused refused.

Lukhele went on to open a case at the Mbabane police station against Madlazi, which led to the accused arrest. In court the accused represented herself, her charge sheet reads that the accused is facing one count of theft.

"On December 13, 2023, at or near Lobamba area in the

district of Hhohho the said accused persons, did wrongfully, unlawfully, and intentionally steal money amounting to E4680.00 which was mistakenly sent to her mobile money number, the property of or in the lawful possession of Vuyokazi Lukhele and thus commit the said offense" the charge sheet reads.

During court proceedings the accused pleaded guilty to theft, she was therefore found guilty as per her plea, in his mitigation statement she told the court that she is remorseful of her actions. She said she has two children who are dependent on her. She further mentioned that she is willing to repay the complainant.

Magistrate Simelane said the accused will not face criminal prosecution, however, she has to pay E1 200 for four months to the complainant.



▲Khetsiwe Madlazi who is charged with theft.



▲The 13 Dlangeni residents who are charged with Malicious damage to property.

12 men and 1 woman from Dlangeni under Hhukwini Inkhundla have been arrested by Lobamba police for damaging a tractor valued E90 000 and a house valued at E600 000 which belonged to residents who are also from the same area.

According the charge sheets the accused names are Lihle Sibanyoni aged (20), Nhlonipho Dlamini (19) Similo Tsela (20), Vusie Matsebula (30) Bandile Gama (18) Mlandvo Matsebula (28), Nkosinathi Dlamini (26), Mpendulo Gama (25) Samkelo Gama (25) Cyprian Matsebula (24), Nomsa Ginindza (48) and Paulos Gama (54).

The charge sheet reads that all the accused persons are charged with two counts of malicious injury to

13 Dlangeni folk arrested for injury to property

property.

Count one reads that on January 15, 2024, at Dlangeni Lomahhina area in the district of Hhohho said accused persons each of them acting jointly in furtherance of a common purpose did wrongfully, unlawfully and intentionally damaged, burn a Mersey Ferguson 240 Tractor valued at E90, 000.00, which is the property of Philip Nkambule and thus commit the said offense.

Count two states that on 15th January 2024, in the Dlangeni Lomahhina area in the district of Hhohho, the said accused persons each of them acting jointly in furtherance of a common purpose did wrongfully, unlawfully, and intentionally damaged, a window of a three-bedroom house valued at E600.00 the property of or in the lawful possession of one Girly Busisiwe Ndwandwe and thus commit the said offense.

In court all the accused legally represented themselves, and the crown applied that all the accused be remanded out of custody pending the setting of their trial date. Magistrate Simelane ruled that the accused should be remanded outside custody on February 1, 2024, pending the setting of their trial date.



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BUSINESS NEWS

BUSINESS BRIEFS

Absa aims to harness Chinese push

JOHANNESBURG — South African lender Absa Group is positioning to benefit as private Chinese firms increase their investment in Africa, the head of the bank's international business told Reuters. China's involvement in Africa, for decades defined by large, government loan-backed projects, is undergoing a transformation, Absa International CEO Cheryl Buss said in an interview.

Astral recovers after bird flu outbreak

SOUTH Africa's largest poultry producer Astral Foods will bounce back to profitability in the half-year to March 31 as the impact of the country's devastating bird flu outbreak and power cuts wanes, it said on Wednesday. In a trading statement, Astral said it expects headline earnings per share (HEPS) - South Africa's main profit measure - to rise by at least 300 per cent to 654 rand in the six months to March 31, up from 163 rand during the same period last year.

Traders divert Russian oil products around Africa

MOSCOW — Traders were diverting cargoes with Russian oil products around Africa to avoid the Red Sea due to a heightened risk of attacks by Yemen's Iran-aligned Houthi group, data from market sources and LSEG showed. Last week, the fuel tanker Marlin Luanda, carrying Russian naphtha, was attacked in the Red Sea by Houthi rebels.

Guided Trade Initiative through AfCFTA will benefit even small businesses — Minister

By Silindzelwe Nxumalo

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THE Guided Trade Initiative through AfCFTA has benefits not only for the bigger players but the small businesses.

This was revealed by the Minister of Commerce, Industry and Trade Manqoba Khumalo who said for Eswatini to start trading under the Guided Trade Initiative through AfCFTA the main benefits will not only accrue to the bigger players but will also enable small businesses owned by women and the youth to tap into the opportunities as envisaged in the AfCFTA Protocol on Women and Youth in Trade.

Khumalo was speaking during the launch of preferential trade under the AfCFTA Trade Guided Initiative (GTI) by the Republic of South Africa held at the Durban.

The Minister stated that Eswatini looks forward to commencing trade under the Guided Trade Initiative as they strongly believe that the AfCFTA is an important initiative in facilitating investment and increases the country's prospects of stimulating industrialization including value chains, employment, income generation, and poverty reduction.

He said currently, Eswatini's principal exports in Africa are mostly concentrated in the Southern and Eastern regions.

"The AfCFTA presents the country with greater prospects to expand into new markets beyond these two regions and provides alternative markets for the export of value-added goods and services," he said.

He stated that Eswatini is fully committed to starting trading under the GTI and looks forward to partnering with the SACU Secretariat to ensure that the country's private sector, including the SMMEs sector is assisted.

"The country has already engaged traders to take advantage of this great opportunity to penetrate the African market," he said.

He added that Eswatini has concluded the development of the National AfCFTA Implementation Strategy and Action Plan which will be launched in March 2024.

He explained that the Strategy identifies priority export products and services, key value chains, value addition, and trade opportunities, as well as constraints, measures, and capabilities required for Eswatini to take full advantage of the available markets, including the AfCFTA.

He further congratulated South Africa for taking the positive strides to commemorate the launch in the margins of the Council of Ministers which not only signifies the importance of the AfCFTA to them but to the SACU countries collectively.

Khumalo stated that the shipment that was made during the launch under the AfCFTA operational tools portrays a positive message to the African economic operators and the whole world that SACU is ready to trade under the AfCFTA.

"Gazetting of the provisional tariff offer by the SACU countries will now enable the private sector, particularly MSMEs to tap into the



▲ Minister of Commerce, Industry and Trade Manqoba Khumalo making his remarks during the launch of the preferential trade agreement under the AfCFTA Trade Guided Initiative at the Durban Port.

opportunities brought by the wider AfCFTA market with a population of 1.3 billion people and a market share of about E63.3 billion (US\$3.4 trillion).

The AfCFTA is the largest free trade area globally considering the number of member states, second only to the World Trade Organization (WTO). It is also the largest in terms of population and geographic size, encompassing over 1.3 billion people across Africa, which is expected to grow to 2.5 billion by 2050.

Last week Eswatini through the Minister of Commerce, Industry, and Trade in a press conference announced that Eswatini is set to commence trade under the AfCFTA Agreement from January 31, 2024, following the issuance of a Gazette issued by the International Trade Administration Commission (ITAC), on behalf of the five (5) SACU Member States, including Eswatini.

He also announced that the ministry has already engaged traders to take advantage of this great opportunity to penetrate the African market.

He said that as a tool to enhance trade under the AfCFTA Agreement, Eswatini has since joined other AfCFTA Partner States that are part of the Guided Trade Initiative (GTI). Under this initiative, the AfCFTA Secretariat assists in connecting businesses and products

for import and export amongst the Partner States.

He stated that currently, Egypt, Kenya, Cameroon, Rwanda, Ghana, Mauritius, Tanzania, and Tunisia are trading under this initiative and Eswatini is amongst the countries that are set to join the second phase of the programme.

Khumalo said Eswatini traders have registered their interest in being part of the initiative and the International Trade Department of the Ministry of Commerce Industry and Trade in collaboration with the AfCFTA Secretariat, Eswatini Revenue Service (ERS), and the Eswatini Investment Promotion Authority (EIPA) will be engaging with these traders to assist them with increasing their market in the continent.

He also stated that the ministry is also engaged in discussions with key exporting companies namely The Rhodes Food Group, CONCO, Eswatini Sugar Association (ESA), and The Fridge Factory just to name a few.

The minister said these are some of the companies already exporting in the continent and are looking into expanding their exports into the rest of the continent, and they will be reaching out to more traders including SMMEs and Women and Youth owned businesses which are set to benefit from utilizing this agreement.



FX RATES

Notes/Cash		
	Buy	Sell
U.S. Dollar	18.3132	18.7769
G.B. Pound	23.1465	23.8305
EURO	19.8178	20.4256
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	



Reset your electricity meters — ESERA

By Silindzelwe Nxumalo
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ESWATINI Energy Regulatory Authority (ESERA) has urged all prepayment meter customers to align and cooperate with their respective electricity suppliers to ensure that their meters are reset.

According to the notice issued by the regulator, the nation is expected to cooperate with their electricity suppliers in ensuring that their prepaid meters are reset by the Electricity Prepaid Meter Token Identifier (TID) Rollover conducted by Eswatini Electricity Company (EEC) by November 24, 2024.

The statement issued by the regulator, the TID Rollover is a global initiative that is aimed at addressing the issue of the Token Identifier (TID) running out of digits in November 2024, which would affect the functionality of prepaid electricity meters that use the Standard Transfer Specification (STS) technology.

ESERA explained that a Token Identifier (TID) is a token identification code used to uniquely identify each token generated when a customer purchases an electricity unit.

“Prepaid meters store the TID to prevent the same token from being accepted more than once,” read the notice.

The notice also stated that the TID has a life span of 31.9 years after which the meter stops accepting new tokens which



▲ESERA Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Sikhumbo Tsabedze.

necessitates that the meters be reset, known as TID Rollover, prior to the lapse of this period.

The regulator explained that existing meters are linked to a base date of 1993 hence reaching end of life on 24 November 2024.

“The ongoing rollover by local electricity distribution licensees, such as the Eswatini Electricity Company, will enable these meters to be reset to a new base date thus making them continue functioning correctly until at least 2045,” read the notice.

The regulator further urged all prepayment meter customers to align and cooperate with their respective electricity suppliers to ensure that their meters are reset (rolled over) before November 2014, 2024.

EEC launched the TID Rollover project dubbed as ‘Bambelela Siyajika, keep calm and rest your meter’ on August 15, 2023, at their headquarters in Mbabane.

Speaking during the launch, EEC Managing Director Ernest Mkhonta said this isn’t a drive unique to EEC or Eswatini, even neighbours all over the southern African region, are also busy with the same project.

He stated that all prepaid meters, regardless of where people are residing, must be aligned with meter resetting to the system of the service provider.

Mkhonta said the EEC was also excited that it would be able to put into perspective misinformation that had been peddled through various platforms regarding the

“We have noted with great concern reports carried out in some publications that have been further from the truth and, if anything, they have caused panic to our customers. We have read stories about a supposed blackout that will affect all prepaid clients in 2024 and heard allegations that this is an attempt by the company to consume units loaded by clients fast. All these narratives are just

misconceptions that we hope, after today, will be cleared,” said the MD.

He explained that the token generation is said to be in two-fold whereby, when a customer buys tokens (units), they give the vendor their meter number, and this allows the system to generate a token that can only be read by that specific meter.

He said the customer’s meter identifies the token generated for it through a token identity number, which is then stored in the meter memory.

He added that as a result, unrest meters will reject tokens generated after the new base date, and therefore this means the public needs to wipe out the memory of EEC meters so that they can accept tokens generated moving forward.

“This entire process will need to key change tokens that only we can generate and will be completely free to our customers. We have included the option to generate your key change tokens on our USSD platform. What you need to do is dial *8888#, choose option 7 (TID Rollover), and follow the prompts. The two tokens that will be generated for you are the ones you will use to reset your meter. Customers must follow the sequence of the tokens and make sure that they have loaded all bought units before resetting,” he explained.

Mkhonta further emphasized on the importance of loading all bought tokens before people reset their meters. This is because if customers do not follow the procedure, they will forfeit the token and EEC will be unable to issue refunds.

THE United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) is looking for qualified consultant firms for the Greening the Central Bank of Eswatini Project (GCBEP).

According to the procuring notice issued by UNDP Eswatini, the GCBEP is set within the broader context of global efforts to combat climate change and transition to sustainable economies.

The notice stated that the consulting firm would be responsible for coordinating and executing the project activities, and the specific duties and responsibilities include but are not limited to, conducting a baseline assessment and benchmarking of greening financing efforts and Central Bank policies, and engaging with stakeholders and raising awareness among Central Bank staff and key stakeholders.

It is stated that other responsibilities include undertaking a comprehensive diagnostic study, including identifying potential entry points for action, assessing capacity gaps, and providing recommendations for integrating climate-responsive policies into the financial supervisory and monetary policy framework, developing training materials, and conducting training for Central Bank staff and relevant stakeholders, that include but are not limited to government ministries.

“Other responsibilities include developing a roadmap for greening the Central Bank’s financial services, products, and processes, ensuring gender mainstreaming throughout the project activities, and overseeing and coordinating the work with the Central Bank and other key stakeholders,” read the notice.

The UNPD further requested interested candidates to indicate whether they intend to submit a bid by creating a draft response

UNDP looking for consultant firm for Greening Central Bank Project

without submitting it directly in the system.

“This will enable the system to send notifications in case of amendments to the tender requirements. Should you require further clarification, kindly communicate using the messaging functionality in the system. Offers must be submitted directly in the system following this link: <http://supplier.quantum.partneragencies.org>, using the profile you may have in the portal,” read part of the notice.

They also stated that in case the tenderer has never registered before, they can register a profile using the registration link shared via the procurement notice and following the instructions in the guides available on the UNDP website: <https://www.undp.org/procurement/business/resources-for-bidders>.

“Do not create a new profile if you already have one. Use the forgotten password feature in case you do not remember the password or the username from previous registration,” advised the notice.

CBE Head Strategy and Communication Mandla Lumphondo said the Central Bank of Eswatini Greening Project (CBEGP) is set within the broader context of global efforts to combat climate change and transition to a sustainable economy.

He stated that the project objectives included developing a national green taxonomy for Eswatini to define greening in the context of the country, and this is necessary to avoid greenwashing as the country implements green growth-related

activities, projects, programs, strategies, and policies.

He said another objective is that it will be enhancing Green Finance Capacity, stating that one of the central objectives of the CBEGP is to build the capacity of Eswatini’s Central Bank to spearhead sustainable green finance initiatives.

“This will involve a comprehensive diagnostic of the Central Bank’s current efforts on greening financial services, policies, procedures, and products, as well as the overall country,” he said.

He also said that this will also help establish a capacity needs assessment to identify gaps for the greening of the Central Bank in particular and the economy in general and identify the most strategic areas of focus for the greening of the Central Bank and other financial institutions.

He further stated that a key component of the project is to address capacity gaps identified in the diagnostic study that may hinder the Central Bank and the country at large from effectively embracing green finance and green growth in general.

He said the project will result in the formulation of a broader greening roadmap and a specific roadmap for greening the Central Bank’s financial services, products, and processes.

UNDP – Eswatini has been identified as the Implementation Partner for this project and will secure the services of an external Consulting firm to lead the technical work for delivering the project outputs.



S.Africa’s Absa aims to harness Chinese corporate Africa push

JOHANNESBURG — South African lender Absa Group is positioning to benefit as private Chinese firms increase their investment in Africa, the head of the bank’s international business told Reuters.

China’s involvement in Africa, for decades defined by large, government loan-backed projects, is undergoing a transformation, Absa International CEO Cheryl Buss said in an interview.

“It was very much government to government,” she said. “One could also argue it shifted slightly and became government to business. And I think now we’re seeing it being business to business, increasingly so.”

On Wednesday, Johannesburg-listed Absa said it was opening a non-banking subsidiary in Beijing to support Chinese customers as part of its strategy to offer expertise on African markets to foreign clients.

The new office is operational and will

officially open in May, the bank said. Buss said Absa was still nurturing close relationships with Chinese state-owned enterprises and development finance institutions, which would continue to play an important role in Beijing’s ambitions in Africa.

Absa’s Chinese subsidiary, however, would allow the bank to better understand the needs of new and potential clients.

“It’s very key to be in China so that we can ... understand which corporates are having a strategy shift towards Africa and where they may be investing,” she said.

Buss said there had been significant investment by Chinese companies in mining and mining infrastructure, particularly in the critical minerals sector in countries including Zambia.

Chinese firms were also moving deeper into technology and telecoms, light manufacturing, and agriculture with Kenya, Ghana and increasingly Tanzania, Uganda



▲The logo of South Africa’s Absa bank is seen outside an Absa branch in Cape Town, South Africa.

and Mozambique as their target markets.

Absa has pushed ahead with an international expansion strategy since former owner Barclays announced its sale in 2016, ending a 90-year presence in Africa.

It has already opened offices in the United

States and Britain and is evaluating its strategy for the Middle East and Asia, Buss said.

“Everything we do is to develop the pipeline of engagement for trade and investment into Africa,” she said. (Reuters)

Traders divert Russian oil products around Africa to avoid Red Sea — sources, LSEG



▲The Galaxy Leader cargo ship is escorted by Houthi boats in the Red Sea.

By Ahmad Ghaddar

MOSCOW — Traders were diverting cargoes with Russian oil products around Africa to avoid the Red Sea due to a heightened risk of attacks by Yemen’s Iran-aligned Houthi group, data from market sources and LSEG showed.

Last week, the fuel tanker Marlin Luanda, carrying Russian naphtha, was attacked in the Red Sea by Houthi rebels.

Since the full EU embargo on Russian oil products took effect in February 2023, traders have rerouted fuel oil, vacuum gasoil (VGO) and naphtha cargoes from Russian ports to Asia and the Middle East via the Red Sea and the Suez Canal as the shortest sea route.

According to LSEG shipping data, fuel oil and VGO loaded on two tankers Nissos Christiana and Alkinoos at the Russian Baltic ports, had turned around in the Mediterranean Sea and were skirting the coast of Africa on their way to India and Singapore.

Another vessel, Minerva Zoe - loaded with Russian fuel oil - was heading to Singapore but was rerouted and was now waiting near

the Senegal port of Dakar. Shipping companies sailing around the Cape of Good Hope to avoid Houthi attacks in the Red Sea face tough choices over where to refuel and restock, as well as rough conditions at sea, companies and analysts say.

A Malaysia-bound tanker from the Russian Black Sea port of Taman with vacuum gasoil is heading towards Gibraltar, shipping data showed.

Another cargo vessel, Sea Senor, loaded with naphtha at the Baltic port of Ust-Luga has already passed the Cape of Good Hope on its way to Singapore, according to the LSEG data.

Most oil product tankers loaded in Russia head to Asia through the Suez Canal. Some of them add new signage - “No link with Israel” or “No contact Isr” - to deter Houthi attacks, in addition to the usual “Armed guard on board” signs, LSEG data shows.

The U.S. and Britain have launched strikes on Houthi targets in Yemen and reinstated the militia in a list of terrorist groups in a bid to curtail future attacks.

The Houthis, who control the most populous parts of Yemen, say their attacks on ships in and around the Red Sea are in solidarity with Palestinians in the Gaza war. (Reuters)



▲A test tube labelled “Bird Flu” and eggs are seen in this picture illustration.

S.Africa’s top poultry producer Astral recovers after bird flu outbreak

SOUTH Africa’s largest poultry producer Astral Foods will bounce back to profitability in the half-year to March 31 as the impact of the country’s devastating bird flu outbreak and power cuts wanes, it said on Wednesday.

In a trading statement, Astral said it expects headline earnings per share (HEPS) - South Africa’s main profit measure - to rise by at least 300 per cent to 654 rand in the six months to March 31, up from 163 rand during the same period last year.

Astral posted a 621 million rand (\$33 million) operating loss, the first in its 23 years of existence, in the year ended Sept. 30.

This was mainly due to costs associated with the outbreak of a high-pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI), a bird flu which spreads rapidly in an infected flock causing a high death rate, as well as diesel costs to provide alternative power amid South Africa’s ongoing electricity crisis.

Africa’s most advanced economy is

struggling to generate adequate electricity from its ageing coal-fired plants, which frequently break down.

The company said while diesel expenses remained, the cost had reduced after the intensity of power cuts eased in the first quarter of the current financial year.

Feeding costs have also come down due to lower commodity prices, Astral said.

It still faces water and electricity supply disruptions, while the importation of broiler hatching eggs to rebuild its chicken flock, decimated by bird flu, has added costs.

The company said it was “dismayed” by the International Trade Administration Commission of South Africa’s decision to lift punitive tariffs on poultry imports, saying there was no shortage of chicken products to justify the move.

South Africa’s poultry producers say the move to allow more chicken imports into the country will hurt a sector battling to recover from the avian flu outbreak, an electricity crisis and higher input costs. (Reuters)

TIKTOK has completed its deal to take control of Indonesia's biggest e-commerce platform, which has allowed the Chinese social media giant to restart for its online shopping business in the country.

Indonesian tech conglomerate GoTo said on Wednesday that TikTok, owned by China's ByteDance, had completed a deal agreed in December to buy 75.01 per cent of Tokopedia for \$840 million from the conglomerate.

TikTok had been forced to close its relatively new e-commerce service, TikTok Shop, in Indonesia after the country banned online shopping on social media platforms in September, citing the need to protect smaller merchants and users' data.

Under the deal with GoTo, TikTok Shop's Indonesia business will be injected into the enlarged Tokopedia entity.

"Today marks the completion of a partnership with TikTok that will continue to bring benefits to

TikTok seals deal for Indonesia's top e-commerce platform

Indonesia and its MSMEs [micro, small and medium enterprises]. It is also a big step forward for GoTo Group," GoTo Group CEO Patrick Walujo said in a statement.

In the same statement, GoTo said it achieved positive adjusted earnings before interest, tax, depreciation and amortisation (EBITDA) in the final quarter of 2023, as targeted, though details on the amount will not be shared until March.

GoTo's businesses include ride-hailing, delivery and financial services.

As its profitability improves, GoTo also said it may conduct a share buyback.

Prior to the announcement, GoTo shares closed up 1.15 per cent at 88 rupiah each.

(Reuters)



▲ Employees pack goods at Goto's e-commerce unit Tokopedia's warehouse in Jakarta, Indonesia



▲ A Volkswagen logo is pictured at Volkswagen's headquarters in Wolfsburg, Germany.

Volkswagen founds AI lab, in talks with potential partners

BERLIN - Volkswagen is in talks with international technology firms about collaborating to create new digital prototypes for products and features using artificial intelligence, the carmaker said on Wednesday.

The company has founded a new 'artificial intelligence lab' to generate new product ideas, including possible cooperations with companies in the technology sector across China, North America and Europe, it said in a statement.

The aim is to generate early-stage prototypes in areas like AI-optimised charging cycles, predictive maintenance services and voice recognition.

"Exploratory talks are already underway with international tech companies on initial projects," it added, without providing further details.

The lab will not be housed inside Volkswagen's software unit Cariad or a

“Exploratory talks are already underway with international tech companies on initial projects,”

specific brand, with the view of moving faster than other processes within the company would, a spokesperson said.

Still, promising prototypes will be passed onto brands to proof and execute, and the supervisory board of the lab will include representatives from Volkswagen, Audi and Porsche.

Cariad, which has struggled with years of delays and overhauls, is currently developing a restructuring plan which reports say could involve cutting thousands of positions as the unit attempts to bring new software architectures onto the market.

(Reuters)

Oura launches a new feature to measure resilience against stress

Smart ring maker Oura is rolling out a few features called Resilience, which measures how much can users withstand stress.

The company is measuring resilience using parameters like stress load during the daytime and recovery during the day and night (sleep).

It doesn't assign a score but categorizes resilience into five types: Limited, Adequate, Solid, Strong, and Exceptional.

Oura will also show insights and suggestions to increase resilience in the app. There is also a section showing the trend line for the newly released feature for the week.

In October, the hardware startup launched the ability to measure daytime stress along with a mood journaling feature called Reflections.

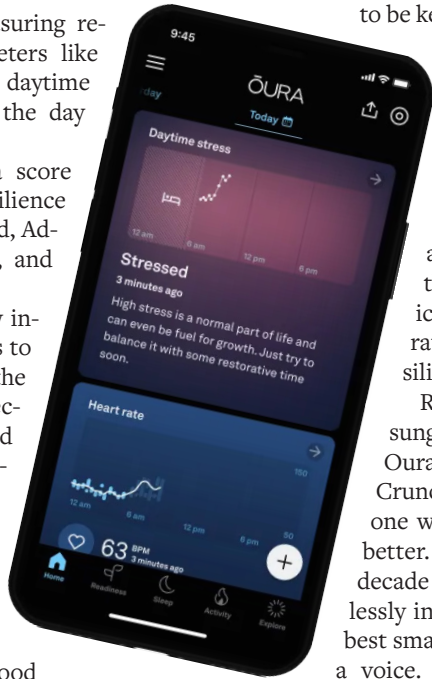
The company said on average users experience 96.5 minutes of stress per day. Plus, it observed that users show a high-stress duration during Fridays and Saturdays as

compared to weekdays because of increased activity and alcohol contributing to increasing stress.

Apart from measuring stress, Oura seems to be keen to provide ways to manage it. In December 2023, the company partnered with meditation service platform Headspace to launch 15-minute sessions it the Oura app.

Oura's rival, Ultrahuman also has recovery scores, but that focuses more on physical readiness and resilience rather than psychological resilience.

Recently, in reaction to Samsung announcing its own ring, Oura CEO Tom Hale told TechCrunch that its ring is for everyone who wants to manage stress better. "Since our founding over a decade ago, we've invested relentlessly in the service of creating the best smart ring that gives everybody a voice. Our members span from Gen Z to Boomers, from pro athletes to those seeking to improve their sleep and health, from women tracking their cycles to those who want to better manage their stress," he said. (TechCrunch)



SpaceX will launch the Starlab private space station using Starship

Starlab, the private space station being developed by Voyager Space and Airbus, will go to orbit onboard a SpaceX Starship rocket before the decade is out, the companies announced Wednesday.

Starlab is one of a handful of private space station initiatives currently under development. These projects have gained major funding from NASA, under a new initiative called the Commercial Low Earth Orbit Development Program, which is seeking to avoid a critical "space station gap" when the International Space Station is decommissioned in 2030.

The news from Starlab is not exactly a surprise; in a recent interview, Voyager CEO Dylan

Thomas said it was always the plan to launch Starlab in a single mission – and Starship is the only heavy-lift rocket under development that will be capable of accommodating the station's 8-meter-diameter in one go. Taylor added that the decision to launch in one mission also reduces on-orbit risks.

"Let's say you have a station that requires multiple launches, and then you're taking the hardware and you're assembling it [on orbit]," he said. "Not only is that very costly, but there's a lot of execution risk around that as well. That's what we were trying to avoid and we're convinced that that's the best way to go." (TechCrunch)

NEARLY 400 people have died of starvation in Ethiopia's Tigray and Amhara regions in recent months, the national ombudsman said Tuesday, a rare admission of hunger-related deaths by a federal body.

Local officials have previously reported starvation deaths in their districts, but Ethiopia's federal government has insisted these reports are "completely wrong".

Ethiopia's ombudsman office sent experts to the regions, which are gripped by drought and still reeling from a devastating civil war that officially ended 14 months ago. They concluded that 351 people have died of hunger in Tigray in the past six months, with 44 more deaths in Amhara.

Only a small fraction of needy people in Tigray are receiving food aid, according to an aid memo seen by The Associated Press, more than one month after aid agencies resumed deliveries of grain following a lengthy pause over theft.

Just 14 per cent of 3.2 million people targeted for food aid by humanitarian agencies in Tigray this month had received it by Jan. 21, according to the memo by the Tigray Food Cluster, a group of aid agencies co-chaired by the U.N.'s World Food Program and Ethiopian officials.

"Immediately scale up"

The memo urges humanitarian groups to "immediately scale up" their operations, warning that "failure to take swift action now will result in severe food insecurity and malnutrition during the lean season, with possible loss of the most vulnerable children and women in the region."

The U.N. and the U.S. paused food aid to Tigray in mid-March last year after discovering a "large-scale" scheme to steal humanitarian grain. The suspension was rolled out to the rest of Ethiopia in June. U.S. officials believe the theft may be the biggest diversion of grain ever. Donors have blamed Ethiopian government officials and the military for the fraud.

The U.N. and the U.S. lifted the pause in December after introducing reforms to curb

Nearly 400 Ethiopians have died of starvation

theft, but Tigray authorities say food is not reaching those who need it.

Two aid workers told the AP that the new system — which includes fitting GPS trackers to food trucks and putting QR codes on ration cards — has been hampered by technical issues. Aid agencies are also struggling with a lack of funds.

A third aid worker said the food aid pause and the slow resumption meant some people in Tigray have not received food aid for over a year. "They went through multiple rounds of registration and verification, but no actual distributions yet," the aid worker said.

The aid workers spoke to the AP on the condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to speak to the press.

Around 20.1 million people across Ethiopia need humanitarian food due to drought, conflict and a tanking economy. The aid pause pushed up hunger levels even further.

The U.S.-funded Famine Early Warning System has warned that crisis levels of hunger or worse "are expected in northern, southern and southeastern Ethiopia throughout at least early 2024." A former head of the WFP has described these hunger levels as "marching towards starvation."

Erupted

In Amhara, which shares a border with Tigray, a rebellion that erupted in August is impeding humanitarians' movements and making distributions difficult, while several regions of Ethiopia have been devastated by a multi-year drought.

Malnutrition rates among children in parts of Ethiopia's Afar, Amhara and Oromia regions range between 15.9 per cent and 47 per cent, according to a presentation by the



▲ Environmental stakeholders look on as Tourism and Environmental Affairs Minister admires a collection of indigenous tree seedlings

Ethiopia Nutrition Cluster and reviewed by the AP. Among displaced children in Tigray, the rate is 26.5 per cent. The Ethiopia Nutrition Cluster is co-chaired by the U.N. Children's Fund and the federal government.

Tigray, home to 5.5 million people, was the center of a devastating two-year civil war that killed hundreds of thousands and spilled into the neighbouring regions. A U.N. panel accused Ethiopia's government of using "starvation as a method of warfare" by restricting food aid to Tigray during the conflict, which ended in November 2022 with a peace deal. Persistent insecurity meant only 49 per cent of Tigray's farmland was planted

during the main planting season last year, according to an assessment by U.N. agencies, NGOs and the regional authorities, and seen by the AP.

Crop production in these areas was only 37 per cent of the expected total because of drought. In some areas the proportion was as low as 2 per cent.

The poor harvest prompted Tigray's authorities to warn of an "unfolding famine" that could match the disaster of 1984-5, which killed hundreds of thousands of people across northern Ethiopia unless the aid response is immediately scaled up.

(Africanews)

'States must stop funding Israel's military'

JOHANNESBURG - All states have an obligation to stop funding and facilitating Israel's military actions in Gaza after the World Court indicated that those actions could plausibly be genocidal, South African foreign minister Naledi Pandor said on Wednesday.

The International Court of Justice (ICJ) last week ordered Israel to take all measures within

its power to prevent its troops from committing genocide against Palestinians in Gaza, in a case brought by South Africa. South Africa has for decades been a strong advocate for the Palestinian cause, comparing the plight of Palestinians to that of Black South Africans under apartheid. Israel has strongly denied allegations of genocide and rejects the comparison to the apartheid era.

(Reuters)



▲ South Africa's Department of International Relations and Cooperation (DIRCO) Director-General Zane Dangor, South African Foreign Minister Naledi Pandor and South African Ambassador to the Netherlands Vusimuzi Madonsela sit on the day the International Court of Justice (ICJ) rule on emergency measures against Israel following accusations by South Africa that the Israeli military operation in Gaza is a state-led genocide, in The Hague, Netherlands.

Wildfires force evacuations of South African coastal towns

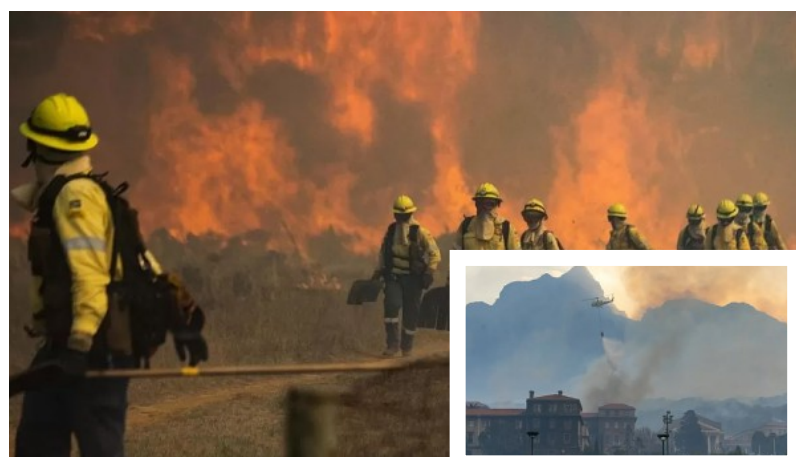
RESIDENTS were evacuated from small coastal towns near Cape Town in South Africa as wildfires swept down from surrounding mountains and burned out of control for a second day on Tuesday.

Authorities ordered a full evacuation of Pringle Bay, a coastal village popular with holidaymakers about 80 kilometers (50 miles) from Cape Town. People evacuated parts of the nearby town of Betty's Bay on Monday.

Wildfires are relatively common in the mountain ranges around Cape Town and further down the coast in the South African summer, but it's unusual for towns to be completely evacuated.

The fires began Monday and were fueled by the hot, dry weather and strong coastal winds. Annelie Rabie, mayor of the Overstrand municipality that oversees the towns, said as many as six wildfires had broken out in the area. Four had been contained or extinguished, she said, but one was heading straight for Pringle Bay.

The Overstrand council said a small number of homes had been gutted. No injuries were reported but authorities issued a 'code red,' meaning the fires presented a seri-



▲ More than 120 firefighters have been deployed to the area, Helicopters have been used to try to control the fire

ous and immediate danger to people and property.

Around 95% of a nearby nature reserve had also burned, the government said.

Residents of Pringle Bay were moving to a nearby town, local authorities said, while firefighters battled to get remaining fires under control.

Helicopters were scooping up water from the ocean and dumping it on the fires, a common tactic in the region. Wildfires have broken out in numerous parts of South Africa's Western Cape province in recent

weeks, including one on the slopes of the world-famous Table Mountain overlooking Cape Town over the weekend. It was quickly brought under control.

A huge fire swept across Table Mountain in 2021, causing extensive damage and taking days to put out.

The main causes of the wildfires are discarded cigarettes, people lighting cooking fires or burning debris and sometimes arson, according to the Western Cape local government. Coastal winds fan the blazes and can make them unpredictable.

(Africanews)

Biden has decided how to respond to attack on US troops in Jordan

WASHINGTON - U.S. President Joe Biden said on Tuesday he has made up his mind on how to respond to a drone attack that killed U.S. service members in Jordan, as he weighs punishing Iran-backed militias without triggering a wider war.

Biden, speaking to reporters as he left the White House on a campaign trip to Florida, did not elaborate on his decision, which came after consultations with top advisers at the White House.

But John Kirby, the White House national security spokesperson, told reporters aboard Air Force One as Biden flew to Florida that the United States could respond more than once.

“It’s fair for you to expect that we will respond in an appropriate fashion and it is very possible that what you’ll see is a tiered approach here, not just a single action, but essentially multiple actions,” he said.

Biden said the United States does not need a wider war in the Middle East, echoing comments from other officials on Tuesday that the United States does not want a war with Iran.

Biden has been weighing his options and the expectation has been that there will be retaliatory strikes, but the timing of the response has been unclear.

“I don’t think we need a wider war in the Middle East. That’s not what

I’m looking for,” said Biden.

Biden replied “yes” when asked if he had decided how to respond to the attacks.

Asked if Iran was responsible, Biden added: “I do hold ... them responsible in the sense that they’re supplying the weapons” to those who carried out the attacks.

Three U.S. service members were killed and at least 34 wounded in a drone attack by Iran-backed militants on U.S. troops in northeastern Jordan near the Syrian border, officials said on Sunday.

Biden is under pressure for a strong response with Republicans accusing the Democratic president of letting American forces become sitting ducks. (Reuters)



▲ U.S. President Joe Biden is briefed on the deadly drone attack at a U.S. outpost in Jordan, by Director of National Intelligence Avril Haines, Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin and other members of the national security team in the Situation Room at the White House in Washington, U.S.

‘No U.S. threat to Iran will go unanswered’

DUBAI - Iran will respond to any threat from the United States, Tehran’s Revolutionary Guards’ chief Hossein Salami said on Wednesday, as Washington prepares its response to the killing of American servicemen by presumed Tehran-aligned militants.

U.S. President Joe Biden said on Tuesday he had already decided how to respond to a drone attack that killed three U.S. service members in Jordan on Saturday, but gave no further details about his plan.

Washington has blamed the attack, the first to kill U.S. troops in the Middle East since an escalation in regional violence accompanying the war between Israel and Hamas, on Ketaib Hezbollah, a pro-Iranian militia based in Iraq. The group said on Tuesday it was suspending military actions against the United States to avoid embarrassing the Baghdad government.

“We hear threats coming from American officials, we tell them that they have already

tested us and we now know one another, no threat will be left unanswered,” Iran’s Salami said, according to semi-official Tasnim news agency.

State media quoted Iran’s foreign minister, Hossein Amirabdollahian, as telling a cabinet meeting: “The U.S. has to stop its threats and focus on a political solution.”

Washington “has to accept the resistance as a fact”, he said, referring to Iran’s name for its alliance of armed groups across the Middle East.

U.S. forces based in Syria, Iraq and at sea have been engaged in tit-for-tat strikes with pro-Iranian armed groups since Israel launched its retaliatory war against Hamas after the Palestinian group attacked Israel on Oct. 7.

But Saturday’s drone attack in Jordan was the first time U.S. forces had suffered fatalities, raising pressure on Biden to respond forcefully against Iran itself despite the potential risk of a wider escalation.

Iran’s envoy to the United Nations, Amir

Saeid Iravani, said on Wednesday that Tehran would respond decisively to any attack on its territory, its interests, or Iranian nationals outside its borders.

In recent weeks, presumed Israeli strikes on Syria have killed several Iranian Revolutionary Guards, including senior commanders. On Monday, another Israeli strike hit what Tasnim described as an “Iranian military advisory centre” in Syria, killing two people. Iran’s envoy to Syria denied the target was an Iranian base and said the casualties were not Iranian.

On Jan. 15, Iran attacked what it called an Israeli “spy headquarters” in Iraq’s semi-autonomous Kurdistan region.

In the most direct confrontation between Iran and the United States in recent years, U.S. forces killed the commander of the Revolutionary Guards’ elite Quds force in a strike on a Baghdad airport in Jan. 2020. Tehran responded by targeting a U.S. air base in Iraq. (Reuters)



▲ Tehran’s Revolutionary Guards’ chief Hossein Salami.



▲ The United Nations’ top court will rule on Wednesday on whether Russia violated an anti-terrorism treaty by funding pro-Russian separatists in Ukraine, including those who shot down Malaysia Airlines flight MH17 in 2014.

World Court to rule on whether Russia violated international treaties in Ukraine

THE HAGUE - The United Nations’ top court will rule on Wednesday on whether Russia violated an anti-terrorism treaty by funding pro-Russian separatists in Ukraine, including those who shot down Malaysia Airlines flight MH17 in 2014.

Kyiv says Russia also violated a human rights treaty by discriminating against ethnic Tatars and Ukrainians in Crimea, the peninsula which Russia declared annexed from Ukraine in 2014.

Kyiv took Russia to the United Nations highest court in 2017, before Russia’s full scale invasion of Feb. 24, 2022.

In the case, which has taken almost seven years, Russia is accused of equipping and funding pro-Russian forces, including rebels who shot down Malaysia Airlines Flight MH17 in July 2014, killing all 298 passengers

and crew.

In November 2022, a Dutch court sentenced two Russians and a Ukrainian in absentia to life imprisonment for their role in the disaster.

In Crimea, Ukraine says Russia was trying to erase the culture of ethnic Tatars and Ukrainians.

The court’s judgments are final and without appeal but it has no way to enforce its rulings.

A ruling finding Russia responsible for funding the pro-Russian fighters in Ukraine, could, however, boost separate cases against Russia at the European Court of Human Rights and the International Civil Aviation Organization.

On Friday, the International Court of Justice will rule in another case in which Ukraine has accused Moscow of falsely applying the 1948 Genocide Convention to justify its Feb. 24, 2022 invasion. (Reuters)

Stories by Siphesihle Dlamini
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ESWATINI'S very own Zindzi Thwala and PhD have been announced as the hosts for the highly anticipated Eswatini Creators Awards.

Otherwise known as Phila Dlamini, PhD is a strong community and social services professional with a bachelor's degree focused on Chemical Engineering from University of Johannesburg, an MBA with Edinburgh Business School, and a Project Management Certification from PMI.

Known for her charisma and expertise in communications strategy and media management, Zindzi Thwala is a prominent public figure in Eswatini. She is also the proud owner of the award-winning Authentic Hair Salon and serves as the country manager at Liquid Logic Eswatini.

The stage is set for the Eswatini Creators Awards, scheduled to take place at Sharma House in Ezulwini on February 3, 2024. With tickets priced at E150, attendees can expect an unforgettable evening of celebration and recognition.

Embracing the theme of 'African Bling,' guests are encouraged to showcase their cultural pride and elegance through their attire. The organisers have spared no expense in creating an atmosphere that truly captures the essence of the nation.

As soon as guests step foot into Sharma House, they will be transported into a world of African splendour, where creativity reigns supreme.

The Eswatini Creators Awards go beyond mere glitz and glamour; they serve as a platform for the nation's talented creators to shine and receive the recognition they deserve. From fashion designers to musicians, models to influencers, this event is a celebration of diversity and inclusivity. It provides every citizen and resident with an opportunity to showcase their unique talents and be appreciated by a wider audience.

More than just an awards ceremony, this event has become a symbol of unity, bringing together creators from all walks of life. In

PhD, Zindzi to host Eswatini Creators Awards



▲ PhD and Zindzi Thwala will host the Eswatini Creators Awards.

a world where social media plays a significant role, the Eswatini Creators Awards leverage this connectivity to foster a vibrant community of artists and innovators. By sharing and engaging with each other's work, they create a sense of camaraderie that transcends borders and unites the nation in its creative endeavours.

Moreover, the Eswatini Creators Awards aim to empower and support individuals while elevating the value of existing brands. By recognising and celebrating the achievements of creators, they inspire others to pursue their passions and contribute to the growth of the creative industry in Eswatini.

'Swazi Gospel Carnival concept still alive, thriving'

THE organisers of the Swazi Gospel Carnival have come forward to reassure fans that the concept is still very much alive and in progress, despite last year's unfortunate setback.

In a recent statement, Siphesihle Mamba, the Public Relations Officer (PRO) for the event, expressed sincere apologies for the delay in providing updates regarding the festival and the inconvenience caused to the Top 7 artists, voters, and the Gospel Fraternity as a whole.

Mamba stated that due to unforeseen circumstances, the first edition of the Swazi Gospel Carnival was postponed. The festival was originally scheduled to take place on August 12, 2023.

Since its announcement last year, the Swazi Gospel Carnival has garnered immense support from Gospel fans who eagerly awaited the grand event. The festival was designed to showcase the talents of the Top 7 artists, who were nominated and voted for by the public. Voting took place through the Eswatini

Mobile platform, with each vote costing E2. The enthusiastic participation of the public further fueled the anticipation for the show.

However, due to financial constraints and delayed fund disbursement, the organisers were forced to postpone the event to a yet-to-be-announced date. This decision understandably raised doubts among many, but Mamba was quick to assure fans that the Swazi Gospel Carnival concept is still very much intact and progressing.

Mamba emphasised that the management team is actively working on implementing better fundraising strategies to secure the necessary funds for the show's success. She said as management, they are dedicated to ensuring that every component of the event is adequately catered for is unwavering. She concluded by reassuring the concept's lovers that there will be a makeup edition of the festival, on a date to be announced.



▲ Swazi Gospel Carnival PRO Siphesihle Mamba.



▲ Sancheziey.

Sancheziey to drop Valentine's song for singles

LOCAL artist Sancheziey and producer Milton B have teamed up to create a Valentine's song with a unique twist, to comfort single individuals on the love-themed Valentine's Day.

Titled 'Ngedvwa', this musical fusion of SiSwati and English combines elements of Dancehall, Amapiano, and Afro, resulting in a groovy yet melancholic anthem for single people.

The duo spent countless hours at Megasound Studios, pouring their creative energy into crafting the perfect theme song. Composed by Sancheziey, produced by Milton B, and with the beat created by Alex, 'Ngedvwa' is a masterpiece that captures the essence of being single on Valentine's Day. The song is set to be released on February 6, 2024, and will be available on all major digital platforms.

In an interview with Sancheziey, he expressed excitement about the upcoming release, stating that 'Ngedvwa' is everything they had envisioned. With a strong determination to make the song reach the magnitude it deserves, Sancheziey and Milton B are ready to go all in.

Collaboration

Notably, their collaboration does not end there. Sancheziey and Milton B have also partnered with Sky Fly Bed and Breakfast to create a unique event for singles on Valentine's Day. The Singles Valentine's Dinner, set to take place on February 14, 2024, from 6 pm onwards, aims to provide a space for those who find themselves without a partner on this romantic holiday.

The event, headlined by Sancheziey, Milton B, Mcola Lohlebako, and DJ Black Pearl, promises to be a night of both entertainment and therapeutic discussions. As Sancheziey explains, "Love is a beautiful thing, but it can also bring pain and heartbreak to many. This dinner is an opportunity for people to come together, share their experiences, and find solace in knowing they are not alone".

Rather than focusing solely on the celebration of love, Sancheziey and Sky Fly Bed and Breakfast aim to create an environment where attendees can engage in meaningful conversations about love's complexities. By discussing their experiences and exploring ways to heal from past heartaches, participants can find a path toward a brighter future.

Tipcee's Birthday Party to be held at The Destination

Stories by Siphesihle Dlamini
siphesihled@rubiconmedia.group

SOUTH African Gqom sensation, Tipcee is gearing up to set the stage on fire at The Destination as she celebrates her birthday with an electrifying performance.

This highly anticipated event will also feature an incredible lineup of artists including Costar Dollar, Tairro, Miss Iwah, Masento, and Katz. The party is scheduled to take place this Friday at The Destination, located in Ezulwini. Fans are already buzzing with excitement, eagerly waiting to witness Tipcee's dynamic stage presence and infectious energy.

Tickets for the event are available for purchase in advance at E50, while those who prefer to buy at the gate can do so for E70. To beat the heat, attendees are allowed to bring their cooler boxes until 3 pm. Here's a special treat for the ladies - they can enter the party for free before 7 pm.

Tipcee's rise to fame has been nothing short of remarkable. With her unique blend of house, kwaito, and gqom, she has managed to capture the hearts of fans not only in South Africa but across the entire continent. Her journey in the music industry began in 2009 when she decided to pursue a professional music career.

It was DJ Gukwa who first recognised Tipcee's exceptional talent and introduced her to DJ Tira. Impressed by



▲ Gqom artist Tipcee.

her skills, DJ Tira wasted no time in signing her to the prestigious Afrotainment record label. This collaboration came about after Tipcee and DJ Gukwa joined forces to create a stunning remix of the hit single 'Amadada'.

One of Tipcee's most notable

achievements is her chart-topping collaboration 'Is'cathulo' with DJ Tira, Busiswa, and Distruction Boyz. Her energetic performances and mesmerising dance moves have earned her the well-deserved title of 'The Princess of Afrotainment.'

Rising Star Talent Search to record songs for 5 upcoming artists

THE Mother of All Gospel Shows Rising Star Talent Search will be recording songs for five upcoming artists.

According to the brains behind the talent search, Nduduzo Matse, the technique to be used to sample the artists for the recording will include the overall winner of the talent search and one artist from each of the country's four regions. All these artists will be recorded free of charge.

The Mother of All Gospel Shows, a highly anticipated event in Eswatini, is taking its commitment to supporting emerging talent to new heights with the Rising Star Talent Search. The selection process for this exciting opportunity will begin on February 2, 2024, and conclude on February 17, 2024.

Auditions will be held in various locations across the country, including Pigg's Peak, Mbabane, Siteki, and Nhlangano in Manzini. On February 24, 2024, the elimination round will take place in Manzini, where the winner will be announced.

Talents

The Mother of All Gospel Shows Rising Star Talent Search is a nationwide endeavour aimed at empowering and uplifting new talents in the gospel music industry. It serves as a platform for aspiring artists to showcase their skills on the grand stage of Mother of All Gospel Shows, providing them with an opportunity to shine and make their mark.

Mother of All Gospel Shows, scheduled for April 27, 2024, promises to be an unforgettable experience for gospel music enthusiasts.

The line-up includes renowned acts such as Nduduzo Matse, Once More Six, Gcebile Maseko, Ntando Ngcamphalala, and Nothando Hlophe, among others. General tickets for this extraordinary event are priced at E200, ensuring that everyone can partake in the magic of gospel music.

For those seeking a more luxurious experience, early bird lounge tickets are available for E300, while regular lounge tickets can be purchased for E400.

Since its inception in 2019, Mother of All Gospel Shows has become a beacon of hope for emerging gospel artists in Eswatini. Through the Rising Star series, this annual event has nurtured and supported incredible talent within the country, fostering growth, innovation, development, and empowerment.

▲ The brains behind the Rising Star Talent Search Nduduzo Matse.

Neon Love theme for this year's Traffic Light Party

IT'S Neon Love at Traffic Lights!

This year's Traffic Light Valentine's Party theme is Neon Love, and attendees are encouraged to stand out with an outfit that's fun, colourful, bold, striking, and above all - bright.

The House on Fire's first big event of the year, the ultimate Traffic Light Valentine's Party will be held on February 16, 2024. This night will be a chance to dress up, with attendees donning their Traffic Light colours and going wild.

The night will feature games based on the classic theme of Valentine's Day and Love. Valentine's Day isn't just a day for lovers. Whether single or in a relationship, anyone can enjoy a night of memorable fun and meeting new people. Keeping the atmosphere alive and the energy high will be a line-up of some of Eswatini's finest DJs. Tickets are E120 and will be available from Dala Spaces at Mandela's Lifestyle in Malkerns from February 5, 2024, as well as at the door on the night.

Now in its thirteenth successful year, this Valentine's themed event continues to deliver a host of exciting games and a sizzling line-up of some of Eswatini's most talented DJs. House On Fire and official Traffic Light Party sponsor, Castle Lite are pulling out all the stops to make this a night to remember.

At this party, guests get to dress up in a Traffic Light colour of their choice to indicate their relationship status.

Green signifies that one is 'single and



▲ Fun lovers at the last Traffic Light Party 2023.

ready to mingle'. Red means that one is in a relationship, or not looking for one, while orange/yellow may mean 'unsure' or 'maybe' or could be, well, 'it's complicated'.

For those who need to get into Love's

fast lane, red, green, and orange Traffic Light wristbands will also be available at the door.



Dominic West spent days in bed after seeing negative reviews of ‘The Crown’

DOMINIC West spent two days in bed after seeing negative reviews of ‘The Crown’. The actor, who played King Charles in the latest instalment of the popular Netflix series when the royal was the Prince of Wales, admitted he was ultra-sensitive to criticism of his projects.

He told BBC Radio 4’s ‘Today’ show when asked if he had worried about the royal family’s opinion of the drama: “Well, I don’t want to make their lives any more difficult than they already are. So I suppose it does concern you. All reactions worry me.”

“I read all the reviews and had to spend two days in bed. So, yes, I’m a sensitive soul. I worry about what people think.”

But ‘The Wire’ star said about enjoying his time on the show: “I loved being on it. I loved wearing the clothes, I loved driving the cars and I loved having people bow to

me. It’s an absolutely wonderful feeling.”

The final season of ‘The Crown’ was released in November, and has been slammed for scenes in which Charles spoke to the ghost of Princess Diana.

Since wrapping filming on the series, West has returned to the stage in ‘A View from the Bridge’ in London.

He added about his latest job: “It’s such a relief to go back to theatre and not talk about the monarchy any more.”

Diana, who died in a Paris car smash in 1997 aged 36, was played by Elizabeth Debicki in ‘The Crown’, who has admitted the role was an emotional “challenge”.

The 33-year-old actress was quoted by the Daily Mirror saying: “I think it’s a unique challenge as an actor, to portray those days.

“It’s his interpretation and it made emotional sense to me, so I



▲ Dominic West (Right) with other cast members of ‘The Crown’.

clung to that.”

Imelda Staunton, 67, made her comeback to the show for its final series as Queen Elizabeth, who died aged 96 in September 2022. (Bang Showbiz)

Jonathan Majors relying on his faith while awaiting jail sentence

JONATHAN Majors is relying on his faith after a judge found him guilty of assault.

The 34-year-old actor was recently slapped with the verdict for harassing and assaulting his ex-girlfriend Grace Jabbari, and he insists he’s relying on God as he awaits sentencing on February 6, 2024.

Asked how he’s remaining positive, he told TMZ on Monday: “God is good. God is great. Prayer. Faith.”

When asked if he still plans to act, he refused to answer, telling the outlet: “I think that’s enough for now.”

Just hours after he was found guilty in December, Disney dropped Majors from the Marvel Cinematic Universe. He had played Kang the Conqueror in ‘Ant-Man and the Wasp: Quantumania’ and the Disney+ series ‘Loki’.

Majors vowed to clear his name after he was found guilty of one count of intentional assault in the third degree and one count of aggravated harassment in the second degree.

Lawyer Priya Chaudhry said: “It is clear that the jury did not believe Grace Jabbari’s story of what happened in the SUV because they found that Mr Majors did not intentionally cause any injuries to her.

“We are grateful for that. We are disappointed, however, that despite not believing Ms Jabbari, the jury nevertheless found that Mr Majors was somehow reckless while she was attacking him.

“Mr Majors is grateful to God, his family, his friends, and his fans for their love and support during these harrowing eight months.

“Mr Majors still has faith in the process and looks forward to fully clearing his name.”

The actor was arrested on March 25 on assault and harassment charges, after Jabbari accused him of assaulting her in the backseat of a private car after she took his phone to read a

text message he had received from another woman.

She alleged the star forcefully took his phone back from her, causing an “excruciating” injury to her right middle finger.

And she said when she got out of the car Majors hit her on the back of her head and then tried to force her back into the car, causing a cut behind her right ear.

Majors denied he assaulted Jabbari and his defence team alleged she was the aggressor when she took his phone.

During the actor’s nearly two-week trial, the Manhattan District Attorney’s Office released a series of texts between him and Jabbari, as well as an audio recording that was used as evidence.

It included messages in which Majors seemingly attempted to persuade Jabbari not to go to hospital following a head injury.

In the audio, Majors tells Jabbari she needs to act like Corretta Scott King and Michelle Obama, because he’s “a great man” who is “doing great things, not just for me, but for my culture and the world.”

Majors could be jailed for up to a year when he is sentenced and the case could spell the end of his Hollywood career

The Hollywood Reporter has said Majors was set to front 2026’s ‘The Avengers: Kang Dynasty’, which has now been renamed ‘Avengers 5’.

(Bang Showbiz)

Sanna Mchunu to star in new teen drama series ‘Youngins’

FORMER Gomora actress Sanna Mchunu has bagged a role on a new Showmax teen drama series Youngins set at a fictional boarding school named Olifantsfontein High.

Mchunu will star alongside Ayakha Ntunja, Kealeboga Masango, Lebohlang Lephatsoana, Toka Mtabane, Thabiso Ramotshela and Loyiso MacDonald.

Ntunja stars as Amo, the sweet and determined new girl who knows what she wants out of life, with Masango as Buhle, an absolute firebrand and the “it” girl at school.

Role

Joining the girls is newcomer Lephatsoana as Tumelo, an overly confident ball of energy who is obsessed with social media. Mtabane plays the role of Khaya, the handsome, popular guy at school and Buhle’s boyfriend.

Ramotshela who currently stars as Morena on The River will play the role of Mahlati Maleka, an intelligent young man who challenges the status quo. He takes his marks far too seriously, but he is far from the stereotypical nerdy pushover.

Together, the crew forms the famous five as they navigate the chaos and ex-

citement of boarding school while also trying to deal with all the anguish and drama caused by the adults in their lives.

MacDonald stars as Principal Mthembu, Mchunu as Matron Lulu, and Keneilwe Matidze as Pearl “Miss SA” Buthelezi.

Phathu Makwarela, the executive producer, shared that Tshedza Pictures always approaches each show with a desire to make it different.

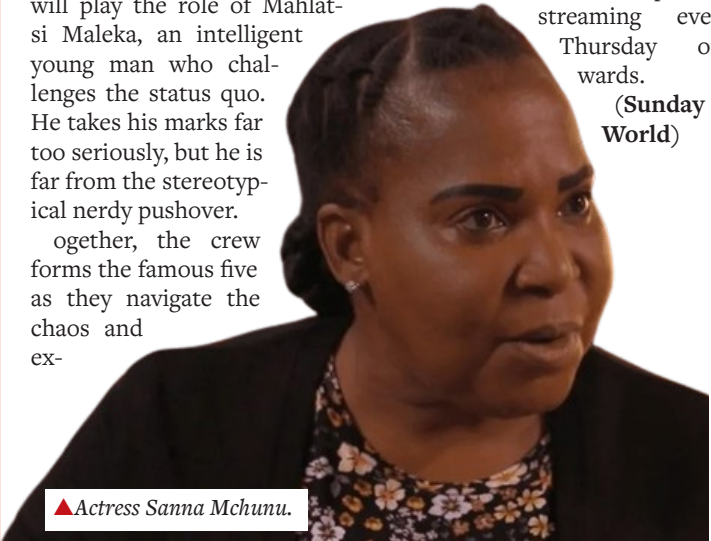
Dramas

“We grew up in an era when television was dominated by youth dramas like Party of Five and Dawson’s Creek which shaped our coming-of-age.”

“We have never produced a youth drama before, and we took great consideration in creating a writers’ room that reflects the audience that we are talking to. Youngins is a window into the lives of Generation Z viewers and that much of society,” said Makwarela.

Youngins will premiere on Showmax on February 12, with three new episodes streaming every Thursday onwards.

(Sunday World)



▲ Actress Sanna Mchunu.



▲ The 34-year-old Jonathan Majors was recently slapped with a guilty verdict for harassing and assaulting his ex-girlfriend Grace Jabbari.



GOING vegan when pregnant could raise the risk of developing complications, research has suggested.

Danish experts discovered pregnant women following plant-based diets were five times more likely to develop preeclampsia.

Vegan mothers also delivered newborns weighing 240g less, on average.

Researchers attributed the results to low protein intake but acknowledged the paper was merely observational and cannot prove causality.

They also noted those following plant-based diets were slightly older, which itself can raise the risk of complications during pregnancies.

Danish experts discovered pregnant women following plant-based diets were five times more likely to develop preeclampsia. Vegan mothers also delivered newborns weighing 240g less, on average

The scientists from the University of Copenhagen analysed data from more than 66,000 mums-to-be, who were quizzed at 25 weeks about their diet and supplement intake over the previous month.

Volunteers were then divided into omnivorous (65,872), who don't avoid any meat products, and fish and poultry consumers (666), who don't eat red meat, as well as vegetarian (183) and vegan (18).

They found vegan mothers welcomed babies with an average birth weight 240g lighter than omnivorous mothers.

Mothers who ate fish and poultry had babies weighing 15g lighter than omnivores, on average. Vegetarian mothers had the largest babies (34g heavier than omnivores).

Additionally, pregnancies were 5.2 days longer among vegan women.

Concerningly, the risk of preeclampsia was five-fold higher among vegan mothers, with 11.1 per cent (2 mothers) affected, compared to just 2.6 per cent of omnivores (1,680 mothers).

The condition, which is thought to affect around five per cent of pregnancies in Britain and the US, causes expectant mothers to suffer high blood pressure, which previous research has shown can lead to heart disease later in life.

Kim Kardashian and Beyonce both suffered from pre-eclampsia during their pregnancies.

Researchers also discovered those following a vegan diet consumed 'substantially' less protein (56g per day, or 10.4 per cent of their food intake) compared to omnivorous women (89g per day, 15.4 per cent).

Micronutrient levels were also lower among those adhering to diets including meat.

Vitamin B12 intake was four times higher among omnivores, at 6.4 micrograms (µg) per day, than vegans (1.5µg per day). Levels were also higher among vegetarians (4.3µg) and fish and poultry eaters (5.3µg).

Meat, fish and cheese are among the most potent sources of vitamin B12, which isn't found naturally in fruit, vegetables and greens.

This means vegans can struggle to include enough of it in their diet. As a result, they are advised to take a supplement.

Omnivores recorded a vitamin D rate three times that of vegans (3.3µg compared to 1.1µg per day). It was highest among those who ate fish and poultry (4.2µg per day), while veggies also logged just 1.7µg per day.

Iron and folic acid levels, however, were similar across all dietary groups.

While researchers acknowledged their findings were 'subject to some uncertainty given the small number of vegans', the sample size 'was still sufficient to detect meaningful differences in continuous birth outcomes',

Warning for vegan mothers-to-be

... as study suggests plant-based diet can raise risk of pre-eclampsia by 5-fold



they said.

Writing in the journal, Acta Obstetrica Et Gynecologica Scandinavica, they added: 'The lower birth weight of around 240g among vegans compared with omnivorous mothers in our study, strengthens our observation that vegans may be at higher risk of giving birth to low birth weight infants.'

They suggested lower protein intake could be partially to blame.

Two 2021 studies by researchers in Israel and the US also found a vegan mothers babies' were 200g lighter than those born to meat eaters.

Discussing these findings, the scientists behind the new study wrote: 'These results along with ours provide quite consistent evidence suggesting that adherence to vegan diets during pregnancy may adversely affect fetal growth.'

But they noted that findings on higher levels of preeclampsia among vegan mothers 'requires careful interpretation given the number of vegan participants'.

The two previous studies with a larger sample size of vegans 'have not found any indication of hypertensive disorders during pregnancy among vegans', they noted.

It comes as data on Brits weekly food purchasing habits, gathered annually by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, also revealed in October that Brits are eating less meat, potatoes and bread than ever before. Meanwhile, rice and pasta have enjoyed massive booms. Alcohol consumption has also increased over time but this data only goes back to 1992

The DEFRA data showed that red meat consumption has plunged by up to 81 per cent since the 70s, while sales of poultry and fish have doubled. This chart shows how much meat Brits have purchased on average each week, the most recent data for 2022 shows a massive drop compared to historic levels (data doesn't include fish)

'Further research is needed regarding possible causality between plant-based diets and pregnancy and birth outcomes, to strengthen the basis for dietary recommendations.'

Experts believe anti-inflammatory foods and those rich in antioxidants – typically found in fruit, vegetables and wholegrains – can help maintain a healthy pregnancy.

Meanwhile, research has long suggested that those known to cause inflammation – such as red meats, processed foods and

refined carbohydrates such as white bread – could raise the risk of miscarrying.

Interest in a plant-based diet has soared in recent years, with vegans citing ethical, environmental or health reasons.

Some studies have also suggested the diet lowers the risk of heart attacks and type 2 diabetes.

The exact numbers of vegans now in the UK is almost impossible to establish.

But one recent survey suggested around 600,000 people are believed to be on a plant-based diet, while another in 2021 claimed that almost a third of Brits used alternative milks.

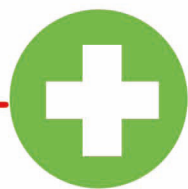
WHAT IS PRE-ECLAMPSIA?

Pre-eclampsia affects around six per cent of pregnancies in the UK.

It causes expectant mothers to have high blood pressure and protein in their urine, which should be picked up during routine appointments.

Some pregnant women may also suffer severe headaches, vision problems, pain below the ribs, vomiting or sudden swelling to their face, hands or feet.

Most cases are mild but it is severe in one



Men can slash odds of getting prostate cancer by a third

MEN could reduce their chances of developing prostate cancer by over a third through jogging, cycling or swimming more, research suggests.

Those who boosted their annual cardiorespiratory fitness by at least 3 per cent had a 35 per cent lower risk of developing - but not dying from - the disease.

Researchers analysed data on the physical activity levels, height and body mass index (BMI) of 57,652 men, alongside information on lifestyle and perceived health and the results of at least two cardiorespiratory fitness tests.

More than 52,000 men are diagnosed with prostate cancer every year on average in the UK, making it the most common cancer in men. Around 12,000 men die every year from the disease — the equivalent of one every 45 minutes.

Annual cardiorespiratory fitness measurements were expressed by the amount of oxygen the body uses while exercising as hard as possible and divided into groups according to whether these increased by more than 3 per cent, fell by more than 3 per cent or remained stable each year.

They were then divided into groups - of low, moderate and high respiratory fitness - to see how changes affected both their chances of getting and dying from the disease.

During an average follow-up period of seven years, researchers found 592 men were diagnosed with prostate cancer and 46 died from the disease.

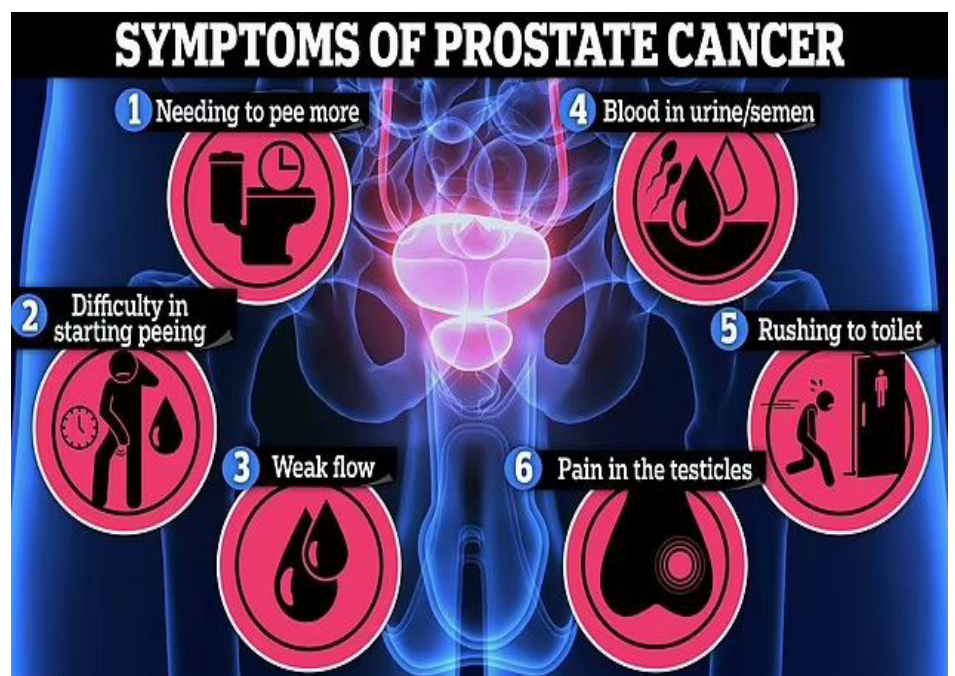
Those whose fitness had improved by 3 per cent annually were 35 per cent less likely to develop cancer compared with those whose fitness had declined, according to the findings in BMJ.

Increasing cardiorespiratory fitness was associated with a 2 per cent lower risk of prostate cancer, but not death, after accounting for potentially influential factors, including age, education level, year of test, weight (BMI), and smoking status. But when grouped according to whether their cardiorespiratory fitness had increased, remained stable, or had fallen, those whose fitness had improved by 3 per cent or more a year were 35 per cent less likely to develop prostate cancer than those whose fitness had declined.

Researchers from the Swedish School of Sport and Health Sciences said the results 'highlight the important role of supporting the general public to increase their CRF (cardiorespiratory fitness) or aim to reach moderate fitness levels'.

Prostate cancer is the most common cancer in men in the UK with 1 in 8 men being diagnosed with prostate cancer in their lifetime.

The Mail has campaigned for better diagnosis and treatment of prostate



cancer for 25 years, encouraging men to stop 'dying of embarrassment'.

Simon Grieveson, assistant director of research at Prostate Cancer UK, said: 'This is an interesting piece of research that adds to previous studies showing possible links between exercise and a lower likelihood of getting prostate cancer.'

'Regularly keeping fit and eating a balanced diet are good for every man's general health and wellbeing - however, we don't know definitively whether physical activity can lower a man's risk of getting, or dying from, prostate cancer.'

Matt Lambert, at World Cancer Research Fund, said: 'It is widely known that having a higher level of cardiorespiratory fitness is important for our health and longevity, but it can also be protective against certain diseases.'

'This insightful study adds to the evidence around how risk factors such as fitness may play a role in reducing men's risk of prostate cancer.'

WHAT IS PROSTATE CANCER?

How many people does it kill?

More than 11,800 men a year - or one every 45 minutes - are killed by the disease in Britain, compared with about 11,400 women dying of breast cancer.

It means prostate cancer is behind only lung and bowel in terms of how many people it kills in Britain.

In the US, the disease kills 26,000 men each year. Despite this, it receives less than half the research funding of breast cancer and treatments for the disease are trailing at least a decade behind.

HOW MANY MEN ARE DIAGNOSED ANNUALLY?

Every year, upwards of 52,300 men are

diagnosed with prostate cancer in the UK - more than 140 every day.

HOW QUICKLY DOES IT DEVELOP?

Prostate cancer usually develops slowly, so there may be no signs someone has it for many years, according to the NHS.

If the cancer is at an early stage and not causing symptoms, a policy of 'watchful waiting' or 'active surveillance' may be adopted.

Some patients can be cured if the disease is treated in the early stages.

But if it is diagnosed at a later stage, when it has spread, then it becomes terminal and treatment revolves around relieving symptoms.

Thousands of men are put off seeking a diagnosis because of the known side effects from treatment, including erectile dysfunction.

TESTS AND TREATMENT

Tests for prostate cancer are haphazard, with accurate tools only just beginning to emerge.

There is no national prostate screening programme as for years the tests have been too inaccurate.

Doctors struggle to distinguish between aggressive and less serious tumours, making it hard to decide on treatment.

Men over 50 are eligible for a 'PSA' blood test which gives doctors a rough idea of whether a patient is at risk.

But it is unreliable. Patients who get a positive result are usually given a biopsy which is also not fool-proof.

Scientists are unsure as to what causes prostate cancer, but age, obesity and a lack of exercise are known risks.

DailyMail

WHAT SHOULD A BALANCED DIET LOOK LIKE?

Meals should be based on potatoes, bread, rice, pasta or other starchy carbohydrates, ideally wholegrain, according to the NHS

- Eat at least five portions of a variety of fruit and vegetables every day. All fresh, frozen, dried and canned fruit and vegetables count

- Base meals on potatoes, bread, rice, pasta or other starchy carbohydrates, ideally wholegrain

- 30 grams of fibre a day: This is the same as eating all of the following: Five portions of fruit and vegetables, two whole-wheat cereal biscuits, two thick slices of wholemeal bread and large baked potato with the skin on

- Have some dairy or dairy alternatives (such as soya drinks), choosing lower fat and lower sugar options

- Eat some beans, pulses, fish, eggs, meat and other proteins (including two portions of fish every week, one of which should be oily)

- Choose unsaturated oils and spreads and consuming in small amounts

- Drink six to eight cups/glasses of water a day

- Adults should have less than 6g of salt and 20g of saturated fat for women or 30g for men a day

Daily Mail

● The scientists behind the new study wrote: These results along with ours provide quite consistent evidence suggesting that adherence to vegan diets during pregnancy may adversely affect fetal growth



▲A night time aerial shot of Manzini City.



▲Pope Francis meets with students of etablissement La Rochefoucauld college, as he holds a weekly general audience, in Paul VI hall at the Vatican



▲ Ukrainian service members of the aerial reconnaissance unit of 45th Separate Artillery Brigade operate a Mara reconnaissance unmanned aerial vehicle from a dugout near the town of Lyman, in Donetsk region, Ukraine.



▲Firefighters and volunteers attempt to extinguish a fire that broke out at a commercial depot, used for oil barrels and flammable drums, near Muthurwa settlement, in Nairobi, Kenya.



▲A migrant child seeking asylum kneels in front of a member of the Texas National Guard and asks to be allowed to enter the United States, after crossing razor wire deployed to prevent the crossing of migrants, as seen from Ciudad Juarez, Mexico.



▲Palestinians, fleeing Khan Younis, rest along the road with their belongings amid a move towards Rafah, during the Israeli ground operation against Palestinian Islamist group Hamas, in the southern Gaza Strip.



▲A displaced Palestinian boy, who fled his house due to Israeli strikes, swings on a cable at the border fence with Egypt, in Rafah in the southern Gaza Strip.



▲A member of Taiwan's armed forces, riding in a M60A3 tank, participates in a drill as part of a demonstration for the media to show combat readiness, ahead of the Lunar New Year holidays, at a military base in Taitung, Taiwan.

Case closed on Rashford incident

MANCHESTER, England - Manchester United Erik ten Hag wants to draw a line under the Marcus Rashford story, saying the forward has taken ownership of the behaviour that had him dropped from Sunday's FA Cup match.

The 26-year-old missed training last Friday and was absent from Sunday's 4-2 FA Cup fourth-round win against Newport County after he had reportedly been spotted at nightspots in Belfast earlier in the week.

"He has taken responsibility and for the rest it is an internal matter," Ten Hag told reporters on Wednesday. "Case closed."

United will have goalkeeper Andre Onana on Thursday when they play at Wolverhampton Wanderers. Onana featured in just one of Cameroon's four games at the Africa Cup of Nations, where they went out in the last 16.

Rashford has had a difficult season scoring four goals after his career-high 30 last year. Ten Hag was asked if the player's behaviour shows a lack of respect for the club.

"It is nothing to do with that," the manager said. "Let's focus on the game ... we have to focus on winning football games."

"In football you need discipline on the pitch but also off the pitch -- there is a line between. Every professional knows what is required. We have to focus on winning football games, that's all that matters. Every top professional knows what is required."

On the plus side, Ten Hag highlighted the fact that Rashford has scored in each of their last two league games -- a 2-1 loss to Not-



▲ Manchester United Erik ten Hag wants to draw a line under the Marcus Rashford story.

tingham Forest and 2-2 draw with Tottenham Hotspur -- in addition to getting an assist.

"He is developing a strong bond with (fellow forward) Rasmus Hojlund and we want to continue that process," Ten Hag added.

United slipped to ninth in the Premier League standings after Newcastle United's win over Brighton & Hove Albion on Tuesday, and they are languishing 11 points back of fourth-place Aston Villa. Wolves are

11th.

Despite their struggles, Ten Hag said his side does not lack confidence.

"On our best days we can beat anyone, but on our worst days we go down to certain limits that aren't acceptable," he said. "We have to push our limits to higher levels so that also on our worst days we can get results in."

(Reuters)

Players return to Swallows but Komphela's nowhere to be seen

NIGERIAN international goalkeeper Daniel Akpeyi is one of the 11 players that Moroka Swallows have re-signed, despite the uncertainty surrounding head coach Steve Komphela's future at the club.

Swallows dismissed 22 players early this month on the basis that they got involved in an illegal strike.

Akpeyi's agent, Minenhle Mkhize of Dream Sports Agency, confirmed the former Kaizer Chiefs and Chippa United goalkeeper is back at Swallows.

"We had a fruitful meeting with Swallows management. He is happy that he has been given an improved offer. Like he has always done, he is committed to helping the team get out of this quagmire," said Mkhize.

He said Akpeyi turned down an offer from the relegation-threatened Cape Town Spurs. "Coach Ernst Middendorp [of Spurs] rates Daniel highly, having previously worked with him at Chiefs and Chippa. Unfortunately, he politely turned them down because his family is settled in Johannesburg, and since Swallows

have shown love to him, he felt it wise to remain in Johannesburg," said Mkhize.

Sources said another player spotted at Swallows training on Tuesday was midfielder Tlaku-sani Mthethwa, but Komphela was nowhere to be seen. Taking care of proceedings were assistant coaches Musa Nyatama and Ditheko Mototo. Sunday World reported about Komphela's imminent exit as he is gatvol with the endless problems at the club.

It is alleged that Komphela no longer wants to remain with the club because of the problems that have engulfed the beleaguered club.

After the club's shock decision to dismiss 22 players, the situation put Komphela in a fix and under pressure.

Jali not coming back

Attempts to reach chairman David Mogashoa proved futile, and CEO Sipho Xulu said he was in a meeting but blue-ticked our message.

Meanwhile, Andile Jali's agent Mike Makaab confirmed on Durban's Gagasi FM on Monday that the Swallows captain is not returning to the club.

(Sunday World)



▲ Moroka Swallows AWOL coach Steve Komphela.

LIV players returning to PGA Tour should not be punished: McIlroy

RORY McIlroy concedes he has "changed his tune" on the issue of LIV golfers returning to play on the PGA Tour, with the four-time major champion now saying they should be able to come back without being punished.

The Northern Irishman has been a vocal critic of the breakaway tour since it launched in 2022 and signed up a host of big names, causing a rift that threatened to tear golf apart.

McIlroy previously accused some of those who jumped ship as being duplicitous and that he would rather retire than join the Saudi Arabia-backed breakaway circuit.

However, with negotiations on a merger between the PGA Tour and LIV Golf ongoing, and McIlroy's Ryder Cup team mates Jon Rahm and Tyrrell Hatton making the switch to LIV, the 34-year-old has recently softened his position on the rival tour.

"I think life is about choices. Guys made choices to go and play LIV, guys made choices to stay here," he told reporters on Tuesday ahead of the Pebble Beach Pro-Am tour-

nament.

"I think it's hard to punish people. I don't think there should be a punishment."

"If people still have eligibility on this tour and they want to come back and play or you want to try and do something, let them come back."

"Obviously, I've changed my tune on that because I see where golf is and I see that having a diminished PGA Tour and having a diminished LIV Tour or anything else is bad for both parties," McIlroy added.

Englishman Hatton is the latest big name to join LIV, the world number 16 set to be part of an expansion team captained by Masters champion Rahm.

"I had a long talk with Tyrrell on Sunday, completely understood where he was coming from," McIlroy said.

"It got to the point where they negotiated and got to a place he was comfortable with and he has to do what he feels is right for him. I'm not going to stand in anyone's way from making money and if what they deem life-changing money."

(Reuters)



▲ Rory McIlroy concedes he has "changed his tune" on the issue of LIV golfers returning to play on the PGA Tour, with the four-time major champion now saying they should be able to come back without being punished.

Haaland to make Man City return against Burnley

MANCHESTER, England - Manchester City will finally have striker Erling Haaland back in the squad when they play Burnley in the Premier League on Wednesday, manager Pep Guardiola said on Tuesday. Haaland is the joint-top goalscorer in the league this season with 14, level with Liverpool's Mohamed Salah, but has not played since fracturing a bone in his foot in a 1-0 loss to Aston Villa on Dec. 6.

"Apparently he will be selected, yeah. The first time he's back," Guardiola told reporters. "We have all the squad (fit), we are stronger. He is an important player for us."

Haaland's return could prove pivotal for holders City, who are second in the Premier League standings and trail leaders Liverpool by five points but have a game in hand. City also have Champions League and FA Cup fixtures in February.

The 23-year-old Norwegian has 19 goals in 22 games in all competitions this season.

Four days after Liverpool manager Jurgen Klopp shocked the football world with news he would leave the club at the end of the season, Guardiola was asked if he is thinking about leaving City.



▲ Manchester City will finally have striker Erling Haaland back in the squad when they play Burnley in the Premier League on Wednesday, manager Pep Guardiola.

"I have everything that a manager could dream (of)," he said. "(The club) have supported me. We've changed a lot of players in the last few years but they've always been

supportive.

"I still feel good and, of course, one day it is going to finish, but I don't think about that right now." (Reuters)

Rakitic leaves Sevilla to sign with Saudi's Al-Shabab

FORMER Croatia midfielder Ivan Rakitic has left Sevilla following a second spell at the club ahead of his move to Saudi Arabia's Al-Shabab, the LaLiga side said on Tuesday.

The player's contract was set to expire at the end of the campaign. "We have agreed a deal with Saudi Pro League side Al-Shabab Club for the transfer of Ivan Rakitic, who will bring his second spell with us to a close," Sevilla said in a statement.

Rakitic, who first played for the Spanish club from 2011-2014 following a move from Bundesliga side Schalke 04, returned to Sevilla in September 2020 after six years at Barcelona.

Last year he helped Sevilla win a record-extending seventh Europa League title, after winning his first in 2013-14 during his first spell with the club.

Rakitic, until now a vice-captain for the team, became the foreigner with the most official matches in Sevilla's history and the only one to have surpassed 300 games with the club (323).

During his time at Barcelona, Rakitic won the Champions League in 2014-15, followed by the Super Cup and a Club World Cup. He was also



▲ Former Croatia midfielder Ivan Rakitic has left Sevilla following a second spell at the club ahead of his move to Saudi Arabia's Al-Shabab.

a four-times LaLiga champion, four-times Spanish Cup winner and won two Spanish Super Cups.

The 35-year-old earned more

than 100 caps for Croatia between 2007-2019, helping his country to a runners-up finish at the 2018 World Cup. (Reuters)

Order issued for Gabuza's arrest after he skipped court date

A warrant of arrest has been issued for former Bafana Bafana striker Thamsanqa Gabuza after he failed to appear at the Alexandra magistrate's court on Monday.

Gabuza was scheduled to make his fourth appearance in court for a charge of malicious damage to property.

The matter was previously postponed for an alternate dispute resolution (mediation), which was set to take place on Monday between Gabuza and the complainant.

However, the 36-year-old Gabuza, who is currently out on R3 000 bail, failed to show up.

Gabuza, a former Orlando Pirates and SuperSport United striker, is currently plying his trade with Premier Soccer League club TS Galaxy.

No sign of Gabuza

The court proceedings started at about 9.30am when the state prosecutor, advocate Tshiego Dekka, called Gabuza to step into the dock.

There was no sign of Gabuza, as neither he nor his lawyer, Themba Ngobeni, came to the courtroom. The complainant, Zikhona Zode, was present in

the courtroom.

Dekka asked magistrate Lindokuhle Lubisi to stand down so that she could contact Ngobeni and find out where Gabuza was.

When the matter resumed at about 11.45am, Dekka called Gabuza again to step into the dock, but again, Gabuza was nowhere to be found.

Ngobeni did not come to the courtroom as well.

Dekka informed Lubisi that she had contacted Ngobeni, who told her that he had no clue where Gabuza was.

Warrant of arrest

Lubisi issued a warrant of arrest for Gabuza and ordered that his bail be revoked and forfeited to the state.

She then postponed the matter to February 15 for Gabuza's appearance and for possible mediation.

Gabuza is required to appear in court on February 15 and provide an explanation for his absence from the January 29 court date due to the issuance of the stayed arrest warrant.

Failure to do so will result in the police going out to look for him and resulting in his arrest.

Shortly before 1pm, Ngobeni entered the courtroom for a separate matter. (Sunday World)



▲ The 36-year-old TS Galaxy player is out on R3 000 bail for malicious damage to property.

US consortium set to invest billions in PGA Tour

THE PGA Tour, which organizes professional golf tournaments primarily in North America, is close to finalizing an investment from a U.S. consortium, Bloomberg News reported, opens new tab on Monday citing people familiar with the matter.

The initial investment from Strategic Sports Group could be about \$3 billion, with an additional tranche from the Saudi Public Investment Fund, according to the report.

The deal could value PGA Tour Enterprises — the for-profit entity created to

house the Tour's commercial interests — at about \$12 billion, the report added.

Point72, a fund run by Steve Cohen, Marc Lasry's Avenue Capital Group and a spokesperson for PGA Tour did not immediately respond to Reuters' requests for comment.

In September Reuters reported, citing a source, that Endeavor Group (EDR.N), opens new tab and Boston Red Sox owner Fenway Sports Group had expressed interest in investing in the PGA Tour.

Any potential transaction would rival PGA's deal with Saudi Arabia's Public Investment Fund. (Reuters)



All set for intriguing Last-8 games

THE quarter-finals of the TotalEnergies CAF Africa Cup of Nations Côte d'Ivoire 2023 is set to serve some interesting fixtures across the 3 host cities.

The round of 16 provided some exciting games coupled with shocks and some of the favorites ended up exiting the competition including defending champions and 2022 World Cup semi finalist, Morocco.

Here are the games to pay attention to in the quarter-finals and how things are expected to turn out.

NIGERIA V ANGOLA

The Super Eagles will face Angola in the opening quarter-finals of the TotalEnergies CAF AFCON Côte d'Ivoire 2023 on Friday, February at the famous Stade Félix Houphouët-Boigny.

Angola will be hoping to continue their fairytale against one of the tournament's favorite, Nigeria.

Nigeria's resolute defensive unit in William Troost - Ekong, Calvin Bassey and Semi Ajayi will be put to test by Angola's forward's, Jacinto Dala, Gilberto and Mabulu in this fixture. Game will be played at the Stade Félix Houphouët-Boigny on Friday, February 2.

D.R CONGO V GUINEA

D.R Congo who are yet to win a game in the competition will have Guinea to deal with in the quarter-finals.

Mohamed Bayo has twice been the saviour for Guinea in the TotalEnergies CAF AFCON Côte d'Ivoire 2023. He scored against Cameroon to help them secure a point and was on target against Equatorial Guinea in the round of 16.

With the 2009 CHAN success in Coté d'Ivoire in sight, D.R Congo will give it their all against an equally motivated Guinean side.

Game will played on Friday, February 2 at the Stade Olympique Alassane Ouattara in Abidjan.

MALI V COTÉ D'IVOIRE

The host put up a solid performance to eliminate defending champions, Senegal on penalties in the round of 16.

This followed a disappointing end

to their group stage campaign where they lost to both Nigeria and Equatorial Guinea and went ahead to concede 5 goals.

Coté d'Ivoire have failed to score from open play in their last three games and will be hoping to make amends with the return of Sébastien Haller upfront.

Mali despite a shaky performance in the group stage put up an improved performance against Burkina Faso in the round of 16.

Game is February 3 at the Stade de la Paix in Bouake.

SOUTH AFRICA V CAPE VERDE

Cape Verde, unbeaten will play South Africa who eliminated 2022 World Cup semi-finalist, Morocco in the round of 16.

The Blue Sharks have had a smooth run throughout the competition unlike South Africa who have been inconsistent with results.

Hugo Broos will count on Evidence Makgopa, Percy Tau and Themba Zwane to deliver against Cape Verde. Though a tough one but Cape Verde have seen it all against experienced countries and have had their way through.

Game is on February 3 at the Charles Konan Banny Stadium in Yamoussoukro. (Cafonline)



Proud Broos hails special victory over Morocco

BAFANA Bafana coach Hugo Broos hailed a "special" win over Morocco in their Africa Cup of Nations last-16 clash in San Pedro on Tuesday, but warned they must keep their feet on the ground ahead of a quarterfinal with Cape Verde on Saturday.

Goals from Evidence Makgopa and Teboho Mokoena sealed victory against the World Cup semifinalists, advancing Bafana to only their third Cup of Nations quarterfinal since 2002.

"We came here (the Ivory Coast) with the first aim of getting out of our group," Broos said.

"We were delighted to do that but you can't be certain of going any further when you come up against Morocco. On Saturday we will once again be playing against a dangerous team and we can't make the mistake of underestimating them."

Bafana have now beaten the Moroccans twice since the latter's historic run at the World Cup in Qatar, having also claimed victory in the qualifiers in Soweto.

"Beating a team like Morocco is something special," said Broos. "This is a very good team with very good players, but we did the right analysis and the way we played, tactically, was the right one."

"In the first half, I thought both teams were a little bit afraid of each other. But, in the second half, as the game was more open with a few chances for Morocco, we scored, and it is always important that you score first."

"Yes, we were a little bit lucky because Morocco started to play power play with all the players in front, with high balls and very hard duels. So, they had a few chances then."

"But, after the second goal, we are in the quarterfinal and we are very, very, very happy."

Broos gave praise to his players, who have now effectively dumped fancied Tunisia and Morocco out of the Cup of Nations in consecutive matches.

"I didn't do it. The players are the ones who did," he said. "Every coach hopes that what he is telling the players is that they do the right thing because the players did what we asked. "They fight from the first minute. They played very disciplined, and we knew that we would have chances today against this team. But when we had the chance, we had to use them, and we did." Bafana will now be aiming for a first semifinal since the 2000 finals that were co-hosted by Ghana and Nigeria.

(Supersport)



▲ Teboho Mokoena celebrating with team mates after scoring against Morocco.

Desabre sees Leopards as title challengers

DR Congo head coach Sebastien Desabre believes his team are contenders for the 2023 Africa Cup of Nations title as they prepare to face Guinea in the quarterfinals at the Alassane Ouattara Stadium on Friday, February 2.

The Leopards caused a major upset in the round of 16 when they beat seven-time African champions Egypt 8-7 on penalties following a 1-1 draw at the Laurent Pokou Stadium on Sunday, January 28. Desabre's side had qualified for the knockout stages despite winning a single match in Group F; they drew 1-1 with both Zambia and Morocco before being held to a goalless stalemate by Tanzania as they

finished runners-up to the Atlas Lions.

The National Elephants made history with their dramatic 1-0 win over Equatorial Guinea in the last 16 at the Alassane Ouattara Stadium on Sunday, January 28 as it was the first time since 1976 that they won a knockout game on Africa's biggest stage.

Not many had given them a chance of even progressing from Group C after being drawn alongside defending champions Senegal, Cameroon and Gambia, but they went through as the best third-placed team.

Kaba Diawara's side drew 1-1 with the Indomitable Lions and then edged the Scorpions 1-0 which was enough to advance after they suffered a 2-0 defeat to the Lions of Teranga in their final group encounter.

(Supersport)

Correctional is off to a bright start in the Mula Sport Series league

By **Sibusiso Masilela**
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GIANTS Correctional were off to bright in the 2024 Mula Sport series played over the weekend at OlympAfrica Centre.

The defending champions recorded three wins against the likes of UNESWA, Ludzeludze and Bob Cats during their recent matches.

Last season runner-, up Royal Eswatini also had a great outing after beating rivals Umbutfo Eswatini Defence Force (UEDF) by 2-0 before beating Royal Eswatini Sugar and minnows Olymp Africa by the same scoreline.

Meanwhile, the Tigers are currently leading the chasing pack in the B Division league with 31 points after 11 matches.

The capital city outfit is followed by Fire with 23 points while Bob Masters are third with 20 points.

The top four teams in the two leagues will book a place in the semi-finals of the two-year knockout tournament bankrolled by the betting company (MulaSport) after the round-robin.

Eswatini National Volleyball Association (ENVA) Vice President Eric Gama said they are happy with the progress of the two

leagues.
“We are happy with the progress of the two leagues, and we urge teams to continue working within their respective leagues. We are grateful for the support from the supporting from the sponsor,” he said.

The full scores			
A Division			
Bob Oats	2 -0	Ludzeludze	
REPS	2 -0	UEDF O	
Correctional	2 -0	UNESWA	
RES	2 -1	Olympia	
Bob Cats	2 -0	Uneswa	
Correctional	2 -0	Ludzeludze	
Reps	2 -0	RES	
Olympia	2 -0	UEDF	
Uneswa	2 -0	Ludzeludze	
Correctional	2 -0	Bob Cats	
RES	2 -0	UEDF	
Reps	2 -0	Olympia	
B Division			
Sidwashini	0 -3	Fire	
Tigers	3 -0	Phoenix	
Eagles	3 -2	Kwaluseni	
Bob Masters	3 -2	Luve	
Fire	3 -0	Phoenix	
Tigers	3 -1	Sidwashini	
Luve	3 -2	Eagles	
Bob Masters	3 -1	Kwaluseni	



▲ Giants Correctional were off to bright in the 2024 Mula Sport series played over the weekend at OlympAfrica Centre.

E2 000 for Eswatini Yellow Epilepsy Half Marathon

By **Ntokozo Magongo**
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THE winners of the Eswatini Yellow Epilepsy Half Marathon will take home E2 000 in both male and female categories.

The 21km, 10km and 5km race will be held on Saturday at Lobamba between Somhlolo National Stadium and the OlmypAfrica Sports Development Centre. Athletics Eswatini (AE) Communications Officer Victor ‘Mavikane’ Dlamini announced on Wednesday.

The Yellows Epilepsy Charity Half Marathon is set to be bigger and better as already over 455 runners have registered for the event so far for all three events.

The manual registration can be done at the Eswatini Epilepsy Organization offices in Mbabane, at the Deputy Prime Minister offices, The Fitness Zone in Ezulwini and Manzini and Futis branches in Mbabane, Matsapha, Manzini, Nhlangano, Siteki and Siphofaneni. “Manual registration is still open for runners, and we asked people to



▲ Victor Mavikane Dlamini

come in their numbers as they will benefit a lot. Early registration was closed on January 15 and the late registration which is now manual will be closing on Friday end of business,” he said. The race will start at 6 am. Dlamini said they are happy with the numbers as they have improved from the 370 that competed last year in Sikhuphe. He said they were still hoping to meet the 600 targets with three days remaining.

The registration:	
21km E180	10km
10km E150	1 E1 500
5km E120	2 E900
The prize breakdown:	
Category	Men Women
21km	1 E2 000
2	E1 000
3	E800
4	E700
5	E600
6	E500
7	E400
8	E300
9	E200
Veteran 21km E180	
10km Master	
21km E180	
10km E150 E150	
Grand Master 21km E180	
10km E150	

Actions continue in PLE Under-19 League on Saturday

By **Ntokozo Magongo**
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THE Premier League of Eswatini (PLE) Under-19 League log leaders, Rangers will face Young Buffaloes under week three of three.

The game will be played at King Sobhuza II Memorial Stadium in a doubleheader that will also feature Manzini Sea Birds. The first game will kick off at 9 am with the second match starting at 11 am.

This is according to the fixtures released by PLE Development Manager Banele Masondo on Wednesday. Rangers are top of the table with four points after two games closely followed by the army side, Young Buffaloes. The teams will be battling for the top spot.

Defending champions Royal Leopard will face Manzini Wanderers at the University of Eswatini (UNESWA) Sports Ground in Kwaluseni. Ezulwini United will face Mbabane Highlanders at the same venue, starting at noon.



▲ The Premier League of Eswatini (PLE) Under-19 League log leaders, Rangers will face Young Buffaloes under week three of three.

The PLE Under-19 League week 3 fixtures:	
Saturday:	
Ecinisweni Sports Ground:	
D. Sundowns	vs M. Pirates 10 am
Mayaluka Stadium:	
Illovo	vs Green Mamba Noon
Sunday:	
King Sobhuza II Memorial Stadium:	
Rangers	vs Y. Buffaloes 9 am
M. Sea Birds	vs N. Hotspurs 11 am
Mayaluka Stadium:	
Madlenya	vs M. Swallows Noon
UNESWA Sports Ground:	
Ezulwini	vs M. Highlanders Noon
M. Wanderers	vs R. Leopard 2pm

‘Ndezi’ funeral on Saturday

Stories by Sibusiso Masilela
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THE late Mbabane Highlanders and Black Leopards defender Bongani ‘Ndezi’ Masangane will be laid to rest on Saturday at his parental homestead Mzimnene, Manzini.

The ex-Sihlangu right back succumbed to death on Monday while undergoing treatment at Mbabane Government Hospital.

Mduduzi Nkambule announced the logistics on Wednesday.

“My nephew will be laid to rest on Saturday morning after a night vigil on Friday at Mzimnene,” he said.

The former international former clubs Mbabane Highlanders and Black Leopards have also expressed their condolences over

the demise of the player.

Masangane became the fifth footballer to pass away Kwanele Dlamini (Manzini Wanderers), Mukelo Nkambule (Denver Sundowns) and Ubombo Flyers duo of Simanga Kutsembe and Phumlani Masango in the list of local footballers that recently passed away.

The late Masangane played for the Limpopo based side between 2003 and 2005 together with Sibusiso ‘Spoko’ Dlamini and Wonder ‘Samba Jive’ Nhleko under the mentorship of several coaches such as Walter Rautman and Gavin Hunt, to mention a few.

He rejoined Highlanders in 2006 before his retirement where he played with the likes of Sabelo Shilubane, Mduduzi ‘Aghahowa’ Mdluli, Mxolisi ‘Nana’ Dlamini and Charles Mamba, among others.

He had a couple of senior national team’s caps during the era of the late Zambian coach Francis Banda.



▲ The late Bongani ‘Ndezi’ Masangane.



▲ Sibusiso ‘Swazi Bolt’ Matsenjwa.

SA race for ‘Swazi Bolt’

THE country’s fastest man Sibusiso ‘Swazi Bolt’ Matsenjwa continues with his extensive preparations for the 2024 Major international assignments.

The Royal Eswatini Police Service sprinter will be attending the AGN 300m race on February 18 at the Pilditch Stadium ahead of the 2024 African Games and 2024 Olympic Games.

He is currently undergoing training at the Tshwane High performance together his female compatriot Bongiwe Mahlalela.

Matsenjwa said his preparations were going proceedings smoothly.

“I am currently working at training in preparations for my major competitions. I am confident that the AGN race will boost my endurance as I continue to prepare for both the African Games and the Olympic Games where I want to do well for my country,” he said.

He further thanked the local sports bodies and the Royal Eswatini Police Service for supporting his career.

“I am grateful for the support that I have been getting from Eswatini Olympic and Commonwealth Games Association (EOCGA), (Eswatini Sports and Recreation Council (ESRC) and my team (REPS). The love that I am getting from the three organizations encourages me to work hard every day. I am confident that I will achieve a podium finish in the big assignments,” he said.

Matsenjwa has reached the finals of the 2022 Commonwealth Games and rescheduled 2021 Tokyo Olympic Games semi-finals.

He is part of the EOCGA Olympic scholarship training program together with Thabiso Dlamini (Boxing), Carlota Munave (Taekwondo), Simanga Dlamini and Hayley Hoy (both Swimming), among others.

The 35 years old sprinter will be looking to make a grand exit in the international arena during the Paris Olympic Games which will be his last major international assignment in illustrious career.

Wanderers chasing Leopard defender, Machawe Dlamini



▲ Royal Leopard players.

MANZINI Wanderers are chasing Royal Leopard defender Machawe Dlamini ahead of the second transfer deadline on Saturday.

The ex Sihlangu player is set to become the third player to join the ‘Weslians’ on loan from the police side after midfielder Lindelwa Dlodlu and left back Majaha Nhlabatsi.

Wanderers Management Committee Chairman Berger Nxumalo confirmed the news.

“We are currently in talks with Leopards over the services of Machawe and we hope to conclude the deal before the end of the week. We feel he is a good player who can bring stability to our defence,” he said.

The ‘Weslians’ target, Machawe boasts of

various Sihlangu caps under the mentorship of former Harries ‘Madze’ Bulunga and Pieter ‘De Jongh

Dlodlu and Nhlabatsi will both miss the crowd pullers next MTN Premier League clash against ‘Ingwemabalabala’ at Mavuso Sports Centre on Saturday due to the loan agreement between the two teams.

The maroon and white ensemble recently enlisted the services of ex Mbabane Swallows striker Simanga Shongwe and former Highlanders playmaker Sibusiso Mkhonta.

The Nyanga ‘Crooks Hlophe led charges are currently perched at position 12 in the log standings with the same number of points while Leopard is perched top with 28 points.

Bufs pair on Zambia's Zesco United radar

... Army side duo of Bongwa Matsebula and Ali Matse have attracted the interest of top Zambian side, Zesco United where they are set to re-unite with former captain, Lindo Mkhonta

By Sibusiso Masilela
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▲ Young Buffaloe is set to lose two players to Zambia's Zesco United.

TWO Young Buffaloes wingers Bongwa Matsebula and Ali Matse could soon reunite with their former captain Lindo Mkhonta at Zesco United.

The attacking pair is linked with a move to the Ndola based side next season which is also the current home for former Sihlangu captain Mkhonta.

A source close to the matter revealed that Zesco has already enquired about the two players with Buffaloes.

"The two players might join Zesco United next season after Zesco showed interest to sign them next season. They have been monitoring both players during the AFCON 2023 qualifiers and they believe both players can add value to their team," the source said.

The players both have several Sihlangu caps under the guidance of incumbent coach Dominic Kunene and they were both part of the Buffaloes squad that competed in the 2019 CAF Champions League.

Buffaloes Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Sandile Gwebu could not be reached for comment on the matter as his cell phone was switched off at the time of compiling this report.

The pair could join the likes of Lindo

Mkhonta (Zesco United, Zambia), Justice Figareido (Richards Bay FC, South Africa), Banele 'Stiga' Ndzabandzaba (Botswana Police XI) and Mxolisi Mkhonto (Jwaneng Galaxy, Botswana) in the list of the country's current international players.



▲ Mcolisi Mkhonta.

Mcolisi on the bench as Jwaneng Galaxy wins 1-0

By Ntokozo Magongo
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BOTSWANA'S Jwaneng Galaxy new signee Mcolisi Mkhonta, who has been handed jersey number 12, debuted on the bench during the team's 1-0 win over Security System.

This was during the Botswana Premier League game played on Wednesday afternoon. The win saw Galaxy moving to the second spot of the 16-team log standings. They have 25 points after 10 games.

The former Green Mamba and National team, Sihlangu players signed for the Botswana side last with a reported E200 000 and he is set to earn around E30 000 per month. He joined former Mbabane Highlanders Banele 'Stiga' Ndzabandzaba who is also playing in the same league for Botswana Police XI.

Mbabane Swallows' Sandile to miss Madlenya clash

By Ntokozo Magongo
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MBABANE Swallows will be without their striker Sandile Hlatshwako when they face Madlenya in the MTN Premier League.

The game is set for the newly constructed Mkhuzweni Technical Centre on Saturday at 3pm. Hlatshwako was forced out of the game against Green Mamba on Saturday at Mavuso Sports Centre.

He joins Felix Badenhorst in the casualty ward and the former Sihlangu striker even missed the goalless draw with Green Mamba last Saturday.

Badenhorst dislocated his shoulder during the Ingwenyama Cup match against Tambankulu Celtics at Mayaluka Stadium in the last 16 stage of the tournament. A source close to the matter confirmed that Hlatshwako was currently not training with the team and he is set to be out of action for some time. "It's a blow for Swallows as they are challenging for the title. They are set to be without their first 11 players



▲ Sandile Hlatshwako will miss the Madlenya clash.



▲ Felix Badenhorst dislocated his shoulder during their recent match against Tambankulu Callies.

and this will give a chance to the young stars to prove their worth," said the source. Swallows Public Relations Officer (PRO)

Knowledge Ngwenya could not be reached for comment as his phone was not answered on Wednesday afternoon. Mbabane

Swallows will be hoping to have the players back before their quarter-final match against Pigg's Peak Rangers in the Ingwenyama Cup.



**All set for
intriguing
AFCON last 8**

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**Birds' Sandile
to miss
Madlenya clash**

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Eswatini Daily News *Thursday 1 February, 2024*

Sport

Buffaloes pair on Zesco United **radar**

... Army side duo of Bongwa Matsebula and Ali Matse have attracted the interest of top Zambian side, Zesco United where they are set to re-unite with former captain, Lindo Mkhonta. *Page 23*